

Robert Murray Smith (1880-1937)

The History of Greenock

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Contents

Introduction	5
The Superiors - The Schaw Family - The Cathcart Family - The Craufurd Family - Easter Greenock Castle - Ardgowan Mansion - The Foundations - The Fishers' Hut - The Name (Greenock) - It's Source - Feudal Authority - The Original Charter - Glasgow Opposition - New Charters - Rise of Popular Opinion	
Municipal	11
The Civic Birth - The Municipal State - First Local Act - Feudal Rights - Town Records - Original Council - Early Difficulties - Fashioning Affairs - Food Control – Subsidies - Town Chambers - Housing the Council - A Modest Home - A Municipal Building - Masonic Privilege - Town Hall	
Fuller Powers	15
Municipalisation Act - A Lull in Affairs - Interludes - Magisterial Mien - Financial Embarrassment - Increasing Responsibilities - Contentions - The Reds and Blues - Weapon of the Pen - Election Fervour - Greenock Sand Bank – Ownership	
Water Supply	20
Formation of Waterworks - Loch Thom - The Shaw's Company - Rejoicings - Town Supply - Times of Scarcity - Water Trust Formed - The Gryfe - Further Needs - Trust V. Mill owners - Gas Light - Primitive Methods - Works Started - Taken Over - New Works	
The Broadening Franchise	23
How Greenock Stood - Reform Election - First Meeting - Greenock Unique	
The Tide of Prosperity	26
Brightening Prospects - Communal Problems	
Public Health	27
The Foreign Factor - People to Blame - Cholera and Smallpox - The 1840 Act - Estate Policy Embraced - Public Agitation - Low Finances - Other Outbreaks - Drainage System - Larger Parliamentary powers - Government Report - Authorities' Reply - A Fresh Effort - Medical Martyrs - The Man - Smallpox Hospital - Light and Air - Mortality Decrease - Combination Hospital - Shipping and Infectious Disease - Public Baths	
Housing	32
Old Town Neglect - The New Town - Projects of Relief - A Building Company - Call to Local Authority - Big Improvement Scheme - In the New Century - Complaints of Delay - More Corporation Houses - Homes for Ex-Service Men	
Tramways	35
Squeezing the Council - Extension - Terms of Lease - Breaks in Lease - Sunday Cars - Electrical Installation - Outside Pressure - Rapid Extensions	
The Municipal Buildings	36
A Wave of Extravagance - Pleas of Justification - Public Warnings - Publicity Ignored - Site Selected - The Money - Plans Adopted - Street Widening - The Buildings - End of Heroics - An Ambitious Bill - Important Acts - The Opposition - Industrial Revival - Public Access to Quays - Increased Water Supply - Chief Magistrates - The Public Service - Personal Status - Lack of Leaders	
Parliamentary	42
The Reform Bill - Greenock and Port-Glasgow - Local Opposition - Amalgamation Defeated - Members - The Candidates - Protest and Petition - A Plebiscite - Unionist Victory - A Blunder in Returns - Sir Thomas Retires - Liberal Renaissance	
Physical Features	45
Original Appearance - Roads Unformed - Town's First Aspect - Feuing - Cartsydyke - Slow Changes - Old Houses and Lanes - New Town Feus - Oldest Existing House - Mid 18 th Century - A Westward Current - A Planless Town - Architecture - Feu-Contract Conditions - Spreading Wings - Street Opening - Views of Old Town - New Town Plan - Bridges - Names of Streets - Road Repairing - Brisker Movement - One Hundred Years Ago - The West-End - Mansions and Villas The Southward Trend - The Industrial Aspect - Cathcart Arcade - West-End Streets - The Hillside - The Esplanade - East Quay Lane - Lyle Road - To-Day	
The Harbours	55
Rude Experiments - The Near Rival - Building a Harbour - An Extensions Bill – Troubles - Greenock Jurisdiction - At Issue with Glasgow - A River Lock Bill - Mollifying Shippers - The Anchorage Dues - Harbour Dues	

First Graving Dock	59
Dry Docks - New Harbours Wanted - Big Schemes to View - Strides in Trade - Architects' Plans	
East India Harbour	60
The East Harbour - Government Aid Sought - Dispute with Superior - Appeal for Money - Act Passed - East India Graving Dock - A Silver Lining - A Fillip to the Port - Ship owners and the Constitution - Dissention - Plans in the Air - A Gourock Harbour - Conflicting Issues - Negotiating with Superior - New Harbour Estimates - Opposition to Glasgow Bill - A Grumble from Shipbuilders - Still Delaying - Cartsdyke Harbour - Quays and Harbour Shortage - Site Selection - Fitting-out Room - Clyde Trust Opposition - Estimates	
Victoria Harbour	67
Tidal Harbour - The Toll on Glasgow Ships - More Dock Demands - A Warning Note - Larger Vessels - Dock and Harbour Plans - A Bill Failure - Princes Pier and Albert Harbour - West-End Quay and Harbour - Government Loan - Albert Harbour - Port-Glasgow Bill etc. - Critical Period - Prospective Changes and Extensions - Consolation Act - Railway Facilities - Conflicting Opinions - Bills Passed - Garvel Park - State of Finances	
Purchase of Garvel Park	71
The Turning Point - The Railway Factor - Plans for Garvel Works - Garvel Graving Dock - Harbour Ownership - Final Effort Westward - Garvel Wet Dock - Doubts Arising - James Watt Dock - Final Step - Justifying Facts - Progression - Completed - Views - Instant Misfortune - Insolvency - Official Revelations - The Public Mind - Trustees in Ignorance - Bondholders' Inquiry - Their Report - Position of Mr. Kinipple - Excitement Subsiding - The Cause - Reconstruction - Mutual Agreement - The New Trust - Incongruities - Looking for Trade - Graving Docks Inadequate - Rival Accommodation - Local Assessment - Fitting-out Appeals - Town Help - Shipbuilders' Offer - Corporation and Purchase - Judicial Factor - Parties at Loggerheads - Bondholders Ask Control - New Consolidation Bill - Opposing Bill - Corporation Guarantee - Clyde Conservancy Board - Result - Bondholders not satisfied	
List of Docks and Harbours	84
West Harbour - East India Harbour - Victoria Harbour - Albert Harbour - Princes Pier - West Quay - Customhouse Quay - Garvel Graving Dock - James Watt Dock and Great Harbour	
Trade and Commerce	85
Glasgow Influence – Staples - Shipping and Ship-owning - Herring - Growing Trade - Greenock's Share - Rise and fall - Sea Trading - Pioneer Ships - Effects of the Union - Widening Markets - Greenock Tonnage - Glasgow and River Deepening - Customs and Tonnage - The Indies - Enterprising Shippers - Timber - The Ships - Quebeccers - Iron Ships - High Tide - Steam v Sail - Low Water - Old Firms	
Shipbuilding	92
Pioneers - Successors - First Cunard Fleet - Ship Development - Early American Competition - Success in Rivalry - Iron and Steel - Outstanding Firms - Scott - Steele - Caird - Dockyard Company - Geo. Brown & Co. - Engineering - Engineering Firms - Hastie & Co. - John G. Kincaid & Co. Ltd. - Rankin & Blackmore - G. & J. McOnie	
Sugar Refining	99
Clyde Trade Begun - Cane Monopoly - Greenock Prospect - Refiners' Drawback - Beet Imports - Duties Abolished - Ending Bounties - The War Years - Firms and Refineries - General Trade (Trade and Commerce) - First Factories - Old Existing Firms - Glasgow Capital - Variety of Industries - Anticipation - Historian's View - Mills - Sugar Machinery - Further Expansion - The Changing Tide - Coal – Copper - Railways - Line to Glasgow - Cost - Amalgamation - Harbour Lines - Ayrshire Line - Harbour Connection - Gourock Line	
Ecclesiastical	109
Old West Kirk - Anterior Churches - The Auld Kirk - The Royal Charter - The Structure - Alterations and Enlargements - Sailors' Loft - Old Coins Recovered - Sacred Utensils - Memorial Windows - Vaults and Monuments - The Kirkyard - In Decay - New West Church - Restored and Re-named - The Mid Kirk - First Meeting Place - The Manse - The East Kirk - Highland Church - West Chapel - St. Andrew's - St. Thomas' - Cartsburn Chapel - South - Ladyburn - Wellpark - St. Paul's - Augustine - The Disruption - Secession - Burgher and Anti-Burgher - Greenbank - Trinity Church - Sir Michael Street - Finnart Church - Union Street - St. Andrew Square - Mount Pleasant - Wellpark U. F. - Gaelic U. F. - St. Thomas' - St. Andrew's U. F. - West U. F. - Middle U. F. - North U. F. - Mount Park U. F. - Crawfordsburn - Martyrs' U. F. - Free Gaelic Church - Reformed Presbyterians - George Square Congregational - East Congregational - Martyrs' Congregational - Mearns Street Congregational - Orangefield Baptist - George Square Baptist - Nelson Street E. U. - Wesleyan Methodism - Primitive Methodism - Episcopal - R. C. Re-Establishment - New St. Mary's - St. Lawrence - Church and Town - The West Kirk - Sacramental Payments - The Mid Kirk - A Competent Salary - Litigation - Appeal to Lords - Transference Proposed	
Education	126

Parish School - First Teachers - Grammar School - John Wilson - Council's Displeasure - Town Subsidies - For the Poor - Salaries - Inadequate Facilities - Bearhope Academy - Teachers' Terms - Ann Street School - Old Masters - Harbours and Education - Alan Ker School - Highlanders - Statistics - Grants by Council - Public Dissatisfaction - Situation Faced - Responsibilities - Academy - Education in - School Boards - How Things Stood - Taking Over - Progress - Academy Transferred - The Academy Grants - On Human Lines - Education Trust - Indignant Parents - Thriving Affairs - The High School - Financial Cares

The People

135

The Gaelic Strain - Lowland Trek - Irish - Population - The Early Settlers - Ecclesiastical Overrule - Conduct and Authority - Ecclesiastic Rigour - Sabbath Breaking - Swearing, Etc. - Drinking - Inns and Taverns - Caution in Judgement - Sidelights - Crime - Scant Early Records - Offences Increase - Commendation - The Poor - Relief - Secular Aid - Generous Citizens - Vagrancy - Allocation Disputes - Lax Ratepayers - In Straits - Public Criticism - Official Reports - Poor-Law Act - Poorhouse - Bad Trade - Unemployment - A Season of General Want - Dearth in Shipbuilding - Later Lean Times - Amusements and Recreations - The Means - Fairs - Parks and Open Spaces - The Classes - Social Distinctions - The West End - Recent Charges

Institutions

150

The Watt Club - Watt Memorial - The Institution - Museum and Hall - A Universal Memorial - Disappointment - The Embers - Watt Dock - Birthplace Memorial - Greenock Library - The Philosophical Society - Greenock Hospital - Eye Infirmary - Combination Hospital - Poorhouse and Asylum - Mariners' Asylum - Seamen's friends - The Scott Institution - Night Asylum - Medical Aid - Mechanics' Institution - Burns' Club - Coffee Rooms - Chamber of Commerce - Provident Bank - Post Office - Public Library - Temperance Institute - Y.M.C.A. - Sheriff Court - Court-Houses - Circuit Court - Police - Harbour Police - Prisons - Others

The Press

160

First Printer - The Advertiser - Various - The Telegraph - The Newsclout - Town Council and Press - Some Periodicals - Early Books - Daniel Weir - George Williamson - Donald Campbell - Archibald Brown

Gleanings

163

Greenock Arms - Present Seal - Harbour Trust - Town Clerkship - Bells and Clocks - Banks - Stage Coaches - Fly-Boats - Theatres - Graveyards - Cartsydyke Floods - A Baronial Chair - Custom-House - The Cross - Lyle Fountain - Seafield House - Batteries - Torpedo Factory - Practice Range - Volunteers - Relic Guns - Paintings and Portraits - Watt Relics - John Galt - James Fairrie - James Johnstone Grieve - Robert Neil - Robert Wallace - Dr. James Wallace - Robert MacFie - John Rennie - Alan Ker - Rev. Dr. J. M. McCulloch - John Caird - David Crawford - John Davidson - Robert & Walter Bain - George Robertson - Robert Buchanan LL.D. - David & Charles MacIver - Unemployment - Provisional Order - The House of Refuge - The Masonic Temple - Greenock War Memorial - St. Lawrence Bay

Introduction

THERE WAS A TIME, now half a century past, when the Clyde coast tourist traffic threaded its way from railway terminus to steamboat pier through an unsavoury lane in the heart of Old Greenock. Since then a considerable change for the better has been wrought on some of the most squalid districts, although this partial transformation to broader spaces and more agreeable odours came too late to avert a diversion of the swelling stream of travellers into wider, sweeter, but also outlying channels. What in means and repute, in this simple connection, Greenock may have lost through a faulty prescience or a laggard public spirit; it is now idle to conjecture. The intensity of the regret consists not so much in the knowledge that the bulk of the now enormous summer coasting is borne by other ways as that to this day, happily in lessening degree, there clings the reproach of a period when travellers literally shook the dust from their feet as they passed in haste through our streets. To impressions thus superficially acquired are at least partly due the mischievous figment so long prevailing of the town and its environments as being unworthy the notice in any appreciable degree alike of the student of history, the itinerant sight-seer, and the lover of noble and inspiring scenes.

He must be impervious indeed to the appeals of nature who fails to be deeply impressed by the external features of the situation as seen, say, from the vantage-point of a steamer's deck, from which one can with a look sweep almost the entire superficies of the burgh area. From the shores of the Clyde as it widens to the dignity of a firth lies the oblong town, face to the north-east, the older and easterly part stretching back in a sharp acclivity to hills whose steep sides set the limit to extension; the newer, with the valley of the Kip opening between, rising in an unbroken and gentler slope to the ridges of the less lofty Craigs. If by any chance, through the intervention of adverse atmospheric conditions or of overhanging smoke from the hundred stalks that mark the hives of industry, the working town should be blotted out or lie blurred in a mist of its own begetting, one can with a less distracted eye admire and linger upon the loveliest West-End in the world. The travelled citizen returns to exult in its surpassing charm; the stranger halting on his way farther afield is doubly captured-by the gracious spell of the beautiful in nature and art, and again by the novelty of its sheer unexpectedness. The seeker of fragrant and reposeful by-places may here spend days in pleasing rumination, undisturbed by the rude currents of noisy life. Mansion, villa, and church are virtually embowered on the wide front of the sweeping hill, the broad, mile-long roadways and their intersections lying fair and wholesome, the air redolent of the odours of flower and tree. The shipping and merchant princes of over half a century ago did much better for posterity than merely amass riches. Whether designedly or by happy fortune, they founded a new and more admirable town side by side with the dingy and congested old, and passed it on as a priceless possession to future generations.

The other side of the picture unhappily presents a different aspect. Here we see, with a sense of humiliation not unmixed with a measure of astonishment, the narrow streets and huddled dwellings of the east and middle town; and surely, we must confess, in few cities of the kingdom may we find contrast of the kind so painfully obvious. On whose shoulders is to be laid the chief blame for living conditions that an awakened national conscience now regards as an intolerable anachronism? It is recorded in the annals of the town that, to begin with, there were no regular street plans, and that the early feuars were permitted to do very much as they pleased in fixing the sites of houses and their relation to those of neighbours. Thus as the buildings multiplied the town formed itself into a series of aimless streets and lanes and closes, contracted, crooked, and too certainly unclean. This default cannot altogether be laid at the doors of the feuars. While some justification or excuse may be found in the general ignorance or indifference, and in the absence of social and domestic ideals attributable to those benighted and less spacious times, one cannot exonerate the Superiors of two centuries ago, who were admittedly wanting in a scrupulous consideration for the social wellbeing of their vassals. And what is to be said of the semi-burghal rule during the long period of divided authority under the Barony Charters, when Superiors and townspeople shared the responsibility of managing affairs? For them the most plausible justification is that the sense of communal aspiration was as yet unstirred, or that already sectional interests were having undue weight while the common needs were in neglect. In more recent times it became too apparent that this neglect had extended through so many generations that the task of redress had grown so formidable as to produce dismay. In our own day municipal authorities touched the fringe of the problem. A golden opportunity was cast to the winds in the Seventies of last century, a period during which wealth was pouring into the town and public representatives were looking around for heroic ways of spending it. Had the merely ornate sections of the Municipal Palace been dispensed with, the saving might have sufficed to clear away the hovels back to Market Street, and to offer, as one of the least of its beneficial results, a fair perspective in which to view the architectural proportions. But the revolution may be at hand that will issue in cleansing and healing the scarred face of Central Greenock. The conjunction of industrial pressure, of the force of a new, inspired public opinion, of Government insistence and subsidy, and of a graver sense of duty and responsibility in respect of the good name and prestige of the town should, when the psychological moment has arrived, prove strong enough to remove mountains.

The Superiors

The Schaw Family

In the superiority of the town of Greenock, in which we include Cartsburn and Crawforddsdyke, four notable Families have had a share.

The Schaw Family is one of the oldest in Scotland, and was originally the de Chatto or Schatto on the Scottish side of the Schaw Border. The Family is descended from Shaich, a son of Family. MacDuff, Earl of Fife. In 1296 William de Schaw swore fealty to Edward I, in whose reign Hugh de Greenock was created a Scottish Baron. The Barony of Greenock belonged of old to a family named Galbraith. In the reign of Robert III it was divided by the two daughters of Malcolm de Galbraith, one of whom married Schaw of Sauchie, the other Crawford of Kilbirnie. The two divisions were held as separate Baronies - Wester Greenock by the Schaws, Easter Greenock by the Crawfurds - until 1669, when Sir John Schaw purchased the eastern Barony from the female of Crawford of Kilbirnie, and became the proprietor of both Baronies. The Schaws of Sauchie were hereditary cup-bearers to the Scottish kings as early as Alexander II and III.

In 1639 Sir Alexander had obtained from James V. a grant of the forfeited lands of Fynnart, which had belonged to Sir James Hamilton, son of the Earl of Arran; and in 1540 a further grant of Wester Greenock-Schaw, the castle of which stood on the site of the late Mansion house. On the death of Sir Alexander about 1547, James, the only son of his first marriage to the Lord Erskine's daughter, succeeded to Sauchie as his father's heir-at-law, and on the failure of male issue in the person of George Schaw, one of his descendants, the estate of Sauchie fell into Greenock, and thereafter the Schaws were designated as of Sauchie and Greenock, the succession of Sauchie opening to the Greenock family during the tenure of the first Sir John Schaw. In 1565 John Schaw married Jean, daughter of John Cunninghame of Glengarnock, Ayrshire, his uncle, by whom he had five sons and five daughters. He died in 1593, and was succeeded by his son James, who married Margaret, daughter of Hugh Montgomerie of Haslehead, and had one son, John. James Schaw died in 1620, and his son, who married Helen, daughter of John Houston of that ilk, died in 1679, leaving a son, John, and a daughter, Margaret. This was the first Sir John Schaw. He married Jean, daughter of Sir William Mure of Rowallan, and had one son and five daughters, the youngest of whom married Tobias Smollett of Bonhill. Sir John died in 1691, and was succeeded by his son John, who married Helenor, daughter and one of the co-heirs of Sir Thomas Nicolson of Carnock, Stirlingshire. Lady Helenor predeceased him, and he afterwards married Elizabeth Scott, without issue, and died in 1702. The last Sir John Schaw in 1700 married Margaret, daughter of Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick, by whom he had one daughter, Marion. On his marriage his father and he concurred in making an entail of the Estate of Greenock, which they settled on the heirs male of that marriage, which failing, on the heirs male of Margaret Schaw, afterwards Lady Houston, the elder Sir John's only daughter, who in 1714 married Sir John Houston of Houston, third Baronet. Marion married the Master of Cathcart, a distant cousin, and it was in virtue of the feu-rights made over in favour of this lady and her husband that the Cathcart family became connected with the Superiority of Greenock. The armorial bearing of the Shaws is azure, three covered cups, or, supported by two savages wreathed about the middle; and for crest a demi savage, with the motto, "I mean well."

The original residence of the Schaw family was accepted as Greenock undoubtedly the oldest dwelling-house in Greenock, and was founded by the eighth John Schaw in 1542. It is described in the Royal Charter of 1635 as "the auld castell-heid, castle, tour, fortalice, and manor place, etc., new buildit," which has been taken as an indication that there had formerly been a castle, etc., on the site. On the wall close by the site (now vacant through the operations of the Gourrock railway in 1886) the date 1629 is inscribed, and on one of the garden gates was the date 1635. On this wall the Laird's initials and arms are still to be seen, and on the east side a monogram containing the initial letters of the names of husband and wife. On the lintel of the doorway leading into what was once the private garden was the date 1635, with another-similar monogram, and this date has been generally accepted as recording the erection of the Burgh of Barony. Considerable additions were made to the mansion, a new western group having been added in 1694, and the last extension took place in 1740, the father of James Watt being the tradesman who carried through the work. The stones were taken from one of Sir John's reserved quarries, and they were much whiter than those used in the old houses of the town, and more carefully selected. It is said to have well merited the name of fortalice, as it was sufficiently strong to afford protection to the inmates and stout resistance to an invading foe. The house had four approaches: north-east, north, west, and south. That from the south, stretching from down Regent Street, was the most picturesque, and from it struck off the private avenue leading to the front of the house and garden. The terraces on the brae-face were of wide extent. The western portion was very much as at present, looking down the lane (afterwards Cross-Shore Street) to the slip at the harbour. On those terraces were mounted at least nine guns; on the lower terrace was a range of buildings approached by a flight of stairs from what is now Watt Place, originally named Taylor's Lane; and on another were the Pavilions, the last of them, the easterward, long occupied as the Baron Bailie's office. The site of the new Mansion house, which consists exclusively of estate offices, is on the north side of Ardgowan Square, corner of Patrick Street, and the building, a fine example of Scottish renaissance style of architecture, was opened in 1886.

The Policies were bounded by the line of Ann Street on the west, along the foot of the hill behind Market Street, along Mansion house Street, which before the making of the Greenock Railway ran eastward from the foot of Sir John's Brae across Bogle Street to Dellingburn Street, to the water of Cartsburn, the eastern part of the policies being thickly wooded. The Pond Park lay to the south of the first East Parish Church, between Bogle Street on the west and Dellingburn Street on the east and what is now Chapel Street was formerly Fish Pond Street. The ground on which are now the streets lying between Bogle and Cartsburn Streets at one period formed a chief part of the pleasure grounds and gardens. The Deer Park was a large enclosure between the Dellingburn and Cartsburn streams. Large buildings used as dove-cots stood on the south side of Well Park, the Duck Pond was in Upper

Bank Street, and an avenue of stately trees, from the Mansion house to the Deer Park, surrounded with beauty the building of the period.

According to an old statute no feuing was allowed nearer than 300 yards from the Mansion house, and this was enforced so long as it remained a family residence. Even in 1719 there were comparatively few houses within view of the windows. Craufurd thus refers to the Mansion house: "Above the town, on an eminence, stands the Castle of Greenock, surrounded by pleasant parks and enclosures, having on all sides a great deal of beautiful planting, with spacious avenues and terraces." The upper end of these terraces can still be distinctly traced in the grass just above the Wemyss Bay railway line a little to the east of Berryyards Farmhouse, which stands close to Upper Greenock Station. The name of the farm indicates that it occupies at least a portion of the ancient fruit garden. At old Scotch houses the part of the garden planted with small-fruit trees was commonly termed "the berry-yards". "A very imperfect idea can now be formed of the beauty and extent of the Baronial policy. The original plan was said to have been to build a house above a terrace, with the street opening down to the harbour, "in which case", had remarked Mr Alexander Drummond, British Consul at Tripoli, in making a comparison with the Count de Mercis's beautiful house at Vabro in Italy, than which the Greenock: mansion was nobler and finer, "it would have been the most lordly site in Europe."

The remains of what was believed to have been an old watch tower were still to be seen at the highest point of Whinhill a hundred years ago or more. The walls had been about 2 feet thick, length about 30 feet, breadth at one end 18 feet, at the other end 27 feet. Some correspondence on the subject took place in the columns of "Greenock Advertiser" of April, 1803, in the course of which a writer of an apparent authority stated: "It is either of a too high antiquity for any well authenticated account to be given of its design or use, or it was connected with the policy of the Greenock Estate. As the tradition of this country has bestowed upon it the name of Castle Vanity, from the mischievous activity of those beings denominated fairies, I suspect it to be remote. The other opinion is founded upon its situation and figure, as it might be the termination to the wood opening in the planting that rises in a straight line from the terrace to the top of the Whinhill. There is some confused report that 'this was its design.'

It was from his Baronial hall that John Schaw, with about 200 of his tenantry, marched to the assistance of Charles II, and fought at the battle of Worcester on September 3, 1651. The banner carried on the occasion was preserved and hung along with the town flags in the Coffee Room till about 1796, when it disappeared. It was in consequence of John Schaw's zeal in the Royal cause that he was created a Baronet under the flag on the field of battle. Sir John was residing at Wester Greenock in 1715 and on the Duke of Argyle's arrival in Edinburgh on September 14, appealing to Greenock for assistance, "from Greenock and Cartsdyke he was reinforced with somewhat more than 100 men, accompanied by their minister, Rev. Mr Turner. These remained under the orders of his Grace for eighty days, doing "duty all that time the same as the regular troops. Besides the above, that were thus employed abroad, there were fifty men belonging to, Greenock and twenty-five to Cartsdyke who kept watch every night, bringing all the boats across the Clyde to prevent the rebels, especially Rob Roy and his thieves, from transporting themselves over and plundering the adjacent country." In 1745 Sir John, in the open green close by the house, drilled the various trades before they went on active duty. The records of the Scottish Parliament afford ample proofs of the loyalty of the Lairds of Greenock. Besides taking the command of a troop of horse, called Greenock's troop, and lending to the Government a sum of money for the special purpose of suppressing the rebellion in Ireland in 1641, John Schaw seems to have taken an interest in fitting out an armament by sea. In March, 1647, an Act was passed for outfit of two ships and a pinnace to guard the coast, and in June, 1649, the following entry was made in the Recorder: "Remit in favour of the Laird of Greenock's boatmen."

The Cathcart Family

The Cathcart connection with Greenock lasted for over one hundred years. It was in 1718 that Marion Schaw married Charles, Master of Cathcart, Colonel of the Scots Greys, afterwards the eighth Baron Lord Cathcart, and the couple took up residence in the old Greenock Mansionhouse. By the entail Lady Cathcart had made over to her the feu-rights "of these portions of the lands and Barony of Greenock lying adjacent to the shore upon which the town of Greenock is built and may be further extended - on the east by the highway (Bogle Street) to the Mansionhouse, along the east side of the Royal Cross, on the west by the bridge and West Burn, on the south along the foot of the Brae and the garden hedge, and by the sea-shore on the north and other parts." Lord Cathcart, who was predeceased by his wife, died in 1740, and was succeeded by his eldest son Charles, in whose favour Sir John Schaw, his grandfather, had granted a charter of novo-damus or new grant of the subjects in the sub-feu. He died in 1776, and was succeeded by his eldest son William, who entered the Army in 1777, became Vice-Admiral of Scotland in 1795, was raised to the Peerage for distinguished services, and chose the titles of Baron Greenock of Greenock and Viscount Cathcart of Cathcart. In 1830 he sold the Superiority of Greenock to Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, grandfather of the present Sir Hugh; and thus the Cathcart Superiority merged into that of the Stewart. Armorial bearings - Azure, three cross crosslets fitchée, issuing out of a wreath, holding up a crescent argent; motto, "I hope to speed."

The Craufurd Family

The lands and estates of Cartsburn and Easter Greenock belonged to the Craufurds of Kilbirnie, Ayrshire, having been acquired by them in the reign of Queen Mary. The surname has been spelt variously as Crafoord, Craford,

Craffurd, Craufurde, Craufuird, Craufurd, etc. Easter Greenock extended eastward from Wester Greenock, starting from a short distance beyond the Old Flint Mill feu, crossing the Carts Burn and stretching to Devol's Glen, then westward along the Clyde until it joined the Cartsburn March, and southward to the limits of the parish. The Cartsburn Estate extends from the Carts Burn on the west along the river Clyde to the point where the boundary falls out at what is known as the Old Clyde Forge, which it intersects, leaving one portion of the feu in Cartsburn, the other in Greenock Estate. In the middle of the 17th Century the lands were in the possession of John Craufurd of Kilbirnie, who was created a Baronet in 1642 for distinguished loyal services to Charles I. By his second wife, Magdalen, daughter of Lord Carnegie, Sir John had two daughters - Anne, who, married Sir Archibald Stewart of Blackhall, the first Baronet, and Margaret, who married Patrick Lindsay, second son of John Earl of Craufurd. The lands were settled by deed of entail on Margaret and her heirs male, who had to assume the name of Craufurd with the family arms. John Craufurd died in 1661, and Margaret, Lady Kilbirnie, with consent of her husband, in 1669 sold the lands of Easter Greenock to Sir John Schaw. The disposition reserved the right to Cartsburn, which Lady Kilbirnie afterwards conveyed to her cousin, Thomas Craufurd of Cartsburn, the first Baron. It was reported that the estate was sold at a far higher rate than the ordinary and much above the value of the debts, Sir John Schaw and the City of Glasgow both being anxious to obtain the lands to make a harbour. Sir John's purchase was made on the year before the Crown Charter of 1670 was granted to his father and himself, which contained a clause uniting Easter and Wester Greenock into one Barony, the Burgh Barony of Greenock, and united it in one family, after having been divided for fully 250 years. The armorial bearing of the Craufurds is gules, a fess, ermine, betwixt a crescent in chief and two swords saltyre-ways, hilted and pommelled or, in base for crest, with a balance, with the motto, "Quod tibi hoc alteri."

Easter Greenock Castle

Craufurd the historian tells us that a mile west of Port Glasgow, upon the shore, stood the ruinous Castle of Easter Greenock, for 300 years the possession of the Craufurds of Kilbirnie. About 150 years ago a tenant of Hillend, the site of the Castle, in excavating discovered a sunk cellar in which there were a number of casks containing some kind of liquid. Tradition says that the site of the old Mansion house was the ground occupied by Hutcheson's Court, Main Street, and that it was approached by a long lane leading from the sea called the Stenders or Stanners. The new building, erected in 1672, was removed about fifty years ago to make room for public works. It was a tall structure, with crow-step gables, on a commanding site at the extreme western portion of the estate, the old Castle having been a little to the south. The old place was strongly fortified, and it is not known when it became untenable. Ruins were there at the beginning of the 19th century, but have been long cleared away. It is said to have been built on the site which now forms the angle between the Glasgow and South-Western and the Wemyss Bay railways, at the east-end of the two tunnels at Hillend. About the middle of the 19th century the spot had become a quarry for building stones, and now all that remains is a mixed heap of stones and earth known as The Knowe. Sir John Schaw occasionally made the Mansion house of Easter Greenock his residence during the season, but he preferred Wester Greenock, although it was not so commodious even after its enlargement in 1674. It is not known for certain whether or for how long the house was occupied by Sir John Craufurd and his daughter.

The Stewart Family

The Stewarts have been Lairds of Inverkip since the days of Robert III. Three Charters are still extant by which that King conferred upon his son, Sir John Stewart, the lands of Auchingoun, Lochwinnoch, in 1390; of Blackball, in 1395; and of Ardgowan, in 1403; all of which have been possessed by the family in lineal descent until this day. The head of the house in the time of Charles I was a Privy Councillor, and also in the reign of Charles II, and was raised to Knighthood, while his successor and grandson was created a Baronet of Nova Scotia in 1667. Sir Michael Stewart, grandson of the latter and third Baronet, married Helenor, daughter and heiress of Sir John Houstoun of that Ilk. This lady's mother, Margaret Schaw, was the only daughter and heiress of Sir John Schaw of Greenock, and her mother, Dame Helenor Nicolson, had been the only daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas Nicolson of Carnock, Stirlingshire. Through his marriage, therefore, Sir Michael brought into the family the estates and representation of those three ancient houses. The estates of Greenock came to the Stewarts through this marriage in 1736 of Sir Michael to Helenor, elder daughter of Sir John Houstoun and Margaret Schaw. They had two surviving sons, John and Houstoun, the latter succeeding to Carnock, and the elder son, the first Shaw Stewart, succeeding in 1752 to the Greenock Estates of his maternal grand-uncle, Sir John Schaw. By the entail of Greenock John Stewart was bound to assume the surname of Schaw and the title, designation, and arms of the family. At first the Barony writs were granted in name of Master John Stewart Schaw alias John Schaw-Stewart (he was then fourteen years of age, his father being curator for him), but gradually the letter 'c' was dropped from Schaw and the form Shaw-Stewart adopted. Sir Michael died in 1796, aged 84 years, and his son became Sir John Shaw-Stewart of Greenock and Blackhall. Sir John was a popular landlord, and was elected Member for Renfrew in 1780, 1786 and 1790. He married Dame Frances Colquhoun, relict of Sir James Maxwell of Pollok, Bart., whom he predeceased in 1812. Having left no issue, the estates of Greenock were again opened to a collateral line. His brother Houstoun died in 1785, leaving an only son, Michael, and his younger brother Archibald died of violence in Trinidad in 1779.

Houstoun had married Margaret, eldest daughter of Boyd Porterfield of that Ilk, and, through failure of heirs male of Boyd, in 1815 the Stewart family came to represent the Porterfields and the lands of Duchal and others. Michael, only son of Houstoun Stewart Nicolson, succeeded Sir John as fifth Baronet. He married in 1787 his cousin

german, Catherine, youngest daughter of Sir William Maxwell of Springkell, and had six sons and two daughters. He was succeeded by his elder son Michael, who in 1819 married the only child of Robert Farquhar of Newark, by whom he had three sons and three daughters, and he died in 1836. His son, Sir Michael Robert Shaw Stewart, born in 1826, succeeded. In 1852 he married The Lady Octavia Grosvenor, daughter of the second Marquis of Westminster, and had five sons and two daughters. Sir Michael was Member for Renfrewshire from 1855 to 1865, and in 1878 he was asked to stand for Greenock but declined. He was made Lord-Lieutenant of the County in 1869, in succession to the Earl of Glasgow, and was Grand Master Mason of Scotland for nine years. At his death in 1903 his son Michael Hugh succeeded, having, in 1883, married The Lady Alice Thynne, daughter of the Marquis of Bath. Sir Hugh was nineteen and a half years Member for East Renfrewshire, and after his retiral from Parliament he entered Greenock Town Council, in which he served for term as Magistrate. He was pressed to become Provost of the town, but owing to his multifarious duties in the county, he felt himself unable to give the requisite attention to the demands of the important position. Armorial bearings - Quarterly, 1st and 4th, or, a fesse, chequy, azure and argent, over all a lion rampant, gules, for Stewart; 2nd and 3rd, azure three covered cups or, for Shaw; mottoes, "Spero Meliora" and "I mean well."

The family vault stands in the old Kirkyard of Inverkip, and contains the remains of eleven members of the house of Ardgowan. Their names are cut in marble slabs affixed to the walls as follow: Sir Michael Stewart, Baronet; born 12th November, 1712, died 20th October, 1796. Sir John Shaw Stewart, Baronet; born 18th April 1759, died 7th August, 1812. Margaret Stewart, Lady Maxwell of Springkell; born 19th November, 1742, died 27th March, 1816. Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Baronet; born 10th February, 1766, died 3rd August, 1825. Catherine Maxwell Lady Shaw Stewart; born 7th January, 1707, died 10th May, 1849. Patrick Maxwell Stewart, 4th son of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Bart.; born 28th February, 1795, died 30th October, 1846. William Maxwell Stewart, 6th son of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Bart.; born 13th December, 1796, died 29th July, 1869. Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Baronet; born 4th October, 1788, died 19th December, 1836. Eliza Mary, daughter of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Baronet; born 9th September, 1825, died 3rd November, 1839. Eliza Mary, eldest daughter of Sir Michael R. Shaw Stewart, Baronet; born 2nd July, 1855, died 3rd May, 1875. Sir Michael R. Shaw Stewart, Bart.; born 25th November, 1825, died 10th December, 1903. The Lady Octavia, died May, 1921.

Ardgowan Mansion

The Mansion of Ardgowan occupies an ideal site on the Ardgowan plateau of a finely-wooded tongue of land overlooking the Clyde at the Bay of Inverkip. This also is the site of the ancient Castle of the family, whose first ancestor was granted the lands of Ardgowan in 1403, but of the original structure, the date of whose erection is lost in the mist of ages, there remains a solitary tower, a quadrangular keep, promising still to stand against the ravages of time for many years to come. The first family dwelling was erected against the western side of the old tower. The present Mansion, like Eglinton and many other west country castles, was erected at the dawn of the nineteenth century. It is a monument of the energy and taste of Sir John Shaw Stewart, the fourth Baronet, who was a notable man in his day, both as an enlightened politician and a sedulous improver of his estates. The building was begun on April 10, 1798, and completed on November 13, 1801; the garden was begun on the same date and finished in 1799; the offices in 1801 and finished in 1804. Cairncross was the architect of the Mansion. Grecian in style, the central portion consists of four storeys adorned with handsome Corinthian pillars, and is flanked by long wings, the one terminating in the domestic offices, the other in a noble Gothic Chapel erected by Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, the 5th Baronet. Within the house the central hall, open to the roof, is hung with family and historic portraits. The staircase is of later origin, having been extensively altered in 1833. Among the pictures are several family portraits by Sir Henry Raeburn. The dining-room, previously the saloon until the internal improvements in 1833, contains, as indeed do all other apartments and sections of the house, a number of choice artistic treasures. The grounds surrounding the Mansion are laid out and planted with skill, affording interesting views across the Firth of Clyde to the Argyll hills, and south-westward to Bute and Arran.

The Foundations

The Fisher's Huts

Unlike many other places famous in history, the beginnings of Greenock are shrouded in no obscurity. As a potential centre of population and commerce it came into existence near the close of the sixteenth century. It was then the rallying ground of a small fishing community whose boats worked the adjacent lochs and arms of the firth, and whose families lived in straggling and unsettled groups along the shores. The fact of this sparsity is emphasised by the record that by the Royal permission of James V., ratified by the Scots Parliament of 1592, for the building of a church by the Superior, John Schaw, for the people on his estate, there is no reference to town or village, but simply to the parish of Greenock. Leaving aside the question of Charters, Royal and feudal, it may be taken that the foundations of Greenock were laid with the first stones of the Old West Kirk. For nearly half a century longer the inhabitants of the district other than the servants and retainers of the house of Schaw were still mainly fishing folk. With the introduction and growth of a sea-borne traffic, much of it as yet of a very circumscribed character, the natural advantages of the bay as a ship haven gradually attracted increasing numbers of vessels trading between outlying ports and the Clyde, and the place began to gain in size and importance. From the scattered huts of the native and migratory fisher families there grew a settled population, gathered around the ecclesiastical precincts and developed into a common body with mutual wants and ambitions. At a later period the area within the boundaries of Delling Burn on the east and West Burn on the west was specifically referred to as

Greenock town proper. It embraced the lands the feu rights of which were made over to Marion Schaw, daughter of the last Sir John Schaw, who married Lord Cathcart. But we may accept this definition as one of family and proprietorial convenience, in no strict sense precluding the more westward feus on the Schaw estate from being embraced within the limits of the town. It was, of course, quite otherwise with respect to the eastern portion of the town, Crawforddyke and Cartsburn, which in origin, early history, and other regards actual and imaginary, was a distinct community, and so, remained until merged in Greenock in 1841. It is of little consequence to-day, and need provoke no resentment, that Cartsdyke was at one time regarded as of greater importance than Greenock, or that it boasted of a pier from which part of the Darien Expedition set out in 1697. To the rivalry in shipping may have been greatly due the subsequent rapid advance of the district in industrial and commercial pursuits, and when the new world of the Indies and the American Colonies began to stir the minds and arouse the cupidity of the enterprising and adventurous, Greenock and the sister port were setting their houses in order to share in the wealth that was about to pour into the mother country.

The Name

It's Source

The name of Greenock has issued so uncertainly from the mists of the past that no one can dogmatise upon its origin. There are various suggestions - first, that it has its derivation in the British word Graenag, a gravelly or sunny place; second, in the Gaelic Grianach, a sunny bay; third, in Grian, the sun, and cnoc, a hill, from the eminence on which stood the Mansion house, which was said never to be in shadow; and fourth, in an oak which grew on the bank of the river at the Square in William Street, then so close to the water's edge that the fishermen made fast their cables to its trunk, the name originally being Greenoak. Williamson says that this spelling has twice been met with in the docquet to Sir John Schaw's factory accounts - in 1717, written by John Miller, his chaplain, and afterwards by John Arrol, the first Master of the Grammar School. This origin was believed to find support in the emblem on ships' flags, banners, the headpiece of "Greenock Advertiser," the notes of the Greenock Bank, porters' badges, and keyhole shields in public and prison buildings. The hypothesis was also naturally the one to capture the popular fancy. Some obstinate persons still cling to the once common view, but the great majority of the people have long since dismissed the derivation as belonging wholly to the realm of imagination. There is thus left a choice of three. It must be confessed that Greenockians do not insist upon the acceptance of sunny place as the probable or most appropriate origin. With regard to the Mansion house theory, it has received but scant support and may be reckoned out of count. Little doubt is now entertained of the absolute fitness of the remaining solution offered. It is a fact that may startle the oldest inhabitant that the long stretch of foreshore now occupied by docks, quays, and shipyards disclosed in its state of nature lovely sandy coves and gravelly capes.

That there also have been variants in spelling will excite no astonishment. The changes and developments in the spoken and written word these two or three hundred years are the delight of the student of philology. Early Acts of Parliament printed the name as Grinok, Greenhok, Grinock, Greenhoke, Greinnoek, later as Greinok, while old Presbyterial records had it as Grenok, and it was commonly so spelt until 1700, when the change to Greenock was finally effected and the idea of the green oak began to take shape in the public mind. The name of Crawforddyke, abbreviated to Cartsdyke from the conjunction of Crawforddyke and Cartsburn, is believed to have arisen from the conformation of the early harbour, which was set in a deep bay in the centre of which the Superior built a long quay or dyke. In the Scots Act, 1682, the orthography is Cartesburn and Cartesburne.

Feudal Authority

The Original Charter

Greenock was raised to a Burgh of Barony by virtue of a Charter of 1635, which was confirmed by the Scots Parliament in 1641, to John Schaw and Helen Houstoun, his spouse. Previous to this all the powers of jurisprudence by which the town was governed were vested in the full authority of the family of the Superior, and a black hole or the jugs in the Mansion house were all the terrors of the law which could be pointed at to overawe offenders. Crawforddyke (according to Weir) was erected into a Burgh of Barony by Charles II in 1669, the Charter being granted in favour of Thomas Crawford of Cartsburn. Authorities are at variance with reference to both of these Charters and to the powers and privileges conferred by them. It has been argued that the real foundation of Greenock as town and port was by Act of Parliament in 1670, ratified in 1681. Ramsay, in "Views of Renfrewshire", says that the only privilege conferred by the Charter of 1635 was the liberty of holding at Greenock a weekly market on Fridays and two yearly Fairs. George Crawford, third son of the first Baron of Crawforddyke, gives the date of Greenock erection as about the year 1642, and Ramsay states that Crawforddyke was erected a Burgh of Barony in 1633, that it possessed a pier, and that it was of more importance than Greenock; while Robertson, who continued Crawford's "History of Renfrewshire", says that Crawforddyke was erected in 1636, about forty years before Greenock. Williamson pertinently points out that this assertion was made on the erroneous assumption that 1685 was the date of Greenock Charter, instead of 1635. He also states that there can be no reasonable doubt that the Charter of 1642 was that which contained the legal erection of the Burgh of Barony of Crawforddyke, not a Charter of 1633.

Glasgow Opposition

On the whole, so far as the dispute relates to Greenock, the testimony of Williamson is most reliable. It receives strong confirmation from other sources. In December, 1633, Glasgow intimated to Dumbarton that John Schaw

“was attempting to get Greenock erected into a Burgh of Barony, with a weekly market and two yearly Fairs, and to have it constituted a free port, with customs, tolls, and dock mails.” This attempt both burghs determined to resist, and a communication was sent to Renfrew, another Royal Burgh, to join in the opposition. The ground of opposition was that, while Greenock might be created a Burgh of Barony, it should have no right to enjoy liberties belonging to free Royal Burghs, nor should it pretend to any right to the Customs of the water of the Clyde and its duties in any sort. This stands out as one of the many early instances of the anxious and resolute efforts by Glasgow and other burghs to stop the infant growth of Greenock, and prevent it from taking its due place as one of the ports and coast communities of the Clyde. Happily, the efforts were unsuccessful. Charles I, on June 5, 1635, “granted a Charter to John Schaw of Greenock and Helen Houstoun, his spouse, and longest liver of them in conjunct fee and life-rent, and their heirs hale, of the lands of Wester Greenock, and erected the town or village of that name into a free Burgh of Barony, to be called the Burgh of Greenock, with all the usual privileges and immunities belonging to any free Burgh of Barony within the kingdom.” A Burgh of Barony was designated “a corporation consisting of inhabitants of a determinable tract of ground within the Barony erected by the king, and subject to the government of Magistrates.” The position and influence of those Magistrates in town affairs were for a lengthened period of little more than a nominal character. It was the Bailie of Barony, appointed by the Superior, who was the chief and responsible administrator on his behalf, and looked after the adjustment of weights and measures, Government cess, minister's stipend, schoolmaster's salary, assessment for the poor, funds for repairing the Kirk, repairing the clock, etc.

New Charters

Another Royal Charter was granted in 1670 and ratified in 1681, in favour of Mr. Schaw and of John Schaw younger, his son, the first Sir John, in life-rent and fee, by which latter Charter various privileges were conferred on father and son, as Barons of Greenock, and on the inhabitants, of buying and selling wine, brandy, and other articles of foreign trade. It also gave the Baron power to elect Bailies and other officers, but he retained no further right over the Magistrates, and could not, as before, remove them from office during the year.

Rise of Popular Opinion

No additional greatly effective change in the relations of Superior and people took place until well on in the eighteenth century. Naturally enough there was a certain amount of discontent among the inhabitants, occasional disputes as to the application of the local funds, the feuars and others holding the quite just view that as the money was largely their own they ought to have a voice in the dispensing of it and in administering the business of the harbours. Sir John Schaw is said to have for a time demurred to this claim, but finally to have conceded to the feuars a part in the control of the funds, a decision given effect to in the Charter of 1741.

This Charter, dated January 30, 1741, gave to feuars and sub-feuars power to meet yearly and choose nine managers of the public funds arising from a voluntary assessment upon all malt grinded by them at Sir John's mill at Wester Greenock. The names of the first town managers are not known for certain, but they may have been the same as those of 1743, who were John Anderson, John Hood, John Hyndman, Robert Donald, James Watt (father of the inventor), Alexander Drummond, and Gabriel Mathie. The Baron Bailie had the right of sitting and voting with them, and of calling, convening, and presiding at all meetings. In this Charter Sir John gave liberty to meet when most convenient to appoint “of the most wise, substantial, and best qualified to be managers and administrators of the public funds, for the support, public use, and benefit of the Burgh only.” But those powers, because of their limited character, gave incomplete satisfaction. It appeared to the feuars that the Charter offered little more than permission to tax themselves. Many of them declined to pay the assessment, and consequently the funds did not fully meet the requirements of the harbours and other needed improvements. A supplementary Charter was granted ten years later, three years prior to which date there had been passed what was known as the Jurisdiction Act, by which the powers of Barons had been defined.

Municipal

The Civic Birth

The Municipal State

It is here, in this period and aspect of her history, that we are first brought into close touch with the soul of the town. One may rightly question whether in the kingdom there is a more conspicuous example of a place of any great importance having, in a clearly measurable space, uprisen from a small and almost indeterminate group of human units to be a centre become famous through its achievements in industry and commerce. Less than 300 years ago Greenock was not even an entity that could be described by any rule or method of dimension. Shut in by the barren moors and hills to the south, to the north hemmed by the inhospitable sea, with neither broad cornfields, nor coal, nor any other of the riches of the earth wherewith to found great enterprises or raise the inhabitants to a level of affluence, Greenock made her way from the rudimentary state to a place of eminence through the indomitable spirit that makes the most of an unpromising environment and the sheer force of character that overcomes the forbidding obstacles to success.

First Local Act

The municipal life of Greenock began in fact with the two Charters and the first local Act of Parliament of 1751. The earlier of these Charters went on to say that “owing to the great increase of the town it had become necessary that

the police and government should be put under proper regulations, and that there should be a perpetual succession of a competent number of the inhabitants or burgesses chosen, with Bailies, Treasurer, Clerk, and Officers of Court, for the constant management of the funds or common good, administration of justice, and for maintaining peace and good order." It granted power to elect twelve managers, the Baron Bailie to have a cumulative jurisdiction with the Bailies to be chosen. But although this Charter was registered in the Books of Council and Session for preservation on April 12, 1751, it never came into operation, and neither it nor the 1741 Charter was relied upon in any judicial proceedings. The last Charter, September 2, 1751, repeated the other almost word for word, with the variation that it was so far assimilated to the Act of Parliament, passed earlier in the year, as to authorise the election of nine instead of twelve Councillors, styled Trustees, with elections in September instead of May.

An influential citizen in 1825 publicly expressed the opinion that "this Charter must have been the gift of one who possessed no ordinary mind, since it was the voluntary surrender of that power and influence to which all men so fondly cling, and the unbought and absolute grant of rights and franchises of the highest value in favour of a whole community, manifesting on the part of him who granted it a liberality of disposition and magnanimity of principle of which there are not many examples, whose name, therefore, must be proportionally respected by all who have the honour to claim kindred with it." "The passing of the local Act," wrote another citizen in a more modified tone, "and the great increase of trade, forced upon Sir John the necessity of either taking a more direct responsibility upon himself for the management of public affairs or of bestowing more power upon the Trustees nominated under his first Charter, who were the feuars or owners of property on his estate. He decided on the latter and wiser alternative, and gave two additional Charters in 1751, the last continuing in force until the Reform Act of 1833." Williamson refers to this Charter as a valuable measure of what would now be styled Home Rule. It rendered the burgh virtually independent of the Superior, and it conferred on the inhabitants' power to elect and remove their municipal rulers. The Charter disappeared, and was said to have been forwarded to London about 1773 while one of the Harbour Bills was being promoted. There have been printed copies, all differing in material points. By the Act powers were given to levy a compulsory assessment on ale and beer for the purpose of raising money for cleansing and improving the harbours and piers, building a new church, town-house, poor and school houses, market places, a public clock, etc. The Act continued in force for 31 years and on its expiry an attempt to renew the assessment on ale and beer was unsuccessful.

Feudal Rights

Referring to the origin and progress of territorial and heritable jurisdiction, Williamson (himself a legal authority) says: "These rights were the necessary outcome of the feudal system, and were in former times possessed by the vassals of the Crown in every part of the kingdom. They were not only productive of the most grievous and cruel oppression to the people, but utterly incompatible with the due authority of law and regular government. They subsisted and continued in force in Scotland longer than perhaps in any other countries. After the suppression of the 1745 Rebellion the expediency and necessity of putting an end at once to the power and influence resulting from such jurisdiction culminated, and led to the introduction of at least three Acts of Parliament. The first was the Statute 20 Geo. II. cap. 43, which enacted that all heritable jurisdiction of Judiciary, and all regalities and heritable Baileries within Scotland were abrogated, taken away, and totally dissolved and extinguished. As to the jurisdiction of Barons, it was enacted that they should exercise no jurisdiction in capital cases, nor in any criminal cases other than assaults and for which a fine not exceeding 20s sterling could be imposed; or in civil cases, or their Bailies, where the debt or damage should exceed 40s sterling, other than the rents, multures, etc., due to them."

Town Records

Greenock Town Council records extant begin with the fragments of a meeting held presumably in July, 1751. Nothing in this connection exists prior to the appointment of managers under the last Charter. The minute book, otherwise in good order, carefully kept, and showing remarkably legible penmanship, retains in front the ragged edges of several pages that had been torn off, a form of mutilation or abstraction from which also the still earlier records of the Old West Kirk Session suffered. This first Council book is otherwise consecutively intact until January 2, 1762, at which date the record is broken off, through purloining or destruction to the extent of pages, an act indeed carried forward to the portion of minutes in the second volume on to June 8, 1763.

Original Council

The following are the *ipsissima verba* of the opening fragments: - "Therefore the Tax laid on by said Act should take place from that day and no sooner Betwixt and which date the Inhabitants will have sufficient time to Brew up all the Malt from which the fifteen shillings Scots' upon the Sack has been exacted in terms of the Contract with Sir John Schaw which contract now ceases upon the commencement of the said Act of Parliament. Signed by Ja. Warden, merchant; Ja. Watt, merchant; Gabriel Mathie, cooper and merchant; Nath. Wilson, surgeon; John Alexander, writer and factor for Lord Cathcart; Robt. Donald, James Butcher, Wm. Gammell, and Robt. Rae, merchants. John Paton, clerk." This list was adopted without opposition at a general meeting of feuars and sub-feuars in September 9, 1751, to comprise the original Town Council. Robert Donald and James Butcher were appointed Bailies for two years, and William Gammell Treasurer for one year. According to the minutes of this date, the Magistrates and Councillors were to "have power in all time coming of holding Courts weekly and oftener if necessary for administrating justice, of seizing, arresting, imprisoning, or otherwise punishing transgressors and delinquents

conform to the laws of the land, with power to manage the fends and common good presently belonging or that any time hereafter shall belong to the town and burgh, and with power also to make rules, laws, and statutes for the advantage of the burgh and maintaining good order and peace." There were three different characters in which the Magistrates and Council acted: first, as Bailies and Councillors governing the town and administering its funds - the common good; second, as Trustees under the Act of Parliament and in conjunction with nine other feuars, sub-feuars, or burgesses (householders who contributed annually to the tax), managing the revenue arising from the assessment on the rents for paving, lighting, and watching the town and supplying it with water; and third, as Trustees for improving the harbours and managing the harbour funds, under the surveillance of Commissioners, some of whom were expressly nominated by Act of Parliament and others appointed annually by the ship owners of Greenock and Glasgow.

Early Difficulties

The duties of the Trustees were from the beginning early harassing and not easy of performance. Town Proper affairs were in comparative chaos, due chiefly doubtless to the municipal poverty and the almost exclusive demands made by the harbours upon the labours and finances of the community. It is plainly disclosed that citizens of substance and capacity continued to take part in affairs. On occasions, from petty diversities of opinion, but more often from disabilities through pressure of private business, there were resignations of Magistrates that brought about temporary confusion; but no great difficulty seems to have been experienced in filling the vacancies with a number of men of talent, time, and not seldom means as well to place at the disposal of the inhabitants. In September, 1757, when a vacancy occurred through the retiral of James Butcher on account of old age, public intimation was made by town officers affixing copies "at and upon the Mercate Cross, other public places, on both church doors, and reading the same over in time of the congregation skailing therefrae ane Sunday." In the following year Robert Donald resigned, and the remaining Trustees were enjoined to think of a proper qualified person to supply the vacancy. Again, in 1761, "there are no Bailies, whereby the inhabitants are at a considerable loss by not having justice administered."

Fashioning Affairs

It was by slow degrees that the vital questions of cleansing, street formation and upkeep, water supply, and sanitation generally could be faced with anything like method or good effect. Financial complications arose at once in connection with the ingathering of the assessment and difficulty in getting persons to collect it. Within a few weeks the feuars were complaining of the hardships inflicted by the tax, and a petition from a general meeting to the Commissioners requesting a concession as at Glasgow, Irvine, and elsewhere resulted in a reduction to one shilling sterling on each barrel of ale collected. Complaints of non-payment became so rife that £1000 had to be borrowed from the New Banking Company of Glasgow on the security of the fund, the two pennies Scots being mortgaged until the loan was re-paid, the Trustees and their heirs holding themselves personally bound, and the tax had to be paid into the bank until the loan was redeemed. On the credit with this bank becoming exhausted early in 1754, and the Trustees being unwilling to extend it, inquiries were made at local sources for £100 to cover outlays on cellars and breasts. A willing lender was found in William Andrew, shipmaster, Crawfurdsdyke, who had a further sum of £50 which he gave up on request.

Food Control

Control of food and of food merchants was the subject of considerable anxiety, glaring breaches of regulations and local customs having to be rigorously dealt with. The practice of slaughtering cattle and exposing meat for sale in the High Street was rightly regarded as a great nuisance. For want of a flesh market and slaughterhouse the inhabitants were imposed upon by the butchers. In 1763 it was resolved to build a slaughterhouse "upon the south-side of the lane leading from the (new) Church towards the Seceding Meeting-house." It was built in the following year. Butchers were ordered to sell their meat in the market, and were threatened with prosecution in the event of their killing in their own houses or of going through the town selling. Visitors were appointed to go round regularly to see that no blown meat was offered for sale. Some years later it was reported that there was no assize of bread in the town, "so that the bakers are at liberty to make bread of what weight and quality they please, to the great prejudice of the inhabitants." There were also complaints of a scarcity of meal, "whereby the poor are greatly distressed, and although cargoes of meal are daily imported. There is no appearance of this calamity being at an end, as the meal is bought up by other people from the country so soon as it comes in, and none laid up for supplying the town." There was a meal mob riot in 1785 composed chiefly of women whose families were in great want.

The Trustees joined with the Kirk Sessions to buy up cargoes of meal, but "there being no money in the treasurer's hands to answer this, and the Trustees are owing to the New Kirk Session £50 by bond beside some bygone interest, and the Session being willing to lend a further sum so as to make the whole £262, it is agreed to borrow it, buy up the first cargo of meal and lay it into the public cellars, to be sold to the inhabitants when there is no other meal in the place."

On a subsequent occasion a special meeting was called on similar complaints of a scarcity. A conference with the meal men to find the amount in town showed that "they have only 161 bolls, that there are 200 bolls in the warehouses which have been sold by Bailie Moody to Peter Auld in Glasgow, besides 300 bolls of corn which are

being put into gabbarts to send to people in Glasgow who had bought it, which last quantity on board of the lighters the Magistrates have stopped until they have the sense of the meeting." This was approved of pending opinion of counsel, and it was decided that the 200 bolls sold by Bailie Moody should be disposed of to the inhabitants on two days a week while it lasted, in no greater quantities than two pecks to each family.

Subsidies

So recently as the beginning of the nineteenth century the authorities were subsidising individual fishermen with the view of securing a regular and plentiful supply of fish for the inhabitants. On a statement in 1805 by Mr Hugh Crawford, a late Chief Magistrate, regarding John Welsh, from Torbay, who supplied the town with flat fish, the Council gave him ten guineas as an encouragement. In 1813 the Council considered the propriety of encouraging the white fishery in the firth, and were of opinion that some experienced fishers should be brought to the town. One of these men came from Ireland, for whom there was a proposal to purchase a proper fishing boat and equipment, or to give a protecting bounty, but it was accounted more consistent "for individuals to subscribe for the purchase, and that the Corporation after a year's trial should give such a bounty as the importance of the subject and the exertions used might warrant and require." Again, in 1815, forty guineas were granted to Dugald Ferguson as a premium in consequence of purchase and employment of a smack in the trawl fishing for supplying the town. It continued to be the custom up to the middle of last century for the Magistrates to exercise a close personal supervision over food supplies. As an instance it may be noted that in July, 1830, all the fresh butter brought into the town for retail was taken to the Council Chambers to ascertain if it was of the legal weight. Tests of weight were also made of the wheaten bread.

Town Chambers

Housing the Council

It was some time before the Council were able to settle down in a house of their own. In the days of joint ecclesiastical, feudal, and citizen rule the meetings were usually held in the vestry or other room of the Kirk, a privilege that could not be expected to continue under the new regime and the consequent cleavage in the administration of secular and religious affairs.

A frequent place of meeting previous to and under the Charter of 1741 was at first a large room of the inn situated in what was then known as High (Shaw) Street, kept by John McLaren, the public entrance to which was from the east side of Cross-Shore Street. A stone placed in the front towards Shaw Street indicates the date (1716) of the building, and it was one of three or four houses that were there prior to 1720. There was a sundial on the western corner, and a passage to the inn in Shaw Street from the public prison. In front of the prison there was a cross and the date 1669 in white pebbles. Councillors were clearly not at all fastidious in the matter of premises in which to transact public business. For committee meetings, at any rate, and on occasions of special civic functions, they were partial to certain of the taverns and hostelries, a custom that was not only followed in the eye of the people, but formally noted in the records, with charges against the town funds for a judicious amount of liquid refreshment. The treasurer's books for 1749, for instance, show a claim for room and liquor in John McLaren's Inn "To cash paid John. McLaren for punch at Council meeting, 2s 6d; and others, at various dates". – "Expenses of Bailie Rae and Bailie Watt in Jean Gordon's about Council business, 6d;" "By a Council meeting in John Clark's, and signing the minutes, 1s 4d;" "As Bailie Rae was buried yesterday, we had this day a Council meeting for proposing someone to fill the vacancy, 2s 4d;" "By paid expenses with James Watt and James Graham at settling the treasurer's account, is 2d;" "By expenses with James Watt and John Paton in getting the two pennys from Mrs Monroe, 1s 2d;" "By expenses with the Council at qualifying the Bailies, 5s;" "Paid for punch after examination of Latin School." In 1783 the Committee of the Public Library, after the institution of the Greenock Library, met in a public house. It was suggested that the spring water of the Long Well mixed kindly with the spirits of the taprooms and taverns of McDougall, Mrs Reid, Mrs Alexander, and a number of others.

A Modest Home

The first mention of municipal premises to be found in the extant Council minutes is in relation to the need of Post Office accommodation. The date is August, 1753, and the statement is that Lord Cathcart had interested himself in having a postbag at Greenock, and had recommended John Paton as post master, "which would be a saving to the town in respect that they behoved otherwise to gratify him for his services [as clerk] in the town's business." Part of a little shed originally built for the reception and preservation of the water engine was agreed to be fitted up as a Post-Office, "whereat the Bailies and Council might also meet on occasions to doe business, and likewise the Bailies might hold their weekly Courts there till better be provided." This ground belonged to Lord Cathcart, and was situate on the east side of New (now William) Street.

A Municipal Building

It was 1764 before any decided step was taken towards the erection of a Town House. The Council then formally concluded "that it would be for the interest of the community to have a Town House, in which there would be a place for the public meetings of the Council, . . . and that there is already a great deal of money subscribed by sundry inhabitants for carrying on a work of this kind upon condition of their having the liberty to hold other meetings, of the Masons' Lodge, which subscriptions might be lost unless the Town House is set about building." It was resolved to feu a piece of ground from Lord Cathcart "in the street leading from the Square to the Long Vennel,

on the same terms as other people paid for ground adjoining." At this meeting a plan was submitted, with some improvements by James Watt, contractors were advertised for in the "Glasgow Journal", and the contract was fixed in May, 1765, with James Wallace for £240.

Masonic Privilege

With reference to the conditions imposed upon the Council on behalf of the outside subscribers, the following excerpt from the feu-right by Lord Cathcart gives a precise explanation: "Providing always, as it is expressly provided and declared, that after the said Town House is built and finished the Society of Masons called the Greenock Kilwinning Lodge shall in all time coming thereafter have the liberty and privilege of keeping their meetings in the hall to be in the said House for their ordinary and usual business, providing such meetings shall not interfere with the public meetings of the said Magistrates and Town Council and their foresaid. As also, that the young people in the said town of Greenock shall in all time coming have the liberty and privilege of keeping assemblies in the said hall and rooms of the same, where such assemblies do not interfere with the said public meetings or with the meetings of the said Lodge. And that in consideration of the sums advanced by the said Lodge and several of the inhabitants of the said town of Greenock towards the erecting and building of the said Town House."

The subject of the Masonic privilege came above board again during the erection of the new Municipal Buildings in 1879. On a claim being made by the Kilwinning Lodge, a special committee of the Town Council reported that the creation of a heritable right in the buildings might prove inconvenient and burdensome. There was a suggestion that a payment should be made in discharge of whatever rights the Lodge might have, and it was stated on their behalf that if the matter could not be settled to the satisfaction of the Provost and Magistrates other than by compensation they were prepared to take £500 in full of their rights. This special committee agreed to offer £400, or the sum to remain with the Council, without interest, during such period as the Lodge, with consent of the Council, should continue to use the Council Hall for their meetings. The alternative was accepted. Some years previous the Lodge had refused £300.

This Town House served for 116 years. The hall was occasionally used as a ball-room and ordinarily as a news-room, until the Exchange Buildings in Cathcart Street were erected in 1814, when the members removed and the Magistrates took full possession. For about 20 years prior to the building of Bank Street Hall in 1834 the Sheriff and Justice of Peace Courts were held in this Town Hall. The lower flat of the hall was until 1811 used as a Town Clerk's Office, and offices for Clerk and Fiscal were then built on the east side behind the hall.

Town Hall

At the middle of last century there was a general desire for a larger hall, similar to Glasgow City Hall but higher in the roof, to accommodate about 2600 persons. This was effected partially by reconstruction, in 1858, at a cost of £1700. Three years later an organ was installed at £720, of which the public subscribed £289, and Mr Geo. T. Poulter was appointed organist at £10 a year with fees. The Choral Society offered a contribution of £100 with a binding resolution about use and charges, but the arrangements fell through, and the organ became the absolute property of the Corporation.

Fuller Powers

Municipalisation Act

The second local Act was applied for in 1773, when in relation to town affairs it was stated that the inhabitants and shipping at certain seasons of the year had much difficulty in getting fresh and wholesome water, that the streets were ill-paved and not lighted, nor a watch kept for preventing disorders in the night time. The ordinary revenue could not defray the prospective expenditure on all the necessary improvements. In connection with this Bill there was one of the earliest movements on the part of feuars, traders, and corporations towards a fuller representation in town management. The contention, as set forth in a resolution to the Council, was that, "considering the increase of the town and the mode of government by Charter established, it would tend to the utility, concord, and happiness of the town were the number of Council and managers of the funds of the feuars increased, as is usual in towns of such importance, and that there will be little or no opposition to whatever reasonable tax is to be applied for." In the opinion of the Council this subject was quite foreign to the purpose for which a committee of feuars, etc., had been appointed, and "tended only to enflame the minds of the people and to create a jealousy of the managers and the present Council." It was demanded also "that nine Trustees should be chosen by the owners of shipping to meet with the Magistrates, but the Council unanimously resolved that no other Trustees could be admitted into the Bill," agreeing, however, to the appointment of nine Commissioners for adjusting the accounts respecting the tax on shipping. The new Bill was passed in April, 1773. A concerted appeal with a similar aim was made in 1792. The Trades' House convened the delegates from the Incorporations of tailors, weavers, hammermen, shoemakers, and coopers, and passed a resolution "that as Greenock is a trading town composed chiefly of craftsmen, they have the undoubted right to be represented in all assessments laid upon the inhabitants." The Council replied that the resolutions were "evidently calculated to occasion dissensions between the Council and the inhabitants, because it must be evident to every person of any understanding that although this Trades' House was incorporated by Royal Charter they would have no right to interfere with the town funds under the management of the Magistrates and Council by Act of Parliament. The unfree trade and ministers' stipends are laid on the inhabitants by the deacons of

the different trades and other persons appointed by the Magistrates and Council, and surely a fairer and more equitable way cannot be devised for assessing according to the circumstances of the inhabitants."

A Lull in Affairs

No other matters of first importance in Town Proper affairs occupied the attention of the Council from the passing of the 1773 Act to the end of the century. Amongst the incidental items is an allusion to the American War, on which the following resolution was passed: - "Considering that it is the duty of every community to aid and strengthen the hands of the Government in the present situation of affairs, the Council agree to give £3 3s to every able-bodied seaman, £2 2s to every ordinary seaman, and £1 is to every man residing in the parishes of Greenock and Inverkip who enters with the recruiting Captain at Greenock, or with any other officer of the impress voluntarily." With one exception, so far as the records show, it was the questions of the streets, cleansing, lighting, and water that filled up the tale of constant worry. A contract for street cleaning was entered into in 1779, not to exceed £15 a year, and in 1781 we find that the rubbish was being allowed to lie about after it was gathered. Then in 1786 a committee was appointed to "agree with some person to light the lamps." Contracts were made to repair and uphold "the road leading to Inverkip as far as Corsehill, Gourrock Road, the Herring Street road, the Sugarhouse road up to the Long Vennel, and the road to Mr. Scott's up to the Slaughterhouse." The fact that the salary of the Master of Works was £45 a year tells us just how much was then doing in the way of town extension or of municipal schemes. Of this £45 the Harbour Trust paid £25, the Town Proper £15, and the Burying Ground Authorities £5; and for these payments the official superintended the quays and the town and took charge of the warehouses and burying ground.

Interludes

Councillors had their lighter and pleasanter moments in the conduct of business. An application by the masons employed on the cellars at the East Quay asked drink money for every lintel and arch on the job, "as was usual in the case," and the Council gave a couple of guineas for the thirsty throats. For the appointment of town drummers applicants had to produce certificates of moral character, go through ordeals of trial in rat-tatting, agree not to keep a public-house in Greenock, and submit to the condition that they must beat through the town during the course of the year at five in the morning and nine in the evening. In 1791 the cutter on the Mid Kirk steeple failing to respond to the changes in the wind, the Bailies were authorised to have it removed and a cock substituted; but this was not long allowed to remain unrebuked and the emblem of the port restored.

That there was a growing sense of dignity amongst the personnel of the Council, and a desire to have some external show and expression of it, is proved by the presentation, in September, 1797, by Councillor James Blair, distiller, of a gold chain and medal for the Senior Magistrate. In the following year the Council similarly decorated the junior Magistrate. It was nearly a century later, the number of Council dignitaries having meanwhile more than trebled, before chains were bestowed on four Bailies and a Dean of Guild, three more following not many years after.

One other subject of side interest of a less agreeable nature was the drinking prevalent on the flyboats plying between Greenock and Glasgow. The Council called up owners and masters, and admonished them to reform the management of the boats, to abstain from the immoderate use of spirituous liquor, to prevent such misuse of it by the passengers, and to put a stop to obscene and improper language on board.

Magisterial Mien

In November, 1805, "Bailie Hugh Crawford had a correspondence with Moss, a player, regarding his intention to perform within the town under the permission of Sir John Shaw Stewart's Baron Bailie. The Council united in returning thanks to Mr. Crawford for having by his prohibition to perform under this authority supported the dignity of the Magistracy; but by reason of the distress to which Moss was reduced by this situation the meeting recommend that the Magistrate in his wisdom license him on his respectful petition to play in the town for a limited period and under such restriction as he might deem necessary, and under the condition also of his making a suitable apology public."

A still more striking illustration of the jealous regard for Magisterial dignity, and at the same time of the Council's solicitude for the good of the common people, was given at the opening in 1800 of a new market in Cross-Shore Street for the exhibition and sale of garden stuffs, fish, eggs, poultry, etc. The inhabitants were publicly enjoined to deal at this market on risk of being fined or otherwise punished for contempt of authority.

Financial Embarrassments

The exception to these minor matters was the subject of finance, which was a source of constant embarrassment. Calls for money that could not easily be provided were coming in from various quarters. In the closing decades of the century the collectors of the cess for the Royal Burghs were literally dunning the Local Authority for arrears, and on an occasion threatening that "unless the eight months' cess and missive dues, amounting to 424 pounds Scots, were remitted by 24th inst. an order of quartering would be made against the town." To prevent this, a Council committee, with delegates from the Incorporations of coopers, weavers, shoemakers, and tailors, proceeded to stent the inhabitants. This process of stenting (or stinting) was resorted to periodically for the purpose of raising

money to meet the regular exigencies of expenditure. With regard to the Royal Burgh charges, which were felt to be a considerable burden on the town, the Council believed that they had a substantial grievance against the taxing authority. In 1819, on a revision of the tax roll with the view of adjusting the proportions payable by the various burghs of the annual sum of £200 for the privilege of foreign trade, Greenock calculated their share at £36 3s 1d. A memorial on the subject referred to a proposal that successful Burghs of Barony enjoying foreign trade should share the burden of making up the defaults of decayed towns, and complained that the deficiency had been laid on two or three towns which had hitherto paid their proportions, and the tax on Greenock increased to double the former sum. The chief grounds on which the appeal was founded were stated thus:

"1. The independent trade of Greenock, owing to the decease or removal of many principal capitalists, has fallen off considerably of late years in all its branches, which can be distinctly proved by the official documents of the revenue. 2. In consequence of the improvement of the navigation of the river the whole coasting trade of the Clyde, which in former years resorted to the port and benefited the inhabitants of Greenock, and also a portion of the foreign trade, have removed to Glasgow. 3. Much of the registered tonnage, and of course of the foreign trade, of Greenock belongs in reality to merchants resident in Glasgow, who are entitled in virtue of the privileges of the Royal Burgh to bring their ships freely to Greenock without subjecting them to pay for the benefit which in fact is received by a privileged place. Thus the augmentation in the present circumstances of the town is excessive."

This had no immediate effect. In 1844 the Council took the strong step of petitioning against the continuance of the Convention of Royal Burghs, as they were satisfied it was not of public utility. The Corporation funds were burdened by an annual contribution of £72, "with relief to the extent of £8 against Paisley, for, as it was called, the privilege of foreign trade."

On this subject of finance also there arose reports of irregularities in connection with the town funds, and a demand was made for the centralisation of collection. It was alleged that amongst the items chargeable against these funds were the ground and harbour rents due to Lord Cathcart and the landlord of Greenock, interest on borrowed money, salaries to public officers, repairs on harbours and public works, ministers' additional stipends, and charges for the town unfree trade. A newly elected body of Magistrates and Council in 1793 found affairs "in disorder and subject to various abuses and heavy expenditure in management." A special committee reported that "the disadvantage to the town had been not so much from the conduct of those employed as from the system on which they acted, the funds being branched out among various agents with high salaries, to the total exclusion of economy. The business would therefore have to be concentrated in one hand."

The funds proper of Greenock at this time were its ground property and buildings, yielding a considerable annual rent, and its taxes for water and light. In 1800 the debt on the various Trusts amounted as follows: -Aggregate town debt, £9669 2s 4½d; due to that fund by sundries, £4560 10s 2d; real debt, £5108 12s 2½d. Harbour debt, £5487; due to harbour, £1398 1s 10d; real debt, £4088 18s 2d. Water debt, £1325 9s 9d due, etc., £459 19s 2d; real debt, £866 10s 7d. In 1803 the town's total debts were £17,532 1s 9½d. It was stated that the town was then paying for sheds at the various quays, in which connection a committee advised that it would be but fair that the Harbour Trustees should pay this value, and that the amount should go in extinction of the town debt to the harbours.

Increasing Responsibility

Throughout the opening quarter of the new century, with a growing trade and population, the conduct of civic affairs naturally became more onerous and absorbing. The spirit of rivalry and partisanship - entered more extensively into the discussion of local questions, and of national as well, to the vital importance of which the conscience of the country was awakening. The housing of the people did not yet, nor for long years after, greatly trouble the minds of the authorities. But the cleansing of the town and, sanitation generally, street formation and upkeep, the policing of the burgh and harbours, water supply and lighting, and all the common amenities of a community that was still in a half chaotic state, were matters that called for constant consideration. Above all, the harbours and the need that shipping accommodation should keep pace with the times engrossed attention and became the bone of ceaseless controversy between opposing interests.

Contentions

Few episodes in the history of the town have occasioned so great disturbance of the public mind as the internecine warfare that raged between parties from 1809 to 1825. The community was literally divided into two conflicting camps on the question of town management. A Parliamentary Bill of 1810 was said to have been the cause of the first real contest for the Magistracy, and virtually for the executive power of the community. The opposition objected to the mode of procedure as irregular and also to several of the clauses, certain of which, relating to the establishment of an Academy, admittedly premature or too costly for the times, were abandoned, and the Bill passed. Further signs of dissension and displeasure were shown on the promotion of a Bill in 1817, but no effective combined action was taken, and the Bill passed without opposition. The situation was aggravated by the introduction of the question of the relative rights of property in the seats of the Mid Kirk, the seat-holders, regarding a proposal to deprive them of their valuable possession as unjust and oppressive, making common cause against the Magistrates. At the ensuing election a keen struggle resulted in the defeat of the party in power.

The Reds and the Blues

The spirit of discord was intensified also by what is still referred to as the political battle of the Reds (Tories) and Blues (Liberals), which arose out of a difference of opinion amongst and the members of the Reading or Coffee Room as to who were proprietors and who were not. The Town Reading-Room, Exchange Buildings, had been erected chiefly as an Assembly Room. The majority of the proprietors were Tories; the larger body of subscribers, on the other hand, were Liberals, and consequently had the greater say in the management. Owing to the influx of Radical opinion the proprietors took occasion to insist upon the exclusion of what they regarded as objectionable newspapers. This led to the resignation of 263 subscribers, who left in a body and established themselves temporarily in the White Hart Hotel, and subsequently built the Coffee Room in Cathcart Square. The Magistrates came to be identified with the seceding members, their opponents with those who remained. Almost every inhabitant was a party to the dispute, hundreds of pounds were spent in litigation, and the town set by the ears with dissensions, the effects of which persisted for years after a settlement had been reached.

John Galt, in "The Ayrshire Legatees," by the pen of Miss Rachel Pringle to Miss Molly Glencairn, makes the following pleasantly satirical allusion to the event:

"The people of this town are a very busy and clever race, but much given to litigation. My brother says that they are the greatest benefactors to the Outer House, and that their lawsuits are the most amusing and profitable before the Courts, being less for the purpose of determining what is right than what is lawful. The chambermaid of the inn where we lodge pointed out to me, on the opposite side of the street, a magnificent edifice erected for balls, but the subscribers have resolved not to allow any dancing till it is determined by the Court of Session to whom the seats and chairs belong, as they were brought from another house where the assemblies were formerly held. I have heard of a lawsuit compared to a country dance, in which after a great bustle and regular confusions the parties stand still, all tired, just on the spot where they began; but this is the first time that the judges of the land have been called on to decide when a dance may begin."

Weapon of the Pen

Two specimens from the profuse literary arsenal of the period throw a flood of light on the spirit and character of the warfare. Reporting on the opposition to the Bill of 1809, Bailie Hugh Crawford wrote that it had been "engendered in the purest malignity, and the personal resentment embodied and spread itself in every direction. It presumptuously demonstrated itself in the more particular machinations of a majority of the feuars, and was certainly led on by motives the most improper. Sir John Shaw Stewart, under the influence of a policy the most illiberal, also thought proper to obtrude himself against us, and the Sheriff of the county, not, I believe, more for the regard of his own interest than at the unnatural instigation of those parties, came forward with the utmost exertion in his power to embarrass our proceedings, and at last, when seriously embarked in our undertaking, we had to encounter opposition in all the virulence which could flow from a mass, however disposed in its original principles, yet combined on this occasion with most mischievous activity." This Bailie in the following year incurred the displeasure of a section of the inhabitants, who attacked his house with stones and brickbats; but according to an entry in the Council minutes the demonstration was believed to have been in revenge for his activity and determination in punishing offenders against the law and good order. The disturbance was so seriously regarded that a reward of one hundred guineas was offered for information that would lead to the arrest of the ringleaders.

The second literary specimen excels in the ferocity of its language: "Of late there have been issued in this town by a creature the most paltry and generally detested amongst us two pieces of doggerel rhyme which, viewed either in relation to their execution or spirit, are enough for ever to disgrace their author and the Church of which he is an official member. These rhymes are founded on a presumption not less false than calumnious. The wretch - the ungrateful, the bodily-deformed, and morally depraved wretch - who in his miserable rhymes has made so gratuitous, so utterly false an assumption is incapable by any affirmation from his polluted lips or filth-dropping pen of injuring a character far above the reach of his low malice. But he is supported by the issue of a pamphlet, and although this in its present shape is a great improvement upon the chaotic mass of miserable grammar and monstrous orthography which it at first presented, it has lost nothing of its base falsehood, its rancorous malevolence, and execrable manners. And what does this disgraceful compound of impudence, malice, and falsehood in substance contain when stripped of the low slang and ungrammatical verbiage of which it is almost wholly composed? Think not that the dressing up of thy scrawls by the prostituted hand of a young aspirant to the clerical office can throw any sanctity over proceedings so abominable!"

Election Fervour

The election of Magistrates in 1825, again, is memorable for the unique character of the proceedings and for a display of bitter partisanship. Interest and excitement, at first confined to the leaders and adherents of the contending camps, gradually extended to all classes of the community. The voting, which took place in the Town Hall, began on September 23 and went on from day to day until September 29. The sitting Magistrates were thrown out and the Reds returned to power. The chairman (Bailie James Ramsay) expressed a hope that the irritation and animosities that had so long separated and torn the community would now be forgotten. That this advice was not universally accepted we find from Weir, who wrote: "It is to be regretted that party spirit does not rest with these elections, but has often been the means of conveying strife and division into other societies and institutions where they should have nothing to do."

Greenock Sand Bank

In the intervals, of less pressing business the question of acquiring and utilising the sandbank from which the famous Clyde anchorage, the Tail of the Bank, derives its name, had periodically been exercising the minds of the authorities. As far back as 1792 it had occurred to the Magistrates that it would be a desirable improvement to acquire the bank, and at that time Bailie Garden was authorised to institute the requisite inquiries. A personal application was made by him to the Exchequer, but the matter remained in abeyance until in August, 1816, there was laid on the table of the Council meeting as Harbour Board a copy of the signature of the Barons of Exchequer for the gift. The Charter, granted in response to a petition from the Bailies and Town Council, is a lengthy document, Latin in the original, in the English translation running to about 3000 words of legal phrases, repetitions, and the ringing of verbal changes. The petition described the bank as being at the north-west of the West Harbour, and running across the bay in a south-easterly direction until it touches another point or opening situated to the east of Garvel Point called the Throughlet; and the petitioners asked the grant "for the purpose of building dykes upon said bank, and to that end of digging and gaining upon the same for the protection of the bay and harbours from the east and north winds, and for making it otherwise useful without destroying or injuring the navigation of the Clyde." His Majesty King George intimated in reply that the sandbank was "given, granted, and disposed, for ourselves and our Royal successors, and that he did heritably and irredeemably for ever confirm it to our lovelies, the two Bailies of the burgh of Greenock and said Town Council." In further detail the Charter continues that the sandbank is now given for the enlargement of the harbours of Greenock and the navigation of the river, to be held by the Bailies and Council and their successors in office for ever, . . . in free blench, farm, fee, and heritage for ever, by paying annually the sum of one penny Scots in the Town Hall of Greenock, if asked only."

The principal objects that obviously were in the minds of the petitioners had relation to the protection and the improvement of the harbours, but these were not the only aims or hopes built upon the acquisition of the property. Various were the ideas current, some not quite impracticable, some altogether fanciful, for its utilisation. It was suggested that, when dyked and secured from the inroads of the winds and tides, it might be made the site of a recreation or pleasure ground. The establishment of a battery was for a time regarded in the light of a serious proposition. Then it was half believed that a section could probably be laid off for villas or better-class dwellings for workmen's families. In a local periodical of 1817 a contributor wrote that "had the American war continued longer it was in contemplation to have raised a Martello tower on the lower extremity of the bank, midway across the river." John Galt's plan was "to make the bank an island, by sugar hogsheads-that is to say, by sinking a certain number filled with stones until a nucleus was formed always dry at full tide . . . Nature would do the rest."

In 1837, on the proposal of Provost Macfie, Mr. Hamilton, Master of Works, was sent to Holland to examine the manner of forming embankments there. On his return Mr. Hamilton submitted a short report which was remitted to the Harbour Committee for observations.

As to the nature of these observations, if any were made, neither the minutes of the Harbour Board nor of the Town Council contain a record. For many years the bank was a prolific mussel growing area, and until recent years cod and flat fish catches by line and later by trawling were by no means inconsiderable. Both industries are now at low ebb, chiefly for the reason that they were overdone, and nowadays one sees but an occasional boat employed in either way.

In all Harbour Bills subsequent to the date of the gift references to the sandbank were laid down in specific terms, care being taken, on the one hand, that the interests of Greenock harbours should be conserved, and on the other that nothing should be done that would injure or endanger the interests of other affected bodies, while adequate provision was made for the equitable settlement of differences that might arise between opposing river or port authorities. The Clyde Lighthouses Trust in 1912 proposed to take the bank compulsorily for the purposes of a Provisional Order, but on Greenock Corporation petitioning an amicable arrangement was arrived at.

Ownership

The Town Council and the Harbour Trust are at variance on the question of ownership. So lately as March, 1912, the secretary of the Trust wrote to the Council claiming the bank as their property. This it was resolved to deny, and a subcommittee of the Council was appointed to take any action considered desirable. In the existing state of things, with other affairs of greater importance to occupy attention, the dispute is allowed to remain at rest. The bank was named St. Quentin's Isle, in honour of Quentin Leitch, who had a great share in the work of influencing the Government.

Water Supply

Springs and Streamlets

From a very early date the need for a plentiful supply of water was under frequent discussion, and was now become a question of the first importance. Previous to the operation of draining for storage in reservoirs the supply was obtained from the many streams that run down the hillsides. In 1657 the Presbytery referred to the West Burn as a great water impassable in winter. So also were the Delling and Strone Burns, two others of the seven streams of Greenock, the remaining being Lady Burn, Crawford's or Carts Burn, Finnart Burn, and Glen Burn. Besides these sources of supply, which were in great measure used for sanitary purposes, wells for domestic service were

sunk at various parts of the town. The Long Well (Duff Street) was built prior to 1682, and was recovered on the removal of old houses under the Corporation Improvement scheme of 1877. This well was very deep, and the water of a rare good quality. Others, also deep, were sunk at the head of Broad Close, behind the old Tontine Hotel; in Open Shore; at the foot of Charles Street, the depth 40 ft.; while far into the second half of the nineteenth century there was a pump well at Cathcart Square. It is recorded that in 1771 Archibald Turner, shoemaker, offered to keep the waterworks in constant good order, and "to furnish the liquor necessary for that purpose," for £2 12s yearly. The offer was accepted on condition that Turner "kept both the waterworks in good order, and caused play of the same at the Kirk Burn every three months."

Formation of Waterworks

In 1773 the Magistrates and Council obtained Parliamentary powers to form waterworks. Plans were prepared by James Watt (the originals of which are still in existence), and the works were constructed under his supervision. Two acres were feued at the base of the Whinhill, at a place called Fairy Bridge, head of Lynedoch Street, for two reservoirs or dams, the sources of which were Ingleston Spring and Overton Burn. Wooden pipes to the number of four or five thousand, from Speymouth, carried the water to the dams, and thence it was led down Whinhill Road, or High Lynedoch Street, to the Dove Cots at the south corner of Well Park, and across to a cistern or filter at the north-east corner, near the top of Jacob's Ladder. To a meeting of the Trustees under the Act in August, 1773, James Watt, in a letter to Bailie James Donald, wrote: "I intend to be with you next week to set the dams agoing." The cisterns were also constructed under Watt's supervision, and he is referred to in the minutes as "Engineer, Glasgow." With the assistance of a man and a boy to carry the stakes, he laid down the levels with his own hands. The wall of the cisterns was removed in 1852, at which date the ground was converted into a public park. Ten wells were provided under the 1773 Act, placed as follows: East corner of the dyke enclosing the New (Mid) Church, the lane leading up to the Mansion house, Row-End, East Quay Head, Cross Shore, Hector Henry's Close, Bell Entry, Corner of James Ewing's house at west side of street leading to Long Vennel, John Love's house in Long Vennel, and near corner of Manse Lane. No considerable extension was made until 1814, when the Council feued ground on Nether Murdieston, the water being drawn from a reservoir past the Blin' Cuddy and conveyed to public wells.

Loch Thom

In 1824, at the instance of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Mr. Robert Thom, C.E., inspected all the likely grounds in the interests of a projected joint-stock company, in great measure for the encouragement of public works in the district. Mr. Thom reported favourably on what came to be known as the Loch Thom scheme, estimated to cost £16,000 exclusive of the price of the land. The report on the scheme was a picture of the rosiest hue. The whole country round was to assume a new face and vigour. The increased demand for produce was to enable farmers to improve their lands, villas and cottages were to spring up, thirty to forty elegant and extensive public works were to form a crescent above the town, all in full activity and all propelled by water.

The Shaws Company

The joint-stock company, with a capital of £30,000, was incorporated by Act of Parliament on June 10, 1825. The works, which included a reservoir covering an area of 294¾ acres, having an embankment of 60 feet in height, and capable of storing 300 million cubic feet of water, was completed on April 16, 1827. A supply was designed for the public without detriment to the company's primary object, that of affording power to manufacturers, and it was believed that the falls would be more than adequate to the utmost wants.

Rejoicings

On the occasion of formally declaring Loch Thom completed and of the water being let into the Cut or aqueduct of 6 and a half miles in length, the town was on half-holiday, and a great crowd gathered at the Paper Mill. The event is described in the "Advertiser" of April 16, 1827: "Precisely at a quarter to twelve the sluices were raised by our Chief Magistrate, William Leitch, who immediately thereafter entered a boat prepared for the purpose, gaily decorated with flags, and was floated along on the first tide of the stream. The spectacle of a vessel skirting the mountain's brow and tracking the sinuosities of the Alpine chain at so great an elevation seemed the realisation of a dream of the wildest fancy. The course of the boat was followed by crowds of delighted spectators. It arrived at Overton at a quarter to three, and was received with cheers and a salute of cannon. At the flour mill of the Society of Bakers there was another discharge of cannon. We cannot help remarking as a most singular circumstance that the birthplace of Watt should have become the theatre for exhibiting the earliest practical demonstration on an extensive scale of a great mechanical power rivalling the utility of his own, and been the means of adding another name to the proud record of ingenious men who have proved at once the benefactors of their country and of mankind." The public works on the line of falls at the time of the opening were the grain mills of the Associated Bakers, the Paper Mill (James Walkinshaw), the power-loom manufactory of McNab & Co., and the sugar refinery of Tasker, Young & Co.

It is interesting to note the number and names of the tributaries of the Shaw's Water scheme. They were Gryfe Water, Garshangan Burn, Wee Burn, Kip Water, Shaws Water, North Rotten Burn, Shepherd's Burn, Red Burn, Harestone Burn, Horse Burn, Kelly Burn, Berry Burn, Gimlet Burn, West Burn, Hole Burn, Spango Burn, Delling Burn, and Carts Burn.

By almost universal assent the chief credit of initiating, or at any rate of suggesting, the scheme was given to Mr. George Robertson, a native of Bute settled in Greenock, of which he was a Magistrate, and the builder and owner of the mansion now Tontine Hotel, Ardgowan Square. The undertaking was carried through 32 years before the completion of the Glasgow Loch Katrine water scheme.

Town Supply

By agreement the Shaws Water Company gave the town 21,000 cubic feet per day, for this they had the privilege of supplying houses and ships, and the town guaranteed 10 per cent on any pipes laid down in the streets. In a period of great drought sugar refiners saw a possible supply for their purposes from the river. Against this the company took up a determined opposition, on the ground that morally and legally the authorities were foreclosed from granting the permission. In the opinion of the Town Clerk (1848) the right to take the water existed, but the question was whether the Trust had power to give liberty to open up the streets for this purpose. A conference with the directors failed in a solution of the point. The sugar refiners were insistent, and in 1852 the company went to Court to interdict the Magistrates from opening up the streets. The interdict was refused, with expenses. The Court decided that the supplying and selling of salt water was not prohibited by the agreement between the Trustees and the company. By this agreement, come to in 1838, the Trust were obliged to discontinue supplying water as they had done, in consideration of the large supply to be furnished to the public by the company. The public wells and the privilege pipes already in existence were to be the only supplies of water to be furnished to the inhabitants.

Times of Scarcity

At no time in the management of the Shaws Water Company was the domestic supply equal to the needs of the population. Primarily instituted for the purpose of encouraging industrial expansion and of furnishing power to the mills on the line of falls, the company was often unable to meet the demands of the labouring and artisan class, who were said to have experienced the want for thirty years. In the great drought of 1852 the mills were stopped for six weeks, Loch Thom was run dry, 2000 persons were thrown idle, and £350,000 capital said to be lying dormant. In a report on the disabilities that had been suffered by the general community it was stated that "in the densely populated portions of the town, in narrow streets, lanes, closes, and overbuilt, ill-ventilated courts, there are no main water pipes for general supply. The only water available is taken from pump wells, one-eighth of a mile apart, and has to be carried upstairs by five-eighths of the population. The reservoirs supplying these pumps are limited in extent, and often dry in summer." It was urged in 1866 that there was no alternative but to purchase the Shaws Water system and to go on with a Gryfe scheme.

Water Trust Formed

In this year the Water Trust was formally constituted, in terms of the 10th Section of the Greenock and Shaw's Water Transfer Act, 1866, the works were sold to the Trust for £170,000, £18,000 was paid to the Police Board for their old works, and tenders taken for extensions amounting to £67,587 13s 7d. The extensions embraced additional storage at Loch Thom by raising the embankment, at an outlay of £47,500.

The Gryfe

The Gryfe scheme, designed to supply increasing power and domestic needs and to provide for future contingencies, was launched under the special care of Provost Grieve. It evoked strong opposition from a section of the community as being unnecessarily extensive and much too costly. There was a period of fierce debate and a steady spate of very outspoken newspaper correspondence, but through it all the master mind of the day went steadily towards his goal, and achieved a work for which not many years later the townspeople were all but at one in regarding as a great public benefit. The Gryfe reservoirs, completed in 1872, cost altogether about £160,000, a figure which included the price of the land and Parliamentary expenses. One of the ponds provided compensation water for the mill owners on the line of the stream, the other was chiefly for domestic supply. At this date the Water Trust revenue was £20,382, and the year's surplus was £3711. The water was let in on June 1, 1872, in the time of Provost Robert Neill, who had led the opposition. Thus the 'Advertiser' on the occasion: "The story of opening the Gryfe Waterworks is recorded easily enough, for, bless you, there is no story at all. The works will cost one way and another near £100,000, an evidence of great spirit and hopefulness on the part of the community, but there was not even one word of welcome publicly offered to the water."

Further Needs

Without any further vast capital expenditure, this provision for an increasing population and extending manufactories proved sufficient for many years. Then toward the close of the century the Corporation was betraying an anxiety on the question of an additional catchment area, or of otherwise finding means of augmenting the supply. In 1901, and again in 1902, the engineer of the Trust prepared an exhaustive report on the subject. The catchment area at that time was approximately 10,000 acres in extent and comprised six districts, of which Loch Thom with 4518 acres was the largest, the Gryfe next in size with 2715 acres. In addition there were the Compensation, Whinhill, and fourteen smaller dams, several of them in the vicinity of the town used for compensation and trade purposes. The quantity of compensation water to be rendered for interference with the natural flow of streams was nearly 217 million cubic feet annually. With regard to the supply legally due for mill-power on the two lines of falls, the yearly quantity was 600 million cubic feet. For this the Corporation, received £3818, or about ¼d per thousand gallons.

For a good many years subsequently the storage was on occasions reduced to a minimum that gave cause for alarm in respect of both the domestic and the trade supplies. From the financial point of view as well as from the difficulty of hitting upon a profitable catchment area, the situation was an extremely perplexing one. As an alternative to the construction of an additional reservoir there was a suggestion that the Corporation should, by arrangement with the mill owners affected, purchase the rights of the lower line of falls and use the water for general purposes. This, it was calculated, would give a further thirty days' supply. Unfortunately, for the time being at any rate, negotiations towards this end were unsuccessful; and then, in 1921, the question was re-opened in the form of a Provisional Order. The Order sought power to determine the contract entered into between the Corporation and the Shaws Water Company relating to the discharge or delivering the quantity of water allotted for the eastern line of falls, and from all obligations to the mill owners in this connection. The Corporation, at a special meeting on April 4, by a practically unanimous vote, decided to proceed with the order and to enter into fresh negotiations with the mill owners to gain their consent to the arrangement. While the opposition still existed, there was a hopeful feeling that, with a reasonable settlement on the question of compensation, the object of the Corporation might at length be obtained.

For a brief space a slender hope had been entertained that a sense of common interests might induce the respective local authorities to unite in formulating a scheme that would meet the wants of the inhabitants from Ashton to Clune Park. East and West, however, went unpersuaded, Port-Glasgow and Gourrock determining to solve each its own water problem.

Trust v. Millowners

The relations between the Corporation and the mill owners on the question of supply have at various times been disturbed by points of dispute. The most serious of these had reference to the power of the authorities to interfere with the mill supplies in favour of that for the inhabitants at periods of drought and consequent scarcity. The conflict of opinion reached a critical stage in the autumn of 1916, when Messrs. Neill, Dempster & Neill, sugar refiners, acting representatively, raised an action of declarator in the Court of Session to determine whether the domestic supply should take precedence. This action arose out of a Corporation notice to the mill owners that the supply might be reduced or entirely withdrawn, against which the association protested as being invalid and illegal. The contention of the Corporation was that they were entitled to conserve the public health by giving preference to domestic requirements, and that it was their duty to incur a claim of damages for breach of contract rather than expose to risk the health and rights of the community. They also held that on a sound construction of the original feu-contract with the Shaws Water Company and certain regulations incorporated therein the pursuers had no right of priority or preference as that claimed, and that such right would be contrary to the defenders' statutory obligations and to public policy.

In August, 1917, Lord Cullen granted decree of declarator, and in his decision stated that the Shaws Water Company had been empowered to undertake obligations for supply on the basis of perpetual contract, and that, on the other hand, the supplying of water to the inhabitants had not been made compulsory, but left to the company's option. By the Act of 1845 the company became bound to supply the inhabitants with water on terms and under conditions. No obligation, however, was laid on the company to provide or have available any particular quantity for the inhabitants, and the supply to them was thus such as could be given consistently with contracts made by the company for defined and continuous supplies to the mills. An appeal was made to the Second Division, the Corporation now limiting their claim to a right of *pari passe* ranking with the pursuers in the water of the lades whatever the effect of that might be on the supply available to the pursuers. In adhering to the Lord Ordinary's decision, the Lord Justice Clerk (Scott Dickson) stated that the pursuers' rights of water power were not affected by the statutes vesting the domestic supply in the Corporation. The whole water supply for domestic purposes was now provided by an independent scheme, and it was impossible to disintegrate that supply and to allocate it to the different reservoirs. If the defenders were to found on any supply for domestic purposes as being now entitled to rank along with the pursuers, his Lordship thought they were bound to specify details of such supply and the contracts of agreement under which it was granted and enjoyed. No further appeal was taken.

Gas Light

Primitive Methods

The lighting of the town was in a backward state until near the end of the twenties of the last century, at which time the public lamps were lit with oil and houses with seal or whale oil and candle. By the Act of 1817 the power for lighting the town with gas was vested in the Trustees of the Water Fund, but it was years before any definite step was taken. In November, 1826, a public meeting resolved that the Act should be put in operation. There was some indecision whether the undertaking should be proceeded with by a joint-stock company, or by the Trustees of the Water Fund, or by both in conjunction. The Corporation was finally asked to act.

Works Started

A public subscription of £9100 was made in the nature of a loan at 5 per cent interest for the purpose, under an agreement that if the money were not repaid within four years the works should be vested in the subscribers as a joint-stock company. On the question of site Sir Michael stated that gentlemen residing in the neighbourhood of

certain ground considered gasworks a nuisance and would complain accordingly. Not long after it was written on Sir Michael's behalf that the only situation on the Greenock estate which could be given was the shore ground in the neighbourhood of the Blubber Works (about half a mile west of Inchgreen), but this was considered too far from the town. Ground was ultimately taken in Crawford and Laird (or Lord) Streets, and the works were there erected and carried on by the subscribers.

The town was partially lighted with gas for the first time on September 1, 1828, the cost of the works £8371 0s 9d. Thus the 'Advertiser' on the great occasion: "The novelty and brilliancy it displays have caused it to be no common source of attraction to all classes of the community. When contrasting the luminous effect of the Greenock gas light with that of Glasgow, as well as some other places, there is a marked disparity in our favour."

Taken Over

At a general meeting of the subscribers in June, 1830, the resolution was adopted that "By the deed of contract with the Trustees of the Water Fund the works should be conveyed to the Trustees on condition that they should advance the sum necessary to pay off the amounts." In January, 1831, the works were accordingly so conveyed.

New Works

The need for extension occurred at various times in the course of the town's rapid development. In 1845 there was a proposal to erect new gasworks by a joint-stock company, but this was successfully opposed, and the establishment in the Glebe was carried on with periodic improvements until 1870. In that year it was arranged with the Harbour Trust to acquire 82 acres of ground at Inchgreen at £5000, with a feu-duty off about £85 a year, the new gasworks were calculated at double the size of the old, and the Harbour Trust was to erect and maintain a jetty or landing place. A Parliamentary Bill passed the House of Lords in May, 1871. A petition against it by the Clyde Navigation Trustees on the ground that the works would interfere with the bed of the river was thrown out. On the financial statement of the Gas Trust ending May, 1871, being submitted, £2000 of the profits went to the Town Council, £2000 to the Police Board, and £562 to the contingent fund, and a report stated that this was the last occasion on which the profits would be divided between the Police Board and the Town Proper. By a clause of the Act it was provided that the Police Board should pay to the Corporation the sum of £34,000 due to the town on the gasworks, and the further sum of £40,000 in consideration of the waiving by the Corporation of their right to share equally with the Board in the future profits of the works. The cost of the new works was calculated thus: Main pipe, £8000; works, 451,000; land, £5000; Parliamentary expenses, £2000; debt of and compensation to Town Council, £74,000 - total, £144,000; deduct value of old site, £25,000 - £119,000; borrowing powers, £130,000; balance of borrowing powers, £15,000. The history of the works has been one of steady progress, thousands of pounds annually going to the aid of the town's funds. In 1920 the amount of gas consumed was 586,324,000 cubic feet. The capital expended on the undertaking amounts to £337,634, and the outstanding loan debt at June, 1920, was £124,523, equal to £212.4 per million cubic feet of gas made. The present manager is Mr. Geo. Keillor.

Within a few years the Gas Committee moved in the direction of purchasing Port Glasgow works. A motion to purchase but meantime to supply was defeated by a direct negative. It was said that Port Glasgow would negotiate on the basis of purchase only. Although a motion was passed at the meeting of Police Board, the negotiations were fruitless. In 1914 Port Glasgow authorities asked if Greenock were willing to give a supply, if so on what terms, and stated that they were then considering the question of erecting new works. This letter was remitted to a committee to report on the application. Port Glasgow states that no reply was ever received and their new works were proceeded with.

The Broadening Franchise

How Greenock Stood

The period of the Great Reform agitation will be regarded as a fitting point of time for noting the general conditions to which the town had then attained. It is, for instance, of historical importance to have on record the names of representatives on the various public bodies immediately prior to the passing of the Act. The Town Council comprised Robert Baine and Thomas Turner, Bailies; James McNaught, Treasurer; John Miller, Robert Kerr, John Rodger, jun., William Macfie, Adam Fairrie, and George Robertson, Councillors. The Trustees for paving, lighting, cleansing, and watching the town, and for supplying water, were the Magistrates and Town Council, along with nine persons elected by the feuars and householders, as Commissioners, who were Archibald Buchanan, Agnew Crawford, Archibald Black, Alexander McCallum, Andrew Ramsay, James Little, Samuel Paterson, John Buchanan, and Nicholas Kuhle; and as Water Trustees, David Melville, James Kerr, Arthur Bruce, John Marquis, Nicol McNicoll, Dr John King, William Scott, John Ross, and Hector McPhail. The Harbour Trust was composed of the Town Council and the following nine ship owners: John McLellan, jun., John Marquis, Dan. Sharp, Alexander McCallum, Samuel Paterson, James Stuart, John Neill, James Scott, and Duncan Ferguson. The harbour police force consisted of seven constables, twelve night watchmen, with a superintendent; and the town force of a superintendent, two sergeants, and four constables. The debt on the various Trusts was: Town Proper, £28,068; Road Trust, £13,179; Harbour Trust, £97,530; Water Trust, £32,346 - total, £171,213. The total income amounted to £22,683, or about 13 per cent of the whole debt.

There were twenty-one Greenock shipping companies and sixteen ship owning firms, these being Neil & Gray, Alex. McGill, Alexander McCallum & Co. (also sugar refiners), Thomas Hamilton, Alexander Harvie, James Hunter & Co., Geo. Kerr & Son, Martin & Co., Samuel Paterson, Wallace, Hunter & Co., Dan. Sharp, Baine & Johnstone, Wilson, Archibald & Co., Quentin & James Leitch, John Marquis, and James Scott & Co. (also wine merchants). The shipping list numbered nearly 300 vessels, while about 60 additional owned in Glasgow traded to and from Greenock. In those days there was a great variety of rigs - ships, barques, brigs, snows, galliots, gabbarts, schooners, smacks, and cutters. No fewer than 26 regular river steamers were sailing, several of them making daily trips to Ayr, Campbeltown and Inveraray, and communication with Irish ports continued to be an important element in local shipping. Those vessels ranged from about 10 to nearly 500 tons. It must be a matter of sad reflection for us of to-day that in 1832 Greenock could boast of having over 200 shipmasters, and from 4000 to 5000 seamen. The shipbuilders were R. & A. Carsewell, R. Duncan & Co., Joshua Muirress, James McMillan, R. Steele & Co., John Scott & Sons, William Simons & Co., and quite a number of boat builders, timber merchants, coopers, and kindred tradesmen. Ten sugar refineries were in operation - Alexander Anderson, Dellingburn Street; Alexander Angus. & Co., Nicolson Street; James Fairrie & Co., Rue-End Street, Carstydye Bridge; William Leitch & Co., Clarence Street; Alexander McCallum & Co., Sugarhouse Lane; Robert McFie & Sons, Bogle Street; McLeish, Kayser & Co., Sugarhouse Lane; Tasker, Young & Co., Dellingburn Street; and Thomas Young, Ker Street.

One of the most interesting notes of the time is that which relates to the residences of the large employers of labour. While the plan of the West End had been in existence from 1818, no general movement had been made by shipbuilders or sugar refiners to take advantage of it. Most of them were still located in the neighbourhood of their works. Adam and Thomas Fairrie had their dwelling-houses in Virginia Street and East Blackhall Street, James McMillan in Rue-End Street, C. C. Scott in Kilblain Street, William Simons and Robert Steele in St. Andrew's Square, and Robert Duncan in Carsturn Street. John Scott, sen., was in residence at Halkhill, Largs, and John Scott, jun., in Finnart House. The Banking Houses were the Glasgow Union, 34 Cathcart Street; the Greenock Bank, 44 Cathcart Street; the Renfrewshire Bank, Bank Street; and the Provident Bank, Town Hall, 47 Hamilton Street. There were two Reading Rooms, two Coffee Rooms, and two Libraries (Greenock and Mechanics'). It says much for the intellectual status and habits of the inhabitants that the town contained ten booksellers - John Hislop, R. B. Lusk, Andrew Laing, John Lang, Arch. McIver, John Sharp, all in Cathcart Street; James Kerr, jun., William Watson, in Hamilton Street; James Sinclair, East Breast; and John Thomson, William Street. The churches were: - Established Old West, Middle, East, and the Chapel of Ease in Grey Place; Dissenting Baptist, Burgher, Independent, English Episcopal, Methodist, Relief, Reformed Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Unitarian, United Secession, and Universalist, while religious societies numbered thirteen, exclusive of four town missionaries. In a population of about 28,000 there were 22 schools (many of them in an insanitary condition and with inadequate accommodation) and about 3000 pupils. Street formation was advancing rapidly in a southerly and south-easterly direction, Clyde Crescent extended uninterruptedly to the foot of Forsyth Street, Lynedoch Street was in course of filling up in its whole length, and Nelson Street was still little more than a number of buildings in the vicinity of George Square. Feuars of the town numbered nearly 400. The Post-Office was at 1 Watt Place, Mr Matthew Urie, postmaster, who had two assistants, three letter runners, and there were five outward and six inward mails. Transport facilities to the inlands were confined mainly to carriers, the regular contractors travelling to Beith, Paisley, Largs, Kilmarnock, Irvine, etc. The poor were still being looked after by the Kirk Sessions and heritors, and so also was the Lunatic Asylum at Fancy Farm, Inverkip Road. Trade guilds, benevolent and other associations for the general welfare, some of them dating back to close on the beginning of the eighteenth century, were numerous. Of trade and industrial societies the principal were the Master Wrights (1731), Ship Carpenters (1738), Gardeners (1742), and so on; half-a-dozen friendly or friends' societies, an association for preventing sepulchral violation, and a Brotherly Love Society. The Master Wrights' Society, benevolent and friendly, was promoted by Sir John Schaw. It was dissolved in 1868, when over £1600 was apportioned among the members and representatives of deceased members. In a directory of the period it is given out that the gentry and clergy numbered 74 and that there were over 200 premises for the sale of liquors.

Reform Election

The first municipal election under the Reform Act took place on November 5, 1833. According to the 'Advertiser' of that date, the voters of Greenock were lukewarm, as compared at any rate with some other towns - "The inhabitants of Glasgow appear to take a much greater interest in the election of their Councillors than the people of our good town. A number of most excellent and a few questionable men have been nominated, and we hope the electors have enough good sense to discriminate between them, but if they do not they will be the first to suffer from their folly. The Herald' of this morning contains upwards of thirty advertisements upon this subject, while our sheet, we are sorry to say, does not display one. This may in part be accounted for from the fact that in the one place a popular election of Magistrates has long existed, while in the other the proceeding has all the excitement of novelty to recommend it."

At the election everything was conducted with the greatest good humour, and generally speaking great fairness prevailed on all sides. The results of the voting in the five wards were: - First (3 seats) - James Watt, 111; Robert Steele, 105; Thomas Carmichael, 97; James Kippen, 44; A. McLeish, 18; Thomas Fairrie and D. Ferguson, 1 each.

Second (3 seats) - Andrew Anderson, 91; John McLellan, 60; Adam Fairrie, 55; James Blair, 50; James Caird, 43; Thos. Carmichael, Robert Steele, and, Jas. Watson, 1 each.

Third (3 seats) - Robert Baine, 94; Robert Kerr, 75; William Park, 69; Andrew Clark, 40; Wm. Thom, 11; Jas. Stevenson, 9; James Stuart, 8; James Stewart and R.D. Ker, 5 each; Wm. Aitken and Thos. Turner, 1 each.

Fourth (3 seats) - Wm. Macfie, 111; John Buchanan, jun., 101; Thos. Turner, 89; John McLellan, 32; George Robertson, 24; Wm. Leitch, 3; Robert Baine, James Stuart, and John Buchanan, 1 each.

Fifth (4 seats) - Robert Baine, 145; James Stewart, 131; Thos. Turner, 125; John Rodger, jun., 91; Wm. Leitch, 67; Jas. Stuart, 59; Robert Ewing, 26; Jas. Tasker, 24; John Kerr, 4; Andrew Anderson and Thomas Lang, 2 each; and Maitland Young, James Oughterson, John Scott, jun., Jas. Scott, R. D. Ker, and Jas. Kippen, 1 each.

Messrs Baine and Turner, elected in two wards, chose respectively to represent the Third and Fourth. This left two vacancies in the Fifth, and these were filled on November 11 by the election of John Kerr with 122 votes, and William Scott with 113. "The whole of the Councillors elected are of the genteel class," commented the 'Glasgow Liberator', "the poor ignorant, discredited shopkeepers and tradesmen having considered themselves either unworthy or incapable of exercising any trust or filling any situation in the civic departments." With two exceptions, the members of the old Town Council were returned, and the former Magistrates were elected for two wards.

The vital change in municipal government was thus marked in the columns of the local newspaper: -"Baron Bailies' Decease. -Died by Act of Parliament, at Greenock, on 5th November, 1833, the two Baron Bailies of Greenock, in the 82nd year of their Magistracy. The demise of these gentlemen - both of them high and excellent citizens took place while they were in the full possession of all their faculties and in the enjoyment of the confidence of their constituents. Although the event at last was sudden, it was not altogether unexpected, and was attended by the sympathy of a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. The predecessors of these gentlemen succeeded to the management of the town of Greenock in the year 1751, under a Charter granted by Sir John Schaw of Greenock, a gentleman of distinguished liberality and patriotism. At the time the estate came into the management of the Bailies it was small but independent. By a course of good conduct on the part of its Magistracy, by the encouragement of liberal institutions, by frugality and industry, and the exercise of every public and private virtue, the town and port, from being little more than a thriving fishing village, has become the first seaport of Scotland, flourishing in trade, abounding in ships, and carrying on commerce with the remotest corners of the world. The same Act which deprived the town of this Magistracy removed, equally regretted, the last members of a grave and venerable body of Councillors, whose advice they had been in the practice of taking in every case of difficulty and improvement. They are to be succeeded in their honours and estate by a Provost, four Bailies, and eleven Councillors. This change in the government has not taken place without a civil war of opinion - an opinion, however, expressed in the most open and candid manner - in which the character and fitness of the successors were canvassed with becoming good sense and discrimination. It is satisfactory to learn that the choice has fallen upon a class of men of known respectability, tried worth, public zeal, and talent - men who have a great respect for all well tried in the spirit, and regulate themselves by the constitutional provisions of the old Charter they have now quietly deposited in the "tomb of all the Capulets."

First Meeting

The honour of presiding at the opening meeting of the Reform Town Council was given to Mr James Stewart, the successful candidate by the greatest number of votes on the 5th of November. The election of Magistrates took place in the Town Hall, which was crowded. Mr Baine, who presided, congratulated the town on the order and good humour with which the elections had been conducted, and hoped that any party feeling would soon subside and be forgotten. At that moment, he said, the other burghs of Scotland were rejoicing at having got rid of their old constitution, in which the self-elective system had prevailed; but the old Charter of Greenock had been very liberal, and he was so sensible of its advantages that he could not part with it without something like a feeling of regret. It would not be doubted that its liberal provisions had contributed greatly to the rise and prosperity of the town, the inhabitants of which must ever revere the memory of the enlightened individual by whom it had been granted. Again, at the meeting of the Council on November 14, Mr Baine, in contrasting the new with the old system, said that although they now enjoyed the advantages of a larger constituency and a distinct broadening of democratic representation, yet the old system had been in some respects more liberal, inasmuch as the electors had been allowed to choose the Magistrates directly and to vote upon the whole list of members to be admitted into or removed from the Council. At this meeting Robert Baine was unanimously elected Provost; Messrs Turner, Watt, Macfie, and Stewart were made Bailies; and Adam Fairrie Treasurer.

Greenock Unique

So far back as the beginning of the nineteenth century the unique position of Greenock Municipality had attracted special attention in the country, and was thus referred to by the 'Edinburgh Gazetteer' in 1818: -"The municipal situation of Greenock well deserves attention, and the public undertakings which the inhabitants have accomplished by their own unaided means is the best comment on its advantages. Every proprietor of ground within the town has a vote in the election of the Magistrates, the public accounts are open to inspection, and it is the understood usage and practice that the Magistrates cannot originate any application to Parliament without having previously obtained the general concurrence of the electors publicly assembled. The same principle of effective representation and of periodical recurrence of the constituents pervades all the other departments of the

public concerns." Williamson states that "whatever benefits other towns may have derived from the Reform Bill, perhaps Greenock of all the constituencies in Scotland may be said to have obtained the least, if their power to elect a Member to serve in Parliament be excepted. The constituency at the time was upwards of 500 and enjoyed a freedom of election which has not been surpassed either in municipal elections or in the choice of a Member of Parliament under the Act of 1832."

The Tide of Prosperity

Brightening Prospects

In point of material prosperity the half century that followed was at once the most prolific and the most critical in the history of Greenock. It was a period during which prospects and opportunities were opened up to which no ordinary bounds could be set. The town was singularly free from the revolutionary spirit then abroad throughout the country. At the height of the Chartist movement it was officially reported from the headquarters of the agitation that "the cause is behind in Greenock in consequence of the want of speakers, and the workmen generally have too good wages to join." In settling down to the conditions of the new regime the community as a whole showed no extraordinary stirrings of the imagination, nor were they roused to a much deeper sense of social ideals. It was essentially a work-a-day world for the industrial population. The public mind was engrossed with the ambition of getting on. Through the broadening channels of a world-embracing shipping riches came pouring into the laps of merchants, ship owners, shipbuilders, sugar refiners. In successive decades the population increased by tens of thousands of the artisan and labouring classes.

Communal Problems

In its rapid commercial development, and owing to the nature of its trade and environment, Greenock could not escape the fate of being for the most part the home of a well-to-do minority and a labouring mass. The ills of social life, some of them rankling and deep-seated, were not entirely neglected, but from want of Parliamentary powers, a leanness in public funds, an absorption in harbour interests, and consequently but partial and intermittent enthusiasm on the subject of sanitation, cleansing of streets and houses, habitable dwellings for workmen and the poor, town reconstruction, etc., were too often allowed to drift from stage to stage in a spirit of seeming indifference. There were times when, on an influx of labour, proper housing was an impossibility, streets lay unformed or unpaved, sewage and drainage were unsystematised, in whole areas altogether a wanting, and domestic water conveniences a luxury. Indeed, of the character and magnitude of the task that thus faced the town rulers during long years we can today have but the faintest conception. In the most literal sense they had to grapple with problems for whose solution they were woefully equipped.

It was the Water Trustees who had then charge of the municipal undertakings - water, gas, cleansing, paving, sanitation, etc. The official minutes and brief newspaper reports disclose that those duties were performed primarily with a consistent regard to economy, and consequently on a scale that hardly succeeded in an appreciable lessening of the general unwholesomeness of the older town. That the authorities did creditably in the circumstances of a very difficult situation is confirmed by the report of the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations in Scotland, dated December, 1835: "The affairs of this flourishing town appear to have been managed with great care and ability. The Harbour Trust has a large surplus of revenue over expenditure which will quickly redeem its debt. The affairs of the Town Proper are in a less satisfactory state. The situation of the Water Trust is not so favourable and the assessment is high, but this state has lately been improving by sharing with the town the profits on the gasworks. The portion of the town called the Policy, being the pleasure ground of the old Mansion house of Greenock, is exempt from assessment for the purposes of the Water Trust. The Policy is now extensively built upon, and is yearly increasing in population. It is truly a principal part of the town, and is within the Parliamentary boundary. It has been represented as just and expedient that the assessment should be extended over the Policy, particularly as its inhabitants have a voice in electing Magistrates though exempt from the town's taxes. The only remark which suggests itself upon the administration of the affairs of the town is that the system of borrowing from each other seems to have prevailed among the different Trusts, originating in the Trustees being nearly the same persons in each, which has given, it is said, too great facility to the poorer Trusts of becoming debtors to the richer. Perhaps this, upon the whole, has not been disadvantageous to the interests of the town, through making the management of the Trusts more economical; but undoubtedly it is a practice full of danger in its consequences, and inconsistent with preserving that complete separation of interests which the creation of different Trusts would imply. The Magistrates and Council, as such, do not assume any power of taxation or assessment of the inhabitants. Assessments are imposed and levied by virtue of Acts of Parliament, as in the case of several Burghs of Barony, and the town of Greenock, in return for the privilege of participating with the Royal Burghs in foreign trade, pays annually the sum of £72 as its share of cess, but with the slight relief against the towns of Paisley and Crawfurdsdyke jointly for £12 of this sum. Under its late constitution it was the subject of debate whether by its Charter of erection the jurisdiction of the Magistrates was confined to the taxable limits of the town or extended with the enlargement of the town. The latter opinion was acted upon of late years without challenge, and the limits of jurisdiction are now the same with the Parliamentary boundary. In this town exclusive privileges are unknown. The police is very indifferent, there being no officers and no system of night watching."

Public Health

We have seen that insanitation, its causes, and how to deal with them constituted the great vexation of the Town Councillors' official life. The problem was an ever present one that could not be ignored or laid aside, yet for many years it seemed to be almost insoluble. When we review the perplexities of the situation, the indifference and neglect of the people themselves, the worse than supineness of house proprietors, the delays of a despairing Corporation, we may wonder at the town's remarkable immunity today from the forms of infectious disease that were the sources of the high mortality that so long obtained.

The Foreign Factor

Until a comparatively recent date the chief sources of disease were reported to be filthy streets, bad sewerage, unwholesome dwellings, the dirty habits of the lower classes, and shipping. As lately as the middle of last century the general sanitary condition was grievously backward, the existing evils greatly intensified by periodic contagious assaults through the shipping that then crowded the harbours as at no other port in the kingdom, and by the influx of labourers to meet the fast-increasing demands at the quays, shipyards, and factories. This indeed had always been the case in a greater or lesser degree. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, when epidemics of fever and smallpox were of frequent occurrence, in not a few instances the outbreaks were traced to exterior origins. Thus in 1806 a contagious fever was introduced by Russian sailors on board a prize vessel brought into harbour, from whom the malady spread and caused many deaths among the inhabitants. The alarming event roused the citizens to action that resulted in the erection of the Hospital two years later. In 1818 the Town Council resolved closely to supervise the great influx of Irish labourers, who were suspected of having carried a contagion of fever. Irish vagrants also were very numerous at the time. It is therefore clear, and a point of significance, that a certain amount of misconception and over-statement existed in relation to the public health of Greenock, too little attention having been given by official inspectors and newspaper quidnuncs to this extra-local factor in infection and the spread of disease.

People to Blame

When this fact has been given its due importance, however, it must be admitted that for the main causes of trouble the responsibility lay at the people's own doors. In the early years of the third decade the town was literally ravaged by successive epidemics of fever, smallpox, and cholera. By the end of 1831 fever had greatly abated, but had been so severe and fatal that the Board of Health sent a visiting inspector to inquire into the circumstances. This inspection, according to the 'Advertiser', "while it has brought into notice the filthy state in which the lanes and closes are mostly kept, has likewise been the means of ascertaining the important fact that the town has rarely at this season of the year been so free from disease. The Magistrates have adopted several most judicious measures for the purification of the town and preserving it in a state of greater cleanliness."

Cholera and Smallpox

The first visit of cholera to Greenock took place in 1832. In spite of all preventive measures the epidemic raged with terrible virulence, and carried off 2000 persons in addition to the ordinary death rate. At the same time a pestilence of smallpox was stalking through the country, taking a dreadful toll of lives. It did not in Greenock assume the frightful proportions it reached in many other places, yet it is said to have been so widespread as to inspire universal horror. Appearing about the end of February, almost concurrently with the first case of cholera, it had within three months seized 326 victims in a population of 27,571, and the deaths were 171. The disease was stayed for a time, but broke out afresh, with such dire effect that by the end of October there had been 839 cases and 431 deaths. From that date the epidemic gradually disappeared.

The 1840 Act

A great impetus towards public health reform had been expected to follow on the Parliamentary Bill of 1840, which was almost two years in course of incubation. The Act marks an important step in municipal government. It consolidated all previous Acts, extended the powers of the Trustees to the whole of the Parliamentary boundaries, the territories within the old and new boundaries (which included Cartside) to be called the town of Greenock, and the Magistrates were given considerable additional powers in relation to sanitation and general good government. The Council now consisted of the Provost, four Bailies, the Treasurer, and ten other representatives, together with nine feuars or sub-feuars as Commissioners, this body having exclusive control of the streets, lanes, and thoroughfares. The first Commissioners were Messrs Hector McPhail, James Kerr, David Melville, John Paul, Matthew Orr, William Scott, David McLeod, John McIlvain, and John McLoskey. The Act took powers also to widen Taylor's Close in order to form another access to the town offices, and to fix the jurisdiction of the police from Garvel Point to Whitefarland. It introduced the same qualification for the elected and the electors in reference to both bodies of the Town Council and Police Commission, and the same form of election, covering the whole of Greenock and giving one uniform system for the burgh. It is worthy of note that at the fag-end of the discussion on this Bill amongst the general public there was a serious movement in favour of establishing a college for scientific education, but the suggestion came too late for the insertion of such a clause.

Estate Policy Embraced

By this Act also the land embraced within the old Greenock Mansion house Policy was first brought under full municipal jurisdiction. It was about 1810 that the Superior began feuing in this ground, the rentals of the properties being assessed for poor rates and a proportion of road money. The feus, buildings, and subsequent transfers were

made on the distinct faith and understanding that the ground was without the jurisdiction of the Magistrates, and not liable to any assessment made or to be made by the Parliamentary Trustees empowered to supply the inhabitants with water, etc., in proof of which a special exception was made in favour of the Policy in certain Acts relating to the town. The holders of property sunk wells and otherwise provided themselves and their tenants with the necessary comforts of the household. There were occasions, however, when the residents found it inconvenient to insist upon being altogether self-contained. When their streets fell into disrepair, as they did in 1835, the Town Council were petitioned for monetary help. The sum of £110 had been subscribed for the improvement of Bank Street, which was £60 short of the estimate, and this the town was asked to give. While the petitioners paid nothing into the town funds, they were assessed for road money, and it was from this source they looked for a grant. It was publicly stated that no part of the town was more neglected than the streets in the Policy. The sum of £25 was granted.

Public Agitation

During the summer of 1844 the community was so deeply stirred on the subject of public health that a public meeting petitioned Parliament to adopt measures for improving the sanitary condition of the working classes. In the words of Provost Baine, a cursory survey of some of the lanes and closes provoked wonder, not at so much disease existing, but at its absence from habitations so ill-ventilated and filthy. In a long report to the Infirmary directors Mr. Adam Fairrie stated that since 1824 the deaths and rate of mortality had shown a constant and rapid increase in fever cases, and that notwithstanding this frightful state of things the cases during 1843 had been more numerous than in any of the previous five years put together. Two years later a comprehensive report on the insanitary condition of the town constituted a serious reflection upon the authorities and property owners. Many of the streets in Cartsdyke were said to be receptacles for decaying animal and vegetable matter, manure lay alongside doors, under windows, below stairs, and in confined closes. Pig-houses abounded apparently, with their dung-heaps and other filth, and in some instances the pigs were in the very dwellings. The people were suffering from poor food and the absence of personal cleanliness, and "it might almost be said that there are no wells." Everywhere were great complaints about the state of the streets, nearly all the lanes, closes, and courts were without water, and there was no main sewer in Shaw and Dalrymple Streets. A general regret was expressed that the Act of 1840 did not take power to oblige landlords to provide suitable accommodation and sewerage for tenants, and in the opinion of committee members the town ought to pay the penalty by providing the essential conveniences.

Low Finances

The main recommendations on the whole were that common sewers should be constructed throughout the town and that street cleansing should be taken in hand by the authorities themselves. Hitherto this work had been under contract, and so inadequately performed that six men were employed where thirty would not have been too many. No real headway was made. The Provost admitted that the recommendations were well worthy of consideration, but they had been thought of again and again and had always been given up for want of funds, a difficulty which still remained. They might induce feuars to introduce water into their properties, but it was for the landlords, and not the Trust, to guarantee the Shaws Water Company for the outlay. "There are many things to do necessary for the sanitary condition of the town that is beyond the power of the Trust, and as it is inexpedient to increase the rate many contemplated improvements must consequently be suspended." The sewers were emptied into the harbours, and to carry these into the river would cost £1,000, which just then seemed impracticable. It was complained that unless the authorities were better supported by the inhabitants generally no means they could use would be of permanent avail.

For much of their time now the Town Councillors were occupied with the question of town drainage. Their first extensive scheme was conceived concurrent with the passing of the 1840 Act, but the execution of it was hampered and delayed for years, and so little was done in this direction that in 1852 (during the greatest drought in 20 years) the clamant need forced the authorities to move for expert plans of drainage. It was stated that several streets in the most densely populated parts of the town were almost or altogether without sewers, and that the whole annual cost of cleaning the streets amounted to £453 17s 6d. Cartsdyke was evidently in even worse condition. "The spiritual, moral, and material destitution of Cartsdyke is at present great and lamentable. With a population of upwards of 6,000, most of them living, in vice and squalor, in wretched hovels with beds of rotten straw and wood shavings, with floors and roofs pervious to wind and rain."

Other Outbreaks

The Board of Health sent down a communication in 1848, but despite a conjoint effort with the Parochial Board no substantial advance seems to have been made. An epidemic of cholera and other infectious diseases forced the authorities to take counsel with the medical faculty. Ten medical men were engaged in addition to those employed by the Parochial Board, and conferences held nightly. The cholera abated towards the end of the year, on which the Health Committee, while "acknowledging the hand of Divine Providence as primary in the removal of the pestilence," expressed their "conviction that the means resorted to have had a salutary effect." In 1847-8 fever had 1400 and in 1849 cholera 1300 victims. In 1854 the ship Conway put back from sea with 23 of her emigrant passengers dead from cholera, and the efforts of the inhabitants to assist and relieve the others cost 300 lives.

Drainage System

It was, then, to drainage chiefly that the authorities applied their resources in the ten years from the middle of the century. Between 1852-6 they expended £14,300 on 7½ miles of streets, in the following year £2,000 was laid out in similar work. The Harbour Trust accepted their share of responsibility, paid £3,000 in two years in making sewers along the quays, and dredged the harbours of filth and debris. The sewage of the town was now discharged direct into the river. House drainage and rainfall went down through the main sewers, with a volume and weight of water that drove it strongly to the outlets. At the close of the decade about £25,000 over all had been expended in this direction. Street cleaning and improvements, however, were not being overtaken in such a whole-hearted spirit, partly doubtless for want of funds. The Back Walks no longer resembled a slough of despond, although the alterations had been made at the expense of a row of fine old elm trees that lined the east side of the walk; a bridge was constructed over the Carts Burn at Ingleston that cost £880 (£100 from each of the Superiors); the West Burn would have been closed in long before this date but for difficulties in connection with the rights of parties on the banks; and Cartsdyke was expected soon to be in a healthy condition. Dr. James Wallace issued a pamphlet in the beginning of 1860, in which he attributed the high mortality to the ignorant and degraded state of a great proportion of the inhabitants, to unpaved streets, etc. The Master of Works, Mr. Wm. Allison, worked out a modification of the official mortality statistics on the ground that deaths among the large numbers of destitute Highland and Irish labourers coming to Greenock in search of work were uniformly reckoned against the town. At a Sanitary Association meeting in midsummer, 1862, during which there were strong expressions of public feeling by means of correspondence and speeches, it was remarked that although very much had been done of late years in the formation of drains and otherwise to purify the town, the fact remained that for want of connections in the houses with those drains and through other causes the mortality in the portion of the year past was greater than in any corresponding period since the Registrar-General's returns were published. A Town Councillor attributed the high mortality to the great humidity of the weather, "caused by the influence of the Gulf Stream and southerly winds." This view was in consonance with a statement in the Registrar-General's report of 1865 that "the mortality was largely owing to the low atmosphere and the vicinity of the Gulf Stream." The Registrar-General did not endorse the further opinion of the same authority, "that the epidemic (of 1864-5) had been sent by the Almighty, and would gradually go away."

Larger Parliamentary Powers

The enlargement of powers secured by the Act of 1865 gave a great and beneficial impetus to the crusade against the notoriously unhealthy conditions still prevailing. It repealed the 1840 Act and extended the burgh boundaries. The Board of Police was constituted, as follows: The Provost, four Bailies, Treasurer, and the remnant members of the Town Council, with nine occupiers of lands and heritages, elective members. Power was taken to widen Dellingburn Street and East Quay Lane, and to form a new street from the West Harbour to the Albert Quay. In his evidence Provost Grieve stated that the increase in population had chiefly been among the labouring classes. The death rate was very high, especially among children, the cause overcrowding, some of the houses being in bad condition and many families living in one apartment. He was sorry to say that it was one of the most unhealthy towns in the kingdom. In their efforts towards mitigation the Town Council had within the previous fifteen years laid ten miles of drains.

Government Report

Dr. Buchanan, Government Inspector, in this year reported – "The excessive mortality is due to the deaths of children, who are produced in Greenock in remarkable numbers, the birth rate in 1864 actually reaching 52 per thousand. It is also due in some measure to the special fatality of lung disease and consumption, and to the contagious diseases in almost every year. In 1847 typhus killed 353 out of a population of 36,500. The causes were overcrowding and the dirty habits of the people. Little or no influence is to be ascribed to defects in draining, and in the present epidemic exceptional destitution is wholly wanting as a causative element. In the Mid Parish there are 9414 people on 20 acres, at the rate of 300,000 in a square mile, and portions are even more crowded than these figures represent. There is a great want of public conveniences. In every poor man's room in Greenock the atmosphere is foetid. The action of the authorities in sanitary matters until lately scarcely extended beyond the paving of the town and the construction of main sewers. Very little attention was paid to the homes of the poor until the appointment of the present inspector of nuisances in 1863. Power should be obtained to make new streets through the crowded parts, and to pull down houses that impede ventilation. The beginning of legislation in this direction was from the local Act of 1840, whose powers were insufficient. There are a multitude of houses that ought to be closed. The appointment of a medical officer is much to be desired. Out of the hundreds of lodging-houses 15 only are registered, and the rest are well known to be in a deplorable condition of dirt and overcrowding. The authorities have not attempted to deal with the great cause of epidemics - overcrowding and the ill-ventilated state of houses."

Authorities' Reply

A public petition followed to expend a large sum under Parliamentary sanction in taking down houses in lanes and back courts. Meanwhile the Water Trustees, who comprised the Health Authority, prepared a reply to Dr Buchanan, which stated that "nearly all his recommendations had either been anticipated or were embodied in the Police Bill, and that overcrowding and the dirty habits of the people are beyond the control of the Trust. The Trust had no money to buy streets and open up the town, and would require to go to Parliament for power. In 1840 power had been got to widen Taylor's Close, but this had not been acted upon."

A Fresh Effort

That the community had a growing consciousness of their added responsibility under the new Act was made evident by renewed activity in several quarters. A Ladies' Sanitary Association was formed, "to redeem the humbler classes from low tastes and squalid habits." Working-men came together in clubs and societies, and kept the subject of sanitation in constant agitation. Newspaper correspondence was indulged in to inordinate length. The elected authorities bestirred themselves in an increasingly earnest spirit, if not at once to much better account. The town unfortunately had just been visited by deadly typhus, and a special report of a Privy Council officer was before the Health Committee. It rehearsed the old story - yet "it is but fair to say that there is every disposition on the part of the authorities to do something to remedy the sanitary evil. It so happens that their very prosperity has produced a state of things which has caused the high mortality. The increase in population in fifteen years is more than 30 per cent. In spite of this increase there has been scarcely any rise in the number of registered poor, but no proportionate increase of houses for working men."

Medical Martyrs

The epidemic of 1865 is memorable for the sacrifice of five medical men through devotion to their professional duties in the public interest. These gentlemen were Messrs. James Fraser Paton, James Lamont Lochhead, Wm. Joseph McLoskey, James Dowie, and Joseph Conway, to whom the community, in affectionate recognition of their martyrdom, erected a memorial in the cemetery, and the Town Council, as representing the ratepayers, placed a memorial tablet in the Mid Parish Church. Those doctors were all young men, the eldest thirty-three years, the youngest twenty-three.

The Man

The coming of Dr. James Wallace in the Fifties was destined to have far-reaching bearings on sanitation and public health generally. To him more than to any other single man were due the great strides in the application of medical and sanitary sciences and the immunity from epidemics that marked the last quarter of the nineteenth century. While still at the opening of his career Dr. Wallace called attention to the lamentable position of Greenock in the Registrar-General's returns. He had shuddered at the amount of fever up to that time, and laid before the Local Authority what he believed best fitted to meet and prevent epidemics in future. Some years later he was asked to draw up a series of instructions. These had to a certain extent only been acted upon. This was repeated in 1869. He insisted upon the appointment of a medical officer of health, as provided for in the Act of 1865. "No town could be a town worth living in," he declared, "where the Local Authority are bent upon making a few pounds." Dr. Wallace was in 1871 appointed consulting physician to the sanitary inspector; in 1875 he was engaged to regulate the sanitary state of the town and to treat cases of infection as medical officer of the burgh. It was said of him that it was really he who first laid the foundation of the great sanitary schemes of Scotland. He was the first medical officer of Greenock, and was so in fact long before he was officially.

Smallpox Hospital

The town was in alarm in 1873 through a serious outbreak of smallpox and a dread of cholera. The Police Board asked the Admiralty for a hulk to be used as a floating hospital, on the strong plea that Greenock was the health custodian of the Clyde ports. An unfavourable reply incited Mr. J.J. Grieve, M.P., to renew the appeal, and the Admiralty offered a hulk on loan on conditions regarded as unsatisfactory. The Board met with difficulties in looking for a smallpox hospital site. The authorities were restricted by the Superiors to a particular locality, and Craigieknowes was their most suitable selection.

Light and Air

The Artisans' Dwellings Act was adopted in March, 1876. Dr. Wallace reported considerable difficulty in deciding what parts of the town should receive attention, for the localities distinguished by extreme density of population, want of light and ventilation, and the absence of conveniences necessary for health and common decency, were unfortunately too numerous. In the scheme he suggested "the widening of East Quay Lane on the east, Low Vennel on the west, the whole line of Shaw and Dalrymple Streets lying between these two lines, and sweeping away many dens and rookeries which have been too long a reproach and a standing danger to the community." Mr. A.J. Turnbull, Master of Works, had also a special report, in which he said: "It is entirely owing to the laxity of the Superior in days gone by in allowing such narrow lanes and streets as we have in the lower parts of the town that the Local Authority are now compelled in the interests of the public health and wellbeing to seek powers under the Artisans' Dwellings Act and for an improvement scheme at a large expense to the community. Previous to the Act of 1871 the Board could not macadamise a street unless on a requisition by the feuars, nor could the Board level the surface at the expense of the feuars. The want of this power under the Act of 1865 was the source of considerable annoyance and injury to the proprietors of new buildings, in consequence of new streets not being opened up timeously. The difficulty was in some cases tried to be got over by having the work done and the cost defrayed by subscription. The Act of 1871 gave power to level or macadamise and recover from the feuars."

Mortality Decrease

In the quarter of a century that followed the first systematic and vigorous attempt to remove the reproach from the town of being the most unhealthy in Scotland there was a marked decrease in the rate of mortality. The figures for periods of five years from 1855 are here given: -

1855-59: 30.85 per 1,000

1860-64: 33.61 per 1,000

1865-69: 32.46 per 1,000

1870-74: 29.7 per 1,000

1875-79: 23.09 per 1,000

1880-84: 22.05 per 1,000

1885-89: 18.28 per 1,000

1890-94: 24.07 per 1,000

1895-97: 21.01 per 1,000

The highest (34.29) was in 1874, and the lowest (15.98) in 1888. This improvement held good throughout the remaining years of the century and during the two decades of 1900-1920.

Combination Hospital

A suggestion by Dr. Wallace, medical officer, in 1899, that there was need not only for additional hospital accommodation, but for a new hospital away from the Greenock Infirmary, and constructed on the pavilion system, was the beginning of the Combination Hospital built at Gateside. A consultation between Greenock, Port Glasgow, Gourock, and Lower Ward Authorities resulted in an arrangement as to proportional guarantees, and the hospital was opened in January, 1908. Dr. Andrew Love was appointed superintendent. Dr. Wallace was in 1904 succeeded as medical officer of the burgh by Dr. Wm. S. Cook, on whose retiral in 1919 Dr. J. H. G. Whiteford was appointed as whole-time officer.

Shipping and Infectious Disease

Until recent years the onus and expenditure in cases of infectious disease occurring in connection with Clyde shipping had lain upon Greenock authorities. Many appeals were made without effecting redress, and it was 1893 before an adjustment was arrived at. Two years previously a memorial to the Secretary for Scotland stated the case for Greenock – “The whole supervision of the inward-bound shipping of the Clyde ports is practically imposed upon Greenock, and probably no port in the kingdom is in a better position to protect itself from the introduction of infectious disease. There can be no doubt that Glasgow and Port Glasgow owe their exceptional immunity from disease imported by shipping to the excellent arrangements of the Local Authority of Greenock, but these arrangements are costly, troublesome, and highly responsible. It has been said that the best solution of the difficulty, as a final arrangement, would be a general Sanitary Authority for the Clyde ports, but meantime Glasgow, Port Glasgow, and Bowling should compensate Greenock by a small tonnage rate for the vast services now gratuitously given. Mr. J. B. Russell, sanitary officer, Glasgow, has on many occasions expressed his sense of the obligations Glasgow is in to the sanitary officials of Greenock for their thorough and intelligent treatment of outbreaks on board ship.”

By the Greenock Corporation Act of 1893 Parliament gave the right to recover the cost of treatment to the extent of £12 per patient of cases of infectious disease from ships for Glasgow, Govan, Renfrew, Paisley, Bowling, Dumbarton, Helensburgh, and Port Glasgow, and from Partick and Clydebank as soon as a pier or harbour had been established. Glasgow thereafter applied for an Order to establish a boarding station at the Tail of the Bank, which was opposed by Greenock, on whose behalf it was urged that this proposal would override the provisions of the 1893 Act and create a new authority in the Greenock district without the sanction of Parliament. The Order that was passed constituted the Corporation of Glasgow the Port Sanitary Authority above Newark Castle, and in 1903 terms for the treatment of patients were amicably adjusted between Glasgow and Greenock.

Public Baths

In the matter of public baths, a subject closely related to the public health, the authorities can claim little credit. They have had the subject before them for a hundred years and are not a step further forward. It is the irony of the situation that they themselves have preserved a record of the threadless maze of their doings. The singular thing is that they never had an unwillingness to consider the need of baths. Their difficulty consisted in being unable to fix upon site, plans, estimates, or something else equally unimportant contrasted with the concrete essential itself; and they found endless excuses for delay - want of money, inopportunity, anything with a face value for putting off. Greenock has a sea or river front of three miles or more, and with the bare exception of the extreme western limit there is not a single public access to the water. In these circumstances public baths would seem to be a necessity. It was the directors of the Mechanics' Institution who first took the burden upon themselves of doing something in this direction, and with scant patronage from the Town Council of the day, who about the middle of last century actually refused “to aid in any manner a project so humble, yet calculated to increase the health and comfort of the community.” The ‘Advertiser’ said of them – “Our Local Authority, brimful and running over with sanitary talk, has never aided the only public baths in the town by patronage or pence.” In future years, however, this did not hold quite true. By and by the authorities were forced to take a more serious view of the subject. In the fifty or sixty years that followed they held scores of meetings, visited other Scottish towns, had plan after plan, and were sometimes apparently on the eve of a final settlement when something or other intervened to bring the whole structure to the

ground. The James MacCunn floating baths at Battery Point in the Eighties brought an interval of relief, which ended with their destruction in a north-west gale. It would be tedious to go further into detail. There was a good deal of show work and nothing else. The last attempt was being made in July, 1914, and was wrecked by the outbreak of the war. There were then three alternative schemes of £3870, £4700, and £5900. The West-end Baths, Campbell Street, open to subscribers only, have been popular with a numerous section of the public since their institution in 1881.

The public health of Greenock to-day, while not beyond reproach, is so immeasurably improved as to excite the envy and emulation of many other populous communities of the country. The district is now a special resort in certain forms of disease, and every year is being more generally recommended as a residence for invalids so suffering.

Housing

Old Town Neglect

The housing conditions of the people have always been more or less at the root of the health problem in Greenock. These had an ill beginning in the haphazard nature of the early feuing and building in the old town, they became aggravated by the increasing seafaring interests of the inhabitants, which concentrated factories, stores, and dwellings close to the quay fronts, and in later times were rendered still more acute and menacing by the periodical influx of labour for which no adequate housing accommodation was provided. At no time in the history of the burgh has this question of dwellings for the people received the attention it deserves. Superiors do not appear to have worried much on the score of town building. There was all but a complete neglect of plan or comparative relation in the matters of house, street, or lane formation. Loose and ineffective measures for the enforcement of sanitary supervision existed unreasonably long. Until close on the days of the great Reform Bill few of the conditions of municipal rule tended in appreciable measure to the social well-being of the common lot. From that date even, for still many years, the growth of public sentiment on the subject was painfully slow. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the population was under 18,000 but rapidly increasing, many poor families were obliged to live in barns and outhouses.

The New Town

The more enlightened policy in dwellings began with the habilitation of the West End about ten years later. It was then too late to overcome the evils of the old town, which remained as a crying example of what should be avoided. Superior and merchants who took off his feus saw to it that the errors of the past should not be repeated in the new. It must not be supposed that the conscience of the authorities was untouched, or that the better-class citizens were apathetic. In the second quarter of the century there was a clearance of slums in the neighbourhood of Harvie Lane, at best, however, a very partial undertaking. The radical defects of about 200 years could not be remedied without a vast expenditure of money. An extension of the town southward helped to mitigate the penalties of congestion in the lower districts, which were left to the poorest of the people. With all their social disabilities, their imminent risks to the general health, and the absence of the commonest decencies of life, those places swarmed with a labouring and vagrant population. The most zealous of the citizens in their generation were constant, in public meeting and newspaper correspondence, in proclaiming anxiety and alarm. The years passed, ways and means undiscovered, until the second half of the century was well on its course, and the clamant need could no longer be dallied with.

Projects of Relief

In February, 1864, a public meeting was held to consider the evils arising from the defective nature of the houses of the working classes (many of which were said to be worse than Indian wigwams), and the formation of a company to endeavour to meet the situation. A committee of working men found that one-half of the dwellings they examined consisted of a single room and that each room averaged six occupants, a number of whom were lodgers. Engineers and shipbuilders could not get men for want of houses, and it was suggested that they should do something for their workers. There was talk of building model dwellings to accommodate from 5,000 to 10,000 persons, and a committee was appointed to organise a company. Within a few months the editorial comment was as follows: "Their excellent remarks ending, like all other action taken in this matter, in no practical result. The thing would not pay, and that was the death of it." One of the remedies: "Let us draw off from our filthiest and most densely crowded localities from 2,000 to 3,000 of the present inhabitants, rent a field above Cartsdyke most convenient to public works, for a year or eighteen months, and form the ground into three or four rows of little wooden houses." Another was a joint-stock company of 2,000 shares of £1 each. A Helensburgh house proprietor wrote: "Come over here," and some correspondence followed on the feasibility of building houses behind Ardmore and arranging a morning and evening penny ferry.

A Building Company

A Working-men's Sanitary Association which met in February, 1865, approved of plans for the immediate erection of houses at Hillend, the number of persons practically homeless at the time being computed at 6,000. The foundation stone of the first tenement built by the Greenock Provident Investment Company was laid by Mr. James Morton in June of that year. This society enjoyed a period of success, but failed, of course, to provide for the existing demands. They had from Sir Michael Shaw Stewart the offer of new feuing ground, 8 and a quarter acres

in extent, for the erection of six divisions of self-contained cottages of brick, English style, with a small garden and green attached. The price was £16 per acre, accommodation provided for 1148 persons, and the offer to remain open from 1866 to 1875. In August of that first year Sir Michael laid the foundation stone of two out of forty of those double cottages at Bridgend, the cost about £300 each. He was ready and willing not only to encourage the building of cottages for working-men, but to make sacrifices for their benefit.

The great lock-out in the shipbuilding and engineering trades had a detrimental effect on the Provident Investment Society, which, however, by May, 1867, had built four tenements in Morton Terrace, had contracted for twenty-two and built eleven double cottages at Bridgend, altogether providing for 52 families. The terrace was named after James Morton, who not only subscribed a handsome sum towards the initial fund, but throughout took a close personal and active interest in the society's work. While the Harbour Trust were still undecided about the extent to which they should utilise Garvel Park grounds Provost Grieve put forward the view that the east end of the park would be useful for feuing blocks of workmen's houses. This suggestion was soon lost sight of in the subsequent vastly enlarged plans for the docks and Great Harbour.

The Police Board looked at the question of having barracks for single men who were coming in from Ireland and the Highlands, and it was agreed to ask Mr Murray Dunlop, M.P., to bring in a special Workmen's Houses Bill for Scotland if the existing Act did not apply. The Provident Investment Company had proved that it was not the want of ground, which they had got cheap from Sir Michael, but the great cost of building, that was the chief obstacle.

Call to Local Authority

The Board were at this time being worried a good deal about the widening of East Quay Lane, which involved delicate negotiations with the railway company and proprietors on the line of street, and the great Improvement Trust scheme of the succeeding decade was adumbrating. A broad hint had been given by the Privy Council officer in a special report. This gentleman's opinion was that the building of working men's houses in Greenock would not pay. Capital did not undertake such work for 6 per cent interest. People were dissatisfied with small profits. It seemed to him that if there was in Great Britain a place where the Local Authorities could with every prospect of profit and commercial success, to say nothing of other considerations, try the experiment of erecting decent dwellings for the working class, that place was Greenock.

A list prepared in 1868 enumerated 41 properties, comprising considerably over 100 dwellings, the greater number of which were totally unfit for human habitation. Many of them were single rooms, at rentals from £5 to £8, the floors bare earth or a thin covering laid close on the damp ground.

Big Improvement Scheme

Still, much to their credit, Greenock Corporation, in 1877, was amongst the first in the country to take advantage of the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act, 1875. In July of the following year their scheme was practically under way. It embraced eight acres of ground in the lower parts of the town, from the Vennel to East Quay Lane, and involved the displacement of 2,700 persons and the demolition of 605 houses reported to be unfit for human habitation. East Quay Lane disappeared and Brymner Street (in honour of Bailie Graham Brymner, convener of the Improvement Trust) took its place; Longwell Close gave way to Duff Street (named after Bailie John Duff); the Vennel was widened from Hamilton Street to the West Breast; Dalrymple Street also widened from the Vennel to Brymner Street; Taylor's Close opened up; and the denuded portion of the area covered with working class tenements, while four acres of ground were feued at the west-end of Dempster Street and Prospecthill Street for a number of the dispossessed, at a considerably modified feu-duty. The total estimated value of the properties, with contingencies for the removal of the old buildings, etc., amounted to £112,403, and the scheme cost altogether £201,940. As a result of these operations the improvement in the public health was so marked that in the five years succeeding the death rate fell from 31 to 23 per 1,000.

In the New Century

This was a great effort on the part of the Corporation. Together with the outlays in other directions, it reduced their financial resources to such an extent that for many years it was impracticable to entertain the idea of extending the operations to adjoining old and congested areas. Thus matters stood till early in the new century, when the Local Government Board asked the Council whether they proposed to submit a scheme under the new Town Planning Act. The reply was that the town had been practically under a town planning scheme since 1818, when a feuing plan had been prepared conjointly by the Local Authority and the Superiors of Greenock and Cartsburn, that all local legislation relating to streets and buildings had been determined by it, and that it was the intention of the Corporation to continue to administer building operations under existing town planning arrangements in the meantime. At the request of this Board again in 1910 Dr. Wm. S. Cook, medical officer, reported that since 1877, 500 houses had been closed as uninhabitable, that there had been a great improvement of late years, both in regard to cleanliness and ventilation by open windows, and a considerable amount of house building, better class tenements, small cottages, and semi-detached houses, but no buildings lately for the working class.

Towards the close of 1911 the Corporation resolved to build 200 houses for the labouring classes. The scarcity, on the sanitary inspector's warning, was becoming a menace to public health, as overcrowding prevailed to an

alarming extent. In the summer of 1913 Mr. Godfrey P. Collins, Member for the Burgh, asked the Secretary for Scotland for a grant of money for housing the workers at the Torpedo Factory, but the reply of Mr. McKinnon Wood, hardly a satisfactory one, was that the case of Greenock would be considered by the Government Department concerned. The outcome of this application was the erection in 1915 of a number of temporary wooden dwellings at Battery Park.

Complaints of Delay

In a report by the Local Government Board Commission of Inquiry into the housing conditions of Greenock in 1914, which originated in a complaint by householders that the Town Council had failed to exercise its powers under the Housing Act of 1909, the Commissioners recommended the undertaking at once of a building scheme of definite proportions, which in certain events should be enlarged. This was regarded only as a temporary palliative to meet abnormal conditions. Employers of labour had done practically nothing, nor had the Admiralty undertaken schemes for housing the many workmen who had come from Woolwich to the Torpedo Factory.

More Corporation Houses

At the opening of the Craigieknowes cottage scheme in 1916 Provost McMillan stated that private enterprise had for a long time failed to fulfil the demands for the accommodation necessary in a progressive industrial centre. Prior to 1911 there had been many empty houses, but improvement in trade and the starting of smaller industries had rendered the housing question very acute. The Council had at that time agreed to go on with about 200 houses. A number of these were proceeded with at once in Serpentine Walk, and there followed 144 in Roxburgh Street. The Corporation shortly after feued from Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart ten acres at Craigieknowes at £16 an acre. The Serpentine Walk houses cost £5738, those in Roxburgh Street £25,740; on the completion of the Craigieknowes scheme the Corporation would own 539 houses; and he promised that as soon as the war was over an additional scheme, and if possible an improvement on the others, would be carried out. A certain proportion of the cost at Craigieknowes was received as a subsidy from the Admiralty.

After the erection of the above houses there had been a large influx of population due to extensions at the Torpedo Factory, etc., and it was estimated that 1373 additional houses were wanted. The number of houses occupied was 14,500, the population estimated at 82,000, while there were only 30 vacant, every one of these unfit for human habitation. Moreover, the sanitary inspector had reported 686 houses that demanded demolition or renovation, 50 per cent of which could be made subject to remodelling. The Corporation expressed a willingness to go on with further schemes on a promise of financial assistance from Government.

The situation had become still more aggravated by the end of the war in 1918, so that the immediate need of building for ex-Service men and others who were practically homeless was painfully obvious to everyone. The great shipyard extension scheme of Messrs Harland & Wolff cleared away many old dwelling-houses in the lower town for the tenants of which provision had to be made elsewhere. In common with the authorities of other towns in the country, Greenock was forced to embark on large schemes of building, at first piecemeal, later on a greater scale. At the beginning of 1921 it was calculated that about 5,000 workmen's houses were required, and at that date a few hundreds only were under contract. Ground was feued from Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart in the Murdieston and east-end districts, and it was in contemplation to open up a wider building field in the Inverkip Road neighbourhood and to provide travelling facilities for the people.

Homes for Ex-Service Men

The claims of ex-Service men in the matter of housing were pressed upon the attention of the community soon after the close of the war. At the invitation of the local branch of the Scottish Veterans' Garden City Association, Lord Salvesen visited the town in 1918, when at a representative meeting of citizens a committee was appointed to ventilate and advance a building scheme. A new committee had to be formed about the beginning of 1920, from which date progress of a satisfactory character was made, and in June the memorial stone was laid by Sir Francis Davies in connection with the first of four houses at Kitchener Place, Cornhaddock Street. Provost Thomas Mitchell, who in the words of Lord Salvesen on the occasion was the life and soul of the movement in Greenock, intimated two donations of £500, one from Mr Peter McBride, Port-Glasgow, the other made anonymously, and the total sum subscribed by the public at that date amounted to about £3,000, of which £950 18s was the proceeds of a scrap jewellery sale, per Councillor Isabella Kerr; £200 from the committee of the Clyde Naval and Military Home, per Mr J. J. Patten MacDougall; £134 16s from an empty bottle collection fund, per Mr Hugh MacCutcheon; and £100 each from Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart, Bart, C.B., Messrs P. McCallum & Sons, Limited, and Mr William Millar, shipbuilder. It was aimed at building eighteen houses, at a cost of £10,000.

Tramways

Squeezing the Council

It was a spur from the outside that first set a tramways scheme on the move. The Police Board had in 1870 a communication from Glasgow solicitors regarding a proposal to apply for powers to construct tramways in Greenock. In the following year the authorities obtained powers to work tramways by horse haulage from the east end of Cathcart Street to Gourrock boundary, and the Corporation carried out the undertaking in 1872 at a cost of £31,412 3s 7d. The Bill showed 37 main and short connecting tramways, including a line from Grey Place to the

south side of Albert Harbour; West Shaw Street, Nicolson Street, Dalrymple Street to the West Quay; Charles Street to Dalrymple Street; Drumfrochar Road down Lynedoch Street, across Regent Street down Bogle Street, along Terrace Road, Watt Place, and Cross-shore Street to the East Breast; from Drumfrochar Road near Upper Murdieston by Baker Street, Carnock Street, St Andrew Square, to Rue-End Street. These connecting tramways were never constructed, and on the laying of the main line this was leased to the Vale of Clyde Company for 21 years. In 1886 there waited upon the Police Board a deputation from a Tramway Provisional Committee, consisting of local gentlemen, for consent to form a tramway line from Rue-End Street to the Town Buildings, Port Glasgow. The deputation comprised Messrs Robert Kerr, A. S. Mories, J. W. Turner, and Mr. Macrae, C.E., Edinburgh. The cost was estimated at £30,000. Two-thirds of the distance was situated within the burgh of Greenock. Omnibuses had been doing a considerable business between the two towns.

The Board were anxious to consider the question of widening the north side of Main Street, so as to allow the laying of a double line of rails, but it was found that owing to a large portion of the frontage being occupied by sawmills and shipbuilding yards any interference with the buildings would involve a serious disturbance, and that the probable outlay would be prohibitive unless under compulsory powers. There were serious difficulties in the way on the south side of the street as well. It was suggested that a part of each side might be taken, and the cost of dealing thus with the widening was put at £20,000. On behalf of the promoters it was intimated that they could make no contribution to this expenditure, but that they were willing to offer £1,000 for disturbance of streets, etc. An agreement was come to for the payment of £1,200 to Greenock and £720 to Port Glasgow for the use of material.

Extension

The Bill empowering the construction of the line was passed in August, 1887. Greenock and Port Glasgow were in 1889 asked to take shares for the above amounts, which the respective town clerks held to be incompetent. At a joint meeting it was then agreed to accept a mortgage over ten years. On the expiry in 1893 of the Vale of Clyde Company's lease with the Corporation offers were received from this company and also from the Greenock and Port Glasgow Company for a lease of the town tramways for seven years. The latter offered £700 a year, which was accepted. The Vale of Clyde paid £5,250 for renewal of the line in implement of their obligation. In this year the Police Board learned that they could by arrangement acquire the Vale of Clyde line through Gourcock, but after protracted negotiations they were of opinion that it was undesirable meantime to take it over at any price.

Terms of Lease

The Greenock and Port Glasgow Company in 1898 obtained powers to adapt the whole line for the use of electricity, and in 1900 the Board entered into a 28 years' lease, subject to breaks. The amounts payable by the Greenock and Port Glasgow Company to the Corporation under this lease were as follows: Rent, £1,200, with 6 per cent compound interest, £52,080; maintenance of streets, £450 per annum, £12,600; less 28 years' interest at 3 per cent on £14,000, the amount still standing against the Corporation tramways, £420 for 28 years, £11,760-leaving £52,920. The company had also to pay such a sum annually as should be equivalent to one-third of the annual profits in proportion to the mileage in excess of the accumulative dividend of 6 per cent on the capital employed in the undertaking.

Breaks in Lease

A proposal that the break in the lease at May, 1914, should be taken advantage of was defeated by 12 to 8. The conditions of taking over the tramways are six months' notice and the Corporation to purchase the whole undertaking within the burgh as a going concern. A similar proposal was under consideration in 1920. It was made a test question at the November elections, and was thrown aside by the electors and the Corporation.

Sunday Cars

A brief agitation against the running of the cars on Sunday occurred in 1902. In reply to representations from the Council on the subject, the company remarked that if the public did not approve they could refuse their patronage, and then obviously the cars would not be run; while if the public did patronise them sufficiently to warrant the company incurring the cost it might safely be taken as evidence that public opinion was in favour of Sunday running. In the course of a comparatively short time the matter righted itself on these lines, and Sunday traffic became quite common with many church-goers.

Electrical Installation

Outside Pressure

Electrical experiments in Greenock were made by Messrs. John Walker & Co., sugar refiners, in 1878-9. The plant consisted of a Siemens' dynamo and a large arc lamp for the purpose of providing light at night for the erection of their raw sugarhouse. The Town Council had a series of tests at the Steamboat Quay in April, 1881, but their attention was first seriously directed to the question of electrical power and lighting near the close of 1882, through the receipt of notices on behalf of seven companies that they intended to apply to the Board of Trade for power to supply electricity within the burgh. The law agents of the Police Board recommended application for a Provisional Order or a license, the former was obtained, and in May, 1883, an area was marked off at Prospecthill for experiments, which, however, did not go beyond this initial stage. Subsequently, at various times, private companies threatened to apply for powers, but were invariably met with the opposition of the Local Authorities.

The Corporation was practically forced to action in 1897. Representatives of Greenock and Gourock had a consultation and agreed to obtain information, but shortly both Port Glasgow and Gourock intimated that it was not their intention to proceed in the meantime. In the same year an influential local deputation asked the consent of the Police Board to their application for a Provisional Order to supply Greenock, Port Glasgow, and Gourock, or alternatively that the Local Authority should undertake the duty so far as Greenock was concerned. The Board replied that they would oppose the application. The proposed local company then desired to dispense with the consent of the three burghs, and at a Board of Trade conference it was stated on their behalf that in 1883 Greenock experimented over a compulsory area at a cost of £2,000, but afterwards made no attempt to proceed, on the plea that there was no demand by either manufacturers or householders.

The Board of Trade advised the Corporation to proceed within a year; otherwise powers might be granted elsewhere. This they did early in 1898, appointing Mr. Fedden engineer, who estimated the cost of an installation at £30,000, without making provision for supplying the tramways or public works with power. A site was secured at Hunter Place, in the centre of the town, and works were erected at a cost of £32,000 to supply electric light to shops, houses, and public lamps, and motive power to the premises of small tradesmen. These works were opened by Provost John Black in 1899. Mr. Fedden was succeeded by his assistant, Mr. W.M. Nelson, in 1900, and further extensions were then carried out to enable the power station to cope with the demand made by the newly electrified tramways belonging to the Greenock and Port Glasgow Tramways Company, and also by several shipbuilders and engineers in the burgh. The electric tramways began running in October, 1901. Mr. J.A. Robertson was appointed engineer early in 1903, from which date to 1906 extensions of generating plant were made from time to time to meet the increasing demand for power and lighting for the shipyards.

Rapid Extensions

The output from the works had risen from 158,000 units in 1900 to 2,500,000 in 1906, when it was apparent that the Hunter Place site would soon be overtaxed for placing further generating plant. While the question of plant was occupying the attention of the Electricity Committee another committee was dealing with that of disposing of the town's refuse, and both questions were settled by erecting a combined refuse destructor and an electric generating station on a site in Dellingburn Street, where gravity water was available for condensing purposes. The new station, costing £11,000, was opened in October, 1907. The system of electricity distribution that had been adopted was 3-wire at 250 volts., but with the large increase in demand from Scott's Shipbuilding and Engineering Company Limited, and an application from the Admiralty for a supply to the Royal Naval Torpedo Factory at Battery Park, a change in the system of distribution was made from low to high tension. Mr. Frank H. Whysall succeeded Mr. Robertson as engineer in 1913. Since then extensions of generating plant have been carried out at various times to meet the increasing demands of Greenock and Port Glasgow shipbuilders, engineers, etc., until in 1920 the number of units sold amounted to 25,680,000. The capital expenditure had reached £585,261, and the revenue for the year was £180,256.

The Municipal Buildings

A Wave of Extravagance

It is not easy for the public to view with equanimity or reserve the results of the spirit of extravagance that overtook the town in the Seventies of the last century. The various elective bodies - Town Council, Harbour Trust, and Parochial Board - were to all appearance vying with each other in conceiving grandiose schemes of expenditure. Four ambitious undertakings were under way almost concurrently that made inordinate demands upon the financial resources of the community. These were the James Watt Dock, the Municipal Buildings, Smithston Poorhouse and Asylum, and the reconstruction of a congested area under the Artisans' Dwellings Act. In each case a moderate estimate was put on the probable outlay, and in each case also this was much exceeded, partly at least from causes that might have been foreseen. Of the Improvement Trust scheme adverse criticism would be both ungracious and undeserved. It constituted a work of transformation and betterment for the common people that stood so greatly in need of execution that a further extension would have been welcomed had the authorities but proved less lavish in other directions. No such exception could be urged in defence of the prodigality that characterised the process of the other projects.

Pleas of Justification

One cannot say that reasonable pleas were not adduced for embarking upon all three. For half a century the town had prospered in remarkable measure, for a decade or more almost phenomenally. To the growth of trade and revenues there seemed no end in view. It was the fit moment for devising and effecting civic ideals. The pressing needs of the harbours could no longer be overlooked: here indeed there had already been fatal delay. For the honour of the town there had to be municipal buildings adequate in accommodation and design. The poor had to be decently housed and humanely cared for. The error of the time consisted, not in misjudging the call for action, but in encouraging an overweening confidence in the flowing tide of prosperity and in a lack of no extraordinary prevision. It consisted also in a lax and wasteful handling of public money. Speaking at a meeting in connection with the insolvency of the Harbour Trust in 1888, Mr. W. Crawford, shipowner, stated that every beauty but the beauty of economy had been studied in the erection of the Municipal Buildings, and that the offices for the harbour engineer were such as he could start as a first-class hotel if he thought proper.

Public Warnings

It could not be claimed that warning voices had not been lifted to curb the current of excess. Amongst the faithful few, the 'Telegraph', custodian of citizen rights and property, was sound and forcible in argument and appeal. "The £120,000, on Smithston has proved to be only the beginning of a system of lavish expenditure almost unparalleled in the annals of Scottish burghs." "It is surely high time some public notice was taken of the gross extravagance the Council are threatening to commit the community to for Municipal Buildings... The ratepayers are being treated like children."

Publicity Ignored

Owing to an obviously concerted vagueness and to a sparsity of statement, the minutes of the period convey very indefinite information regarding the progress or the compass of the municipal undertaking. From a total misapprehension of their relative responsibility to the constituency, the majority deliberately adopted a policy of secrecy with the avowed purpose of withholding facts in process from the public knowledge. We may draw the plain inference that already a certain official uneasiness existed on the question of ultimate cost. The modest first intentions had developed beyond recognition, not so much by deliberate reckoning as from a state of indeterminateness that step by step carried the scheme past full control.

Site Selected

The resolution to proceed with the erection of the Municipal Buildings was come to at a special meeting of Town Council in August, 1877. For thirty years the authorities had been on the outlook for a suitable site. They had first of all cast a favourable eye on West Blackhall Street, where they already owned certain property, and in 1853 it was agreed to purchase adjoining buildings, but the offer was declined. It was then decided to remain on the Hamilton Street site, and the Council began to buy up properties around the Town Hall as they came into the market. The public offices there had been occupied long after they had become inconvenient and inadequate, so that from this point of view the Council were entirely justified in pressing forward the subject of new buildings in the late Seventies.

The Money

A motion that all minutes relating to the meetings of Council in committee should be discussed in private was carried by ten to three. The 'Telegraph' was once more in the field of criticism – "The people who are entrusted with the management in this town have a bad habit of first involving themselves in expense and then looking for ways and means." Provost Lyle, on a motion for a report on ways and means, characterised it as an extremely weak and premature question to ask how the cost was to be provided. The money, he said, was coming from the same source as the money for other Corporation works. Where did the money come from for the Garvel and James Watt Docks? They had got it in the market for good security, and he held that there was no better security than the revenue and resources of the Town Proper. When the time came the information would be fully given to the public.

Interest in the scheme was not confined to the town or district. Newspaper editors elsewhere were taking note of events, the 'Glasgow News', for instance, commenting – "It is obvious that the whole financial question has not been sufficiently considered. Where the money is to come from should not be burked, as Provost Lyle and his supporters seem to be doing."

Plans Adopted

In September, 1879, designs were sent in from over eighty architects on an estimate of £80,000 exclusive of the cost of the site, which was calculated at £60,000. A final effort for delay was made in order to have a statement of the probable annual revenue from the buildings and how the money was to be provided. Such a statement was said to be in preparation, but in the same month the design of 'Art and Science' (Messrs. H. & D. Barclay, Glasgow) was unanimously approved. On the occasion the Provost remarked that the financial statement made up by the assessor and the master of works could be fully founded on. They could show a surplus from the Buildings, but supposing they could show no surplus revenue they would be entitled to go on with some degree of faith in the future, as in the past they had done with other great works. Bailie Brymner's view was that the magnificent and beautiful building would be one of the happiest results in the history of Greenock, and at the moment of parting from the meeting Mr. W.O. Leitch exclaimed that "we shall all have great cause to remember the 22nd of September, 1879, as a red-letter day in the history of Greenock."

Street widening

In relation to the Buildings it was in prospect that the whole of the large space within the area should be completely utilised, and that Hamilton and other streets in the immediate vicinity should be widened and improved. When the question came up of widening Hamilton Street 4ft. all the way to have it in keeping with the line of the Buildings, what may seem a specious argument against the proposal was used - that Hamilton and Cathcart Streets would, so far as width was concerned, just have to be accepted as inevitable in the sense that the citizens of Glasgow and London regarded Argyle Street and Cheapside. Hamilton Street was not a broad street, but taking into account the immense size of Glasgow it was relatively as broad as Argyle Street. Instead of meddling Hamilton Street, it was suggested that through time a parallel street should be formed either north or south of it. This idea was once or

twice looked at later on, but without practical result. With regard to the outlay on the Buildings, the lavish expenditure remains a sore point with the public, and the expectations of an adequate return have never been realised.

The buildings

The foundation-stone, in one of the piers of the tower, was laid on August 6, 1881, by Provost Dugald Campbell. The first section contracted for was the police establishment, fronting Dalrymple Street, including a new front and extension of the Town Hall (built twenty years previously) to the line of Dalrymple Street. On the level of the Town Hall is the banqueting saloon, finished in the Corinthian style, and over it the Police Court Hall. The second section comprised the tower and the whole of the buildings fronting Hamilton Street. The total height of the tower from the level of Cathcart Square to the vane is 245 feet. In Hamilton Street the floor is occupied as shops, a piazza in front with arches 20 feet in height and the columns monoliths of Peterhead red granite. The principal entrance, from Hamilton Street, leads to the Provost's room, reception saloon, Council Chambers, Town Clerk's offices, and a public staircase from Taylor's Close gives access to all the floors of the building. The third section comprises the rates collecting hall and other offices, the Harbour Trust chambers, Fire Brigade depot, etc. The body of the Buildings, which are Renaissance in style and throughout of an ornate character, consists of four storeys and attics, with an additional storey at several points; and the four elevations front Hamilton Street, Dalrymple Street, Taylor's Close, and Cathcart Square. At interstices are niches for statuary, memorials of distinguished townsmen, none yet occupied. The ground cost £58,000, and it was estimated that the outlay on the buildings would amount to £80,000. The total sum was about £200,000. A motion in 1884 to delay the third section on the ground that prosperity had for the time gone from the town was defeated.

End of Heroics

The completion of the Municipal Buildings brought the ostentatious programme of the Corporation to an end, and of ushered in a prolonged season of administration on the lower planes of town affairs. It could not be said that there had been any obvious neglect of the ordinary business while the uncommon was in progress. But now Councillors were able to apply their minds with greater concentration to questions of public health, water, gas, cleansing, etc., that are after all the vital things in the daily life of a community that are given over to the care of its representatives. For a dozen or more years, therefore, the municipal machine worked at a reduced pressure on lines that called for no extraordinary faculty in its guidance. By the Act of 1865 the Board of Police had been constituted, and by subsequent Acts the Water Trust was incorporated under that name and consisted of twelve members of the Police Board, of whom seven were Town Councillors and five elected members. The Greenock Burgh Extension Act of 1882 extended the boundaries, increased the Council from sixteen to twenty-five, the Bailies from four to six, the Wards from six to eight, altered the constitution of the Police Board, which now consisted of the entire Council, the elective members ceasing; and the Water Trust consisted of the Provost and twelve members of the Council.

An Ambitious Bill

In 1892 the authorities set themselves a comprehensive and ambitious project. The original draft of a new Bill was for:

- (1) The renewal of the tramway lease;
- (2) The extension of the municipal and police boundaries so as to include the landward part of the parish and parts of the parishes of Inverkip and Kilmacollm, and so relieve the community of the heavy taxation (£1,000 a year and increasing) of the County Council on the waterworks, and also to include the estate of Smithston;
- (3) An equitable scheme of relief from the charges of the Public Health Act of 1867 in respect of ships at the Tail of the Bank with infectious disease;
- (4) The prevention of damage by gunpowder at the Tail of the Bank;
- (5) The establishment of a cattle depot;
- (6) The transference of the town churches, with the Mid Parish manse, to trustees elected by the congregations; and
- (7) The extinction by commutation or otherwise of the annual payments to Greenock Academy and the minister of the West Parish.

There was also a suggestion that the police burgh of Gourock should be included provided the Commissioners of that place were agreeable. It was obvious to Greenock authorities that by such an amalgamation mutual advantages would accrue in the administration of the sanitary, cleansing, police, gas, and water improvements of both burghs. Furthermore, the Greenock Magistrates considered a proposal to bring in Port Glasgow, but owing to the number and variety of interests involved it was decided that this union could not meantime be undertaken. It was, however, left to Port Glasgow authorities to say whether they were so inclined, in which case a supplementary notice could be made in connection with the Bill. In the case of neither of the adjoining burghs was there any encouraging support, and both proposals accordingly lapsed. The church clauses were withdrawn. The authorities succeeded in their claim against Glasgow, and took powers to establish a cattle depot.

Important acts

In 1901, doubts having arisen as to the effect of section 117 of the Town Councils (Scotland) Act, 1900, it was considered expedient that the Corporation should be the sole authority for all purposes hitherto under the control of

the Board of Police and the Water Trust. A Parliamentary Bill of great importance was promoted in 1909. It had first appeared in 1908 in the form of a Provisional Order, but had to be proceeded with as a Bill in consequence of the refusal of the Secretary for Scotland to deal with it otherwise. It was reported at the time that the burgh occupied an anomalous position in regard to local legislation. This was due to the peculiar conditions under which it had grown up, which had been largely the result of the complicated arrangements as to streets and sewers made in the eighteenth century between the Superiors and the Local Authority, and which were practically unique. These special local conditions constituted the reason why the Burgh Police Act of 1892 was not applied to Greenock in the first instance, and that subsequently the provisions of the Act could only be adopted in a form modified to meet these, and for this there was no provision inasmuch as the whole fabric of Greenock legislation rested on the arrangements referred to, which were specially regulated by the Greenock Acts. The objects, then, of the 1909 Bill were:

- (1) Consolidation of the existing Acts and Orders;
- (2) The abolition of exemptions from rating;
- (3) The extension of the boundaries of the burgh;
- (4) change of the law with regard to the costs of formation of streets and sewers;
- (5) the incorporation of clauses from the Burgh Police (Scotland) Acts of 1892 and 1903 relating to municipal, police, and sanitary matters.

With regard to boundary extensions, the ratepayers owned nearly all the property in the extended area, paid nearly all the rates, and got comparatively trifling services in return. The additional rates to come to Greenock in consequence of the extension were estimated about £1,000 a year. The Corporation failed in one important point, that of the exemption of the Harbour Trust from the public health and improvement rates. The passage of the Bill was claimed as having marked a notable advance in the progress of the burgh. Greenock had acquired a consistent code of local laws which recognised local conditions and circumstances, complete within the covers of a single Act. It was said also to have constituted a valuable asset in the hands of the Corporation, and that by direct accession of revenue or reduction of expenditure to have been equivalent to the payment per annum in perpetuity to £2,668 7s, as follows: Increased rating, £1,097 0s 4d; improved assessment provisions, £1,356 1s 8d; fire brigade as constables, £215 5s. The finances were reorganised and provision made for the reduction of debt which under the old Acts had not been provided to be redeemed, and the regulation for the redemption of all existing debt was fixed upon a logical and consistent scale.

The Opposition

The successful passage of the Bill through Parliament was the prelude to the municipal defeat of its promoters. Throughout the discussions and negotiations party feeling had reached an intensity rarely shown in municipal or Parliamentary politics. The Corporation was at the time composed of two strongly opposing camps, led by two forceful and irreconcilable men, at variance apparently on nearly every point of local government. As the result of this strong opposition within the Corporation, the members of the Denholm party who sought re-election were defeated at the November polls, and at the annual statutory meeting following a letter was submitted from the Provost in which he said: "I have given serious consideration to the results of the polling, and have come to the conclusion, in justice to my friends and supporters who have been defeated and to myself, to resign as Provost and Councillor. It is needless at this stage to renew the controversy about the origin of the recent Act of Parliament and the steps taken for promoting it, but I am satisfied that when history is fairly and impartially written, without prejudice and outside the heat of party warfare, it will be found that useful work has been accomplished." Subsequent events in great measure justified these anticipations, especially in respect of the amount of increased rates derivable from the area of the extended boundaries, these amounting in 1920-21 to over £2,000.

Industrial Revival

The year 1916 is regarded by many as the opening of an era in the industrial history of Greenock. The conviction had steadily been gaining ground that as a seat of manufactures the town had well-nigh reached its zenith. While, too, the trade at the port, under close and vigorous management, had been showing indications of revival, there were few who had hopes of a return to the volume or importance of former days. The simple announcement of a shipbuilding deal wrought a wondrous change in the situation and in the sense and outlook of the community. So radical and penetrating were to be the effects of Caird & Co.'s incorporation in the great firm of Harland & Wolff that visions arose of the old town, infused by new blood, taking a fresh lease of vital energy and under the impetus attaining heights of industrial prosperity. The principal object in the amalgamation was a great extension of the existing shipyard. This involved the inclusion of the West Harbour and the acquisition and demolition of a considerable amount of property, tenements of dwelling-houses, some of them old and uninhabitable, warehouses, workshops, factories, Westburn Refinery, part of the Corporation electricity works, and the Old West Kirk and graveyard. It would naturally take years to carry the scheme to completion, but it would then mean employment for about 10,000 more workmen, for whose accommodation and that of dispossessed tenants a new town would spring up in the Kip Valley and its neighbourhood.

Negotiations between Harland & Wolff on the one hand, the Corporation and the Harbour Trust on the other, went on for many months. Besides their interests in the streets affected and in the Old West Kirk, the Corporation owned properties within the scheduled area, and it was on Provost W. B. McMillan that the chief burden fell of conducting

the counsels to a satisfactory end. A Provisional Order was promoted in 1919, the inquiry was held at Glasgow in August, and the Greenock Improvement Bill was passed in Parliament in December. The main body of opposition had respect to the projected removal of the Kirk and graveyard, and came from lairholders, the Church representatives, and the Burns Club Federation, the latter chiefly concerned with the grave and monument of Highland Mary. The shipbuilding firm dealt generously with the church authority in the arrangement of terms. They offered ground at Seafield, east end of the Esplanade, with £500 for the extinction of the feu-duty; agreed to remove all the existing buildings, take down the old church and build a replica at Seafield, with another design of steeple according to plan; in consideration of disturbance make a gift of £1600 for increased endowment; and build a parochial hall to hold 300, and a suite of rooms. This offer was virtually accepted by the congregation, subject to the approval of the Presbytery. It was there rejected by a majority, but on appeal to the Synod the decision was reversed by a bare majority, and thereupon the Presbytery agreed to carry the case no further. The matter then ultimately rested with the Court of Teinds. In the matter of Highland Mary's grave a settlement was reached whereby a re-burial of the remains was made in Greenock Cemetery close to the international monument to James Watt. The remaining opposition was more easily disposed of.

Both Harbour Trustees and Corporation worked in harmony with Harland & Wolff throughout the negotiations, and came to terms in respect of property values in an amicable spirit and with the general interest of the town in view. In taking over the West Harbour the firm engaged to fill it up at their own expense. The dwelling-houses within the area of the scheme numbered 306, and of these 97 were one roomed and 163 two-roomed. Plans were prepared for the building of houses in the south and south-west of the town, Harland & Wolff giving £10,000 to assist in providing a transport service for the workers. There was a proposal in this connection to open up a new central thoroughfare from Hamilton Street up Buccleuch and Ann Streets, and a new main street 60 feet in width to the north and parallel with Cathcart and Hamilton Streets. It has been estimated that a town reconstruction scheme on the scale thus entailed would have cost the Corporation £250,000.

Public Access to Quays

By the Greenock Port and Harbour Order of 1920 the Harbour Trust obtained powers to fill up Cartsyke Harbour. East-end ratepayers organised a strong opposition, and presented a numerously signed petition at the inquiry. They insisted upon a right-of-way to Cartsyke Harbour, which was now the only approach to the water in the east-end that could be used by the public. The contention on behalf of the Trust was that the harbour had not retained its value, and that if filled up it would form useful ground for the extension of adjoining shipyards. The Trust was satisfied there was no right-of-way.

This movement on the part of the public had followed upon an agitation, bitter and exciting while it lasted, for the retention of free access to Princes Pier by way of Patrick Street Bridge. This question goes back about sixty years. It was apparently a grave concern to the authorities of that day that free access from Ker and Patrick Streets to the quays and harbours should be secured to the public as their right. In February, 1866, Provost Grieve, in laying on the table the agreement between the G. & S.-W. Railway Company and the Police Board regarding the temporary closing of West Blackhall Street between Patrick Street and Clyde Crescent for the formation of a goods depot, said that the public would suffer no disadvantage when Clarence Street was opened into Patrick Street, but would have free access to the quays from Patrick and Campbell Streets. Some months later he gave an assurance that he would see that the interests of the public would be attended to by the Town Council; and in the same year the town clerk was instructed to write to the Glebe Refinery Company for a draft of the conveyance of Ker Street in order that it might be opened up to the sea. At the Police Board in September, 1869, a motion by Mr. Robert Neill was agreed to "That the Greenock and Ayrshire Railway Company be required to execute and open to the public the work fourthly described in the 6th section of the Act of Parliament - namely, the raising of the north end of Patrick Street and the construction of the bridge so as to get a passage to the sea." The situation remained in possession of the public until 1913, in which year the Trust passed their Port and Harbour Consolidation Act, by which they were empowered to close by locked gates such of the piers, quays, or breasts of the harbours as they might think fit. These powers were put in force during the war as regards the access by Patrick Street. It came as a painful surprise to the public that their right no longer existed, and that the Act had been passed without any general knowledge or recognition of its bearing. At the close of the war the Trustees intimated their intention to continue the bar, but the agitation ended in a compromise whereby they agreed to allow the privilege of a narrow lane from Patrick Street Bridge to the pier, subject to certain restrictions as to hours, etc.

Increased Water Supply

In view of the anticipated extension of the town in the near future, the need of a greatly enlarged water supply, for many years one of the most pressing of local questions, became more imperative than ever. Two alternatives still presented themselves. The Corporation had either to come to terms with the mill owners on the line of the new eastern falls, or face a construction scheme at an outlay of something like £300,000. Negotiations had been going on periodically since the previous failure with the mill owners, and had been rewarded with success in every case but one, the exception being Messrs Neill, Dempster & Neill, sugar refiners. In the preparation of a Provisional Order dealing with a proposal to increase the limit of local assessments it was decided to include a clause asking for powers to arrange with this firm. The inquiry was held in Glasgow in August, 1921, and after three days' proceedings parties arrived at a private settlement in the following terms: "In consideration of the sum of £20,000,

to be paid to the petitioners, Messrs Neill, Dempster & Neill will surrender all their rights in the 1,200 cubic feet of water per minute which belongs to the new, eastern line of falls, and will be relegated to their water rights pertinent to the old eastern line of falls. They will further maintain the aqueduct which passes through their premises, and which for the future will convey for them only 1,200 cubic feet. It will at times convey more water in which they are not interested. They will maintain the aqueduct as at present, and continue their responsibility with regard to snow obstruction which has hitherto been incumbent upon them. On the other hand, their water rent, which they pay to the Corporation in respect of use and benefit of both, will be proportionately diminished."

It was stated that £17,500 had been paid to Messrs Fleming, Reid & Co. for their rights, and it was estimated that the total compensation to mill owners would amount to over £100,000. For this an additional 55 days' supply was obtained for the town, while the alternative scheme, that of new waterworks at £300,000, would have given an extra supply of 30 days. Power was also given to raise the Burgh General Assessment from 4s 10½d to 5s, the Public Health Assessment to 1s 6d, and stair lighting charges from 10s to 15s. It was explained by Mr. Nimmo, town clerk, that the special purposes of the assessment embraced maintenance of streets, halls, and the stipends of three parish ministers.

Chief Magistrates

The following is a list of the gentlemen who have held the office of Provost since the passing of the Municipal Reform Act of 1833: Robert Baine, 1833; James Watt, 1834; William Macfie, 1835; James Stewart, 1837; Adam McLeish, 1837; James Scott, 1838; Adam Fairrie, 1839; Walter Baine, 1840; Adam Fairrie, 1844; James Johnstone Grieve, 1846; Samuel Paterson, 1849; John Martin, 1852; T. O. Hunter, 1855; James Duff, 1858; James J. Grieve, 1860; James Morton, 1868; Robert Neill, 1871; Abram Lyle, 1876; Dugald Campbell, 1879; Edward Wilson, 1882; Robert Shankland, 1885; Walter W. B. Rodger, 1888; Dugald Shankland, 1893; Daniel M. Erskine, 1896; John Black, 1899; John Anderson, 1901; John Denholm, 1904; William Bentley McMillan, 1909; Thomas Mitchell, 1919. Messrs. James Stewart, James Scott, Samuel Paterson, John Martin, Robert Shankland, and John Black died while in office. Messrs. Walter Baine, Grieve, Hunter, Neill, Robert Shankland, Denholm, and McMillan held office for longer than the statutory period of three years, and Provost McMillan has the record of ten years' continuous service as head of the Corporation.

The Public Service

Few things in the written and printed records of the past stand out more clearly than the devotion and disinterestedness with which men of parts spent themselves for the benefit of the town. The leading citizens of yesterday, it must not be forgotten, were not engaged simply in carrying on social and municipal activities that had been rendered to their hands. They were in the throes of making and fashioning a community that was still far short of mature end and proportion. To-day we see a town that in most essential features is complete, whose actual and relative position, whatever may happen in expansion, is established on distinct and durable lines. One hundred years ago, say, the future presented problems of a highly complex kind, the difficulties and anxieties of which it is hard for us to imagine. The ways by which Greenock has come to its present stature and significance, looked at in retrospect, are by no means free from blunderings of a serious detriment to its local and national standing. We have to remember that in the most flagrant of mistakes honesty of motive was rarely impugned, and that there might easily have been public citizens of inferior foresight and ability to hand down a vastly greater legacy of ill-directed energy.

On this subject Weir says: "To our first Magistrates, etc., down to a late period, the inhabitants are under deep obligations. They watched with a parent's care the growing importance of the community, and it was not until 1796 that bickerings were heard at the Council table."

Personal Status

It has once and again been asserted that in respect of social position and culture the public representatives of recent generations compare unfavourably with their predecessors. It was but natural that with the expansion of the town and the widening of general interest in affairs the less opulent classes should aim at sharing in municipal work and honours. In 1874 it was stated editorially that "the general public have no doubt seen with a feeling of concern that our Town Council is now gradually falling in status. If this depreciation be allowed to go on without let or hindrance, the office of Councillor will speedily sink into contempt and the great interests committed . . . to our Town Council will correspondingly droop, and must ultimately fall into decay and ruin." Condescending upon a point of time at which a change in the character or class of the personnel of public bodies was first most obvious, we might with some reason fix upon the penultimate decade of last century. When the Municipal Buildings and the James Watt Dock had coincidentally been inaugurated, those schemes marked the climax of a glowing era in the town's material advancement. For the time being there was nothing further in magnificence or magnitude that remained to be attained. There followed a gradual withdrawal from public life of men who, for want of a more felicitous term, were referred to as of the better class, a withdrawal for which unhappily there were causes other than that of disinclination to continue in office. The way was thus more widely opened for citizens of less substance and prominence. In the composition of subsequent Town Councils the tradesmen and shop keeping element grew and ultimately became the governing majority. By a number of dismal prophets this was regarded as a grievous

lowering of status that boded ill for the proper administration of affairs. This remained an unfulfilled prediction, for in no essential quality in local government has this middle class been deficient.

In still more recent years, as one effect of the Socialistic tendencies of an extremist section of working-men, a new group has been introduced into the councils of the community. Of the men who compose this group it is too soon to utter judgment yea or nay, as they have yet to prove themselves justified of having been elected leaders of the people.

Lack of Leaders

While Greenock, as we say, has had no lack of devoted public men of business capacity, it is equally true that she of has rarely succeeded in throwing up really strong men in days of municipal exigency. In other circumstances than those which have been the prevailing force in shaping the course and history of the town, in circumstances more free of competing demands upon the energies of the able citizen, the genius in purely civic reform might well have emerged at moments of great need. The truth is that for very many years the town proper suffered from and was sacrificed to the interests of the port. It was evidently a ruling article in the creed of the times, for financial and other reasons, that both could not concurrently be raised to a high state of efficiency; and in the clash of interests persisting under this dual claim on loyalty of effort the harbours forced themselves upon the attention as of greater and more pressing import. This explanation can hardly apply to the period in which vast sums of money were lavished on the too ostentatious Municipal Buildings. So much more could then have been done in transforming the rugged and repulsive features of the old town and letting wholesome airs play more freely in its thoroughfares. It was a situation that called loudly for the man, unhappily in vain.

Parliamentary

The Reform Bill

Greenock was no less concerned and excited than other communities during the progress of the great Reform Bill. As early as November, 1830, the Magistrates on requisition convened a public meeting in the Town Hall, which was crowded to excess, the object "to secure to the people a full, fair, and free representation in Parliament." This, it was stated, was the first general meeting of the inhabitants that had ever taken place for the discussion of the question of Parliamentary reform, and until a very short period before it would have been considered an extraordinary and anomalous circumstance for any Magistrate to call such a meeting. A special compliment was paid to Sir Michael Shaw Stewart and his ancestors, who throughout had uniformly supported the cause of liberty. At the beginning of the following year the town petitioned for a Member, and a meeting was held in the Mid Church. On March 5 "the bell of the Mid Parish was immediately set in motion, and tolled a merry peal of the good news. A great concourse of people was called forth, and bands of young men, in the most orderly manner, for two hours paraded the streets with songs and cheering. Our amateur band of music caught the spirit-stirring infection and marched into town from the westward playing, in compliment to our most gracious Sovereign, the fascinating Scots air, 'Up and waur them a', Wullie.' "On the 27th of the same month the town was illuminated. According to the 'Advertiser' it was "in a universal blaze of light." But the most general and exuberant expression of popular enthusiasm was reserved for a great trades procession on May 9, in demonstration "that it is not to any one class of an intelligent population that the power belongs of thinking rationally on political subjects." There were 4000 people in the march, with 19 bands of music, 223 banners, and 186 working models and devices. The greater part of the trades assembled at the Villa Park, east-end of Crawfurdsdyke, and the line of procession was by the main thoroughfares, up Nicolson Street to Mr. Warden's park, where a hustings had been erected. Sir Michael on the occasion made the notable pronouncement that "there was nothing connected with the history of his family that he was more proud of than the liberal Charter which his respected ancestor, Sir John Schaw, had granted to the town, the powerful and abundant effects of which liberality were irresistible evidence of the status, and prosperity, and spirit, and independence of this great community, and amply realised Sir John's statesmanlike anticipations."

Greenock and Port Glasgow

In preparing the clauses of the Reform Bill of 1832 the Government proposed to embrace Greenock and Port Glasgow in one constituency Greenock rose in arms against the indignity, and in their turn those inhabitants of Port Glasgow who had strong local patriotism did not regard the proposal with high favour. In the words of the Greenock Town Council minutes, "A deputation was sent to London to use every exertion to prevent a conjunction so prejudicial to the local interests of Greenock." The Cabinet had the cases of both towns put before them in memorial, with lengthened statements of the facts and opinions. The 'Greenock Advertiser' of January 20 said: "It is rumoured that the threatened annexation of Port Glasgow to Greenock in the return of a Member of Parliament will not take place. A more unnecessary and inexpedient arrangement could not be thought of. We are informed that some of the Port Glasgow authorities have set out for Edinburgh to urge the Solicitor-General to use his influence with Ministers in support of the junction, but if our present information is well-founded they will find themselves at least a post too late." The 'Glasgow Courier' remarked: "The Liberals of Greenock are moving heaven and earth to prevent the annexation of Port Glasgow, but we may tell them that their labour will prove in vain." This newspaper believed also that Gourock was to be included in the Parliamentary constituency of Greenock.

Local Opposition

It was stated that a petition from Port Glasgow, signed by the great majority of the inhabitants, praying for a junction with Greenock, had been forwarded to the Lord Advocate. At a public meeting in Greenock Mr. Robert Baine said that the opposition to the proposal had not originated in any hostile feeling to Port Glasgow, but had been founded on the consideration that the extent of Greenock trade and population justly entitled them to a Member for themselves. It would have been strongly objectionable on account of their opposite local interests and the great influence that Glasgow would exercise. Mr. Wallace, M.P., gladly viewed the disjunction of Port Glasgow, the town and trade of which had his best wishes, one of which was that it might be dis severed from the overwhelming influence of Glasgow. Had Port Glasgow been joined to Greenock, the influence of Glasgow would have kept up a continual jealousy if not jarring with Greenock. A great deal had been said about the well-known jealousy between the two seaports. That the rivalry should continue and even increase would be highly gratifying to all liberal minds, provided it should be as to which place should be most carefully and most liberally governed.

Amalgamation Defeated

The proposal was not defeated without a strong effort by those in favour of it. In a further leader on the subject in May the 'Advertiser' said: "All we have to say on the subject is that Greenock is of sufficient importance to require the undivided labours of a representative for itself, and were it otherwise the deep-rooted jealousy which has so long existed between this town and Port Glasgow renders them the least likely of any places in the Empire to agree cordially in matters which concern the interests of either. As the leading men in the latter town are great admirers of virtual representation, we are surprised they should doubt for a moment that their interests will be sufficiently watched over by the Member for Glasgow, with whom they are already so intimately connected." In the House of Commons on June 13, on the question of the union, Sir Robert Peel enforced the claim of Port-Glasgow on the ground of its vicinity and common interests with Greenock. A rivalry was supposed to exist between the two towns. If such were the case, the best way to conciliate their differences and reconcile their animosities was by uniting them in a bond of a common representation. Lord John Russell thought Greenock should not be embarrassed by being united to any place, especially as the combination would be unpalatable and was not required to give a sufficient constituency. Greenock won its case by 73 to 47, and Port Glasgow was joined in the Kilmarnock Burghs, on which the 'Advertiser' remarked: "Upon the whole, we suppose our friends at the Port will be as well pleased, their chief anxiety having been to get out of the county constituency, in which they were afraid of being swamped."

Members

For fifty-three years after the passing of the Reform Act of 1832 Greenock was represented in Parliament by a succession of Liberal Members. The break in this line was one of the results of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1886, which split up the Liberal party and brought the Liberal-Unionists into being as virtual supporters of the Conservative cause. Previous to this the local Liberal citadel came nearest to a downfall in 1878, when Sir James Fergusson was within 19 votes of the successful candidate, Mr. James Stewart. In the complicated situation it was a remarkable escape, for there were no fewer than three Liberal aspirants; and yet, while one of them polled 108 votes only, the total Liberal majority over the Conservative was 1815. It fell to Mr. (afterwards Sir) Thomas Sutherland, the then sitting Member, who went into the Liberal-Unionist camp, to carry the seat against the remnant Liberal electors, and he held the constituency safe for the Unionists until his retiral in 1900. Mr. James Reid was the successor to Sir Thomas, and he was representative in the Parliament that dissolved in 1906. This was the year in which Mr. Halley Stewart restored the seat to the Liberals, who have since then retained possession.

The Candidates

The candidates at the first election were Mr. Robert Wallace of Kelly and Mr. John Fairrie, sugar refiner. Both stood in the Liberal interest, and the result was in favour of Mr. Wallace by 231 votes in a total poll of 755, the constituency 986. Mr. Wallace was in 1837 opposed by Mr. James Smith of Jordanhill, Conservative, who was defeated by 199. There was the narrower majority of 97 for Mr. Wallace in 1841, when his opponent was Sir Thomas John Cochrane, Conservative. An interesting episode in the course of this election was the issuing of a challenge to a duel between the candidates. A letter by Mr. Wallace in the 'Advertiser': "in the opinion of a committee man (Mr. Geo. Noble) of Sir T. Cochrane's - contained "very offensive expressions," and a demand was made to explain the reference. In reply Mr. Wallace wrote that he should "send a friend to wait upon you in order to learn the name of the person you shall appoint to act for you in settling the matter." In a subsequent note, in which he feared the intervention of friends on behalf of the law, he proposed to "change the scene from Greenock to Glasgow, where we could go expeditiously and unnoticed." The correspondence was submitted to Sir Thomas Cochrane's committee, who had further communication with Mr. Wallace, on whose part there was no withdrawal, and the affair came to an end with the publication of the letters previous to the polling day.

In 1845 Mr. Wallace accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and at the bye election two Liberals contested the burgh. These were Mr. Walter Baine (of Messrs. Baine & Johnstone, Greenock and Newfoundland merchants) and Mr. Alexander Murray Dunlop of Cornock, advocate, son of Mr Alexander Dunlop of Keppoch, at one time manager of the Renfrewshire Bank at Greenock. The contest was an extremely keen one, Mr. Baine winning by six votes. On the dissolution of Parliament in 1847 Mr. Baine did not seek re-election, and Mr. Dunlop was opposed by Viscount Melgund, afterwards Earl of Minto, also a Liberal. The latter was successful by 141 votes. Viscount Melgund did not return to Greenock for the election of 1852.

Protest and Petition

Mr. Dunlop made a third attempt, the opposing candidate being Sir J. D. H. Elphinstone, Conservative, who retired and under protest at one o'clock on the polling day, alleging that intimidation had been practised on his supporters. Nothing came of the protest. Mr. Dunlop, who earned for himself the title of the Member for Scotland, retained undisturbed possession of the seat until his retirement in 1868. In this year Mr. James Johnstone Grieve (then Provost of the town) and Mr. W. D. Christie (who was referred to as the Illustrious Stranger) fought for the seat as Liberals. The result was the return of Mr. Grieve by 850 votes, but it was petitioned against, and Lord Barncable, a Judge of the Court of Session, was engaged for several days in the case, which was heard at Greenock. Mr. Christie failed to establish his charges. Mr. Grieve was re-elected unopposed in 1874, and retired in 1877. At the bye-election in January, 1878, there were four candidates – Mr. James Stewart of Garvocks (of Messrs. J. & W. Stewart, ship owners and merchants, Greenock), Liberal; Sir James Fergusson, Bart. of Kilkerran, Conservative; Mr. (afterwards Sir) Donald Currie, Liberal; and Mr. W. D. Scott-Moncrieff, Liberal. Mr. Stewart was returned by 59 over Sir James Fergusson and by 535 over Mr. Currie, while Mr. Scott-Moncrieff polled 108 votes only. The Liberal majority over the votes given to the Conservative candidate was 1815. At the general election in 1880 Mr. John Scott of Halkhill, shipbuilder, came forward in the Conservative interest, and was defeated by Mr. Stewart by 1190. Mr. Stewart retired in 1884.

A Plebiscite

The electors were then introduced to Mr. Thomas Sutherland, chairman of the Peninsular & Oriental Steamship Company, which had an extensive shipbuilding connection with the town. A plebiscite was taken by the Liberal Association between Mr. Sutherland and Mr. John Neill, sugar refiner, the former receiving the support of the bulk of the Liberals in the constituency. The issue in this case was frankly influenced by what was termed the bread-and-butter or local interests policy. Mr. Neill was the leading Liberal of his day, and in other circumstances than those created by the appearance of a potential industrial benefactor the plebiscite would probably have been in his favour. Years afterwards, if he had wished, Mr. Neill could have become Liberal candidate, but while continuing a staunch supporter of the party he declined the honour. Mr. Sutherland was then opposed by Mr. Scott, who was on this occasion defeated by 1131. A general election followed in 1885, the candidates Mr. Sutherland, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Morrison Davidson, a London journalist of extreme Radical views, whose intervention threatened complications. Any alarm on this score proved needless. The result revealed at once a distinct growth of Conservatism and the hopelessness of an appeal outside of party lines. Mr. Scott was in the minority of 103 only, and Mr. Davidson polled 65 votes, which was said to be fewer than the number of his committee.

Unionist Victory

The election of 1886 was fought on the Home Rule Bill of Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Sutherland went over to the Liberal-Unionist side, taking with him a considerable section of his former supporters. This crisis marked the close of Mr. Scott's Parliamentary ambition. On the vital questions of the time his views and those of Mr. Sutherland were no longer in antithesis. The sitting Member was cordially received by the joint Conservative and Liberal-Unionist Associations. He was opposed by Mr. Harold Wright, London, whose defeat by 693 was not considered irretrievable.

A Blunder in Returns

The election of 1892 is memorable for an incident which, because of its utter unexpectedness, for the moment literally struck the Unionists with dismay. The candidates were (now) Sir Thomas Sutherland, K.C.M.G., and Mr. John Bruce, a young Liberal enthusiast from Aberdeen. In the course of the contest there had not appeared any strong reason for apprehension as to the safety of Sir Thomas. At the declaration of the poll the figures given were: Bruce, 2937; Sutherland, 2892; majority for Bruce, 45. It is impossible to convey any adequate impression of the feelings on either side. The Liberals were beside themselves with joy, unrestrained in its demonstration; their opponents were in dejected amazement. On an appeal by the Unionist agent, however, it was discovered that by a simple blunder of a supernumerary, the transfer of a packet of 50 voting papers, an erroneous declaration had been made. The returning officer hastened to rectify the error, which brought out the figures: Sutherland, 2942; Bruce, 2887; majority for Sutherland, 55. It would be ungracious to elaborate upon the altered attitude and sensations of parties. The Unionists, to their credit, refrained from making full capital out of the contretemps, while the Liberals, chastened in spirit and temporarily discouraged, were able to extract from the result a reasonable hope for the future.

Sir Thomas Retires

Sir Thomas Sutherland enjoyed one more contest before his retirement. This was in 1895, when his opponent was the well-known English journalist, Mr. A. E. Fletcher. An increase in the electorate of nearly 600 went in favour of the sitting Member, who came out ahead by 3,571 to 2,753. In the succeeding election in 1900 the fight was a local one, between Mr. James Reid, of Messrs. Fleming, Reid & Co., Merino Mills, and Mr. John MacOnie, of Messrs. G. & J. MacOnie, engineers, and a Town Councillor of long service. Both were worthy men, in high estimate with the public. Mr. MacOnie made a valiant effort to retrieve the seat for the Liberals. He was helped by Unionist abstentions and a noticeable waning in Liberal-Unionist sentiment, but neither of sufficient body to bring about the change. The result was: Reid, 3,166; MacOnie, 2,885; majority, 281.

Liberal Renaissance

It was left to an outsider to bring Greenock back to the Liberal fold. In 1906, when the electorate had increased from 7590 to 7821, Mr. Reid's opponent was Mr. Halley Stewart, a Parliamentarian of great force and eloquence, who roused the Liberals to heights of enthusiasm and carried the seat: Stewart, 3,593; Reid, 3,256; majority, 338. Mr. Stewart did not seek re-election in January, 1910. The candidates were then both new to the constituency: Mr. J. Parker Smith, an experienced and cultured Conservative, and Mr. Godfrey P. Collins, who was opening his political career. The contest resulted in the comparative rout of the Unionist, who sought in vain for the explanation: Collins, 4,233; Smith, 2,632; majority, 1601. In December of the same year, on the dissolution of Parliament, Mr. Samuel Chapman was selected as the Unionist champion. The constituency now numbered 8160, an increase of 307. Mr. Chapman improved the cause of his party by a few hundreds, but made no substantial impression upon the former majority: Collins, 4,338; Chapman, 2,913; majority, 1425. With the coming of the Franchise Extension Act of 1918, the election of that year presented a problem quite beyond the ordinary political forecast. The candidates were four in number: Mr. (now Sir Godfrey) Collins, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Fred Shaw, Socialist, and Mr. Neal Haughey, a local Labourist. With a constituency of 34,182, the poll was as follows: Collins, 10,933; Chapman, 7246; Shaw, 2542; Haughey, 2050.

Physical Features

Original Appearance

The inhabitants of to-day can scarcely realise that at no very remote period the hillsides of Greenock and district were thickly wooded. At their base, on the edge of the sea from Gourrock to Newark, ran a narrow roadway, ill-suited to any kind of travelling by foot or wheel, and not infrequently flooded by the incoming tide. In 1650 the slopes of Devol's Glen and its neighbourhood were richly planted with stately forest trees. At a much later date the wood of Ingleston is mentioned in feu titles as the southern boundary of a yard lying between it and the town, so that it must then have extended a long way towards the high road to Crawfurdsdyke. Amongst the conditions in feu charters was one that retained the Superior's right to cut down trees and ship them, and as recently as the second decade of the nineteenth century the 'Advertiser' displayed notices regarding cut timber from the Cartsburn estate.

Roads Unformed

As to the roads, even in 1768, when the Associate Church was built at Cartsdyke, the Port Glasgow members had to walk along a foot-track through a dense wood between the two towns. This intolerable state of pathways, which at many points were available only for foot passengers or riders on horseback, combined with the want of conveyances, sent travellers to the water where such means were within reach. It was not until the beginning of last century that a good road was formed between Cartsdyke and Gourrock, and it was about fifty years later before it was further improved at the instance of the Road Trustees, aided by loans from Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, whose farmers were put to work on the job and supplied horses and carts. The early farm steadings of the district were one-storey buildings of stone, with small glass windows, the roofs of heather or thatch (large quantities of heather being brought from Sir John Schaw's farms at Milligs, near Helensburgh), the fireplace in the centre of the kitchen, with a stone seat round the ingle, the smoke from the peat fire carried up through the centre of the roof. The farmers had great difficulty in the transit of goods to the markets of Paisley, Glasgow, and elsewhere, not only on account of the condition of the roads, but also from the absence of bridges. Those roads were originally of the General Wade order, and parts of them were not so long ago to be traced east and west of Greenock.

Town's First Aspect

With regard to the original appearance of the town itself, the West Burn served as a harbour for the fishermen, which became known as the Kris Burn, and a clachan sprang up round the Old Kris. Until comparatively recent years, indeed, lower Nicolson Street was, still being spoken of as the Kristen. Across the burn to the east stood a row of cottages, thatched with straw or heather, with gardens down to the waterside. Above was John Schaw's Mansion house, surrounded by trees, on the site of the later building not long since demolished through the operations of the Caledonian railway to Gourrock. From the Mansionhouse a row of fine trees led to a pleasant retreat at the top of the Whin Hill, which was covered with wood until 1782. On the site of the present Regent and other streets there was until 1809 a plantation known as Lovie's Wood. This was how the town looked about 1591, and it remained so with but little change for nearly one hundred years.

These facts supply sufficient reason why the early settlers, whatever other ambitions they may have had, could not regard the site as an encouraging one for the founding of a city. They could hardly be expected to visualise those hills, street upon street, covered by a terraced town. They probably felt no need, as they could see no way, of climbing out of their physical environment. And so, as in the case of every old seaport in the kingdom, they built their homes and their warehouses close against their ships and harbours, living and labouring in the atmosphere of the sea. In the bare records of three centuries we can trace the steps by which the town came through the ordeal of its simple upbuilding the first dim notions of design in house and street, the dawning sense of aims and ideals in structural harmony and expansion, the slow delivery from the bonds of servitude, self-imposed to some extent and long-enduring, to semi-primitive modes of existence, and at length the entrance to the better and more spacious conditions of modern times.

Feuing

It is established that the first feu in Greenock (that is, east Feuing. of the West Burn) was taken off in 1636, at the foot of the Broomy Brae, Broomhill, or Broomeyhill, a sort of commony near Hunter Place. The growth of the town then went on with a little vigour, and by 1669 a row of houses had been built where now runs Rue-end Street, and others, with gaps between, along the sea front towards the present West Quay. A second row began about the Bell Entry, with gables turned to the shore, and extending to a point near the Old West Kris. Not long after a group of houses was built on the line of what is now the Vennel, while here and there were isolated thatched cottages in straggling fashion.

Cartsdyke

In Cartsdyke the first feu was dated April, 1671, in favour of Andrew Simpson and Elizabeth Crawford, for ground on the shore; the next in 1673, to John Orr, joiner; and the third in 1674. On those conditions there was not much change for ten years or more. Sometime subsequent to the erection of a new Manor House by Mr. Crawford of Cartsburn in 1672, in the lane leading to it from the sea (known as the Stenners or Stanners), feus began to be given off with greater regularity, but it was not until well on in the eighteenth century that any great extension in building or laying out of streets took place. What was then the village of Cartsdyke or Crawforddsyke consisted of the hamlets or humble sheilings built by the Laird and occupied by his tenants, and were his property.

Slow Changes

In Greenock also for a long period the town consisted of one street from the West Burn to the Row, and of the Vennel southward to The Street, thence eastward to the Delling Burn. At this point was built one of the earliest houses on the Greenock estate, and for many years it was the only one east of the Royal Close. It stood on the east of the Delling Burn, at the foot of now Dellingburn Street. The feu to Robert Noble, merchant, is dated 1678, and it had a jetty a considerable distance into the water, as most feus had at the time. The house was standing until recently, with "R. N." and "J. W." (Jane Watson, his wife) as monogram on the stone apex of one of the dormer windows. In the Broomhill district one of the earliest feus was taken off for a candlework, in 1682, but immediately to the west of this there were then no houses, and only a few fronting the sea near the old Sugarhouse, in the end gable of one a light serving as a beacon to the herring busses coming into the harbour at night. An extensive bleaching green lay along the right hand of the West Burn, and through it ran the "hie road or passage" to the left of the Old Kirk.

The south side of the road for half the distance between Greenock and Port-Glasgow was wild and uncultivated, thick with brushwood, while the space on the north to the water edge was covered with brambles, whin, and broom. Within the town, where now are the warehouses of D. & A. Prentice & Co., was a springing heath on which the children danced and fishermen dried their nets. Mothers warned their daughters in their summer strolls not to venture farther west into the country than the farmhouse on the site now occupied by the Gaelic U.F. Church at Grey Place. The forest reached downhill to the back of the Mid Kirk, and the Mansion house fishpond lay in the hollow north of Armadale Place. A double row of old elms stretched from the top of Bank Street to Dellingburn Square, a clump of lime trees at Chapelton, and a double line of trees on the east side of Bank Street to the south of Roxburgh Street. The residence at Bank Top which latterly became that estimable institution the Working Boys' Home had originally a garden that reached to Regent Street, part of it about fifty years ago sold to Greenock Orangemen for Wellpark Church. Of the two dovecots that were then in Well Park one is still to be seen as the curator's office in the cemetery grounds. On the rising ground to the north-west, near the site of George Square, was a windmill, with farm-steadings in the near prospect - the two Kilblains, Ford, Upper and Lower Finnart, Murdieston, Holmscroft, Caddlehill, Branchalston or Brachelston, Drumfrochar, Cornhaddock, and Goldenhaddock. Other names of the time were Hallyards, Byerglen, Auchinmugton, Home's Croft, Darnemes, Engliston. This last is said to have had its origin in the settlement in the district of a number of English families. It looks as if in one of the above words we had the original form of present day Auchmountain. The West Burn was a clear-running rivulet with many a trout pool, in summer a meandering stream, in winter not seldom a roaring torrent. Farther southward was an ancient mill-dam, going back beyond memory and long ago removed. On the opposite side of the burn were green fields and pleasant gardens. On the east side, as the burn flowed to the sea, there grew up the busy commercial centre.

Old Houses and Lanes

One of the oldest of the houses here was that of James Warden, shipmaster, whose family is still honourably represented in the district. A member of the family, we believe, Peter Warden, was for many years secretary of the Lower Ward Agricultural Society, and at a presentation to him in 1858 it was stated that for more than 300 years his ancestors had rented the farm of Nether Murdieston and that the Wardens were the oldest tenants on Greenock estate. This long tenancy by a representative of the family ceased in 1895. The house, at the south-west corner of the Vennel foot where it joins Dalrymple Street, was one of the most venerable in the district, with crow-step gables and dormer windows. The adjacent Harvie Lane, running from Dalrymple Street to Hamilton Street, was long known as John Harvie's Close, after a Flesher of that name, whose feu on the east side was given off in 1686, and also as John Rae's Close, after a hammerman whose feu was on the west side. More recently it was called Tanwork Close, from Park's tanwork. It was also spoken of as the Tannery or Dirty Close, and again as Fox Lane, for Charles James Fox, of whom Sir John Schaw Stewart was a great admirer. This honour was later transferred to Fox Street in the west-end, and the most recent name of the lane was Hunter Place, given in recognition of the

services of John Hunter, Councillor and Magistrate, who did much to open up and sweeten the congested areas of the town by the removal of many old thatched houses of early Greenock. One of these, a ground floor and attics, with the date 1669 over the lintel of the door, as late as 1831 stood a little to the westward at the foot of Harvie Lane.

New Town Feus

In what was then called the new town the first feu was taken New off by Captain Andrew Anderson, who in 1710 built a house at Town the corner of Kilblain and Nicolson Streets, on ground described Feus as lying on the south side of the street laid off from the Long Vennel to head towards "Gurrock." After 1712 the feus contained a contract that the houses should be covered with slate, about the first so slated having been that of Robert Paterson, butcher, in 1710, on the north side and west end of New (Dalrymple) Street. The term was variously applied as slate, sclar, and scaley or scalie. None of the earlier feu contracts made any stipulation with regard to the street, height of houses, or the mode of roofing, and the liberty of the harbours was conferred for the payment of the accustomed dues of all ships, barques, and boats owned by feuars or tenants.

Oldest Existing House

The oldest existing building in Greenock is believed to be the dwelling house and store which forms the corner of Cross-Shore and Shaw Streets. The date 1716 is cut into the stone above one of the doorways. It is said that the house was originally an inn, that the first meetings of the Town Council were held in it and that from its door the stage coach from Glasgow for many years started for its daily run. The original feu contract mentions, "John Spier, merchant in Grinok, was granted permission to erect a tenement and weir upon the north side of the High Street."

Mid-18th Century

It was near the middle of the eighteenth century before the shore ground to the eastward began to be feued and the front of the now Victoria Harbour to be taken up, a portion westward to the East India Harbour site continuing vacant. Opposite Virginia Street was known as the Murrays or Marrows, after the Murray Stones, two large rocks on the shore, now covered over by warehouses. Westward from this to the Open Shore all was still the beach, and with few exceptions on to the Mid Quay, beyond which were the earliest feus, between East Quay Lane and William Street. Many of the houses had apparently been built by the Superior, old feus referring not to feuars but to tenants. There were still many blanks from the east side of the Long Vennel to the west side of Mid Quay Head, the oldest houses on the south side, many of them long open to the sea.

A Westward Current

About this time some of the more successful merchants were selecting sites for better and more suitably placed residences beyond the confines of the old town and its narrow and already partially congested lanes. A network of closes had grown up, some of which existed to our own day, amongst the best known or most notorious being Drummer's, Buchanan's, Mince Collop, Split, Minister's, Taylor's, Baron Galbraith's, Jibboom Square, Quarter Cape, etc., all now gone to make room for the new Municipal Buildings. On one of those feus, at the south-west corner of William Streets, was the house in which James Watt was born in 1736. It was removed over a century ago, the subsequent building was also demolished, and the site is now occupied by a handsome edifice and effigy to his memory. The Minister's Close was on a part of the site of the Town Buildings, fronting Dalrymple Street. It and all the others similarly named as closes were in their day occupied by citizens of the highest respectability. Rev. John Shaw, first minister of the Mid Parish, resided in Longwell Close before the manse was built in 1766, in a house owned by his wife, Agnes Hendry, daughter of Hugh Hendry, cooper.

A Planless Town

In Cartsdyke, as in Greenock, the early houses were built without any plan or restriction on style. The only or principal restriction was that they should front the line of street or shore road, and this to a large extent was strictly adhered to. Hence for many years the row of houses on the south side in Cartsdyke faced St. Lawrence (Cartsdyke) Bay, with no continuous range on the north side to interrupt the view. The liberty to build bulwarks to defend the feus from the encroachment of the sea must have been very generally exercised, for the flood tide frequently flowed up to the high road, as it did also for a considerable distance in Greenock before the jetties and harbours were thrust out towards the channel. All of those old houses were built of stone quarried in the neighbourhood. This stone was also used in the breasts of the harbours, in the building of the Mid Kirk, etc., and specimens of what were called weather stones are still in old tenements in Shaw, Market, and Dalrymple Streets.

Architecture

In a special reference to the old houses Williamson states that those on the south side of Main Street, Cartsdyke, were with few exceptions of uniform architecture, although by no means bearing the look of hoary age betrayed by the line that extended from William Street east to Cross-Shore Street, which contained styles co-eval in age and similarity in structure, particularly in the old dormer attic windows, with their prototypes in the older portions of the old Mansion house of Greenock. There is nothing in Crawfurdsdyke (he says) at all resembling those old tenements, if we except three old houses at the foot of the Knowe, one of which is claimed to have been the abode of Jean Adam, authoress of "There's nae luck about the hoose." Those three have each the characteristic nepus gable, with a window alternately to east and west. This peculiarity is observable in the Greenock houses,

particularly in Market Street, south side, in which exist unique and uniform specimens. There long stood a continuous row of houses on the north side of the High Street of Crawfurdsdyke, amongst the older one known as the Beggars' Land, the haunt of vagrants, sturdy beggars, and disreputable characters, whose presence was a plague spot, only got rid of by long and persevering exertions on the part of the authorities.

Feu Contract Conditions

Some of the old feus were granted under seemingly hard conditions, as for instance, "It shall not be lawful to erect a tanwork, soap or candle work, Kirk of Relief or Sunday meeting-house, play house, or house for a concert of music or interlude, or any kind of nuisance whatever, without the consent of the Superior or his foresaids, under pain of forfeiture." Then all the old feu charters of Greenock and Cartsburn contained stringent clauses obliging the vassals to bring their grown corn to be grinded at the mills of the Superior, the latter being bound to provide wind, water, or other mills or engines for the purpose and the services of a miller. The multure dues formed a material source of income, and consisted of a quantity of grain either ground or in kind. Tenants, cottars, and feuars were also bound by their charters and tacks to give attendance three times a year at the Mansion house, where Head Courts were held, and at all other Courts when duly warned. At those Head Courts the Baron Bailies issued decrees and sentences for the recovery of feu-duties and exactions, which were enforced by distraint of the goods and gear of both feuars and tenants.

Spreading Wings

During the life-time of Lady Cathcart and her son, ninth Baron Cathcart, great encouragement was given to the formation of streets and harbours and to the erection of public buildings; and in consequence there ensued a period of considerable activity in this respect in the closing half of the eighteenth century. His Lordship himself employed architects and surveyors, and put himself to much personal trouble and expense in having his plans carried out with precision and adherence to the rules of prevailing correct taste. To his enterprise, public spirit, and liberal expenditure, we are told, the town was indebted for the formation of Cross-Shore, William, Cathcart, Hamilton, Market, Charles, and other streets, and for many improvements in the re-building of old houses. All his plans were submitted to Sir John Schaw, who is said to have had the utmost confidence in Lord Cathcart's judgment and administrative ability. About 1744, for instance, John Alexander, Baron Bailie and factor to Sir John Schaw and Lord Cathcart, feued a large piece of ground between the Mid Quay and the Long Vennel, encouraged the erection of stores and cellars at Bell Entry, extensions of the harbour works, the establishment of a Post-Office, the institution of a meal market, feuing for the Mid Parish Church and manse, the deepening of the river, cleansing of the harbours, etc.

Street Opening

Cathcart Street, originally a turnpike road 18 feet broad, was planned in 1758, and the earliest feu after the church and manse was in 1757, immediately to the east of the Bank of Scotland buildings. At this time Cathcart Square and the upper part of William Street were occupied by gardens. A genteel family house of two storeys was erected a little back from the line of street, a building afterwards long tenanted by the Royal Bank of Scotland before being replaced by a new structure. Next to be opened was Market Street (from the Flesh Market, built in 1764), which was then variously referred to as Church Lane, Fleshers' Row, and Butcher Row. In 1765 the Town Council built a Town House in Hamilton Street, on the site of the present Municipal Buildings. The house with five gables, corner of Dalrymple Street and Taylor's Close, next to Jibboom Square, was one of the old buildings to go at the later date. An early feu at the south-west corner of Smith's Lane and Market Street was long occupied as the anti-Burgher Kirk, and on the front of the building (tenement and public house) is the inscription, "Wee Kirk Buildings, erected 1758, re-built 1842." Nearby in Hamilton Street an old house, taken down over eighty years ago, bore the date 1769 on its crow-step gable, and even older dates were found on adjoining properties.

Views of Old Town

There is a view of Greenock in 1768, by a member of the Academy of Glasgow, an engraving of which became the property of Sheriff-Substitute William Steele, of Dumbarton, who gave permission to the Watt Club to take a lithograph of it, a few copies going to club members and friends. To the west of the Mid Church it shows the West Burn, its bridge surrounded by a cluster of very humble dwellings; on the south the windmill, from which the Windmill Croft (now George Square) took its name. The rock Leo (from its resemblance to a lion, seen at certain states of the tide) stands out eastward from the Steamboat Quay, and at the Open Shore is what was known as Bailie Donald's house, which at the middle of last century remained absolutely unchanged. At this date, 1768, there was no proper thoroughfare by Cathcart and Hamilton Streets. A passenger coming from Cartsdyke found his way along shore (now Shaw and Dalrymple Streets) to the foot of the Vennel, which led to the Inverkip Road, and by Kilblain Street to the high (then the only) road to Gourack. An old lady who resided in the Vennel told a relative (1840) that she remembered seeing wheat growing where the Masons' Lodge buildings stood, and that there was nothing but a tree here and there to interrupt the view of the river.

An important feu granted by Lord Cathcart was the large acreage to John Scott for his shipyard. It consisted of three parts, the first in 1787, the second in 1788, and the third in 1799. In 1788 ground at the north-east corner of Charles and Hamilton Streets was sold to the Masonic Lodge Mount Stuart Kilwinning, and soon after was built the Masons' Hall, the principal entrance to which was by a wide staircase from Hamilton Street.

New Town Plan

When in 1752 John Stewart, son of Sir Michael, third Baronet, was served heir to the Greenock estate, there were not many new grounds to feu within what were termed the Cathcart boundaries, or originally the town of Greenock - that is, within the limits east and west of Royal Close and the West Burn. Along with large portions of land there had been certain dwelling houses, offices, etc., reserved by Sir John Schaw from his daughter's feu-rights, and these were not confined to one locality, but stood irregularly over the grounds included in the rights. East Quay Lane, previously New Street, was amongst the first thoroughfares to be opened up and built upon during the early part of this period. On the demolition of a house at the west corner the joisting was found to be quite sound, and the window lintels inside (some of mahogany), originally used as part of a ship, as fresh as on the day on which they had been inserted. In 1780 John Shaw Stewart had a survey and plan made of the town, laid off a great part of the adjacent ground regularly for building upon, and feued a number of steadings, where several good houses were built, part of which was to be known as the new town of Greenock.

Bridges

The subject of bridge-building was by this time greatly exercising the minds of the inhabitants, who had so many small streams to ford in the course of their daily travelling Lady Burn, Strone or Craigieknowes Burn, Crawford's or Carts Burn, Dailing, Delling, or Da Ling Burn, West Burn, Glen Burn, Jerdan's Burn, and Finnart Burn. A bridge was thrown across Finnart Burn, near Mr. Scott's shipyard, in 1740, the first erection of the kind in the neighbourhood, two other bridges over the same stream following some time later. For nearly forty years after, however, there was no bridge at the east end of the town, the rudder of an old ship serving the purpose at Delling Burn until about 1780. The bridging of the West Burn at its lowest point took place prior to 1751, and the high bridge was undertaken in 1777. We find from the Town Council minutes of May, 1786, that feuars petitioned in favour of a bridge across the West Burn from Sugarhouse Lane, but the Council, having regard to the fact that "the inhabitants of Kilblain had with the aid of the Superior built a bridge over the burn upon the road leading to Gourrock without any aid from the public funds, they could not with any propriety give any aid to build the intended bridge, especially as the town funds are in no better situation now than when Kilblain Bridge was built, and that the intended bridge is not of the same utility to the public." But the bridge had to be built with or without the help of the town funds, and it is gratifying to note that five years later the Council were in a more generous mood and subscribed £20 to this object. A few months later attention was drawn to the "ruinous situation and narrowness of the old bridge over the West Burn, whereby the inhabitants passing that way are in danger owing to part of the bridge falling down; "and it was resolved to apply for some county money for repairs or for a new bridge. In the following century the more rapid increase of population and the expansion of the town made it essential that safe passages over the streams should be publicly provided, and from time to time the means of crossing were increased and made more substantial for all kinds of traffic. The Cartsburn Bridge at Arthur Street was built in 1814; that over the West Burn at Shaw Street in 1855, at a cost of £400.

Names of Streets

Street nomenclature was almost entirely neglected until the concluding quarter of the eighteenth century. At a meeting of the Town Council in August, 1775, the following resolution was passed: "Considering that it is necessary that the streets have names to distinguish them, agreed as follows: The large street from the Row End to the Mide Quay, Shaw Street; from the Mide Quay to the bridge, Dalrymple Street; from the Row End to the Square, Cathcart Street; from the Square to the Mide Quay, William Street; from the place where the Poultry Mercate is kept to the Flesh Mercate and westward, Mercate Street; the street leading from the Laigh Street (once the Hie Street) to the head of the Long Vennel, Charles Street." Cathcart and Hamilton Streets had each in its turn come to be spoken of as the High Street, and at one time comprised what was known as the back side of the town. It has been generally understood that Charles Street was previously named Herring Street because of the herring curing trade carried on there, but Williamson believed that the origin was much older and had been given in connection with the old Royal House a little to the east of Charles Street, the tack of which was granted in 1765, the primary object of which was the curing and storing of herring, and from which building a passage to the West Burn led across this street.

In Cartsdyke for a long time the only street that existed was first called simply The Street, then the High Street or King's Highway. Later there was the Stenners or Stanners leading to the Manor House. This continued to be the state of things till near the end of the eighteenth century, when the commonly known as the Earn was intersected by Arthur, John, and Cartsburn Streets (the last for a long time known as Foundry Lane), etc. This Earn, Earne, Iron, or Irn was a park of five acres lying between the Crawford's dyke feuars' gardens and the Cartsburn policy, occupied as a commonly or used for bleaching or gardens. It is now intersected by the Caledonian railway and by Arthur, John, and St Lawrence Streets, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century it stretched towards the high ground to the south-east of the bridge over the burn. In 1800 there was a garden scheme proposal for the ground, but the physical difficulties through irregularity of formation intervened to prevent the undertaking. St. Lawrence Street was supposed to have been named from the Bay; Williamson, on the other hand, inclines to the view that it was probably after Major-General Lawrence Crawford, and points to the fact that many of the other streets were named for members of the family.

In this naming of streets the authorities have, as a rule, from time to time followed four principal lines of obvious suggestion, in which the territorial families take precedence, after them in order Royalty and leading statesmen, naval and military heroes, and local celebrities and trade connections. A glance over our present-day Post Office Directory makes this so clear that, excepting in a few obscure instances, the origins of our street nomenclature are almost self-disclosed. Royalty is represented in George (once Kilblain) Square, after George III; Regent (first Prince Regent), York, and Clarence Streets. Of territorial derivation are Dalrymple (after Margaret Dalrymple, Lady Shaw), Margaret (Margaret Stewart, who married Sir William Maxwell of Springkell), Stewart, Nicolson, Shaw, Ardgowan, Blackhall, Houston, Sir Michael, Carnock, Bogle (Robert Bogle, merchant, Glasgow, who married Agnes, daughter of Sir Archibald Stewart of Blackhall, first Baronet), etc. The list named for Dukes, statesmen, etc., includes Hamilton, Argyle, Nelson, Fox, Bedford, Wellington, Newton, Bentinck, Brougham, Eldon, Grey, Kelly (Robert Wallace of Kelly), Lynedoch, Brisbane, Maxwell (Sir John of Pollok). Streets and lanes called for first feuars—Robertson, Laird, Ann, Watson's, Lindsay's, Crawford, Boyd, Campbell, Johnstone, Forsyth, Ker, Dempster, Home's Croft, Bearhope, Duncan. Chapel Street was at one time spoken of as Pond Park Street, Roxburgh Street as Alexander Street; in 1831 Williamson Street was named after Mr. Geo. Williamson, writer and historian; Crawford Street after John Crawford, cooper, the first feuar there from Lord Cathcart in 1768. It was at that time known as Kirk Burn Lane. Until 1850 what is now Bentinck Street was Martha Brae; South Street was substituted for Ford Road; there was a Puddock Row near the top of Inverkip Street; Bearhope Street was named after old Ann Bearhope, whose house was below the school.

Road Repairing

As the town was now fast extending in various directions, east, south, and west, the authorities were becoming more conscious of the need for close attention to the condition of the streets and of the roads that led in from the neighbouring country. It would appear that prior, say, to 1770 this duty had been performed in a perfunctory way. But in May, 1774, as evidence of a more vigorous spirit and intention, an advertisement was "put through the towns of Greenock and Crawfurdsdyke that the Magistrates and Council are now appointed overseers of the road betwixt Greenock and Port Glasgow, and commanding all persons to remove all kinds of timber, dung, and rubbish, or other nuisances, off the street, road, and lanes in the town, otherwise they will be punished according to the Act." In the same year the old parish road towards Gourock leading away from Kilblain Street was improved. An extract from the Council minutes of June 27, 1775, makes it plain that the inhabitants had to do much more than simply pay the taxes to meet the outlays on this work: "The clerk was instructed to warn out the inhabitants of the town and parishes of Greenock, excepting the inhabitants of the Western Barony, to work upon the road leading from Greenock to Port Glasgow, beginning at the Devol's Glen Burn, and they are to work westward upon the 6th, 7th, and 8th days of July next. Archibald Turner, shoemaker, appointed to oversee the people working." Another similar call out was made at the beginning of August, and quarterly reports had to be sent in to the justices. A new road was in 1777 formed from the west-end of the town to the Hole Burn, shortly thereafter a road to Gourock by the windmill to the Cove Burn, where the parish of Greenock ends, and sums were being expended on the road between Greenock and the Auld Kirk.

Port Glasgow Road was the occasion of considerable trouble through the failure of contractors and the insufficiency of upkeep. In 1780 the contractor had so far neglected his work that another person had to be employed to fill up the holes and ruts and scour and clean all the sivers, Greenock to bear two-thirds and Port-Glasgow one-third of the expense. At the close of the century the road was still in a bad state, and "so narrow that scarcely any money could keep it up." The widening of it became an absolute necessity, and there was a proposal to the Road Trustees that it should go by way of Crawfurdsdyke dock. By May of 1802 a good road was formed, Greenock's share £700, and the policy of street causewaying made a start. In 1804 £1,500 was borrowed for the road to Inverkip, estimates were taken for that from the Auld Kirk to Kelly Bridge, the "Clough" "Road from Gourock to Sir John's poultry house was under way, and the authorities were for a time in a state of doubt whether the Greenock to Gourock Road should go by West Stewart or Blackhall Street. On this point a Council committee consulted whether they should "depart from the present line and adopt that laid down on Sir John's new plan," and within two days they judged it better to acquiesce in the latter, on the express condition that Sir John should give the ground occupied by the road, but making no charge. The lower road to Gourock was accordingly formed.

Brisker Movement

Feuing was proceeding apace in widely separated districts of the town while these essential amenities were demanding attention - in St Andrew Square, the Deer Park, Virginia Street, and in the neighbourhood of George Square. One of the first feus to be taken off in this square was that to-day occupied by the Middle U.F. Church. A year after, in 1790, there followed the Gaelic Chapel and the Anti-Burgher Chapel in Nicolson Street and in 1802 the Associate meeting house in Inverkip Street. About the same time, on the west of the Delling Burn, a range of houses was built, and stores on the other side of Rue-end Street. Tenements were also going up in Allison's Lane (so called from John Allison, mason, the first feuar), afterwards named Sir Michael's Lane, then Sir Michael Street. It could still be said of the town that it was not remarkable for regularity of street plan, while the actual general conditions were even more defective, particularly in the low parts, where in various places the streets were further narrowed by projections from the line. Up till 1805 West Shaw Street was unopened, but feus were then being advertised as leading from that street by the Anti-Burgher Kirk to the avenue of Greenock House, along Shaw Place before the crest of the hill had been cut away, or by Regent Street. In this year the Independent Chapel was

built, in 1807 the Relief Church and the Infirmary, and for a number of years following several other important buildings in different parts of the town. Amongst these was the mansion in Ardgowan Square now the Tontine Hotel. It was built in 1808 by Mr. George Robertson, and is probably the oldest mansion in Greenock. The site was formerly occupied by a windmill for grinding corn, the first mill of the kind, it is believed, in this district. In a water-colour picture soon after the erection of the house it is shown as the most westerly of town buildings. Mr. Robertson is said to have been the first in Greenock to own a private carriage and to possess a piano. In February, 1820, the 'Advertiser' noted "with satisfaction the improvement which the town has received by the formation of an excellent footpath from Kilblain along Nelson Street to Brakelston, from thence by Roxburgh Street to the East Church. These operations answer the double purpose of opening up a pleasant and healthful outlet to the country and of occupying upwards of 100 persons out of regular employment."

One Hundred Years Ago

We can see that the town of a hundred years ago, in its streets, buildings, and area of occupation, was a vastly different place from that of to-day. It is not easy for us to realise, for instance, that at a point of time so comparatively recent almost the whole of the ground west of the West Burn was still the country side, that West Shaw Street on to the Well Park marked practically the limit of the township southward, the hills rising back to a height at Corlic of 995ft. above sea level, and that Cartsdyke consisted of little more than a line of houses on the fringe of the shore that ended far short of its eastern boundary. The situation of the time is accurately shown in a plan of the town and its environs, with the intended improvements, designed by David Reid in 1818 on the instruction of the Superiors and the Local Authorities. Greenock proper was densely packed with dwelling houses and business premises, bounded on the south from Nelson Street at the corner of West Shaw Street to Ann Street, thence to Market Street, Cathcart Street, on to Virginia Street, between which and Mansion House Street (now Terrace Road) was a cluster of warehouses and dwellings, while farther eastward the buildings were almost entirely confined to the shore road along to the Bottle Works near Garvel estate.

The West End

This feuing plan was the beginning of an undertaking that aimed at laying off a new town of ambitious extension, with the lines of streets marked and named, from the West Burn to the Battery on the west, southward to the foot of the Whinhill, and up to Hillend in the Cartsdyke district. The West-end was then very sparsely built upon. There were but a score or so of houses, amongst the larger Finnart (Mr. Scott), Caddlehill (Mr. Thomson), The Glen (Bedford Street), the mansion of Mr. Robertson (now Tontine Hotel), Fergusland (on the high road to Gourock, west of Madeira Street), Rosebank (Mr. McCall), Seabank (Mr. Johnstone), Glen Park (Mr. McNaught), Seafield (Mr. Silveira), west of Jardine's Burn, the Drums Farm, far in the country; and a few others. Finnart House was built in 1813 by Mr. James Hyde, merchant, at which time there was no other house in the immediate neighbourhood. In 1820, while Mr. Hyde was in Honduras, it was sold to Mr. Christopher Scott, then a merchant in St. Andrews, New Brunswick. On Mr. Scott's death in 1834 the property passed to his brother, Mr. John Scott of Halkhill, shipbuilder, who occupied it until his death in 1837, when it came into the possession of his son John, who lived to 1864, and it was then sold to Mr. Robert Blair, sugar refiner. Shortly thereafter it was taken over by Mr. Andrew Ramsay, and a little later it descended to Mr. John Crawford Hunter, rope and sail manufacturer. It was afterwards tenanted by Mr. J. Campbell Hart, banker, and Mr. John Cameron, solicitor and Burgh Fiscal; and recently it was purchased by the Education Authority to be fitted up as a special school for defective children. To the general regret the grounds have been entirely denuded of the fine old trees that marked the enclosure as one of the charming spots of the neighbourhood. The old toll-bar stood on the Low Gourock Road (now Eldon Street), between Margaret and Fox Streets. Starting eastward from the Battery, Whitefarland Point, there was no other erection on the shore line up to Rosneath Street, at which were the powder magazines; next, past Madeira Street, at the corner of Maxwell Street (which ran from the Esplanade to Union Street, but was closed many years ago), and two or three villas from this to Margaret Street.

This was the westmost point of the Bay of Quick, which extended to Ker Street, the most inland part of it on a line midway between Campbell and Robertson Streets and reaching to about the gusset at what is now the Gaelic U.F. Church, thence sweeping outward on the easterly side on a line with Ker Street. The streets in this neighbourhood shown on the map began with Clyde Crescent, at Robert Hunter's woodyard; East Clyde Street went on to Ropework Street, near which were John Scott's shipyard, dock, and basin; from the west end of Dalrymple Street were several slips (Hunter's, Robert Baine's, etc.); groups of warehouses and other buildings filled up the distance to the West Quay; beyond the West Harbour were the new Customhouse, the East Harbour, Dempster's wood yard, the shipyard of Wm. Simons & Co., John Haddow & Co.'s wood yard, Steele's shipyard and basin, Robertson & Hunter's wood yard at the east side of Cartsdyke Bay, and finally Garvel estate and the Park House. Upper Ingleston was a lonely spot on the hillside, not a building between it and St. Andrew Square, the intervening ground covered by wood and shrub. Beside the burn of its name Cartsburn House stood out, the corn mill farther up the stream, still higher the flour mill, at the west end of the present Belleville Street, and off to the north-east Hillend House, the nearest building to it in St. Lawrence Street, from which a stretch of gardens ran down to Main (or High) Street.

The principal buildings of that date were the Customhouse, Infirmary, White Hart Hotel (corner of Cathcart Square), Tontine Hotel (present Post-Office on the site), Renfrewshire Bank (west side of Well Park), Assembly Rooms,

Cathcart Street, with Theatre behind, Town House and Sheriff Court in Hamilton Street, Free School in Ann Street, Prison Buildings, eleven churches or meeting-houses - Old West, Mid, East, Gaelic Chapel, Relief, Tabernacle, Methodist, Anti-Burgher, Roman Catholic, and two Burghers.

Mansions and Villas

The originators of the 1818 town planning scheme were doubtless men with long views in their ideal of development, otherwise they could hardly have been elated at the measure of progress in the next twenty years. It is true that Weir, whose "History of Greenock" was published in 1829, wrote in glowing terms on this very point. He says that at this date the town, although having a rather irregular appearance, contained many excellent buildings. It was evidently stretching towards the west and many places which had been considered quite retired and in the country formed part of the streets. Those streets that had recently been planned were spacious and forming rapidly. A number of beautiful villas were scattered from east to west, and gave the stranger a highly favourable idea of the wealth as well as of the taste of the inhabitants. Many villas were also seen along the shore, and the minds of the public were becoming fascinated with a great Esplanade scheme, projected by a joint-stock company, to include within its scope the then untouched Bay Of Quick and the entire shore ground westward to the Battery. Mr. Allan Park Paton wrote a highly encouraging letter to the 'Advertiser' on this subject. "In the plan of Greenock," he said, "there is laid off a street round the Bay of Quick called Clyde Crescent, and from it along the river-side to the Battery another called Clyde Street, both apparently about 40ft. or 50ft. wide. Those streets would form by far the finest and healthiest promenade in Scotland, if not in the kingdom. Looking upon what is admitted to be scenery unequalled for beauty, the minds of our working-classes would grow in taste and elevation and their bodies gain in health from the improved dwellings it is now intended to provide for them." This, so far as we have been able to find from the town records, is the first suggestion from which grew the concrete scheme of the Esplanade. As in the case of many other attractive ideals, there were visions of comfort and wellbeing for the working-classes, more practicable than the Utopian proposal of workmen's cottages on the sandbank, yet doomed to a similar fate. To the families who sought to escape from sordid lanes and foetid airs the joint-stock company was a brilliant flash in a drab sky. Thirty years later, when the Bay of Quick had become a memory and the Harbour Trust fashioned the Esplanade with the debris from Albert Harbour, the dream of dwellings for working-men had apparently no place in the minds of the authorities, who by then perhaps were more inclined to conserve the amenities of the well-to-do who were rapidly feuing favourable villa sites along the remaining shore.

The Southward Trend

But that for some time longer there was no general movement westward on the part of the monied families we have reliable data in a subsequent town plan, prepared in 1838-42 from an actual survey by Andrew Macfarlane, Glasgow. In the lapse of years from 1818 the most marked of the changes on the town were confined chiefly to the working-class districts, whole streets having filled up with tenements on the line of least resistance southward, situate between Inverkip Street and Shaw Place, at some points reaching beyond Holmscroft Street. In and about Shaw Place a few buildings only had been erected, overtopped by Crow Mount Wood, still clear apart from any building. The growth of the west end had been inappreciable, and most apparent near the river. From Battery Point to Forsyth Street there were now twenty-seven villas or mansion-houses, Battersea, Western Villa, and Clydebank among the most prominent. On the hill-slope were Beltrees, Finnart Cottage, and several less imposing, but there was still nothing west of Bagatelle on the Low Gourrock Road. The mansion of Bagatelle was built in 1830-31 by Mr. James Hunter Robertson, youngest son of Mr. George Robertson, of the property in Ardgowan Square that is now the Tontine Hotel. It was destroyed by fire in 1843, and the new building was in 1844 sold to Mr. Walter Washington Buchanan and Mr. George Washington Buchanan, founder of the Buchanan Institute; in later years it was occupied by Provost W. W. B. Rodger and on his death by Mrs. Rodger. South of Union Street, where on this plan Ardgowan Square is marked off with a bowling green and curling pond, a building was shown here and there only, and the whole length of Nelson Street was still an almost entire blank. Ardgowan Square was laid off as a pleasure ground and place of amusement in 1841. Sir Michael Shaw Stewart gifted two acres free of annual charge for a bowling green, curling rink, and quaiting ground; and there was an expressed hope that this might form the germ of a botanic garden.

The Industrial Aspect

The river front from Campbell Street to the Garvel estate was a great hive of industry and commerce, a continuous line of shipyards, wood yards, timber ponds, rope works, cooperages, sugar-houses, sawmills, docks, etc. Of the shipyards, that of Mr. Gray was at the west corner of Campbell Street, of Mr. Johnstone at the foot of Robertson Street, of Mioress & Clark east of Ropework Lane, next Scott & Co.'s (where there was a wooden effigy of Nelson perched in the north-east corner); on the other side of the East Harbour the shipyards of Duncan, Simons, McMillan, Steele, and a second Duncan yard on the site of Scott & Co.'s present east yard. In the centre of this compact mass, and also adjacent to the river, were Scott's iron forge, a straw hat factory, cooperages, etc. In Carlsdyke were Marshall's tanwork, Ladyburn, a brewery, lime work, Caird & Co.'s foundry, sugar refinery, forge, flint-glass works, and dwelling-houses reaching up to John, Carnock, and Springkell Streets.

Churches and other buildings of ornate pretensions were springing up in various parts of the town – St. Thomas', the New West, and George Square Congregational Churches, Greenock Bank, Bank of Scotland, the railway

station block, and many private villas in the west-end. Within a few more years, on the heels of the Disruption, sites were being selected and new churches erected for the out coming congregations.

Cathcart Arcade

It was about this time the project was begun of forming an Arcade from Cathcart Street to Steamboat Quay. The original scheme was for the making of two new streets, one on this line and the other through East Quay Lane to the West Burn to run parallel with Dalrymple and Shaw Streets. It appears that the proposal came from a number of enterprising citizens who had the laudable notion of opening up this crowded district and rendering it more attractive for shop keeping and other forms of trading. The Arcade and Public Market idea was highly commended on every hand, and had the moral support and blessing of the Town Council. It came before the Council in October, 1845, when it was stated that the Magistrates had allowed their names to be inserted as members of the Provisional Committee. The Cathcart Street end forty years before had been known as Tucker's Close, formerly it was the site of the Excise Office and was called also the Excise Close, and sometimes Brownlie's Close. Above the shops was Malcolm Lyon's Navigation School. It is unnecessary to describe the Arcade, as it stands to-day, though in dilapidated form, almost exactly as it was constructed seventy years ago. Although opened under the most encouraging auspices, it quickly fell much short of the promoters' dreams. For financial reasons mainly the continuation of the Arcade to the Steamboat Quay was found impracticable. Its completion might possibly have proved a great public benefit and a profitable undertaking. Instead of this, it came up against the dead wall of a lumber store at the narrowest part of Shaw Street, which was more than enough to damn a scheme the first aim of which had been to bring light and cheer into a dark corner of the town.

West End Streets

The Town Council had for a number of years been embarked on the important task of laying off several of the new leading streets in the West-end, and towards the middle of the century they were engaged with those opening from the Low Gourock Road to the sea. Even then, and for some time later, this select residential quarter was still at an unformed stage, comprising rows of villas on the shore and Low Gourock Road, and further a score or so of larger villas or mansions at intervals higher up. That noble pile the Mariners' Asylum was now a prominent figure on the landscape; Balclutha had appeared on another of the outstanding sites; and with West Fergusland, Lyle House, Bellaire, The Craigs, and a few others, the West-end was giving promise of a grand fulfilment. A bowling green at the corner of Eldon and Margaret Streets had to give way after a few years' existence. On the town side the streets were now built upon into Brougham Street as far as Campbell Street, and in West Blackball Street to its then westmost limit at East Clyde Street.

The Hillside

In the upper parts the tenements were mounting steadily to the heights of Cartdyke and to the base of the Whin Hill, and gaining on the districts of Mount Pleasant, Orangefield, and the greater part of Nelson Street. An encroachment on the Crow Mount in 1865 brought out a number of protests against the removal of this landmark. It was held to be as much associated with the history of the town as Well Park is, and that it contained the finest group of beech trees in the West of Scotland. On the subject of those trees and their feathered occupants the 'Advertiser' of April 16, 1867, commented: "The cutting down of a number of trees in Mount Park has had the effect of an action of ejection on a part of the colony of crows which have, ancestors and descendants, occupied their branches from a period even beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitants. Some have migrated to Well Park and others to Seafield, where their cry has hitherto been unknown, and the remnant is left to build on the Mount, from which, looking at the rapid progress of feuing in that locality, it is likely soon to be dislodged. Many of the community regret the gradual disappearance of the Mount and its feathered visitants, but with the gradual and steady increase of the town and of the prosperity of the inhabitants sentiment and all feeling for the picturesque must give way."

The Esplanade

That portion of the sea front from Campbell Street to the Battery was still simply rough shore ground. Houses built on its line sat literally on the head of the beach. The formation of a roadway, or street, or drive, one would think, was only a matter of time. We are informed from the municipal records that the initiation of the Esplanade dates from 1863, when Provost Grieve told the Harbour Trust he had a plan for turning to account the mass of excavations from the ground on which Albert Harbour was being built. In point of fact the plan was some years older, and had been prepared by Messrs. Bell & Miller, C.E., Glasgow, in 1857. At the later date, however, the Provost stated the proposal as one for the continuation of Clyde Street from Campbell Street to Fort Matilda, "so as to form a fine Esplanade." Sir Michael had no objection providing the consent was received of the feuars bounded by the street as then intended, such consent to bear that Sir Michael was left free to deal in any way he might see fittest with the ground that would be left vacant between the south side of Clyde Street as deviated and the north boundary of the feus as they then existed. He further stipulated that the street must be fully formed and levelled, and not only partially completed in the first instance. At a later consultation it was resolved that heavy cart and omnibus traffic should be prohibited. Sir Michael having thus given this ground, the construction of the Esplanade began, and was completed in July, 1867, at a cost of £18,428. This sum greatly exceeded the original estimate, which was £12,000. Provost Robert Neill said that whatever might be the desire to improve the shore this was too large a sum to expend at the time, considering the means at their disposal. A colleague stated that the scheme had

crippled the finances and prevented the carrying out of other and essential improvements; and, as expressed by another, perhaps the money might have been expended with more general advantage nearer the central part of the town. Others were of the opinion that the actual cost was as nothing compared to the advantages that would result. A prominent rock, the "Cow and Calf" was swallowed up by the work.

East Quay Lane

The question of widening East Quay Lane and opening up a seemly passage between railway and river was being discussed during the progress of the Glasgow and Greenock line. It was first suggested to lay down rails for the conveyance of passengers and luggage, and this was under consideration quite a while before being abandoned, together with a proposal to widen the lane at its lower end by the removal of buildings. The project was said to be too expensive for the railway company, who were convinced that such a local improvement should emanate from the public. It would be needless now to dwell at length upon the disgraceful condition in which this thoroughfare was for so long allowed to remain, or upon the obloquy it was the means of bringing on the town. From the inauguration of the railway in 1841, and the almost immediate introduction of a river steamboat connection, it was evident that sooner or later this, the oldest and dingiest area, had to be swept away. No serious overtures were made prior to the amalgamation of the local company with the Caledonian in 1847, nor until near the Sixties had any real progress been accomplished. In the Town Council minutes of February, 1864, it is stated that a proposal had been made to widen the lane to 50 feet. It was at first intended that when widened the street should be half arcaded, with shops on the east side. As a million of people were said to pass through in a season, Councillors were inclined to place the chief onus on the railway directors, who were believed to be willing to go the length of one-half the cost, estimated at £15,000 with an arcade of glass. The Water Trust, to whom the lane belonged, had no funds for the purpose and no power over the proprietors of houses, facts which occasioned postponements; but in July, 1864, plans were ready, and the three Trusts - Water, Harbour, and Town - sought to come to an understanding with the railway company regarding the value of houses on the east side. A deputation from the company offered to contribute £5,000, while £2500 was expected from the sale of certain ground. The cost of dealing with the west side of the lane was estimated at £14,800; while the widening of the east side to 70 feet was put at £16,500, and of the west at £18,400. The scheme of improvement was inserted in the Parliamentary Bill of 1865, and it was decided to operate on the west side and to form a street of 58 feet width. Although powers were taken to proceed, the years passed without any action. It was reported that the Caledonian Company, who on a verbal agreement were to pay a considerable sum, were now going on with a branch to the west-end. It was therefore proposed to spend the money on improving streets and extending the town drainage. The negotiations thus came to an end, and the widening was left to be included in the great Improvement Trust scheme of the Seventies.

The formation of two other thoroughfares came in for a good deal of discussion at the beginning of the Seventies. First was the proposed continuation of Jamaica Street to the north, opening up with the harbours, and second an artery from West Quay Lane along to Albert Harbour. This latter, it was computed, would cost £60,000, which was reckoned too much to take on hand, and the other scheme had a similar fate.

Lyle Road

Towards the end of 1878, in a time of unprecedented distress through dull trade, the Police Board resolved to form a road or carriage drive from Finnart Street at Madeira Street to the Craigs or Bingens, in order to provide work for the unemployed. Sir Michael Shaw Stewart's permission had been given, and the Board approved unanimously. The road was originally intended to be 30, feet wide, but by arrangement with Sir Michael it was laid off to 60 feet. At a meeting in January, 1879, the Streets Committee agreed that it be named the Lyle Road (after Provost Abram Lyle). The Master of Works made a rough estimate of the cost - if done by a contractor it would have been about £3,000, and if carried out by the unemployed at least £7,000. About 400 men and boys were at one time engaged, and for a year the number varied from this down to 250. On the practical completion of the work the cost had mounted to £16,524. In addition to this there was some years an annual expenditure of £250, later a smaller sum. The formal opening took place on May 1, 1880. The payments in wages were about £12,500, and the remainder was expenditure on material, fencing, etc. The length of the roadway from Madeira Street to Gourrock Toll is nearly two miles, from the Toll to the highest part of the carriageway the height is 381 feet; the level of the Craigs top is 425 feet above the sea-line; and the steepest gradient is 1 in 10. Eight counties are in view from the heights - Ayr, Bute, Argyll, Dumbarton, Stirling, Lanark, Perth, and Renfrew.

With regard to the original name of the eminence, there have been various ways of spelling it. A writer in the 'Telegraph' at the time stated these as Bingans, Bingins, Bingens, and Binyans, the last being most nearly correct. The name, he said, is Binneans, Gaelic, signifying little hills, the diminutive of Bienn or Bein, a mountain, hill, pinnacle, bin. A suggestion that a park and recreation grounds should be formed at the summit did not go far.

To-day

Greenock had now entered upon a period of unexampled expansion. The staple industries, sugar refining and shipbuilding, with brief lapses, were prospering beyond the most optimistic forecasts, while the harbours were failing to meet the increasing demands of shipping. A consequent boom in house-building for the working classes ensued, streets of tenements sprang up to the east and the south, the better-off families made a more general

move westward, and within a few years the town had reached what, from its natural environment, appeared to be almost its ultimate dimensions. With the construction of the James Watt Dock the face of the river front eastward to Inchgreen had undergone a radical change. In some of its most crowded parts the central district had been practically reconstructed. At a cost of over £200,000 the Improvement Trust had gutted out the rookeries over an area from Hunter Place to East Quay Lane, formed new and wider streets, built better houses for the working people, and later set up the palatial Municipal Buildings. Otherwise old Greenock, along the edge of the harbours, back of Hamilton Street, and the densest spots of old Cartdyke, remained much as it was over a century before, the inhabitants ill-housed in crowded back courts and narrow lanes.

Thus the town now stands, awaiting the advent of the new day that is to put an end to slumdom and introduce tolerable living conditions for all classes. The events or portents of recent years in this direction are distinctly encouraging. Important shipyard extensions have caused the demolition of old and uninhabitable houses in the lower streets, and have forced the authorities to face the problem of providing for the dispossessed and for the thousands of workmen and their families who within the next few years are expected to add greatly to the population. New residential quarters will spring up to the south-west, spreading to the Inverkip Road, and to the still vacant feuing land east and south-east, in both of which districts cottages and garden suburbs will give a much-needed bit of colour to the present drab surroundings of the labouring population.

The Harbours

Greenock as a centre of effort in trade and commerce was begotten of her harbourage. In later times shipbuilding was the staple of her existence, but it was as a haven of the sea and a port of ocean-carried traffic that she grew in stature, captured her place in the markets of the world, and spread her name abroad. To the docks and shipping, therefore, must we look to find the vital forces that stimulated and sustained the town during the greater part of her history.

Several dominant impressions remain after a research of the official records of the harbour undertaking. Chief of these is a persisting sense of a continuous struggle against great odds - against the obstacles and restraints imposed by the geographical situation, the recurrent shrinking of financial resources, and the sleepless opposing energies of a powerful rival. Greenock harbours were brought forth in poverty, were nourished on doles, and for a considerable period had a precarious existence. A century and a half ago, and for long after, there was an almost incessant call for aid: appeals to Government Commissioners, to shipping associations, to men of money, and, most pathetic of all, to the impecunious inhabitants themselves. Those appeals had in the main but meagre results, and the line of zealous citizens who bore the burden of administration must have had many moments of despair.

To tell the story, step by step, of the long years of travail and vicissitude, in a form claiming to be reasonably complete, has entailed a space that on a first look may seem out of due proportion. We venture to think that the reader will discover this impression to be groundless. It is a tale of human progress, of doings and happenings upon which were being founded the life, sustenance, and growth of a homogeneous community. From this point of view alone it may be accepted as a record of general interest; to the people of the town and district it will doubtless appear as a document of absorbing import even in the minutiae of detail.

There is not unnaturally a general desire to appreciate at their highest value the beneficence and services of Sir John Schaw and his immediate successors in the Superiority to a town and port that was virtually in embryo. Even so, whilst sharing in the sense of gratitude, one need not be too readily inclined to credit those gentlemen with an over-generous attitude in their financial dealings in the matter of the harbours. Sir John Schaw admittedly displayed a commendable spirit of enterprise, he was evidently alive to the advantages and possibilities which a sea-borne trade must mean to Greenock, he advanced sums of money in encouraging and furthering harbour schemes, and he incited his feuders to activity and expenditure. On the other hand, it may without offence or disparagement be said that to the Schaw family and estates were sure to accrue, then and for long thereafter, results and emoluments much exceeding in sum and proportion all that might fall to the common lot.

Rude Experiments

So long ago as 1164 the Bay of Quick (at one time, according to Weir, named Wick) was known to seafarers as a safe anchorage for the galleys and other vessels of that day, but the first efforts towards the formation of any kind of harbour were not made until about 1635. These were still of a primitive and tentative character, consisting of a landing jetty or pier of unmortared masonry, built by Sir John Schaw for the convenience of his household and retainers and for the benefit of the increasing fishing population. This pier is said to have extended a considerable distance into the bay, which was spoken of as Sir John's Bay and Sir John's Little Bay. Little more had been done by the beginning of the eighteenth century, for in 1700 there was no better harbour than a heap of whinstones for sheltering the fishing boats and small barges, and the bay itself was the only protection for vessels anchoring close to the town. According to "Lives of Boulton and Watt," vessels of burthen requiring to load or unload did so at the pier of Cartdyke. In apparent contradiction of this statement, we have it on the authority of a Frenchman, Rochefort, that in 1670 "Krinock is the town where the Scotch post or packet starts for Ireland. It is a well-sheltered port, and has a mole or jetty where the vessels are ranged loading or unloading." This again may be subject to the qualification that on a hurried visit a foreigner was not unlikely to confuse details of locality.

There is an interesting reference to the Bay of Greenock in the minutes of the Court of Directors of the Company of Scotland trading to Africa and the Indies, meeting in Edinburgh on March 12, 1697. Upon a motion "how to conclude with the several proprietors concerned in the Bay of Ardmore for the company's intended salt-works, it was suggested that it might become advisable to agree with Sir John Schaw for his little bay, described as a very minute thing (meaning that it might be cheap), as it presented excellent ground fit for the work of salt-making." "This nameless place was Greenock, and the sole big vessel kept in the little bay thereof was Sir John's barge or water carriage, excepting indeed the boats of the fishermen, its only inhabitants."

The Near Rival

Port Glasgow was at this period springing up as a formidable rival port at the instance of the Glasgow merchants, who, having in 1694 fallen out with Greenock on the questions of harbour dues and warehouse accommodation, feued about fourteen acres at Newark on which they built a harbour, This purchase had followed upon the heels of a strong bid by Glasgow for the lands of Easter Greenock, which were sold to Sir John Schaw, who had the double motive of forming a harbour and of shutting out the Glasgow influence and control.

Building a Harbour

The need of adequate harbourage for increasing trade had been recognised by the Superior and the inhabitants for a good many years. Fruitless applications for a grant were made to the Scottish Parliament in 1696 and in 1700. In the year of the Union they embarked on the venture at their own charges, and the West Harbour was completed in 1710 at an outlay of £5,555 11s 1d. It was acknowledged to be the greatest work of the kind then in Scotland. Sir John Schaw advanced the sum of £5,000 on condition that he should be repaid by a levy of 1s 4d on every sack of malt brewed into ale within the burgh. The debt was cleared off in thirty years. As originally constructed, the harbour comprised an East and a West Quay, of circular form, with a tongue called the Mid Quay. The ground was eight acres in extent, and is now occupied by the West Harbour, extending from the West Quay to the Customhouse Quay. At high water there was a depth of 18 feet, and at low water 8 feet. Hamilton of Wishaw, writing of the port about this time, says: "The town hath ane great harbour for vessels, and is become a place of considerable trade, and is like more and more to increase, especially if the herring fishing continue in the river Clyde, which occasions a confluence of many thousands of people to those parts, which yearly continues a considerable space."

An Extension Bill

With the exception of repairs, improvements, and dredging, this accommodation had to meet the demands of the port for half a century. In 1751 the first local Act of Parliament was passed, which in addition to harbour extension sought powers for certain municipal works. The Bill set forth that "whereas the town of Greenock is very advantageously situated for carrying on both foreign and coasting trade, and whereas the Superior of said town, with the inhabitants thereof, did about the year 1705 begin to raise money by a voluntary subscription for building a harbour there, and some progress hath from time to time been made in erecting of the same, which if completed would be a great advantage to the said town and to the trade and navigation of these parts; but the produce of said subscriptions has been found insufficient to answer that purpose and to defray the expense of cleansing the said harbour and of performing other works in relation thereto which are absolutely necessary to be done to render the said harbour useful and commodious;" and so on. Powers were given to impose a duty of two pennies Scots for a period of thirty-one years upon every Scots pint of ale and beer brewed, brought in, tapped, or sold within the town. Mr. James Watt, father of the inventor, wrote of the harbour of those days: "The town from its situation and harbour may truly be said to be amongst the most convenient in Great Britain. The High Street is now bounded on both sides by stone houses, and most of those on the river side within the full sea mark have closes or quays falling a considerable way into the sea, within the harbour, so that vessels of 50 or 60 tons can discharge at these back closes." By this Act nine persons named therein were appointed Trustees of the funds arising from the impost, and power granted to them to elect their successors in office.

The harbour beacons of those old days were several in number. There was one at the foot of the west corner of Herring and Dalrymple Streets, another at Broomhill, west of the Vennel, one at the five-gabled houses at the foot of Taylor's Close, and one at the foot of the Knowe, 34 Main Street. Some of the houses with dark kitchens had windows behind the fireplaces to show the pots a-boiling, and served as beacons as well. These, made of coarse glass, were said to have been placed for the purpose of showing lights to the fishing boats coming for harbour. This view has been doubted, on the assumption that the houses on the north side of the streets had been built before those on the south side, which necessarily would exclude the light and vision from the water. There is, of course, the probability that care was taken to have an opening from these house beacons to the firth.

In 1751 the first of the new feus granted by Lord Cathcart for harbour extension was given in favour of the Magistrates and Town Council for behoof of the community. This was upwards of 106 falls, and the Council were empowered to enclose and gain off the sea by stone dykes, weirs, breasts, and bulwarks, and to build office houses, cellars, and dwelling-houses. This feu extended eastward along the north side of what is now Dalrymple Street on the line of shore to the north end of the passage between the shore and the Vennel foot. At the end of

1754 anchorage dues were imposed, two large anchors having been placed at the East and West Harbours to prevent accidents through the fouling of vessels.

Troubles

For many years the Trustees, who comprised the Magistrates and Town Council, were greatly hampered for want of funds and by difficulties in administration. Glasgow merchants, for instance, were in arrears of rent for the cellars, and an active person had to be found to visit them for collection of the money. George Scott, previously Comptroller of Customs, got in not only enough to pay off £140 to the New Bank and a debt to one Barrie, but to purchase a clock at £18 9s 2d for the steeple of the cellars. The sum of £50 was borrowed from the managers of the Poor Sailors' Box, on the security of the Magistrates and Councillors, "rather than let the public works lie behind;" a bond for £100 was given to William Andrew; and then £100 more obtained from the Poor Sailors' Fund.

Greenock Jurisdiction

At Issue with Glasgow

Collisions with Glasgow authorities grew in number and acuteness. To a Lighthouse Bill Greenock gave a strong opposition because of certain financial arrangements relating to the allocation of the dues, an opposition which was the means of securing the payment of one-sixth of the surplus to the two Bailies of Greenock to be applied towards the improvement of the harbours. This was the beginning of a long continued series of contentions and negotiations, the facts and results of which may fittingly be set out here. Under their Act of 1755 the Cumbrae Lighthouses Trustees were authorised to levy certain rates from the masters and owners of vessels passing the lighthouses of Little Cumbrae, and were required to apply them, *inter alia*, for the removing of shoals and flats below the harbour of Greenock. Then the Act directed that the surplus of the rates was to be applied, one-sixth to the Bailies of Greenock, who were members of the Trust, for the improving of the harbour of Greenock, and the remainder towards the improving of the navigation of the river above Greenock harbour. It was thus quite clear that it was only those portions of the river below and above Greenock harbour over which the Trustees could exercise any jurisdiction, and that the control of the harbour of Greenock was left solely in the hands of the Greenock authorities.

At the date of the Act the harbour of Greenock was considered to embrace the whole bay, channel-way, and anchorage ground opposite the town, and the acquisition of the Greenock Sand Bank in 1816 gave force and conclusive effect to this view. In 1870 the Cumbrae Lighthouse Trustees went to Parliament for, *inter alia*, power to change the constitution of the Trust of 1755, and the Greenock Trust opposed the Bill as injurious to if not quite destructive of Greenock interests. Parliament gave Greenock a protective clause excluding the jurisdiction of the Cumbrae Lighthouse Trustees in the Greenock Channel. In 1871 the Cumbrae Trustees introduced a Bill for the same purpose, and the shipowners of Glasgow had then a similar Bill. The Cumbrae Bill was thrown out, but the Shipowners' Bill passed into law, with a most satisfactory clause for the protection of the port, and with no further power of interference in the channel than given by the Act of 1755. The protective clause in the Act of 1871 was preserved in the Greenock Harbour Bill of 1880. This clause was to the effect that the Clyde Trustees should not execute any works or perform any operations in the river between a line drawn from Newark Castle and Cardross Burn and another line from Whitefarland Point to Rosneath Point, without the consent in writing of the Greenock Trustees, or, failing such consent, with the authority of Parliament, provided that with such consent the Lighthouses Trustees might maintain and deepen the navigable channel between Newark Castle and Ladyburn, and that the Trustees of Greenock should, when required by the Lighthouses Trustees, and at the expense of the Lighthouses Trustees, maintain and deepen the channel between Ladyburn and Whitefarland Point. Thus the jurisdiction of Greenock under the Act of 1755 was in effect continued and rendered clear and certain.

In 1873 negotiations were entered into between the Lighthouses Trustees and Greenock with a view to obtaining the consent of Greenock to the cutting off a portion of Garvel Point and a portion of the Greenock Bank, the deepening, widening, and improving of the channel between Port-Glasgow and Greenock. There was no objection from Greenock if it could be done without endangering their channel and the interests of the port. The view of Greenock, as expressed by Mr John Neill, one of the Trustees, was that "This is the natural fixed estuary to which we are indebted for the deep water close to our harbours. The formation of that point causes a diversion of the ebb tide, and the current of the river crosses to the bank. From the bank the current is deflected into Cartsydyke Bay, and thus the deep water channel is sent scouring along the front of our quays." On a consultation Greenock gave a tentative consent to the dredging of the channel at Garvel Point, keeping distinctly in view the contemplated river lines and projected works to the eastward of Garvel Point, and the understanding that if injury were being done to Greenock harbours the work should be stopped.

In 1879 the Lighthouses Trust contemplated a Bill for still further widening, deepening, and straightening the channel between Newark Castle and the western end of Princes Pier; and Greenock was promoting a Bill for enlarging the wet dock at Garvel Park, constructing the river lines and embankments, a jetty at Inchgreen, warehousing, etc. Counter petitions were lodged, one by the Navigation Trustees against Greenock, the while negotiations were proceeding between representatives of the principal bodies. Greenock did not object to the improvement of the channel for the benefit of the upper navigation provided the port's interests were sufficiently protected. They did object to their rights being invaded by a body the majority of which had an interest in making a

direct channel from Glasgow to the open sea, almost exclusively for the benefit of the upper navigation and without regard to the injury which might thereby be inflicted on the port of Greenock. The issue of negotiations was the insertion of a clause for the protection of Greenock. The portion of the river to be improved was divided into three sections:

- (1) The western channel more immediately opposite the quays of Greenock was to be from 600ft. to 900ft. wide, having a depth along the northern and southern margins of 18ft. at low water and in mid channel of 23ft. for 200ft. in width at low water;
- (2) The Garvel Point channel and
- (3) The eastern channel were both to have a width of 600ft. at top of the slopes and a minimum depth throughout at low water of 18ft. After the completion of the works, which were to take no longer than ten years, Greenock had to execute the necessary dredging in all time coming, at the expense of the Lighthouses Trust. These provisions, in the judgment of Greenock authorities, satisfactorily maintained the rights of the port and harbour.

The Clyde Navigation Trust in 1911 sought power to construct a tidal dock and graving dock at Renfrew and to acquire the rights of improving Renfrew Harbour. Greenock Harbour Trustees petitioned on the ground that, while the proposed dock was situated fourteen miles from Greenock, it appeared to the Trust that the granting of an unqualified power to construct works the bottom of which would be 28 feet below low water level and a graving dock 30 feet below low water level at spring tides might be held to carry with it by implication the right subsequently to obtain power to have the channel of the Clyde deepened to such an extent as might be necessary to give proper access to the proposed dock and harbour. The Committee of the House of Commons laid it down that, while they found the preamble of the Bill proved, they were of opinion that the access to Greenock docks ought to be protected if further powers were sought which might have the effect of prejudicing that access.

A River Lock Bill

As early as 1758 the Magistrates and Council had to oppose a Glasgow Lock Bill, which, with the support of Renfrew and Dumbarton and of Mr. Campbell of Blythwood, was deferred for the session. A year later the feuars, sub-feuars, and the inhabitants generally agreed to renew the opposition, which proved successful, Renfrew meanwhile having come to terms with Glasgow.

Mollifying Shippers

Trouble from another quarter arose on account of alleged irregularities at the harbour. Traders who frequented the port were threatening to take their ships elsewhere. To meet the danger, and to bring administrative details more effectively within control, the Council asked Sir Michael Shaw Stewart to grant a tack of the anchorage and shore dues, which he did for four years at £40 a year. In 1762 Lord Cathcart granted a further feu of ten falls of shore or sands at the east side of the East Quay, and ten years later the Council bought from Glasgow merchants a piece of ground on the east side of the quay on which to build a breast or line of communication as far as the ground ran. On this feu it was resolved to build a new quay on a plan by James Watt, and the first Harbour Bill was brought for deepening, cleansing, and making the harbour more commodious. A plan of the system as it appeared in 1772 shows the original works as they had been completed in 1710, West and East Harbour with tongue or Mid Quay, the cellars erected at the west entrance of this quay, entries to the harbour at the east end and through the cellars at the Long Vennel foot and Morison's Close to the west, and to the graving bank at the south-east extremity of the East Harbour, with a shed on East Quay, and cellars and a shed on West Quay.

The Anchorage Dues

An agitation in favour of acquiring the anchorage and other small dues had been going on for a year or two, and earnestly taken in hand by the Council. A minute of December 14, 1770, sets this out clearly: "The Magistrates and Council having taken into consideration that although the quays of Greenock were built by contributions from the feuars and inhabitants, yet the Superior receives the whole anchorage [dues] arising therefrom, and that by the Act of Parliament for levying a tax of two pennies Scots on each pint of ale the Trustees are bound to uphold these quays; and considering at the same time that many improvements might be made upon these for promoting the trade of the town and accommodating traders there, which the meeting could not take upon them to do, and the profits in a great measure arising therefrom would not accrue to the town but to the Superior; the meeting therefore agree to feu the said harbour and anchorage and other dues payable therefrom to the Superior, and to pay a yearly feu-duty of £340, being the rate that has for these several years past been paid to the Superior: therefore and likewise to pay the Superior £400 as grassum for granting said feu, and at the same time to be at the expense of procuring an Act of Parliament to enable the Superior to grant such a feu-right to the Magistrates and Council and their successors in office. A committee was appointed to wait upon Sir Michael Stewart, Commissioner for Mr John Shaw Stewart. When the answer is received, to write Lord Cathcart if he will feu his part of the harbour, and on what terms?"

The negotiations went on until February, 1772, when Mr John Shaw Stewart agreed to sell the anchorage dues for 120 merks Scots (£66 13s 4d) of yearly feu-duty, without any grassum. This offer was accepted unanimously, and the feu-contract was signed on May 16, 1772. By this charter Mr. John Shaw Stewart "sold for ever the harbours, piers, and quays built and gained off the sea since 1700, with the anchorage, shore, bay, and ring dues, the right of property to remain for ever with the Magistrates and Council and their successors for the use of the community,

and for the purpose of enlarging and improving the same." At the close of the bargain Sir Michael on behalf of Mr. John Shaw Stewart, wished the town much joy of the purchase, and hoped "that it would be the means of raising it to as flourishing a state as its best friends could desire." The Magistrates had looked with a jealous and apprehensive eye upon the word "assignees" that appeared in the contract, doubtless fearing that successors might in a time of pecuniary straits sell or dispose of their rights to a rival neighbour. This proved to be a prophetic dread, for the very contingency in their minds actually arose in 1866, when the Town Council sold the anchorage and other dues, not certainly to an opposing seaport authority, but to the Harbour Trustees (the two public bodies being then identical in personnel), out of which transaction sprang much contention and long enduring ill-feeling.

Harbour Dues

The new Harbour Act, the first to allow the exaction of harbour dues, received the Royal Assent in April, 1773. In the application to Parliament it was stated that the harbours were choked with mud and that the trade had so increased and the ships become so numerous and of large dimensions that the quays were insufficient. The Act constituted two Bailies, nominated by the Town Council, as Trustees for making quays and deepening the harbour, and empowered them to levy certain rates for this purpose. A body of Commissioners was appointed whose functions were to authorise the Trustees to proceed with harbour works, to audit their accounts, and to control the rates. Those Commissioners consisted of the two Bailies and Town Council, Lord Cathcart and his heirs, Sir Michael Shaw Stewart and his heirs, Mr. John Shaw Stewart and his heirs, the Member of Parliament for Renfrewshire, nine merchants, inhabitants of Greenock being ship owners and payers of harbour rates, elected by persons who were Greenock ship owners and payers of harbour rates, the Provost, Dean of Guild, and eight merchants of Glasgow elected by Glasgow merchants who owned ships at Greenock.

The accommodation provided under this statute seems to have been used chiefly for vessels of the herring fishery and for re-packing and preparing their cargoes for exportation. The East Quay was first attended to, next the West and Mid Quays, the East and West Breasts following, the work of widening beginning in 1805 and finishing in 1819. The third feu granted by Lord Cathcart for harbour extension was almost contemporaneous with the passing of this Act, and was for shore ground at the east end of the town, the open shore at the head of the new dry dock, and comprised 1 rood, 35 falls, 29 yards.

A Government Bill in 1782 for laying a duty of 2s per ton on coasting vessels threatened to injure considerably the business of the port, which at the time was confined almost entirely to this trade. A statement on the subject was transmitted to Mr. John Shaw Stewart, M.P. for the county, to the effect that, "as the whole provisions for the subsistence of the inhabitants are brought by water and coastwise, the tax will add very much to the price of them and greatly affect the poor; and as Government give a bounty to the herring busses it is on that account it is hoped that all fishing vessels will be exempted, at least during the time they are so employed." While there is no record of the result of this representation, it may reasonably be accepted that the relief was granted.

First Graving Dock

Dry Docks

The question of dry dock accommodation was of growing importance with ship owners and merchants. At the beginning of 1783 subscribers to a memorial on the subject asked for ground for this purpose at the west side of the Mid Quay, to whom the Council replied that while it was necessary that the dock should be provided the funds allotted by Act of Parliament were insufficient to meet the outlay. The authorities agreed to grant the subscribers a tack of the ground for 999 years or a feu-right, as the memorialists should decide. Feuars and inhabitants offered to pay the difference of cost to the extent of £584, and the scheme was proceeded with at an outlay of £4,000, the town advancing £200 and the Council taking power to acquire or purchase the property on a re-imbusement of the money subscribed. Previous to the existence of a dry dock, while the trade consisted chiefly of gabbarts sailing between Glasgow and Greenock, there were two tar-pots for ships' use, one at the corner of the West Harbour near the foot of Cross-Shore Street, the other at the foot of West Quay. Several years later a private dock was built in the shipyard of Mr. John Scott, between the West Burn and the Bay of Quick.

With regard to the projected improvements under the Act of 1773, the funds of the Trust were found unequal to the sinking of the debt contracted, and an effort was made to renew the impost on ale, without success. In 1789 another Act was passed for deepening and cleansing the harbours, etc., and for constructing a pier (Customhouse) eastward of the old harbour, which was completed in 1791 by Mr. John Scott.

New Harbours Wanted

The shipping interests were now insistent upon the need of immediate additional accommodation, for the lack of which, it was said, there would be the mortification of seeing ships passing the harbours, while the few ships belonging to Glasgow that continued to discharge at Greenock "were being held by the tender tie of private friendship, a tie which could not be expected to hold much longer, as owners were becoming sensible of the manifest advantages of proceeding to Port Glasgow in all points of expense, despatch, and accommodation. The means to be taken were obvious, and equally so that the place would not be able to retain the trade it possessed unless the measures were speedily adopted. If more argument were needed, much more could be adduced, for in a few years without considerable improvements the town would be at the mercy of Glasgow."

This was a note of warning that could not pass unheeded. Not that the authorities were blind to the current of events, or that they had in any great measure been remiss in recognition of their duty. The fact was they were beset by financial embarrassments, anxious enough to make the most of their position and opportunities, yet scarcely knowing where to turn for the money, and at the same time most reluctant to load the town with the fresh debt of great undertakings. The pressure of immediate needs caused a reconstruction of breasts and quays and the provision of storage cellars at a cost of several thousand pounds.

Big Schemes in View

But very shortly it was seen that the time was more than ripe for schemes of greater dimension. The wonderful expansion of foreign trade with both the eastern and western worlds, and especially the opening up of the former through the withdrawal of the East India Company's monopoly, in the agitation for which Greenock merchants took a leading part, gave a powerful incentive to the motives and actions of the Trustees. They had also to deal with an ambitious move on the part of Glasgow which they sought to nip in the bud. This was an attempt to constitute Glasgow a free port, a memorial in this direction having been lodged with the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury from the Lord Provost, Magistrates, Council, and Chamber of Commerce respecting the inconvenience and obstructions which resulted to the trade of the city from its being dependent on Port-Glasgow. Greenock Town Council unanimously resolved to oppose the application. Communications were sent to Lord Cathcart and Sir John Shaw Stewart pointing out the injury Greenock would sustain. This was in May, 1792, and is the only reference to the matter we have been able to discover in the local record. It is a significant sidelight on the relations of the two ports at this period, and we can fancy that, while the Greenock authorities regarded opposition as a patriotic duty to their constituents, they could scarcely have hoped longer wholly to ward off the menace of a more serious rivalry in the near future.

Prior to 1801 vessels requiring a depth of water when laden were, from the shallowness of the harbours, obliged to load and unload in the river. Property and produce were thus exposed to sea risk and injury as well as to pilferage, of very frequent occurrence on board lighters. This state of things hurried on the Act of 1801, which at a cost of £50,000 enabled the Trustees to enlarge and deepen the harbours and construct new works and quays. By this Act a Harbour Board was constituted, still composed of members of the Town Council but acting as a distinct body for the management of harbour affairs. Their first meeting, was held on June 26, 1801, and the Board comprised: George Robertson and Walter Ritchie, Bailies; James Simpson, Treasurer; Hugh Crawford, jun., David Colquhoun, John Scott, John Hamilton, Alexander Dunlop, and Archibald McGowan. The powers of the Commissioners appointed under previous Acts were continued, and they were also empowered to reduce the new rates, to impose certain additional rates, and continue exemption in favour of vessels laden with coal for Greenock. The qualification of the elective Commissioners was fixed at an annual payment in harbour rates of £12, and the qualification of electors at £3.

Strides in Trade

The trade of the port was now undoubtedly rapidly advancing. In 1802 the Harbour Committee could not repress a feeling of satisfaction at the growing prosperity. They believed that if means could be found for paying off the debt due to the harbours by the town it would be nearly equal to the execution of all the improvements then contracted for, without borrowing more money.

Architect's Plans

The necessity, then, for increased facilities became so urgent that on the passing of this Act the Trustees consulted Mr. John Rennie, London. They desired that harbours as capacious as possible should be designed for construction at the Bay of Quick, and that a wet dock should be regarded as a distant expediency. Mr. Rennie drew up an elaborate report on a comprehensive scheme. On each side of the harbour he planned a wet dock, partly on the shore and partly inland, each having an entrance from dry docks east and west to accommodate conveniently 120 square-rigged vessels of about 200 tons each, with a small basin in the dry docks and ground for shipbuilding, so that building and repairing should be contiguous. Considerable objection was anticipated owing to interference with private property; but, as Mr. Rennie observed, "If private property is to stand in the way of so great an improvement there is an end to every good plan that may be proposed." In his opinion the works would make Greenock one of the completest harbours in the kingdom. His designs and estimates included consideration of a previous scheme of the Trustees to construct a harbour to the east of the West Harbour, estimated on the basis of his enlarged plans to cost £35,500. At the same time he put the outlay on the widening of the old harbour quays at £8,500 and of the West Quay at £14,700. The Bay of Quick harbour, with the two wet docks and piers, were estimated at £96,265; the two dry docks, basins, and repairing shipyards at £25,700. In a supplementary report Mr Rennie stated that the Bay of Quick might someday be acquired for a wet dock, but that the scheme was too grand for that time, and estimated to cost £121,575 exclusive of the price of the ground.

East India Harbour

The East Harbour

A great deal of correspondence followed on the question whether the Bay of Quick or Cartsdyke was the more suitable site, the latter being in preference. In April, 1802, the Commissioners authorised the Trustees to proceed

immediately with the operations and improvements to the eastward, and with the re-construction of the old harbour. On the passing of the Act of 1803 the decision to go on was ratified, and in May, 1804, the contract was fixed for the East India Harbour, which was completed at a cost, exclusive of ground, of £43,836. The foundation-stone of the East India Harbour is between the east bottom of an arched gateway (now removed) of the harbour and a large wooden crane for raising timber, etc. This Act directed that separate books should be kept of the respective accounts of the Harbour and of the Town Proper, in which connection there seems to have been not a little financial confusion.

Government Aid Sought

In a very few years the demand for a new and larger graving dock was general on the part of the shipping community. In an application for aid to the Treasury in 1809 it was urged that "the trade of Greenock holds a very conspicuous place in the commerce of the country, and seems to keep pace with the increase which is found to mark the most growing seaports in the Empire. We are very sensible of the extreme delicacy in obtruding on Government pretension for aid, and alive to the imputations which are frequently and erroneously cast both on its motive and end. Conscious, however, of the purity of our intention, and acting in all our operations under an open and vigilant control, we cannot allow any dread of misinterpretation to keep back our present application, which we know will be treated with judgment and candour. We are ambitious there should be a graving dock of such dimensions as to admit a ship of war of the largest size, nor can the essential advantages of which it might prove to His Majesty's Service escape your Lordships' discernment, since there is no dock of such magnitude either in Scotland or Ireland, or nearer to this part of the kingdom, we conceive, than Plymouth." This, we may presume, was the first suggestion of a Government graving dock for the Clyde.

It was a year and a half before the Lords of the Treasury made up their minds to express regret at being obliged to decline granting the assistance asked, on the plea lest it should be made a precedent for similar applications. The Trustees having learned that Liverpool was to be granted such a loan, it was suggested that the matter might be pressed, but this was decided as inexpedient. The question of construction, however, was not allowed to rest.

Dispute with Superior

In the course of this year there intervened a difference between Sir John Shaw Stewart and the Trustees with regard to payment for ground below low water mark. A letter from the Baron Bailie, Mr. Robert Stewart, explains the situation: "As I have no doubt that you are as anxious as I am to avoid all disputes between the town and Sir John, I have taken the liberty to request you will state to the first meeting of the Trustees that as the submission has long ago expired relative to the disputed shore ground, and as the difference between the parties does not exceed £800, I think I will get Sir John to agree to divide it, which will at once put an end to any future disagreement. If a lawsuit is to go on, it will cost both parties twice that sum before a decision is obtained." The view of the Trustees was that, "clear as it appeared that Sir John had no claim whatever to any part of the space occupied by the harbour beyond low water mark, still as the dispute regarding what is beyond it is stated not to exceed £800, and that Sir John to terminate the dispute would divide the sum, we deem it advisable to sacrifice £400 to avoid the litigation which might otherwise be maintained and the expenses, occasioned by it; in which view, but under no admission that Sir John had any right to payment for more than the shore ground above low water mark, the Trustees, besides paying for this, agree to pay, over what is in dispute, such further sum as the one-half that may be ascertained to be the amount, but not more than £400." In order that this payment should not be established as a precedent or the homologation of the principle on which Sir John had maintained his claim, the agreement was made out as follows: "Price of ground above low water mark, £3,654; below low water mark, £892 14s, but this part was disputed by the Trustees, and an agreement was made between the parties, to save a lawsuit, that only one-half should be paid."

Appeal for Money

In 1810 an Act was passed enabling the Trustees to make an additional entrance to the harbours and docks, and to borrow £50,000, making £100,000 in the whole. As there was still delay in proceeding with the work, the authorities were beseeched to give immediate directions for the formation of a new dry dock, for which, they were assured, the necessary expense would very soon be subscribed in shares. Their reply was that they had no powers to build a dock on this principle, but that the earliest attention would be given to the measure. Soon thereafter they examined plans by Mr. Rennie for docks at the new East Harbour. Two docks were shown, alongside of each other, the estimated cost £36,000. This expense was considered too high, and a depth of 16ft. at spring tides unnecessarily great. One dock with as much length as the two was considered preferable, and Mr. Burnet, Master of Works, made out a revised plan on the basis of Mr. Rennie's. Unhappily, owing to financial straits and to the very extensive operations then going on in the building of the piers, there ensued a period of almost unexampled anxiety and actual inability to make any headway. Their embarrassment compelled the Trustees to confess that, as the works could not be proceeded with unless they were possessed of considerable funds, they had resolved to try negotiations with the Bank of Scotland. In this application they must have failed, as a year later they were still despondent for lack of means. It occurred to them that ship owners, merchants, and other prosperous citizens might regard it to their interest to make the required advances, the Trustees to give the requisite ground and to hold shares to its value. No adequate response seems to have resulted. Notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of the financial outlook, plans on a further revised scale were submitted to the Commissioners and approved, and

following on this an application was made to the West India Association in Glasgow, of which, so far as the records show, no more was heard.

About this time Sir John Shaw Stewart had in view a Bill for the union of the three parishes and the erection of a workhouse, and the Trustees resolved to include in this application powers to borrow £20,000 and to impose an increased harbour duty of 2d per ton on all ships in foreign trade. This Bill was dropped for the time, and consequently there was a fresh delay.

In November, 1816, Bailie Leitch stated that in an interview with the Secretary to the Parliamentary Commissioners for Highland Roads and Bridges and the Secretary to the Commissioners for Northern Lights he had been induced to believe that the Trustees might secure their aid towards building a dry docks and a new harbour. In petitioning for £10,000 the Magistrates said that over £90,000 had been expended in ten years and that unless they obtained public assistance their labours must cease. The Trustees thought that if they could assure a sum for the erection of a breakwater on the sandbank the Commissioners might agree to advance as much more. On the other hand, if money could be obtained for building a dock on condition that no higher duties should be exacted than those of the old graving dock, it would be advisable to apply for and accept such a grant, and if unsuccessful afterwards apply for money for the breakwater. All the labour and scheming went for nothing, and affairs fell to such a low ebb that a committee was appointed to meet with the principal ship owners of Glasgow and appeal for help to complete the harbours. The result must have been disappointing, for no further reference to the appeal is made in the minutes.

Act Passed

With a brave front and in the hope of something turning up the Trustees went forward with their Bill of 1817. A break in the clouds appeared on Mr. Finlay, M.P., agreeing to support an application to the Commissioners, on the legislative issue of Exchequer Bills, for £20,000, which was made also to the Treasury. On the Bill coming before the Parliamentary Committee clauses relating to the sandbank had to be withdrawn because of the absence of plans and estimates, although by another clause introduced with that for building additional quays the Trustees were authorised to go on with so much of the improvements of the bank as referred to the breakwater for rendering the harbours more secure. A revised estimate of the dry dock was now put as low as £8,000 to £9,000. This Act increased the rates on ships and goods to and from foreign ports, power was given to borrow £20,000, and certain other dues, called quay and shed dues, for the purposes of police, etc., were imposed. The status of the Commissioners does not appear to have been affected. But an advance of Exchequer Bills authorised was made so guarded and fettering, and the requisition of the Commissioners so minute and particular, that it was rendered very doubtful if it would prove an advantage under the circumstances, especially as money from other quarters was becoming more abundant.

East India Graving Dock

A Silver Lining

We have here the first indication of brighter times financially: the money market was growing easier with improving trade, and the Trustees were doubly fortunate in finding the bulk of their loans at home. Page follows page in the minute-book of financial transactions with ship owners, masters, and merchants of the town, of comparatively small sums in most instances but in the aggregate sufficiently large for existing wants. The construction of the East India graving dock was begun in 1818 and completed in 1823, at a cost of £20,000. A newspaper notice at the laying of the foundation stone is worth quoting – “The dock is creditable to the community, and we are bold to say it is second to none of the kind in the Empire, and we hope that the public spirit which originated it will be recompensed by a trade and employment commensurate to the accommodation it is calculated to afford.” Again, at the opening – “There can be little doubt that in the future progress of the town it will be regarded, along with our harbours and other public erections, as a splendid proof of the spirit and the judgment which have prepared the way for assuring to Greenock a primary rank in the commercial ports of the kingdom.”

There had been an outside proposal to construct a harbour at Cartsdyke Bay, but it was abandoned owing to the opposition of the town authorities and Harbour Trustees, who thought it visionary and unnecessary. The requisite ground, it was said, could have been purchased in 1812 for from £12,000 to £15,000.

A Fillip to the Port

The two undertakings of the East India Harbour and the graving dock, coming so closely together, will help us to realise the change that was in process and the impetus experienced in relation to ocean trading. Customs authorities, too, were sharing in the anxieties of the Trustees, as we discover from a visit in 1815 of a deputation of Commissioners to ascertain whether there was a sufficient depth of water at the quays to admit directly to a landing stage of ships of such tonnage as were authorised by law to trade with India, and whether every security would be given to prevent thieves and idle and disorderly persons from resorting to the landing places. Gates were placed at the head of East India Quay, the erection of which was made the occasion of much party strife, and was cited as an instance of unnecessary expenditure for purposes of ornamentation. On the accession to power of the Blues, as opposed to the Reds (the political labels of Liberals and Tories), the walls and gates at the West and East India Quays were removed. In 1816 the re-building of the old East Quay was completed, and the sea-wall in front of the Custom house extended eastward as far as the front of that building. A further scheme of extension was carried

through under the Act of 1817, the Trustees noting, with a sense of personal satisfaction, that “the sea risks of transhipment were at an end, and all this without the aid of a single shilling of public money.”

This was altogether a stormy period in local history, in the management of town and harbour affairs. The conduct of the Magistrates, Council, and Trustees was spoken of in language of a most intemperate character, and it was plainly stated as necessary that better men should come forward to “preserve the public credit from utter ruin and the community from the mortification and exposure of an otherwise inevitable bankruptcy.”

From now onward for a considerable time improvements on harbours, quays, piers, etc., became the subjects of constant concern, and were carried through with manifest solicitude and at an increasing outlay. Yet they quickly proved inadequate to the advancing tide of prosperity. In 1825 the value of the harbours at 20 years' purchase was £160,000, or £40,000 beyond the debts.

Ship owners and the Constitution

A movement in favour of a change in the constitution of the Trust was started in 1827. Since 1751 the Magistrates and Town Council had been the sole Trustees of the port and harbour. Notice was given of a Bill for enlarging and amending the terms of former Acts, for altering the powers vested in the Bailies and Council as Trustees, and for vesting those powers in other Trustees, and for appointing the Bailies and Councillors as Commissioners of the harbours; for liberty to purchase from the Bailies and Council the right to anchorage, shore, bay, and ring dues, etc. This resolution was carried by a majority of seven, a conclusive proof of the preponderating influence the shipping interests had secured in the Council. Chief Magistrate William Leitch, justifying the Bill, stated that hitherto ship owners, the largest contributors to the harbour funds, had had no control over the expenditure, that they desired to prevent the funds from being used for other purposes than those sanctioned by the Acts, and to enable the Trustees to purchase the anchorage and other dues so that a large sum of the debt due by the community might be paid off.

Dissension

The introduction of the Bill was the signal for a serious and prolonged contention of parties. Mr. Robert Baine held that the Magistrates had taken measures without the sanction of the Council regularly recorded in the books, and had thus acted contrary to the constitution, but this was negatived by a majority of four. Mr. John Fairrie's view was that the Bill was meant to deprive the Magistrates and Council, and through them the feuars, of that property and management of the harbours they had hitherto enjoyed in terms of the Charter from the Superior and confirmed by successive Acts of Parliament, and to vest them in the hands of ship owners. At a subsequent meeting a representation from feuars, ship owners, merchants, and others asked that the Bill should be abandoned. A motion to proceed was carried by the Commissioners, and the Bill went forward in June, 1828. It was at once found expedient to excise the clauses relating to the anchorage dues. Otherwise the Bill asked authority to exact a new schedule of harbour rates, power to erect a new pier if necessary, and to borrow money for the purpose; to add nine Trustees chosen from the ratepayers, putting the Harbour Trust on the same footing as the Water Trust; and there was an imperative clause obliging the Trustees to publish their accounts annually. A suggestion in committee to reduce the number of new Trustees to six was declined by the promoters, on the ground that it would not only break faith with the mercantile bodies of Glasgow, whom they had all along consulted, but would also be most unjust in principle, as it would deprive them of the privilege enjoyed since the Trust was constituted in 1473, a privilege which the large amount of their contributions to the Trust funds justly entitled them. It was feared also that it would afford a very sufficient reason for the Glasgow merchants withdrawing their trade from the port. The application ended in defeat for the promoters, as the Bill was lost in Committee.

Plans in the Air

For a year or two the business of the Trust was apparently more or less in a fluid or uncertain state. The subject of financial complications between the various Boards was brought above-board, revealing the unpleasant fact that the Town Proper was £7,000 in debt to the Harbour Trust, and the Water Trust £2,177 19s 9d. Of much greater importance and concern was a report in 1830 that the harbours badly needed attention and that the borrowing powers had been exceeded by £6,462 4s 6d. The Trust obviously had no alternative to the making of an effort towards a scheme of reconstruction and improvement. Plans and estimates were obtained from Mr. Thomas Telford, C.E., who reported that £48,550 was required for the East India Harbour and that the West Harbour would be considerably more difficult and expensive to deal with. It became a matter of debate whether, if one harbour was sufficient for the existing prospects, it might not be advisable to leave the West Harbour until a greater pressure of trade demanded an extension. But Port-Glasgow was just then thinking of a wet dock. Following upon a conference with the Commissioners, and a meeting of feuars and others, it was unanimously resolved to proceed with a Bill, but it was shortly dropped, ostensibly for the session.

A Gourock Harbour

A diversion of attention from exclusively local demands was occasioned on a proposal by the Gourock Harbour Company to erect a harbour there. A special committee was appointed to investigate and report, and Glasgow Town Council desired to co-operate with Greenock. At an interview with General Darroch and his son the former expressed a willingness to consider suggestions that would render the Bill less objectionable, and stated that the

boundaries would be limited to 400 yards instead of 1000 beyond low water mark along the shore from Berry Burn to the march with Ardgowan estate on the west, and that vessels anchoring in the bay would pay only on the goods landed. It appeared, as the committee pointed out, that if there were no falling off in the steamboat traffic with Gourock this Harbour Company, in exchange for an outlay of £3,000, would acquire the right to an annual revenue of £700 from steamboats alone. The scale of dues was regarded as generally inadmissible and out of all proportion to the expenditure to be incurred, and the committee was accordingly instructed to watch the progress of the Bill, which failed to pass. Power was granted for the erection of a pier, Glasgow Trustees appointing three of the Commissioners, Gourock two, and Greenock one. Seventeen years later, at a public meeting, Gourock discovered that by some unaccountable overlook none of the Commissioners had ever been elected, an overlook that was then rectified. Thirteen river steamers were at this time calling at Gourock, Arran Castle, Dunoon Castle, Earl Grey, Fairy Queen, Gleniffer, Hero, Kilmun, Nimrod, St Catharine, Windsor Castle, Albion, Largs, and St Mun.

Conflicting Issues

Whilst ideas and schemes continued to occupy the minds of the authorities and the community, little beyond the most necessary repairs could for a few years longer be undertaken. In the meantime the proprietors of the old graving dock, anxious to have it off their hands, offered it to the Trustees for £1,200, and the bargain was concluded. For a time, beginning about 1834, there was a constant cry for more graving dock accommodation. Plans for a dock to cost £13,800 were thrown aside as too costly. A committee was asked to consider what could be done to repair and extend the old dock. On the top of this appointment everything else had to give way to the vital question of the general shipping needs, renewed in a most pressing form through an influx of trade and the consequent demands of owners, masters, and merchants. The situation was for the Trustees one of the utmost difficulty. Obstacles were met with on every hand, in finance, in site, in extent of the provision for the future, in the acquisition of land. Worried by many other matters of a minor character, the authorities were knocked from pillar to post, and ten years passed before they entered a peaceful haven.

Negotiating with Superior

The first step in tedious negotiations was taken in January, 1835, when the Provost and Magistrates were appointed to confer with Sir Michael Shaw Stewart to find on what terms he would give ground for wet docks to the eastward and westward of the existing harbours. An offer was made of a site westward of Scott's shipyard, but the Trustees were disappointed at the amount of feu-duty, which they said would prevent extension in this direction. They had expected Sir Michael to act with greater liberality, and to encourage them in an undertaking likely to prove so beneficial to himself as well as to the community, and this more especially because of the competition from Port Glasgow and of the deepening of the river, which would enable ships of a large tonnage to go on to Glasgow. The River Trustees had an improvement scheme for cutting the banks and deepening the channel from the Broomielaw to Dumbarton Castle, so as to have 20ft. depth at high water in neap tides, at an estimated cost of £377,867. It was explained on behalf of Sir Michael, in reply to a request for a statement of the lowest rate, that in the first instance it was desirable parties should come to an understanding as to the actual value as between individuals of the property wanted; but that, being fully alive to the great importance of the proposed public works, he had never intended to exact nearly the amount of that value.

In July, 1835, the following clear offer was made - To the eastward, no feu-duty for the first two years, 5s per fall for the next eight years, after which time the rate to be 10s, but the latter rise to take place only provided the amount of the gross revenues drawn by the Trust on the footing of the existing rates during the last three years of the term of eight be at least equal to the amount of the same during the three years immediately preceding the contract which may follow on the offer; but if this be found not to be equal the rise shall not take place until the gross revenue in three successive years shall be equal to that amount. Westward, between Clyde Street and low water mark, 2s per fall, but no feu-duty for the first two years. In both cases liberty was given to extend beyond low water mark without further feu-duty.

This was regarded as a more encouraging prospect for the Trustees, who in the same month had a report from the Harbour Committee on the question of extension. Owing, as they said, to the great expense of Rennie's plan on the Bay of Quick scheme, they had directed their attention exclusively to the only other plan of wet docks, that of Mr. Telford in 1830, which they presented on modified estimates by Mr. Thom: eastern, £53,735; western, £66,000. On the one hand, it was remarked that the improvements at Port Glasgow should operate as a stimulus; on the other, that the uncertainty existing as to the extent to which the navigation to Glasgow might be made, and consequently as to the share of the foreign trade of the Clyde that would ultimately go to that port, would seem to call for a large expenditure that would greatly increase the debt of the Trust.

New Harbour Estimates

The Commissioners generally were on the side of progress. "Why," one of them asked, "should we fear to make an exertion to keep our ground among the ports of the Clyde? Is there not a surplus revenue, half of which would pay the interest on all that would be necessary to borrow? No doubt a part of our trade is gone and some more may follow to Glasgow, but surely it is not unreasonable to expect some increase to the trade among ourselves." By a majority of four (three having left before the voting), the Commissioners resolved that there should be as little delay as possible, and the Trustees were unanimous in their confirmation. It was agreed, also unanimously, that before

fixing on a site a plan and estimates should be got of a tidal harbour and a wet dock of as great a depth of water as could be conveniently obtained at the Bay of Quick, and the probable cost ascertained of the various properties within the limits of the plans that had already been submitted. Messrs. Walker & Burges, London, were asked to supply plans and estimates on a site between East Quay dock and Steele's shipyard, on a site west of the West Burn, and the Bay of Quick. These were provided in January, 1836, the eastern plan estimated at £80,000, the western from Clarence Street at £120,000, and the Bay of Quick at £100,000. With reference to this last the firm stated that its distance from the centre of the town and the character of the accommodation generally were such as to render it in their opinion quite inferior to the other two sites, though if the trade should increase so as to make the three docks necessary it was well placed. Meanwhile the draft of a new Bill was prepared, the sum to be borrowed fixed at £130,000. It was proposed to repeal the provisions of the several Acts relating to the harbours and to consolidate them into one Act, with new and additional powers for extending the police jurisdiction of the Provost and Magistrates over the harbours.

Opposition to the Glasgow Bill

Concurrent with these steps there was a Glasgow Bill for further deepening and improving the river, for enlarging the harbours of Glasgow, and for constructing wet docks. This Bill it was resolved to oppose. It was alleged to contain clauses of an objectionable nature, which if passed could not fail to prove most injurious to the interests of Greenock and of other ports. The Bill proposed to deepen the river with the avowed object of withdrawing the trade and shipping from Greenock and transferring them to Glasgow, and it was obvious that in this event the creditors of Greenock would be deprived of their security. Deepening operations had already accumulated sand and sludge that had enlarged the banks and narrowed the approach to Greenock and Port Glasgow harbours, and if this deepening and embanking were to go on as contemplated the course of the river might be turned to the north of the sandbank, to the entire destruction of these harbours. In conference the Clyde Trustees declined to make any alterations. Port Glasgow joined with Greenock in their opposition and the withdrawal of the Bill in June, 1836, relieved the situation for the time being.

A Grumble from Shipbuilders

With their own Bill Greenock Trustees had some local trouble. A petition against it was lodged by shipbuilders, who regretted that powers were being asked to purchase the whole of the shore ground within the limits of the port from Jerdan's Burn west to Bailie Gammell's estate east, about two miles in extent, with the special exception of two shipyards, to whose proprietors would be reserved an exclusive privilege and a perpetual hereditary right, while others were to be deprived of their property, and a monopoly of shipbuilding established unfavourable to fair competition. On a recommendation by the Commissioners the Bill was withdrawn for the session.

Still Delaying

In April of the same year negotiations were renewed with Sir Michael regarding the unfeued ground east and west of the existing harbours, and he was asked to continue his previous offer until the Trust came to a final decision on the subject of extension. Sir Michael replied that he had no objection to the renewal, but as it implied a very considerable sacrifice of the return he drew from the ground under a temporary tenure, and much greater sacrifices of its true permanent value, he was prepared to make it over upon the work actually going forward within a reasonable time - twelve months from May 30, 1836. To this the Trustees agreed as a handsome offer. But the difficulties in the way were too formidable to be overcome so quickly. It was October, 1840, before another strong effort was made. Memorials were being received from various public bodies, including the Chamber of Commerce, who pointed to the deficiency of accommodation for the timber trade and an utter inadequacy for the daily increasing traffic of the port, whose continued prosperity was being -seriously imperilled.

Cartsdyke Harbour

It was in this year action was taken leading to a settlement with Mr. Crawford of Cartsburn regarding his legal rights in Cartsdyke Harbour. The Trustees resolved to obtain the opinion of Counsel on the questions of Superiority and the validity that entitled Mr. Crawford to levy anchorage and other dues from vessels. They were anxious also to know whether any actions had been decided in the Court of Session or in the House of Lords by which those rights were affected. A committee reported that it would obviously be of great importance to come to an immediate arrangement with Mr. Crawford in view of his threatened opposition to the Police Bill of that year. Moreover, there was the danger of others securing the rights and building an opposition harbour. Parties shortly came to a joint agreement under which the Council were to make an annual payment of £100 for the first thirty years and £150 per annum afterwards, in compensation for Mr. Crawford giving his consent to Cartsdyke and the whole Cartsburn property being included within the burgh's jurisdiction and assessments of Greenock, and at the same time for transferring his rights under a Crown Charter to erect and maintain a harbour at Cartsdyke. The responsibility for this payment was taken over by the Harbour Trust in 1861. This harbour was greatly neglected and allowed to get into a ruinous condition. Midway in the century it was being said that the very stones composing the quay were allowed to be carried off for the building of pigstyes and such like purposes.

Quays and Harbour Shortage

Towards the close of 1840 a special committee reported

(1) That there was a deficiency of berthage for both sailing and steam vessels, particularly those of a large size;

- (2) An accumulation of floating timber in the harbours;
- (3) The encumbrance of quays and breasts with timber; and
- (4) The want of slips for landing heavy timber.

They suggested the construction of a wet dock or a tidal harbour, and a breakwater on the sandbank to shelter the harbours and render the roadstead available for the discharge of timber ships. The limited range of tide was said to be against a wet dock, which was also more costly than a tidal harbour and would be longer in the building.

A breakwater plan had been furnished in 1838, showing a dyke of about 17ft. above low water mark and running in a line parallel with the harbours at a distance from them of about 350 yards from near the Tail of the Bank on the west to a point beside Duncan's yard on the east (beyond the present Victoria Harbour); thereafter a half-tide dyke 6ft. above low water mark to a short distance above the Throughlet. The total cost of this breakwater was estimated at £23,195. At the north side of the breakwater it had been proposed to form a timber pond of nearly 60 acres in extent; but a fear had existed that the want of water depth and the removing of the timber would lead to an obstruction in the channel. This plan, as before, did not commend itself to the Harbour Committee.

Site Selection

Two sites were mentioned for a wet dock-east of the existing harbours, in Cartsdyke Harbour, at £39,022, and west of West Burn, at £42,600. The former was objected to on the ground that it could not be connected with any more extensive plan to be executed progressively, and that if further accommodation were necessary it would have to be westward under more disadvantageous circumstances than then existed. Mr. Joseph Locke, C.E., on being consulted, was favourable to the eastward site, his estimate £55,000, the westward at £80,000, and he explained his views at some length. However great had been the demand for additional harbour accommodation, he believed the time was yet to come when that demand would reach its maximum. Railway facilities for the transmission of merchandise would induce ship owners to stop at Greenock instead of proceeding to Glasgow, where it was well known great inconveniences existed which for want of available space were not likely to be entirely removed. Paisley should most inevitably require its chief port business to be carried on at Greenock, and this circumstance, in addition to the belief that the owners of deep-sea steamers would find it to be to their interest to stop at Greenock, led him to the conclusion that the time had come when further accommodation must absolutely be afforded. The railway to Greenock now in prospect would . . . require such an augmentation as would include both the eastern and the western plans.

Fitting Out Room

With reference to the provision for the general shipping of the port, the Harbour Committee recognised that there was another class of steamer whose wants were only beginning to be felt, that of the overseas vessels built at Greenock, which needed room for fitting out and facilities for taking machinery on board. Opinion was in favour of the eastward plan, in proximity to the foundries. At the same time, the Trustees thought, ground should be purchased also to the west. In again approaching Sir Michael it was found that prices for ground were so high as to amount almost to a prohibition, and he was asked to approximate these to the offer of 1835. The minutes of the Trust do not disclose the terms upon which the transaction was completed, but it is well enough known that Sir Michael dealt with the situation in a generous spirit.

Clyde Trust Opposition

The Bill was supported by the Commissioners, ship owners, and others interested. The Trustees were in opposition on the ground that the works were uncalled for and unnecessary, and Mr. John Scott, shipbuilder, because it was proposed to take a portion of his ground. Regarding the former opposition the 'Glasgow Argus' said: "It is not surprising that strong feelings should be engendered by the unhandsome treatment which Greenock Trustees have received from those who bear the rule of this city, and all we ask is that our neighbours should discriminate between the inhabitants of Glasgow and the individuals who misrepresent them in the management of the Trust." In this relation on a subsequent occasion the 'Advertiser' made the following general comment: "For a quarter of a century, and we do not know for how long before, the river authorities of Glasgow have continually at the expense of their own ratepayers imposed upon the authorities of Greenock the necessity of making immense sacrifices of time, temper, and money to maintain the position of the port and prevent unjustifiable encroachment. Many of those attempts were of a character intended to ignore the position of Greenock, while others were of a kind capable of so changing the current of the stream and tide as to silt up and destroy the harbours and shipbuilding yards on the river side." In the case for the promoters of the Bill it was stated that the last Act for improving the harbours had been passed in 1817, and that in the elapsed period the general trade and population had greatly increased, shipbuilding much extended, and foundries erected on a large scale. Customs duties in 1842 amounted to £423,535; ships registered at the port in 1832 numbered 362, tonnage 35,928; in 1841 the number was 452, of 84,106 aggregate tonnage. Three years' averages of harbour revenue were: 1830-2, £11,852; 1833-5, £13,648; 1836-8, £13,895 1839-41, £15,477. In 1825 the debt of the Trust had been reduced to £117,680, in 1835 to £88,061, and in 1841 to £60,196. The old harbours had been made for ships of from 300 to 400 tons, and the size of ships in 1842 was from 700 to 1000 tons. The Bill was passed on June 18, 1842.

At this stage of the shipping competition between Glasgow and Greenock the statistics of the two ports are particularly interesting. In 1840 the ships inward at Greenock were 232, with a registered tonnage of 100,039, an

increase over 1839 of 84 ships and 33,627 tons; outward, 241 and 75,292 tons, an increase of 59 and 19,423 tons. Ships inward at Glasgow in 1840, 228 and 42,782 tons, an increase over 1839 of 107 ships and 23,896 tons; outward, 234 ships and 50,681 tons, an increase of 77 and 19,131 tons. Ships arriving at Greenock with American timber in 1839, 47; in 1841, 91.

Estimates

Mr Locke's estimates for the two docks for which he had now prepared designs were - east, £82,413; west, £121,397. Still the Trustees were far from being unfettered in the execution of their schemes. There was, for instance, a side issue regarding deposits on the sandbank, a question that was left to the judgment of the Admiralty, with representatives from Glasgow and Greenock. In an interim report on the Bill it had been stated that the charter of the sandbank had been given to the Trustees for the express purpose of building dykes as a protection from the east and north winds, and that the Act of 1817 granted this power provided the operations did not injure the navigation of the river. The Lords of the Admiralty in 1843 authorised the construction of the breakwater in strict accordance with a report and plans by Mr. Walker, engineer, who was of opinion that the interests of the Clyde would not be injured if the works were properly executed and kept in repair, while an opening was to be retained for steamers plying to Helensburgh. Opposition from the Clyde Trustees, who were of a different opinion, caused delay, with the result that Greenock authorities resolved to trouble the Admiralty no further in the meantime.

Victoria Harbour

Tidal Harbour

By slow degrees, and with an apparently justifiable hesitancy, the Trustees were at length brought face to face with the problem that now called for an absolute and speedy solution. Merchants, ship owners, traders, and other inhabitants were pressing by means of memorials and public meeting. Once more the order of preliminaries was set agoing: ground to the eastward was to be scheduled and purchased for a tidal harbour, and an engineer appointed to prepare fresh plans. In January, 1845, Provost Adam Fairrie, reviewing the surplus revenue of the previous ten years, said that it would not be proper to expend more than £60,000 on harbour improvements, including the price of the ground, and that with this expenditure, their resources being very limited, it would be necessary to increase the rates on shipping. Pressure was also being brought to bear by the Superior, who on the strength of his offer of ground was insisting that the work should begin not later than the spring or the summer. In February it was decided by a majority of five to build a tidal harbour, to which the Commissioners unanimously agreed. An offer of £67,662 was accepted, but on the contractors discovering a miscalculation in their specification new plans were prepared and an offer of £90,000 concluded. The works of the Victoria Harbour were thus begun in 1846, and were completed in 1850 at a cost of over £120,000. On the east side was placed a crane to lift 70 tons, convenient for the engining of steamers, and the depth of water allowed the largest ships of the day to remain afloat while being fitted out. The debris taken from the spot was used to form the Albert Quay at the Bay of Quick, where 42 acres were reclaimed between low and high water marks. In digging out this new harbour a stone was turned up containing two small glass bottles, coins, and a plate inscribed to the effect that these articles had been deposited with the foundation-stone of the East India Quay in 1801. They were re-deposited in the foundation-stone of the Victoria Harbour.

The Toll on Glasgow Ships

The imposition of anchorage dues on ships bound for Glasgow, "a toll which had been exacted by Greenock Board from the early days of their authority, had now grown into a subject of acute dispute between the two bodies of opposing river Trustees. The Town Clerk of Glasgow wrote at the beginning of 1846 questioning the right of Greenock to impose such dues on vessels anchoring in the roadstead or passing the harbours of Greenock for Glasgow without actually touching at the quays. The Clyde Trustees said they were averse from having any question with the Commissioners of Greenock, but as they conceived the right assumed was not well founded they felt that it would be impossible for them, in the discharge of their duty to the shipping interests of the Clyde, to avoid bringing the matter to a judicial inquiry. They asked under what authority the town or the Commissioners conceived they were thus entitled? Did they found on any Charter or Act of Parliament? Greenock replied that the right was based upon similar principles to those at the other ports where such dues were exacted. The Superior had obtained a grant from the Crown of the land of Greenock, with a right to levy anchorage, shore, bay, and ring dues, and when the Superior feued to the Town Council the ground upon which the harbours were then built he assigned over his right to exact those dues, and this had continued since 1772. The small dues were really shelter dues for ships anchoring opposite the harbours. However, if the Clyde Trustees insisted, Greenock might collect the dues only from Glasgow ships which communicated by boat or otherwise with the shore. Greenock Trustees would like to keep up the friendly feeling which had so long existed between the two ports, which they regretted to observe there had for some time past been no desire on the part of the Glasgow authorities to continue. To this Glasgow stated that they were happy to find that they would be relieved from the necessity of any judicial trial. They regretted that the Commissioners of Greenock should appear to feel that any desire existed on the part of Glasgow authorities to disturb the most friendly intercourse between them, desired to give an assurance that no such feeling existed on their part, and hoped that in duly protecting the interests of their respective constituents the most favourable construction would be uniformly put on the proceedings of both parties.

A few years later the Provost reported that application had been made by the Clyde Trustees to the Board of Customs for permission for ships inward from foreign ports for Glasgow to discharge part cargo at the Tail of the Bank into lighters under the direction and surveillance of the Glasgow Customhouse without being subject to the Greenock Customhouse authorities and payment of the port dues. A great deal of correspondence ensued, at the close of which the Board of Customs were unable to comply with the request of the Clyde Trustees, and the Collector and Comptroller at Glasgow were asked to take care that the indulgence granted by an Order of August, 1849 - "in cases of necessity or emergency on permitting goods previously entered, cleared, and water-borne for shipment at Glasgow to be shipped at the Tail of the Bank on board outgoing vessels" - would be confined as originally contemplated. This continued to be the state of the question until 1862, when the Clyde Trustees renewed their application. On this occasion the Board of Customs did not consider that they would be justified in interfering in the dispute by sanctioning a departure from the regulations which had been in force for so many years. The question could only be decided in a court of law. A new issue had been raised as to whether or not the anchorage was within the statutable limits of the port of Greenock. The subject was up again in 1864, when in an interview with the Board of Trade a Greenock deputation was informed that it had given the Board a good deal of annoyance owing to the frequent and pressing representations from Glasgow, and that they were therefore anxious to have it arranged. Negotiations with this object were ultimately successful, the issue being that after the lapse of a short term of years the exaction of the dues was discontinued.

More Dock Demands

Within a comparatively short time after the opening of Victoria Harbour in 1850 it became obvious that the labours and anxieties of the Trustees in the direction of dock extension were far from being ended. They were soon on the outlook for more shore ground, and were deeply disappointed that Sir Michael Shaw Stewart was disinclined to feu additional land at the Bay of Quick. A local authority, writing in 1852 on the problems of the time, stated that the Harbour Trust, the great source of the wealth and importance of the town, had in that year produced the largest revenue ever raised in Greenock. The whole of the interest had been regularly paid, a large accumulated surplus carried to the credit of the stock account, and money was freely offering to the Trust at a reduced rate of interest. Statistics regarding foreign tonnage showed the vast increase from 14,916 tons in 1784 to 224,174 tons in 1852; gross rents and revenues had grown from £256 in 1750 to £36,262 in 1852. "If the apparently dreamlike imagining of 10,000 ton ships be realised, it is not easy to predict what may be the future progress of the shipping trade. It is a fact that Liverpool has bought up all the river land over a great distance for the extension of dock accommodation, while shipbuilding has very much fallen off there. A town may thus overshoot the mark. Greenock from its peculiar position is stretching rapidly westward, and forcing shipyards and engineering works down the river. It will be well, therefore, that careful consideration should be given to this question by the Corporation, so as not to shut out the means of expanding public works."

A Warning Note

An inquiry into the need for further accommodation, begun in 1854, extended over two years without much apparent effect, and then the question involved graving dock, slip, and harbour facilities in one scheme, together with that of financial ability to meet the outlay. One of the strongest arguments was that an enormous increase had taken place in the size of ships built at and frequenting the port, and that these were being forced elsewhere for dock inspection and repairs. A memorial from ship owners, merchants, manufacturers, feuars, and others warned the Trustees that unless immediate exertions were made their shipping interests would fall behind and their trade be materially and permanently damaged. The memorialists regarded with satisfaction a large purchase of land with a sea frontage in the west end, that seemed suitable in point of locality, depth of water, and extent of ground, in all other respects preferable to all other sites, and ample enough to supply the wants for many years to come. The ground belonging to Scott & Co., shipbuilders, west of the West Burn on to Albert Quay had been offered to the Trust, and conditionally accepted for £30,000, but great delay took place in the negotiations owing to doubts regarding some of the titles. This site was nearly twelve acres in extent, with a sea frontage of 900 feet. A public meeting in 1857 expressed regret at the failure to conclude the purchase, which, however, was completed not long after. Provost T. O. Hunter expressed his pleasure at the Magistrates having seen the propriety of buying ground at the west-end, for a very great blunder had been made two or three years before in not accepting Sir Michael's offer of the Bay of Quick, which might have been got at a rate of feu-duty that capitalised would not have been over £2,000.

Larger Vessels

In a lengthy report to the Board in this year it was admitted that about one-half of the harbours was from want of depth of water unavailable to the general class of vessels frequenting the port. The rapid increase in the size of ships, steam and sail, had been extraordinary, and indeed the only limit in this respect seemed to be the dock accommodation provided. Of late years the rapid deepening of the river had permitted vessels of large tonnage to proceed to Glasgow, which had now become a port of great importance. Still ships of great tonnage were obliged to discharge and load part cargo at Greenock, and thus sailing vessels of 1,400 tons and upwards and steamers of 2,000 tons and upwards remained at Greenock. On account of the difficulties the further deepening of the river must be a work of time, and Greenock still hold the advantage which contiguity to deep water gave her. But it was essential that her harbours should be kept in advance in affording superior accommodation, and so far from this relative position of the two ports being prejudicial to either it would be found most conducive to the interests of both.

Dock and Harbour Plans

Messrs. Bell & Little, C.E., were consulted, and their plans showed a graving dock and harbour at the west-end, the former estimated to cost £35,000. Consideration had to be delayed owing to an unparalleled commercial and monetary crisis, but with a tendency by the end of 1858 towards financial improvement the plans were generally approved, the total estimates were: Larger graving dock, £35,000; smaller, £32,000; harbour, £119,000; and as the whole could not be undertaken without an application for additional borrowing powers one dock only was to be proceeded with. It was also proposed to erect a battery on the north-west point of the dock and ask Government for a subsidy. The scheme was held up and practically abandoned before the middle of 1859.

A Bill Failure

On a renewed proposal to schedule property south of Clarence Street and west of Patrick Street, Messrs. D. & T. Stevenson, consulting engineers, were engaged to furnish a comprehensive report. They inspected the whole ground from Garvel Point to the Red Light. They judged that the development of railway traffic was the general want of the port. Revenue had increased in the previous ten years from £13,000 to £23,000, and ordinary expenditure, including interest, amounted to £13,000, leaving £10,000 available for harbour improvements. The engineers considered that £200,000 might safely be applied for. In their opinion there were two methods only of improvement. One was to deepen and enlarge the East and West Harbours, the other to construct a new harbour at the west-end. The cost of the harbour and graving dock, with the price of property, was estimated at £196,000, and without the graving dock £159,000. It was unanimously resolved to ask Parliament for £180,000 for a harbour and a dry dock between West Burn and Patrick Street. But the Bill came to an untimely end in March, 1860. There was a sharp conflict on the question of a change in the constitution, ship owners and harbour ratepayers declined an offer of five representatives on the Trust, and a public meeting held that such a concession would be a flagrant infringement of the rights and privileges of the electors. A new committee got fresh plans, and the Admiralty was asked for permission to carry the west-end works as far as possible into the river.

Princes Pier and Albert Harbour

West End Quay and Harbour

In June, 1861, it was resolved to construct a pier in front of Albert Quay, at an estimated cost of £60,000, according to plans submitted by Provost Grieve. This was the beginning of the costly undertaking of Princes Pier. A report of the time stated that the debt of the Trust had increased by £5,750 in ten years, and that the amount owing to the Trust had decreased by £16,784, but that they had expended £30,000 on renewals and upwards of £38,000 in purchasing ground for extensions. Trade had greatly improved, and it was believed that the additional facilities in contemplation would be amply justified. Messrs. York were selected as contractors for the pier at £64,212, the first section to cost £17,640.

Government Loan

An application was made to the Board of Trade for £150,000. This was accompanied by plans showing

- (1) A harbour of seven acres within the new pier,
- (2) Additions to the pier westward, and
- (3) A dry dock 450ft in length, 80ft. in width, and 18ft. on the cill-total cost, £150,000.

The Loan Commissioners agreed to give £100,000 on condition that, while the mortgage did not affect the right of priority held by the existing creditors, it gave the Commissioners a right of preference next to and immediately after them, and that any borrowings after the date of the mortgage would not rank *pari passu* with it. A minority opposition, headed by Mr. Robert Neill, a very prominent figure in the local politics of his time, objected to the unwise expedient of a Government loan, argued that to complete the works it would take £100,000 to £150,000 more than the sum to be borrowed from the Commissioners, and contended that such a loan would prejudice the rights of the Trust in any future loan from the general public.

Albert Harbour

The majority decided, on the strength of this promise, to proceed with the Albert Harbour, the foundation-stone of which was laid in 1862 by Provost Grieve. Messrs. Bell & Miller, Glasgow, were the engineers, and the entire undertaking, inclusive of land and shed accommodation, cost over £250,000. The formation of Princes Pier was also decided upon, to extend westward about 2000 feet, the outlay, owing to the necessity for deep piling through soft strata, finally reaching £100,000.

Port Glasgow Bill etc.

To add to the anxieties of the Trust, Port Glasgow was promoting a Harbour Bill which proposed to fix the western boundary of their Trust at Ladyburn. To this claim they held stubbornly for a time, and then agreed that Devol's Glen should mark the boundary. Railway complications were also bringing disturbing elements into play because of the companies' naturally strong desire to have adequate harbour connections and get as near as possible to the river. They were also making a first move for a fleet of river steamers, both companies introducing a Bill for this purpose at the beginning of 1862. The Magistrates just then were apparently supine on the subject, as they did nothing at all in the matter; but a few months later the Trustees resolved not to oppose a railway steamboat pier at Wemyss Bay. A change of mind took place previous to the hearing of the Bill. Time and second thoughts induced

the opposition of the Trustees, who were now of opinion that as a general principle railway companies should not own or subsidise steamers. This clause of the Bill was lost.

Critical Period

In January, 1865, schedules were served by the Greenock and Ayrshire Railway Company for ground to be taken by them at Albert Harbour. An assent to this was recommended by a committee of the Trust, with certain stipulations regarding the height of Brougham Street Bridge. This railway Bill was passed in May of the same year. It may be taken as marking a turning point in the history of the harbours.

Prospective Changes and Extensions

The Trustees were confronted with the necessity for still further extensions, and were now looking elsewhere than in the Bay of Quick vicinity. In introducing the subject Provost Grieve stated that the financial position and the state of the harbours, principally on account of the enormous sugar imports, warranted application for a new Bill, by which it was proposed to consolidate all previous Acts and obtain powers for new works. With still further harbour accommodation they would soon be enabled to extend their arms to Port Glasgow and Gourock, admit them into their federation, and that with so easy a rate of taxation they would see it to be to their interest. The position that Greenock occupied made it a great port and a great town. Through its manufactures and other resources Glasgow held a great place, but he believed that Greenock was destined to be the shipping port of the Clyde. At an interview with the Board of Trade it had been indicated that a pier and landing place would be constructed at the foot of Forsyth Street or at some other suitable place in the locality.

At the same time, all idea of having docks to the westward had not been abandoned. A minute of the Harbour Bill Committee advised that the whole foreshore from Campbell Street to the burgh western boundary should be secured for harbour extension works, and that Sir Michael should be asked to state his terms. Meanwhile the Provost, in October, 1865, was prepared with a plan for the purchase of property to the east, where a new graving dock could be erected. This scheme was approved, and designs prepared for Parliament.

Consolidation Act

Events marched with astonishing speed, and soon the scheme far exceeded the original conception. The draft of the Bill and estimates were submitted in December. The figures, according to the designs of Bell & Miller, were—graving dock, £45,000; tidal basin, £118,000; West Pier wall, £70,000; repairs on old dock, £100; Garvel Park, £50,000; other properties to be purchased, £3500 - total, £288,000.

The Bill also asked powers for changes in the constitution, one the abolition of the Commissioners. It passed in June, 1866. This Act gathered up all the statutes relating to the port into a consolidated Act, and re-constructed the Trust by adding to the Town Council nine elected members drawn from a limited class of ship owners and harbour ratepayers. All the statutes had contained the usual borrowing powers, and these had been exercised to the extent of borrowing upon the security of the harbour undertaking in the aggregate to about £1,500,000. It also provided for the sale of the anchorage dues by the Town Council to the Harbour Trust, a transaction that was carried through within the following twelve months at the price of £20,000; and according to a resolution of the Board the exaction of those dues, formerly levied by the Council, was discontinued on the completion of the transfer.

In this year notice appeared of Ardmore Harbour Bill, the object of which was the formation of a large harbour opposite Greenock in connection with the North British Railway, to accommodate traffic between the north-eastern districts and the Clyde, the cost estimated at £140,000. The scheme reached no practical point.

Railway Facilities

The development of railway company penetration in the district was now proceeding apace, and gradually coming into closer contact with and opposition to the views and aims of the Trust. In January of 1866 the Parliamentary plans of the Caledonian Company (Greenock and Gourock extension) and of the Greenock and Ayrshire Company (various and Gourock extension) were lodged. A draft agreement was made out with the latter regarding their proposed connection with the west-end harbour works. Objections were taken to this by Mr. Robert Neill, on the ground that the site in question had for sixty years been pointed out by successive engineers as most suitable for a tidal harbour, and that it would practically shut out the Caledonian Company from the Albert Harbour. He also pointed to the fact that no adequate compensation was being stipulated to be paid to the Trust, held that it was ultra vires to enter into such an agreement, and insisted that as they were entirely dependent upon their borrowing powers for their ability to fulfil their obligations the Trust should have made an absolute condition enforceable by the Ayrshire Railway Company to constitute large and extensive sea-works which from various causes it might be out of the power of the Trust's successors to fulfil.

Under a portion of the Caledonian Bill it was proposed to carry their line across the Esplanade and up an embankment to be formed beyond low water mark, over part of the ground intended to be acquired by the Trustees for a steamboat quay, and on to the western end of the outer quays of Albert Harbour. It included in the limits of deviation a great portion of the western quay of this harbour, and the greater portion of the ground embanked by the Trustees between the harbour and a timber pond. This, in the opinion of the Trust, would virtually hand over to

the company the entire possession of the sea frontage from the cope of the western quay of the Albert Harbour to Campbell Street, and even beyond this, and give them entire command of the harbour ground to carry their rails there in any way they pleased. As this was the only ground on the Greenock shores available for a steamboat quay, which was urgently demanded, the loss of this sea frontage would be a serious blow to the steamboat traffic.

Conflicting Opinions

The Trustees lodged plans in Parliament in connection with a new Bill to embrace the construction of the pier, and proceeded to ascertain the possibilities of an improved design for providing both companies with access to the Albert Harbour and to the pier. Mr. Neill's objections to the plans were that they did not provide for the retention of the shore ground for future harbour purposes, and that no arrangements had been come to for affording equal facilities to the railway companies. Mr. James T. Caird, shipbuilder, submitted a plan as the basis of an arrangement, giving a continuation of Clarence Street westward to Campbell Street, but reserving the ground to the north for a new harbour equal in dimensions to the Albert Harbour, a main mineral line to both railways to be confined to the south side of the continuation of the harbours, and their passenger stations to be placed side by side on an open space running north and south at Campbell Street. It was suggested that engineers should be consulted in order to satisfy themselves that the plans gave proper connections to the companies and at the same time retained to the Trust control of the outer space of shore ground. Against this a motion by Mr. James Morton was carried by thirteen votes to nine that the plans be generally approved, reserving it to the Trust and the companies to make any modification as to details for mutual advantage. Mr. Robert Neill intervened with a protest against the whole proceedings and resolutions of "a pretended meeting of the Trustees of December 27":

(1) The meeting had not been called in terms of the Act;

(2) The pretended resolution had been carried by votes of members who as chairman, directors, or partners respectively of the Greenock and Ayrshire Railway Company were interested in the subject matter of said resolutions;

(3) The resolutions were injurious to the present or future interests of the port and harbours.

At the February meeting following Mr. Neill moved a rescinding resolution, with an addition by Mr. James Stewart, "And the Trust being satisfied of the necessity for preserving for harbour purposes the ground ex adverso of Clyde Crescent, resolve to memorialise the Board of Trade to appoint a neutral engineer of the highest standing, with instructions to point out how the two lines of railway can best be laid out consistently with the above object." The previous question was carried by thirteen votes to eleven.

Bills Passed

The Trustees' Bill received the Royal assent on May 31, 1867, and the construction of Princes Pier was gone on with to its completion. Certain differences with the Greenock and Ayrshire Railway Company remained, but these were resolved by the amendment of plans in the company's Bill, to an extent which conceded almost all that the Trustees had demanded. While the Caledonian Bill had also passed, the Board were for some time left in ignorance of the real intentions of the directors. By the middle of 1868 the new steamboat pier had reached a point that rendered it necessary to decide whether it should stop at Campbell Street or be extended to Forsyth Street, as originally intended. In reply to a communication the company stated that they proposed to apply to Parliament for power to abandon the Greenock and Gourock line. It was then resolved not to carry the pier beyond Campbell Street. The Caledonian directors agreed to adjust certain clauses so as to make it clear beyond doubt that they abandoned any right they possessed in relation to the west-end new harbour works.

Garvel Park

The Bay of Quick as a probable site for dock extension having now apparently been cleared out of the way, the majority of the Trustees turned their minds with serious intent to the consideration of Garvel Park. Throughout the latter half of 1867 inquiries, calculations, and resolutions relating to the subject were of constant recurrence. To begin with, it was decided to ascertain on what terms the whole or part of that ground, and at the same time of the property of McNab & Co., shipbuilders, to the east and west of West Burn, could be acquired. An offer was made by this firm, but subsequently withdrawn. Mr. John Scott offered Garvel Park lands for £88,000, a figure, according to the sellers, considerably below the value. Messrs. Kyle & Frew, valuers, put it at £71,343 13s, an estimate that was followed by a definite motion by Provost Grieve to make an offer not exceeding £80,000. Mr. Robert Neill was still energetic in his opposition, and moved that, considering the heavy expenditure on the west-end works and the purchase of the anchorage dues, and the obligation to lay aside £5000 a year from revenue for a sinking fund, consideration should be adjourned for two months. The resolution of the Board was to delay for fourteen days to receive a report on revenues and liabilities.

State of Finances

As the Trust entertained certain doubts on the strength of their financial position or resources with regard to the purchasing of Garvel Park, a memorial was drawn up for the opinion of counsel. This memorial stated that before the passing of the 1866 Act the Trust had borrowed £360,000, by that Act this was increased to £650,000, and by the Act of 1867 to £750,000. According to calculations, the revenues, making reasonable allowance for increase, would afford a sufficient sum for borrowing the money requisite for the purchase of Garvel Park and the other purposes of the Trust, but doubts had occurred to some whether those revenues would be sufficient for all

purposes when the sinking fund came into operation in 1871. Counsel's reply was: "I am of opinion that if in the judgment of the Trustees it is desirable and expedient to purchase the whole of Garvel Park, they need not be deterred from doing so by any apprehension that their revenues may prove insufficient for a time to provide the sinking fund required. It is clear that they have the power under the Act to make the purchase for the purposes of the Trust, and they and they only are the judges whether it would be proper to do so. I think it is clear that it is competent to acquire only a part of the land of Garvel Park, and that they could not be compelled to take the whole." It was without further delay resolved by twelve votes to eleven to offer £80,000. It was stated at the time that the trustees on the estate had been on the point of selling it to the Caledonian Railway Company at a 50 per cent larger price.

Purchase of Garvel Park

The Turning Point

This, probably, was the most momentous decision ever come to in the affairs of Greenock. It resolved debates, doubts, and conflicts in opinion that had lasted for two generations, and to which can be attributed the fatal delay in the harbour equipment of the port. Even at this comparatively far-off day the echoes of the struggle which ended in wiping the Bay of Quick clean off the map are reverberating, and carry with them a continuing sense of regret and of opportunity cast away. To many of those who are looking at events in retrospect it may seem that in the protracted discussions on the merits of East versus West the Trustees of the times were inexplicably unstable in mind, and that, when at length, by the rapid growth of shipping and the imperative need for action, they were forced to finality, they took a misdirected and disastrous step. Before the middle of last century the harbourage system was moving seaward in its natural course. Eminent engineers, by plan and counsel, had encouraged the authorities in this view and in the facility with which they could exploit the situation. The moment appeared ripe and the way clear, and but for this singular mental inability to arrive at a fixed resolve the whole face of the town frontage might have become subject to a transformation bearing little resemblance to that we see to-day. So thought many of Greenock's representative citizens. "My ideal Greenock from an utilitarian point of view," said one, "would have involved a part sacrifice of the Esplanade, slightly limited the area of the West-end, and given itself to the building up of a community wholehearted and uncompromising in a devotion to shipping, shipbuilding, and commercial interests generally. From Battery Park to the Bay of Quick was the natural harbourage of a great port. The Esplanade is a thing of beauty, but as an asset to the town its value is incommensurate with its cost. With docks in the west and shipyards in the east, Greenock would have been perfect in its topographical adjustment to the work it has to do. At rare times have shipbuilders been given the encouragement the importance of their industry demands. Their yards on occasion have had to give way to harbour schemes without a clear idea as to their relative bearings on the town's prosperity. Garvel Park occupied by shipyards and engineering works, and the wide area behind with factories, was at one time to many citizens a scheme of great potentialities, unfortunately fated to be overborne and extinguished by the weight of a single vote."

The Railway Factor

It had been the coming of the railway that introduced an element disturbing to former calculations, that led to new trains of thought as well as opened up new channels of industry and investment. The importance to Greenock of a railway connection it was believed could not be over-rated. It was welcomed with wide-open purses and inaugurated with a grand flourish. The returns in dividends failed to reach the standards of anticipation, but there could be no doubt about the generally beneficial effects upon the town. Promoters of railways with termini near the sea-front look naturally for the water developments. In the original crude programme of the Glasgow and Greenock Company there was something about building a pier near Langbank. The idea was abandoned pretty quickly as financially impracticable, and the directors contented themselves with Greenock Customhouse Quay as a steamboat landing-stage. As yet there was no menace to harbour extension, nor did it appear in concrete form until the day of the Greenock and Ayrshire railway. It was then impossible to evade complications arising out of the collision of interests to which events had been tending. This, we are told, was the stage from which, with an ampler share of prescience, Greenock would in all probability have dated her sure progress to a much higher state of prosperity.

Plans for Garvel Works

In August, 1868, premiums of £300 and £100 were offered for the best competitive plans for the new works at Garvel Park. The second prize was won by Mr. W. R. Kinipple, London, who in the beginning of 1869 was appointed to lay out the ground, with the promise of being engaged as engineer on the undertaking in the event of the dock and other works being proceeded with. The first prize was won by Mr. Fiddler, London, an amateur, who could not agree single-handed to carry out his plans, which Mr. Kinipple did with modifications of his own. This appointment was the opening of a notable period in the affairs of the Trust. Mr. Kinipple was a man of ideas, of great professional ability, who believed in the future of Greenock as the port of the Clyde, and who had a singular power of persuasion to convince the most doubting that this was on the eve of being realised. For about a score of years he was easily the most prominent and most potent person in the town, and who of those who were here at the time can forget the eagerness with which his annual deliverances at the Ardgowan Club dinners were awaited, those flamboyant prophetic utterances that to the local mind compared in importance with the dicta of Cabinet Ministers at the Mansion house!

Garvel Graving Dock

There was one strong note of warning to the Trust with regard to the construction of a graving dock. The protest issued from a deputation of ship owners, who feared that the dock was certain to involve a greater outlay than the funds warranted for that purpose alone. They were of the opinion, besides, that a breadth of 70ft. and 16ft. depth of water on the cill at ordinary spring tides was amply sufficient for all the ordinary requirements of the port, present or prospective. The Trustees' view was that the immediate needs demanded a dock 500ft. on the floor, 60ft. width of entrance, 20ft. on the cill, and 80ft. breadth inside. For this they received the requisite Parliamentary powers, the dock was begun in 1870 and completed in 1874, at a cost of £89,000. Provost Morton on this occasion hazarded his character as a prophet by predicting that in ten years the revenue of the Trust would be £100,000 - that was, if the Trust continued to be alive to the importance of making provision in the interests of the port; for he considered that the authorities of Greenock in some past generations had had too little foresight. When the Garvel works were first projected in 1866 it was proposed that the harbour and graving dock should be constructed, but that the former should be tidal. This, however, was altered during Mr. James Morton's Provostship, and a wet dock approved of in 1871.

Further utilisation of Garvel Park was for the time postponed, chiefly doubtless from financial considerations, and a suggestion to convert the West Harbour into a wet dock came to nothing. Schemes in other departments were being formulated, one of the most important and most necessary that of warehouse accommodation. This question had been a source of disappointment throughout the later periods of the Trust's history. So long ago as 1803 a petition by the Magistrates and Council to the Lords of the Treasury had been rejected, and at various times onward to 1872 all efforts in this direction had been fruitless. In their promotion of a Warehousing Bill in 1870 the Trustees were extremely unfortunate in failing to have the preamble proved, and no reasons given. The report of the Bill Committee is a document worthy of preservation: "We believe the Bill was calculated to do good to a most important branch of trade, in the success of which the Trust is so deeply interested on account of the large amount of revenue derived from the sugar imported and the vessels coming in, and also from the refined goods shipped at the quays for England and Ireland, and from the steamers carrying such goods. As was admitted...Greenock is carrying on a keen competition with London and Liverpool, and...whatever facilities the refiners of those cities enjoy ought in common justice to be granted to the refiners of Greenock. But these privileges have been refused on the opposition which, while mainly instigated by the sugar merchants and brokers in Glasgow, whose interests are adverse to the price of raw sugar being cheap at Greenock, was supported by our own townsmen...- that is, a few of our townsmen allied themselves with the Glasgow merchants to prevent Greenock getting a system of warrants that those competitors possess." The Trustees were more fortunate two years later, when Parliament passed a Bill empowering the erection of warehouses and transit sheds at Princes Pier. Sugar imports to Greenock in 1870-1 were 150,092 tons, and the total dues paid to the Trust amounted to £16,220, about $\frac{3}{8}$ ths of which came from sugar.

Harbour Ownership

About this time the question of the ownership of the harbours was brought under the consideration of the Ownership and a special committee made the following report: "By the Act of 1866 the whole undertaking of the port and harbours was placed in the power of the Trustees, so that by force of this provision the two graving docks are now their property. The Trustees are free to deal with the regulations of the harbours without being trammelled by any restrictions. The Act of 1866 incorporated the piers and docks, but no provisions are to be found bearing on graving docks, and the word dock in that Act is evidently used in the sense of a harbour for loading and unloading vessels."

The main contention here is, of course, quite at variance with the view of the Town Council, whose position has been stated in the following precise legal terms: "The proprietary rights of the Town Council in the solum of the harbours described in the feu contract of 1772 have never been assigned. The successors of the original parties to it have in no way divested themselves of their respective rights and interests in so far as the solum of the harbours is concerned. The right on the part of the Town Council to levy anchorage, shore, bay, and ring dues was transferred to the Harbour Trust in 1868 under powers contained in the Greenock Port and Harbours Act of 1866, but that Act specially saved the rights and interests of the Town Council under the charter granted by Sir John Shaw to the town in 1751, which gave power to raise money by taxing the inhabitants for maintaining the harbours, and the feu contract entered into between Sir John Shaw Stewart and the Magistrates and Council in 1772. . . . It has on several occasions been contended by opponents of the Town Council that all their proprietary rights in the original harbours of Greenock ceased when they assigned their right to levy anchorage, shore, and ring dues to the Harbour Trust in 1868. The Town Council, however, maintain that this is not the case. It is the case that the right to levy these dues was transferred under powers contained in the Harbours and Passing Tolls, etc., Act of 1861, but the Town Council's feudal right of property in the harbours was never transferred, as the feu contract expressly prohibited the alienation of said property, and the harbour continues legally vested in the Town Council for behoof of the community to this day. No person can be inferentially deprived of right of property by an Act of Parliament. Had it been intended to oust the Town Council from their rights of property in the old harbours of Greenock, this would have been expressly stated in the Act of Parliament. A person does not lose his rights in real property by non-use. His rights in real property are completed according to a well-known legal method, and if this well-known legal method has not been solemnly carried out such person cannot be legally divested of his rights. Such is the

case of the Town Council of Greenock in their right of property in the old harbours, and these rights have continued in full force and effect from their creation until now.”

The contention of the Harbour Trust, on the other hand, is that by the Act of 1866 all the property that remained vested in the Town Council connected with the harbours was the anchorage and other dues, and that all other harbour property was vested by that Act in the Harbour Trustees - that, in fact, the Town Council on the sale of those dues for £20,000 ceased to have any proprietary interest in the harbours.

Final Effort Westward

A few last obstacles to the absolute establishment of great Garvel works were still to be overcome. Perhaps the greatest of these arose through the election of Mr. Robert Neill as Provost in succession to Mr. Jas. Morton. It soon became evident that Mr. Neill was determined to make a new effort in favour of dock extension to the west. There was also on his part a preliminary move towards the absorption of Port Glasgow harbour system. In 1873 he intimated to the Trust that in an informal conversation with Provost Birkmyre it had been suggested that negotiations should be opened with this view, and he submitted a statement from Port Glasgow that condescended on a price. At the same time he referred to the possibility of acquiring from Sir Michael Shaw Stewart the foreshore ground to the east of Gourock Bay for additional harbour accommodation. A committee reported on the expediency of treating with Port Glasgow, and, subsequently, on a proposal to negotiate on certain terms, consideration was adjourned. Unable to attend the next meeting, Provost Neill wrote that he was strongly of opinion it would be prudent to continue the negotiations, and quoted Mr. Hawkshaw, their London adviser, as saying that they should not let the opportunity slip of acquiring Port Glasgow harbours. A motion on these lines was defeated by twelve to two.

Garvel Wet Dock

It was February, 1875, before Mr. Kinipple, now chief and consulting engineer, was instructed to prepare plans for a wet dock. Mr. Kinipple had also a scheme for the construction of a new river line 90ft. into the river, which was negated as inexpedient on several grounds, the chief of these being that the Trust should not be the first parties to disturb or propose a change on the status quo. The plans for a wet dock were passed in May, 1875, and in October it was resolved to build it at Garvel Park. A certain degree of uncertainty or hesitancy persisted a little longer, still on the question whether the westward scheme should be revived or totally abandoned. Moreover, even after it had been decided to advertise for tenders the Trust came to very close quarters with Sir Michael over a proposal to feu the entire area of about 55 acres lying between the march dyke at Berry Burn and Fort Matilda. The Trustees were to be given power to sub-feu a strip of the ground, 130ft in length, fronting the Low Gourock Road, for the erection of dwelling houses not exceeding three storeys in height. So long as the ground was not appropriated for harbour purposes, that portion to the north and north-west of the dwelling-houses was to be used for timber ponds, woodyards, shipbuilding yards, sawmills, and other works of a similar description. A motion to feu the westmost portion only was carried by a majority of one in a full meeting. Sir Michael declined to entertain this offer, and there the matter ended.

Doubts Arising

Now that the last hope had gone of building docks to the westward, there was apparently a remarkable consensus of opinion that the Trust had blundered. Bailie W. B. Paul would “have preferred to see this dock at the Bay of Quick, where Sir John Rennie some fifty years ago said one of the finest natural harbours or docks in the kingdom could be made. This bay was quietly handed over to the Ayrshire Railway Company without opposition, . . . and the town got little for it.” The ‘Telegraph’ believed in the Garvel Park wet dock only because “we cannot have one farther west. If the Bay of Quick had not been given away - if that true site . . . had not been squandered - there had never arisen the necessity for Garvel Park purchase.” The Trustees had “been guilty of the enormous blunder and then buying Garvel Park to cover the blunder, at an enormous cost.” So thought and said Provost Abram Lyle, Mr. Walter Grieve, and many others, admitting at the same time that the authorities had been beset by difficulties.

Ex-Provost J. J. Grieve had a word of personal justification and one of warning before the contracts for the dock were fixed: “I proceed to show that the wet dock at Garvel Park will be a great mistake..... I may say truly that the object I had before me (in purchasing the Garvel estate) was at no distant date to construct a large tidal harbour or basin, having directly in view the entire removal of the timber traffic from our present harbours, and to promote a large mineral traffic in connection with the Caledonian railway. I have heard it stated that the proposed works at Garvel Park will cost half a million of money. If this is near the truth, I hold it would be sufficient to induce the Trustees to pause, and to ascertain how far the works as contemplated are adapted to the general interests of the port and town, and what would be the cost of the same. It would be very costly to have cargoes of sugar carted from Garvel Park. I sound a note of warning before it is too late. Three-fourths of the cartage will be necessarily directed through Cartsydyke, and another prodigious amount of money must be found to clear away the long narrow street, independently of throwing too much traffic along the backbone of the town.” In reply to certain allegations by Bailie Paul, Mr. Grieve wrote to the ‘Telegraph’ - “Bailie Paul is reported to have said that “Provost Grieve, in power then, was determined to buy Garvel Park; he had an interest in doing so. The beautiful Bay of Quick was sacrificed, and Garvel Park was bought to serve a family connection.” This is the first time I have been charged with corrupt action or motive, and I defy the Bailie to prove either; and it is well known I have no family relation whatever to the

parties who owned Garvel Park. Perhaps the Bailie does not know that I had authority to benefit the owners of that property to the extent of one or two thousand pounds from another quarter more than they received from the Harbour Trust."

James Watt Dock

Final Step

A unanimous decision to go on with the dock was come to on June 13, 1878, and the contract given to Mr. John Waddell on an estimate of £242,885 5s 3d. "There had never in the history of Greenock," said Provost Lyle, "been a more momentous time, involving greater interests or a greater outlay of money. The whole cost would be something over £400,000, but they could very well face it." It is impossible to-day to realise the amount of enthusiasm the resolution occasioned throughout the community. Mr. Kinipple virtually staked his reputation on the success of the scheme, while the Harbour Trustees, inclusive of the Town Council element, inflated by the magnitude of the prospects, helped to create an atmosphere that fairly overbore the public mind.

Justifying Facts

The main arguments for the dock were based upon the great and rapidly increasing volume of trade, and upon the obvious need of providing for the steady enlargement of cargo and passenger steamers. For the former of these pleas the body of facts adduced showed an array of undeniably convincing figures:

In 1830, tonnage 430,000 and revenue £12,000;

In 1850, tonnage 850,000 and revenue £14,000;

In 1860, tonnage 1,200,000 and revenue £22,000;

In 1870, tonnage 1,900,000 and revenue £51,000;

and when 1880 came round, tonnage 2,700,000 and revenue £66,000;

The Atlantic steamers, it was held, would never pass Greenock quays with such ample provision so handily at disposal. That this was not the opinion of all influential citizens is shown by a statement by Mr. John Neill, sugar refiner: "The chances of paying for this dock by Transatlantic traffic intercepted on its way to Glasgow are very shadowy. The tendency is always to carry navigable water to the great centres, and the upkeep upon all the Clyde navigation, though it may be expensive, will never come to so much as the cost of the transshipment to Glasgow from Greenock by rail."

Progress

The first sod was cut by Provost Lyle on August 1, 1878, and at a trip down the firth on the occasion Mr. Kinipple said that "the time was rapidly approaching when the river quays would be brought to a straight line between Port Glasgow and Greenock, and the ebb current would be directed straight through the bank by Princes Pier; and the Trustees would soon have to consider what belonged to the salvation of Greenock from an engineering and harbour point of view, and take prompt action to secure additional area for harbours, which if not done soon would be lost to the town for ever." The foundation-stone was laid on August 6, 1881, by Provost Dugald Campbell, and in conjunction with the foundation-stone of the Municipal Buildings was made the occasion of a great public demonstration. Here is a passage from the Provost's speech—"We do not often take the prophetic line, but we have an impression that the dock, especially in winter, will be taken advantage of to a considerable extent by the large Atlantic liners, because of the risks attending the passage up the river to Glasgow." Ex-Provost Grieve said: "I am quite sure, as I told Mr. Henderson of the Anchor Line, that before long we will compel his steamers to come here, when we show that thousands of pounds can be saved." Mr. Kinipple told Greenock that "they ought to be thankful that they were at the beginning of a great epoch of prosperity for the town."

Completed

The opening ceremony took place in August, 1886, an event completed, which Provost Edward Wilson characterised as the greatest in the history of the port and harbours. The whole of the Garvel Park works comprised two tidal harbours, a wet dock, and a graving dock, with an extensive quay acreage. The various dimensions are:

Tidal basin-width of entrance, 175ft.; depth at high water, 35ft.; length of quays, 2480ft.

Great tidal harbour: Length, 3230ft. width, 600ft; area, 45 acres; depth at high water when completed, 38ft. James Watt wet dock: width of entrance, 75ft.; depth of water on cill at high water, 32ft.; length of dock, 2,000ft.; width, 300ft. to 350ft.; length of jetty, 800 ft.; length of quays, 6,400ft.

Garvel graving dock: length, 635ft.; width, 80ft.; width of entrance, 60½ft.; depth on cill at high water, 20ft. Total water space, about 90 acres; total quay area, about 100 acres; total length of quays, about three miles.

The depth of water then in the channelway between the docks and the deep water of the estuary was 18ft. at low water of spring tides and 23ft. at half tide, so that vessels of 22ft. draught could enter the Garvel basin from half flood to half ebb tide. Dredging operations had been started to increase the depth at low water to 23ft. and at half tide to 28ft., thus allowing vessels of 27ft. draught to steam into the basin six hours out of every twelve. It was claimed that this was then the only dock on the Clyde in which vessels of great tonnage could be kept constantly afloat. The first estimated cost of the James Watt Dock was £208,000, the outlay amounted to £634,343 8s 3d, and the actual total of the whole undertaking, including the price of the ground, was £850,000. Within the period of extension other improvements on the harbour system were effected - the reconstruction of the West and

Steamboat Quays, at an outlay of £10,821; frontage of Steamboat Quay between the entrances of the West and the East India Harbours, £40,774; and a travelling bridge at the West Harbour entrance, £9100.

Views

It is extremely interesting to note expressions of opinion on the occasion of the opening. 'Greenock Telegraph': "After having experienced many years of corporate and administrative travail, after having seen Glasgow go dangerously ahead in the matter of steamship trade, and after Scotsmen and people all over the world have for twenty years back been wondering why such a community with such a queenly position at the mouth of one of Europe's principal waterways had failed to take advantage of it, Greenock yesterday for the first time in her history stood forth as one of the greatest and best equipped of British seaports. Nothing now remains but a few years of safe, honest, energetic, and frugal administration and management of the harbour system to raise the port to the commanding position to which by her very birthright she is entitled - nay, even has during several rather dead decades loudly called upon her to assume." 'Greenock Herald': "The trade will as naturally follow the James Watt Dock as it has followed the national flag throughout the world. Its fleet, its vested interests, and its management are the talisman of its future history of prosperity." Provost Robert Shankland, whose ship the Otterburn, built by Robert Steele & Co., Greenock, was the first to enter the dock "On its proper development depends greatly the continued prosperity of the port, although there are some who feel alarm at the large amount of debt." Mr. John Scott, shipbuilder: "But whatever our geographical situation, and however much we may have devoted ourselves to the pursuit of maritime matters of the day, although we possess perhaps a port unrivalled from its sheltered situation, protected from all dangerous winds, and offering an easy highway to the ocean, still we cannot shut out from our minds that we are somewhat distant from the busy portions of Scotland. In these circumstances it has been our good fortune to have established relations with the principal railway companies, who put us in communication with all the other parts of the kingdom and enable us to perfect the system we are inaugurating." Mr. Nathaniel Dunlop: "It is one of the most perfect docks in the kingdom, with advantages in its constant and great depth, in its nearness to the sea, and in the depth of the channel by which it is approached superior to our Glasgow harbour. If the centres of consumption and points of departure can be reached from one place more easily than from another, that place will obtain a preference and must progress. I look for the prosperity of the whole district." Mr C. W. Cayzer: "The tendency still is to build bigger ships, and I believe that in a few years they will not be able to proceed to Glasgow. It is therefore, with the co-operation of the railway companies, only a matter of time when the larger vessels will have to load and discharge at Greenock." Mr Kinipple: "The sum of £70,000 has been saved through not having had to deposit the excavated materials in Lochlong....Had all parties interested in the straightening of the channel past Greenock joined hand in hand in 1870, Glasgow would now have a straight channel to the sea, and there would have been one of the finest harbours in the world in front of and adjoining the very centre of the town of Greenock. The dock will give an increased revenue of £5000 a year, and within the next ten years you will be able to reduce the dues and induce a more rapid development of trade." Mr. James MacCunn, shipowner, afterwards traffic manager, struck a more modified note: "In addition to the revenue from existing sources the Trust would require at least £29,000 a year to enable them to pay all the working costs of the dock and the bondholders' expenses. It was clearly useless to invite ship owners to bring their vessels into dock without some clear, well-laid joint agreement with the railway companies. No provision had been made for the sugar trade, and what about masting and putting machinery on board vessels? The Trust was well aware that meanwhile Glasgow held a grip of the Clyde trade, as she is the great western Scottish metropolis, and would have the power to draw trade to herself in spite of the river, and hold it. Her success was the result of long and persistent perseverance against great physical disadvantages. Greenock had hung behind, and for want of wet docks had lost many valuable years."

In a lecture to the Philosophical Society on "Greenock Harbour Works", Mr Kinipple expressed the general views he had formed of the harbour system. "Right or wrong, his impressions in 1868 were not at all favourable to the Greenock harbour system. They appeared to him so different to what they might have been, and seemed to indicate the zigzag opinion that must have predominated when each proposed harbour was under consideration. No doubt the Trustees had done the best thing they could with the means at their disposal. What they had failed in, and it was what most Harbour Trustees failed in, was the adoption of a comprehensive and complete scheme of works such as might be extended or executed in sections from time to time as the trade of the port demanded. With regard to the present harbours, they were all disjointed. The main line of the river quay should have been continuous, and the works should have had but one entrance at the sea end of the quay. Greenock harbours had flourished, and no doubt would continue to do so, and although the extensive works at Garvel Park to some might appear somewhat in excess of the present requirements, they were not a day too soon for the more modern requirements of keeping afloat in wet docks heavily laden steamers of great tonnage. When the works were completed, a very small amount of the class of traffic they looked for would yield a very large income, while at the same time the cost of maintenance and working expenses would amount to a mere trifle compared with the cost of maintaining and working the old harbours. As a site for a wet dock, the foundations of Princes Pier would have proved a source of weakness, but no doubt had it been founded well inshore it would have been an excellent scheme!"

Instant Misfortune

Insolvency

In the midst of the rejoicings over approaching good fortune the blow fell that brought the affairs of the Trust into temporary ruin. A sense of foreboding had been spreading and deepening amongst a number of the reflecting citizens, within and without the management, as they regarded the vast outlays with no near prospect of adequate return; but the extent of the danger, or the quarter from which it was to spring, was unknown and unsuspected. An incredible ignorance of the actual state of the Trust's finances existed amongst the men who guided its affairs. Rumour was busy for weeks before any official or reliable news was put in circulation. In a generous and loyal spirit the local press refrained from even hinting at a calamity until the subject could be dealt with in freedom and presented in an aspect trustworthy and partially re-assuring. The public mind was prepared by degrees for a full realisation of the impending disaster. The financial position, it was, indicated, was not so satisfactory as well wishers could desire. There were reasons for thinking that if the Trust were assisted any possible difficulties of the future might be overcome. It was to be understood that there was no great cause for alarm, as in course of time all claims were likely to be met.

Official Revelations

The first official reference to the financial situation, so far as the records show, was made early in 1887, when a sub-committee was appointed to investigate the expenditure of the various departments. There followed an instruction to the secretary to prepare a statement of the Trust's debt. Yet there did not even then appear to be cause for serious alarm, until a report by the Finance Committee on April 22, that £16,500 was required to complete the arrangements for the payment of interest at Whitsunday, and the more startling announcement of priority rights possessed by the earlier bondholders. The necessity was at once recognised for taking the opinion of counsel on both points, while in the meantime it was resolved to apply to a bank for an advance, and committees of Trustees and Town Council agreed to consult with the view of co-operation, the Council offering to guarantee repayment to the bank. In the process of these efforts, however, a collapse was precipitated by the application of a bondholder for repayment of an old loan of £600 for which no period had been fixed, and this without giving the usual six months' notice. Because of this application, and of the fact that it had already been stated in a Glasgow newspaper that the Trust was in financial straits, it was considered advisable to lay the state of affairs before the bondholders and intimate that payment of interest was delayed. A circular was issued to holders of stock stating that "in consequence of the difficulty of negotiating loans owing to the present depressed state of trade and the decrease of revenue arising from the same cause, the Trustees very much regret that the payment of principal and interest on 15th May will be delayed. The Trustees are in the meantime, under the best advice, considering what is the wisest and best course to follow, and are in the course of preparing a scheme of re-adjustment of the debt which it is hoped will prove satisfactory to all the bondholders of the Trust. As soon as the scheme is completed the bondholders will be invited to meet together to consider the proposal of the Trustees."

The Public Mind

The announcement of the collapse, and a revelation of the true state of the funds, created a real sensation in investment circles and consternation amongst the public of Greenock. Much of the criticism that followed had its rise in impulse and personal resentment, and no little of it was undeserved. The gravamen of the indictment consisted almost entirely of negligence in financial knowledge and detail. In the sight and judgment of the commercial world the Trustees stood absolutely committed by necessity to a dock extension scheme. Here, if they erred at all, they erred blindly in that their views of the future had become inflated by a season of rapid and continuous prosperity, on which they were induced to build a superstructure of extravagant anticipation, oblivious to the probabilities of a recurrent cycle of adversity. They honestly believed that the moment had arrived for seizing fortune at the flood, and from a modest plan meant to meet a normal growth of trade they were step by step led to launch a scheme which constituted a virtual challenge to the supremacy of Glasgow.

Trustees in Ignorance

It would seem that the Trust as a body, up to this April 11, 1887, had really been uninformed of the actual condition of their finances. The subjoined figures give the gross revenue for several years prior to the breakdown, and the fast increasing amounts paid in interest:-

In 1882, revenue £70,569, interest £5,792;

In 1883, revenue £77,397, interest £8,759;

In 1884, revenue £64,069, interest £11,676;

In 1885, revenue £62,071, interest £15,495;

In 1886, revenue £60,313, interest £19,814.

The process of borrowing since 1842 had gone on thus:-

By the Act of 1842 the borrowing powers were increased to £220,000,

In 1866 borrowing powers were increased to £650,000,

In 1867 borrowing powers were increased to £150,000,

In 1872 borrowing powers were increased to £1,000,000,

In 1880 borrowing powers were increased to £1,300,000,

and in 1884 borrowing powers were increased to £1,800,000.

The opinion of counsel on the question of priorities was that practically all the assignments for money borrowed prior to the passing of the Act of 1880, even although renewed after the passing of that Act, had a preference over those assignments granted after the passing of the Act. On a joint case being taken to the Court of Session the Judges' opinion was as follows: "While the creditors under the Act of 1842 ranked in the first place *primo loco*, the creditors under the Act of 1866 rank *secundo loco*, the creditors under the Act of 1872 rank as *tertio loco*, and lastly come the creditors under the Act of 1880, who are not under the operation of those Acts, but who necessarily rank *pari passu*."

Bondholder's Inquiry

The bondholders took protective action without delay. They held a series of public meetings, appointed a large committee of their number, and probed the accounts with the utmost diligence and care. Sir Harry Mitchell, chairman of the Bondholders' Committee, was of opinion that the financial complication began with the introduction of a priority clause into the Act of 1866, which clause was repeated in the different Acts down to 1880. The Trustees should have inserted a clause in the 1886 Act, following the precedent of the 1842 Act, providing for a *pari passu* ranking, or have passed a resolution instructing their officials to pay off all the prior assignments issued under the 1842 Act after the passing of the Act of 1866 when these had matured. The negligence he regarded as unaccountable. The annual statements of accounts should have disclosed the true position of the different securities, and stated the existence of priorities.

Their Reports

In their first report in June, 1887, the Bondholders' Committee stated that in their opinion "the financial difficulties have been caused mainly by the large expenditure in the construction of the James Watt Dock, which has not yet developed an increase of traffic, and also by the decrease which has arisen in the revenue on the depression in trade." In their second report they said that "the negligence of the Trustees and their officials in regard to the priority assignments that were created by the Acts of 1866, 1872, and 1880 is unaccountable, and the alteration made in the form of assignment in the 1872 Act by adding the words, 'the works and property of the Trust,' is even more mysterious. The priority clause was not inserted in the original Greenock Port and Harbour Bill, 1866, but was inserted by the committee on the Bill."

Position of Mr. Kinipple

This report also *inter alia* referred to Mr. Kinipple's relation to the Trust. On the original estimate of £208,000 for the James Watt Dock Mr. Kinipple's commission would have amounted to £7920, while on the actual contract he was paid £14,211, and the total sum received by him as commission on new works from 1870 was £24,243. In this connection we may quote from a remarkable speech delivered by Mr. Kinipple at the Ardgowan Club dinner in 1885 - "He was happy to say that he had now had a very good innings in Greenock, and he was sorry to say that his work was almost at an end - sorry on his own account, but mightily glad that the works were coming to completion on account of the near prosperity of the town. It would then be the duty of their merchants, brokers, shippers, and so on, to do what they could to bring trade to the port. He knew there were a great many half-hearted, stupid-headed men in the town who believed that there was nothing before them in the future, simply because they could not see an inch before their noses." The rejoinder came from Provost Robert Shankland: "I demur to this, and maintain there is not a single true Greenockian either half-hearted, stupid-headed, or blind to the true interests of the town, and I think they could see probably as far as their critic. For myself, my vision cannot yet discern ships of 800ft. long and 80ft. beam trading to and from Greenock."

Excitement Subsiding

Within a remarkably short time the stunning effects of the blow were wearing off, the public mind cooled and recovered, and a return to the normal was marked by a season of saner criticism. In this the newspaper editors took the lead, and it may fairly be accepted that in the tenor of their comments they in most instances reflected the general views of the community. It was recalled that all the Provosts following upon the purchase of Garvel estate had been opposed to the transaction - Robert Neill, Abram Lyle, Dugald Campbell, Edward Wilson, and Robert Shankland. The 'Telegraph' wrote: "The expenditure from revenue, which includes a sum of about £36,000 for interest, does not include the interest applicable to the cost of the dock, as that interest has hitherto been added to capital, Parliament very properly allowing the dock to be finished and fitted to earn revenue before asking that the interest be paid out of revenue. The Trustees, we understand, were of opinion that they could well have capitalised the interest for a time, and were prepared to do so. Had this been done, and no other contingencies supervened, the dock might have had a breathing space before the interest was demanded from its revenue; instead of which, owing to the blundering of those responsible, it has had barely six months. Before the dock was opened money could easily have been got to pay off all the bonds falling due for three or four years; and when so much depended upon a careful financing the least that could be expected was that strict attention should be given to monetary arrangements. Instead of doing so, matters have been allowed by the Trustees and the leading officials to drift into confusion."

At a meeting of bondholders and the Trustees Provost Shankland admitted that none of the Trustees had any pecuniary interest in the harbours, and that they had never been legally advised that the bonds should be placed on an equality. The distribution of bonds throughout the country was as follows: England, £370,000; Glasgow and

west of Scotland, £650,000; Edinburgh and rest of Scotland, £500,000; friendly societies, £58,000. On the proceedings at this meeting the 'Telegraph' commented: "After making every possible allowance, it has to be admitted that the Trustees made a poor show on the platform. Those of them who did open their mouths did so to little purpose, and some of those who could perhaps have made a creditable appearance sat out the long meeting mute as Egyptian mummies."

The Cause

But local opinion was far from being at one in respect of the radical causes of the downfall. Mr. Louison Walker, accountant, attributed it mainly to depression and to diversion and change of trade that could not have been foreseen. The sale of the Bay of Quick, Mr. Wm. Crawford, shipowner, asserted, had been the origin, a great blunder, amounting almost to a crime. A more serious charge of a personal nature was made in a letter to the editor: "Without doubt the harbours, like the Municipal Buildings, are far and away beyond the requirements of the town and port. There was nothing to outward appearance in the affairs of the Trust any more than in many other harbours to bring about so terrible a crisis. The ordinary income had always met the ordinary expenditure, including the interest on all the old debt, and in regard to the James Watt Dock the Trustees had full Parliamentary powers for still a few years to add interest to capital. What appears to have upset the thing was an unaccountable want of confidence in the Trust. Whoever caused this want of confidence was undoubtedly the cause of the calamity. That it has been brought about by someone, and by one also high in authority in Greenock, is cognisant to many. In Glasgow Exchange here, in commercial circles, and indeed everywhere, this Greenock dignitary has for years back made remarks in regard to Greenock Harbour Trust such as would ruin any public body, coming as they did from one known to be for years back in authority in Greenock. The harbour management is not so much to be blamed as a spiteful townsman." Whether there was any ground for such an allegation was never publicly known, and the painful subject was allowed to rest at that. The feeling was general that too much credence should not be given to the statement.

Reconstruction

A Bill was lodged in December, 1887, its stated purposes being: -

- (1) To arrive at some suitable financial arrangement of affairs, and
- (2) To provide for a change in the constitution so as to include representation of the bondholders.

It contained proposals

- (1) For the acceptance of the Court of Session decision as to priorities;
- (2) The creation of the whole debt into stock of two classes, A and B -3½. per cent. preference debenture stock to come in place of the bonds which should be declared to have priority, and the other consisting of 4 per cent ordinary stock to be exchanged for bonds not having priority, but it was sought to be provided in regard to the interest on this stock that the deficiency of any one year should not be recoverable out of the surplus of succeeding years;
- (3) Provision for the election of 8 Trustees by the bondholders in addition to the 25 members already existing, the Trust to consist of 16 Town Councillors, 9 ship owners and harbour ratepayers, and 8 bondholders. The bondholders objected that the interest on the ordinary stock was not made cumulative, that a Trust of 33 was too large, and that the proportion of Council representation was excessive.

No arrangement could at the time be come to, and the bondholders lodged a petition against the Bill. Their suggestion as to the constitution was 8 Councillors, 6 ship owners and harbour ratepayers, 6 bondholders, and one member from the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber lodged a petition, the Town Council also in order to protect their interests.

Mutual Agreement

Subsequent negotiations resulted in an agreement that the interest on ordinary stock should be made cumulative, and that the constitution should consist of 21 members: 9 Councillors (the Provost being one and chairman, ex officio), 6 ship owners and harbour ratepayers, and 6 bondholders. The Bill then became an unopposed measure, and received the Royal Assent on July 24, 1888. The possibility of the interest not being met was contemplated in this Act, in which event the bondholders were empowered to apply to the Sheriff for the appointment of a judicial factor. This privilege could be exercised by A bondholders upon failure of payment of any half-year's interest, but by B bondholders only after the lapse of seven years, a restriction which in 1895 was extended by ten years more.

The New Trust

Incongruities

With the introduction of a new and foreign element in the management there naturally followed conflicting counsels and policies. One need not stigmatise the motives of the bondholders' representatives, who were there primarily to keep jealous guard over the administration of the finances, that the lenders might secure a rate of interest as full as the revenues would permit. This duty they performed with undisguised sincerity and vigour, with always, to the onlooker, a leaning to the side of saving wherever this could be effected, sometimes, maybe, at the risk of impoverishing the productive resources of the undertaking. In the creed of the town and harbour representatives, on the other hand, it was a cardinal principle that not only should the existing apparatus be maintained in a high state of efficiency, but that extensions and improvements, on a scale essential to the growing needs of the port and

proportionate to their ability, should be executed at every possible opportunity. This, they contended, was by no means inconsistent with the aims of the bondholders, and indeed led to the same goal and with greater hope of realisation.

Looking for Trade

In the first days and years of contact there was no glimpse of agreement. Can it, then, be wondered at that the Trust business was greatly hampered while protracted discussions went on to a futile end. To begin with, the Trust concentrated on the need for a larger volume and new sources of trade. A circular informed the great shipping companies that the James Watt Dock had been built expressly for the transatlantic traffic. For a time slight indications of a movement on the part of Ocean Lines in favour of Greenock raised hopes that proved unreal. There could be no long-continued self-deception. A city newspaper sounded the warning note that Greenock should not indulge in roseate anticipations about outdoing Glasgow in the Atlantic trade, because the steady widening and deepening of the river would obviate that. No appreciable improvement in revenue had been reached by 1892, a committee was formed to consider ways and means of improving it, and the question was raised whether the time had not come for amalgamation with Glasgow and Port Glasgow Trusts.

Graving Dock Inadequate

Now intervened an insistent pressure for greater graving dock accommodation. It was suggested that the Town Council, on behalf of the ratepayers, should find the money. Estimates of the necessary outlay were - Garvel graving dock alterations, £35,000; new dock, £90,000; second new dock, to take in first-class battleships, £200,000. The Council were willing to make a contribution. Conferences resulted in a proposal by the Trust to grant a free site to the north of the Garvel Graving Dock. In 1896 a deputation waited upon the Government, and were told that there was no intention meantime of making a grant, but that if any local authority constructed a dock suitable for H.M. ships the Government must give favourable consideration. In a petition the following year the local shipbuilders stated that out of 24 vessels of one firm two only could dock even in an entirely light condition, and that it appeared that the size of ships being built in the district was such as to render the existing graving dock entirely obsolete and of no assistance to the shipbuilders and the repairing industry upon which the prosperity of Greenock and the whole neighbourhood depended. Suggested alterations at an estimated outlay of £34,680 were not entertained, on the plea that it would be spending a large sum for a limited improvement. This vital question consequently once more fell into abeyance.

Rival Accommodation

Meanwhile formidable dock extensions were looming in various quarters of the upper reaches - Kilpatrick, Renfrew, and Glasgow, each a deadly menace to the future of Greenock. The Kilpatrick Dock Bill of 1897 was unsuccessful, but the preambles of the Renfrew and the Clyde Navigation (Clydebank) Bill were proved in the following year. The Trust asked the Town Council for a substantial contribution towards the opposition expenses, to which the Town Clerk replied that "the Town Council cannot legally vote any contribution, substantial or otherwise. In former times they had a large common good out of which such payment might competently have been made, but for the past eleven years a municipal assessment has been levied, and while that is required for municipal purposes no outside contribution can be granted." The Bondholders' Committee in their report of 1900, alluding to this refusal, stated plainly that their efforts to obtain reform and redress of grievances had been hindered by the large representation of the Town Council. On what principle of equity, it was asked, had the Council, who had no pecuniary responsibility whatever with reference to the harbours, continued the predominant partner, and consequently to control its policy?

Local Assessments

There were also reflections upon the Town Council on a fresh attempt to impose public health and improvement rates on the Trust. The Sheriff had found the Trust not now entitled to exemption, the Council having been empowered by the Act of 1897 to assess the harbours, but that they were entitled to have the assessment modified. Appeals to both Divisions of the Court of Session and to the House of Lords brought no relief. The bondholders felt that their interests were not safe in the hands of the Town Council, and that in fact there was a danger of oppression. On this subject of assessment a later appeal was made to the Court of Session, which was unsuccessful, but on proceeding to the House of Lords the views of the Bondholders' Committee were upheld and a saving of £1,120 a year effected. The assessments and charges paid to the town in 1903 were £8,900, equal to about 27 per cent. of the annual revenue of the Trust, and the modified sum expended in 1905 was £6,750 10s 10d, or upwards of 20 per cent. of the revenue.

Fitting Out Appeals

Towards the end of 1901 shipbuilders and engineers made a renewed appeal for "effective and timeous provision for the inevitable development of the most important and most productive industries of the port." The response was far from encouraging. The Trust could not afford to give further accommodation for fitting-out steamers unless the memorialists were prepared to contribute a proportion of the cost and to guarantee the additional revenue to meet interest and depreciation. They were, as before, willing to give a free site for a new graving dock, and to look after the construction and annual upkeep, if suitable terms could be arranged. It was to be the largest dry dock in the country, capable of holding the biggest battleships then built, the estimated cost £300,000. Plans and the

engineer's report had been submitted to the Admiralty in the hope that Government would pay all the capital or give a full subsidy that would guarantee the interest. It is almost needless to say that neither then nor in a subsequent application in 1908 did the Admiralty view the scheme with favour.

Town Help

Considerable diversity of opinion existed as to the sources from which the money should come for works extension. It was said, on the one side, that the town could not look to the Trust for any progressive scheme, nor to the bondholders further to exploit the port. The Trust, it was maintained, must be backed up by the town. In June, 1903, the Council made a move on the question of helping to increase the fitting-out accommodation, and conferred with the Trust. But the Bondholders' Committee were obdurate in their opposition on the ground that the extensions could not be entertained in the existing state of the Trust. At a meeting of the bondholders in this year it was confessed that the most sanguine of them had abandoned the hope that the Trust could ever recover a solvent position. The circumstances of the Trust "were not only fatal to the bondholders' interests, but were inimical to the shipping trade of the port, and without doubt were gradually strangling the progress of the town. The practical available borrowing powers were something like £60,000, altogether inadequate to meet the need and developments of the harbour system in its wider sense. An alliance of the Clyde ports had long ago been suggested, the sale of the harbours to a railway company, reconstruction and formation into a limited liability company, and the field was held for the time by a proposal from the Corporation, or some members of it, to purchase the harbours. Failing this, the Bondholders' Committee were satisfied that it would be to the advantage of all interests that those who had the entire risk should have the entire management. Under one single control, they were not without faith in the future of the harbours."

Shipbuilder's Offer

In April, 1904, Mr P. T. Caird wrote that his firm were willing to contribute £10,000 to the expenditure on alterations at Victoria Harbour, as a loan to be repaid by retaining all harbour, crane, and dock dues for which they might become liable until the amount advanced, without interest, was extinguished. The Trust were not satisfied that the alterations proposed were either feasible or desirable. In a letter from the Town Clerk the Trust were informed that the terms of their reply to Mr. Caird debarred the Council from pressing the proposal further. It was also asked whether the Trustees were willing to transfer their rights in the harbour undertaking to the Corporation, and if so whether they would enter into negotiations, and on what terms such transfer might be effected. After a conference between sub-committees, the Trust's finding was that if the Corporation resolved to prepare a Parliamentary Bill to acquire the undertaking by arbitration under the Lands Clauses Act, and subject to the adjustment of clauses in that Bill, the Trust Committee would recommend the bondholders not to oppose such a Bill. There the negotiations closed. In May, 1905, the Corporation came to the following resolution: "That as the Corporation is at present fully engaged with other municipal schemes they do not propose meantime to take any action with reference to acquiring the harbours."

Corporation and Purchase

When in 1909 the Corporation was prosecuting their Burgh Extension Bill, to which the Trust appeared in opposition and principally on the point of harbour exemption from municipal assessments, the Parliamentary Committee of the House of Commons suggested that the Corporation should consider whether they could not come to some arrangement with the Trustees and the bondholders to purchase the undertaking. The Trust Committee was unanimous in favour of transfer on the assumption that the status quo with regard to exemption should be maintained. The Corporation, however, could agree to neither proposition.

Judicial Factor

The issue on the question of appointing a judicial factor arose on the expiry of the ten years at 1905. Interest on the B bonds was now in arrear about £419,000 and growing at the rate of £20,000 a year. The bondholders moved for the appointment and for a re-construction of the Trust. To a petition to the Sheriff a majority of the Trust responded: "The appointment in the present circumstances is inexpedient and uncalled for, it will seriously injure the working of the harbours, will confer no benefit on the petitioners, and will entail large additional expenses in the collection and application of the revenues." The case of the bondholders was a strong and convincing one. Mr. Andrew Carmichael, retired shipowner, was appointed "to receive the whole or a competent part of the rates and duties and other revenues until all arrears of interest or of principal, as the case may be, together with all costs, be fully paid." In 1907 the judicial factor proposed to raise the rate on sugar from 10d to 1s 3d per ton. By eleven to six the Trustees declined to agree. Thereupon Mr. Carmichael issued a notice that on and after January 1, 1908, the rate would be 1s 3d. An action was raised in the Court of Session, and the Court decided that Mr. Carmichael had no power at his own hand to raise or reduce rates. This was confirmed by the Second Division of the Court of Session and thereafter by the House of Lords.

Parties at Loggerheads

During the next few years the irreconcilability that had grown up between the opposing elements of the Trust was if anything intensified, and was brought to a climax by a proposal of the majority to expend £120,000 on improving the condition and equipment of the harbours. The first step in this direction was taken in July, 1910, when it was resolved to consider the constitution and reconstruction of the Trust. Shipbuilders urged the immediate necessity

for altering the entrance to the Garvel graving dock. It took a year of inquiries and negotiations to mature a report, but the Trust were carrying with them the cordial co-operation of shipbuilders and engineers, of the Corporation, and of many others less intimately interested. The result was put in the following concrete proposals, as the opinion of the majority, in the hope that they would form a reasonable basis for negotiations with the bondholders and their representatives: -

1. that as the earning power of the assets of the Trust does not warrant the book valuation, the Trust should be reconstructed and the assets of B debenture stock written down.
2. That the value of the A debenture stock should remain as at present-namely, £398,245
3. That B stock be written down to a sum to be afterwards arranged, but it should be in the relation to the average interest earned on the stock since the reconstruction of the Trust. In the opinion of the committee this should be between £25 and £33 6s 8d per £100 and bear 4 per cent. interest.
4. That an additional stock, to be called C debenture, should be created to the amount of £100,000, the interest to be guaranteed by the Corporation, the stock to be issued when required and be available for the purpose of developing and improving the harbours only.
5. That the capital and interest of B stock should have a prior rank to that of C.
6. That after paying interest on A and B any surplus revenue should be applied to paying interest on C, and in the event of a further balance this to be placed at the credit of the B holders.

Bondholders Ask Control

An attempt was made to open negotiations with the Bondholders' Committee, from whom at an early period in the correspondence the following unanimous resolution was received: "That failing such alteration of the constitution as will give satisfactory control of the management and future capital expenditure to representatives of the bondholders, no scheme of reconstruction involving a reduction of the capital account will be acceptable except on a valuation of the undertaking in terms of the resolution of the Bondholders' Committee and of the Trust submitted to the House of Commons Committee on the Corporation Bill of 1909, and the assured guarantee on the amount so arrived at."

Subsequent to conferences between parties, the Bondholders' Committee in March, 1912, stated that the only proposal they could consider or recommend was one whereby the interest on the whole capital of the undertaking should be guaranteed by the Corporation, and that in order to arrive at the value to which the stock should be written down for the purpose of determining the amount to be guaranteed a valuation of the undertaking as a whole should be obtained and an arbiter appointed. The Trust Committee declined to consider the proposal of arbitration. They offered to consider a scheme whereby the interest on B stock might be guaranteed, provided the value of this stock was fixed on a revenue basis. With a refusal to this offer the negotiations ceased.

At a Trust meeting a resolution was carried by eleven to six to obtain expert opinion, make the necessary investigations, and report how additional capital might be raised. Provost McMillan on this occasion spoke of the state of the harbours as deplorable, said that good customers had been forced to make fitting-out basin arrangements for themselves, and insisted that the necessary improvements could be effected only through the introduction of fresh capital. On behalf of the protesting minority it was said that the bondholders were willing to accept responsibility for all the necessary expenditure that might be before them in the future on one condition only, that they had control of the management and expenditure, and that they were willing also to come out on fair terms.

New Consolidation Bill

At the September meeting it was finally resolved, by twelve to seven, to proceed with the Bill. The main purposes of this Bill were the consolidation of the various Acts; to execute certain new works; to reconstruct the finances, according to which B stock was to be written down to 20 per cent. to borrow £100,000 under a guarantee of repayment of the interest and instalments of capital by the Corporation; and to cancel the office of judicial factor. Bondholders' representatives characterised the proposals as monstrous and the scheme as outrageous. Mr. Wm. Johnstone, a leading representative of the bondholders, said that the first step was to seize £10,000 of the bondholders' money and appropriate it for the benefit of the community or of the Corporation. There had been one stumbling block all along, that they were going to knock Glasgow into a cocked hat. This was what had been in the minds of the Trust when they built the James Watt Dock, and they saw what it had led to.

Opposing Bill

The bondholders went to Parliament with the Greenock Harbour Constitution Bill in opposition to the Greenock Dock and Harbour Consolidation Bill. They proposed drastic changes designed to put an end to the control by the Corporation and the local representatives; they objected to the value of bondholders' stock being cut down, to borrowed money ranking prior to existing bonds, and only on the footing of securing control were they prepared to get rid of the judicial factor. They also sought powers of sale to the Corporation within twelve months, an early proposal to sell to the railway companies or to the Clyde Trust having been withdrawn. This Bill was first heard, and occupied nine days in the House of Lords. As persons primarily interested, it was claimed that they should have a majority in the Trust, and their Bill proposed to eliminate the Town Council element and have six bondholders' and two harbour ratepayers' representatives. The Committee decided that this Bill should not proceed, but they were convinced that the constitution should be altered. They were also impressed by the grievances of the bondholders,

which view they hoped might facilitate an agreement. A suggestion from the bondholders that they should have six representatives, that six should be given to the Town Council and the harbour ratepayers together, and that there should be a neutral chairman was objected to by the Trustees as not a reasonable basis of compromise.

Corporation Guarantee £100,000

On proceeding with the Bill of the Trustees it was stated that the estimated cost of the essential new works was £120,000. On the question of finances the Trust had an unexercised borrowing power of £58,000 by the issue of the A bonds, but the money could not at the time be raised except at a considerable discount. The Corporation had stepped in with a guarantee on certain conditions. An important point was, to what extent was the interest on the new expenditure to come before the B stock interest. In the matter of the constitution the Trustees offered three more bondholders' representatives. Counsel for the promoters, expressed the view that if the bondholders were to get the representation they wanted the interests represented would be largely those of Glasgow, and the harbours placed in the hands of a Board with a Glasgow majority. The existence of Greenock might be at stake and the town sacrificed.

The Bill was amended to the effect that the point at which the B stock should be split should be 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. The Earl of Donoughmore, chairman of the Committee, strongly advocated that the Bill should be passed, on the ground that something must be done to put an end to the intolerable position of the port and the Harbour Trust. The bondholders' Bill had proposed to put the bondholders into complete control, to which they were not entitled, because they were not in the ordinary position of debenture holders—that was to say, the debenture holders in the case of Greenock had no power to come down and seize the undertaking if their interest was not paid. It was a Greenock question, and a very important Greenock question, and must be considered in its relation to Greenock and to the harbour of Greenock, with which the prosperity of the town was very largely bound up. Greenock harbour was a public undertaking, carried on primarily not for profit but for the benefit of the public of Greenock, and as such they must regard it in deciding anything to be done in reference to the harbour.

Clyde Conservancy Board

On the Bill being sent down to the House of Commons there was a motion to decline proceeding with any measure for reconstituting the Trust until an inquiry had been held into the desirability of placing the harbours and the Conservancy of the Clyde under a single control. Of the seven existing authorities many were by no means as financially strong as harbour authorities ought to be. Mr. J. M. Robertson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, was of opinion that if they were to decline the Bill before they ascertained that there was a general agreement on the question of single control they might frustrate the end in view. The needs of Greenock were pronounced, and there was no argument in favour of delaying the Bill until an inquiry had been held. Mr. Godfrey P. Collins, M.P. for Greenock, was authorised to state that the Trustees were not averse from the question of one control being considered.

Result

The amendment was withdrawn, and the Bill was read a second time and committed. The decision in regard to the constitution was that the Trust should consist of six bondholders', five Corporation, and five ship owners' and harbour ratepayers' representatives, with a chairman, who if not appointed by three-fourths of the Trustees should be an impartial person appointed by the Board of Trade. The Trustees could not agree upon a chairman, and in May, 1914, Sheriff Jas. A. Fleming, K.C., was appointed by the Board of Trade.

With regard to the outstanding results of the Bill, the special committee pointed out, first, that it had restored the Trust for the first time in 25 years to a solvent financial position, and this they believed would be reflected in increased prosperity; second, that it had brought to an end the office of the judicial factor, which while it continued only emphasised the financial embarrassment of the Trust; and third, that it put the Trust into the position of carrying out the many improvements which necessarily from time to time are called for in a healthy and progressive port, and the need for which was one of the main objects for the promotion of the Bill. A sum of nearly £650,000 of arrears of interest had been wiped out, and the Trust would be enabled at once to spend about £100,000 on their harbours.

The shipbuilders and engineers had their own views on the subject of the necessary requirements quickly placed before the Trust. Their chief anxiety related to the need of a huge fitting-out crane at the James Watt Dock, the widening of this dock's entrance, and a certain reconstruction of the Garvel graving dock.

Bondholders not Satisfied

The bondholders, whose success had been only partial, were not unnaturally still unappeased and in some regards not less indignant and remonstrant than before. Their committee's report laid it down that the Trustees' Bill was not to be held as an agreed Bill, so that if similar grievances should continue or others arise under the new constitution another appeal could be made to Parliament for a more complete and effective remedy. With the view of securing a concerted policy and action in the future, and suitable remuneration to the stockholders' representatives, they set about the formation of the Greenock Harbour Associated Stockholders, Limited. Recent experience, they said, had shown that neither the influence nor the vote of the neutral chairman had been effective in restraining the dominant

power possessed by the local majority, and the bondholders' representatives had with him been placed in a minority on important questions seriously affecting the holders' interests.

Fortunately those fears of further party eruptions were in course of time found to be in great measure needless. The Trust as a whole settled down to a system of economic and rigorous management. The additional fitting-out facilities and the encouragement of certain shipping interests, an increase of rail and general traffic, together with a Board of Trade permission to increase the rates during the War, first by 20 and later by 35 per cent. had a substantial effect upon the revenue which rose from £54,961 gross and £28,851 net in 1914 to £63,579 and £36,743 in 1915; 1916, £68,007 and £38,231; 1917, £73,002 and £40,835; 1918, £81,465 and £46,113; 1919, £97,511 and £52,576; 1920, £110,035 and £56,449; and for the year ended June, 1921, the revenue was £112,510, a record for the port. After paying full interest on the A and B Preferred stocks, the balance accruing to the Deferred shareholders was only £1971 3s 6d. This was owing to extraordinary expenditure, the western caisson at the James Watt Dock and the fitting-out crane at Victoria Harbour together absorbing about £17,000. The chief sources of the augmented revenues were the increased rates (which continued in force for six months after the declaration of peace,) the sugar imports, the fitting-out of steamers, warehouse storage charges, and the considerable increases which were due to war conditions, which resulted in prize ships and cargoes being held up at the docks, paying dues which otherwise would not have been earned. On the other hand, wages went up to an enormous extent, from £7811 in 1912 to £17,205 in 1919, equal to 120 per cent. coal, 130 per cent.; policing, 40 per cent.; lighting, 95 per cent.; and other materials used by the Trust from 20 to 40 per cent.

The three great objects aimed at in the scheme of improvement were:

- (1) The erection of a fitting-out crane at James Watt Dock,
- (2) A deep-water berth at Prince's Pier, and
- (3) Alterations to the entrance to Garvel graving dock. A 200-tons crane, at a cost of £22,000, was put into operation in 1920; Prince's Pier was widened by 18 feet over a length of 500 feet, the cost £14,000; and the Garvel graving dock alterations were held over.

An action of great importance in its relation to the powers of the Trustees to grant exclusive use of any portion of their undertaking was before the Courts for a year or two on the conclusion of the war. The action was raised by the Glebe Sugar Refining Company Limited, against the Harbour Trustees and Messrs. James and Henry Lithgow, shipbuilders, Port-Glasgow, to have it declared that the Trustees had no power to grant to Messrs. Lithgow the exclusive use of the Garvel graving dock. Pursuers also asked that a lease to Messrs. Lithgow for a term of ten years from August 15, 1918, at a yearly rent of £4,500, should be reduced as having been made ultra vires. In the Second Division of the Court of Session Lord Hunter held that under the Port and Harbours Consolidation Act of 1913 there was nothing to indicate that the Trustees were bound to maintain the graving docks in efficient condition in all time coming. He found that these docks were works ancillary to the harbours, and under the Act the Trustees had powers conferred upon them by section 109 to grant the exclusive use to any person on such terms as they thought fit. The Judges of the First Division upheld this view. The Glebe Company appealed to the House of Lords. The Lord Chancellor, in giving judgment in May, 1921, stated that in the record no mention had been made of the fact that by section 6 of the Act of 1913 the Harbours, Docks, and Piers Clauses Act, 1847, with the exception of certain sections, had been incorporated therewith. By this provision was made that "the undertakers may lease or grant the use or occupation of any warehouse, building, wharf, yards, crane, machine, or other conveniences provided by them for the purposes of this Act, or the Special Act, at such rents and upon such terms and conditions as shall be agreed upon between the undertakers and the person taking the same, provided that no such lease be granted for a longer term than three years." Neither the appellants nor the respondents, however, had taken their stand on this section, nor had any allusion, direct or indirect, been made to it. It had been discovered by Lord Atkinson while preparing his judgment. The impeached lease, owing to the length of its term of ten years, was declared void, the interlocutors appealed from were recalled, and decree pronounced in terms of the reductive conclusion of the summons. In the circumstance that neither of the parties had alluded to the section on the grounds of which the appeal was decided, both had to bear their own costs in the House of Lords and below.

List of Docks and Harbours

West Harbour - Begun, 1707; completed, 1710; cost, £5,555 11s 1d.

Graving dock completed 1786; cost, about £4,000.

East India Harbour - Foundation-stone, 1805; completed, 1809; cost exclusive of ground, £43,836. Graving dock completed, 1818; cost, £20,000.

Victoria Harbour - Begun, 1846; completed, 1850; cost, over £120,000.

Albert Harbour - Foundation-stone, 1862; opened, 1867; cost, fully £250,000.

Princes Pier - Begun, 1862; completed, 1870; cost, about £100,000; extension, 1921, cost £14,000.

West Quay - Completed, 1880; cost, £10,821.

Customhouse Quay - Completed, 1885; cost, £40,774.

Garvel Graving Dock - Foundation-stone, 1871; completed, 1874; cost, £89,000.

James Watt Dock and Great Harbour - Begun, 1878; completed, 1886; cost, including price of land, £850,000.

Chairman of the Trust, Sheriff Alex. L. McClure, K.C.; deputy chairman, Mr. Arthur Caird; general manager, Mr. William Jardine; secretary, Mr. John MacLellan; treasurer, Mr. William C. Morrison; engineer, Mr. Robert Crawford, C.E.; harbour and dock master, Captain Andrew W. Richmond.

Trade and Commerce

The student of local records cannot fail to perceive how narrowly Greenock missed fulfilling quite a different destiny. Whether that other way would have led to greater distinction and a more brilliant history it is unprofitable now seriously to discuss. It is the fact that a critical moment did arrive when by a turn of fortune's wheel Greenock might in effect have become the Port of Glasgow. The city merchants of that day were quick to note the potential situation at the Tail of the Bank. Numbers of them were on the spot on the first sign of a development in shipping. Before the end of the seventeenth century they owned, in whole or in part, several of the few vessels trading from Greenock, and they were amongst the pioneer merchants and manufacturers in the town. With the consent and support of their Town Council they competed with Sir John Schaw for ground on the Cartsburn estate on which to construct a harbour, and were defeated by what was commended as the loyal act of Sir John, who paid a fancy price to attain his object.

Glasgow Influence

Even at that period too much of the Glasgow influence was resented. A coalition based on mutual interests was apparently unsuggested, or at any rate is unrecorded, and the opportunity was not accepted of founding a harbour system which might in time have filled the sea-front from Whitefarland to Newark, doomed our eastern neighbour to extinction or absorption before ever she had become conscious of a burghal existence, and rendered needless part of the enormous outlays on river deepening and on the vast quays and docks at Glasgow. But to-day we dismiss these highly hypothetical and futile reflections. Glasgow has long since overshadowed our town in all the fields of shipping, financial, and commercial competition. We may reasonably doubt whether the policy of the open arms to her exploiting representatives of 250 years ago would have issued in permanent advantage to Greenock, or whether, in face of the rapid expansion in foreign trade, the Glasgow merchants would have been satisfied in retaining as the centre of their operations a point so far removed from the wealth of minerals at their doors and from the natural distributing facilities possessed by a community so placed. In all probability to Greenock would have fallen something of the fate that overtook Port Glasgow. This eventuality might possibly have been delayed a generation or so longer, but in the ultimate result it would have left to Greenock the task of reconstruction and rehabilitation at her own risk and outlay, a state of things which might well have proved even more disastrous to her interests than the unequal rivalry that grew up and partially overwhelmed the weaker and less influential port. Now Greenock has outgrown the rankling jealousies of former days. The prevailing sentiment towards the Second City is ungrudgingly that of pride in the splendours of her achievements against a mass of obstacles. The marvel of river navigation alone excites the admiration of our town no less than it compels the amazement of the world.

Staples

The three capital essays in Greenock's trading and industrial endeavours have been shipping and ship-owning, sugar, and shipbuilding. Today the greatest of these is shipbuilding. Mills and factories, permanent or temporary, at whatever stage in the progress of the town, have all been of a subsidiary importance. Ship-owning has run a chequered career in the 250 years of our harbours. By a conjunction of untoward circumstances it fell upon evil days. To custom and wealth that rose with the flood of sea trade there came a period of low water. The owning of ships is now for Greenock very much a business of the past. Yet the port has an inherent vitality, drawn from a vigorous origin and upbringing, and no one will say that her present state is in any way forlorn. On the contrary, the prognostics are more than encouraging. We are persuaded that Greenock will soon again come into her own, and occupy a position in the industrial world surpassing the visions of the most sanguine. This position will exhibit the town as a rival to Glasgow not so much in the realms of shipping or harbourage, in which years ago we acknowledged her supremacy, as in that of shipbuilding, where without undue conceit we may claim equality in skill if not in actual output.

Shipping and Ship-Owning

Herring

The shipping and commercial greatness of Greenock was founded upon the herring fishery. It is doubtless a lowly origin, not to be too insistently emphasised in the hearing of dignified present-day magnates; but it was surely a source of legitimate pride to the adventurous pioneers from whose happy thought evolved the earliest motto of the port, "Let herrings swim that trade maintain."

Herring fishing on the Clyde was a recognised form of industry very early in the history of Scotland. Walter, High Steward of Scotland, in 1170 presented to the monks of Paisley one boat and one net for catching herrings. In 1424 a tax was laid on herrings sold in Scotland, foreigners being charged a higher rate for the barrelled fish than were the natives. Fifty years or so later the revenue derived from this source at Dumbarton was £170, and from herrings caught in the Clyde lochs £379. James V. in 1526 granted to James Stewart of Ardgowan the assize herring in the West of Scotland. It is said that as early as 1674 20,000 barrels of salted herrings were exported from Greenock, and that the town, with its weekly market and two annual Fairs, did a great trade with the West Highlands by way of the Dunoon ferries.

Growing Trade

The Royal Fishing Company was constituted by Act of Parliament in 1661, and in 1665 the company leased a piece of ground and set up a curing yard in the Royal Close, Greenock. The company was dissolved at the end of seven or eight years. Its exclusive privileges had been objected to as hindering private enterprise, and were withdrawn. The Royal Close property passed into the possession of Glasgow Town Council in 1684, and for many years it was used in the tobacco trade. The Council parted with the last link of this connection when they gave John Hamilton a sub tack for the 590 years then to run, at £2,000, with relief of feu-duty and casualties. Thereafter arose private fishery concerns. John Spreull, a Glasgow merchant (who in 1687 had been liberated from a six years' imprisonment on the Bass Rock for his Covenanting principles), feued five roods of land on the shore at Cartside Bay, and shortly started a station for curing red and white herrings, and it is recorded that in 1691 thirty-two fishing boats and gabbarts came to Crawfurdsdyke with herrings for Spreull. In 1697 the Baron Bailies' Court at Crawfurdsdyke passed an Act for the purpose of remedying a grievance of the inhabitants that when fresh herrings came into the place the merchants who "bought in great would not serve the people in small." In "Mediaeval Scotland," by R. W. Cochrane Patrick, it is stated that "Sir John Schaw of Greenock introduced a new method of making salt, and in consequence the privileges of a manufactory were extended to him and his partners in 1696." In Craufurd's 'History of Renfrewshire' (1710) we learn that "of all the shires that border on the Clyde Renfrew might justly claim a right to it, the inhabitants of Greenock, Crawfurdsdyke, Gourock, Newark, and Inverkip making the greatest number of the fishers. The herrings caught there were larger, firmer, and of a better taste, and took better with the salt, than any other the kingdom afforded, and they were consequently, both fresh and salted, more valued at home and abroad. When the fish were considerable in the river about 900 boats were employed, built after the form of little galleys, each having on board four men and twenty-four nets, every net six fathoms long and one and a half fathom in breadth all joined together making a considerable length. The fishing continued from July 25 till December 25, after which there was no fish during that season."

The prosperity of the time was greatly due to the Act of 1705; empowering all Scottish subjects to take, buy, and cure herrings and white fish "in all and sundry the seas, bays, etc., of the same," various restrictions were removed, and free trade in fishing confirmed. The boats then went a-fishing three times a year, which times were called the drave, and there were payable to the Crown out of each boat, of such a bigness as was then determined, a thousand herrings each drave, and afterwards by a measure of a fixed size and bigness, whence the duty came to be called the assize herring, which in the reign of James III was annexed to the Crown, while Argyll had for a long time tacks, with jurisdiction and the power of punishing offences. In 1669 fishermen had to defend themselves in a law plea in the Court of Session, the Bishop of the Isles having sued the men of Greenock for the great teind of cod and ling caught by them between the islands of Ailsa, Arran, and Bute. The fishermen pleaded immemorial use of these grounds without the payment of any teind except the small tithe of two merks to the tacksman of the Vicarage at Greenock, and the Court found in their favour.

Greenock's Share

One-half of the boats engaged in the fisheries in 1728 belonged to Greenock and one-half were hired by curers. Fifty years later the number owned in Greenock was 300, employing about a thousand hands. The Society of the Free British Fishery, established by Act of Parliament in 1750, granted a bounty to herring fishers of 30s per ton, this was in 1757 increased to 50s, and in 1771 reduced to the former figure. In 1791 129 busses were cleared at Greenock Customhouse and outports, and the hands engaged numbered nearly 1500. In addition there were entered at Greenock 45,054 barrels of herring and at Port Glasgow 8434 barrels. A Greenock gentleman in a letter to a London friend in January, 1754, wrote the following description of the herring fishery on the Clyde: "We have near 800 small vessels, four or five Highlanders in each, in the fishing in the most delightful river some miles over, and frequently catch the quantity of about 1,200 barrels (twelve to the last) in one night's take or fishing, all brought into Greenock next morning for sale and curing for exportation; about 700 lasts already got since the middle of October, the fishing still going on with great briskness and seldom over till the month of January, the finest herring I saw or tasted, and great numbers of them weighing more than an English pound. The choicest salmon also now sells for 1d to 1½ d per pound, and the finest fish in proportion, all taken just under our windows and within immediate sight of Greenock and Port-Glasgow."

In "Essays on Trade, Commerce, Manufactures, and Fisheries of Scotland" by David Loch, merchant and General Inspector of the Fisheries of Scotland, published in Edinburgh in 1778, the author favoured the public with "strictures on the principal inland towns, observations on the constitutional police, with many curious and interesting articles never yet published." He made a visit to Greenock in 1778 "On Thursday, 16th April, I arrived at Greenock and inspected the herrings that were shipping. To give a clear idea of the increase and importance of this trade I need only mention that from 6th April, 1777, to 6th April, 1778, inclusive, there were 23,058 barrels of herrings shipped from this port and really exported to foreign parts. The quantity entered at the Customhouse for the same year was 4458 barrels, besides 949 sent coastwise, each barrel containing 31½ gallons English wine measure, holding from 700 to 900 herrings according to their size, and six score to the hundred. Mr. John Lindsay and Messrs. Buchanan & Co. carry on a great fishing trade, and are extensive dealers to the West Indies and other foreign parts."

Rise and fall

The 'Scots Magazine' of 1787 reported a great take during eight days between Dunglass and Kilpatrick, the small boats finding it difficult to make their way through the shoals of herring. The people were said to have laid in so plentifully that half of the usual annual quantity of salt beef served them as winter store. On no night were there fewer than a thousand boats fishing between Greenock and Old Kilpatrick. In the neighbouring bays and lochs were excellent salmon, although none for exportation, and cod, haddock, and whiting in great plenty from Ailsa upwards. Greenock shared in the stimulus produced by the bounties, the new harbours offering increased facilities for the industry, and the curing yards and cooperages extended from the Mid Harbour westward to Herring (Charles) Street and the West Burn. The houses on the south side of Lindsay Lane, from the Vennel to the West Quay Lane, then fronted the harbours. All this space was taken up, besides the breasts, Charles Street, and a part of Crawford Street. The trade was mostly in the hands of curers from Bute and other parts of the Highlands, but among the old local firms were Malcolm & Co., Robert Sears, Chisholm & Co., Mackie & Service, Baine, McLachlan, McPhedran, Gideon Lyle, Black, Spence, James Adam & Co., D. McLean, Lyon, Rennie, McKellar, and Todd & Kelso. When plentiful the herrings were the chief food of the common people, especially in harvest time, in all the adjacent shires.

The decadence of Greenock as a fishing port dates from the early years of the nineteenth century, and the disappearance of the herring from the upper reaches of the Clyde is believed to have been caused by the pollution of the river and the disturbance of the water by the increasing steamboat traffic. The port for a time continued to hold a place as a fitting-out station for fishing vessels and a distributing centre for cured herrings; but thereafter the gradually lessening number of local fish merchants sent fishing and curing vessels to the north-west seas and inlets. Bailie John Hunter, a local authority, in 1870 declared that "its decline may be traced to the falling off in the catch in the lochs of Aberdeen and Ross Shires, from which the greater quantity were brought, and to the emancipation of the West India negroes, who gave over eating herrings when freed."

Shipping (Sea Trading)

Pioneer Ships

In the records of the Scottish Parliament of August 6, 1649, in which is mentioned the granting of a commission to Captain Robert Hall and the Frigate of Greenock, it is believed that we have the first intimation of a vessel belonging to and fitted out in Greenock harbour. The earliest vessel to cross the Atlantic from Greenock was the George in 1684, with 22 persons transported for their share in resisting the oppression of those cruel times. In September, 1699, the Clyde division of the Darien Expedition sailed from Cartsdyke Harbour. It consisted of four vessels, the largest named the Rising Sun, and there were altogether about 1,200 people.

At the end of the seventeenth century there was at least one vessel, the Neptune, owned partly in Greenock and partly in Crawfurdsdyke, and a number of small boats from six to nine tons. According to the testimony of Allan Spier, Baron Bailie of Greenock, there were besides a Greenock owned ship named the John; the ship George, partly owned in Glasgow; the Hendric, similarly owned; two barges belonging to Glasgow merchants; a traveller boat, and some smaller craft, the ships taken at 200 tons each. At the same time there were two vessels of about nine tons each owned in Crawfurdsdyke. Another authority states that in 1700 the vessels belonging to Greenock and Crawfurdsdyke were of small tonnage, the combined fleet, chiefly embarked in the herring fishing, not exceeding in the aggregate a few hundred tons, yet that some of the vessels hailing from Crawfurdsdyke were engaged in trading to the Continent and as far north as Sweden and the Baltic.

Effects of the Union

When the Union opened up big commercial prospects to the whole of Scotland Greenock naturally came rapidly to a position of importance in both coasting and foreign shipping. A considerable trade was established with America and the West Indies. It was in 1718 that for the first time a Clyde-built trading vessel sailed from the Tail of the Bank for foreign parts. This ship was built at Crawfurdsdyke, was of 60 tons only, and was engaged in the Virginia trade. No square-rigged vessel belonging to Greenock left the port till 1764. About 1720 the rising prosperity of Greenock excited the jealousy of London, Liverpool, and Bristol to such an extent that they accused the merchants of Greenock and Port Glasgow of fraud against the Revenue, first to the Commissioners and then to the House of Commons. This charge was conclusively refuted, the merchants exonerated, and in spite of continued efforts to crush its infant commerce the town went on prospering amazingly.

Widening Markets

To the increasing volume of trade with America the War of Independence in 1773 put an end for the time being, so that new sources of commerce had to be sought for and encouraged. There followed extensive foreign connections - imports of rum, sugar, and other products from the West Indies; wines, fruit, etc., from Spain and Portugal; cargoes from the fisheries of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Greenland, and Davis Straits; products from the East Indies; and, not least, a large cross-channel shipping. From the Union to the beginning of the American War the greater part of Greenock shipping was carried on by Glasgow merchants, but by 1810 or thereabout Greenock citizens were the principal shareholders, and thereafter for many years were prominent in the foreign trade of the Clyde. Whale fishing had been started by Greenock ships about 1752. It was, however, soon given up as unprofitable, but revived in 1786, at which date two large vessels were engaged in the business. It went on for

about forty years, and was again abandoned before 1830, the last of the small fleet having been purchased by Captain Ross for his voyage to the North Pole, but did not take part owing to the refusal of the crew to proceed. This is believed to have been the ship John, 316 tons register, which belonged to the Greenock Whale Fishing Company. It was reported in 1865 that for the first time in a long period a Greenock ship, the Wolf, owned by Mr. Walter Grieve, had been employed in the Greenland whale fishing, and had been highly successful. In the shipping news of September 19, 1828, appeared the following notice: "John Combe master, from Davis Straits with 300 butts blubber consigned to James Hunter & Co." This was the John's last voyage to the whale fishery. In October she was advertised for sale, together with the boiling yard and materials. The John was built in India, of teak, and doubled in London with British oak. In 1871, during gas-pipe excavations between Victoria Harbour and East Hamilton Street, whale jaw bones were uncovered.

Greenock Tonnage

As indicating the amount of shipping business done at Greenock at the middle of the eighteenth century, it is important to note that the harbour regulations of 1753 gave minute directions for loading and unloading, etc. There was in that year such a demand by Glasgow Virginian merchants for more storage for the increasing foreign trade that it was the general view, shared in by Lord Cathcart, that no surer way could be devised for drawing rich merchants to reside in Greenock than by allowing them property at the port. Loch wrote: "In 1778 14,000 tons of shipping belonged to Greenock, mostly employed in the foreign trade, and 100 sail of busses in the herring fishery, at a medium 50 tons measurement each. There were three good quays to lie alongside and moor at, four dockyards, and a dry dock in agitation. A great part of the principal people of the place have got a sea education, as many of them have been shipmasters, which is many times an advantage for a man of trade to know. The place is best adapted for sea-trade, having a most commodious, safe, and good harbour, with 18 feet of water at spring tides and a road from five to seven fathoms of water having a good bottom, where most part of the Navy of Great Britain may ride, having an easy access thereto. Within these last twenty years, 1762 to 1782, the people of Greenock have increased their shipping and fishing busses to a great extent." With regard to the number of vessels belonging to the port, there were in 1784 about 250, aggregating 20,000 tons; in 1791, 450 of 50,000 tons; and in 1806, including coasters and fishing boats, 1000 of 80,000 tons. The number of foreign-going ships increased from 7 in 1784 to 21 in 1792, and to 346 in 1806.

That the utility of the local streams in their relation to shipping was not overlooked is proved by the fact that Anthony Burrow and William Lawson, who in 1792 feued land in the Deer Park and Ingleston for an iron foundry, were given liberty to deepen Crawford's Burn and fence the west side with stone dykes or otherwise, so as to make the burn navigable for the purpose of bringing and discharging the cargoes of sloops and other vessels coming from the sea or river Clyde up the burn as far as the bridge, but reserving to Sir John Shaw Stewart "the liberty of loading and unloading vessels on the west side, and of cutting and carrying away the trees on the ground without any consideration."

Glasgow and River Deepening

When the deepening of the river began in 1774 a good deal of the foreign merchandise was taken direct to Glasgow, instead of being transhipped, as had been the custom until then, but much rum and sugar was still being landed at Greenock and Port Glasgow, though owned by Glasgow merchants. On October 2, 1791, and the following day 22 vessels arrived at these two ports from the West Indies with full cargoes of sugar, rum, cotton, etc. After the Peace of 1783 the increase of commerce was still more rapid than previous to the American War. During the years from 1784 to 1790 the shipping trade of the port was nearly tripled in amount. With the formation in 1790 of the Forth and Clyde Canal the facilities for dealings with the East Coast were extensively taken advantage of by the traders of Greenock. Robert Heron in 1797 stated that "two commercial towns have arisen at the mouth of the Clyde where it opens into the firth, and in these we have complete harbours and landing places to the shipping and trade which are employed and carried on by the merchants of Glasgow and its environs. Port Glasgow contains about 4000 inhabitants, and has belonging to it about 125 vessels of 12,760 tons aggregate. Greenock, much more considerable, contains about 15,000 souls, is a commercial and maritime town, has a good road and harbour, and carries on a very extensive trade to almost all parts of the world." Glasgow at this time had a population of 60,000; Paisley 20,000, and was making £700,000 annually from its manufactures of thread, candles, shawls, etc.; Renfrew about 2000; and Kilbarchan about 2000, engaged in lawns and muslins to the value of £27,000 a year.

Customs and Tonnage

A review of the Customs statistics during the hundred years beginning in 1728 will be found eloquent of the vast strides in Greenock shipping during the latter part of that period. In the year stated those receipts amounted to £15,231, and for nearly twenty years thereafter there was little perceptible increase. By 1770 the total had risen to £57,336, in 1794 it was £77,680, the following four years showed an enormous advance, to £141,853 in 1798, and by 1814 the figure had reached £376,713. The succeeding increases to the close of the hundred years were more gradual, the amount in 1828 being £455,596. The number of registered vessels in the later years of this period ran about 250, with a total of over 30,000 tons, and employing 2500 men. With regard to the number of ships trading to the port near the close of the eighteenth century on to 1840, in 1784 there were 52 British-owned and 4 foreign-owned inward; in 1794, 89 and 17 respectively; in 1804, 165 and 25; in 1829, 210 and 13; in 1835, 255 and 12; in 1840, 275 and 13; and the outward vessels in like proportion. During the same term of years the trading to and

from Ireland engaged regularly about 130 boats in 1784, 250 in 1829, 450 in 1835, and 750 in 1840. In 1828 a Parliamentary paper issued gave the number of ships, with their tonnage, registered in Scotland. There were 900 over and 2160 under 100 tons, and the aggregate tonnage was 300,835. Of the 22 ports of register, Aberdeen came first with a total tonnage of 46,587 and 434 ships; Greenock next, with 37,786 tons and 425 ships; Glasgow, 36,220 and 224; Leith, 26,107 and 257; Grangemouth, 24,635 and 210; Dundee, 24,227 and 214; and then in order Montrose, Irvine, Dumfries, Kirkcaldy, Bo'ness, and Port Glasgow, which last had 7155 tons and 50 ships. The majority of the vessels from the Clyde were still sailing ships, yet they often made remarkable passages to and from the foreign ports.

The Indies

The first Indiaman fitted out from the Clyde was the ship Earl of Buckingham, 600 tons, in 1816. At that date Greenock harbour had accommodation for 500 sail of ship. In the 'Advertiser' of a date in February, 1820, the following paragraph appeared: "A circumstance occurred on Sunday last unprecedented in the annals of the trade of the Clyde. Six of the finest vessels in the British Mercantile Marine, all of them built at this port, set sail on their first voyages to the East and West Indies and South America. They were the Clydesdale, for Calcutta, and the Osprey, for Buenos Ayres, Valparaiso, and Calcutta, both built by R. A. Carswell; the Bellfield, for London and Calcutta; the Trelawney, for Jamaica; and the Eagle, for Barbados, built by Scott & Co.; and the Hanilla, for Jamaica, built by R. Steele & Sons." In the same issue is printed "Extraordinary sailing. - The Robert Burns steamboat very lately made the passage from Glasgow to Greenock in 2 hours 1 min., including the usual stoppages."

Enterprising Shippers

It was when the local herring trade began to languish, in the closing years of the eighteenth century that the ship owners, coopers, and others vitally concerned were set the problem of finding fresh outlets for their capital and energies. They extended their enterprise to Newfoundland, where on a large scale they developed a connection in salted cod, which they exported to Europe and South America. In those far-off days the Greenock shipowner was not a mere carrier: he was also a merchant. The ships bound for the West Indies carried coal and lime in hogsheads, potatoes in crates, and other goods, and brought home sugar, molasses, rum, and cocoanuts. The Canadian mails were conveyed in 10-gun fast-sailing brigs that were dubbed coffins. Passengers were taken east and west in cargo ships, the owners getting half the passage money, the masters half and having to provide the food. The general shipping trade was then fast extending, in coasting as well as to France, Germany, Russia, Spain, the Brazils, etc. Owners as they grew richer were building bigger ships, and were venturing round the Cape of Good Hope to India and China, for which there was a demand for higher-class and better-equipped vessels than the lower port craft classed at Lloyd's.

Timber

Subsequently there sprang up the St. Lawrence timber trade. A Clyde colony was established in the Bay of Chaleurs, South of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, at a point at which the primeval forest reached to the sea front. The trees were cut down in the fall, squared, and prepared for shipment on the first show of open water. Carpenters from Ardrossan, Arran, etc., were on the spot and built ships in winter to bring the timber to Greenock, to unload their cargoes, and then to have them iron-bolted, kneed, and caulked. They were rough craft and leaked like baskets, but as they came across in early summer and were timber-laden they floated all right and made the passage without undue risks. Built by rule-of-thumb, it sometimes happened that one side was inches broader than the other, and consequently they were crank and hard to steer. Latterly their owners became so rich that they were able to copper-fasten and sheath their ships, and to cultivate a taste for figure-heads. The tonnage was on an average about 300. The big Eldon of Greenock, the largest Clyde ship of her day, a full-rigged ship with stunsails, was 460 tons. Those lower port, soft-wood ships owned in Greenock usually made two voyages, occasionally three, each spring, summer, or autumn to the St. Lawrence with coal and sometimes pig-iron. In winter they went to Mobile, Charleston, New Orleans, and the West Indies for pitch pine, cotton, sugar, etc.

The history of Greenock timber trade, its rise and fall, is of a special interest. Previous to 1707, when Greenock obtained authority to build a harbour, little or no import of timber had come to the port, and a stray shipment invariably led to trouble with Dumbarton, whose authorities claimed dues upon it. In an Act of the Scots Privy Council of August 20, 1623, it is stated that a Friesland vessel laden with deals had arrived at Ayr and that her master had offered the cargo to the Magistrates of that burgh; but, as they were supplied, they recommended him to carry the deals to Glasgow. Several of the Magistrates and burgesses of the city went to Ayr and bought the whole cargo, and the master took the vessel to the Tail of the Bank and began to unload. He was pounced upon by the Magistrates and Bailies of Dumbarton, who with over a score of men boarded the ship, carried the master to Dumbarton and imprisoned him, and seized seventy deals in payment of the customs they charged. Glasgow naturally took the master's part, and as a result of legal proceedings Dumbarton had to pay him £20 for his expenses during the one night of his imprisonment, he having proffered caution. This occurrence issued in one of Glasgow's periodic law suits with Dumbarton over the question of river dues.

When Greenock trade began to develop with the West Indies and the Baltic the return cargoes for the exported herrings usually included mahogany from the former and deals from the latter ports. All through the eighteenth

century the trade was very small, but early in the nineteenth, owing to the exploiting of Canada, large quantities of yellow pine and spruce were coming from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and about 1810 very considerable quantities of oak, elm, and yellow pine from Quebec, this particular trade having been created by the remarkable growth of shipbuilding on the Clyde. One of the leading importing firms (Messrs. Pollock, Gilman & Co.), while not the first in this American trade, did much to develop it; during a period they were bringing nearly one hundred cargoes in the course of a year, and at one time they were the owners of the largest fleet of ships in the country. It is interesting to note in this connection that the great rival in New Brunswick for some years of this firm was Cunard, who, beaten out of the timber trade, went on to found one of the most famous shipping lines in the world.

For a time Baltic timber came to Greenock in frequent cargoes, but the importing port subsequently became Grangemouth, particularly so after the construction of the Forth and Clyde Canal, and the Baltic trade with Greenock came virtually to an end. Then shipbuilding underwent the great change from wood to iron and on to steel, a still greater change when steamers were being built with the one idea of vast carrying capacity. By this time the Canadian forests where suitable timber was to be found were less accessible than formerly, and this state was followed by a rise in cost and the necessity of getting a cheaper timber. The Canadians had also about 1870 begun to saw a great quantity of their timber into deals, which step, with the rise in prices, practically drove the old form of yellow pine logs to the region of things that have been. From the early years of the nineteenth century until about 1870 Canadians were almost the only timber imports. In that year pitch pine made its appearance, at first nearly all made up of large hewn logs, later sawn logs, until hewn pitch pine all but wholly disappeared. It was close on the twentieth century that Greenock had an import of Pacific coast timber commonly called Oregon pine.

Few trades have passed through so many changes of form as the Greenock timber trade, and although the ponds of the neighbourhood are now a mere ghost of former days, the trade has much developed in Scotland generally. Previous to the Great War, Grangemouth, owing to its favourable situation for ships from the Baltic and Northern Russia, and to the great railway and canal facilities for forwarding, had become one of the largest timber ports in the kingdom. Again, the changed method of deals coming in place of logs has offered to Glasgow dock great opportunity of enormous expansion, of which the authorities have been alive to take full advantage. But Greenock must always remain a port of very considerable timber imports, if only from the fact of the very suitable storage accommodation which it offers, and no matter how much the timber producing countries come to the shipment of the finished articles for ship or house building, there are still many requirements that must be imported in log, and that can only be economically handled where transport is by water.

The Ships

Many of the fine ships of a hundred years ago and under were built at Quebec. Greenock did not lack skilled builders of hardwood ships, but most of the local owners clung long to the Canadian yards. There they were able to launch cheaper and larger deadweight carriers, and, besides, old relationships and family connections had been established to hold owners and masters to the colony. In practice, though, there was quite a moderate limit to the size of the Canadian-built ships. A 1500-tonner was found to have a rather short life, and a 1200-tonner was regarded by experienced owners and masters to be quite large enough. They did very well carrying coal to Bombay and a cotton return cargo to Liverpool or Havre, but few of them were suitable for bringing saltpetre, indigo, linseed, hides, etc., from Calcutta, and fewer still for carrying tea and silk from China. In their maturer age the softwood ships were relegated to the timber trade with Quebec, Pensacola, etc., in which they made good until the Board of Trade interfered with deck loads, and finally drove owners to sell to Norwegians, whose Government was more sympathetic with their traders.

Quebecers

As illustrating the extent of the trade of the port in this connection, the following notes may be given. The 'Advertiser' of August 8, 1868, intimated that "the number of arrivals of ships, chiefly sugar and timber laden, during the past fortnight, has been extraordinary, upwards of thirty having been reported since the first of the month. The consequence has been that in the Victoria and in the old harbours they are lying in two tiers and every available berth occupied, while Albert Harbour is filled all round. Notwithstanding the increased accommodation, vessels are lying at the Tail of the Bank awaiting berthage." In 1869 the spring fleet for Quebec numbered 23 ships of 20,245 tons aggregate, employing 446 men. In June of that year the Albert Harbour was said to be a forest of spars, forming a lesson to the student of nationalities. The Quebec spring fleet of 1870 was: Greenock, 37; Port Glasgow, 7; the largest for a number of years. But this number was still increasing, until in 1875 55 vessels sailed from the Tail of the Bank for Quebec and 57 arrived, all of them British-owned and no fewer than 32 regular Greenock traders. In consequence of the vessels then leaving eight and ten days earlier than before, the Communion was changed from the third to the fourth Sabbath of March in order that the ships might get loaded and away previous to the Preachings, the Thursday, Saturday, and Monday services standing in the way of getting cargoes shipped and all ready for sea. The Allan firm had at this time six fine Quebec clippers, of 6032 tons aggregate, and the Canadian Shipping Company three of 2879 tons. One of the earliest firms in the trade to be formed at Montreal had been established in the thirties by a Greenock capitalist and a shipmaster, for whom Scott & Co. built four fast vessels. The crews of the Quebecers were largely made up of North countrymen. Thus in 1870 there were 300 Shetlanders, fishermen and farmers, who left their homes when the seed was sown and returned from their sea trips in time for the reaping. Those men were said to be well behaved and well dressed, and cases of desertion

were very uncommon. But Clyde owners of Quebecers were gradually being squeezed out of the trade by an influx of Norwegians and Swedes. In 1895 the Curlew, the last of the fleet owned in Greenock, was sold to Norwegian owners.

When this Canadian timber traffic was at its height it took two and sometimes three years to bring the logs from rivers flowing into the Great Lakes on to Quebec for shipment, necessarily at greatly advanced prices. Greenock owners were thus forced to build hardwood ships on the Clyde and the Tyne, and others were induced to go in for composite build, iron frames planked with teak or greenheart and copper-fastened. Several very handsome vessels, Greenock-owned, were turned out locally, renowned as China tea clippers, with a special breed of masters. The opening of the Suez Canal and steamships ran them off the tea sailing route. Those clippers were really more like yachts than ships, all legs and wings, of 700 tons or so, and poor deadweight carriers, costly to build and sail.

Iron Ships

Three Greenock owners about 1853 had the first locally owned iron ships built. One of them was by John Scott & Sons, of about 800 tons; one, of about 1000 tons, at Warrington, the earliest ship with iron lower masts; and the third, about 800 tons, in the north-east of England, clinker-built like a rowing boat. Lloyd's Register did not then quite appreciate the iron ship, having no class for it; underwriters feared they would be struck by lightning; sailors believed the rivets would drop out; and some wiseacres said an iron ship would not float. The Warrington ship came to fit out in the new Victoria Dock and load for Australia, taking cargo and emigrants. The longshoremen on Greenock quays shook their heads and called the hollow iron masts a patent device for smuggling. The specification for John Scott & Sons' ship was incubated and evolved by a Greenock shipowner and a Gourock carpenter, and was used by Lloyd's Register as the foundation of their scantlings and rules for the classification of iron ships. The vessel herself was classed as a thirteen years A1 wooden ship, or equal thereto. Long after this many wooden vessels were built for the West India trade, Greenock being the headquarters of the sugar commerce with British and Spanish West India, the Brazils, and Newfoundland before the Clyde was deepened to Glasgow. The imports of the time embraced a great variety of goods besides timber and sugar, such as guano, tar, hemp, flax, dried salted cod, fish oil, seal oil, and skins, so that Greenock quays were always in a busy state, and locally owned sealers, of which there were many, did a thriving business. The pine timber was kept afloat, and regularly sold by auction on the quay.

High Tide

It was chiefly sugar and timber that in the third quarter of the century brought the port to its high point of prosperity. The newspaper reports in the sixties, brief but regular, reveal in reliable data the remarkable advance in overseas trade that took place within a comparatively limited period. Thus, for instance, at the end of July, 1865, there was "the unprecedented number of 107 ships for the month, 76 sugar-laden, the remainder mostly of timber." Great difficulty was experienced in getting berths, the harbours were jammed, outside the East Harbour vessels were lying five abreast and in three tiers outside the West, while the ponds were full of timber rafts. A year later, "the harbours are crammed. Yesterday the outside of the East India Harbour presented the unprecedented sight of twelve large timber ships, with an aggregate of 10,000 tons, lying four abreast. There are at present 100,000 tons of shipping in the port." Columns of advertisements appeared in the local newspaper of sailings to Demerara, Sydney, New York, Quebec, Bombay, St John's, N.B., etc. Amongst the firms so advertising were Gray & Roxburgh, John Rankin & Co., John Neill, John Brown, John Walker & Co., Thomas Carmichael, D. Weir & Co., Alexander & Co., MacCunn & Campbell, Kippen & Lindsay, Archibald Black, G. & J. Oughterson & Co. The registered vessels numbered 408, the aggregate tonnage was 63,820, and at the same date 21 ships were on the stocks at Greenock.

It was about 1865 that the iron ships came in quicker order to replace the soft and hard wood craft, and Greenock owners were not behindhand in ordering new vessels of about 1000 to 1200 tons. One of these, by Scott & Co., Captain Jamieson of Greenock master, earned the premium as the first arrived tea clipper, and afterwards made a phenomenal passage to New South Wales. Iron ships grew in size slowly but steadily to 1500, 1800, and 2000 tons. When in 1870 a famous Greenock ship of 1512 tons, 2150 tons deadweight, went out to Calcutta, the agents wrote the owners, "Please do not send us any more such big ships. When we ask for cargo we were met with the question, 'When do you expect to fill such a monster?' Twenty years later the same vessel, on her last voyage to Calcutta, was the only sailing ship in port, the other vessels being steamships of 10,000 tons or so. At the launch in 1853 of the P. & O. steamer *Atrato*, measuring 354 feet over all and of 3,466 tons, and then the largest ship in the world, Mr. J. T. Caird predicted that in the course of 50 years steamers from 700 to 800 feet in length would be built and profitably worked, an opinion in which lie was supported by Mr. Robert Duncan against the view of many shipbuilders and naval architects. The *Cedric*, launched at Belfast 49 years later, was 740 feet in length.

Steam v. Sail

Anticipating that the Suez Canal would promptly kill the sailer at Bombay and then at Calcutta, Greenock owners had gone into the Australian wool, Californian wheat, Chile nitrate, and Java sugar trades, in all of which their ships became famous for fast passages. But the steamship steadily outran the windjammer, helped by the French, Austrian, Italian, and other bounty-fed ships, and aided also by the Board of Trade, whose treatment disgusted the

old-fashioned Greenock shipowners. The shipping trade of the Clyde, besides, was fast setting Glasgow-wards. First the Mediterranean vessels, then the sailing craft, then the Montreal traders, the growing Atlantic liners, and others began at an alarming rate to pass the harbours to the Broomielaw; and had it not been for the strong hold that Greenock had on the sugar-refining business the large West India trade would then also have been lost.

Low Water

From owning a great fleet of sailing craft-schooners, skows, brigs, barques, and ships Greenock has come to be represented on the Customs register by a blank for locally owned sailing ships, and by a few lines by firms of steamboat owners. The Post Office Directory, which in days gone by had a long list of shipowners, has no heading for the class, but prints the score or so of Greenock-owned steamers and others registered but not owned at the port. There used to be few families of note who did not have shares in ships; now there are few who have. There are but two firms of steamship owners where at one time were about two score of firms and individuals managing sailing ships, besides a long list of registered owners of so many 64th shares under the Act of 1854. Addressing the Clyde Navigation Trust in 1907 Mr. Nathaniel Dunlop said that in 1847 sailing ships were the only deep-sea traders. The depth of water at high tides at Glasgow varied from 16 ft. to 17 ft., at neap tides less, causing much of the cargoes to be transhipped by lighters in the firth off Greenock. Glasgow, which in shipping then occupied a secondary place to Greenock, was becoming conscious of its strength and of the trade expansion that awaited it because of its position in the midst of coalfields and the manufactories which these helped to create. It had grown impatient of claims by Greenock to levy duties on Glasgow goods transhipped at the Tail of the Bank, and was dissatisfied with the limitations in the movements of its larger vessels which the shallowness of the river imposed. Shipowners had urged the Trustees of the day to make improvements. One of the early acts of the Trust was to resist the claims of Greenock to levy tolls on passing Glasgow cargo. The contest was sharp, but with Greenock's consent a date was fixed when the tax should cease. It came to an end, and even the memory of it had long ago disappeared.

Old Firms

It will be of interest to have placed on permanent record the names and titles of some of the old Greenock shipping firms. One of the best known at the beginning of the nineteenth century was that of Walter Ritchie & Sons. In 1808 Mr. Ritchie, who was an active and public-spirited citizen, removed to his London business, leaving his sons in charge of by far the finest mercantile fleet (eleven ships) in Great Britain belonging to one firm. Conjointly there was a partnership of Ritchie, Galt & Co., of Honduras, Thomas Galt, brother of the novelist, being managing director there. In 1807 the ship *Harmony*, of this firm, was the first to sail from Scotland to the South Seas. In service with this company was William Leitch, youngest brother of Quentin and Robert and father of the late Arthur Oughterson and William O. Leitch. Besides a general business at Honduras and San Domingo, the firm was extensively engaged in receiving and selling mahogany cargoes and immense quantities of log-wood. It was said that one-half of the household furniture in Greenock, Port-Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Ayr, and other towns around had been constructed of mahogany imported by them. Of coffee there was cargo after cargo, and they had on one occasion eleven cargoes of San Domingo coffee burned in the Prussian harbour of Pillau. When free trade with India was declared, Greenock stepped in and took her full share.

Another of the most famous of the ship owning houses of over a hundred years ago was founded by the ancestor of a Greenock family still well to the fore. Quite a number of those old families were of Ayrshire origin, drawn to Greenock by a spirit of enterprise and the hope of commercial success. Troon had been the great port for the West of Scotland, say 250 years ago, and lost her precedence only when the residents in the Clyde Valley awakened to the potentialities of their natural situation. This other famous firm was founded by Thomas Carmichael, from the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, who besides being a shipowner in his own name was an active partner of John Haddow & Co. He was succeeded by his two sons as Andrew Carmichael & Co., and in 1867, when his grandson and namesake joined the firm, it became A. & J. H. Carmichael & Co. Amongst the many others were Eccles & Co., ship owners and sugar planters in Trinidad, with whom Alexander Allan, jun., afterwards of the Allan Line, was an office boy, and J. Brooks Wright (of Clark, Wilson & Co., Glasgow, Wilson & Co., Madeira, and Anderson, Wilson & Co., Calcutta) was at the same time head clerk; Stuart & Rennie, Hunter, Robertson & Co., Alexander Laird & Sons, Baine & Johnstone, J. & W. Stewart, Kerr & McBride, the Oughtersons, Grey & Buchanan, Jas. McLay & Son, J. & G. Smith, Pattens & Co., T. O. Hunter & Co., Archibald Sword & Son, McArthur & Binnie, Walter Grieve, Son & Co., Robert Shankland & Co., John McCunn, James Lamont & Co., Andrew Lusk & Co. (Andrew Lusk became Lord Mayor of London), Leitch & Muir, Colin S. Caird, James Richardson & Co., Hendry, Ferguson & Co., McLean & Co., Oliphant & Haddow, John Clapperton & Co., John and Graham Brymner, J. D. Clink & Co., John Carsewell & Son, J. S. Denniston, Abram Lyle & Sons, Meldrum & McKellar, J. & W. Crawford, A. Campbell Finlay & Co., Steel & McCaskill, Adam, Hamilton & Co., McEachran, Fulton & Kerr, John Kerr & Co., Ross, Corbett & Co., Neill & Dempster, and many old-time owners of coasting schooners, ranterpikes, etc., whose names and titles are now hard to trace. Most of the older generations had peculiarities of dress, manners, or speech, such as the wearing of a frilled shirt, sporting Wellington boots, or in other ways standing out as well-marked features in the town life. Their regular howff was the Coffee Room, where they could be met in their most fetching form, the best-dressed men and many of them the most distinguished-looking of the citizens.

Shipbuilding

Pioneers

The shipbuilding industry of Greenock had its rise concurrently with the formation of the first harbour in 1710. One of the most remarkable facts in the history of the town is that it has long been pre-eminent among the great shipbuilding companies of the world. It is certain that other ship and boat yards existed in the first half of the eighteenth century, but records of the names and locations have not been preserved. Early in the latter half we find the established firms of Halliday or Holiday, to the west of the West Burn; of Love, at the foot of Virginia Street; and at the Bay of Quick of McPherson & McLachlan and of Alexander McArthur. It was from the yard of Peter Love that the brig rigged Greenock was launched in 1760. Simon Halliday was an Aberdonian. His yard, like that of others in the vicinity, was on the high or south side of the street, and vessels on being launched had to cross the highway to reach the river, which at that time washed the north side of the road. Halliday was succeeded by Alexander McKechnie, nearer the Auld Kirk later were David Porter and Morgan, Munn (taking up part of the Old West Manse garden), and Duncan Smith at the Rue-end. Steel & Carsewell began in 1786, and the firm was dissolved in 1816, when John Carsewell went to Port Glasgow and Robert Steele carried on at the Bay of Quick with his two sons as partners. About 1810 William Simons, a native of Greenock, started on a site now absorbed by Victoria Harbour, and farther west were the yards of Porter, McMillan, and Hunter. The first vessel launched by Simons was a coppered brig named the Jane Dunlop, 180 tons, which sailed from the Clyde for Quebec in August, 1811. This firm set up a shipyard on the St. Lawrence, near Montreal, and there built several vessels for the British Navy. They resumed at Greenock in 1818, still building only sailing vessels. Amongst these in later years were four famous yachts - the Tiara, regarding which it was said that if she had been racing against the America in 1851 the Cup would not then have been lost; the Aurora and the Chance in 1853; and the Anita in 1861; and all to the firm's own designs. The company removed to Whiteinch and Renfrew, and became celebrated for the building of dredgers.

Successors

At the time of the Simons' return from Montreal there were three considerable shipyards at Greenock - those of John Scott, Steele & Co., and William Simons & Co. The 'Edinburgh Gazette' of the day stated that shipbuilding was being carried on to a great extent at Greenock, in which industry it had long excelled. Caird & Co. had started their foundry in Cartdsyke in 1809, and began the manufacture of machinery in 1826, but it was 1844 before the firm embraced the business of shipbuilding. Within the second and third decades of the last century the number of yards greatly increased, Gray, at the west corner of Campbell Street; Thomson & Spiers; Johnstone, at the foot of Robertson Street; Moiress & Clark, east of Ropework Lane; Scott & Co. and Robert Duncan & Co., east of the East India Harbour; Simons & Co., McMillan & Co., Steele & Co., a second ward of Duncan & Co. The yard of Thomson & Spiers was immediately to the east of Seafield House. From it in 1840 was launched a Scottish river fleet of six vessels, engined by Caird & Co., for the West India Royal Mail Steam Navigation Company - Clyde, Tay, Solway, Teviot, Dee, and Tweed.

First Cunard Fleet

The shipbuilders of Greenock and Port-Glasgow of that period greatly enhanced their reputation by turning out the first Cunard fleet of four side-wheel steamers, 207 ft. long, 34½ ft. beam, and 22½ ft. deep. The wooden hulls were constructed as follows: The Arcadia by John Wood, Port Glasgow, builder of the Comet; the Britannia by Robert Duncan & Co., at their Cartdsyke yard; the Caledonia by Charles Wood, Port-Glasgow, brother of John; and the Columbia, by Robert Steele & Co., in the yard at the foot of Stanners Street, now occupied by Scott & Co. It was in the Britannia that Charles Dickens went to America in 1842.

Changes in the shipbuilding business were frequent in those days. Firms came and went within a few years. Before the middle of the century there were new names in Caird & Co., at Cartdsyke; Hill, Lawrence & Co., and Robert Taylorson & Co., Port Glasgow Road; the Scott family was doubly represented by Scott & Co., Cartdsyke, and John Scott & Sons, Dalrymple Street; Duncan & Co. had removed to Port Glasgow; and the remaining firms were Steele & Co. and James McMillan, Bay of Quick. Within a few more years there were McNab Co., the Clyde Shipbuilding Company, Hope Crawford, Bay of Quick; Robertson & Co., Main Street; and later Russell & Co., who afterwards concentrated in Port-Glasgow; the Greenock and Grangemouth Dockyard Company; and one or two minor establishments.

Ship Development

For the greater part of the eighteenth century (we are informed in Scott's 'Two Centuries of Shipbuilding') shipbuilders on the Clyde were concerned in the building of fishing and coasting boats. In 1752, with the coming of the Greenland whale fisheries, there was a development in the size of vessels. The first square-rigged ship built at the port was the brig named Greenock, in 1760, for the West India Trade. The Jacobite risings considerably affected the industry, but later the American War of Independence had far reaching results of a beneficial character. Previous to this the British Colonial possessions and the English markets had been opened up to the commerce of Scotland, and Glasgow merchants had established extensive connections with West India and British North America.

Early American Competition

Still, with all this traffic, most of the large vessels trading with the Clyde were being built in America. In 1769 no fewer than 389 vessels, of 20,000 tons, were constructed in the North American Colonies, which was far in excess

of the annual British output. This was largely owing to the limitless supply of timber and to the import duties in favour of English growers of oak. About 1790 there began a period of greater activity, especially in regard to large ocean ships, although craft was still insignificant in size. It is on record that the largest ship built in Scotland up to this date was launched at Greenock, and that she belonged to a company that had a contract with the Government for supplying the Royal Navy with masts from Nova Scotia. The increase of the mercantile fleet of Britain throughout the eighteenth century was only five-fold in numbers and six-fold in tonnage, while the average size showed an increase from 89 to only 100 tons. There was also no improvement in labour-economising appliances for the working of a ship. Of the total output of tonnage on the Clyde at the beginning of the nineteenth century no very definite information is available. Such shipbuilding as the river then could show was carried on in the lower reaches, there being no sufficient depth of water farther inland up to 1835 or 1840

Success in Rivalry

A war of retaliation in shipping with the United States of America greatly stimulated a rivalry which ultimately proved beneficial to this country, and the ending of the East India Company's monopoly of the Eastern trade had a similar effect in diverting shipbuilding from India and the South of England to the Clyde, so that by the beginning of the nineteenth century much of the overseas work on the Clyde was for the West India Trade.

Iron and Steel

The period of iron ships began at the close of the second decade of this century, the first vessel in Scotland in which iron was used being the Monkland Canal barge Vulcan, which continued in service for over sixty years. The first vessel entirely of iron was built in England in 1821, and the first sea-going vessel in 1832. Progress of iron building was slow, largely because timber had proved so serviceable and with lessened restrictions upon importation it became much cheaper.

A report of 1852 stated that foreign Governments continued to send to the Clyde for steamers, and that this was owing to the superiority of the machinery, the fact that iron was then succeeding timber vastly increasing our power to excel. Formerly the Baltic, Quebec, Demerara, etc., had been ransacked for timber to combine with home oak, but by the change the material was at our door. Cunarders were then being built principally at Greenock and numerous ships for the P. & O. Company. The number of vessels under construction at Greenock in that year was 24 - twenty of iron and four of wood, eleven paddle and nine screw steamers, a total of 16,000 tons and 2700 horsepower, the aggregate value; £500,000, and the annual payment in wages to the 2,700 men employed over £100,000. It was not until the higher strength and greater durability of steel was demonstrated in the eighties that timber was finally superseded.

In the course of his Watt lecture in Greenock in 1914 Mr. S.J.P. Thearle, of Lloyds, stated that never were wooden ships so well built as at the time when they were supplanted by ships of iron, and never were they so durable or so strong as they had then become under the stimulating influence of classification. At the date of speaking, of 47,000,000 tons only 17,300 were of wood and composite construction, while 38 years before out of 4,320,000 tons 1,523,000 were wood, the remainder iron and composite. So far as he could ascertain, the first classed iron vessels built at Greenock or Port Glasgow were the steamer Melbourne, 817 tons, built by John Scott & Co. in 1849, and the steamer Collier, 195 tons, by John Reid & Co. in the same year. So quickly did steam navigation make its way that by 1832 100 steamers were classed in Lloyd's Register, in 1836 the number was 554 of an aggregate tonnage of 59,363, the majority of them, however, of wood. By 1914, so completely had steel taken its place, there was not one iron vessel in course of construction in the British Isles.

Outstanding Firms

Three Greenock families have been especially distinguished in shipbuilding - Scott, Steele, and Caird. Two of them are so still. The first of the three enjoys a continuous record of over 200 years.

Scott

From the volume, 'Two Centuries of Shipbuilding' (first edition 1906, second 1920) we learn that the Scotts' firm was founded in 1711 by John Scott primus, who built herring busses and smaller boats. Records of the early times were in existence up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, when they were destroyed by fire, and with them much invaluable information regarding the industrial and shipping history of the town. The work of the Scotts for the greater part of the first hundred years was almost entirely confined to fishing and coasting vessels, their original yard at the mouth of the West Burn, on ground leased from Sir John Schaw. Previous to this the industry had been carried on intermittently. It was then placed on a stable basis. A development in the size of ships began in 1752 with the opening of the Greenland whale fisheries. William Scott, son of John, who succeeded to the business and with his brother James greatly extended the works, built in 1765 a large square-rigged ship for Hull owners, of timber from the Ducal woods at Hamilton. In 1776 the number of vessels built at Greenock, ranging up to 77 tons, was eighteen, of 1,073 tons aggregate, and of these six were from this yard. The Brunswick, 600 tons (1,000 tons carrying capacity), in 1791, for the Nova Scotia trade, and the Caledonia, 650 tons, in 179, both by the Scotts and each in its year the largest ship in Scotland, signalled the start of a period of greater activity, especially in respect of large ocean ships. Some years before, in 1767, this firm had feued ground on the shore east of the West Burn and built a graving dock, on the floor of which the inaugural dinner was held. John Scott secundus, son of William,

who died in 1769, followed in his father's footsteps, while his brother William established an important shipyard at Barnstaple. It is noteworthy that William was the father of James M. Scott, who about 1847 founded penny banks in Greenock, and engaged in much other social work. On the departure of William the firm was known as John Scott & Sons. So successful was the management that in three successive years - 1787-8-9 large plots of ground were purchased from Lord Cathcart for extensions, which at that time almost wholly occupied the foreshore from the West Quay to the West Burn.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century much of the overseas work done by the Scotts was for the West India trade. Between 1773 and 1829 their output was 16,800 tons, the vessels not often of more than 600 tons but the business steadily developing. Early in this century the firm began the construction of yachts, with which section of the industry it was long and honourably associated, successive generations of the family taking also a prominent place in the racing and pleasure sides of the sport. A 45½ ton cutter for Colonel Campbell, of the Yorkshire Militia, was launched in 1803, and was pronounced to be one of the completest of the kind ever built in Scotland up to that date. Since then the family have been closely identified, officially and otherwise, with the sport. John Scott secundus (1752-1837) was long a member of the Royal Northern Club. Among the old yachting families in the west of Scotland, indeed, the Scotts and Steeles filled a foremost place. The firm built many of the largest steam yachts in the world, including Mr. A. D. Drexel's *Margarita*, the *Cassandra*, the *Ægusa* (afterwards Sir Thomas Lipton's *Erin*, sunk in the Mediterranean during the war), Mr. Wm. Clark's *Tuscarora*, Lord Inverclyde's *Beryl*, and Scotts' own series of *Gretas*, etc.

When the monopoly of the East India Company was annulled, and ocean trade enjoyed a remarkable fillip, the firm was amongst the first to turn out fast Indo-China clippers. While during the first half of the nineteenth century a long series of successful sailing ships was produced, the Scotts at the same time were taking a leading part in the evolution of the steamship. The last wooden ship built at Greenock, the *Canadian*, came out of this yard in 1859. The firm was amongst the first to enter upon the building of steamships, and in three successive years - 1819-20-21-the largest steamer in the kingdom came from their works. The first engines manufactured by the Scotts at their Greenock foundry were for the *Trinacria*, built by them in 1825. This foundry had been started on a small scale in 1790, and was acquired by John Scott in 1825 at £5,000. Since that date they have continued to turn out first-class engine work, not only for vessels built by themselves, but for hulls constructed on the Thames and elsewhere in England, as well as for the series of warships built by them for the British Navy and by the Government at the Royal dockyards.

This naval engine work began with the *Hecla* and the *Hecate* in 1838-9, the first warships built in H.M. dockyards to be sent to Scotland for machinery. Their first building contract for the Navy was as long ago as 1803, the warship the *Prince of Wales*, and the firm have also the credit of having built the first steam frigate turned out from Clyde works for the British Navy, the *H.M.S. Greenock*, launched in 1849. This was the largest iron warship of her day, the first to be fitted by the Scotts with the screw propeller. The figurehead was a bust of John Scott secundus, in recognition of his labours for the advance of naval architecture and the development of Greenock. From this time onward the firm had a steady and extensive business connection with the Admiralty, and built and engined all classes of war vessels for the British Navy.

In the tale of mercantile steamships there were some for the Mediterranean trade of the P. & O. Company, and for their Eastern route. Contracts were made with the Royal West India Mail Company in 1841, the Holt Lines in 1855, when they traded to the West Indies, and for Holt's China steamers in 1865. Several of the early Atlantic Liners were also built by them. The early Holt Liners, built and engined by Scott & Co., starting from Liverpool, never stopped until they reached Mauritius, a distance of 8,500 miles, under steam the whole way, a feat until then considered impossible. Throughout the century the firm continued to have a close association with the China trade. For the Holt Line they built 63 steamers, aggregating 248,032 tons, within fifty years and for various China services in the past sixty years they completed about 130 steamers. Since 1876 the yard has practically never been without a vessel for one or other branch of the Eastern trade, and particularly for the China Navigation Company. The firm was responsible for the design of almost all the merchant ships constructed by them.

"That Scotts played no insignificant part in recent years is suggested by the fact that they built the first Dreadnought and the first submarine constructed on the Clyde, that for the merchant service they built the first ocean liner to be propelled by geared turbines, and that for the war and during the war they contributed vessels of practically every type required for the fleets of the British Navy."

It has been mentioned already that the construction of steamship engines was started by the Scotts in 1825. The Greenock Foundry was carried on as a separate but co-related concern under the designation of Scott, Sinclair & Co. until 1859, when it was changed to the Greenock Foundry Company, the principal partner of which was John Scott (IV), and under this title it was known up to 1904, the shipbuilding yards and engineering works being then combined under one name, Scotts' Shipbuilding and Engineering Coy., Limited. The Carlsdyke yard, which was bought in 1850, has been completely reconstructed in recent years, and the Carlsburn dockyard, on the site of the shipbuilding yard and graving dock of the late Robert Steele & Sons, has been laid out and equipped for naval

construction. The yards of the company now extend to 45 acres, and their works are capable of dealing at one time with the construction in aggregate tonnage of from 70,000 to 80,000.

The genealogy of the Scott family is naturally of great local interest. John Scott (I.) founded the firm in 1711; his son William, born 1722, died 1769; John Scott (II.), born 1752, died 1837; his brother William, born 1756, migrated to Barnstaple as shipbuilder; John Scott (III.), born 1785, died 1874; his brother, Charles Cunningham Scott, born 1794, died 1875; John Scott (IV.), son of Charles, born 1830, died 1903; Robert Sinclair Scott, his brother, born 1843, died 1905; Charles Cunningham Scott, son of John Scott (IV.), born 1867, died 1915; Robert Lyons Scott, his brother, in 1915 succeeded to the chairmanship of the company, and associated with him are James Brown, C.B.E., as managing director, and J. B. Hutchison, Colin C. Scott, Cedric C. S. Scott, and Lawrence D. Holt as directors.

Steele

The Steele family connection with Greenock shipbuilding began in 1786. James Steele was a Burgess and Guild Brother of the burgh of Ayr. His son Robert, born in 1745, was for some time engaged in building fishing vessels and coasters at Saltcoats, and on the death of his father in 1786 he entered into partnership at Greenock with John Carswell, the firm being known as Steele & Carswell. This partnership was dissolved in 1816, when Mr. Steele assumed his sons Robert and James as partners under the designation of Robert Steele & Co. The firm almost at once began to build steamships, many of the fine vessels of the Burns, Clyde Shipping Company, Dublin Steam Packet Company, and Isle of Man Steam Packet Company fleets coming out of their yard. The head of the company died in 1830, aged 85, his son James had predeceased him, and Robert Steele secundus was left to carry on the concern. The business continuing to expand, in course of time he took into partnership his sons Robert and William; and the firm was soon building for the Cunard, Allan, North German Lloyd, Donald Currie & Co., George Smith & Sons, and other great lines. They turned out one of the first of the Cunard fleet. They also built a number of large racing yachts that were successful at many of the regattas round the British coast. In the construction of clippers they occupied great eminence, the renown of their China clippers being world-wide. After the new co-partnery, the company took over the works of the Shaws Water Foundry and Engineering Company. About this time also, when iron was coming into vogue for ships' hulls, they opened a new yard in Cartsdyke for the building of iron vessels, keeping the older yard at the West Burn for wooden ships and yachts. Robert Steele secundus died in 1879, in his 88th year. He was a notable citizen of his day, public spirited, entering into all movements which aimed at benefiting the community, and in business a man of singular integrity. It was said at his decease that "to him it was not simply a question of pushing trade and dispatching orders, but the execution of examples of naval architecture that should disarm criticism: with respect to material, form, and finish, and that should meet all the demands of commerce with reference to stability, speed, and capacity." Robert Steele tertius and his brother William carried on the business for some years, but on account of financial difficulties entirely unconnected with shipbuilding, and contracted in their father's lifetime, the firm was, in 1883 obliged to go into liquidation, and was wound up.

Caird

The Caird family has been connected with shipbuilding from early in the nineteenth century, the firm of Caird & Co. having first been established as an engineering concern in Cartsdyke. Mr. John Caird, the founder, was the father of Principal John Caird and Edward Caird, Master of Baliol. The father of Mr. Caird, with his son James, had previously carried on business as house and ship smiths at the East Breast, next to the premises now occupied by Gourrock Ropework Company. Afterwards the son, John Caird, jun., went into partnership with Mr. Anderson, Port Glasgow, as smiths and founders, their Greenock shop being in Hutcheson's Court, Cartsdyke. They removed to Arthur Street, and the firm became Caird & Co. The business originally was a general one, but the firm devoted special attention to the fitting up of sugar machinery and also to locomotives, and built the first locomotive on the Greenock and Glasgow railway. It was to the ability and enterprise of Mr. James Tennant Caird, a distant relative, that much of the subsequent success of the firm was due. He was born at Thornliebank in 1816, served his apprenticeship at Greenock, and afterwards widened his experience in Glasgow and Govan with St. Rollox Engine Works Co. and Randolph, Elder & Co. He returned to Greenock in 1838 as head draughtsman, was made assistant manager, and in 1852 managing partner. From 1863 he was sole proprietor of the business, and latterly took as partners his four sons Patrick, William, Robert, and Arthur. It was in 1844 that the firm began iron-shipbuilding, the first two vessels both under 100 tons. They were built in the yard in Main Street, Cartsdyke, now occupied by the Greenock Dockyard Company. The present yard in Dalrymple Street was formerly held by Mr. John Scott, and on its sale about 1863 it was divided into two, Mr. Caird taking the one half, Mr. McNab the other. The entire ground passed into the hands of Caird & Co. in 1872, in which year also some subjects were acquired at the West Quay, the shipyard thus extending from the Albert Harbour on the west to the West Harbour on the east. Mr. Caird died in 1888, and was succeeded by his sons, two of whom, Patrick and Arthur, are surviving. It was said of Mr. James T. Caird that "no man during the last forty years has done so much to keep Greenock in the van of shipbuilding." "He belonged to the great revolutionary band of shipbuilders." "He was not only the shipbuilder, but also the originator of many improvements in marine engines." During his time 250 vessels were built by the firm. After his death Caird & Co. was formed into a limited liability company, with Mr. Patrick as chairman and Messrs William, Robert, and Arthur as directors. The company have since built a large number of steamers for the Hall Company, Nederland Company, Gulf Line, Austrian Lloyd's, Pacific Steam Navigation Company, Union Company of New Zealand, and

many of the best known Peninsular and Oriental Company's intermediate and mail steamers, these including the Medina, which took the present King and Queen to the Indian Durbar, and the last mail steamer Naldera. The list of steamers built by the firm for the principal shipping companies of the world comprises the following: Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company, 85 steamers; North German Lloyd Company, 29; Hamburg-American Company, 25; Netherlands India Steam Navigation Company, 12; Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, 6; Pacific Steam Navigation Company, 5; British India Steamship Company, 5; Inman Steamship Company, 2. The Peninsular & Oriental steamers turned out by the firm aggregate 533,373 tons and 474,000 indicated horse-power; the cost to the company amounted to £11,000,000; and the wages in constructing those vessels, exclusive of the wages in preparing the material, were £4,000,000.

In 1916 Messrs Harland & Wolff acquired the shares of Caird & Co., Ltd., and have since conducted the business. Within a few months a great extension scheme was announced. The area to be included extends eastward to near Brymner Street (taking in the West Harbour), southward to a line through Shaw, Dalrymple, and Crawford Streets to Laird Street on the west. The district is thickly built upon, the bulk of it old property comprising bonded warehouses, grain and other stores, dwellings that are fit for demolition only, some modern tenements, shops and offices, the buildings of the Brewers' Sugar Compare, the Old West Kirk and graveyard, a portion of the Corporation Electricity Works in Hunter Place, etc. Of the comparatively modern dwelling-houses the best are two blocks erected in the Corporation improvement schemes of over forty years ago. The whole extent covers in distance about three quarters of a mile and an area of nearly forty acres. It has been officially stated that the yard is to be enormously developed and made one of the finest in the country, and that in this connection Greenock has a great future.

Dockyard Company

The shipyard in Main Street, Cartside, now occupied by the Greenock Dockyard Company Limited, is a very old established yard and has passed through various hands. The head of the company, Mr. William Millar, was working in it in 1862, when it was owned by Caird & Co., who were then busy building the first steamers for the American-Hamburg Line and the first of the fleet known as the North-German-Lloyd, all of which vessels were built in this yard. It had previously been occupied by Scott & Co. When Caird & Co. left to go west for more room the place lay idle for some years, and was then taken over by three local gentlemen whose firm was entitled Robertson & Co., Mr. Robertson having been a foreman with Caird & Co. Business was carried on for a few years, and the yard was once more closed. It was re-opened by Mr. J. Edward Scott, who failed in 1878, when Russell & Co. bought the estate from the creditors and conducted business in Greenock until 1900, when the place was leased to Carmichael & McLean, who got into difficulties. The yard was then purchased by Mr. Millar, of the Greenock and Grangemouth Dockyard Company, Limited, which while making a specialty of oil and general cargo ships, are builders of all types and classes, as well as of floating docks, sliding caissons, etc. In 1918 the business was sold to a London firm, and the yard is known now as The Greenock Dock and Co., Ltd. The ground belongs to the Harbour Trust, who acquired it from Messrs Burns, of the Belfast Steamboat Company, who had taken it in the early 'seventies with the view of making a dock or harbour for their steamers, but found that the railway connection did not work in well, and the Harbour Trust thereupon gave Messrs Burns certain concessions they had been asking and relieved them of their purchase. The ground was taken over by the Trust, and the various leaseholders since that time have been tenants of the Trust.

Geo. Brown & Co.

The firm of George Brown & Co., Garvel Shipyard, was started in 1901 by Mr. George Brown as a shipbuilding and repairing establishment. The work done embraces all kinds of vessels, cargo and passenger steamers, river craft, dredgers, etc., mostly of special type to suit particular trades. From time to time the yard has been extended and improved, and vessels of 5,000 tons deadweight can easily be built. The adjoining docks facilitate the handling of repair work and completion of new vessels.

Engineering Firms

Marine engineering has been carried on by several important firms other than those engaged in the building of steamships. Amongst them is that of Messrs. Hastie & Co., founded in 1845 for prosecuting the business of millwrights and general engineers. After the death of Mr. John Hastie, the firm was conducted by his sons, John and William. Mr. John Hastie, jr., was an ingenious engineer, and he patented several useful inventions in connection with hydraulic machinery and steering gear. The business retained its general character until about 1890, when the firm began to specialise in steering gear. In 1898 the firm became a limited liability company, and from then until now steering gear is the only article produced. John Hastie & Company are now the most important firm of steering gear manufacturers in the world. Their steering gear is fitted to ships of every important company, and for a number of years they have fitted between one and two million tons of shipping annually with steam or electric steering gear. Their works are equipped with the latest plant, and they have been thoroughly modernised within the last few years. About ten years ago they introduced electric hydraulic steering gear, and this apparatus is now being fitted by them in a large number of vessels building both in this country and abroad.

The firm of John G. Kincaid & Co., Limited, marine engineers and boilermakers, East Hamilton Street and Arthur Street, was established in Clyde Foundry, East Hamilton Street (taking over at same time the St. Andrew Square

Engine Works of Messrs. John Hastie & Co.) in 1868 under the name of Hastie, Kincaid & Donald, the individual partners being Mr. John Hastie, Mr. John G. Kincaid, and Mr. Robert Donald. After a few years Mr. Hastie, who had been accustomed to millwright work, retired from the firm, retaking the St. Andrew Square Engine Works, and left Mr. Donald and Mr. Kincaid in the Clyde Foundry to follow up their objective of marine engine builders. At that time the compound engine was little more than spoken of, the old system of two cylinder engines both taking steam directly from the boiler was in vogue, and surface condensers were only then being introduced. Some years later Mr. Donald also retired. Mr. Kincaid and Mr. Chas. S. Kincaid continued the business, which in 1906 was incorporated as a limited company under the style of John G. Kincaid & Co., Ltd., with Mr. Kincaid as chairman and managing director, the others associated with him being Mr. Charles S. Kincaid, Mr. James S. Kincaid, and Mr. Wm. Nicoll. At the end of 1917 Mr. Chas. S. Kincaid and Mr. Nicoll retired, and the present board is composed of Mr. John G. Kincaid (chairman), Mr. James S. Kincaid (managing director), Mr. Randal G. Kincaid, Mr. T. B. Bingham, Mr. Alex. Storrar, and Mr. P. M. Lang, the secretarial duties being in the hands of Mr. Robert Greer.

In the early history of the firm quite a number of small engines were turned out by them for South American owners, and for many years the firm specialised in the construction of vessels of the shallow draught type for service in the shallow rivers in Africa, India, and South America. Among the vessels turned out by them were stern-wheeler James Stevenson for the African Lakes Corporation, the Sultan of Trincanu, the sternwheelers Stairs and King, Alto Parana, and Congolia. The firm also supplied the machinery for the five-masted auxiliary ship Maria Rickmers, which vessel made a good passage out but was lost on her homeward run; and the machinery for the steamer River Clyde, which was a notable vessel at the Dardanelles in the recent Great War. During the war Messrs. Kincaid constructed the machinery for quite a number of war vessels, and assisted greatly in accelerating the output of merchant steamers during those trying days. For some time prior to the outbreak of the war considerable extensions to the company's works were commenced, including new erecting shop, new pattern shop, new brass-moulding shop, enlargement of smithy and turning shops, new copper shop and plumber shop, also new boiler shops; and this work proceeded concurrently with the greatly increased activity in the production of propelling machinery due to war requirements. The output of the company during 1915 consisted of marine machinery of 13,500 I.H.P.; in 1916 it was 30,000 I.H.P.; in 1917, 39,200 I.H.P.; in 1918 it rose to 46,250 I.H.P.; in 1919 to 70,100 I.H.P.; and in 1920 to 78,500 I.H.P. Only a few years ago the output capacity of the works was represented by ten sets of marine engines and fifty marine boilers annually; the maximum output is now thirty sets of engines and 120 to 150 marine boilers each year. With enlarged premises and the most efficient plant, the firm are now able to construct machinery and boilers for passenger and cargo steamers of the largest sizes and powers. At the beginning of 1919 Messrs. Kincaid acquired from Messrs. Harland & Wolff the engine works in Arthur Street, formerly known as Caird's Engine Works, and these are now being carried on as an adjunct to the firm's business in East Hamilton Street. Recently arrangements have been made by Messrs. Kincaid & Co. whereby a sub-licence has been obtained from Messrs. Harland & Wolff Ltd., who hold the sole licence for the construction of internal combustion engines on the Burmeister & Wain system for Great Britain and the Colonies, which will enable them to construct in their works this particularly well-known type of machinery.

The Eagle Foundry was purchased by Messrs. Daniel Rankin and Edward Blackmore in 1862, from Messrs. Johnstone & Leitch, makers of machinery for sugar-houses, etc. The new firm erected a boiler shop on the opposite side of Baker Street and engaged also in the manufacture of ship machinery, in which they were soon so successful that they enjoyed a long series of engine contracts for river and channel service. In 1874 Mr. Rankin invented a disconnecting compound engine for twin-screw and paddle steamers, for which the firm booked many important orders; while in 1884 his two sons, John and Matthew (who had been assumed as partners) invented several types of triple and quadruple expansion engines. The twin-screw steamer Arabian, the first to be fitted with triple-expansion engines, was given machinery by this firm, and naturally attracted a good deal of attention. Mr. Rankin died in 1885, Mr. Blackmore retired soon after, and the business was carried on by Mr. Rankin's sons. In 1890 the firm was fortunate enough to secure with a set of their patent triple-expansion paddle engines a world's record speed for such craft from the passenger steamer Hygeia, for Huddart, Parker & Co., Melbourne, the hull constructed by Napier, Shanks & Bell, Yoker. This contract had resulted from the splendid performance in 1886 of the paddle steamer Ozone, for the Bay Excursion Co. of Melbourne, the hull of which was built by the Yoker firm. The compound engines were supplied by Rankin & Blackmore, and for the first time in such steamers the navy boilers used worked under forced draught on the closed stokehold principle. This had the effect of greatly lightening the weight of the boilers, and enabled the shipbuilders to make the lines so fine that the guaranteed speed was easily surpassed. A lively newspaper correspondence followed on the result, the chief protagonists Dr. John Inglis and Mr. John Rankin. The success of this bold departure from orthodox practice was so manifest that in spite of strong opposition it soon became the standard on the Clyde and elsewhere. The Melbourne firm had asked Rankin & Blackmore to supply them with a clipper to beat the Ozone, but pressure of business stood in the way of delivery, and Swan & Hunter, Tyne, produced the screw steamer Courier. There was intense rivalry between the two vessels, the forced draught being worked for all it was worth, sometimes more. While the screw was rather faster in deep water, the paddle was the better inshore and decidedly more popular, and the issue was an order for a paddle steamer to beat both rivals. This the Hygeia did so handsomely that the 'ashes' were recovered for the Clyde, where they still remain. This class of work, coupled with engines for tugboats, did not always suffice to keep the Eagle Foundry fully employed, and in later years a specialty was made of cargo steamer machinery, and of passenger steamers as well, of which the Transatlantic Liner Martha Washington, called the greyhound of the

Adriatic, was a notable example. The town and harbours were reaping substantial benefit from this source for these many years, and will most probably continue to do for a long time to come. Before the war the firm was constituted a limited liability company, and Mr. Hugh Ferrier was assumed as a director. At a time when British marine engineers are being reproached for lagging behind their Continental rivals with oil motors, it is interesting to note that in 1892 John and Matthew Rankin patented and made an internal combustion engine to work with either gas or petroleum, but after spending a good deal of time and money on pioneer experimenting they could not find a market for motors of that kind, and have since confined themselves to further improvements on the steam engine. In addition to their records for speed and economy of fuel, Rankin & Blackmore probably hold the blue ribbon on the Clyde for the variety of the types of engines turned out by them, which led to their apprentices dubbing the Eagle Foundry "the College." The types of engines made by Rankin & Blackmore number over thirty.

Messrs. G. & J. McOnie began business as galvanisers at Ladyburn in 1869, and two years later took a lease of the foundry and engine works adjoining. In 1886 the business was removed to the present site, on which new buildings were erected. Their manufactures are practically all dependent on shipbuilding, and include steam and hand windlasses, capstans, watertight bulkhead doors, and the usual iron castings required for ships' hulls. The founders of the firm were Mr. George McOnie, who died in 1913, and his brother Mr. John McOnie, who died in 1910. The present partners are sons of the founders.

The output from local shipyards was steadily on the increase up to the eve of the Great War. Thus, while the year 1890 showed a total of 30,000 tons, with engines of 40,000 h.p. aggregate, these figures had in 1913 risen to 100,000 tons and 220,000 h.p. Thereafter, owing to the flooding of the market with the acquired German ships and the vessels returning from war to merchant service, and a consequent considerable lowering of freights, there was a serious slump in the industry, orders were cancelled, and extended unemployment resulted.

Sugar Refining

Greenock has no claim to be regarded as a pioneer in sugar refining. For over a hundred years previous to its introduction to the town the industry had been established in England, Ireland, and some other parts of Scotland. The first sugar works in Glasgow were started in 1667, but manufacturing had to some extent been going on elsewhere in the country earlier than 1655, in which year an Act was passed imposing an ad valorem duty of 5 per cent on exportation. In the middle of the seventeenth century there were about fifty refineries in England. Sugar was being smuggled into Scotland from the Continent, refined from the raw brought from the West Indies to France, Portugal, Holland, etc., and it is recorded that although the West Indian growers were offered special privileges by the Government to send the cargoes to the home markets they persisted in their policy of dealing most extensively with the Continent in the hope of getting higher prices. In the matter of evading the Customs duties Scotland at this period held an unenviable prominence in respect of sugar, large quantities finding their way into the country by means of the smuggler.

Clyde Trade Begun

Trade between the Clyde and the West Indies began about 1732, but by 1775 the total sugar imports did not amount to more than 4,000 tons, of which a very small proportion went to Greenock or Port Glasgow. Glasgow merchants were concerned in the earliest Greenock refineries, and the first considerable works were situated at the foot of Sugarhouse Lane and opened in 1765. The site is now occupied by the Brewers' Sugar Company (which in turn is about to give way before the shipyard extension of Harland & Wolff). While there is no absolute proof available, it is believed that one or two small refineries had existed prior to that date. A second refinery followed in 1788, at the head of Sugarhouse Lane, but it ceased long ago to be used for this purpose and is now a workmen's lodging-house. The third was built in 1803 in Bogle Street, and to-day is the property of the Caledonian Railway Company. By the beginning of the nineteenth century Greenock had made a distinct advance in the industry, which promised great expansion.

Cane Monopoly

The West Indies was then practically the only source of this country's supplies, and these Colonies had all but a monopoly of the home markets. In 1813 one convoy brought thirteen vessels to Greenock, in 1814 the Leeward Islands fleet numbered seventy-one, and in the same year the Jamaica fleet twenty-one. Other than the West Indies, Mauritius was the first to follow with supplies, which with more or less regularity went on from 1828. The East India Company monopolies greatly restricted refiners out of London, but when these were withdrawn in 1834 the imports from Manila and the East Indies were much augmented, until in 1854 they reached 50,000 tons, in 1860 75,000 tons, and in 1865 136,000 tons. By the middle of the century there was no town in the Empire out of London carrying on the trade so extensively. In the decade 1842-52 the industry was marked by a very rapid increase in the quantity consumed in the United Kingdom, and Clyde refineries more than kept pace with this greater consumption. While in 1843 this was upwards of 200,000 tons, equal to 16.54 lbs. per head of the population, Greenock district was producing only 6.55 per cent.; in 1852, with a consumption of 360,000 tons, it was producing 11.06 lbs. Out of 29.14 lbs. per head; and in 1872, with 715,000 tons consumption, 29.20 lbs. Out of 50.47 lbs.

Greenock Prospect

In 1852 the refineries of Greenock were employing 700 men and turning out 50,000 tons annually, and it was then the largest depot for raw material in the kingdom. Twenty years later there were fourteen or fifteen large refineries in operation, producing about a quarter of a million tons annually, giving employment to thousands of hands, filling the harbours with ships of all nations with the raw material from every sugar-growing region of the world - Spanish ships from Cuba, Dutchmen from Java, the Newfoundland fleet from Brazil, Glasgow traders from the West Indies and Mauritius, and coasting steamers from France and Belgium with cargoes of the beetroot that was beginning to come into the market.

Refiner's Drawbacks

In the early Seventies three causes were said to have been at work to destroy the profits of the refiners - competition amongst themselves, with other British ports, and with the foreigners and their bounties, and the consequent stoppage of works after the Budget of 1873 led to a falling-off in the output to the extent of upwards of 12,000 tons. In 1879 it was stated that the trade had been operated upon by a variety of influences of so depressing a kind as almost to point in the direction of its abandonment by many of the refiners, and to threaten its extinction as a leading industry of the town. Those influences included French bounties, large shipments from America of cube and granulated loaf sugar, etc. It was remarked also that rather frequently during the preceding five or six years the crushed market had been unnecessarily weighted by anxiety on the part of refiners not to be outdone by their neighbours in the extent of their output. Eleven refineries were at this time at work, and the total weekly output about 5,000 tons.

Beet Imports

Beetroot, which was fated to have a disastrous effect on Greenock refineries, was first imported to the Clyde in small quantities about 1855, and in 1858 the first cargo, a small one, arrived at Greenock. So long as the raw beet sugar was imported it was our Colonies that were the sufferers, but when the white sugar began to arrive in yearly increasing quantities for home consumption the imports bore heavily upon our refineries. There naturally ensued a steady downward tendency of British exports and a corresponding upward tendency on the Continent, which process of inversion went on without break for many years. Year by year the quantity had increased, consisting principally of French and Belgian, with a small proportion of Austrian sugar, until in 1873 the importation amounted to 40,000 tons. At the opening of the nineteenth century Scotland had used no sugars worth speaking of that did not come from the West India Colonies; at the close of the hundred years the average from that source was a little over one per cent, or 2,358 tons against 203,699. Java, Surinam, and the more distant countries supplied a much larger percentage, but the Continental countries grew to be our greatest sources of supplies.

Duties Abolished

The duties on sugar were abolished in 1874, and there was no duty for 27 years thereafter. An increased consumption naturally followed, and so greatly were Greenock refineries affected that in 1881 the melting's were 260,299 tons, the largest figure they have ever reached. Of this, no less than 100,000 tons were beetroot sugars, principally from Germany, while of 220,000 tons melted in 1890 213,000 tons were largely German, the remaining 7,000 tons having come from Java. It was the Glebe Refining Company who in 1891 offered the first strong practical opposition to the flood of beetroot, and so skilfully was the assault conducted that Messrs. Kerr's cane sugar enterprise became a brilliant success.

Ending Bounties

For several years more refiners in general were having an anxious time through the redoubled effort of Germany, which was now exporting large quantities of refined and consequently causing a diminution in Greenock melting's. Fortunately the crusade of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and his allies against the bounty system was drawing to a successful issue, and in March, 1902, the Brussels Convention unanimously resolved that they should cease. An additional factor in favour of British refiners was introduced when in 1901 Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, imposed an average duty of 3s 6d per cwt. in order to meet the payment of the Boer War, and the lucky possessors of large stocks enjoyed an addition to capital that had been impoverished during the unprofitable years. The growers of cane sugar, too, were now greatly, encouraged in extensions of their cultivation, so that soon their cargoes were coming into the British markets and, owing to cheapness of production, successfully competing with the beetroot.

Broadly speaking, the decline of the Greenock sugar refining industry synchronised with the development of the Continental bounty system, and it's more recent revival dates from the abolition of the bounties by the Brussels Convention, ratified in 1902, the actual abolition taking place on September 1, 1903. The bounties had a most disastrous effect on the entire trade of the United Kingdom. Greenock saw many sugar houses lying idle and others working but intermittently. Of eleven refineries working twenty years earlier more than half were compelled to close their doors. The general trade of Greenock was in a bad state, and there naturally was a great reduction in the harbour revenues. The ratification of the Brussels Convention paved the way for a better state of things. Trade at the harbours revived, and refiners faced the situation with renewed confidence. Although greatly reduced in numbers, the refineries remaining are now able to turn out a greater quantity of refined than in the most prosperous days of the nineteenth century.

The War Years

From the beginning of the war the trade was under Government control. Supplies from the Continent were necessarily stopped, and in the face of enormous freight difficulties and the dangers involved in transport the Sugar Commission succeeded in delivering the raw article from America and the Colonies, and the refineries were enabled to continue melting on a large scale. The output in Greenock during those years were: 1915, 229,689 tons; 1916, 221,512 tons; 1917, 237,185 tons; 1918, 236,521 tons; in 1919, 259,000 tons; and in 1920, 216,907, a reduction owing to coal strike and other labour troubles. The total of 1919 has only once been exceeded, in 1881. In the House of Commons in 1921 the Burgh Member, Sir Godfrey P. Collins, supported a clause to reduce the sugar duty from 2¾d to 1½d per lb., on the ground that the tax was a thoroughly bad and vicious one, because it was a tax on both food and raw material. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that the result of acceptance of the clause in the Finance Bill would be a reduced revenue in that year of £9,500,000, and in the full year of £15,000,000, and that he could not afford to lose that.

The refineries in operation in recent years were John Walker Co., Glebe Refining Co., Ltd., Neill, Dempster & Neill, Westburn Refineries, Ltd. (including the Brewers' Sugar Co., Ltd.), and the Orchard Refining Co., Ltd. In 1881 there were eleven refineries at work, and included, with four named above, Alex. Scott & Sons, Berryyards and Baker Street, Blair, Reid & Steel, Roxburgh Street Refining Co., Cartsburn Refinery Co., Hogg, Wallace & Co., Dellingburn, and McEachern, Adam & Co. The older houses were of smaller capacity than those of the present day. Harbour revenues have benefited to a highly appreciable extent from the dues on ships and cargoes, etc., and from the large quantities of refined despatched coastwise, while the general trade of the town has necessarily shared in the prosperity of the industry.

Firms and Refineries

The following notes on the various sugar refineries established at Greenock are taken from Mr. J. M. Hutcheson's and valuable book on the subject: - The first large refinery was erected in 1765, on a portion of the site now filled by the Brewers' Sugar Company, foot of Sugarhouse Lane, the partners three Glasgow and four Greenock merchants, with Mark Kuhl as practical manager. The ownership changed several times, latterly the refinery was in the hands of MacEachern, Adam & Co., it was burned down in 1882, and the firm retired. The Brewers' Sugar Company followed, and greatly enlarged the works.

The second refinery was built at the south end of Sugarhouse Lane in 1788 by a syndicate of prominent local citizens. It was burned in 1793 and again in 1795. There were many changes in the co-partnership, the last firm Messrs. Alexander Currie & Co. Mr. Currie, who was a brother of Sir Donald Currie, died in 1886, and thereafter the building was converted into a working-men's lodging-house.

Messrs. Robert Macfie & Sons built the third refinery about 1802, in Bogle Street, and carried on business until 1854, when Messrs. Macfie removed to Liverpool and the site of their Greenock refinery became the property of the Caledonian Railway Company.

The refinery of James Fairrie & Co., at Cartsydyke Bridge, was built in 1809. It was destroyed by fire in 1846, and was not re-built.

Wm. Leitch & Co. opened a refinery in Clarence Street, Glebe, in 1812, which ended by fire in 1847, the site was occupied by Thorne & Sons, and afterwards used as bonded stores.

Princes Street Works began in 1826, proprietors Alex. Angus & Co., acquired in 1838 by MacLeish, Kayser & Co., in 1844 rented by Pattens & Co., and then purchased by John Walker & Co., the present owners. It was three times destroyed by fire.

Tasker, Young & Co. in 1829 built on the east fall of the Shaws Water Company, but wound up in 1837; after many vicissitudes it became the possession of Hogg, Wallace & Co. in 1878, and a few years later ceased working.

The original buildings of what is now the Glebe Refinery, Ker Street, were erected by Thomas Young & Co. in 1831, but were idle before 1841, occupied temporarily by James Fairrie & Co., acquired by the Greenock Sugar Refining Company, which ceased in 1865. It was then purchased by a local syndicate under the title of the Glebe Sugar Refinery Company, Mr. Abram Lyle managing partner until 1873. On acquiring a large refinery in London in 1882, the Lyle family retired from the Greenock works, which are now carried on by Messrs. Kerr.

A refinery was built at the foot of Baker Street in 1831 by Alex. and Thos. Anderson. It was burned down in 1851, and was not reconstructed.

Roxburgh Street Refinery was erected in 1832 by Hugh Hutton & Co. Several changes took place up till 1865, when the building was pulled down and re-erected by Jas. Richardson & Co. as the Roxburgh Street Sugar Refining Company. The firm was wound up in 1896, and the refinery was sold and broken up.

Spiers & Wrede's Cappielow Refinery followed in 1833; it was destroyed by fire in 1841, re-built by Mr. Spiers about 1845, bought by A. Anderson & Sons, who carried on until another fire in 1877.

A refinery was put up near the southern end of Inverkip Street in 1847 by Ferguson & Co., and was worked for about ten years, in 1868 the ground was taken over by John Walker & Co., and the buildings have now disappeared.

A small house was started by Matthew Park in Main Street, Cartsdyke, in a converted building, in 1847, but it was burned out within a year.

Ingleston Refinery began in 1847 by Blair, Reid & Steele, and was conducted to 1882, when it was wound up. It ultimately became the property of the Ardgowan Distillery Company.

Another large refinery was built at the top of Baker Street by Pattens & Co. in 1848, but after a time it lay idle for years, was then bought by Alex. Scott & Sons, and later became the property of the Ardgowan Distillery Company.

Crescent Street Refinery was the first fire-proof works of the kind in Scotland, and was opened by Wrede & Co. in 1851; it was purchased by the Cartsburn Refining Company in 1859, and afterwards by Thorburn, Aitken & Stewart, who carried on until 1899.

The refinery at the head of Lynedoch Street was started by Anderson, Orr & Co. in 1852, and was carried on until 1864, some years after which it was bought by Alex. Scott & Sons. In 1896 it was sold to the Brewers' Sugar Company, Limited, and is now worked by them under the title of the Westburn Sugar Refineries, Limited.

Neill & Dempster built works near Dellingburn Reservoir in 1853, and in 1865 they were destroyed by fire and not re-built. The place became the property of the Scottish Aluminium Company.

In 1858 the old Logwood Mill in Baker Street was converted into a refinery; it was burned down within a year and a larger building took its place, for some years worked by Alex. Scott & Sons, but afterwards it was demolished and the site occupied by the Ardgowan Distillery Company and Rankin & Blackmore, engineers.

Ballantine, Adam & Rowan's Dellingburn Refinery was built in 1858, and was carried on until the eighties, when it was closed, the property being purchased by the Scottish Aluminium Company.

In 1864 Paul, Sword & Co. started in Ingleston Street, the property was purchased in 1878 by the Cartsburn Refining Co-partnership, carried on by them as the Orchard Sugar Refining Company, and recently was secured by the Glebe Company, who continue it under the old title.

An old mill at the foot of Baker Street was converted in 1864 by the Deer Park Company, was worked for four years, when it was destroyed by fire, and the site taken over by the Aluminium Company.

The refinery of Neill, Dempster & Neill in Drumfrochar Road was built in 1868, and has been in operation since.

The old Cotton Mill in Drumfrochar Road was converted in 1873 by Cowan, Neill, Oliphant & Livingston as the Clyde Refining Company, which continued until about 1899. The building lay idle for years, became the property of the Corporation, and was recently leased to Cornfoods Ltd., the lease shortly being transferred to K.O. Cereals, Ltd.

Greenock Sugar Exchange was erected in 1857 by Mr. William Anderson. In 1866 the Clyde Crushed Sugar Dealers' Association was formed to foster and increase the trade of the Clyde, to act as a medium of reference between refiners and dealers, to arrange for sampling, weighing, and forwarding, and to publish a daily report of the market. The Beetroot Association was instituted in 1882, the name was in 1906 changed to the Sugar Association of Greenock, and in 1916 to the Raw Sugar Association of Greenock, Limited.

Members of many Greenock families identified with sugar refining, after having helped to establish the industry in their native town, sought wider fields for their energies, making both fortune and name in London, Liverpool, and elsewhere. Amongst these were the Macfies, the Fairries, the Leitches, the Lyles, etc. Other families who were prominent at home have now passed out of the trade through death or retiral - three generations of Richardsons, Steele, Anderson, Wrede, Currie, Pattens, Scotts, Orr, and many besides.

General Trade

First Factories

A candlework is believed to have been in operation in the Broomyhill in 1680, and the bottleworks at Cartsdyke were started about 1700. On the demolition of the cone at the latter place in 1881 a large black bottle was found bearing the date 1712 and the initials D.B., supposed to stand for Dickson Brothers, who were proprietors of the

works. The cone was composed of three million bricks. Many of the employees were English and resided in Ingleston, a corruption of the original name Englishtowyn.

It is generally agreed that one of the oldest industrial firms in Greenock was that of a rope and sail duck or sail cloth manufactory, situate to the south of the Albert Harbour site, the original feu contract for which was entered into about 1725, when the entire population was 1,000. Of the first partners, three - Robert Bogle, jun., George Bogle, and Arthur Tran - were from Glasgow, while John Hyndman, shipmaster, Robert Donald, merchant, and John Scott, Hammerman, were of Greenock. The Boggles of Glasgow were a firm of West India merchants who brought their ships to Greenock. James Bogle, a cousin, began business in Greenock as a wood merchant, and founded the firm that became John Haddow & Co. George Laird was made a partner in the Ropework Company in 1776, at which date the firm consisted of John Laird and his sons Alexander and William, under the title of John Laird & Sons. The works were on an extensive scale, with a wharf, on which the first battery, Fort Jervise, was built and remained until 1839. The former Rope Walk was named after the factory, and Laird Street, leading down to the Old West Kirk, in honour of the family. The firm of John Laird & Sons was dissolved in 1820, some members of the family going to Liverpool and establishing the shipbuilding firm of Laird & Sons at Birkenhead. The Lairds were succeeded by Andrew Ramsay, and afterwards the firm became Orr, Hunter & Co. The factory was purchased by the Corporation, and before being taken over was successively used as a poorhouse, ragged school, mission Sabbath school, and cholera hospital. Factory and dwelling - house were cleared away on the construction of Albert Harbour in 1867.

Old Existing Firms

Several other industries that were established in those early days are still being carried on by members of the original families. Greenock Grain Mills is a case in point. Mr. Matthew Hill started business in 1799 in the Greenock Mill (now Mr. Chalmers' potato store), which was driven by water from the West Burn. His son, also Mr. Matthew Hill, built the present mill, Chapel Street, in 1855, and it is now owned by the firm of Matthew Hill & Son, of which the partners are Mr. James H. Hill, his brother, Mr. William A. Hill, and the son of the former, Mr. Matthew A. Hill. The firm are now the only oatmeal millers in the Greenock district.

Another company of manufacturers that have come through the long years with marked success are Messrs. Robert Houston & Sons, Rock Bank Woollen Mills, Drumfrochar Road. It was originated in 1780 by Mr. Robert Houston, who conducted it until 1820, when he was succeeded by his son, Robert, who carried on by himself until 1856, when he was joined by his eldest son, Mr. R. H. Houston. In 1873 Mr. G. W. Houston, brother of Mr. R. H., became a partner, and since then the firm has borne its present title, was acquired in 1900 by Mr. James Robertson, and registered as a private limited liability company in 1916. The factory at Rock Bank was erected in 1838, it has been enlarged from time to time as the Growth of business demanded, and is now an excellent example of a first-class woollen mill, working a large number of power looms, employing many hands, and possessing complete facilities for the conduct of a large industry.

Greenock Ropework Company was established in 1796 by Alexander Tough, and has descended in the family from father to sons to the present fifth generation. The original works of the firm were built at East Regent Street. These were burned down in 1840, and new premises were erected in Lynedoch Street, which were also destroyed by fire in 1847, a new building going up on the same site, where the business was carried on until 1867, when the factory was again burned down. New works were built on the present site in Drumfrochar Road, and were lost by fire in 1905. The next factory was installed with the most modern machinery, and is now turning out all sizes of manila, hemp, and coir ropes, etc. The firm are contractors to the Admiralty, H.M. Office of Works, and to most of the largest shipbuilders and ship owners in the country.

Glasgow Capital

Glasgow manufacturers were early encouraged to invest in property at Greenock, and did so willingly that for a time hardly any undertaking of consequence was begun in which they did not have a share. Various industries other than those mentioned were introduced before the close of the eighteenth century. Amongst them was a soap work in 1781, and in 1792 lands in the Deer Park and Ingleston were feued to Andrew Burrow and William Lawson, iron founders, of whose establishment the Greenock Foundry is the direct successor. There were also candle works, a saddle and shoe factory, two sugar refineries, and all with big exports. But according to authorities on the subject "the inhabitants of the middle of the eighteenth century and onwards for some years did little to ameliorate their industrial, social, or civil condition." "It was the wise and disinterested action of Sir John Schaw which fostered the rising energies of the burgh. By advice, grants, loans, immunities, and privileges of different sorts, not extorted but offered by him, he animated the zeal, stimulated the enterprise, and encouraged the industry of the people."

Variety of Industries

The closing years of this and the opening of the next century brought a rapid and solid change in all manner of industries. Ladyburn Tanwork was built in 1805 on the banks of the Lady Burn, a site selected on account of the excellent water supply, a very essential factor in tanwork, the permanent exclusive use of it being granted in feu contracts. Up to 1877 the business was chiefly that of tanning heavy leather, the last firm engaged in it being that of Wm. Marshall & Sons. In 1877 the late Mr. R. F. Fisher took a lease of the works, and started the business of wool

merchants, fellmongers, and tanners, only foreign skins being worked, mainly from Australia, South Africa, Buenos Ayres, and Punta Arena. The premises are now owned by Fisher, Henderson & Co. Wool is the most important output, and the qualities range from coarse cross-bred to the finest merino. The purposes to which light leather is put would make a long list. During the war Ladyburn was one of the few yards that undertook the tanning of sheepskins with short fine-haired wool left on for aviators' long boots, motor transport coat linings, and trench gloves. A straw hat factory, established by James and Andrew Muir in 1808, had a successful vogue for a time. The pipe-straw was first sent from Bedfordshire to Orkney to be pleated, then to Greenock to be made into hats. Before 1830 there were 2,000 employees in Orkney and from 200 to 300 in Greenock. This factory was situated in the Glebe, on a site said to have been occupied previously as a bowling green. 'The Travellers' Guide' for 1814 reported that "the town is not elegant, but is in a thriving state. From its rapid increase the price of ground for building on has advanced greatly." Silk and felt hat factories had their day, the Clyde Pottery began in 1816, the flint glassworks about the same time, at which all kinds of crystal ware manufactured were claimed to be equal to anything in Britain. This and the Pottery Works had an extensive home and foreign trade, the Pottery supplying all the principal towns in the country. The first distillery began in 1825, and shortly after a number of mills for the grinding of wheat and oats were in operation.

For at least fifty years from the beginning of the nineteenth century there seemed to be no limit to the promise of Greenock industrial expansion. This view was not confined to the locality. It was a citizen of Glasgow who in 1841 wrote that "perhaps few towns have equalled Greenock in the rapid advance in arts and manufactures. Year after year is giving the assurance that at no distant period the town will become a favourite seat of well-equipped industry and enterprise," and that "this ocean queen of western Scotia has a splendid destiny before her. With the advantages of the waterfalls a new impulse is given, and Greenock is now rising to eminence in her manufacturing as in her commercial importance."

The mere enumeration of the larger industrial concerns that were about that date established in the town will prove that this was no unfounded anticipation. The two shipyards of Scott, Sinclair & Co. and Caird & Co. were together employing 1,200 men, and had a fortnightly wages bill of £2,000, a great sum in those days of small sailing ships and few steamers. There were engine, chain-cables, and cordage and sail-cloth works, two iron forges, numbers of cooperages, three breweries,, two large tanneries, two potteries, soap and candle works, the worsted factory of Neill, Fleming, & Reid with about 400 workpeople, the cotton mill that was to employ 600 (the foundation stone laid on June 15, 1838, the same day as the beginning of the Greenock Railway, and the two opened together in 1841) ; while in the line of water falls were flax, paper, rice, and saw mills, as well as dyeing and other chemical works. Amongst these the Overton Paper Mill, which was opened contemporaneously with the Cut, is to-day a flourishing concern. Built by James Walkinshaw, the mills were in 1850 acquired by James Gray & Co., of which firm Mr. Wm. A. Brown and Mr. Dolwines were partners. Mr. Gray retired about 1856, when Mr. Stewart was assumed as a partner and the name of the firm was altered to Brown, Stewart & Co. The latter firm was incorporated in Brown, Stewart & Co., Ltd., in 1892, in conjunction with the Dalmarnock Mills in Glasgow. The Overton Mills were destroyed by fire in 1887, and rebuilt.

Anticipation

The editor of the 'Advertiser', in a leader in 1839, wrote: "The great increase in the shipbuilding yards at both ends of the town furnishes a convincing proof of prosperity. The same activity is discernible in engines for steam vessels. Hitherto Greenock has been generally known as a seaport. Recently a cotton mill has been begun, there is also Houston's yarn spinning factory, and a print work is expected. In short, there is every likelihood that ere long the whole eastern line of falls will be occupied, and the western line will be opened soon. We have no hesitation in expressing our firm conviction that ere many summers pass away the sites of the hills behind Greenock will be studded with buildings." Again, six months later: "The increase of the shipping of the port, the vast extent to which shipbuilding is carried on within its bounds, and the successful establishment of various branches of manufactures on the Shaw's Water Falls, have combined to give an importance to Greenock which but a few years ago it did not possess, and which many deemed improbable that it would ever enjoy. Yet the most incredulous must admit that we are but on the threshold of an era which in all likelihood will give us a much higher place among the principal towns of Scotland than we can at present boast of."

Marine engineering had begun shortly after the discovery of steam power, and was established by Scott, Sinclair & Co. in their premises near Cartsburn House. This place was first occupied by Burrow & Lawson, in 1791, was purchased by William Brownlie in 1796, who in turn in 1825 sold it to Scott, Sinclair & Co. The firm was said to have in 1829 made the largest engines that had then been turned out, the employees were given as about 200, and the aggregate weekly wages £180. The engineering works of Caird & Co., further east, were started as a foundry in 1809, and the making of engines in 1826. "These" says Daniel Weir, "are two of the most splendid monuments which Greenock can ever rear to the memory of our illustrious townsman."

Historian's View

Weir was optimistic on the subject of Greenock industries. We quote him on the state of things in 1829 – "It has been stated by many that seaport towns are unfavourable for the encouragement of manufactures except what merely belongs to the furnishings and other stores connected with the sea. This assertion has been long exploded,

and it only requires talent and enterprise to succeed as well as any other place. The principal manufactures in the meantime, however, are in a great measure connected with the seafaring life." 'The National Commercial Directory' of 1837 (Pigot & Co.) tells that there were then at Greenock six shipyards, two of them so complete as to rank second only to those belonging to the Crown; two extensive engine-works, six sugar refineries, four ropeworks, three foundries, three tanneries, three breweries and a distillery, two potteries, and manufactories of fluid glass, woollen cloth, sailcloth, straw pleat, soap, candles, flax spinning, and paper. It was remarked that from the opening of a commercial intercourse with India and China Greenock merchants had prosecuted the trade with success, the Clyde ships, from the superiority of their construction, never failing to secure a preference of engagements. This directory contained the names of fifteen cabinetmakers and upholsterers, twenty-three coopers (one of them Abram Lyle), thirty-seven shipping agents, and twenty two ship owners (amongst whom was Alexander Allan).

Mills

The founders of Fleming, Reid & Co., Ltd., Merino Mills, Drumfrochar Road, were John Fleming, son of James Fleming, Newlandsfield, Glasgow, and James Reid, brother-in-law. They built a small spinning mill in 1840, and took five falls on the aqueduct of the Cut from the Shaws Water Company. Nearly every class of wool was used in the course of a steady success in business, yet it was not until fifty years, when the firm began to spin knitting wools, that Australian merinos were brought into service. The mill was originally intended for carpet and worsted weaving yarns for the Glasgow and Bradford markets, the wools chiefly Cheviot. Most of the workmen of the time came from Yorkshire, and it was their custom to wear tall hats at work. The first large mill was destroyed by fire in October, 1880. On its reconstruction on the same site, which occupied two years, during which business was temporarily carried on in England, three additional falls were taken. The main new buildings were 220 ft., in length, 60 ft. in breadth, and six storeys in height; in addition there were knitting sheds, warehouses, washhouses, etc., and the approximate floorage was 220,000 square feet. The company was best known as spinners of carpet yarns, but it also became noted for Tweed yarns, as dress piece makers for Bradford, braid makers for Manchester, and so rapidly extended their retail business that from a shop opened in Greenock for the sale of knitting wool they now own 260 premises throughout the principal cities and towns of the kingdom. In later years the knitting of hosiery and underwear added what has proved one of the most important of their departments, comprised in a shed 30,000 square feet and employing 900 workers. With regard to the remarkable success of this firm's enterprise, it is explained that the founders were quick to avail themselves of the advantages of every new stride forward in scientific achievement in the world of mechanics, and they were determined to dissociate their business entirely from the intervention of the middleman. Mr A. M. Fleming, younger brother of Mr. Fleming, and Mr. James Reid, Belfast, nephew of Mr. Reid, joined the firm, which in 1899 was constituted a limited liability company.

Sugar Machinery

The nature of the town's trade was never widely various, and much of it was connected with sugar and shipping. Take, for instance, the Victoria Works of Messrs. Blake, Barclay & Co., Limited. The firm was formed in 1855 by John Blake and John Barclay, and the present principal of the firm is the son of the former originator. Business was started when sugar refining was, as it is now, one of the staple industries of the town, and they immediately cultivated the trade of making the machinery and plant for the local firms, and later for the refining trade all over the country. About the time the firm was established a great change in the method of refining was developed by the introduction of centrifugal machines for the drying of the sugar by purging off its syrup, replacing what was then the universal practice of running the massecuite which had been boiled in vacuum pans into moulds where the process was completed. The firm took a prominent part in the application of this new method of refining, and have maintained their position in the trade by keeping abreast of all the latest developments and improvements in connection with sugar refining methods and machinery. The firm has designed and erected some of the largest refineries in this country and other parts of the world. The long period of the bounty system arrested all development and killed invention in everything pertaining to sugar refining; so that, like others, Messrs Blake, Barclay & Co., Ltd., had to develop their business in another direction as an alternative to the staple industry. This was found in the manufacture of transport appliances such as elevators, conveyors, etc., of all types, for the economical and mechanical handling of material in bulk, boxes, or bags, and this has remained a secondary branch for which there is a constant demand. From the number of inquiries for sugar refining machinery, especially from abroad, there seems to be a feeling that the cane industry is coming to its own again, largely perhaps in the absence of beet sugar. In any case, with constant and increasing demand for such a necessary article of diet there is a field for further development both at home and abroad, and, in the absence of any artificial aids such as the once dreaded bounty system, there is no reason why the sugar refining trade in this country should not be entering again on a long period of prosperity.

The business of J. & R. Houston has followed similar lines. It was established in the year 1868 by the late Mr. John Houston, who in conjunction with his brother carried on for some years the business of general engineers. Mr. Houston, however, almost immediately turned his particular attention to the manufacture of sugar machinery, and by the excellence of his work and the soundness of his designs soon made for the firm the reputation which their name has ever since carried with it. The firm has ever been in a position to keep abreast of the requirements of the sugar refiners, and has, in many instances, been the means of inaugurating substantial improvements in the method of refining. The foundry, pattern shop, and engine works are specially adapted for the manufacture of this class of machinery, the tools being of the most modern design. The plant is constantly being improved and added

to, thus keeping it abreast of the times. The firm find it a great advantage to make their own castings, as by so doing they are enabled to supervise the work through all stages, and are able to give instant attention to urgent orders, a point which is greatly appreciated by their clients, and an advantage which cannot be too highly emphasised. All the work is carried out by themselves and is carefully tested.

Further Expansion

The rapid increase in the population between 1851 and 1861 - from 39,391 to 45,206 - was brought about chiefly by large shipbuilding and engineering contracts, the industry showing a marked development as regards both size and the number of vessels. Early in the later decade there were sixteen sugar refineries in operation, the shipping list exceeded 200, six shipyards and ten engineering works were well employed, twenty mills were on the line of falls - six sugar, five grain, six spinning, etc., three foundries - and timber merchants numbered sixteen, rope and twine manufacturers five, coopers twelve (five of them also fish-curers).

The Changing Tide

At the close of the American War there were fears that the manufacturing interests of the town would suffer severely, but the forebodings were not realised. An even greater amount of trade was done, and the year closed with Customs receipts showing at £1,235,847, the greatest on record. This expansion continued until 1873, in which year work and wages were at their highest. There was then a fall in the labour market that developed to an alarming extent, bringing reduced wages and profits. The sugar interest was put out of gear by the abolition of the duty in the previous Budget, and refiners were chiefly occupied in putting machinery into good order pending better times. For economic reasons, applicable chiefly to the questions of transit, raw material, haulage, etc., there was a steady reduction in the number of manufactories on the falls that were able to establish themselves on a firm commercial basis. At the opening of the twentieth century the chief complaint was the want of varied industries. The prosperity of the town depended almost wholly on shipbuilding and sugar refining, together with the labour provided by the shipping. Thus, according to a report by the Chamber of Commerce, there was no industrial town in the country which felt the stress of periodic unemployment so severely.

An outstanding exception to this general absence of commercial enterprise, and an illustration of how success waits upon adventure, is afforded in the experience of John Drummond & Sons, Ltd. In this firm Greenock sees the last of the once greatly flourishing local trade of coopering. When John Drummond began business in 1876 the industry was still in a flourishing state. Sugar was being packed in barrels and hogsheads, and most other articles in barrels. A few years later, however, jute bags were introduced for sugar, etc., and the cooper trade suffered a severe check. Refiners filled 7 lb. bags of sugar, packed in cwt. wooden cases, syrup in 2 lb. tins, and so on, and tins became popular owing to the introduction of lever top lids.

Mr. Drummond, moving with the times, opened a sawmill and a packing case factory, these cases being nailed and manipulated by machinery, paper labels gave way to enamelled or printed tins, tin printing was added to the list of the firm's activities, and it is a notable fact that John Drummond & Sons were the first in Scotland to enter upon tin printing. In more recent years machinery was introduced for the making of barrels, there is an up-to-date cooperage, and a large number of men employed in repairing barrels and in manufacturing extensive vats, etc., for home and export, the firm, in addition to their connections in England, Ireland, and Scotland, doing a large export business. With the view of keeping all the products up to a high standard of quality, an engineering department has been established for maintaining tools in the highest efficiency, and an art department that prepares original designs for tins and show cards. Altogether about 300 persons are employed in the works in Rue-end Street. The firm, which originally comprised John Drummond alone, now includes as directors his sons John and Neil, under the designation of John Drummond & Sons, Ltd.

Coal

From an early time in the industrial history of the town repeated efforts were made in the hope of discovering coal in the district. The first search in 1767; met with no encouraging results. Rev. A. Reid, in his 'Statistical Account' in 1793, reported that "the hills for the most part seem to be a mass of whin, very compact and solid in some parts, in others, especially towards their summits, chinky and friable. In digging pretty deep wells, etc., there have occurred strata of earth, clay mixed with shells, sea sand, gravel, freestone, whin, etc., but no appearance of coal". In 1824 there were several bores to a considerable depth, but the chance of success was so unfavourable that the work was abandoned. Towards the end of this year, however, further attempts were made, and five seams in the Bow Glen were regarded so favourably that it was resolved to resume the borings in early spring. About the same time it was reported that "the bore behind Market Street, after being sunk to the depth of about 35 fathoms, has been for the present abandoned; that opposite the Pottery, Port-Glasgow Road, is now about the same depth, and is being prosecuted; at the farm of the Bow Glen several bores have been sunk to the depth of seven fathoms, in the course of which three veins of the thinnest coal, not exceeding two inches, have been passed through. The presence of the coal formation is demonstrated, but whether in sufficient thicknesses to be practicable and valuable remains to be ascertained, and the slight indications now disclosed may be only the ignis fatuus to excite hopes which are fated to end in disappointment." This proved a well-founded fear, as not long after the search was given up as a hopeless one.

Copper

Copper mining on Gourock estate, which began about a hundred years ago, flourished for a time and then came to a stoppage. The 'Advertiser' of September, 1826, stated: "Our immediate neighbour is about to become the site of mining operations novel not only to this district, but we believe to the Kingdom of Scotland. A gentleman of Wales, of large fortune and at present extensively engaged in the copper mines of that country, has, we understand, taken a lease of the mine-fields on the estate of Gourock, and is expected very shortly to commence the working of that property, with the most sanguine prospects of a profitable result." These operations went on for a number of years with a certain amount of success. At one stage many vessels loaded at Gourock very valuable copper ore for Swansea, men of commercial standing being lessees of the mines. The veins ran out disappointingly, however, and the mining was then given up. Another company was formed in 1862, on a report that one of the previous workings gave considerable promise, which unfortunately was not realised.

It is still greatly to be regretted that the leading industries of the present day besides the staples of shipbuilding, engineering, and sugar are neither numerous nor do they offer a wide field of employment for manual labour. They embrace eleven firms of timber merchants and measurers, eight sawmillers, seven sailmakers, seven rope-spinners, six chemical works, two tanneries, four wool spinners and merchants, two distilleries, the Aluminium Castings Company, the Dellingburn Aluminium Foundry, one cooperage, three millers, one pottery, and a variety of smaller trades. Within the past year or two the prospect has been brightened to some extent. The old Clyde Refinery, Drumfrochar Road, was at Whitsunday, 1919, let on a 21 years' lease to Cornfoods Limited, and recently this lease was assigned to K.O. Cereals Limited. It is highly probable also that extensive grain mills will be erected on a site contiguous to the James Watt Dock.

Railways

Greenock was quickly alive to the commercial importance of the railway movement in the early part of the nineteenth century. In 1824 the Council petitioned in favour of a railway through the districts of Old and New Monkland, as they invariably did towards all such enterprises that brought coal nearer and cheaper to their doors. This petition among other relevant things stated that to a town of 23,000 of a population, with a large district embracing other towns and villages, the great expense of getting this essential commodity was very keenly felt, and had long operated as an effectual detriment to the establishment of manufactures. In the same year the town authorities were wise to the fact that direct communication with the Forth and Clyde Canal would be certain to diminish greatly the heavy outlay for the land carriage of coal.

Line to Glasgow

In 1830 there was a projected railway from Glasgow via Paisley to run across Cartsdyke Bay, but the movement was short-lived. The public agitation in favour of introducing the railway to Greenock was brought to a point in December, 1835, when at a meeting in the Town Hall it was resolved, "from acknowledged superiority and economy of railway conveyance by means of locomotive engines, and from a decided conviction that the formation of a railway between Glasgow and Greenock, to connect with Paisley, Johnstone, and Port Glasgow, will be productive of the most important advantages to the agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing interests of the district and of the country in general, and being persuaded that the undertaking cannot fail to afford an ample return to the subscribers, to form a joint-stock company, to be designated the Glasgow, Paisley, and Greenock Railway." The Act of Incorporation received the Royal Assent in July, 1837, and on March 30, 1841, the railway was sufficiently advanced to admit of its being used. Three hundred passengers left Greenock for Glasgow in twelve carriages, drawn by the locomotives Witch and Eagle, and took 65 minutes on the journey. The return was made in nineteen carriages, starting at half-past one and arriving at Greenock at ten minutes to three. In the evening a dinner was given by the company to 240 guests – Mr. R. D. Kerr, chairman of directors, presiding.

Cost

The original estimate of the cost was £400,000, and the actual outlay was £814,000. A larger amount of working plant had been required than anticipated, and, while provision had been made for 2,000 passengers daily, shortly after the railway was opened the company had to provide for 6,000. The station was originally fixed for a point at Bogle Street, but it was afterwards decided to bring it forward to Cathcart Street, at a cost of £60,000. A good deal of money was also sunk in the Dargavel Moss, and the Bishopton land was exceedingly dear. Complaints were freely made about the greed of the landowners in making the company pay enormous prices for land to be used for the benefit of themselves and their tenants. It was, for instance, declared that it was out of all reason to pay £10,000 for making a hole (the tunnel) at Bishopton. Mr. Locke, engineer, stated that he had never met with greater obstacles and fewer facilities than at Bishopton, and had scarcely known of more concessions made or greater compensations given than to the owners of the land there.

Amalgamation

The capital was in 1843 increased to £866,666, the whole of which and more had been expended by September, 1850. A steamboat service, by the Isle of Bute, Maid of Bute, and the Royal Victoria, cost £9,613 13s 11d, and at May, 1842, the loss in this connection amounted to £3,709 11s 9d, the explanation of which was given as severe competition. Three other steamers were purchased, but ultimately all were disposed of. It was also stated that the

working arrangement with the Caledonian Company had not proved satisfactory. Amalgamation with this company took place in 1847.

Harbour Lines

The first single line of rails laid down by the Harbour Trustees was by way of Dellingburn Street in 1842, but it was not until 1859 that the traffic began to assume considerable proportions. In that year the Trustees laid down a second line, erected the first steam crane, and constructed a coal shoot. In 1864 again, to meet the requirements of the trade, they built another crane for the shipment of coal and provided other facilities. In 1861 the mineral tonnage was 98,966, and in 1864 it was 150,140, but in later years much of this traffic was diverted to Glasgow and Ayrshire ports.

Ayrshire Line

The Greenock and Ayrshire railway also had its origin among the leading citizens of the town. The local authorities in 1861 caused the ground to be surveyed in order to form a connection with Greenock, and the result was laid before the directors of the Caledonian Company, who took an unfavourable view. The question of a direct line to Kilmarnock was seriously raised in 1864, and was regarded with enthusiasm by both communities. It was meant to connect with the Glasgow and South Western line at Kilbirnie, and the cost was estimated at £250,000. It was the opinion of the authorities that it would make "Greenock the natural port of the great and wide surrounding country, and open to this community some of those prodigious sources of mineral wealth the possession of which has made Glasgow what it is." It was calculated that nearly 60,000 tons of shipping left Greenock every year to load coal and iron at Ayrshire ports. The Bill came before a Parliamentary Committee in April, 1865. Objections were taken by the Caledonian Company, the chief being on the grounds of vague and unsatisfactory plans, and the Bill did not proceed. Shortly the Caledonian directors proposed a branch line under Well Park, along the south side of Market Street and Tobago Street to the West Burn, thence down the valley of the burn to Albert Harbour. Sometime later this route was altered to a line along Ardgowan Street to the corner of the bowling green on to Paddy Kane's Road, and so to the riverside. The Ayrshire Bill was re-committed in May, 1865, the line now proposed to join the Glasgow and South-Western at Howwood instead of at Kilbirnie. The preamble was proved on May 11, and the Bill passed the Lords in June 23. The Caledonian Bill was passed in 1866. The Wemyss Bay section of the Caledonian railway was opened in May, 1865, at a cost of £155,000.

When the Ayrshire Bill was being promoted Greenock Town Council had certain disputes with the company regarding the amount of compensation for ground at Wellington Park, and they went the length of petitioning against the Bill in order that they might not be foreclosed in the event of the promoters not agreeing to proposed terms. In the result they were paid £3,300 for laying out the new portion of the park granted by Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, and thereafter they got £400 from the Wemyss Bay Company.

In November of the same year the Caledonian and Ayrshire Companies had rival schemes for lines to Gourrock. West-end feuars were strongly remonstrative. Such a connection was in their opinion useless and uncalled-for by any public necessity, offering no appreciable benefit to traffic and incapable of extension except at an enormous destruction of private property." It was never intended that proprietors of villas should give way to the interests of commerce." To this there was the reply that it "had taken place in the east-end, and it would be inevitable that the west-end should be treated in the same way." The Committee of the House of Commons on April 16, 1866, decided in favour of the Caledonian Gourrock line, and the preamble of the Greenock and Ayrshire Bill was not proven.

Harbour Connection

By their Greenock Bills both companies had acquired powers to cross Brougham Street to Albert Harbour. This led to negotiations between the two and the Harbour Trustees, which finally resulted in an agreement, sanctioned in Parliament in 1867. In October, 1868, a letter was received intimating the abandonment of the Caledonian West-end branch. Their eastern branch to the harbours had cost £55,000, and their goods line was opened on June 4, 1869. With regard to the Ayrshire Company's plans, the Town Council objected:

- (1) To the proposal to lower Brougham Street;
- (2) To the shutting up of Clyde Crescent, part of West Blackhall Street, and East Clyde Street;
- (3) To carrying the line of railway across Ker Street on the level; and
- (4) To the mode in which it was proposed to alter Patrick Street.

An agreement was come to in respect of Brougham Street, which was lowered by four feet. The question of encroaching upon the public access to the harbours from Ker Street was justly regarded as vitally important. The right of property in this street was in dispute between the Police Board, the Railway Company, and the Glebe Sugar Refining Company, the litigation in connection with which was carried to the Court of Session, the result so far as concerned the general public being to keep this access to the harbours open. The goods traffic of the Ayrshire Company was opened in August and the passenger traffic on December 23, 1869. At the half-yearly meeting the directors "made their best acknowledgments for the goodwill which had been displayed by the authorities and community of Greenock, and thanks to Sir Michael Shaw Stewart." Mr. James Morton stated that "the transactions between the Company and the Corporation had been most honourable to the Company in every respect."

On the proposal in 1867 to amalgamate the Glasgow and South Western Railway Company with the Midland Company, Provost Grieve gave evidence in favour of the Bill, in the course of which he cited facts in support of increased railway communications. There were then fourteen refineries in operation, and the quantity of sugar refined in Greenock in the previous year had been ten times greater than ten years before. The Provost stated that local shareholders had subscribed £50,000 towards the Greenock and Ayrshire railway, and the Glasgow and South-Western Company £300,000. He himself was only a very small shareholder, and there was only one other director of the Ayrshire Railway Company on the Town Council.

At an extraordinary meeting of the Caledonian Company in June, 1869, it was unanimously agreed to purchase the undertaking of the Gourock Harbour Company, under the provisions of their Act of 1866, the purchase money being £4,916 13s 4d.

There was naturally a great railway boom throughout the country, and this district was not overlooked by the speculators who were flooding the pages of the 'Advertiser' with the enticing prospectus and Parliamentary notices. Surveyors were taking levels on Greenock streets for a line to Largs, for which a Renfrewshire and Ayrshire company, capital £300,000, had been formed. A railway from, Greenock to the Cloch, with a ferry to Dunoon, was projected, quays, wharves, and roads to be constructed on both sides of the firth. Another, later on, was proposed to lead from Branchton Farm on the Wemyss Bay line to Gourock. In 1877 a Gourock Railway and Harbour Company suggested a connection with the Caledonian system, thereafter to be included in the latter property. Provost Binnie stated to Gourock Town Council that it was intended to make a breakwater across the bay with the debris from the tunnel, thus forming a harbour in which ships of any tonnage could discharge. Parties were prepared to help, and the estimate was £340,000. The Council approved.

Gourock Line

At the beginning of 1883 there were Gourock and Cloch Ferry and Gourock Railway Bills, against both of which Greenock petitioned, and they were abandoned. In the summer of the same year appeared the Gourock Railway and Pier Bill, by which it was proposed to form a line from a point on the Wemyss Bay Railway near the foot of Larkfield Road round. Kempock Point and along the shore in Gourock Bay, and to construct a quay 1700 feet in length. In the opinion of Greenock authorities, this would have had the effect of a dock and harbour competition. The promoters, it appeared, had entered into an agreement that practically meant the handing over of the whole management and control to the Caledonian Railway Company. The House of Lords Committee decided that it was not expedient to proceed further with the Bill. In December following notices were issued by both railway companies of their intention each to promote a Bill for a line to Gourock. That of the Glasgow and South-Western was to begin from the present line in the tunnel at the intersection of Ardgowan and Robertson Streets. The Town Council petitioned against both, most strongly on account of the openings of tunnels in the streets. At length the Caledonian Company succeeded, their branch to Gourock being opened in June, 1889.

Ecclesiastical

Old West Kirk

Much of the history of Greenock, on its social and industrial as well as on its religious side, had its origin in the Church life of the early days. To the Old West Kirk, built in 1591, the town owes a debt it can never repay. In those far-off times, as records all over the country inform us, the pastors and sessions stood to the whole people as guides and overseers in every relation to life, looking closely to the morals of week days as well as to the due observances of the Sabbath. The jurisdiction of Presbyteries held almost exclusively the execution of the criminal law, and was regarded in the nature of a police authority, "the penitents having to pay fines and give bonds of security under high penalties. The ecclesiastics, indeed, seem to have been the only criminal judges in the country, and their act of excommunication, besides entailing exclusion from society, was followed by the most ruinous consequences to temporal interests."

Anterior Churches

It is clearly established that prior to 1591 there had been several Roman Catholic chapels within the parish, of which, however, no very authentic records remain. Earlier still, it is believed, there was a chapel of the Culdee period, a little to the south of the Old West Kirk, almost the only memorial of which is found in the word Kilblain, cell of the Blare. One of the Roman Catholic chapels, St. Lawrence, after which some assert the Bay of St. Lawrence was named, had been built at the south-east corner of Virginia and Rue-end Streets, and a part of the ruin was still to be seen as late as 1670. In digging the foundation of the house which afterwards stood on the site a number of human bones were disclosed, which has been taken as proof that a graveyard was attached to the chapel. A second chapel occupied a site to the east of Chapelton, making the question of derivation here very plain, but all outward traces of it disappeared long ago. When many years later the grounds in the vicinity were used as a kitchen garden a number of gravestones were uncovered a little below the surface. The third chapel was in Kilblain Street, but the site cannot be accurately located.

The Auld Kirk

The first and original Auld Kirk was that of Inverkip, where the Lord of the Manor set up a house of worship after the great event of 1560. No one can tell the date of its building. Its area was used as a burial-place by the Ardgowan family. It had two galleries, one on the west for the Ardgowan family and domestics, the other on the east for the Laird of Langhorne and other "respectable parishioners." The Laird of Kelly (Bannatyne) had his pew on the south side, opposite the pulpit. The area was furnished with seats and pews, the walls were unplastered, the roof without ceiling. The parish school was kept in one end of the church.

It is a remarkable testimony to the tenacious hold with which certain associations seize upon the general mind that the name Auld Kirk Road survives, and that it is as familiar and explicit in the message it carries to later generations as if it had been our fathers or grandfathers who made the pious Sabbath journeyings.

The Royal Charter

Mr. John Schaw, who founded the Old West Kirk, is regarded as having been both a God-fearing and a public-spirited man, taking as Superior his natural place with his retainers as guardian in heavenly as in worldly affairs. He is said to have carried his activity and influence to the General Assembly and the Court. James VI in 1589 granted him a charter to build a church and manse and open a graveyard at Greenock. It is supposed to have been the first Protestant church built in Scotland after the Reformation, and perhaps the only Protestant church in Scotland honoured with a Royal Charter and confirmed in the privileges of the same by a special Act of Parliament. The Act set forth that "John Schaw was willing not only on his own cost to erect and build a parish kirk upon his own heritage, but also to appoint and design a manse and yaird to the same, with the whole profit he had of teind belonging to the kirk for the sustenance of a minister, so that the poor people dwelling upon his lands, who are all fishers and of a reasonable number, dwelling four miles from the Parish Kirk and having a great river (the Kip) to pass over to the same, might have an ease in the winter and better commodity." The new parish embraced a large landward district bounded by Inverkip on the west and Kilmacolm on the east, neither Port Glasgow nor Newark parish having then existence. On the subject of this erection a writer nearer our own times has remarked that "the worthy Superior's motives were thoroughly creditable to him, but it is just possible that he was not a little influenced also by the grumbling of his tenants and by the fact, of which doubtless he was often enough reminded, that it was his duty to provide for the religious needs of his vassals. Mr. Schaw, however, was not wholly to blame for Greenock's lack of a kirk. If the people had not understood the Reformation of the Romish Church to mean the deformation of Catholic chapels, they might have been worshipping in the churches of St. Blane and St. Lawrence instead of enduring the discomforts of thirty years' trudging to Inverkip."

From a minute of an early Church Commission on the statistics of the various parishes the following is an excerpt:-
"Comperit personalie Johne Craufurd of Kilburnie Johne Schawe of Greenok James Watsone in Goldenhaddock Niniane Rodger in Murdochstone Edward Fyiff in Drumbane and Patrick Rae in Chapelstone. . . . Of auld 'Greenock' was a pairt and pertinent of the paroche of Innerkip belanging to the Abbace of Paslay bot dewydit frome Innerkip in respect of the great lenth of the paroche and far distant frome the Kirk of Innerkip four large myles vith dyveris great burnes and watteris in the way quhill in the vinter sessone are vnpassable and the number of people many."

The Structure

The original building at various times underwent such extensive alterations that to-day little of it remains. With regard to the fabric (wrote a middle nineteenth century authority), "simple to the last, it had been even more simple at the first. The walls bear evidence, easiest noticed on the east side, of having been heightened by four or five feet at some later period. To the east wing a Shaw gallery had been added since 1591, perhaps also the west wing or Cartsdyke quarter. At the south end the foundation of an old wall three or four yards inside of the present south gable was discovered under the floor. It had evidently been a south gable in its day. It was curious to note the kind of stone of which it was built, chiefly large boulders that had been rolled in from the adjacent and open shore. Similar boulders were met at two other places where parts of the old wall had been taken down to the foundation."

Alterations and Enlargements

One enlargement of the church, in what part is unknown, took place in 1677. Under the floor was found a well-hewn and moulded base to the plasters on each side of the arch in the middle of the east wall, thus showing the original floor level. It was on the same level that the old pavement from north to south was found on which the original Communion table seats had stood, the pavement from two to two and a half yards wide. A small gateway, with a stone arch showing the date 1675, occupied the site of the present entrance. In the north wall was a wicket gate that led to the old manse, and that bore the date 1625, which is probably the date of repairing. In 1787 ground for a new manse was feued at the west end of Clarence Street, and the old manse was sold by public roup by Mr Shaw Stewart to Alexander McArthur, ship carpenter, for £525, and years afterwards passed into possession of the Harbour Trust. The new manse was repaired and added to in 1794. Years ago it became the property of the Corporation, then of the Glebe Refinery Company, and finally it disappeared.

Latterly the church, small though it was, had no fewer than seven doors and six galleries - sailors', farmers', Sir John Schaw's, Cartsburn, etc. Hamilton of Wishaw wrote in 1710 that "Sir John Schaw hath singularly beautified the church." This allusion has been accepted as referring to the east wing, which contained the Schaw gallery, the front seat having an open canopy bearing the Schaw arms in gilding. There was a similar gilt coat-of-arms in front

of the posted-bed looking erection that formed the family seat of the Lairds of Cartsburn, which was a projection separate from the west gallery and parallel with the south wall of the new tower. Directly under the seat was that of the Watt family. At the dismantling of the kirk preparatory to its restoration in 1864 the Watt pew was said to have been carried off bodily by some hero-worshipper, "and may reappear in an inexhaustible supply of snuff-boxes or cabinets." At this reconstruction the walls at many places had to be erected anew, then also a tower was built, and the number of entrances decreased to three.

A few facts relating to the subject of enlargements have been gleaned from the Presbytery minutes. At a Presbytery meeting at Greenock on September 3rd, 1657, it was reported that the church was not able to contain all the people coming to worship on the Lord's Day. It was appointed that it should be enlarged eastward 24 feet by the parish, against which the Laird of Greenock entered protestation because it was the place "appointed for him, and whereof he had been in continual possession since the erection of the kirk." He also protested that his tenants might be free of the expense of the enlargement "in regard that the said Kirk that now is was erected and builded by his grandfather upon his own land and upon his own proper charges, with churchyard, manse, and yard therein, and that long thereafter the Laird of Kilburnie's land was annexed thereto, and that never as yet marking accommodation for themselves, although the Laird of Kilburnie had voluntarily inact himself in the year 1635 to enlarge the south yle 22 feet in length, which has not yet been done." At this meeting it was declared that both yard and manse were "incompetent," and that it was "necessary that another house be built at the expense of the heritors on the place of the present manse."

It does not appear that either the church or the manse underwent the enlargement contemplated in this minute. In 1674 Craufurd of Cartsburn is stated to have desired a just proportion of the seats for his family and tenants. It is once more set down that the church was not capacious enough for half of the communicants. Mr. Craufurd wanted not only the enlargement of the church and burying ground, but asked that a school should "be bigget for training up the young ones;" and offered to bear his proportional part of the expense. The Presbytery, however, anticipated that the Laird of Greenock would be "likely to oppose on several heads," and other difficulties were said to be in the way.

The record of a visitation of the Bishop of Argyle and Committee on May 23, 1677, reports that there was a friendly condescendence on the question of enlarging the church. It was agreed that "the gavel of the south wall to be 10 feet southward, at the expense of the Laird of Greenock older; of the north wall 15 feet northward, at the expense of the Laird of Greenock younger; and of the west 13 feet westward, at the expense of Thomas Craufurd; the side walls and gavels to be the height and breadth of the auld building. The pulpit to be placed in the west corner of the south aisle."

Sailor's Loft

The first mention of the Sailors' Loft is in a minute of session dated December 9, 1697, when permission to build it was given. The front seat was covered with blue cloth fastened with brass nails and furnished with cushions, and was for the use of no one under the rank of captain; the second had also blue cloth but no brass nails, and was reserved for mates; while two seats behind, of plain pine, were occupied by the sailor men. The gallery was guarded by an old tar whose duty it was to classify all claimants to the seats and to ward off female worshippers. "Biddy Pin," a local character with a wooden leg and blind of an eye, held this office for a time, and it is recorded that on the approach of a stranger he kept his blind eye on him until he heard the clink of his collection in the sailors' box, and then, bringing his seeing eye into action and recognising a stranger, he turned him off from the seamen's quarters. From the roof above the Sailors' Loft was originally suspended a model 20-gun frigate, planked and fully rigged. It fell to pieces whilst being removed in 1836. At the restoration of the church the model of a modern clipper ship was substituted, but on its being considered out of harmony with the ancient building it was given over to the chapel of Sir Gabriel Wood's Mariners' Asylum, and a miniature 20-gun frigate, made from a drawing in "Charnock's Marine Architecture," published in 1801, took its place.

Old Coins Recovered

In 1864 between seventy and eighty coins were found under the floor still lower than the old floor. With two exceptions, these were all copper. One of the two was an 1824 shilling; the other, thin and of poor silver, bore the inscriptions, "Cologne de Cayenne, 1780," and "Louis XVI... .et de nay." The most ancient date on a copper coin was 1637. Many of the coins were French, a conclusive proof of the intimate intercourse between the two countries at one period.

Sacred Utensils

The four Communion cups of the old church are dated 1708. They were made by James Luke, goldsmith, Glasgow, and cost £19 19s 2d. Two flagons or tankards are of pewter, and are inscribed, "Wast, Greenock, 1686." The Communion plate has been in possession of West Parish Kirk Session since 1864. The old baptismal basin, also of pewter, is dated 1786. The stool of repentance, a long, narrow oaken bench, which is preserved in the vestry, was variously written cukstule, cookstule, cocastule, cuckingsiule, and cuttystule. The old mortuary in which the bodies of poor seamen were laid for identification and burial is beneath the vestry in a chamber flagged with stone and opening to the churchyard through two arches divided by a square stone pillar.

Memorial Windows

There are in the old church several line windows by famous designers. Three of them are by Morris & Co., London, from designs by Burne-Jones. The largest, of four lights, above the organ gallery, represents "The Adoration of the Lamb," in the treatment of which are nearly thirty figures, and above these are four angels praising with cymbal, dulcimer, and trumpet, on either side a floating angel swinging a censer, and in the head of the arch is the Lamb surrounded by the emblems of the four Evangelists. This window is dedicated to the memory of Thomas McCunn, merchant, of Greenock, who died on June 18th, 1830, and of Mary Ryburn, his wife, who died on June 20th, 1841, by their son, John McCunn. There is a small window under the organ gallery by the same designer and firm showing two angels with harps in their hands, dedicated to the memory of the Rev. John Park, born at Greenock in 1803, at one time assistant in the Old West, who died at St. Andrews while minister of first charge there, in April, 1865. The window is inscribed by his nephew, Mr. Allan Park Paton. The third Burne-Jones window is under the Farmers' Loft, and represents "Faith" holding a cup from which a winged serpent is rising, and is in memory of children of Mr. and Mrs. James Ballantine. A Cottier window, "Hope with her Anchor," has a special interest, the artist having presented it on account of his ancestral connection with the town. It is inscribed, "Daniel Cottier, glass painter, places this window in the Old West Kirk to the memory of his grandfather, Archibald McLean, master mariner of this port, who died in the year 1847, aged 80 years." A Rossetti window is admittedly a masterpiece, glowing in deep blue and crimson and gold. It shows "Charity" as a female figure holding two infants in her arms, while four other children cluster around her feet.

Vaults and Monuments

Two vaults within the church are the property of the Shaw family and of the Craufurds of Cartsburn. The founder of the church and several others of the Shaw's are buried here, but with the exception of the armorial bearings above the door of the vault there are no monuments to the family. The Cartsburn memorial tablets, in white marble, are placed on the walls of the church. Burial within the church was expressly prohibited by Acts of Parliament, the only exemptions in favour of those heritors who had immemorial usage to plead, and the Lairds of Greenock and Cartsburn had all along possessed the right. In the churchyard are tombs in memory of three ministers who died in office Rev. Andrew Turner, his son Rev. David Turner, and Rev. Robert Steele, known as the Bishop. Rev. John Shaw, first minister of the Mid Parish, is also buried here. Father Lemonier, the first resident priest in Greenock after the Reformation and a refugee from France, and also Father Davidson, have their graves in this place, unmarked by stones. There is a tombstone to John Wilson, author of the poem, "The Clyde," and afterwards Master of Greenock Grammar School. One of the three oldest stones is dated 1675. The most famous monument is that of Highland Mary. It was the work of a Glasgow sculptor with a local reputation in his day, and was the successful outcome of a movement initiated by the Greenock Foresters' Society. On the occasion of its unveiling in 1842 there was a Burns demonstration in the form of a trades procession. A memorial marks the graves of father and grandfather of James Watt.

The Kirkyard

Subsequent to the closing of the church in 1841 the care of the graveyard was so greatly neglected as to become a public nuisance. In 1858 the Town Council received a letter from the heritors with the view of having a conference on the subject. The heritors had recognised that the graveyard was in a condition dangerous to public health, offensive and contrary to decency, and should be wholly discontinued as a place of burial. A large number of coffins were heaped up within the church, and on account of the crowded state of the ground it was considered that it should be closed immediately. The Council, without admitting responsibility, agreed to keep the place in order. A lairholders' committee report in 1864 stated that bones and pieces of coffins were in view, and that contractors for restoring the church admitted having taken headstones and used them in the construction of a building in Ingleston Road, and pillars from a tomb had been discovered in a garden seat at a house in Mount Pleasant Street. As time went on there was no great improvement, and in 1867 the Town Council were asked to take over the ground so that it might become an ornament instead of an eyesore. In the following year the Sheriff-Substitute conferred with the Magistrates, with the result that a memorandum was submitted to the agents of Sir Michael, Mr. Craufurd of Cartsburn, and the proprietors of Garvocks estate, but so far as the Council minutes show no satisfactory answers were obtained. The Council meantime instructed the cemetery superintendent to take care of the grounds, and the Burns Club made themselves responsible for the condition of Highland Mary's grave and monument. When through the operations of the Harland & Wolff shipyard extension scheme the Old West Kirk and graveyard were doomed to go, the remains of Highland Mary were removed and re-interred in the cemetery, in close proximity to the rough Watt Memorial there, and the monument replaced at the new grave. The services in connection with the event were under the direction of Greenock Burns Club and of the Burns Federation, and the officiating minister was Rev. W. J. Nichol Service, of the West Kirk. An agreement was also come to by the Corporation with regard to the historic tombstones. Those of the Watt family are to be placed in Greenock Cemetery as near as possible to the Watt Cairn, while those of well-known local families will be removed to the ground of the new church at Seafield.

The following is the ministerial succession - Andrew Murdo or Murdoch (in Notes on Greenock Writs, Advocates' Library, the name is given as Mure or Murehead), 1591; Patrick Shaw, 1593-6; John Layng, or Laing, 1598, died 1639; James Taylor, 1640-65; William Cameron, 1667-80; Andrew Cranstoun, 1681; David Mitchell, 1683; Alexander Gordon, 1687-90; John Stirling, 1694-1701; Andrew Turner, 1704-18; David Turner, 1720-85; Colin

Gillies, assistant and successor, 1774, went to Paisley in 1781; Allan McAulay, 1786, died 1791; Robert Steele or Steel, 1792, died 1831; Patrick McFarlan, 1832-41. The church was closed between 1841 and 1864.

For about sixty years after Mr. Laing's death "the parish was singularly unfortunate in its ministers. No fewer than six came who were either sadly inefficient or who could not be persuaded to remain. James Taylor was constitutionally indolent, absented himself from Presbytery, winked at the profanation of the Sabbath by drinking, piping, fishing, etc. He kept low company, tumbled in change houses on Sabbath evenings, and finally had to resign. It must not be supposed that the cause of this half-century of spiritual depression should altogether be placed to the moral flabbiness of the ministers, who were over-weighted by work and the care of 1100 members at a time when every visit was a religious service, every baptism a function, and every sermon a volume." At the time of the Act of Uniformity in 1663, when 400 ministers were ousted in Scotland, Taylor was at first the only one of Paisley Presbytery to conform to Episcopalian rule. Neil Gillies was called to be assistant to William Cameron in 1679, but it is said to be uncertain whether he ever performed ministerial work in Greenock. Andrew Cranstoun worked in the parish for a few months only in 1681. John Stirling was for twenty-six years Principal of Glasgow University. The Turners, father and son, occupied the pulpit for 82 years, and the latter lived to be the Father of the Church of Scotland. On the death of Dr. (and known as Bishop) Steele (who was a descendant of the martyr, John Brown), the charge was offered to Dr. Chalmers, who declined the translation and recommended his friend Patrick McFarlan, during whose ministry the new church in Nelson Street was built and occupied in 1841.

In Decay

After having been in use continuously for 250 years and for 150 years the only church in Greenock, the Auld Kirk was in 1837 condemned by the Presbytery, and was closed in 1841. On a petition being presented to the Presbytery in August, 1835, the kirk was said then to be most uncomfortable and unhealthy. The churchyard was so filled up that the earth outside was two feet above the level of the floor, and in rainy weather it was necessary to place boards to enable the people to step in at the doors.

New West Church

The site of the new church suggested on that occasion was Ardgowan Square. In reply to a memorial on the subject in, October of that year, the Presbytery found that the removal to Ardgowan Square would be "hurtful to the interests of the poorer classes, prejudicial to a large body of heritors, injurious to the stability of the other unendowed parishes, and that the proposed site is at an inconvenient distance from the great body of parishioners, also in the vicinity of several parish churches, and therefore highly objectionable and improper." By ten to five they declined to sanction the proposal. The new St Andrew's Established Church in Argyle Street had just been opened, the ordination of Rev. J. J. Bonar having taken place in August. The Presbytery in the summer of 1831 again considered the state of the Old West Kirk. The heritors had appointed four inspectors, who reported that £224 was needed to make the building comfortable and that £65 should be expended on the graveyard. In October the Presbytery decided that certain plans submitted by the heritors were inadequate, and that the expense would be nearly equal to that of a new church. They unanimously discerned that a new church capable of holding no fewer than 1200 should be built in a different situation, and ordained the heritors to prepare and submit plans, specifications, and estimates. There was a delay of six months owing to the non-appearance of heritors, and in April, 1838, it was agreed that if nothing was done to follow up this judgment the Presbytery would take the matter into their own hands. In May Mr. J. Shaw Stewart appeared for Sir Michael, Mr Crawford of Cartsburn communicated a wish that a new church should be built, and the heritors asked for the opinion of the Presbytery on the various sites. These were four in number Ardgowan Square, Nelson Street, the corner nearly opposite, and Inverkip Road Toll in line with Roxburgh Street. The Presbytery declared in favour of Nelson Street. At a meeting in December, 1838, Dr. McFarlan stated that although six months had elapsed since all parties had expressed themselves agreeable, still not one step in advance had been taken by the heritors. Plans had been in the hands of Mr. John Shaw Stewart for four months. The West congregation and himself had the dismal prospect of remaining in their present unwholesome and uncomfortable church for years longer than they had anticipated. The congregation were "just sitting over a pool of liquid mud."

While satisfied that the heritor superiors were not chargeable with the delay, the Presbytery decided to take the matter into their own hands. The meeting of heritors was at length held in January, 1839. The decision was that in consequence of the surrounding churchyard they could not enlarge the church if they agreed to re-build on the old site. Resolutions were passed unanimously pledging the meeting to give effect to the decree of the Presbytery, and "to appropriate the area of the old church as a place of interment for such as may choose to purchase it." The decree of the Court of Teinds condemning the old church and authorising the erection of the new was laid on the table of the Presbytery on April 3, 1839, and plans were agreed to for a building to accommodate 1400. Dr. Macfarlan came out at the Disruption, and was succeeded by Dr. James Melville McCulloch, who died in 1883; John Barclay, assistant and successor, 1875, died 1893; Robert Barclay, his son, 1893, died 1904; William Jack Nichol Service, 1904. Dr. McCulloch was the author of McCulloch's Course of Reading, the most notable school-book of its time.

Restored and Renamed

The Old West Kirk remained closed until 1864. For a number of years it had been practically uncared for. According to Mr James J. Grieve, "it gradually fell into decay, and when the idea of its restoration was first seriously entertained it had become all but a ruin. But on being examined further by an eminent architect the dilapidation was discovered to be worse in appearance than in reality. The backbone of the fabric still remained." Another statement was to the effect that "the West congregation allowed the old fabric to pass into decay, and when the proposal of restoration was made it was laughed at as a Utopian idea." Rev. James Rankine, first minister of the re-constructed church, in a speech after his translation, said – "I had never been inside the ruinous Old West Kirk, nor even within its grievously neglected and forbidding looking churchyard. But one day I walked carefully round it, noting as much as could be seen from the opposite sides of the streets by which it is partly bounded. A day or two further on I got the keys of the gate and came in alone. Anything more dismal and desolate I could hardly conceive; in part it was positively repulsive and disgusting."

The restoration cost £2,400, of which £1,300 was raised by subscription, £950 from ten gentlemen, and the church, re-named the North Parish, yet always affectionately spoken of as the Old West, was reopened on Christmas, 1864. Of this restoration Williamson says: "The so-called restoration has eliminated all that was historical about the church." On the petition to the Presbytery by the subscribers for a constitution, it appeared that no absolute title could be got of the ground on which the church stands, and application was made in the Court of Teinds for a constitution in terms of the Act of Assembly, 1798, securing it so far in inalienable connection with the Church of Scotland. The decision of the Court, given on March 4, 1872, was that "in a petition for disjunction and erection of the North Church and Parish of Greenock, it was held no bar to the granting of decree that a title could not be made up as usual, the church of the proposed parish being the old Parish Church of Greenock, which after the erection of a new church had become a chapel of ease and stood vested in the heritors dedicated to the service of the Church of Scotland. Some of the heritors were heirs of entail, but the Court held that, even if the church had reverted to the heritors in absolute property, it could not be affected by the entails, and the consent of the heritors thereafter removed all difficulty." Mr. Rankine, who was translated from Muthill, was appointed in 1865, and was followed by Charles Strong, 1868; W. W. Tulloch 1872, A. E. Shand, 1875; Adam Currie, 1898.

The Mid Kirk

The increasing population from the third decade of the nineteenth century rendered the erection of a second place of worship an imperative necessity. A popular movement in favour of another church had begun many years before, but met with no success. This we find from a letter addressed to Lord Cathcart by a leading citizen in 1735, a letter of considerable historical interest, brought to light about fifty years ago by the late Provost Robert Neill. It was in the nature of an appeal to his Lordship on the subject, and gave at length a narration of events in connection with the movement. The long intended project, it states, of having one other church was started in 1729, the means either by continuing the whole of the tax on malt, or some part of it, as should be agreed upon by Sir John and Lady Schaw, the feuars, and some of the inhabitants of the town. Voluntary subscriptions were taken, amounting in a few days to £300 sterling, which would have amounted to a great deal more had the work taken place, but in about two months it came to be known that this design had been presented to the Superior for consideration, a delay ensued, and the project was dropped. A further disappointment in connection with the building of cellars and a crane at the harbours "came as a terrible shock, and one near to wrecking us all." It was with difficulty that "the greater part of the people could be persuaded to continue under the burthen of the tax on malt, since they could not have libertie to lay out the income thereby, nor anie part of it, in executing sayd designs so manifestlie tending to the good of the town. Hard things and ill to bear were said of the managers. It took a long time to persuade the most considerable of the feuars and brewers to have patience for a little time, by assuring them that the money already collected, and might be collected, should be carefully disposed of."

It was hoped that "once we had some little stock by part of the tax for the stipend to another minister, Sir John and Lady Schaw would certainly agree with us in forwarding so good a design." This situation continued till April or May, 1734, "the call for a new church still going on by the peopell, and indeed there was unanswerable reason for it. There are upwards of 1000 families in Greenock, Crawforddsyke, and the countrie, and our church when crowded to the doors will not hold 1200 peopell." In May, 1734, the town stock was good £800, and the managers called a meeting of the feuars and principal inhabitants. It was agreed that no part of the stock should be taken to build the church, but "reserved for some part of the fund for stipend; that if possible the whole 20s of the tax should be continued and the first three years' income of it, together with the anwallrent of the stock, should be applied to the building of the church, which if approved by Sir John and Lady Schaw should be begun with at once. It was agreed that the church should be the property of the town in all time coming, no seats to be sold but rented yearly, the produce of which, together with the anwallrent of £800, was judged to come near what would be wanted for a stipend."

Sir John and Lady Schaw seemed entirely pleased with the scheme, and disposed to consider it, and Sir John was resolved to give the ground gratis. At a subsequent meeting with him orders were given to take the dimensions of the church recently built at Port Glasgow, and the ground, which seemed to be fixed upon, was in the gardens fronting the "Mid Kie." This went on for some months; other business of consequence engaged the attention of Sir John, and "towards harvest the peopell began again loudly to complain of this and former disappointments." A body of the brewers and some of the feuars together, in the absence of Sir John and Lady Schaw, "either .did or offered

to take instruments against their being subject to the tax any longer." Her ladyship was begged to use her influence with Sir John. Baron Bailie Alexander told her the mind of the whole town was that they should hear the tax no longer. She seemed inclined to make an example of some to end the rest.

Mr. Alexander said it would be most inadvisable, nothing would settle the people, in his judgment, but following forth the design of building the church." The site was measured off, but Sir John had no leisure to view the ground, and an application was not productive of immediate success.

First Meeting Place

There was no regular church building at the ordination of the first minister in 1741, and the congregation met in a large loft in the Royal Close, entrance from the Rue-end and Cathcart Streets, with an exit in Bogle Street, where still, over the doorway of a tradesman's shop, may be seen the keystone bearing the date 1676. It was in 1758 that Lord Cathcart gave ground for building the church in Cathcart Square, while the Magistrates and some citizens helped by subscriptions, but it is understood that the erection and endowment were met chiefly by proceeds from the malt tax. By the decree of disjunction and erection in 1809 the Bailies, feuars, and inhabitants were bound and obliged not only to defray the expense of erecting and building the kirk, manse, and schoolhouse, and every parochial burden, but also to provide the minister with a competent and legal stipend not under 950 merks Scots, with 50 merks for the Communion elements, payable at the two terms of Whitsunday and Martinmas, by equal portions. The fund for the erection and support of the minister was raised by voluntary contributions among the inhabitants. The foundation-stone of the Mid Church was laid in April, 1759, and the opening took place in 1761. The internal seat arrangements were planned by James Watt's father.

The first stipend amounted to £50, paid out of what was called the old fund; in 1753 it was increased to £80, in 1759 to £90, in 1766 to £100, and further increases were made from time to time until during the pastorate of Rev. Dr Scott it was raised to £295.

The Manse

The Mid Parish manse was built in Manse Lane, and was in use by the minister until 1812 or 1813. It had then become so ruinous that the Magistrates and Council agreed to furnish a new manse, and for this purpose had ground laid off in Houston Street. The house was built, but no title was ever found, and no minute appeared in the books of the Council as to the amount of the feu-duty. In 1820 a dispute arose regarding the title of the old ground in Manse Lane, which had passed into the hands of a Mr. McLean for £1,050. There was a clause in the title binding the property to be used for no other purpose than for a manse in connection with the Church of Scotland, and in the event of its being otherwise employed it was to revert to the Superior. This, however, was departed from on condition that a similar clause should be inserted in the Houston Street title. In 1830 a claim was made for feu-duty for the manse at the rate of 11s 6d per fall, reduced to 8s on account of the grassum payment of £200. The claim was considered too high and was accordingly not admitted. After a few years, Sir Michael having in the interim purchased the Cathcart feu-duties, claimed for a sum between £700 and £800 besides interest. When the payment of £200 was discovered it was thought proper to allow the matter to lie over until another letter was received. This, on receipt, charged £350 and for interest £300. The feu-contract could not be found. By arrangement arrears of £352 5s 2d were paid, interest was remitted, and titles prepared.

The Rev. John Shaw, assistant to Dr Turner, Old West, continued to conduct the services as from the formation of the New Parish, and was minister until 1768, when he died. His successors were - John Adam, 1769, died 1792; John (afterwards Dr.) Scott, 1793, died 1836; William Cunningham, assistant, 1831-4; James Smith, 1835-43; James Reid Brown, 1843, died 1860; Frederick Lockhart Robertson, 1861-73; James Alexander Campbell, 1874-76; David Smith Peters, 1877.

The East Kirk

The old East Church was built in 1774, as a Chapel of Ease, and it was erected into a parish church in 1809. It was established "to meet an amazing increase in the inhabitants," and occupied a site at the corner of Chapel and Bogle Streets. The church was of the old-fashioned square box pattern, with green-painted pews, and the pulpit had a canopy on the apex of which was a gilded dove with a sprig of olive in its beak. There were two entrances, on the west next Bogle Street, and on the north, where the elders stood or sat in wooden sentry-boxes. The building was surrounded by old lime trees. The site is now occupied by the grain mill of Mr. Matthew Hill. The Presbytery minutes note that in the Bogle Street Church there was a "band of music," of which Neil Dougall, composer of "Kilmarnock" and other psalm tunes, and Robert Simpson, composer of "Ballerna," were members. The present church, at the corner of Regent and Antigua Streets, was built in 1853, during the ministry of Rev. James Hutcheson. When in 1809 the East was made a parish church the Town Council agreed that the stipend should be £200 and a Communion element allowance.

In 1812 the Council was memorialised to build a manse on the ground adjoining the church and belonging to it. The house was built on a borrowed sum of £700, for which a bond was granted jointly by the Corporation and the congregation and proprietors. The bond was subsequently paid and a new one granted. In 1822, when the pecuniary affairs of the church were going behind, the whole matter was handed over to the town. The papers

connected with the manse were not very clear. The deed of disjunction did not provide for a manse. On the contrary, this document specifically provided that the town should not be bound to furnish a manse. One-third of the church belonged to the town and two-thirds to private parties. When the Corporation and the proprietors went into the Court of Teinds to have the East Parish disjoined parties differed as to the amount of stipend, the Corporation proposing £150 and the proprietors £200, which figure was agreed to on the express condition that the minister should have no right to demand a manse. It was at that time, 1822, resolved by the Council that the manse should be put in a state of repair, the town disclaiming all liability for future repair and refusing any obligation to provide a manse as a matter of right. The list of ministers is as follows: - Peter Miller, 1775-7; Archibald Reid, 1781-92; Archibald McLachlan, 1794-1805; John Gilchrist, 1807-25; William Menzies, 1826-43; James Hutcheson, 1844, died 1887, having been for 41 years clerk of Presbytery; Thomas Reid Thomson, 1887-1916; George David Henderson, 1916.

Highland Church

Prior to 1791 Rev. John Adam, Mid Kirk, had an assistant named Blair, who began preaching on Sabbath evenings and at other times to Highlanders in the Gaelic, in the Star Hotel, Broad Close. The Highlanders resident in Greenock in 1782 started to raise a fund for the building of a church for Gaelic services, and for some years prior to its completion in 1792 they were granted the use of the Mid Kirk on Sunday evenings. The Gaelic Church in West Burn Street is therefore the fourth oldest in the town. It was opened as a Chapel of Ease, and erected a parish quoad sacra in 1834. At the Disruption the minister (Rev. Angus McBean) and many of the members seceded, and for a time the place was closed. Thereafter the congregation passed through a long series of adversities. In 1853 Robert Maxwell Macfarlane was appointed pastor, and in 1855 a decree was granted for disjunction and the erection of the South (Gaelic) Church and Parish. It was stated that there were then 10,000 native Highlanders in Greenock and neighbourhood. A schoolhouse was built in 1856, but abandoned some years later on the retiral of the master. The church centenary was fittingly observed by a scheme of renovation at a cost of £2,000, and later a suite of new halls and a vestry were built at over £1,200. Ministers - Kenneth Bayne, 1792, died 1821; Angus McBean, 1821-43; after ten years' vacancy, Robert Maxwell Macfarlane, 1853-64; John Macpherson, 1865-75; John Barnett, 1876-8; John Dempster Munro, 1878-82; William Thomson, 1882-5; Archibald Macdonald, 1885-92; David Colville MacMichael, 1892-1912, was translated to Colombo, Ceylon; John Stewart McCallum, 1913, died 1918; Duncan McArthur, 1919.

West Chapel

The West Chapel or North Parish Church, West Blackhall Street, was built in 1823 to provide accommodation for the growing population. In 1834 it was erected as a separate charge, and was in 1836 granted a constitution as a chapel. Nathaniel Morren was the first and only minister, from 1823 to 1843, when he seceded and was transferred to Brechin. The church was not in use again until 1857, when it was purchased by Free St. Thomas' congregation.

St. Andrew's

Was formed in 1827 by members of the Mid Kirk who left through disagreement about the appointment of John Jas. Bonar as assistant. This unsuccessful minority, headed by Provost James Watt and Sheriff Claud Marshall, met for a time in the Old Methodist Church at the corner of Tobago and Sir Michael Streets. The new parish of St. Andrew's, within the West, was constituted in 1835, and a church costing £4,000 was built at the corner of West Stewart Street and Argyle Street. The minister and congregation came out at the Disruption, retaining the building.

St. Thomas'

Was an off-shoot of the Mid and West parishes, a church being built in 1839 in Dalrymple Street between Charles Street and the Vennel on a site afterwards occupied by a sugar store. It was intended as a mission church for the working classes. Rev. Wm. Laughton was minister, and in 1843 he came out with a number of the congregation. As the Establishment declined to accept the building with a heavy debt on it, the congregation remained.

Cartsburn Chapel

Cartsdyke, was opened in 1839, when the Original Secession congregation and minister, Rev. James Stark, joined the Church of Scotland, but went out at the Disruption. The new parish was erected in 1866, Mr. Crawford of Cartsburn gifting a site for a church, a mission having been carried on for some years. Ministers from date of erection - Archibald Fullarton, 1865-97; Robert Walker Muir, 1898-1908; Robert Bruce McKinnon, 1909-12; Kenneth Alexander Macleay, 1913-15; George Campbell, 1916-18; James Francis, 1919.

South

The South Parish was disjoined from the West in 1875. Ministers - Charles Durward, 1875-81; John Forbes Macpherson, 1881, resigned 1919, and has been Presbytery Clerk for 20 years; John Youngson Thomson, 1920. An endowment of £3000 was gifted by Mr. Wm. Stewart, St. Fillans and Greenock, and the church in Ann Street, which cost £5000, was opened free of debt.

Ladyburn

Ladyburn quoad sacra Parish Church was opened in 1875, and disjoined from the East in 1882. Ministers - Thomas Kay, 1876-97; Robert Montgomery Hardie, 1897-1903; Robert Aitken, 1903-13; Robert Cleghorn

Thomson, 1913, called to Wallacetown, Dundee, in 1919, but died before admission; George Hope Jamie, 1919; Robertson Millar, 1921. The church cost £3,600, and was opened free of debt.

Wellpark

Wellpark Parish was disjoined from the West in 1877. The congregation came from the Cartdsyke Mission chapel, which was taken over by the Caledonian Railway Company, and the new Wellpark Church was opened in 1879. Ministers - Harcourt Peter Charlton, 1877-79; William Wilson, 1879, resigned 1916; Charles Peter Grant, 1916. The church cost £6000 and the site £200.

St. Paul's

Parish Church was the outcome of a movement by residents in the West-end for convenience sake, and it was disjoined from the West in 1901. An iron building was erected at the head of Bentinck Street in 1878, and the fine stone, church, costing £12,000, was opened in 1893 by Principal John Caird. Ministers - Thomas Francis Johnstone, 1879-1908; John Campbell, 1908-17; Charles Laing Warr, 1918.

Augustine

Augustine quoad sacra parish Church was the result of a secession of part congregation together with the minister (J. K. Campbell) from St. Andrew Square U.F. Church in 1578, in which Year a mission was formed; the church buildings were erected in 1884, at a cost of £5,300, and the parish was disjoined from Cartsburn in 1897. Ministers - John Kerr Campbell, 1878-81; William Proudfoot Begg, 1881-7; Charles Christie, 1887, died 1920; David Wilson Baird, 1921.

The Disruption

Of the sixteen ministers who formed the Presbytery of Greenock, twelve came out at the Disruption, and six of the eight within the town. These were Rev. Dr Patrick McFarlan, West; Rev. Angus McBean, Gaelic; Rev. James Smith, Mid; Rev. James Stark, Cartdsyke; Rev. J. J. Bonar, St Andrew's; and Rev. Win. Laughton, St Thomas'. It was said that there was not a Presbytery in Scotland that was left in such a destitute state.

Secession

The first Secession took place in 1733 - Sympathisers in Renfrewshire were constituted into a Society in 1738, known as the Correspondence of Kilmacolm. The members met on occasions at Greenock, Paisley, Cartdsyke, but most frequently at Killockriggs, about two miles from Kilmacolm. They worshipped in the open air or in tents until 1745, when two churches were built, one at Bruntshields, Kilbarchan parish, the other at Cartdsyke. Both were thatched buildings. One minister, John McAra, sufficed for a time, and was ordained in the open air at Bruntshields in September, 1744.

Burgher and Anti-Burgher

In 1747 there was a break at Cartdsyke between Burghers and Anti-Burghers, the former retaining the church. Daniel Cock was ordained minister in 1752. The seceders, comprising ten heads of families, worshipped in a tent, called the Clout Kirk, near Cathcart Square. For two and a half years James Alice, who had been ordained at Paisley, preached from the tent in a large green, and in 1758, a church was built in Wee Kirk Street, or Smith's Lane. In 1803 the congregation went to a new church (the Canister Kirk) in Inverkip Street, thence as a Presbyterian congregation to George Square, and on to Greenbank. John Buist, the first minister, was ordained in 1761. The second minister, John Dunn, ordained in 1798, was for a time editor of the 'Greenock Advertiser', and later, having been loosed from his charge, he became a teacher of languages and was public librarian.

The Cartdsyke congregation, after the Associate Synod of 1799, joined the Original Associates or Old Lights, and in 1828 re-built the church in Stanners Street. Mr. Cock resigned in 1769, and emigrated to America; William Richardson was ordained in 1773, died in 1780, and was buried within the precincts of the church. His tombstone is said to have served for some time as a paving stone on the line from Stanners Street to the church. The succeeding minister was William (afterwards Professor) Willis, who was translated to Stirling in 1802. Owing to troubles in the Mid Kirk over the settlement of a minister, and to the general want of accommodation, the Cartdsyke Church became crowded. In 1790 the Port Glasgow members formed themselves into a congregation (now Princes Street U.F.), and in the following year the Greenock members who resided westward built a church at the corner of Nicolson and West Blackhall Streets. George Moscrip was minister at Cartdsyke when the church was re-built in 1828, he held the post for 31 years, and was twice Moderator of the Supreme Court. His colleague and successor, James Stark, was ordained in 1834; the congregation and minister went into the Established Church with the majority of the Original Burgher Synod in 1839, and at the Disruption left to form Wellpark Free Church.

Quite early in the nineteenth century Greenock had become noted as favourable soil for the propagandists of the diverse sects and seceders that were fast springing up throughout the country. The "Edinburgh Gazette," referring to the town in 1819, said: "The number of other sects (besides the Establishment) is remarkable for the extent of the place, there being an established congregation of Roman Catholics, a number of the Relief Ordination, Independents, Methodists, Baptists, Anti-Burghers, Burghers, also of that ancient denomination of the latter called Old Lights, and an occasional meeting of Cameronians provided with a regular preacher." At the beginning of the

third decade the following were the ministers in town - Established, Robert Steele, John Scott, John Gilchrist, and Angus McBean; Relief, William Auld; Burghers, William Wilson, George Barclay, and Geo. Moscrip; Tabernacle, John Hercus; Baptist, John Edwards; Methodist, John Lewis; Roman Catholic, John Gordon. Ten years later Weir wrote - "Greenock may be said to contain all sects and persuasions, and the only class of Christians among us who have no regular place except a hall are the professors of Universalist doctrines. In 1817 attempts were made to get a place of worship for the Unitarians, but this failed in consequence of the fewness of their numbers. The inhabitants have been always considered as a church-going people, and though the accommodation is reckoned no more than sufficient for the population the churches are with few exceptions well attended." In 1839 a Royal Commission showed that in Greenock 1,200 families were in habitual neglect of Divine ordinances. The Presbytery then resolved to form a territorial charge, Rev. William Laughton being first minister of the "Kirk in the Laigh Street." By 1841 there were congregations of Irvingites, Universalists, Unitarians, and Chartists, all now gone through the process of religious evolution.

Greenbank

The congregation of Greenbank U.F. Church is claimed to be the oldest Dissenting congregation in Greenock. It was originally formed in 1748, when Greenock had a population of 3,000 and one Parish Church. The first meeting-place was a tent that cost 7s 3d and stood on a green now forming the site of the Town Hall. Five years later a larger tent was got at £2. The first stone church was built in Market Street in 1759, and was used until 1803, when a new place was erected in Inverkip Street, from its shape known as the Canister Kirk, part of it still remaining incorporated with the Infirmary buildings. In 1845 a new church was built in George Square at a cost of £3,000, but was destroyed by fire in 1880, and Greenbank Church was erected in its place at £7,300. The following is the order of the ministry: - J. Alice, 1756; John Buist, 1761, died 1796; John Dunn, 1798; George Barclay, 1808; Sutherland Sinclair, 1830; J. B. Thomson, 1874; R. L. Kirk, 1911.

Trinity Church

Was originally an Associate or Burgher Church, dating back to 1793, and the congregation built a church at the south-west corner of Nicolson and West Blackhall Streets, to seat 1,100, at a cost of £1,300. The premises are now occupied by Messrs. J. & S. Shannon and others, and the roof of the old church remains. Dr. Robert Jack was the first minister, succeeded in 1802 by William Wilson, in 1833 by Dr. Robert Wilson, in 1859 by Dr. Andrew McFarlane, in 1874 by John Young, in 1906 by Thomas A. Fraser, and in 1912 by James N. Gourlay. When the Burghers and Anti-Burghers were re-united in 1819 the congregation was named Nicolson United Secession Church, and on the conjunction of the Secession and Relief Churches in 1847 it was re-named Nicolson Street United Presbyterian. The present church in Union Street was built in 1871, at a cost of £7,792, and the congregation was free of debt at the centenary.

Sir Michael Street

About 120 years ago ten men had occasion to disagree with the way in which the seats were being let in the Mid Kirk, and they went out to form a new congregation. They first met in a vacant circus at the foot of Sugarhouse Lane, their united contributions amounting to 10½d. A more suitable place was shortly found not far from the present church, and a decision made to join the Relief denomination, at the time not a very popular body. 'The Advertiser' thus referred to congregation and church in 1807 - "We are happy to observe that the Relief meeting-house is intended to be erected in this populous place. May no root of bitterness spring up among the sects, for if the people would regularly attend public worship on the Lord's Day it would take about double the churches to contain them." This building, which cost £2,400, was taken down in 1852, and a handsome and commodious church built, at an outlay of £6,000. Rev. William Auld, Relief Church, Penpont, was called in 1808, and was minister until his death in 1849. Under his pastorate the congregation rapidly increased, and he enjoyed great popularity throughout the town. At the Union in 1847 Mr. Auld, as the oldest minister on his side, acted as Moderator of the Relief Synod. The successive ministers were James Jeffrey, as colleague, 1836, died 1845; James Caldwell, assistant, 1846, loosed 1848; Andrew Morton, colleague and successor, 1849; William R. Thomson, 1863; James Davidson, 1877, in 1883 disjoined with part congregation to form Finnart Church; Charles Jerdan, D.D., LL.B., 1884, now pastor-emeritus; John Calderwood, LL.B., 1912. The last surviving member of those who founded the congregation, Miss Janet Smith, died on June 9, 1879.

Finnart Church

Was an extension westward in 1883 from Sir Michael Street Finnart congregation. The building cost £4,500, and at the opening Church service the whole of this had been subscribed. Rev. James Davidson came with the congregation, and was minister until his retiral in 1898. In the year following Charles Allan accepted a unanimous call.

Union Street

Congregation was constituted in 1834 by a number of members from the United Secession Church in Nicolson Street. The present church was built in that year, at a cost of £2,400 Ministers - Thomas Finlayson, 1835; John B. Smith, 1848, died 1899; John Cullen, 1893; John Young, 1909.

St. Andrew Square

Church was founded in 1865 in connection with the U.P. body, the formation being the result of a desire to provide ordinances for a district that gave promise of a rapid growth. The movement had its beginning in Sir Michael Street Church, supported by the congregations of Trinity, Union Street, and Greenbank. The church, opened in 1867, cost £6,000. Mr. James Morton laid the foundation-stone. It was said that but for him there would have been no St. Andrew Square congregation. The first minister was Andrew Jeffrey Gunion, LL.D., followed in 1873 by J. Kerr Campbell, who left the church and formed the Augustine Established. Robert Edgar was inducted in 1877, and was pastor for ten years, when he went to Australia. Robert Primrose succeeded in 1887, after him James Cram in 1891, and Charles F. Fleming in 1902.

Mount Pleasant

Was formed in 1877 by the union of Sir Michael Street and Union Street Mission Stations. Alexander Duncan was first minister, but retired through failing health in 1896, and his successor, James Buchanan, was ordained in the following year. The congregation first met in the building at the corner of Roxburgh and Duncan Streets, then in an iron church in Mount Pleasant Street, and later in their present church.

Wellpark U.F.

Claims to be by many a day the oldest of the United Free Churches in Greenock, and that in fact it has seen the birth of every congregation in the town excepting that of the Old West. The congregation was originally, in 1738, Secessionist, - and then in succession Burgher, Auld Licht Burgher, Established in 1839, out in 1843, and now with the United Free. The congregation left the Cartsydyke Church in 1854, during the pastorate of James Stark, and built the present church, the old building having been purchased by the Caledonian Railway Company. Ministers - James Stark, 1843-90; Matthew Reid, 1873, now pastor-emeritus; Thomas Cassells, 1903. Rev. Mr. Stark celebrated his jubilee in 1884.

Gaelic U.F.

In 1843, when Angus McBean and the congregation of the Gaelic Parish Church came out from the Establishment, they first worshipped in Duncan Street burying-ground, and afterwards for nearly a year in the Old West Kirk. Their church in Jamaica Street was opened in 1844. They removed to St. Thomas' Church in 1910. Ministers - Angus McBean, 1843-5; John McRae, 1849-57; John Kennedy, 1859-70; M. Maccaskill, 1873-84; John Campbell, 1885; Don. Campbell, 1910.

St. Thomas

At the Disruption Rev. Wm. Laughton and congregation remained in what had been St. Thomas' Established Church in Dalrymple Street. In 1857 they removed to the building in West Blackhall Street vacated by the West Chapel congregation, which had been sold for arrears of feu-duty and was re-sold to Free St. Thomas'. Dr. Laughton, who was in affluent circumstances, continued as pastor, at his own request without stipend, which he gave to the poor of the congregation. On his retiral in 1887 he was succeeded by John Jeffrey, afterwards W. L. Robertson, and K. S. MacMorran. In 1910 Mr. MacMorran generously retired in order to give a habitation to the ejected Gaelic U.F. congregation in Jamaica Street (in accordance with the decision anent the Free Church), and thus at the same time facilitated a union between St. Thomas' and Middle U.F. congregations. Ministers - William Laughton, 1843-87; John Jeffrey, 1887; W. Lewis Robertson, 1888-1902; R. S. MacMorran, 1902-10.

St. Andrew's U.F.

The congregation in 1843 retained the church in Argyle Street, and purchased it in 1859 for the balance of the debt, amounting to £327 3s 6d. The building was several times repaired, and in 1879, on the erection of a new church, costing £10,500, at the north-west corner of Ardgowan and Margaret Streets, it was purchased by Mr. Robert MacSymon for £3,000. The ministry of Dr. J. J. Bonar continued for 52 years. He was succeeded by E. D. Fingland in 1888. On Mr. Fingland's translation to St. Enoch's, Glasgow, in 1895, D. S. Adam, Kelso, was appointed and held office for twelve years, when he became Professor of Systematic Theology in Melbourne. Mr. Adam was succeeded by A. G. Mackinnon, of Lochmaben.

West U.F.

Dr. Patrick M'Farlan and the majority of the West Parish Church came out at the Disruption. They built a church in Ardgowan Street in 1844, this was sold in 1862 and a new building costing £6,000 erected on the opposite side of the street. Ministers - Dr Patrick McFarlan, 1843-9; Dr John Nelson, 1851-78; Dr Hugh MacMillan, 1878; J. J. Macaulay, 1902; Peter McGregor, 1914.

Middle U.F.

At the Disruption Rev. James Smith and congregation of the Mid Parish, were without a place of worship, and were granted the use of Sir Michael Street Church. The Brick Kirk in West Burn Street, adjoining Waverley Lane, was built in three months and opened in August, 1843, at a cost of £2,215, of which £1,550 had been subscribed before the opening, the collection on this occasion amounting to £1,000. This building is now used as shops, offices, etc. Mr. Smith resigned through failing health in 1853, and John McFarlan, of Monkton, was inducted in the following year. M. P. Johnstone, from Hawick, was appointed colleague and successor in 1879, and Mr McFarlan died in Edinburgh in 1891. It was during his pastorate that the fine church in George Square was built at a cost of £18,863,

and opened in June, 1871. There was a debt of £7,524 on the building to begin with, and this was cleared off by 1890 without any outside help. Mr. Johnston retired at the end of 28 years, and Charles Ross Lowdon, of Biggar, was appointed in his place. As a congregation the Middle has existed for 180 years, having been disjoined from the West in 1741. There have been two offshoots, the Gaelic and Sir Michael Street. In 1899 Mrs. Robert Shankland, wife of the Provost, presented a chime of six bells, in memory of her parents.

North U.F.

Under the direction of the West Free mission work was conducted in the Glebe from 1856, the meetings held first in St. Andrew's Chapel, in Sir Michael Street, in a disused ragged school in Ropework Street, and then in the church vacated by St. Thomas' congregation in 1859. While Mr. John MacKnight was missionary the congregation was constituted a territorial one, the charge was sanctioned in 1864, and the church in West Burn Square built in 1878. An endowment of £3,000 was in that year left by Mr. Archibald Adam, a deacon of the West Church. Ministers - David Boyd, 1864; W. C. Mitchell, 1900; David R. M. Keir, 1912.

Mount Park U.F.

Was formed by members from Wellpark Free in 1873, who first met in Waverley (Oddfellows') Hall, West Burn Street, and the charge was sanctioned in 1874. The South Free Church had been projected by a committee of gentlemen under the direction of the Presbytery, and (re-named Mount Park) was handed over to the congregation on the condition that the minister should work the south part of the town. The infant congregation got the benefit of the original £1,000 collected by the Presbytery, and agreed to pay off the debt, which was cleared in 1889. Ministers - G. A. Marshall, 1874; John Baird, 1881; A. D. Grant, 1883; William Loudon, 1914.

Crawfurdsburn

Formed as a mission station of the Free Church in 1854, was sanctioned as a charge in 1862. The church, built in 1859-60, was at first called Finnieston, and was changed to Crawfurdsburn at the induction of Peter Thomson in 1863. Ministers - Peter Thomson, 1863-90; R. C. Strang, 1890-99; George Stewart, 1899; Kenneth Cameron, 1915.

Martyrs' U.F.

Was originally a Reformed Presbyterian congregation, and joined the Free Church in 1876. Their building in West Shaw Street was erected in 1861. Ministers - John Torrance, 1861-76; Andrew Symington, 1876, retired 1912; J. Wallace Whyte, 1912; Walter Alexander, 1919.

Free Gaelic Church

The building in Jamaica Street long occupied by the Gaelic Free Church congregation was vacated by them in favour of the New Free Gaelic Church of Scotland, in virtue of the decision of the House of Lords, and was taken possession of by the congregation since worshipping there. Rev. Kenneth Smith was minister for some time, but at present the pastorate is vacant.

Reformed Presbyterians

Worshipped at Kilmacolm until a congregation was formed at Greenock in 1833. Their meeting-place was a little square church opposite the Temperance Institute, West Stewart Street, under the ministry of Andrew Gilmour, then of Peter Carmichael, James Kerr, 1864, and J. P. Struthers, 1882. The present church, in the same street, was built in 1896 under the pastorate of Mr. Struthers, and was opened free of debt, the old building being taken over by the Good Templars. In 1860 about 200 seceders formed another congregation, first meeting in Highlanders' Academy, afterwards in Sir Michael Street U.P. session-house. A site at the corner of Nicolson and Shaw Streets was secured, and the church built in 1861. Mr Struthers died in 1915, and was succeeded by W. J. Moffett, who went to Airdrie in 1921, and A. C. Gregg was called from Loanhead.

George Square Congregational

Modern Scottish Congregationalism dates from 1798. In 1796 a branch of the London Missionary Society was formed, and preaching excursions were made to these districts. Services were conducted by George Robertson, who preached first at Inverkip, and on his settlement in November, 1802, twenty-five members guaranteed £40 and a tabernacle was built at the corner of Sir Michael and Shaw Streets, from which the debt was cleared in 1806. Previously the members had met in each other's houses. The congregation moved to their new church in George Square in 1840, and the old building was bought by the Evangelical Union congregation in 1849 for £500. The pastorate was filled in succession by W. Nicol, for nine months in 1804; Daniel Ramsay, for fifteen months; John Hercus, 1806-30; Alex. Lyle, 1832, died 1834; Alex. Campbell, 1836, died 1844 and was buried in front of the church at the corner next to Union Street; Alexander Raleigh, 1845-8; J. M. Jarvie, 1851, retired in 1891; A. R. Henderson, assistant minister, 1887-9; A. W. Clark, assistant minister, 1890-1; W. H. Addicott, 1893, died 1906; R. Steel, 1906.

East Congregational

Church was formed in 1871 at the instance of members of George Square Congregational Church residing in the East-end of the town. An iron building was erected in St. Lawrence Street, and George Moir was the first minister. Owing to ill-health Mr. Moir resigned in 1878, and his successor, Robert Bell, retained the charge until his death in

1897. It was during Mr. Bell's pastorate that the present church, on the old site, costing £2,000, was opened in March, 1892. W. J. Ainslie followed as minister in 1897, and largely owing to his energy and enterprise a bazaar realised £1,036, which cleared off the debt and met improvements on the buildings. On being called to Hawick in 1902, Mr. Ainslie was succeeded by George Gerrard, who filled the pulpit until 1912, when indifferent health induced him to resign and the present pastor, D. W. Gaylor, was appointed.

Martyr's Congregational

Church is an offshoot from George Square Congregation. For many years the pastor, John Richardson, conducted the mission services in a hall in Charles Street, and it was in 1898 that the congregation was formed. The present building at the corner of Trafalgar and Roxburgh Streets was erected in 1900, and success has attended the movement since the beginning.

Mearns Street Congregational

This church was started in May, 1883, under the pastorate of Dr. T. W. Bowman, and the church was built in 1886. Dr. Bowman was succeeded in 1889 by J. C. Neill, who retired through ill-health in 1894, and in the following year R. C. Richardson was appointed and held the charge until 1907, when J. D. McCulloch, the present minister, was inducted.

Orangefield Baptist

In 1806 a few persons, not exceeding seven, formed the first Baptist Church in Greenock, ministers coming occasionally from Kilwinning, Edinburgh, Lochgilphead. The meetings were held in an apartment at the foot of West Quay Lane and fronting the West Breast, shortly afterwards in a schoolroom in Tobago Street, then known as Cameron's School, and subsequently long occupied by Mr. James Slater. About 1817 a removal was made to a more commodious schoolroom in Sir Michael Street, named the Relief School, and taken down to make room for the Relief Church. In 1819 the congregation were meeting in the Masons' Hall, Hamilton Street, then in the Gardeners' Hall, Market Street, where John Edwards, formerly Congregational minister at Falkirk, was appointed pastor. The building of the new chapel in West Burn Street was begun in 1820 and opened in 1821. Mr. Edwards resigned in 1826, and in 1829 Lachlan McIntosh, Grantown, was called, but relinquished his duties in 1832 and was followed by D. M. W. Thomson, Baptist College, Bradford, who resigned in 1837. Serious differences arose as to the appointment of Mr Thomson's successor, and these led to a division and the formation of another church in 1844, which met first in a small hall in Sir Michael Street, and afterwards in a building known as the Baptist Chapel, Nelson Street. With the exception of the short pastorate of James McFarlan, from Bradford College, it was not until 1861 that a settled minister was appointed to the original congregation. This was Thomas Vasey, who resigned in 1864, when the larger portion of Nelson Street Church returned, and in 1866 Ebenezer Maclean became minister. Under his long pastorate the congregation flourished, and Orangefield Church was built in 1877, at a cost of £5,000. The old chapel was later sold for £2,340. Mr. Maclean was called to London after thirteen years in the pastorate, and there followed James Dunn, 1880; Dr. R. McNair, 1883; Alexander Corbet, 1887; Benjamin J. Cole, 1897; William Gibson, 1913; H. S. Curr, 1916; P. B. Watson Cowie, 1919.

George Square Baptist

Although this congregation is not the actual resuscitation of the church that met in the Baptist Hall, now the West Parish Sessional School, Nelson Street, it was founded on the same principles and several of its members were formerly connected with Nelson Street Church. George Square Baptist services were begun on December 1884, when six persons met and agreed to unite themselves into a congregation. The first pastor was Robert Bennie, 1884; followed by G. M. Macdonald, 1889; Hussy Griffith, 1893; Matthew Miller, 1897; A. T. Richardson, 1906; H. R. McKenzie, 1914; Alexander Duffy, 1919. The church began with a membership of 20; it is now 180. The meeting place for some years was St George's Hall. In 1888 the present church was built at a cost of £2,600, the site costing £1,600.

Nelson Street E.U.

Congregation was founded by several members of the United Secession Church (Rev. Sutherland Sinclair) who had been expelled on account of their views on the Universality of the Atonement. They were led by Alexander Muir, their first meeting-place the Whinhill, and the worshippers numbering three. The meetings were afterwards held in Slater's School, Tobago Street, opposite the Mechanics' Institution, where they here formed into a preaching station of the E.U. Church in 1845, and in the following year they were admitted as a congregation. They met later in the Old Assembly Rooms in Cathcart Street, and in 1847 called Alexander Rutherford, Falkirk. Within a year the Rooms were too small for their increasing numbers. The old chapel in Sir Michael Street, opposite the present U.F. Church there, was purchased for £500, and £250 expended on repairs. A new church in Nelson Street was built in 1865. Ministers – Dr. John Guthrie, inducted 1851; Alexander Davidson, 1862; W. Richmond Scott, 1887; Robert Mitchell, 1892; Andrew Ritchie, 1894; W. F. Riddell, 1904; Alexander Rowatt Maxwell, 1911; James Adam, 1916.

Wesleyan Methodism

In Greenock was introduced by the founder himself, John Wesley, on a visit to the district in 1772. In what exact place he preached is not known, but on his own testimony his mission bore immediate fruit. For forty years the

body or Society of worshippers gathered in dwelling-houses, they rented premises in 1812, and in the same year they were successful in obtaining a church site in Tobago Street. An appeal for funds that appeared in the 'Advertiser' was signed by Joshua Bryan, minister, and Alexander Carson, steward. The church was opened in 1815. In 1862, on the removal of the Free West congregation to another site in Ardgowan Street, the Wesleyans purchased the church vacated, and the building in Tobago Street became part of the Mechanics' Institution. This Ardgowan Street Church served for twenty years, and the present building on the site was erected in 1883, in 1889 the manse in Newton Street was purchased, and the balance of debt on church and manse was cleared off in 1902. The present minister is S. E. Beaugié.

Primitive Methodist

The Primitive Methodist Church began in England. It was founded in 1807 by a group of men who had been expelled from the Wesleyan Church for evangelistic activity outside the ordinary methods. The Primitive Methodist Church originated in Greenock through the work of the Rev. R. Ayres. He came from Paisley in the early part of 1873 - He gathered a few folk together chiefly by meetings in the open air and by visitation. The congregation met in the hall in Sir Michael Street for about two years. The present set of buildings in Roxburgh Street was opened for public worship in 1875. The cost was £2,275, the membership was 33. This has been the home of the church ever since. For many years the church had a very hard struggle to maintain itself, and had to be supported by grants from the Home Missionary Fund. In 1890 the Rev. R. Ayres returned for a further term. During his ministry of this period a debt on the church of £1000 was cleared off. The missionary committee gave £500 and the church raised £500. This was a fine achievement for a church of 80 members, the membership having risen to this figure in the meantime. The church has been served by a succession of able ministers. It was consolidated by the Rev. F. J. Saintry, whose ministry began in 1898. During his ministry the membership steadily rose until it reached practically the present figure of 138. The financial position was also considerably improved. The Rev. C. L. Stowe is remembered for a ministry of sweetness and light. One of its ministers, the Rev. G. Roy Russell, sat on the Town Council in Labour interest. The present minister, the Rev. J. J. Cook, H.C.F., came to the church in 1920 after a term of service as chaplain to H.M. Forces in Mesopotamia.

Episcopal

The movement in favour of erecting an Episcopal place of worship began in 1823, when residents attached to the Church of England initiated a subscription to meet the cost of building. Sir Michael Shaw Stewart granted the committee a choice of ground, asking no grassum and charging a small feu-duty only. The site was close to the west of the present St. John's Church in Union Street, the building was completed in 1824 at a cost of £2,300, giving accommodation for 400 sitters, and was consecrated on April 30, 1825, by the Right Rev. Bishop Sandford. Wm. D. Carter was the first minister, and on his appointment in 1829 as chaplain to the East India Company J. M. Williams was named as successor, but he having also been elected chaplain in the same service did not enter upon his ministerial duties in Greenock. Plans for the improvement and renovation of the church were prepared in 1876, but it was ultimately agreed to erect a new building, which was opened in November, 1877, and consecrated in 1878. Sir Michael presented the additional ground in 1873 and subscribed £1,000 to the buildings fund. In 1854, "having a desire to provide for the daily public worship in the Episcopal Church .of the Holy Evangelist Saint John, Greenock," Sir Michael resolved to endow the church, and did so generously. Ministers - W. D. Carter, 1824-8; T. H. Wilkinson, 1828-30; George Rose, 1830-3; Richard Martin, 1833-9; J. Campbell Smith, 1839-40; George Thornton Mostyn, 1840-5; Charles Cole, 1845-71. The following are the rectors in succession: Julius Lloyd, 1871-80; John Trew, 1880-95; V. F. Hammond, 1895-7; T. Lennie, 1898-1914; Charles R. Robertson, 1915. The churches at Gourock and Port Glasgow were originally started as missions under St. John's, and there are now two missions, St. Stephen's, Cartsideyke, and St. John's, Bank Street.

R.C. Re-establishment

Roman Catholicism in Greenock after the Reformation was re-established in 1802, by an émigré priest named Capron, who was succeeded by a similarly situated priest named Lemoine. The first resident priest was Rev. John Davidson, who came to the town in 1808, said Mass and preached to about 100 Catholics in the Star Hall, Broad Close. He died in 1815, and in the following year Rev. John Gordon was appointed successor, who completed the erection of old St Mary's Church, East Shaw Street, opened in August of that year by the Right Rev. Bishop Cameron. It is recorded that the Right Rev. Bishop expressed his most grateful acknowledgments for the tolerance in matters of religion at that time so conspicuous in the country, and in no part more so than in the West of Scotland. Rev. William Gordon followed in 1832, remained until 1836, but returned in 1852 and died in Greenock in 1880. During this later period the growth of St Mary's was very rapid. St. Lawrence's Chapel was purchased and a school built on the site in 1857.

New St. Mary's

The Patrick Street site was secured and the present church opened in 1862; the old St Mary's Chapel, schoolhouse, and lodge were removed, and the present schools in East Shaw Street opened in 1878. The New St. Mary's Church was designed by Mr. George Goldies, London, and cost about £6,000. A scheme of renovation was carried out in 1890. Rev. Alexander Taylor came to St. Mary's in 1867, he was appointed a Canon of the Chapter in 1901, and died suddenly not many hours after celebrating Mass, on January 6, 1905. He was exceedingly popular as a clergyman and citizen. On his succession to Dean Gordon he had to face an immediate need for additional

school accommodation, an extension of the church, and other pressing problems. In 1892 a bazaar towards raising funds for these objects realised sufficient to provide a temporary school building, and in 1902 a new wing was erected in Patrick Street at a cost of over £1,100. Rev. Patrick Houlihan, of Lambhill, was appointed to the vacancy in 1905. In order to meet the further necessities in school accommodation, Canon Houlihan in 1907 purchased two villas with an adjoining feu at the corner of Houston and Patrick Streets, at a cost of over £3,000, and a combined elementary and secondary school was erected, to accommodate 1,000 scholars, at a cost of £10,000.

St. Lawrence

St Lawrence Church dates from 1855. It was originally an Old Light Anti-Burgher Meeting-House, built in 1745, between Rue-end and Stanners Streets, and re-built in 1828. St. Lawrence was attended from St. Mary's until 1859, when Rev. Michael Condon was appointed to take charge of it as a distinct mission. Close to the church, on the same feu, schools were built in 1857 at a cost of £530. In 1872 Father Condon purchased Bank House for £3,600, and converted it into a middle-class school; and in 1874 he introduced a branch of the Franciscan Order. With the view of erecting more commodious school buildings in the East-end, two feus were taken off, in 1875 and 1880, and these with the site of Wood Cottage, the residence of Father Condon, formed a square on which were raised the new St. Lawrence Schools, the main building fronting Belville Street, the whole now used exclusively as a boys' school and giving accommodation to 600 pupils. Father Condon was made a Canon in 1885, and was transferred to St Patrick's, Glasgow, where he died. He was succeeded by Rev. Robert Grant, six months later Rev. Thos. P. O'Reilly followed, then Rev. John L. Murphy, and Rev. Michael Fox, D.D., in 1896. As the old church was now unsuited for the times, Dr Fox purchased from the Harbour Trust an extensive piece of ground at the junction of Carnock and Dellingburn Streets, and there in 1901 built the handsome new St. Lawrence's, which seats 1,000 people, at a cost, church and presbytery, of about £14,000. Dean Fox died in 1906, and Rev. William Horgan was appointed in his place. There was still need for increased school accommodation, and Father Horgan succeeded in erecting a three-storey building at the junction of Main and Stanners Streets, with accommodation for 900 girls and infants.

Church and Town

We cannot pass without a remark on the intimate and complex relations which so long subsisted between the Church and the Municipality. It is, however, a province of local history in which one needs must go warily and avoid partially-informed or unsympathetic criticism. In the discharge of the financial and other responsibilities imposed by the laws or customs of the olden times, the Town Council could not hope altogether to prevent misunderstandings and disputes. Many of these, petty in themselves, gave rise to long-continuing contention; others, of more serious origin and import, involved litigation which engendered sectional and personal enmities; but few of them to-day so closely touch or interest the general community, or are of sufficient vital concern, as to demand a permanent place in public record. On the whole, therefore, it would seem preferable to abstain from attempting to deal with matters the merits of which to the lay mind must remain obscure, and to leave to the purely ecclesiastical historian the task of unravelling the tangled threads.

The West Kirk

When the West Church was the only one in the town and the stipend very small, the inhabitants at one of their ordinary meetings for laying on the stent paid to the Royal Burghs agreed to cress themselves to the further amount of £25 in order to improve the stipend. So long as the stent was collected the sum in question was levied along with it. By the increase of the town the sum exigible from each individual became so small that the cost of collection was found to be as much as the sum itself; and shortly after, when the required assessment came to be levied for paving, lighting, cleaning, and watching the town, and supplying it with water, it was agreed to save the expense of this collection by taking the amount from the town fund. Sometime later the town refused to pay this sum, but the then incumbent instituted an action at law and succeeded in establishing his claim.

There is strong evidence that the strained financial relations of the time between Council and clergy were generally the result more of inability than unwillingness to pay. While Rev. David Turner was minister of the Old West there appears to have been constant difficulty in meeting the stipend obligations. He had been to the Court of Session, and obtained a decree against the Town Council for increased stipend. At Martinmas, 1764, the sum due to him was £670 12s 1½d. The inhabitants had been "stented to the amount of £416 15s, of which there remain a deficiency uncollected of £81 12s 6d, great part of which would not be received by reason that many people are dead, or poor, or have left the place, so that to make up the stipend it will be necessary to levy the inhabitants." About £300 was wanted by this stent, and the Council appointed "a large committee and representatives of the trades to meet in the house of Mrs. Clark, vintner, at the Mid Quay Head, to take ane oath de fideli before proceeding to lay on the stent. At the same time the stent-masters were to stent the inhabitants and feuars for the cress payable to the Royal Burghs, and the meeting obliged themselves and their successors in office to keep them free and skaithless on account of their laying on the other stents." By the end of the year it was reported that the Council had "with great trouble cleared for the bygone stipend and interest, and got a discharge." One of the collectors, it was stated, left the town without accounting for the money he uplifted.

One proof of the reasonable and humane attitude of the Councillors towards the ministers is given in a minute of May 26, 1766: - "Owing to the great increase of vivers of all kinds for some years back, and the great increase of

the town, the Council made an additional appointment to Rev. Shaw so as to enable him to support his family suitably and with decency - a gratuity of £20 each year out of the first rates of the town's revenues, which made a stipend of £100, during his incumbency."

Sacramental Payments

On the question of Sacramental expenses the Council some years later took a firm stand. Having in 1780 granted £2 2s towards the expense of the Winter Sacrament at the chapel, they "declared that in time coming they would not listen to any application of the above kind from any society whatever, nor give any money out of the town's funds for defraying the Winter Sacrament in any of the Established churches, chapels, or meeting-houses either in the town or neighbourhood, excepting to the New Parish Church, and their reason for giving it there is that a very great part of the town's revenue arises from the said church." Notwithstanding this clear intimation, the Rev. Mr Turner, Old West, the following year made an application, but the Council held to their resolution, adding that "the whole of the members were willing to contribute out of their private pockets along with the other inhabitants."

The Mid Kirk

The Town or Mid Kirk was prolific of dissension almost from the date of its disjunction from the Old Parish. The original troubles arose mostly on the questions of payment for Communion elements, sums in lieu of a manse, or of stipend. Rev. John Shaw, who was the first minister, in 1756 made "a demand for a manse in terms of the decree of erection." He insisted not only on the manse, but for £15 to be paid him just now, and for the town to furnish the Communion elements in the time coming, and these as some kind of compensation for the claim he alleged he had for bygone years since ordination." The reply of the Town Council was that they "agreed to pay £10 a year over what he already receives until the managers find it convenient to build a manse; soon as he is in possession the £10 to cease. The managers not being the least apprehensive of being subjected for anything in law of bygones, refuse the demand for £15 and also the furnishing of the Communion elements, this being already taxed at 50 merks by the decree of erection over and above the 950 merks of stipend." A month later it is recorded that "Shaw was dissatisfied for no other reason than that nothing was allowed as compensation for bygones. He threatened a prosecution, and the Council, while convinced that he had not the least claim for bygones, for peace sake and to prevent a lawsuit, agreed to pay £15 in full satisfaction of what he could claim for the grant of a manse in times past." The feuars were consulted, and after eight days' deliberation they unanimously agreed.

A Competent Salary

By the decree of disjunction and erection the Magistrates and Town Council and the feuars were taken bound not only to defray the expense of erecting, building, and repairing the New Kirk, manse, and school-house, but also to provide the minister with a competent stipend not under 950 merks, with 50 merks addition for Communion elements. For a considerable time this was paid to the first incumbent (Shaw), and also to his successor (Adam), but on Adam's death in 1792 the Council agreed to give £25 additional to Dr. Scott, and the stipend thus amounted to £135, the minute, however, declaring always that the town shall not be bound to pay any additional stipend to his successor, and that in the event of Mr. John Shaw Stewart or his heirs claiming the patronage this augmentation to Dr. Scott should cease and be no longer a burden on the town, and upon these terms the stipend was granted. In 1800 another addition of £35 was given, 1803 £40, 1808 £50, 1812 £25 and continued until Dr Scott's death in 1836. In 1830 Dr. Cunningham was appointed successor at £60 until he became entitled to the stipend and emoluments, it being agreed that Dr. Scott and the heritors should pay £90 additional. In 1835 to James Smith, assistant, the Council paid £100, and the congregation and Dr. Scott £150.

In 1835 the inhabitants were indignant at the charges by the churches against the town, and as a result of a public meeting memorialised the Town Council complaining, among other things, of the granting of "such a large sum of the public money to the new minister of the Mid Church when the senior incumbent receives a large undiminished salary; of the expense of annually adorning and re-adorning the Magistrates' seat in the church, as if the dignity of the Bench were to be enhanced by Sunday parades and exhibitions; and of the £25 paid annually to the minister of the West Parish while the stipend is otherwise one of the largest, if not the largest, in Scotland."

This question of a competent salary and the general financial confusion between Church and Corporation were sources of much trouble for many years. In 1825 Messrs. Alan Ker, Robert Ewing, Quentin Leitch, and John Denniston, who had been long in the management of the public funds, published a statement showing that the Mid Parish Church then owed the Corporation £20,000. In 1841, when an action at law was threatened to reduce the seat rents, a statement was made by Provost Baine that the Church was in debt to about £30,000 to £40,000. On the other hand it was stated that on the disjunction of the Church £1,000 had been laid aside for its endowment in the shape of a bond over the lands of Kirkmichael, and that this had been uplifted by the Council in 1837 to pay its debts; and that 15 falls of the ground granted by Lord Cathcart's feu charter had been taken possession of by the Council without compensation. The Town Council of 1873 came to a resolution that a legal stipend and Communion element money payable to the next incumbent should be £120 per annum, with the use of a manse, and the balance of the seat rents which might during his incumbency be competently levied.

Litigation

The great cause in which the Municipality and the Church were in dispute and continued so for many years was brought to a point in 1881 in a law suit at the instance of Rev. D. S. Peters, of the Mid Parish. Mr. Peters applied to the Court of Session for a summons of declarator against the Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council, and the Presbytery of Greenock, asking that it should be found that he was entitled to be furnished by the Town Council with a competent and legal stipend, and for payment of £320 per annum from Whitsunday, 1880, till Martinmas, 1890, with interest, and for £400 per annum from Martinmas, 1890, with power to apply to the Court from time to time for further augmentation. The Lord Ordinary found that the obligation contained in the decree of disjunction and erection of the Mid Kirk on July 15, 1711, was binding on the defenders, and that upon a just construction of the said obligation the defenders were bound to provide the pursuer and his successors with a legal and competent stipend suited to the circumstances of the time and the position and duties of the benefice.

On a reclaiming note being lodged by defenders this interlocutor was confirmed. Lord Trayner, on giving judgment, said that he saw no reason for doubting that the obligation in question was one which it was within the power of those representing the inhabitants of the burgh at the time to grant or undertake. Such obligations appeared not to have been at all unusual about the middle of the eighteenth century. With regard to what must be considered a legal and competent stipend, the value or extent of the obligation in money might vary with circumstances, but the obligation did not vary. Lord Young, who according to his avowal was in a hopeless minority in the Court, took the view that it was an action for the administration of a trust, and nothing else, and that the managers were appointed under the charter of 1741 to be administrators of "the whole public funds belonging to the burgh, or which shall hereafter pertain and belong to the same." The deed of the trust investment stated that the bond of £1,000 was "in trust for themselves and the whole other feuars and house-holders of the said burgh of barony and of the new Parish of Greenock when the same shall be erected." The beneficiary of this trust was the benefice of the New Parish. The inhabitants had for fifteen years voluntarily assessed themselves in a certain duty on malt for the purposes of said erection, which cost £2,388 17s 8½d, and of this £1,058 5s 9d was raised by subscriptions and the remainder given by the Corporation. It had not been suggested or hinted at that any other funds than this source existed, and he could find nothing in the deed to suggest that the Magistrates had power to undertake any obligation beyond this fund, or that they did so undertake.

Appeal to Lords

The Lords of the Inner House refused the reclaiming note and adhered to Lord Kyllachy's interlocutor, finding the pursuer entitled to expenses from the date of the interlocutor. At a special meeting of the Corporation in May, 1892, it was resolved by fifteen to five to appeal to the House of Lords. This appeal was in the following year dismissed. The reasons stated by the Lord Chancellor and Lord Watson were that this was not a question of a trust; that the predecessors of the Corporation could not of themselves have erected a parish, but were compelled to apply to the Teind Court; that that Court were justified in seeing that a sufficient provision was made to secure a stipend; that the decree created a new state of things and disposed of any question of trust; that the only difficulty was in the construction of the words "legal and competent," and that they concurred in the view taken by the majority of the judges in the Court below, and that the obligation undertaken by the Corporation could not be held to be limited in the manner contended by the appellants. The matter was thereupon remitted back to the Court of Session, and in February, 1894, Lord Kyllachy found that pursuer was entitled to £320 per annum from Martinmas, 1880, to Whitsunday, 1881, and to £400 thereafter, but reserving the right of the pursuer and his successors to apply for an increase of stipend in the event of £400 ceasing to be a competent and legal stipend, according to the circumstances of the time and the position and duties of the benefice, and the right of the defenders and their successors to apply to have the stipend fixed at a less amount in the event of it at any time coming to be in excess of a competent and legal stipend under similar conditions. This decision was reclaimed against to the Inner House, and in June the Lords refused the reclaiming note and adhered to the above interlocutor. It was agreed to acquiesce in this decision, and to take no further steps for appealing to the House of Lords.

Transference Proposed

In the Parliamentary Bill of 1893 there were clauses relating to the transference of the town churches, with the Mid Parish manse, to trustees elected by the congregations, and to the extinction by commutation or otherwise of the annual payments to Greenock Academy and the minister of the West Parish. Considerable opposition was given by the Church interests to the proposed appointment of trustees, compensation was asked on the transfer of the property, and the repayment of £1,000 to the Mid Parish Church which had been made at its erection in 1741. The Town Council was desirous of putting an end to a state of matters that was causing irritation and annoyance, throwing a serious burden on the community, and injuring the best interests of the churches. In February, 1893, they met with a deputation from the Presbytery, when after discussion the Bills Committee suggested the sum of £5,000 as compensation - £3,000 to the East Parish in respect of there being no manse, and £2,000 to the Mid Parish, together with the properties to be conveyed to trustees for behoof of the respective churches. This was declined as being too small a sum, and the clauses were withdrawn from the Bill.

A minor ecclesiastical trouble, which yet had its disconcerting aspects, was that which arose through granting Highland worshippers the use of the Mid Kirk pending the erection of their own building. The incident is best related in the Council minute of October 20, 1783: "The Magistrates were applied to by several inhabitants with respect to the indulgence given to preach in the Gaelic language in the New Church, the town's funds being hurt by the seats

not selling so well as they had done before this practice took place, and also the poor fund, as the collections at the door at the Gaelic preaching were given to the preacher; and the seats were dirtied by lighting candles, and the people who had seats threatened to take none of them next year if this practice was continued. The Council were of opinion that preaching in the Gaelic language should not be permitted in the said church for the reasons before-mentioned, but in order that such of the inhabitants who attended the preaching should have time to accommodate themselves with a house of worship, they were allowed until the first Sunday of May next. This finding was apparently disregarded by the Mid Kirk minister or officials, for the practice was still being complained of in 1786, when the Council again issued a prohibition, against which Rev. Mr. Adam protested and took opinion of counsel. The contention was ended by the course of time, the Gaelic inhabitants entering their own church in 1792.

Education

Parish School

We are almost entirely without sources of information on the state of education in the district prior to 1694, from which year date the extant minutes of the Old West Kirk Session records. It is known that a Parish School was in existence some time previously, and it may be taken for granted that, in keeping with the attitude of the Church on the subject, Greenock would in this respect probably be as well served as other towns and villages in the country. The Scottish Act of 1696 ordained the heritors of each parish to provide a commodious schoolhouse, and to pay a schoolmaster not less than 100 merks (£5 11s 1½d) and not more than 200 merks. John Cruiks, reader in the Old West Kirk, is believed to have been one of the earliest master, of the parish school. The Session records of 1697 show an order that "no school but the Parish School shall be kept in the parish," on the plea that private schools were prejudicial to it, and "providing always that this public school be in a commodious part of the parish." The salary was fixed at 80 pounds Scots (£6 13s 4d), with casualties as reader and clerk of session.

First Teachers

There is no record of schoolmaster or place of meeting at this time, but the teacher is supposed to have been Neill Fisher, who as witness to a feu-charter in 1686 is designated as schoolmaster in Greenock, and the school to have been on the east side of the Vennel from the harbour head. The Superior was paid a rent of 20 pounds Scots, Greenock being liable for two-thirds and Cartsydyke for one-third, one schoolmaster sufficing for both towns. In 1698 Alexander Watson was allowed to teach a school in the Long Vennel, with the express provision that he should "instruct none above the New Testament inclusive, so that the public school should not be prejudged." Other schools of the kind were gradually permitted, one of which, where James Watt was taught, stood on the west side of Smith's Lane, abutting on the Vennel.

In the same year poor children whose parents or guardians could not afford to keep them at school were "distributed through several quarters and proportions of the parish that were inhabited on their being maintained and kept at school;" and Common Bibles were given to the poor from the fund for advancing Christian knowledge. Greenock, indeed, has the credit of having been amongst the first communities to give effect, after the Revolution, to the new and better order of things in regard to education and the general supervision of personal behaviour. John Wallace was parochial teacher for some years up to 1711, when he resigned, and John Whyt, student of theology, was appointed schoolmaster, precentor, and session clerk. The schools were under the control of the Magistrates and Town Council, who were said to have been throughout liberal and diligent in the cause of education, supplementing from the common good the deficiencies of the heritors, in most cases providing schoolhouses free of cost, and subsidising mathematical, elementary, French, and other masters.

Grammar School

The Grammar School was founded in 1727, the first teacher Robert Arrol, M.A., Glasgow, who was schoolmaster, reader session clerk, and precentor. Some complaints were made about the plurality of offices, to which there was the convincing rejoinder that the conjunction was necessary on account of the slender salary attached to each appointment. Arrol had the distinction of being classical teacher to James Watt. The town schools were first at the foot of Smith's Lane, at one time known as Wee Kirk Street. Thence they were in 1762 removed to the Royal Close, and continued there until the end of the century, when they were located at the Butter Market, behind the Mid Parish Church, and carried on in this place until the buildings were demolished in 1833 to make way for the Sheriff Court Hall. Subsequently the Magistrates leased premises in various parts of the town.

During the 120 years following the appointment of Robert Arrol twenty-four teachers held office in the Grammar School. John Woodrow, of Kilmichael, Lochgilphead, was one of the most notable of these, and as shown in the first extant minutes of the Town Council in October, 1751, he was appointed at a salary of £20 sterling and was master for ten years. The following is the extract from the minutes: "That some salary worthy of a man of dignity and character as teacher be paid;" and it was considered that £20 was "a genteel appointment." The sum was allocated thus: Sir John Schaw and his heirs, £3 1s 1½d; Arch. Crawford of Cartsburn and his heirs, £1 2s 2½d; Old West session out of seat rents, £4 9s 5½d; New Kirk session, £3 0s 6½d; the town, £8 6s 8d. Woodrow was succeeded by Andrew Bradfute or Braidfoot, who after four years went as classical master to Glasgow High School.

John Wilson

John Wilson, a native of Lanark, scholar and poet, author of "Clyde: a Poem," was appointed in 1767. He was the first Librarian of Greenock Library. The story was set about that on his appointment he had to come under a promise "to abandon the profane and unprofitable art of poem making," but John Gait subsequently admitted that it was he who had invented the phrase in contributing material for John Leyden's biography of Wilson, and in his autobiography Gait added on the subject: "I had nothing in view save a fling at the boss-headed Bailies, but Dr Leyden took the joke as no joke, and with foot advanced and hand uplifted declaimed on the Presbyterian bigotry at great length."

That Wilson was a disappointed genius there is ample evidence in a letter to his son, in which he said: "I once thought to live by the breath of fame, but how miserably was I disappointed when, instead of having my performance applauded in crowded theatres, and being caressed by the great - for what will not a poetaster in the intoxicating delirium of possession dream! - I was condemned to bawl myself to hoarseness among wayward brats, to cultivate sand and wash Ethiopians, for all the dreary days of an obscure life, the contempt of shopkeepers and brutal skippers." Yet he was a kindly and humane as well as a successful teacher, as is proved by the tenor of the epitaph on his monument in the Old West Kirkyard, where he was buried in 1789.

Council's Displeasure

In 1777 the Council approved of granting premiums to the public schools, and requested ministers to make quarterly examinations. Semple says that about this period "there was scarce a boy in Renfrewshire but what was taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and a part of Church music, and many of the girls also." The Councillors were not without their troubles in this department of their duties. Bradfute, grammar master, charged with teaching English during public hours, was told that if allowed to do so "the highest master would teach Latin in these hours, whereby both schools would be greatly hurt." A petition was presented from John McNab, English master, "with no other encouragement from the town but a schoolhouse," and doubtless relying for salary on the children's paltry fees." Being sensible of his care and diligence, the Council agreed to an annual salary of £5 during their pleasure." Then in 1783 the Magistrates and Council took umbrage at the schoolmasters fixing their examinations without intimation, and they "ordained that the masters must wait annually upon the Magistrates, and have the schools examined on a day fixed by them and upon no other day, and they were to be furnished with an extract of the minutes so that they might not pretend ignorance thereof; and that they should not exact any higher rates from their scholars than those fixed by their several acts of appointment."

Town Subsidies

Those Town Council subsidies from the common good had been made from the erection of the burgh under the charters of 1741 and 1751. The first that can be traced was in 1749, in which year the following entry is found in the books of the town treasurer: "1749, Nov. 24. To cash paid Robert Arrol, grammar schoolmaster, for his year's salary from Candlemas, 1749, to Candlemas, 1750, £4 9s 5½d." In 1785 the amount of contributions from this source for educational purposes generally was - To the master of the English school, £20; to the Latin school, £15; to the master of writing and arithmetic, £13 3s. In or about 1805 the Council, from impoverished finances, found it necessary to withdraw these contributions from all but the Grammar School, the Free or Charity School, and the Female School of Industry; but they provided in buildings of their own free schools for the teachers, and a sum was allowed to each of the masters for school rent and occasionally for furniture. We gather that John Galt was in 1788 a pupil at the school of one McGregor, whom he has referred to as an excellent teacher but of a wayward temper. Here, with two of his most famous contemporaries - James Parker, his "literary mentor," and William Spence, mathematician-Galt was instructed in penmanship, arithmetic, mathematics, and French.

For the Poor

Ann Street Charity School was instituted in 1792, on a suggestion by Dr. Scott, Mid Kirk, for the free education of children who were orphans, fatherless, or who had no prospect of being educated elsewhere. The cost was defrayed by public subscription. The building was sold about 1813, larger premises built with the proceeds and public contributions, and these were enlarged in 1864 at a cost of £645, of which £300 came from the Town Council.

Salaries

In April, 1803, the 'Advertiser' noted "with great satisfaction that our Magistrates and Council have with their accustomed liberality bestowed an augmentation of their salaries upon the public teachers of this town. Nor, it is hoped, will they stop here, but go on to add to the comfort and respectability of that useful class of men by providing them in schools and schoolhouses more in the style with our other improvements than those they at present occupy."

Inadequate Facilities

In a letter to the editor about the same time a writer stated that "in no place have I been more disappointed than in Greenock, a town that has risen more rapidly into notice than any in Scotland, yet where nothing has been done for the encouragement of education since at a period when it did not contain a fourth of the inhabitants it does at present. Many plans have been spoken of, but it is feared that in the midst of many others in agitation this will be

jostled out of view were only a part of that assiduity used which so lately obtained subscribers for the Tontine and the Theatre it would be a very easy matter to raise sufficient funds for the purpose."

Bearhope Academy

A public movement in favour of additional school accommodation was begun in 1805, when, according to the Council minutes, a letter was received from a number of respectable feuars and inhabitants on the state of the public schoolhouses. The Council, "being fully sensible of the justice of the representation, and extremely desirous of providing proper schoolhouses, directed the clerk to apply to Sir John Shaw Stewart to know upon what terms he would grant a feu." Sir John was favourably inclined, and the New Academy in Barehope's or Beerup's Garden was completed in May, 1806, at a cost of £3,000. These magniloquent phrases appear in the minutes regarding the building: "Beauty, grandeur, and simplicity appear united in a more remarkable degree than in any other design. This may be considered as a classical and legitimate ornament (model for the portico of the Parthenon to the Temple of Minerva at Athens) to a building devoted to learning." In addition to this encouragement of elementary education the local authorities of the day were ambitious of having a University in the town, with two accessory scholastic establishments, the expense to be defrayed by a moderate assessment; but, although there was something about a memorial to Parliament, the idea dropped out of sight.

Teacher's Terms

The Council had a ground of complaint against the schoolmasters of 1808, who were charged with a display of apathy in their labours on account of payment by salary. Measures were taken to counteract this tendency, the Council resolving that the terms upon which Colin Lamont had been appointed should be strictly adhered to, and "that although the sum he had been in use to receive for several years past should then be paid to him for the last, still such payment should not be construed to infer any right or claim on his part to a salary, and in time to come he should, in terms of the minute of his appointment, receive such a gratuity only as the consideration of his ability, exertion, and success might suggest him to be deserving of. Robert Ferguson got £12 10s, but all further payment was to be discontinued;" and "Donald McFarlan as in former years, with consideration how far so large an allowance was either proper or necessary for the time to come."

Ann Street School

In 1810 there were on an estimate 23 schools, the pupils numbering upwards of 3,000. The foundation-stone of the Free School, Ann Street, in which there was accommodation for 400, was laid on June 10, 1814, by Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Provincial Grand Master of Renfrewshire and Dumbartonshire, and the opening ceremony took place in January following. The success of this school was early assured through the generosity of Sir Michael, who gifted the ground, the Magistrates and Council, Mr. Robert Boag, who bequeathed to it a considerable part of his fortune, and the general public. At the annual examination in 1818 there was an attendance of 528 pupils out of a possible 530. The school behind the Mid Kirk, referred to in the records of the time as commodious, was opened for evening classes, an example gradually followed elsewhere. Kilblain Academy (now an educational centre of the past and utilised as a Good Templars' Hall) dated from 1817, when the Town Council purchased Kilblain House to be used as a genteel boarding school, there having been complaints from gentlemen that they were obliged to send their daughters from home in order to obtain the education that could not be procured for them in Greenock.

Old Masters

In a handbill dated March, 1814, Lewis Colquhoun intimated that he "has commenced his school down at the Highland Close, in Morrison's Land. Whomsoever may have inclination to obtain a thorough knowledge of writing,, arithmetic, book-keeping, etc., at 5s to 7s per quarter, will be taught with all due attendance." The list of teachers in the town a hundred years ago comprised about thirty male and female. Amongst them were Dan. McFarlane (Grammar School), Colin Lamont, Colin Buchanan, Rev. John Dunn, Rev. John Gordon (R.C.), George Gibson, James Hunter, John Munro (Free School), Mrs. Murray (Female School of Industry), Moses Cumming (Relief), James Sutherland, William Shaw, James Munro, Gilbert McAulay, John Whyte, John McGlashan, Simon Kemp, Robert Nichol, John Barr, Alexander McWilliam, Dan. Tough, John Campbell, Jonathan Davidson, and in Crawforddyke Robert Hunter and John Crawford. Tough went to Australia, but afterwards returned to this country and for some time conducted a school in England. James Slater succeeded Tough in the Tobago Street premises in 1826. Slater, who came to Greenock from Kilmacolm, was in Tobago Street School for forty years, and was afterwards registrar for the East Parish. He introduced evening classes for young men in business or who were learning trades.

A reminiscence of the period has reference to an old Candlemas custom, according to which the pupils brought money gifts to the teacher, the amounts from sixpence to half-a-crown. It was the occasion of a remarkable half-holiday, the children marching into the country, digging a grave, and going through the form of burying their king and queen. An old boy has thus described the event: "Having reached Brachelston Toll Bar at the Inverkip Road, we diverged up the cart track leading into a quarry and passed up over the hills among whins immediately to the south of the elegant mansion of Caddie Hill, residence of Mr. Thomson, banker, and there we performed the ceremony of digging the grave and burying our king and queen."

Harbours and Education

In a Council minute of 1825 there is the following interesting statement: "A period of sixty years has elapsed since any direct taxation came to the aid of the town funds, and but for the valuable assistance derived from the shipping interest through the anchorage dues, etc., something of the kind must have been resorted to long before this time. During the twelve years that have elapsed since the alteration in the table of anchorage dues £6394 has been realised from this source, leaving a surplus much more than sufficient for the building of the Industry and Free Schools and the purchase money of the Kilblain property."

Alan Ker School

The Alan Ker School or Trade School, Ann Street, was opened in May, 1829, at an original cost of £1,100. While it was greatly through the exertions of the Greenock Seamen's Friendly Society that this, called also the Sailors' School, was established, the actual founder was Mr. Alan Ker. On the word of his municipal colleagues, Mr. Ker was "so deeply anxious to diffuse education among all ranks and to add to the general respectability of the town by increasing the number of seminaries for instruction, that at his own expense he erected a school for affording good education at a low rate to the children of operative tradesmen and others." It was left in charge of the Church of Scotland, particularly of the session of the Mid Parish.

Highlanders

At the beginning of 1835 the Highlanders' Church and School Association found, as the result of a local census, that there were from 300 to 500 children of Highland parents attending no school, and from 700 to 1,000 of the Gaelic population not attending any church. The society received a grant of £600 from Government in aid of an Infant and Juvenile School, and at the same time £600 was publicly subscribed. Highlanders' Academy, Roxburgh Street, was opened in July, 1835. Mr. James Watt, of Heathfield, son of the great inventor, was in the chair at the soiree. He stated that Sir Michael Shaw Stewart had given nearly 100 falls of ground at a low yearly feu-duty, and repaid the grassum of £675 14s 8d as a donation to the building fund. The doors of the school were thrown wide open to the children of Churchmen and Dissenters alike.

A movement in favour of establishing a Scientific College occupied public attention for a year or two. The proposal included the founding of three Professors' Chairs, the fund to be raised by assessment under Act of Parliament. A series of resolutions were passed at a meeting in the Town Hall in August, 1837, when a committee was appointed, and a subscription of £100 was offered by one gentleman. The scheme fell gradually into abeyance. The idea of science teaching was in the 'Seventies carried to fruition when Mr. Wm. Cook, B.A., was brought from Beith to carry on classes in the new Mearns Street School, afterwards continued in the Higher Grade, now Greenock High School.

To Mr. Thomas Fairrie, who died in 1858, belongs much of the credit for special educational efforts during his lifetime. In the words of Rev. Dr. Laughton in 1887: "A name that should never be forgotten in Greenock is Thomas Fairrie. There was no other man who did so much for the cause of education in Greenock long before the days of School Boards." The Fairrie Schools began with a maximum of 2d a week per scholar, and were carried on in the Masons' Hall, Charles Street, in Harvie Lane, and in Rue-End Street, afterwards in St Andrew Square. Mr. Fairrie also instituted a number of Sunday Schools and maintained several missionaries.

Statistics

It was publicly stated in 1841 that the education of the young had at no time perhaps been so ably conducted, nor had the opportunities of receiving education been so abundant. Within the previous five years numerous schools had been instituted for the benefit of the working population. A few months later Greenock Presbytery had the subject under consideration. According to the statistics there supplied, in addition to private boarding schools, the public seminaries numbered 30, with an average attendance of 2,711 out of a population of 36,000. Fifty-eight were learning Latin and eight Greek, which was regarded as a most humiliating state of things, as showing that the taste for classical literature was very low. One of the members thought that the fact of the West Parish having no Parochial School was a much greater defect than a falling off in the number of classical pupils. Dr. McFarlan explained that as soon as he came to Greenock he had learned that up to the middle of the eighteenth century a Parish School had been maintained. At that time Greenock had been made a burgh, and the Magistrates had established a Grammar School instead, which was sufficient for the then population. He was aware that this did not exempt the heritors from the burden of keeping up a Parish School, and he believed that but for the death of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart negotiations in this direction would have proved successful.

Grants by Council

The question of a grant for repairs on the Charity School came before the Town Council in 1846, when the Provost stated that the money expended by the town for educational purposes amounted to £30 each yearly to the Mathematical and Grammar Schools. Explaining how these grants came to be made, he said they had been allowed as in some measure taking the place of a Parish School. It was argued that as this money was voted for the children of the rich the Council could not grudge something for the instruction of the poor. The Provost admitted that the Charity School appeal could not be resisted, and a grant of £100 was agreed to. At a subsequent meeting the subject of the above annual allowances was again under discussion. A Councillor ventured to say that there was not a single member who would think of continuing the payment to the Grammar School. The ordinary folks

already paid more than their share of public burdens, and it was unfair to expect that they were to be further taxed for the instruction of the upper classes. The grant should in preference go to the Charity School. Provost Grieve, on the other hand, was of opinion that the small sum to the Grammar School should be looked upon as a boon to the poorer and middle classes, who were thus enabled to obtain a classical education. Mr. Hew McIlwraith was inclined to think that the grant could not reasonably be continued. There were, of course, the two views on the point-one, that it was improper to take from the town taxes the means of educating the children of those who were well able to pay for their instruction, the other that it was meant to keep children in town who would have to be sent elsewhere. There were only 63 scholars in the Grammar School, 600 in the Charity School and the School of Industry, and only £10 was given the Charity School from the town funds.

Public Dissatisfaction

The inhabitants were far from satisfied with the management of educational and municipal affairs of this date. They held a meeting and prepared a memorial to the Council formulating a series of complaints. Chief amongst these referred to "the sums annually expended in supporting the Grammar and Technical Schools, and to the fees being so high as virtually to exclude the children of the great majority of the community; and not only so, but to leave their education to charity or chance." A Charity School was opened in connection with St Andrew's Church in 1836, and the Rev. Dr. P. Macfarlan is said to have left on record the statement - the accuracy of which, in the light of the facts given above, may justly be questioned - that the gentlemen who erected this school had the honour of being the first to introduce efficient teaching at a cheap rate into Greenock.

Situation Faced

It was frankly admitted, however, that up to 1847 the schools provided were for the most part of a primitive description. The Town Council, led by Provost J. J. Grieve, then took the subject into serious consideration. At a meeting in February of that year, an account of which is worthy of preserving in detail, Provost Grieve referred to the state of education in the town and to the absence of a proper system in the elementary branches. He moved that a committee be appointed to consider the whole subject of education the extent and quality of instruction provided for the several classes of society, and the amount of pecuniary provision made for this purpose, from whatever sources. The Council highly approved of the proposal, and to a Corporation Committee were added Rev. Dr. McCulloch, West Parish; Rev. Thos. Finlayson, Secession Church Union; and Rev. Wm. Laughton, Free St. Thomas'. In August of the same year the Committee submitted a report of great length and detail. The subject, they said, had been much discussed for many years, and the prevailing opinion was that the existing provision was both scanty and inefficient. Although some efforts by private individuals and public bodies had been productive of good, much remained to be done.

Statistics showed that the number of children under fifteen years of age at school was about 3,000 in a population estimated at 40,000, on the basis of which figure there ought to have been 6666. From a Parliamentary return of 1826 there were then 2750 children at school in a population of 24,000, and in 1832 3212 in a population of 30,000, thus showing that the attendance had not kept pace with the rapid increase of the inhabitants. The Committee were persuaded that there were good grounds for alarm at the low state of elementary education. The town had 26 elementary schools and 46 teachers, while about 650 children of the better class and 235 from the humbler class were in attendance at schools that taught all branches, a proportion surprisingly small when compared with the state of higher education twenty or thirty years before. It was calculated that the sum of £19,200 represented the capital in buildings and contributions to schools.

Responsibilities

The Committee had devoted some attention to the position of the Town Council and the heritors in reference to the subject, and the Town Clerk had made a laborious search into the records of Council from the earliest period for information under this head, but nothing very definite or satisfactory had been elicited. It was well known that at that date there was no Parochial School, properly so called, attached to any one of the three parishes, and the records of the Council did not show that there ever had been any such school in Greenock. If there had been at any time, it had long ago disappeared. The law of Scotland in those days was understood to impose an obligation on all heritors and feuars to provide a teacher and a good salary, with schoolroom and dwelling in every parish. This, the Committee thought, might be made compulsory in the three parishes of Greenock, but the machinery was so cumbrous and the provision, when found, so scanty, that it was not worthwhile. The researches into the old records showed that the matter of education had always been considered a peculiar function of the Magistrates and Council, and that they had ever taken a deep interest in the efficiency of the teachers and extended a helping hand to educational institutions.

The Committee were prepared to recommend that, since there already existed a certain provision of schools for general education, the Council should endeavour to throw their weight and influence in the direction of those schools, and if possible to add to their number and efficiency and improve the accommodation for the scholars. It was not decent, they stated, that teachers should be reduced to the condition of the humblest citizen, labouring in meanness, obscurity, and neglect. "If ministers of religion would insist on religious teaching in the schools, they must make greater exertions to raise the standard and increase the respectability and efficiency of those to whom is committed the inculcation of Divine knowledge."

Academy

The Committee had great difficulty in forming a precise and definite opinion as to what they should recommend. As to higher education, the Grammar School and the Mathematical School, both in connection with the Council, it was proposed should be incorporated and a new Academy built by public subscription. For this Sir Michael Shaw Stewart had offered a field of two acres in Nelson Street, and the sum of £3,000 was wanted for the building.

A second report of this Committee was submitted in November, 1850, which stated that the capital of the Academy had been fixed at £4,000 in 400 shares of £10 each. While considerable emphasis had been laid upon the need for a more liberal provision of elementary schools and the fostering of education among the working and poorer classes, the efforts of the local authorities and leading citizens were for the time chiefly devoted to the interests of the better class. The scheme of an Academy for secondary and higher teaching was entered into with a commendable spirit, and before long the founding of the institution was assured through the liberality of a number of private gentlemen, who agreed to defray the cost of the building by subscribing for 300 shares of the nominal value of £10 each. Mr. William Macfie of Langhouse subscribed £1,100; Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Messrs. Thomas Fairrie, Mathew Brown, Robert Macfie of Airds, John Fairrie (then of London), and Duncan Hoyle, each £100; and donations were received of £100 from Mr. John Macfie (Edinburgh) and of £50 from Mr. Walter Baine. The Academy was opened on September 3, 1855, the first board of directors being - Provost T. O. Hunter, Bailies Sellars and Kincaid, Councillors James Stewart, John MacCunn, and J. T. Caird; Mr. Robert Macfie, Rev. Dr. McCulloch, Rev. Dr. Laughton, and Mr. J. J. Grieve. The first rector was Mr. Robert Buchanan, LL.D. At the opening ceremony Rev. Dr. McCulloch wrote that the institution promised to secure to children of the upper and middle classes a course and style of instruction hitherto unenjoyed in Greenock. It was true, Rev. Wm. Laughton remarked, that the town contained many excellent schools, conducted by able teachers, but there was no combined system and each was separate and independent of the rest. He had heard it stated that it should have been the duty of the Town Council to attend to the education of the lower classes. There was certainly much to be done there, but for his part he was decidedly convinced that the education of the lower classes was advancing more rapidly than that of the upper. At the annual examination in 1860 Rev. Mr. Stark attributed the great advance even in the humblest educational institution to the establishment of the Academy, and Rev. Mr. Laughton, in confirmation, stated that since the institution was opened all must be sensible of the progress of education. The Academy could not take all the credit, but its opening had produced a great effect. There were now close upon 6000 scholars in the town, amongst the leading academies being a Navigation School (inaugurated by the Magistrates), a School of Art, with a great many pupils, George Square Academy, Cartsideyke Episcopal School (established in 1855), Lynedoch Street Academy, etc.

Education in 1872

From this point of time on to the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 there was undoubtedly a general improvement in the amount and character of education in elementary schools. We have the authority of Bailie Grey in 1865 that in regard to educational institutions Greenock was then equal to any town in Europe. On the passing of the Act the state of education was the subject of discussion by the Town Council. Mr. Dugald Campbell, who subsequently became Provost and was for many years a leading educationist, remarked that Greenock had no Parochial Schools in the Parliamentary sense, and the heritors had nothing to do with the management of any one of them; they were not assessed at all for education, and for all that had been done for Greenock under the existing Parochial Schools Act it might then have been the most illiterate town in Scotland. But, neglected as Greenock had been by the heritors, yet owing to the encouragement of the Town Council, the Churches, benevolent citizens like Mr. Fairrie, and private enterprise, Greenock stood pretty well in the matter of education, the proportion at school being by the previous census about one in every eight of the population. The Established, Free, and U.P. Schools were all voluntarily maintained by the good-will of the several congregations to which they were attached, and the very men who then, as members of the various churches and of the Town Council, took an interest and supported those schools were likely to constitute the Board under the Act.

School Boards

The first School Board under the Act was elected unopposed on April 14, 1873, and was composed of the following gentlemen: - Messrs Edward Blackmore, of Messrs Rankin & Blackmore, engineers; Dugald Campbell, house factor and accountant, afterwards Provost of the town; Rev. Dean William Gordon, R.C.; John Mitchell Hutcheson, sugar broker; Rev. Wm. (later D.D.) Laughton, St. Thomas' Free Church; Dr. William Johnstone Marshall; ex-Provost James Morton, iron merchant; Rev. Dr. James Melville McCulloch, West Parish Church; Alexander Mackenzie, editor of 'Greenock Advertiser'; James Stewart, shipowner, afterwards Member for the burgh; and Dr. James Wallace, for many years medical officer of health. This body of citizens was universally acknowledged to be representative of all that was best in culture, education, and business capacity, and at no time in the history of the Board was the personnel as a whole held in greater confidence and esteem by the general public. The Board did not succeed to any school property vested in it by the Act, but found several establishments thrown on its hands. Some mission schools, and the Charity and Female School of Industry, were thus acquired, and other temporary places were opened in various parts of the town, the whole number under their immediate direction being ten. Many of them were very defective as regards space, ventilation, and the general conveniences, and in point of accommodation few of them made any approach to modern requirements.

How Things Stood

When the Act came into operation the town possessed 37 school premises. The list included Sir Michael Street Missionary and Educational Association, Free North, Gaelic Parish, Mid Parish, Charity, Academy, Kilblain Academy, Smith's Lane Mission, Broad Close, Belmont Academy, Nicolson Street (Gaelic Association), School of Industry, East-end Episcopal, Cartsburn Hall School, St Andrew Square, Lynedoch Academy, West Parish Sessional, Mason's Hall, School of Art in Town Hall, and Navigation School in Palmerston Buildings. Of the 37, 14 were denominational, 4 were under municipal management, 6 were large schools conducted by associations, and the remainder were private seminaries or schools with a limited attendance. The Church or Mission schools had a roll of 4,130, an average attendance of 3,193, and accommodation for 3,499; while the larger undenominational buildings had 3,507 on the roll, 2,756 in average attendance, and accommodation for 3,899. The total on the roll in all the schools was 8,319, with 6309 in average attendance, and accommodation for 8,686. Of 9,900 children over five and under thirteen years, 2,871 were not attending school. The net accommodation required was estimated at 8,415, but as certain of the schools taken over by the Board were held temporarily and in prospect of being speedily withdrawn, this figure was reduced to 6,035, and left a want to be supplied of 2,500.

Taking Over

Almost the first practical business of the Board was this transference of a number of the existing schools, with the willing managers of which negotiations were carried through amicably and satisfactorily. Two new buildings, in Mearns and Belville Streets, were erected without delay, and were the start of a series of well-equipped and commodious premises in the most densely populated districts of the town. As many of the old buildings were lacking in the ordinary conveniences and 14 only had anything in the nature of a playground, the question of sanitation and generally healthful surroundings at once demanded serious attention and expenditure. At the opening of Belville School in September, 1876, Mr. Morton, chairman, stated that the accommodation previous to the first Board had been very defective, as also was the state of education, as compared with other towns; while Mr. Dugald Campbell said that Greenock had been behindhand in regard to school accommodation and that it was in a position of disgrace. These two new schools cost - Belville, £10,320 16s; Mearns, £11,365 8s 2d. At the end of the three years' term there was considerable improvement both as to the rolls and average attendance, and absenteeism was being greatly decreased. Under the East Landward School Board Ladyburn School was opened in 1877.

Progress

In the second triennial period of the Board (Mr. James Morton re-elected chairman) two additional schools were built - Shaw Street, £11,507 16s 3d; Glebe, £14,031 15s 0d - and £445 14s 1d was expended on the transference and conversion of St. Andrew Square School. Much satisfaction was expressed at the success of the Board's labours and the results through the enforcement of the compulsory clause of the Act. There were now seven permanent schools under the Board, with accommodation for 5,397, and the total accommodation in town was 11,353. The Charity School, acquired from the trustees of Mr James Fairrie, was revived as a free school, with 214 on the roll. Supplementary subjects were increasing fast, under an energetic administration, and already included evening classes, cookery, religious instruction, female industry, drill, temperance, etc.

A still more distinct advance in several directions had been made by the close of the third Board's tenure of office (Mr. Dugald Campbell chairman). The passing of an amending Act in 1878 removed some of the defects of the original statute, in particular with regard to the enforcement of the compulsory clauses. The Board, however, desiderated something more authoritative in the way of legislation, for instance, in relation to their duty towards destitute and neglected children. In the matter of buildings, Highlanders' Academy and Alan Ker School were acquired, and negotiations for the transfer of Greenock Academy brought to a successful issue.

Academy Transferred

On this proposal being made in 1819 the average revenue from fees and Corporation grants was close on £2,500, but it was then falling below that figure, and owing to the demands for outlays on buildings and ground the directors could not afford to pay more than three-fourths of the comparatively small salaries of the principal teachers. There was also a heritable debt of about £2,000. Most of the shareholders at once gave consent to the transference. Mr. Robert Macfie of Airds handed over shares to the value of £1,500, the Fairrie family £500, Sir Michael Shaw Stewart a considerable sum, and other well-known local families yielded up their shares in like manner. In reply to the proposal the Board stated that they did not apprehend any great difficulty in taking over or maintaining the Academy as a higher class school.

The Academy Grants

The transference was completed in 1882. It gave occasion for raising the question of the Corporation grants. One hundred years ago these contributions from the common good were - Teacher of mathematics, £30; teacher of Latin, £25; school rent, £25. The amounts continued to be paid after the passing of the Burgh Reform Act of 1833. From 1836 to 1855 the burgh accounts show that these three sums, in total ranging from, £110 to £147, were paid as salaries to the Grammar School and mathematical teachers, for prizes, for printing, etc. On the constitution of Greenock Academy in 1855 the Town Council agreed to the transfer of the Grammar School and Mathematical

School teachers, and committed themselves to the payment of £145 annually to the Academy. The Council in 1882, consequent on the Academy transfer, held that they should no longer be under legal obligation for this payment. The opinion of counsel, however, was adverse to this view, and the Corporation accepted the decision as to their continued liability.

On Humane Lines

The Board now owned twelve schools. Within the ten years from 1872 new buildings at a cost of about £75,000 had been erected, the Academy had cost £17,590 7s 3d, and a transferred school re-constructed nearly £5,000. Hillend, at £9,181 19s, followed in the succeeding triennial period (Dr. William A. Wilson chairman), which was marked by the introduction of oral teaching for deaf mutes and the institution of savings banks and of penny dinners for children in Shaw Street School whose parents were unemployed and in destitute circumstances. These were significant indications of a growing sense of responsibility in the care of the young. Children of school age now numbered 13,800, the average attendance was 9,723, and the total available accommodation in town was for 11,130.

Educational Trust

Special circumstances arose during the life of the 1885-8 Board (Mr. Alex. S. Mories chairman) which forced their hand on the subject of new schools. The construction of the Gourock railway caused the demolition of Highlanders' Academy, at a compensation of £16,617 16s 6d, and the disposal of Ann Street and Sir Michael Street Schools, at £8,494 4s. The new Highlanders' in Mount Pleasant Street cost £15,000, more than half as much again as the old. Ann Street premises were continued for a term of years under lease from the Caledonian Railway Company, until the populous district was better provided for through the construction of Holmscroft School, at £14,000. Sir Michael Street and Ann Street Schools having from their origin been of a charitable nature, built and supported by contributions from various quarters for charitable purposes, the question was raised regarding the future application of the money received as compensation, the ground having been granted for "the sole and express purpose of building accommodations for charitable institutions." The Educational Endowment Commission agreed with the Board that the money was educational endowment within the meaning of the Act. A special case in the Court of Session, however, resulted in the Town Council being declared the legal owners. The sum was thus lost to the new local Education Trust, whose total funds from various bequests at this time amounted only to £255 12s. This Trust was constituted by three members of the Town Council, two of the School Board, one of the trustees of James Fairrie, and a member of Greenock Presbytery. The Board had been of opinion that with a such small funds there was little need for a Trust, but the Commissioners ruled otherwise.

The scheme of the Greenock Educational Trust, of which Mr. Robert Stewart Walker, solicitor, is secretary and treasurer, embraces the Scott Trust, Fairrie Trust, Bog Trust, Watt Bequest, Chambers' Mortification, Patten's Bequests, Currie's Bequest, Park's Legacy, Fairrie's Bequest, McEwan's Bequest, and the Charity School managers' funds. The Trust funds are applied in establishing secondary and intermediate school bursaries for pupils attending public or State-aided schools in the burgh, and clothing for needy children attending such schools, and in maintaining foundationers in the Scott Institution.

By the Technical Act of 1887 the advanced form of industrial teaching was begun during this period, but as it was found impracticable meanwhile to provide a separate building accommodation was given in the elementary schools, which continued until the erection of the Higher Grade (now the High) School, on a feu adjoining Holmscroft, in 1903.

Indignant Parents

In the closing year of this Board the majority members carried through a resolution that in the course of time brought a storm of popular remonstrance about their heads. In the triennial report the subject is thus referred to: "The building of two new schools considerably larger than any hitherto existing in Greenock naturally raised the very difficult and important, question of the proper disposition of the teaching staff. Their desire was to secure the highest possible efficiency, and while they are satisfied the changes have been accepted generally as sound and in the order of merit as regards their teachers, they believe they are also certain before long to commend themselves to many of those who have hitherto been opposed to them." The demonstrations against the transference of Highlanders' Academy and Hillend teachers to what they regarded as inferior schools created quite a stir throughout the town, which for a time bore all the signs of being in the throes of a general election, nothing being too hard or harsh to say about opposing partisans. So effective was the assault upon the new positions that the teachers and their party eventually won. The majority of the 1891 Board (Mr. John Macphail chairman) was pledged to re-instatement, and this was done at once as far as practicable. There was not a little of the squabbling, mob element introduced into the quarrel, some things said and done that sane men should be sorry for. It is wise, therefore, to abstain from elaboration of an event which, big at the moment, is now by the process of time seen in its proper light and perspective.

Thriving Affairs

During the succeeding nine years or so the growth and extension of School Board affairs proceeded on smooth and progressive lines. The chairmen of the three Boards in this period were Mr. J. M. Hutcheson, Mr. Tom Neill

(who resigned during his term of office and his place taken by Mr. John Macphail), and Dr. Philip. The veteran clerk, Mr. George Williamson, who had acted since 1873, died in May, 1899, and his assistant, Mr. A. F. Niven, was appointed successor. A notable fact is that with the opening of Ardgowan School in April, 1898, the Board was for the first time in its history able to accommodate the whole of the pupils in buildings belonging to the ratepayers. It fell to the next Board (Rev. W. Lewis Robertson, ALA., chairman) to realise ambitions on the subjects of technical and other advanced instruction, by the erection of the Higher Grade School, at a cost of £21,223, justly regarded as a creditable addition to the educational equipment of the town. There was a great advance in special classes for the technical requirements of specific trades. The Board also fostered higher education in Greenock Academy, which, while a fee-paying school, imposes no part of teachers' salaries upon the rates; and continuation classes were an outstanding feature, with an attendance of 1,142 pupils, science and art classes with 540.

The High School

The Higher Grade School was opened in the autumn of 1903 (Mr. R. A. Reid chairman), and during this term of three years plans were passed for building Cartsburn School, on the site of the old Cartsburn Mansion house. The matters of principal interest in the 1906-9 Board (Mr. Thos. Mitchell chairman) included the introduction under the New Education (Scotland) Act of free books, free meals, and clothing for necessitous children; the completion of Cartsburn School at a cost of £13,667, and of the Academy extension at £700; and the handing over to the Board of the Watt Memorial Buildings, at the corner of William and Dalrymple Streets.

This memorial was the gift of Andrew Carnegie, it cost about £8,000, and at its opening in October, 1908, there was an endowment fund from local subscriptions of £3,000.

Financial Cares

There followed at this period also, from the operation of the new Act, the extinction of the pupil teacher system in favour of the certificated, pensions for teachers were instituted, and the medical inspection of children made law. The effect of so many drastic changes was seriously felt by the succeeding Board (Rev. Canon Lennie chairman), which had a term of two years only. From the beginning of their duties the members saw the need for extreme care in expenditure at a time when all taxation was showing an upward tendency. It stands to the credit of this Board that it was the first to recognise and act upon the principle that the pupils should enjoy the full benefits of their own playgrounds during the summer months.

The record of 1911-14 (Mr. Alex. Campbell chairman) was one of steady progress. East and West Landward School Boards were merged in that of Greenock. Owing to unprecedented trade conditions and the influx of workers to the Torpedo Factory, the accommodation was severely taxed, and the Board accordingly resolved on erecting Finnart School and a new school at Ladyburn. Temporary room was provided in church halls and business premises. The question of juvenile employment called for some solution, in which connection the Board with excellent results enlisted the co-operation of the Labour Exchange in helping lads to choose an occupation. Physical training, secondary education, and kindred subjects received a due attention, and were on the whole successfully dealt with.

The fifteenth period of the Board extended from 1914 to 1910 Mr. Wm. Dugald Boyd chairman until June, 1917, thereafter Mr. John Allan Tannahill. At the close of the five years it was reported that the abnormal conditions caused by the war not only restricted the Board's operations in many ways, but in different directions it hindered educational progress. Play centres, baths, school gardens, and welfare of youth took up the attention of the members, and serious consideration was given to the need for a school specially adapted for physically and mentally defective children. Government had declined approval of buildings during the war, and in the meanwhile temporary accommodation for these children had been provided in a building adjoining Ladyburn School. Finnart and Ladyburn Schools were opened, the former in April, 1914, the latter in August, 1915. Large sums of money were collected in the schools by the War Savings Associations. Pupils and teachers also assisted in various other directions in connection with war needs. On the subject of finances the expiring Board regretted that the expenditure had necessitated a large increase in the school rate, with no prospect of any decrease in the future; on the contrary, owing to the requirements of the new Act, the prospect was almost sufficient to excite alarm. A great increase of expenditure was inevitable in providing nursery schools, additional schools, and teachers, to meet the raising of the school age to fifteen, and also because of the acquisition of the voluntary schools and continuation classes.

The activities of the School Board were brought to an end in May, 1919, through the operation of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, and the management vested in an Education Authority for the County, with local committees in districts. The farewell report contained the remark that in the opinion of a large proportion of the population the passing of School Boards was a matter of sincere regret. Amongst the important work to which the members of the Authority applied themselves was the provision for the physically and mentally defective. The mansion of Finnart, Forsyth Street, was purchased in 1920, and operations towards reconstruction and adaptation were begun with expedition, the whole at a cost estimated at about £15,000. Grosvenor School, Dempster Street, adjoining Mearns Street School, and intended principally for juniors and infants, was opened in August, 1921. The amount of the school rate imposed for the year 1920-1 was £81,350.

The private schools in town include the Collegiate School, Clyde School and Kindergarten, High School for Girls, Franciscan School, etc.

The following is a list of outlays on schools of the Board since the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872:-

Belville Place	£10,320-16-0
Mearns Street	11,365-8-2
Shaw Street	11,507-16-3
Glebe	14,031-15-0
St Andrews Square	445-14-1
Academy	22,590-7-3
Hillend	9,181-19-0
Highlanders	15,000-00-0
Holmscroft	14,000-00-0
High School	21,223-00-0
Cartsburn	13,667-00-0
Ardgowan	13,996-00-0
Finnart	17,500-00-0
Ladyburn	14,000-00-0
Finnart House	15,000-00 0
Grosvenor	<u>7,556 00 0</u>
	£ 211,381 15 9

The People

The Gaelic Strain

While the stream of Highland migration southward did not flow in any steady volume until 1715, and again in 1745, it cannot reasonably be doubted that long before in considerable measure Greenock was peopled from a Gaelic source. It is true that in the first rumour of a new and pregnant centre of potential wealth the adventurous of neighbouring Lowland counties flocked Clyde ward: it is no less true that these found natives of Argyllshire already firmly established in the staple industries of the time, and that by no application of legitimate competition could they be superseded. Of this ample proofs have not been wanting from the virtual inception of the town, and by simply turning to the pages of the local Directory the most hesitant of doubters will be convinced that it is so still. Many of the fishermen who prior to the building of the Old West Kirk lived precariously off the Bay of Quick came originally, we may surmise, from the opposite shores of the firth to settle in closer proximity to the markets; and not improbably it was on their account and on that of their families, as well as solicitude for his own household and retainers, that John Schaw was prompted to provide religious ordinances. Throughout the succeeding three centuries an increasing influx from the same sources went on until, on Greenock reaching the height of a populous community, the Highland element comprised three-fourths of the whole. Thus, in the latter part of the eighteenth century 1433 of the heads of families had been born in Argyllshire, the name of Campbell prevailing, 78 in Bute, and 314 in the Northern Counties. There is a striking statement to their credit that families from Argyle did more to disseminate a knowledge of the Scriptures and the Church standards than the inhabitants from all the other counties of Scotland. Of the 83 members who signed the original deed of Greenock Library in 1783 about one-third bore Highland names, and the session minutes show that when the Gaelic Chapel was in process in 1782-9 many of the leading citizens were Highlanders. It is claimed, too, that Highlanders were the literary pioneers of the town, and William McAlpine is acknowledged to have been the first bookseller, in 1780. Williamson says that at one period the native Greenockian was a *rara avis*, immigration had been so extensive from the adjoining counties, from the Northern and Southern parts of the kingdom, and latterly from Ireland. As recently even as 1872 the 'Advertiser' stated that three-fourths of the population were Highlanders or their descendants, and that one could not move many yards on the streets without hearing a blash of the Gaelic.

Lowland Trek

When the port had so far succeeded in attaining a substantial reputation, and was fast accumulating the munitions of commercial warfare against jealous and menacing competitors, the incoming of the canny Lowland Scot advanced in increasing force, and soon had a distinct bearing and significance in local history. From the seaboard of Ayrshire—from Irvine, Troon, Ayr, Ardrossan, and Saltcoats - there came sailor men of the finest type, manning, commanding, and owning fleets of ships, by their intelligence and native shrewdness developing into wealthy merchants and founding families that are honourably represented to the present. Far away Aberdeenshire, the East Coast, the Midland and Southern Countries, all contributed their quota in men of enterprise who sought an outlet for their energies and ambitions. To many of them we owe it that the town became the seat of shipbuilding and sugar refining as well as of shipping, and that in after years their sons bore to London, Liverpool, and other great home ports, and to the four corners of the earth, the name of Greenock as a centre of commercial importance.

Irish

No very numerous body of Irish appeared until the nineteenth century was on its course. Such was then (August, 1833) "the influx of labourers from Ireland that it has been computed that from 2,000 to 3,000 have of late been weekly imported to the Clyde. Last week the numbers far exceeded anything formerly, no less than 7,000 or 8,000 having actually landed at Broomielaw. On Saturday the Antelope arrived with 800, crowded to excess. On that day alone there were 1,400 arrivals." Long before this, as a natural result of cross-channel business relations, a number of shippers and produce merchants from the North of Ireland had either themselves settled in the district or established agencies; and, at certain seasons of the year particularly, came bands of labourers, who, however, for the most part returned home on the expiry of their harvest or other work. Less desirable visitors from the same quarter were seen about the town at a much earlier period. Among the first notices in Town Council minutes touching natives of Ireland frequenting the neighbourhood is a reference to an outbreak of fever the seeds of which they were suspected of having brought with them. It was the boom in shipbuilding and the introduction of iron and steel in construction that were mainly accountable for the inrush of the labouring element from the Sister Isle. It has continued more or less constantly to our day, and now the native-born Irish or those of Irish extraction make up a large proportion of the population.

Population

In this matter of population there appears to have been no record previous to 1627. In this year the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of Charles I having ordered returns of the state quoad spiritualia of the different parishes, the minister of Greenock, Mr. Layng, attested that "the number of communicants in the parochine of Easter and Wester Greenock was 8 hundred the or theirby. The lengthe of the parochie is twa myles-the breid of it mur and dail 3-4 myle." Inverkip and Greenock had been disjoined in 1617. This figure of 800 has been reckoned as almost the entire community, as in those days children from seven years of age had their names placed on the Communion roll. Near the end of the seventeenth century the number of inhabitants in the town itself was 746, and the families 282. A trade's classification affords information as to how many of the men were employed: merchants, 26; coopers, 11; boatmen, 32; sailors and seamen, 47. The total population of the district was 1328, made up as follows: Greenock town, 746; Sir John Schaw's household, 26; East and West Barony of Greenock and Barony of Finnart (127 families), 301; Cartsdyke town (106 families), 210; household of Thomas Crawford of Cartsburn, 8; landward tenants (23 families), 37-1,328. By 1741 the Presbyterian census showed the population of Greenock as 3381 and that of Cartsdyke 719 - total 4,100. There was a decrease to 3,858 in the year to 1755, and then a steady advance. Following upon the peace of 1783 there was such a revival of the shipping trade that within a few years the numbers had increased to 13,000, and by 1791 to 15,000. From this on to 1831 the growth was gradual but not great, the increase in the forty years amounting to 12,750 - 1801, 17,450; 1811, 20,300; 1821, 22,000; and 1831, 27,500. In the following decade there was another big advance, significant also of a forward bound in trade, the statistics in 1841 being 35,921. A slower movement was again experienced up to 1851, when the figures were 36,683, but in the three subsequent ten years' periods the respective increases were remarkable 1861, 42,098; 1871, 57,146; 1881, 66,704. There was an actual decrease in the interval to 1891, accounted for by severe depression in shipbuilding. The figures were 63,423. A distinct improvement followed in the next twenty years - 1901, 68,217; 1911, 75,140 - and the census of this year showed the population at 81,120.

The Early Settlers

Of the original inhabitants we learn something from the records of the Old West Kirk. These, however, do not go farther back than 1694, the names of the elders at that time being James Montgomerie, Hugh Steil, William Andrew, James Rowan, James Craford, J. A. Johnstoun, John Clerk, James Warden, William Miller, and Matthew Ramsay; and Cartsburn Younger was chosen as ruling elder. This was on the translation of Rev. John Stirling from Inchennan. The register of births and marriages begins with April, 1698, and no register of burials was kept until a much later date. The session books of the time were alleged to have been shamefully mutilated. A charge of this kind was made in 1780, against the Rev. Mr. Turner, an entry reading: "Rev. Mr. Gillies, assistant and successor, stated that he had kept the minutes, and the session was afraid that Rev. Mr. Turner might destroy them if they remained in the clerk's hands, because he had more than once before torn leaves out of the session book. Mr. Gillies afterwards declined to keep the minutes for the time to come, and the session ordered the clerk on his peril not to deliver up the minutes into any person's hands whatsoever without their express appointment." Besides the mutilations in those years there is a blank from 1713 to 1727, pages are missing in 1780, and no records exist for six years from 1784. Happily the oldest extant volume is intact, and yields a certain amount of information regarding the condition and ways of life amongst the people. Still, except to the inquirer into the history of ecclesiastical discipline at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, it does not contain many generally interesting or illuminating facts. Since the Church of those days was so exclusively engaged in repressing the merely human desires and inclinations, we are scarcely justified in expecting to find much detail of the kind of folk they were - how they lived, dressed, amused themselves, made their state tolerable, and carried through their daily duties. The fishermen and their households, who constituted the base of the civic structure, we need no lively imagination to picture. They were prototypes of a class - a few of whom can still be met with in parts of the West Coast. We are prompted to wonder how, on the nomadic stage ending, those men and women were affected by their changing environment, in what directions and to what purposes their thoughts and actions tended, what they did in leisure as well as in labour. We are left in no doubt as to the estimation in which the common people were held by their Puritanical overseers, or to the attitude adopted towards them in every relation of life; but, apart from

the domain of offences and breaches of the Commandments, nearly all else touching the habits, customs, and character must be gathered by inference.

Ecclesiastical Overrule

Conduct and Authority

The very earliest of official notes contain frequent references to drinking and to misdemeanours of various other kinds. Elders and Bailies had a busy time looking after a section of the inhabitants (a small minority let it be hoped) who would persist in sitting in taverns at unseasonable hours, instead of preparing for or observing the Sabbath or the ordinances of week days. Some of the most influential citizens possessed a dual authority, civic and ecclesiastic, for putting into execution the Acts against profaneness, non-observance of the Sabbath, and excessive drinking. Those persons were so nominated according to an Act of 1672 and confirmed by the Sheriff. On occasions they were complained of as being unwilling and slow to exercise their powers, doubtless through a human sympathy with their unfortunate fellows.

Ecclesiastic Rigour

The Presbytery, on the contrary, were more than strict in this respect, and are said sometimes to have exceeded their province. Rev. John Layng (1598-1636) is understood to have looked sharply after his congregation of 800 members. The story is told that when walking through the town on a market day he was assaulted by a boisterous parishioner, who for his offence was condemned to appear in sackcloth on successive Sundays in every church of the Presbytery, and to end by exhibiting himself in the Kirk of Greenock. We are informed also that Rev. John Stirling (1694-1701) was chiefly remarkable for his rigorous dealings with the peccadilloes of his flock, and that he was sorely exercised at the prevalence of iniquity. The young people were charged with betraying a reprehensible desire to walk in the fields and to lounge at street corners on the Sabbath, to make love at penny bridals, to indulge in promiscuous dancing. The women engaged in bleaching linen tormented him by fighting like fishwives, swearing like troopers, fetching water and cutting kail on Sabbath. Grown men showed a most sinful tendency to sitting in taverns and lounging about the quay, and to the use of impertinent language to the elders who caught and dispersed them. The children played about the kirk door during sermon. Dr. David Service (1721-85) was even a greater stickler for Sabbath observance, and had a summary method of dealing with delinquents. Four apprentices caught in the heinous act of swimming in the Clyde instead of being at church were handed over to the Magistrates for corporal punishment.

Sabbath Breaking

It was about the period of 1694, or ten years subsequent to the end of the Covenanters' persecution, that the Fourth Commandment "began to take the prominent place in the minds of religious people in Scotland that it has since more or less retained, for as a matter of undoubted history this excessively strict and inquisitorial observance of Sunday had no existence in Scotland until about a quarter of a century after the Reformation, when it was introduced to us in the time of the English Puritans."

Beginning with 1695, we give a series of extracts from the session records regarding offences against the Sabbath. "The day is profaned by people walking up and down in the streets and fields unduly, and gathering in company for their recreation; spending the day by carnal intercourse, and by their endless frequenting taverns and ale-houses oftentimes, and by neglecting to attend the ordinances; children were not duly restrained from such abuses by their parents." Elders went through the streets with town officers, and gave in accounts of those found vaging or walking disorderly. "Found Margaret Watson carrying in water. She said it was for a sick cow. She received a sessional rebuke, and was exhorted to attend the ordinances and be more cautious in time to come." "Great abuses arising from light-walks and keeping banquets on the Sabbath." "The minister informed the session that the Govan minister had told him that Anna Paterson, daughter of John Paterson, seaman in Cartsdyke, had on the Lord's Day carried a burden of pease into Glasgow openly." "William Rodger, son of Robert Rodger, miller, for leading turf from the moor so soon on Monday morning by break of day that the same could not be done without breach of the Sabbath." The list of other offences included piloting a ship to Port Glasgow, making a coffin on Sunday (the accused pleading that it was a work of necessity and bringing forward witnesses), talking a boat out of the harbour, cutting kail in the time of the sermon, selling bread to a young maid in time of sermon, exposing for sale sweetmeats and confections on the Sunday morning of the Communion, boarding people and giving them entertainment in time of sermon, gathering in companies in yards and at the harbour heads in both towns, entertaining idle company and selling ale during Divine worship, carrying a pole and other things from the town to a boat. "James Rae loosed his ship on the Sabbath, which gave great offence. He was found really affected and concerned for the breach, coming to the session and acknowledging his guilt." "William Dalziel Wright, on the Monday next after the Communion, in time of sermon, wrought at his trade in a room adjoining the church, and in the hearing of many persons."

This question of a strict observance of the Sabbath for long continued to exercise the minds of ministers, sessions, and on occasions the town authorities. In 1804 the Magistrates, "with a laudable regard to the morals of the people and public decency, as well as to the interests of the Revenue, have prohibited the sale of spirits during Divine service and have also prohibited wholly the sale by persons having no license." The Town Council in 1826 recorded their determination "zealously and constantly to assist in suppressing vice and in enforcing strict

observance. Further, the Magistrates warned the delinquents that they would continue to use the strong arm of the law in punishing offences against religion and morality." In 1834, in response to a memorial, the Magistrates decided upon a more rigid shutting of public-houses, and to prevent the congregation of idle and dissipated persons on the streets. A Sabbath observance meeting was held at this date to petition in favour of legislation. It was, according to the 'Advertiser', "indubitably one .of the most disorderly and tumultuous ever held in Greenock, and that is saying a good deal." The opposition and disorder were so strong that the meeting was adjourned for six months. Strong protests were made in 1840 against the Sunday steamer Emperor. The Harbour Trustees were not sure of their powers on the subject, but resolved to discourage the sailing of the steamer. On the part of the owners of the steamer it was alleged that the quay was so crowded on Sundays that the passengers could not get out or in without being severely jolted and crushed, some of them having their clothes torn, while none of the harbour police was to be seen. The Trustees came to the finding "That, recognising the Divine authority and continued obligation of the Sabbath, the Harbour trustees deeply sympathise with the peaceable exertion made by a section of the working men to check the endeavours of some quarters at a distance to establish Sunday pleasure excursions, and regret that the state of the law is such as to prevent the Trustees from interfering."

Swearing etc.

The old session records have frequent references to swearing, scandal-mongering, etc. For instance - "It was intimated from the pulpit that all habitual swearers and cursers shall be taken notice of, and rebuked before the congregation if persisted in after admonition." "Mary Bannatyne and her family were guilty of very unchristian carriage and behaviour, what by cursing, swearing, and scolding, what by other acts of immorality, that they are a scandal to all good Christians and neighbours. If they forbear not, they will be taken notice of." "Isobell McKinlay sentenced to the greater excommunication for cursing and swearing." Several offences of an exceptional character are noted. "Margaret Goodlet has been using charms. She owned to the accusation, and said that she had practised it twice by turning a key on the Bible for the discovery of something that had been lost. Rebuked before the congregation." A number of similar cases are mentioned. Then, "There are manifold inconveniences in allowing persons to give in libels against their neighbours upon alleged injuries. The session therefore enacted for the time to come that libels of the kind be only received under a penalty." "There is habitual neglect of baptism and the ordinances." "Mountebanks have erected a stage for acting thereon, and it is proposed to fall upon some effective method of suppressing the same as unlawful and inductive to much sin and looseness. There is rope dancing, men simulating themselves fools, women exposing themselves to the public by dancing on the stage." The session took restrictive measures, but allowed the doctor or quack at the head of the show to expose his drugs to public sale.

Drinking

The following extracts deal with the drinking habits: "The overture anent the abuses (in 1695) of sitting at unseasonable times, etc., coining into consideration, it is appointed that sitting in and haunting of taverns on Friday and Saturday nights be abstained from after nine of the clock, at which time the bell of the kirk is allowed to be rung to give advertisement to all to repair to their own homes except in cases of necessity, and that this may be the more effective the elders are desired to be observant in their respective quarters and report as they shall find ground, and public intimation hereof to be made next Sabbath in order to the more due observance." "William Henderson, tailor, of Cappelows, drunkenness on the Sabbath and on humiliation day. Resolved that the civil Magistrate be appealed to." "James Hill relapsed into his old sin of habitual drunkenness. Abominably drunk on the Sabbath day, on his going to Innerkip while the Communion was celebrated there, and that before many witnesses." In 1784 the beadle and his son were charged with being disturbers of the peace, the former having been seen lying in the "sheuch." They were both dismissed from office. About the beginning of the eighteenth century the wives of sailors at sea seem to have given the Magistrates some trouble owing to their habits of ale-drinking and disposing of the household gods to keep up the supply. In 1712 a notice was issued to this effect: "On its being represented as a grievance that several brewers take in pledge or buy articles of household furniture and wearing apparel far within their value, no brewer shall take these from any woman without the consent of her husband, otherwise he shall be liable to ten pounds Scots and be required to restore the goods. Signed by Thomas Watt, Baron Bailie." This was the grandfather of James Watt.

In those far-off days, we are informed, the common drink at the Mansion-house was ale, home-brewed and bought at adjacent taverns. The imposition about 1752 of an Imperial tax of 3d per bushel of malt was the cause of a deficiency in the local ale tax, and throughout the country the passing of the Act was the source of great discontent which in many places broke out into riots. The consumption of ale fell off considerably, tea began to take a place in the customs of the people, so did whisky, and houses for the sale of spirits supplanted the ale houses.

Inns and Taverns

From all accounts there was in Greenock a good deal of illicit trafficking and smuggling. Complaints were frequent that ale was being imported into the town without payment of the impost. There is a reference in the session records to a charge against the beadle and his son, who were dismissed for being concerned in dealing with smugglers and using the kirk premises for storage of the illicit goods. Shipmasters were asked to draw the attention of those on boats and other vessels, and if the rates were refused to seize the vessel and detain the ale. There was a well-known tavern (Mrs. MacDougall's) in William Street that was frequented by merchants, shipowners, and Magistrates, and it was in accordance with the manners of the time that meetings were held there on Council

matters. The first known public-house is said to have been beside a smithy at 60 Vennel, a Vulcan effigy over the door with the legend, "The Sign of the Naked Man"; and the second at the foot of Herring Street, also alongside a smithy. Inns, taverns, and hotels were afterwards, as the port flourished, grouped about the quays, for the convenience of the traffic with the Highlands and Ireland, the names of the houses indicating the direction of their appeal to customers: "The Buteshire," "The Rothesay," "The Leith and Kincardine," and so on. As the town grew, licensed premises seemed to spring up with disproportionate rapidity. Amongst the best known at the end of the eighteenth century and on for twenty or thirty years was the James Watt Inn, 7 William Street, next to the house in which Watt was born. Round the corner in Bell Entry was the Rose and Thistle, kept by George Gillies, who made fiddles and pianos, and had a family of musical sons. About this time Greenock had roughly 300 licensed premises-hotels, inns, taverns, public-houses, wine-shops, etc. The hotels were the Tontine and the White Hart. The inns were the Buckhead (in which the early gatherings of Greenock Burns Club were held); Crown, West Breast; George (afterwards Royal), West Breast, Caledonia, 9 Cross-Shore Street; White Horse, 13 Market Street; Golden Bull, 56 Shaw Street; Wallace Arms, 23 Cathcart Street; Gardeners' Arms, 4 Manse Lane (still a licensed house). Taverns were numerous - Cathcart, Royal Oak, 9 East Quay Lane; Union, 8 William Street; Hope, West Blackhall Street; Burns, 45 Hamilton Street; Henry Bell, West Quay Lane; Blue Bell, 1 Cross-Shore Street (the host Neil Dougal, famous as a precentor and composer of psalm tunes); Commercial, 10 East Quay Lane; Kin's Arms, 11 West Breast; Elephant, Longwell Close; Greenock, 15 Taylor's Close (carriers' quarters); Liverpool, East Quay Lane; Britannia, 7 William Street; Ash Tree Cottage, Port Glasgow Road; Ayshire, 53 Shaw Street; Greenock Tavern and Coffee House, 39 Cathcart Street; Clyde Steamboat, 16 East Quay Lane; the Garrick, the Vine, etc.

Caution in Judgement

It is in no way remarkable, then, that much of the most clearly authenticated early history of Greenock should have an undeniable flavour of the inn and tavern. This should create no surprise in respect of a community that in a manner of speaking drank themselves out of their original harbour debt. We must not forget, though, that in the consumption of ale and the frequenting of taprooms their customs were those of the age, and that while there was an apparent general addiction to drinking it was not until the introduction of whisky that actual drunkenness began to spread; and from what we can gather of the sense and character of the general body of the people the Greenock of to-day is not in a position to cast reproach. Taverns were accredited meeting-places of business and public men. They had few other, so scant were the conveniences of commercial bargaining. On the question of the drinking habits, therefore, we must not hastily assume that things were so bad as they appeared to a Puritanical clergyman in an early Presbyterian period. There was, of course, as there always is, a certain lapsed mass whose misconduct and impiety grieved the souls of the good. Yet it is more than probable that, lacking rational outlets for reasonable recreation, men formed their social ties in the taproom, and that the chief source of complaint against them was really, not that of serious moral flagrancy, but of neglect of personal and family duties and obligations. Rev. James Rankine, who was minister of the Old West, 1865-8, remarked on this point - "In estimating the character of the people of that time, and the merits or demerits of the Church discipline, we should be very careful not to draw hasty conclusions and fall into the common error of judging one age by the standard peculiar to another. The men of that age were dealt with very much as children who are not allowed to judge of their own affairs. We are not to find fault with them for their submissiveness of spirit, or to criticise severely the too intimate relations that were found subsisting between the parochial authorities and the secular Magistrate. These things are the stages by which we have gradually come to our present freedom."

Sidelights

Old Directories are not to be despised as sources of accurate information regarding the state of their times and the character and fashion of the inhabitants. The very earliest of such publications relating to the West of Scotland, we believe, was that issued by John Tait, printer, High Street, Glasgow, for 1783-4, which embraced "the city of Glasgow, the villages of Anderston, Calton and Gorbals, and the towns of Paisley, Greenock, and Port Glasgow." In the words of the author, his undertaking was "the arduous task of compiling a complete guide for the easy finding out every inhabitant of the least note." So far as Greenock was concerned, there is no more than the printing of 217 names of persons, their addresses and vocations; yet with the exercise of a little imagination the few pages can be quite illuminating. It is, for instance, astonishing to find that so recently as 135 years ago Greenock, with a population of about 8,000, consisted practically of seven streets or thoroughfares in which the daily business of these 217 was carried on. These were Laigh, Herring, New, Flesh Market, and Cathcart Streets, Broad Close and the Long Vennel. Firms and individuals designated as merchants numbered fifty-one, which we may accept as a sure measure of the business then established with the outside world. Other branches of industry included coppersmiths, coopers, ropemakers, sailmakers, shipmasters, etc., and it is a gratifying commentary on the taste and education of the people that six booksellers are on the list - Gabriel Laird, Mrs. Yuille, James Lyle, Mrs. Forsyth, William McAlpin, and William Watson. There were six writers - John Snodgrass, Nathan Wilson, William Paterson, John Moodie, Hugh Crawford, jun., and Robert Campbell - more than one of whom, we know, took a part in town affairs; three surgeons - Thomas Millar, David Colquhoun, and McAlman; eight vintners, one innkeeper, and one change-keeper. In the matter of surnames the Highland element greatly predominated, "Macs" easily heading the list and Campbells following. The four commonest surnames of to-day are in a striking minority - two Smiths, three Browns, and not a Jones or a Robinson. We come upon many Greenock family names with which we are to-day familiar - Bain, Gemmell, Leitch, Buchanan, Crawford, Ker, McIver, McCunn, Scott, Ritchie, Malcolm, Stewart, Thomson, Ramsay.

The original Greenock Directory was issued in or about 1814, by Mr. W. Hutcheson, father of Mr. John M. Hutcheson, and was printed in the office of the 'Advertiser'. The seventh edition was published in 1821-22, and contained a list of the principal merchants, traders, shipmasters, mariners; the arrival and departure of coaches, steamboats, carriers, with tables of shore, harbour, and ship dues, etc. The Town Councillors of the time were Arch. Baine and Gabriel J. Weir, Bailies; John Thomson, treasurer; Arch. Wilson, depute treasurer; John Scott, James Ramsay, jun., Robert Lusk, John Rodger, jun., John Hunter, and John Henderson; Fiscals, John Davidson and George Williamson. The river steamers were Clyde, Glasgow, Argyle, Inveraray Castle, Rothesay Castle, Highland Lad, Albion, Britannia, Neptune, Waterloo, Caledonia, Fingal, Greenock, Highlandman, Dumbarton, Port Glasgow, Oscar, Post Boy, Burns, Marquis of Bute, Comet. In the list of harbour dues were the following - Every gabbart coming to the harbour with coals to be used in town, 2s; every boll of potatoes sold on quays or street, 1d; every boat coming to the quay with fish, 6d; every cart coming to the town with fish, 3d. The Directory had the names, professions, and addresses of 1,800 persons out of a population of 20,000, and amongst somewhat singular surnames were Candie, Plowman, Spanket, Crugard, Kentrae, Tilley, Trought, Lickly, Lixter, Ogston, Pickup. Business firms with old Greenock family names included Campbell, Anderson & Co., Ross, Corbett & Co.; Curries, hairdressers and perfumers; John Black, writer, son of Archibald Black, harbourmaster, and father of the late Provost John Black; Houston, dyers; Matthew Hill, miller; Nathan Hill, surgeon; Thomas Carmichael, wood merchant; John Caird, feuar, father of Principal John Caird and Edward Caird, Master of Balliol; - Colin McCulloch, butcher; Matthew Orr, sailmaker; Quentin Leitch, merchant; James Little, agent; George Dempster, wood merchant; Baine & Lang, Burn Street. In the Directory list there were fifty-one Campbells, thirty Kerrs, fifteen Blairs, fourteen Adams, fourteen Leitches, thirteen Buchanans, twelve Curries, twelve Allans, twelve Camerons, twelve Langs, eleven Crawfords, five Lyles, four Carmichaels, four Kers, and four Boags.

Crime

Scant Early Records

There does not appear to be any extant register of crime or of the police anterior to the Charter of 1751. Tradition tells us that the Baron actively exercised his feudal jurisdiction in criminal matters. Before 1741 there is no information regarding the nature of crimes excepting those dealt with by the Kirk Session. There is, however, a record in existence which throws a light upon the proceedings of the Bailies at the very outset of the Magistracy elected by the inhabitants on September 9, 1751. The first Bailies were Robert Donald and James Butcher. No criminal case came before the Bailies' Court for four months after the election. The first was that against George Miller, quarrier, for several thefts, and the accused was banished the town under pain of transportation; the next for encroaching on the street with timber; and a third is not specified. On February 26, 1752, a man Clarke was ordained to stand in the pillory and afterwards banished, never to return under pain of transportation; on March 4, 1752, two sentences are recorded - one banishment under pain of transportation, the offence unspecified, the other, for theft, banishment by tuck of drum; and there was another case of theft on December 1. These six cases, with seven others that were obviously not thefts but brawls and breaches of the peace, make up the criminal record from the institution of the Court till January 3, 1753. From this (late to January 16, 1754, only thirteen cases of the above character occurred. On September 19, 1753, "Galbreath and husband and the Fiscal against McAllister and husband, the pursuer passed from the imprisonment ordained upon the defender acknowledging in open Court that her false tongue lyed, which she having this day done and paid 5s of costs she was assolzied." The record is continued down to 1759. During the years that intervened from 1753 only two or three cases appear to have called for the intervention of the Fiscal. In April, 1771, John Smith, vagrant, was convicted of having stolen candles from a ship, and the Court ordained him "to be carried from the bar and put into the jugs, there to stand bareheaded for the space of half an hour with some of the candles hung about his neck, a label upon his breast with the following words on it in large characters - 'Here I stand for stealing candles.' Afterwards to be drummed out of the town, and thereafter barred out of the town for life."

Offences Increase

The question of population naturally had a good deal to do with the increase or otherwise of crime. In later times, too, there were especially conducive circumstances, such for instance as unemployment and consequent destitution. After the peace of 1815 it was undeniable, according to a report, that a very great number of youths of both sexes were in a deplorable state of destitution as regards religious and moral education. The streets and quays were infested by boys who were often found doing things that led them into crime, disgrace, and ruin. There was a yearly increase of the police calendar of crime, and the very frequent transportations of mere boys for crimes of the most daring character. Whipping, a very ancient form of punishment, was recommended. An appeal was made to the Admiralty for a school ship, the argument being used that "there is no manufactory to employ them in, and they are too young to be apprenticed to the sea, for which the greater proportion have a natural predilection." H.M.S. Ornen, a three-masted schooner, was granted, and afterwards became the Seamen's Floating Chapel.

In October, 1817, the Magistrates issued a proclamation to the effect that "at this time last year they had great satisfaction in looking back on the previous twelve months, during nine of which a single case did not occur requiring the punishment of imprisonment in jail; in the course of the other three months two or three trivial breaches of peace took place. A review of the last twelve months presents a most melancholy contrast; offences have abounded, and crimes of no ordinary dye have been committed to an extent unprecedented in any place of

similar population. From this town no fewer than five men have been condemned to capital punishment, three of whom are to be executed here this day." From this period crime is stated to have been on the increase. Up to January, 1834, the Magistrates held a weekly Court, and thereafter the Court sat daily. Taking the year 1841 as affording an index of the state of criminal offences at this time, we find that there were 499 cases of assault, 462 of breaches of the peace, 609 of drunkenness, 78 of malicious mischief, and 34 of fraud, etc., and in addition 3,615 light offences. A comment of the authorities is that "it is the melancholy truth that 19 out of every 20 of the 2,172 cases will be found to have originated in drunkenness." The number of licensed public houses in that year was 327.

While the increase of crimes and offences went on more or less in the ratio of the expanding population, it is a matter of extreme satisfaction that Greenock has at most periods in its history been comparatively free from crime of a revolting and inhuman character. In recent decades the Chief Constable's reports have almost uniformly noted that the town was singularly free from crime of a serious nature. During the War, while in many other places throughout the country there was a great increase of crimes against the person and property, Greenock in this respect showed a comparatively clean sheet.

Five executions have taken place in town since its erection into a Burgh of Barony in 1635. These were: - 1812 - Moses Macdonald, quay labourer, for burglary and theft from the shop of James Jelly, grocer, Harvie Lane. 1817 - Bernard McIlvogue, Hugh McIlvogue, and Patrick McCristal, for burglary at the house of Robert Morris, farmer, Everton. 1817 - John Kerr, ship scraper, for wife murder, Open Shore. 1834 - John Boyd, for wife murder, Harvie Lane. 1892 - Frederick Thomas Storey, circus manager, for murder of Lizzie Pastor, performer, in Argyle Street. In every case excepting that of Storey the culprits were hanged at Cathcart Square; Storey was executed in Greenock Prison, Nelson Street.

Commendation

Weir has a good word to say on behalf of the inhabitants, this in answer to the uninformed strictures of strangers. He admits that rather an unfavourable impression as to correct morals might be left on the minds of visitors from the number of public-houses to be seen, every third or fourth door in many parts showing the sign, "Licensed to deal in British and Foreign Spirits." The licenses granted in 1825 were 1228, in 1829 1116, this decrease having arisen through the retiral from business of tea and tobacco dealers, while spirit and beer retailers, on the other hand, had increased. "How far," he ingenuously adds, "the imputation is correct it is difficult to say, but if the lower orders did not give considerable encouragement to these places of resort many of them would soon be abandoned. It is a pleasing trait, however, in the character of the inhabitants that a due reverence is paid to the Sabbath, though probably this is not so much attended to as it was. For many years it was impossible to walk the streets about nine o'clock on the evening of that day without hearing the sound of praise from kindred roof, and from the herring vessels at the quay was sent forth a similar sound of worship at the same hour. The want of public works has been much felt as regards the rising generation. Boys are often found wandering about the streets and quays, and in many cases get into a careless, idle kind of life which injures their future prospects." An ill-natured critic less than a hundred years ago wrote: "The streets are close, narrow, filthy, irregularly built, and densely populated by an ill-clad and ill-mannered inhabitants. The suburbs of Cartsdyke present, if possible, an exaggerated picture of every feature peculiar to Greenock. Greenock is absolutely without an acre of land laid out as a square, garden, park, or green for the public amusement or holiday sports of the common people." Over against this we place the view of a fairer and more reasonable writer: "The superior rank are very civil and well bred, the people in general hospitable and kind to strangers. One may at times pass from end to end of the town without hearing a word of any language but Gaelic. Considering the number of inhabitants and strangers, chiefly seafaring, the town is remarkably quiet and regular. Very seldom in the night-time is there any disturbance or rioting in the streets, and excepting by a few a decent respect is paid to the Sabbath." Further, the 'Scots' Magazine' of 1787 has this complimentary note: "The people of Dunoon, from their frequent intercourse with Greenock, etc., are reckoned the most polished in Argyllshire."

The Poor

Relief

It is not on record what methods were adopted prior to the ecclesiastical settlement to provide for the poor of the district, but the duty probably devolved upon the heritors and the minister of Inverkip parish. We may be sure that the first John Schaw, who was a man of piety and the humane instincts, added to his regular charities to his retainers a like solicitude towards the needy fishers' families. One of the first matters that concerned the session of the new church was the state of the poor within the bounds; a subject frequently alluded to at the induction of ministers, who with the sessions charged themselves with providing for their wants. Owing to the destruction or disappearance of the session books, we have no authentic statements to go upon until the beginning of the eighteenth century, at which point of time the number of poor is stated to have been small. In the earliest extant minute dealing with the subject, dated 1704, we are informed that the distributions made were largely from the money collected at the Communion, and that the elders were in the habit of giving in the names of the poor in their districts. This minute states also that seamen coming off long voyages gave donations to the poor, a custom among captains and crews up to comparatively modern times. A statement in 1707 that distribution was to be quarterly only unless in extreme cases would seem to indicate that for the time there was no widespread

destitution. From this date to 1730, chiefly because of a blank in the records, 1713-27, there is no information available.

Secular Aid

The minute of 1730 introduces the secular element in the collection and administration of the funds, and reads: "The Justices of the Peace having under consideration the condition of the poor, they resolved to put into execution the laws concerning the poor, that effectual provision may be made for their maintenance in each parish, and vagrants prevented; and with this end in view they have desired a list of such persons as being the most proper for being overseers of the poor." This list was provided, and steps taken to stop begging from door to door, a common custom of the time. In 1732 the weekly collections at church doors amounted to £74, and £180 was still required to meet immediate wants. In 1827 an outlay of £800 was called for and of £900 in 1833. This question of the begging poor was a source of constant anxiety, the Magistrates from time to time being urged to deal with the nuisance. The stated church-door collections were on occasions liberally augmented by private contributions. The minister of Kilbarchan in 1738 transmitted £10 from an anonymous donor; Lady Houston, daughter of Sir John Schaw, in 1750 left £1,000 for the benefit of the poor; many gifts of small sums were made by citizens; Rev. John Stirling, Principal of Glasgow University (formerly minister of the Old West) bequeathed 300 merks Scots to be applied once in two years for purchasing Bibles for the poor; and in the same year (1739) Mr. Thomas Crawford of Cartburn subscribed 400 merks Scots for copies of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and later gave £400 to the poor.

Another hiatus, extending over 1761-74, occurs in the minutes, and several leaves are missing from the latter date to 1787; but we know that from about the middle of the eighteenth century, when Greenock and Cartdyke together had a population of 8000, the provision of the poor was a serious problem. At one time there were 1155 children whose parents were unable to defray the expense of education. This, we are told, was accounted for by the fact that most of the labourers, boatmen, and sailors came from the Highlands, and with large families settled in Greenock (883 of the total families belonging to this category), to support whom required the utmost industry and application of the parents.

Generous Citizens

In 'Sinclair's Statistical History of Scotland' (1793) it is stated: "The wealthier people of Greenock, and even those in moderate circumstances, are uncommonly generous and liberal, and there are perhaps no people in Scotland whose generosity and liberality have been better tried. The funds for the maintenance of the poor, who are very numerous, are really collections at the churches, the Mariners' Society, and the trade boxes. These being inadequate to put a stop to vagrant begging, with which the town is intolerably infested, the inhabitants in both parishes in 1785 agreed to assess themselves in a sum that might supply the deficiency. Towards this assessment the Superior paid one per cent of his annual income from the town, which was then about £8,300, and his annual share was £83 7s. The assessment for 1791 was £360, and the annual amount of charities is estimated at £1,500. But for the simplicity of the people, who continued to encourage the vagrants, this would have completely answered the purpose. It was said that one cause of there being so many poor was the senseless profusion with which many of the sailors spent their money."

Vagrancy

In 1803 sturdy beggars were astonishingly on the increase. In this connection the want of police was severely felt in the town, to which consequently vagrants flocked from all quarters and in time made good their settlement. Nor was the surrounding country free of those bands of sturdy beggars, who roamed about to prey upon the indiscriminate charity of the people. In 1816 two men were advertised for to act as parish officers, "to prevent beggars infesting the streets and vagrants obtaining a residence. As liberal salaries will be given, none but such as can produce certificates of unexceptionable character need apply."

Allocation Disputes

An unfortunate division of opinion between the Old West and the Mid Kirks as to the allocation of the church-door collections began in 1774, on the allegation that these were not fairly distributed in the respective parishes. The dispute went on somewhat bitter lines and lasted for over twenty years, a settlement being arrived at in 1796 by an agreement to unite the poor-box of the two congregations. In this year the poor fund, amounting to £499 13s 9d, was in straits owing to alleged irregularities, the late treasurer owing £54 6s. Twelve months later the minister and session of the Old West resumed charge of their funds.

Lax Ratepayers

We are led to believe that at this period the general public were so lax and indifferent in the payment of the assessments that the heritors were impelled to make some form of remonstrance. This they did by the following resolution, passed in 1797 - "That as the inhabitants have manifested no intention of taxing themselves in any sum for contributing towards the maintenance of the poor after the first day of May next, and the heritors not thinking themselves bound to maintain such poor out of their own pockets, they are of opinion that the mode ordained by law should be followed - that is to say, badges should be granted authorising such poor people to beg alms from charitable persons living within the bounds of the parish. But if the inhabitants agree to contribute, the heritors will waive their right to stent them for that purpose, and will leave the method of levying the sum necessary to their

discretion." This appeal, it would seem, had at least a temporary effect, and it is noted with satisfaction that a great many private donations had been received. But differences and disputations continued for a number of years, charges were freely made of irregularities and mismanagement on the part of both heritors and session, and a newspaper correspondence did no little to keep the flame alive.

In Straits

In the meantime the state of the poor was said to be calamitous. It was seriously proposed to revert to the old law of Queen Elizabeth, that every person who did not go to Divine service on Sundays and holidays should pay 12d to the poor. Feuars and the inhabitants generally held a meeting in the Mid Kirk to concert measures of relief. Extraordinary collections were taken in all the churches (eight), and some of the most respectable citizens were placed at the church doors to see that no one failed to contribute. The Magistrates engaged to consult counsel as to the best mode of effecting a permanent establishment for the relief of the poor, and it was resolved that quarterly collections should be taken until this was done. It was, decided also that badges granted to the begging poor should be recalled, and that no person should be allowed to beg within the parishes. On the suggestion of the Chief Magistrate, the Justices of the Peace agreed to the levy of the shilling allowed them for administering the oath. There was for the time such an improvement as to call forth the comment that "whatever may have been alleged about decaying charity, this shows that the spirit is not expended." Session records of 1805 give the number of poor, old and young, as 550.

Public Criticism

The correspondence columns of the local newspaper just then were supplying lively reading on the subject, and so indignant were the heritors at the criticisms of the editor and the letter-writers that they were induced to publish a reply, signed by Sir John Shaw Stewart, in which they averred that they had "the fullest evidence that the calculations with respect to the number and revenue of the poor are highly erroneous." The session, in 1806, "considering that an attempt has been made to dry up the sources of public charity in a late publication (the author of which is unknown to them), in which their character is asperged, and they directly charged with partiality and misapplication of the poor money, the session, conscious of having discharged their duty to the poor in the best manner, and being unwilling to lie under the scandalous imputations, unanimously request the moderator to take legal steps for vindicating their character from the calumny contained in the letters published in the newspapers called the 'Greenock Advertiser' and the 'Clyde and Renfrewshire Chronicle.' Then in 1809 the session, reflecting "with some degree of pain on the supercilious and undeserved treatment from the heritors or their agents, have judged it inexpedient to devolve upon the heritors what part of the burden the law imposes on them."

"All the poor, or the great majority of them, met in the church, when their circumstances were particularly inquired into in name of the heritors. They could not fix upon a single instance where the session had been unworthy of trust or profuse of the poor money." It is remarked in this minute that no apology was made, "therefore the session think it proper to vindicate their character in the way they think best." Further, in 1810, "the session feel hurt at the unjust reflections thrown against them. It is agreed to lay this and the previous minute before the heritors, and request them to relieve them from the labour, pain, and thankless office of distributing the poor money."

Official Reports

For a number of years elaborate reports by the Committee of Management were issued from the printing office of William Scott. In the statement for 1810 it said that until the year 1795 the poor had been altogether dependent on the interest of some small sums mortified for their use, occasional donations in testamentary deeds, and the ordinary church door collections. The donations grew less and the wants of the poor considerably increased, so that the alms became more and more limited. In those circumstances a meeting of heritors and inhabitants agreed upon an assessment, which, however, fell far short of adequate provision. This assessment continued until 1795, when complaints were rife as to its failure, and it was resolved to have quarterly church door collections. These answered for a time and then fell off. In 1809 it was decided that each Kirk Session should take immediate charge of its own parish poor and that the ordinary church door collections, after deduction of the necessary charges, should be applied to the relief of the poor, the deficiency to be made up by the heritors and inhabitants by means of a general fund for the three parishes. In the event of this voluntary effort being unsuccessful, the legal assessment was to be reverted to. It is evident, from the list of names given in this report, that the foremost citizens were actively engaged in this work. In addition to the heritors, Magistrates, and parish ministers, the Committee of Management included Messrs. George Robertson, William Forsyth, Thomas Ramsay, Duncan Campbell, James Watt, Alan Ker, John Spence, and G. J. Weir. The sum received during eleven months amounted to £981, and the payments to 1,075 paupers to £1,600. It was remarked that "ten times the amount subscribed would not perhaps be more than that complete provision which would supersede the necessity of their asking alms."

For several years subsequent to this crisis the number of poor added to the roll, chiefly on account of the great adversities of the time, increased rapidly. At one meeting of the heritors in 1817 there were 53 new names, and at various dates in the following year 46, 23, 13, 14, 17, and so on; while the sum of £1,100 was required for the fund in addition to the church-door collections.

The conduct of parochial business ran on rather smoother lines for a few years, diversified by an occasional outbreak of discontent from one side or the other. By 1831 the number of poor was about 750, and there were 18 inmates of Fancy Farm, Inverkip Road, which had been leased as a lunatic asylum, thence to Hillend in 1840. For the sum of £2,020 wanted for the year it was resolved to impose an assessment, one-half on the heritors, the other half "on the hail inhabitants within the parish according to their means and substance." The principle of assessment did not meet with general favour. Rev. Dr. McFarlan did not see why Port Glasgow managed to provide for the poor without an assessment and Greenock could not. The amount in 1832 was £2,474, and in 1837 £3,320, during which period church collections diminished from £436 to £323. This falling off was attributed to the introduction of the assessment. At a meeting of the Town Council in 1841 it was agreed to memorialise the Government in favour of an inquiry into the condition of the poor and the state of the poorhouses in Scotland. References were made to the continuous influx of Irish, to the poverty and destitution, the immorality and intemperance of many of the inhabitants, their filthy habits, and to their being huddled together in confined, unaired houses. Meetings of heritors and kirk sessions were also held, as was then happening all over the country, the prelude to a radical change in the law for dealing with the poor.

Poor Law Act

The first step under the Poor-Law Act of 1845 was a meeting of heritors, ministers, and elders of the united parishes, held in the Mid Kirk, for the appointment of an inspector and other preliminary business, and in February of 1846 proceedings under the old Act were brought to a close. In the following month the ratepayers were convened for the election of twenty-four members of the new Parochial Board, which was carried through quietly and without opposition. The entire Board or Committee of Management consisted of the five Magistrates, the six members of the Kirk sessions, the twenty-four elected members, and twenty-four heritors, with powers of subdivision for the transaction of the ordinary business. At the beginning of the new regime arrears of rates amounted to £700. Provost Adam Fairrie was unanimously appointed chairman; John Malcolm inspector, at £150 a year; and Erskine Orr, who had been the inspector of poor to the parishes under the old order, assistant at 170. There were soon complaints of late attendance and absence of members from the monthly sederunts, in consequence of which the quorum was reduced from twenty-five to eleven. The House of Refuge, Hillend, was taken over for a year to be used as an experimental Poorhouse. Forty inmates were here provided for to begin with, their spiritual interests somewhat rigorously cared for by family worship morning and evening and three times on Sunday. Vagrancy and begging were greatly prevalent, 446 English and Irish being sent home within six months. A careful medical inspection was made of the Irish steamers. According to the minutes of the Board, "a vast multitude of neglected children roamed about without teaching or training."

Poorhouse

The Board recognised from the beginning of their authority that a permanent poorhouse was a necessity. They experienced difficulty in the selection of a site, and at length fixed upon Captain Street, where a house with accommodation for 300 persons was opened in 1850, at a cost of £5,300, lunatic wards being added at an outlay of £2,200. This place sufficed for thirty years. Smithston Poorhouse and Asylum was opened in March, 1879, at an entire cost of £122,904; and about the same time the new Parochial offices in Nicolson Street were completed at a cost of £7,000. The amount of money being annually spent at the incoming of the Board was between £6,000 and £7,000, and the number of poor in 1848 was 965, With 211 orphans. There was a decrease within the next ten years or so, but at the end of the half century marked by the change of constitution under the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1894, by which the Parish Council came into being, the number of registered outdoor poor was 430 and 489 dependents, and of indoor poor 361 and 21 dependents, while the casual poor were 99. The following comparative statistics are interesting: In 1907 the number of out-door poor was 490, their cost £5,545; in Poorhouse 249, cost £5,518; and in Smithston Asylum 195, cost £7,227. The figures for the year 1920-21 are-out-door poor 311, cost £11,734; in Poorhouse 182, cost £11,543; and in Asylum 186, cost £17,650. This remarkable increase in upkeep was brought about by the much enhanced prices in every direction and by the vastly greater outlay in salaries. Payments to out-door poor also had necessarily risen. Prior to the war the weekly outlay on outdoor poor amounted on the average to about £80, in 1921 it was £200. Then the maximum payment was rarely over 7s 6d; in 1921 a number of families were in receipt of 50s a week. The amount of assessment in 1907 was £17,313, while in 1920-1 it reached £42,440. The office of inspector, was held by John S. Deas from 1865 to 1900, when Robert Pettigrew Fairlie, assistant, was appointed. Mr. Fairlie had entered the office in 1865, and he retired in 1921 with 56 years' service to his credit. The present inspector is Donald McLean.

Bad Trade

Unemployment

Owing to the intermittent nature of the staple industries, in later history most markedly, there has always been a considerable section of the inhabitants never far removed from the door of poverty. Seasons of trade depression have usually found many classes of workmen ill prepared to withstand a long siege of comparative want, and in the most acute of these the authorities, with the co-operation of better-off citizens, have literally had to feed thousands of the starving. This obligation upon the Municipality was accepted from early times. Thus, when in 1743 there was a great scarcity of meal and other grains the Corporation took upon themselves the burden of supplies, and in the transaction lost £149 on stuffs imported from London. Provisions and fuel were extremely dear, particularly so with regard to butter and milk, from the want of an adjacent fertile country and the difficulties of transit. The fact that the

pay of a town labourer was a shilling a day indicates the narrow margin from absolute want that must have existed in many families. This kind of help from the authorities had to be given on many occasions of similar need throughout that century. This was so in 1779, for instance, when trade was very bad, with no immediate prospect of improvement, a grant of £4 by the Town Council to the Old Church for winter Communion expenses being given with great reluctance. In 1800 they expended £452 on provisioning the inhabitants by means of soup kitchens and otherwise; and in 1803 the editor of the 'Advertiser' propounded the question, "What can be the reason that new potatoes, which are now selling at Edinburgh market at 2s a peck, in Greenock cost just double that money? Potatoes and fresh herrings, emphatically named the friends of the people, and which we are now going to see in tolerable plenty, keep the poorer classes independent of the butcher market for months."

A Season of General Want

During the opening decades of the nineteenth century, as a result of the Napoleonic wars, the country was passing through a commercial and industrial depression of great magnitude and severity, from which all classes suffered. From 1810 into the Thirties shipbuilding was in an exceedingly backward state, with the consequence that few districts showed greater unemployment than that of Greenock. For several years up to 1830 there was practically stagnation. The inhabitants in 1816 opened a subscription list for the relief of the unemployed, while the Town Council gave £100 in bounties on importations to keep down the prices of meal and butter, and the town was divided into districts to deal with the supply. "A great number of constables were appointed to protect peaceable citizens, so that there is now, while this system is acted upon, no danger of any disturbance. The meal market was re-opened, and quantities of meal carried there and sold." Numbers of men were employed on charitable work on roads and reservoirs, and forty by Sir Michael Shaw Stewart. But instead of giving employment directly the committee offered a bonus of 20s per man to any person taking a number of labourers for two months certain at 1s 4d a day. This was with the view of "not interfering with the ordinary employment of the place, nor giving a premium to idleness by gratuitous distribution." Meetings of the inhabitants were held. That of the people of Crawforddyke was held in the woodyard of Patrick Mories & Co., and passed a resolution "that the present unparalleled distresses are not to be attributed to the sudden transition from war to peace, but to the wasteful and prodigal expenditure of the public money during the long, bloody, unjust, and unnecessary war."

Tradesmen worked for three pence an hour, in winter for seven hours a day at 10s 6d a week, and were glad to work week about. The prevailing want was accentuated by the arrival of beggars from Ireland, against whom in 1817 a ban was proclaimed, but with so little effect that cargoes were being "landed between Greenock and Glasgow, on the Ayrshire coast, and elsewhere in incredible numbers."

In 1826, at a meeting in Paisley of the inhabitants of Renfrewshire, at which Mr. Clark, Greenock, was chairman, and Mr. John Neill one of the speakers, it was said that bankruptcy, distress, and misery existed to an unexampled extent, that no blame was attributable to the public, but that it was quite plain the condition had arisen from the enormous amount of the taxes and the extravagance of those who managed the affairs of the nation. Again, in February, 1830, a meeting of the noblemen, freeholders, Commissioners of Supply, Justices of the Peace, and Magistrates of towns, called by Lord-Lieutenant Campbell, was held at Renfrew. The circumstances relating to this meeting had a special importance for Greenock. A statement submitted on their behalf, signed by John Fairrie, Chief Magistrate, and Robert Baine, Junior Magistrate, complained thus: "As it appears that the Lord Lieutenant has judged it proper to call together only a comparatively small body of freeholders, leaving out other classes . . . we beg to decline attending such meeting." A similar memorial was given in from Paisley.

Dearth in Shipbuilding

Mr. Robert Wallace of Kelly, who was present, submitted a convincing statement on the extent of the distress existing among Greenock shipbuilders and shipyard workers during the twenty years from 1810. In this year the contract price for building a vessel and having it ready for sea was £29 per ton; in 1815 it was £25 10s; 1817, £19 10s; 1820, £22; 1825, £22 10s; 1830, £17 15s; and with no purchasers. The wage of a ship worker in 1810-14 was from 20s to 27s a week; in 1815-29 it was 15s to 21s; and for three or four months previous to the date of this meeting ship carpenters had not earned in general above 4s a week, while four fifths of the class were entirely idle. Mr. Wallace added that the shipbuilders of the Clyde were in possession of large capital, yet there was then only one small square-rigged vessel and two steamboats building at Greenock. The chief causes of this stagnation were the lowness of freights and the use of transports that had been thrown into the trade after the war.

Later Lean Times

Another cycle of bad trade was experienced in 1842, and continued for many months. As showing the extent of this depression, it was stated that from thirteen public works - three foundries, eight shipbuilding yards, and two chain manufactories - 1960 men had been discharged out of a total of 3,287 employed, and that others might have been similarly dealt with but for feelings of humanity on the part of employers. The sum of £2,650 resulted from voluntary subscriptions during the period, and the amounts of assessment for the poor for the years 1839-40-1-2 were £4,100, £4,170, £4,715, and £5,844. A census of the unemployed taken by the Relief Committee, excluding the ordinary poor, showed that in December of 1842 there were still 1482 men with 5,639 dependents in comparative destitution, the bulk of the men classified as follows:- Carpenters, 210; labourers, 649; smiths, 79; engineers, 27; tailors, 26. The distress was still widespread when the funds became exhausted, and as it extended to most

industrial centres of the country authorities got alarmed for the peace of the land, an appeal was made to the Government for help, and Greenock sent up a petition in favour of a scheme of emigration. The distress and embarrassment were greatly aggravated by the suspension of the Renfrewshire Bank in April, 1842. Many of the inhabitants suffered through this failure, although it did not seriously affect the general commercial progress of the town. There was a temporary run on the other banks, this was promptly met, the alarm subsided, and it is said that no person lost over £2,000. Cases of appalling destitution were discovered on a house-to-house visitation. Of the shipbuilding yards five were almost at a complete standstill, and between 700 and 800 men had been discharged from the foundries. The distress was widespread throughout the country, in parts there were serious disturbances, but Greenock fortunately remained comparatively peaceful. A memorial from the people to the Magistrates stated: "We are suffering misery and destitution to an extent hitherto unknown in the history of any country." Over £3,000 was promised by subscribers, and the Magistrates said that in no town in Scotland had greater relief exertions been made.

A number of the unemployed threatened to go to the Court of Session to compel the heritors to provide work or money, and were informed that they had no ground in law, which did not provide for able-bodied men out of work. The heritors decided that it was illegal to impose a compulsory assessment, but they agreed to an extraordinary voluntary assessment, which, however, proved a failure, as the great majority declined to pay, and only £784 of the £3,000 wanted was subscribed. An appeal was made to the Government, and Sir Robert Peel replied that Parliament had no authority to give public funds. One-fifth of the population was in a state of destitution, there were said to be 9,000 in a similar state in Paisley, and the whole of Renfrewshire was in a bad way. An application to London relief funds resulted in the request to go to Edinburgh Committee, which made no reply. A charity ball in February, 1843, produced £60. Signs of recovery were now apparent, and in June it was reported that Greenock, which suffered more than any other town in the West of Scotland, Paisley alone excepted, had been visited with a remarkable revival. The following singularly gratifying note emerges from the welter of want and turmoil: "The cork-cutters of Glasgow and Greenock entertained their employers at supper to express their approbation at their conduct during a time of unexampled depression and general stagnation of trade."

While not so acute or long continuing, the cycles of bad trade came round with painful regularity. It was not until 1878-9 that unemployment was again felt with great severity by the entire community. In the spring of 1879 it was stated that during the winter 4,000 families had been daily and weekly relieved, that the Charitable Society alone had disbursed £2000, and that from all sources the amount expended on the necessitous had been about £20,000. As a further indication of the readiness of the community to help those in need, the sum of £10,000 was subscribed to the relief fund for the shareholders of the City of Glasgow Bank. The Lyle Road was formed in order to provide work, at an outlay of about £18,000, other forms of labour provided, and a fancy ball in the Town Hall brought a considerable sum of money. Trade depressions occurred in 1884-6, in 1904, and in 1908, that were less severe in character. The Corporation employed numbers of men at stone breaking in the cemetery (to which certain tradesmen demurred), it was resolved (in 1885) to open up Cornhaddock and Murdieston Streets at an estimated cost of £1,500, and in 1908 relief work was provided through the gift of The Lady Alice Park by Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart.

In the summer of 1921, owing to a general stagnation in trade aggravated by labour troubles, unemployment was greatly on the increase. In the sugar industry also there ensued a period of local inactivity through an overstocked market, great quantities of refined arriving in this country from the United States, with the result that a number of Greenock refineries closed down for a time and many workmen were consequently thrown out of employment. Provost Mitchell opened a relief fund, to which the initial substantial subscriptions were £1,000 by Scott's' Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, £100 by Mr Hugh McLean, £400 from Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart, and £250 from ex-Provost John Denholm. It was resolved to proceed at once with the work of widening Inverkip Road, towards which the Ministry of Transport intimated a grant of £9,000 and a further loan of £9,000 at 7 per cent. The scheme was estimated to cost about £30,000, but the Corporation agreed to go on meanwhile to the extent of the £18,000 at their disposal. The Ministry of Transport laid down a condition that preference should be given to unemployed ex-Service men. The scale of pay was fixed at 1s per hour for married and 7d per hour for single men.

Amusements and Receptions

The Means

The forms in which in the olden times the people took their pleasures varied little if anything from those in other parts of Scotland. The scope in recreation was narrow, and the means at disposal for social enjoyments, indoor and outdoor, were for long of a rude and primitive order. Bi-annual Fairs made the two great occasions on which fun and frolic were in the ascendant, and for entertainment of other kind families fell back upon the festivities in celebration of bookings, marriages, christenings, and wakes. Field games were apparently not greatly practised, and were confined mostly to the sports of foot-racing and a form of football. In later days assemblies, balls, and theatricals were introduced, the last-named with varying fortune becoming a permanent source of pleasure. At a grand fancy ball in the Theatre on June 10, 1813, at which Sir Michael and Lady Shaw Stewart were present, "The pit was boarded over and strewn with sawdust, over which was laid a complete covering of green cloth, producing the appearance of a verdant lawn, separated from the stage by a beautiful hedge of shrubbery, etc. greatly aided through the kindness of the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood, who in the most liberal manner gave

selections from their gardens." The theatre was followed by the circus and in the nineteenth century by penny readings, lectures, concerts; and thereafter the history of entertainments locally, as elsewhere, has been amazing in growth and diversity. The efforts of Mr. James M. Scott (pioneer of Penny Savings Banks in Greenock) to establish an Artisans' Club deserve a place in the social history of the town. Premises were taken in 1846 in a building opposite the station entrance near Bogle Street, and for a time success seemed assured. This hopeful aspect was short-lived. The complaint of Mr. Scott, who accepted the entire financial responsibility, was the existence of extreme apathy to public undertakings generally. Many of the better classes who had signed in support had failed to realise their promise. There was also callousness on the part of the artisan himself. A similar issue resulted in connection with a brave attempt in 1873 to popularise a British Workman's Public-house opened in Cathcart Street. In the eight months of its life the working-men of Greenock subscribed one guinea towards its success.

Fairs

By their Crown Charters the lairds of Greenock and Cartsburn Fairs. had the privilege of holding two Fairs annually, in connection with which there was until comparatively modern times the popular custom of Riding the Fair (first Thursday of July and fourth Tuesday of November), which was in form analogous to the Riding of the Estates and the Riding of Parliament. In both places those Fairs were ushered in with much pomp and circumstance. The members of the Town Council, who in early days transacted municipal business in a tavern at the corner of Cross-Shore and Shaw Streets, built in 1714, met in company with the deacons of the trades to drink the King's health, thereafter throwing their glasses amongst the crowd in the street, and forming the procession for the march through the town. Lairds, Bailies, vassals, and people generally went the rounds attended by trumpeters and pipers, sometimes by a party of soldiers, winding up with dinners and suppers. The custom is said to have been upheld with the view of preserving order and of encouraging trade, many country folks gathering in from the neighbouring districts. On the other hand it has been suggested that it was an organised resistance in fear of a visit from Highland reivers, but as no very substantial proof has been advanced in favour of the view it is almost universally taken to be a fanciful one.

The method of celebrating those Fairs by trade processions continued to be followed into the first decades of the last century, but had been gradually diminishing into insignificance. This is made evident by the notices in the early issues of the 'Greenock Advertiser', which published recurring comments on the public demonstrations on the occasions. Thus in 1803, "The Summer Fair was well attended. The trades paraded as usual, bearing flags decorated with proper emblems of their respective professions. Each had dinners provided at the different hotels, where they entertained their wives and lasses, and afterwards broke up to dancing, in which they spent the remainder of the evening with much hilarity." In the following year it is remarked that "this is less a Fair of business than of amusement." During the next four or five years the processional custom was hastening to an end, and in 1809 we find the 'Advertiser' congratulating the community on its disappearance: "One thing we observe with satisfaction, that now the useless and unmeaning parade of the different trades through the town in military array has quite gone out. This custom was a perpetual source of individual expense without serving one good purpose. A numerous party of the Coopers' Society dined in the Tontine Hotel, and spent a happy evening in harmony and temperate conviviality." "At the Winter Fair the attendance was thin. The dancing rooms, however, were filled with the rustic nymphs and swains. In the course of the evening there were some trifling pugilistic encounters, produced by the preponderating influence of Sir John Barleycorn." But there was a subsequent revival, for in June, 1817, the 'Advertiser' noted that the parading of trades had been dropped in the preceding year, and in 1819 is the following paragraph: "The trades resumed their ancient custom of parading the streets with their usual tawdry magnificence, accompanied by martial music. From all we can learn, the evening spread her dusky mantle over our town without the occurrence of a single brawl requiring Esculapian aid." The custom was thereafter observed at intervals only, and it has been stated that the very last occasion on which there was a semblance of following the ancient formality was about 1835, and that town officers with halberds and tradesmen with banners and emblems of their craft walked in procession and finished up with festivity. In Greenock the Fair is still held, but that of Crawforddsdyke ceased many years ago, or rather it is merged in the other.

The Winter Fairs have long since died out from want of vitality. So early as 1828 it was reported that "the mildness of the weather had induced the country people to flock hither in very considerable numbers, though more for the purpose of idling about and meeting acquaintances than for business. In the latter respect, indeed, our Fairs are of very little importance either to the people of the town or to those who resort to them." "This annual nuisance," said the 'Advertiser' in 1864, "is only provocative of obstruction in the streets and of considerable drunkenness on the part of the agricultural population. It was a complete failure in every respect, and we hope the day is not far distant when it will disappear altogether."

Parks and Open Spaces

The Superiors of Greenock have in the later days been generous in gifting grounds for the use and delectation of the people. The various areas now in the hands of the Corporation and of sporting clubs exceed a dozen, in extent they are about 160 acres in the aggregate, and they have been bestowed outright or leased on a nominal payment. Well Park and Wellington Park were amongst the first examples of the Superior's generosity. The former was the pleasance of the old Greenock Mansion-house, which was vacated and demolished in 1886 on being acquired by

the Caledonian Railway Company for the extension of their line to Gourrock. In form it is a perfect square of over five acres, overlooking the main thoroughfares, the harbours, and a wide prospect of river and countryside. Some years ago Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart had the site of the old Mansion-house re-conveyed to the estate, and transformed it into a cosy nook for the old folks of the neighbourhood.

Wellington Park, on the hillside to the south of the town, comprises within its present limits three separate gifts. The first was devoted to the formation of a Corporation bowling green, cricket and football pitches, flower plots, and pleasure grounds. In 1864 the coming of the Wemyss Bay railway cut off a portion to the south, in lieu of which Sir Michael Shaw Stewart granted additional ground to the west. Sometime later the Greenock line of the Glasgow and South-Western Company ran through the park, and again Sir Michael more than made up the loss by the gift of what is known as the new Wellington Park, a considerable tract suitable for the promotion of football, cricket, and kindred manly sports.

The Whin Hill, which surmounts this park, is held by the Corporation on lease from the Ardgowan estate, recently renewed on favourable terms for a further period of twenty-one years. Until about 1912 the Whin Hill was taken advantage of chiefly as a leisure resort on week-ends and summer evenings, and by the more youthful football and cricket clubs. In that year the Corporation introduced golf, an 18 hole course was later laid off, sufficient ground being reserved for other sports and the strollers from the town.

Broomhill Park, over four acres in extent, one of the latest gifts of Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart, situate on the fringe of a populous area in the south-west district, is an open space, on three sides of which streets are marked off, and is used as a playing ground.

The Lady Alice Park, on the eastern border of Inverkip Road, is the most ambitious scheme of the kind on which the Corporation engaged. When Sir Hugh presented the fields in 1908 to provide relief work for the growing number of unemployed, the intention was that they should be set aside wholly for the recreation of children. The original plan was subsequently modified. Two bowling greens were constructed, and then additional ground was granted in order that the young should still have all they needed. With the view of further enhancing the attractions and value of the park Sir Hugh bought over some old buildings at the opening of Inverkip Road, where the main access might be made in keeping with the importance and amenity of the grounds.

The Lady Octavia Park is a finely situated stretch of field, extending to nearly eleven acres, to the south-east of the town. It was so named after Lady Octavia Shaw Stewart, mother of Sir Hugh, as was the Lady Alice Park after his wife.

The Superior's dealings in connection with Battery Park, now the property of the town, were conducted on an even more generous scale. Bordering the shore from Fort Matilda to the western boundary of the town, it was for generations common to the inhabitants. In 1907 the Admiralty, under compulsory powers, took over several acres for the erection of the Clyde Torpedo Factory, for which Sir Hugh received a payment of £27,000 odds. In a letter to the Corporation at the time, enclosing a cheque for £5,000 of the purchase price, to be expended as was deemed best for the welfare of Greenock, Sir Hugh said that he had always been of opinion that this land should be preserved as an open space for the use of the community, and that he felt he ought to share the pecuniary gain with a town with which he enjoyed such an ancient hereditary connection. The park was handed over to the Corporation in April, 1914. The remaining open spaces within the burgh include Grosvenor and Ardgowan bowling greens and Glenpark cricket enclosure, all of which are held from the Ardgowan estate.

Ardgowan Square grounds were granted in 1841 to a committee of residents for the promotion of bowling, quoiting, and curling. The feu behind the Watt Testimonial was first fixed upon, but the Superior was unwilling to give it, and offered the other as a gift. A bowling green 140 ft. square was laid down, a curling pond 145 ft. by 40 ft., 140 ft. of a quoiting ground, and walks were so made throughout the ground as to give a promenade nearly a mile in extent, with shrubbery and flower beds, "the germ of a future Botanic Garden." A fountain was also built near the centre of the grounds. The curling pond was filled up in 1863, quoiting was given up, and now the square is occupied by bowling greens, tennis courts, and flower gardens.

Greenock Golf Club in 1915 renewed their lease for another term of twenty-one years, on the same favourable conditions as before, and on this security they felt justified in setting up a new and costly clubhouse.

Wallace Square is a testimony to the real desire of former civic authorities to leave the lower part of the town sweeter and better than they found it. While it may not without a stretch of imagination be named an open space, Auchmountain Glen is a beauty spot of which Greenock is justifiably proud. Until 1886 it was an inconspicuous nook of nature, its chief attraction a spring of cooling water. In that year, during a time of great trade depression, Sir Michael Shaw Stewart gave leave to a band of workmen to make a pathway through the Glen from Kilmacolm Road to the Whin Hill. Transformed by the labours of the Auchmountain Boys, the Glen became a fairy grove, to which in the season there flows a steady stream of townspeople and sojourners from many parts. In 1887, at a

public demonstration, bronze statues of Burns, Scott, and Watt were placed in prominent niches in the vicinity of the well.

The Classes

The inhabitants of Greenock are not difficult of classification. They comprise three distinct grades - the masses; the tradesmen and shopkeepers; and the shipbuilders, engineers, sugar refiners, and a limited group of manufacturers. Fifty years ago or less ship owners formed no inconsiderable part of the well-to-do. Now, so far as Greenock knows them, they are but a small body. There has rarely been a cultured class properly so called. The literati of the place have clustered about the James Watt Club and in more recent years connected themselves with the Philosophical Society and the Greenock Library. The town has seldom been able to boast of a resident scholar of great merit in letters, art, science, philosophy, music. The people have almost exclusively been devoted to the utilitarian side of life. Budding genius has gone out into the world, and illustrious sons have achieved pre-eminence elsewhere. Hitherto men have busied themselves in the making of clones, and taken leisure late in life. The field of exploitation for the ambitious and talented is limited. Greenock has long been a nursery for the higher offices and vocations in the great cities. We have come to regard with unwondering eyes the constant exodus of youth to the more populous centres. It is remarkable how many members of old Greenock families have gone out and gained fame or fortune - the Cairds, the Watts, the sugar-refining Macfies, Fairries and Lyles, the ship owning Curries and Allans, the Maclvers, the Lairds, and many others of like reputation.

Social Distinction

For a town in which actual divergences in social standing are comparatively negligible, it is astonishing in what measure Greenock developed class distinction. It is not so much that the strata of society have been marked off by wealth or outstanding merit. Rather is it a clear cut between east and west, to some extent accentuated by fluctuations in the staple trades, which make for a floating and often an incoming element in the population. This is in direct contrast with the condition of things at earlier periods in the town's history, when the inhabitants were grouped about the harbours and subsisted in a homelike economy almost solely on the fruits of seafaring. Greenock was then, like the Paisley of to-day, much more of a close-banded community, the members of which were cemented by ties of kinship and of common aims and habits.

The West End

The clear cut made the West-End of Greenock a rare example of a choice locality. It is marked off by the line of Nelson Street West, which intersects the oblong figure of the town from the opening of the Kip Valley into the heart of the main thoroughfare, and was long looked upon, by the people of east and west alike, as a place apart. To three strongly impelling motives at least was due the formation of a purely residential quarter for the well-to-do-first, a desire to break away from the stifling atmosphere of congested lanes and ill-ventilated dwellings; second, an accumulation of wealth which put within easy acquisition improved family and domestic conveniences; and third, the inducement of an ideal situation at hand for mansions, villas, pleasure grounds, and gardens. It is not to be believed that there was to begin with any general notion of establishing an exclusive set or society. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, when this movement westward was taking shape, Greenock was still more or less the homogeneous community that had grown up under the coalescing influences of a common outlook. The drift towards an emergence of obvious distinctions in social relations was, for a length of time at any rate, probably imperceptible. Lines of demarcation had been drawn by physical configuration. The West-End developed and arrived as if by a plan of nature. Thereupon there evolved, one might almost say involuntarily, a rank with social standards, conventions, and shibboleths of its own.

Recent Changes

Within the recollection of the middle-aged certain modifications or declensions were at work in various aspects. The glory of other days was dimmed. In not a few instances wealth took wing; in others its sources dried up; and the families of affluence dwindled in numbers. Society as it used to be is a shadow of its former self. On the expansion of general trade, money becoming more plentiful and more widely distributed, the levelling-up process in living conditions as in other respects followed inevitably. The trades people or middle classes encroached upon the confines of the upper set, built villas, flats, and tenements that now, far westward, sit cheek by jowl with the homes of the rich, and boldly overlook the great mansions planted within their own grounds.

Institutions

It will be generally granted that in no department of public or private service is there more reason for congratulation than in that which embraces the entire family of benevolent, educational, and charitable institutions. Great in numbers, many of them have formed an integral part of the early history of the town, and to the vast voluntary army of both sexes by whom the work is carried on each generation has in turn given its quota of recruits.

The Watt Club

Towards the close of the eighteenth century there had been a distinct movement amongst certain classes for the study and discussion of literature. Sectional meetings were held for the reading of essays, etc., but as a rule all of these were short-lived.

The first literary society was formed in 1792, and lasted for eighteen months, a society for encouraging the arts and sciences followed in 1812, and continued for two years; the Literary and Philosophical Society of 1814 went on for twelve months; and a number of circulating libraries were being established. Weir (1829) says "that on the ruins of this Philosophical Society sprang up another of the same name, which existed for five years. In 1819 and 1820 two debating societies were begun, and ended the same year. At present Greenock possesses nothing in the shape of a literary and philosophical society. The only thing approaching to this is the James Watt Club, instituted in 1813. The members hold their meetings in the James Watt Tavern, at the low west corner of William Street, and consist of gentlemen belonging to the town, and honorary members in other places. The meetings cannot be said to be for any particular object as regards science or literature, as no subjects are brought forward farther than the social conversation of the day, and we believe all subjects of a political or theological nature are excluded, lest their introduction should tend to injure the harmony and kind feeling which have hitherto been their principal characteristic."

Watt Memorial

Nowhere, at home or abroad, has the genius of James Watt been more sensibly or more spontaneously appreciated than in the place of his birth. If there has at any time been an apparent lukewarmness, it has arisen not from the absence of a desire to do Watt due honour, but rather from a lack of agreement on the most fitting method of perpetuating his memory. It was in 1820 that the title of the Watt Club was adopted, the members having directed special attention to the discovery of the house in which Watt was born. Glasgow newspapers were claiming him as a citizen, and not a few Greenockians believed Crawforddyke to have been the place of his birth. It was established by the club, beyond all doubt, that the site was the south-west corner of William and Dalrymple Streets. The club was at first exclusive as to its numbers, but this inconvenient limitation was soon dispensed with. Mr. George Williamson, Procurator-Fiscal and historian, was president for many years. An anniversary dinner, presided over by the Chief Magistrate, was held in January, 1821 (Watt died on August 25, 1819), and this was the first public demonstration in the country in acknowledgment of Watt's genius and life work. With an occasional brief break in continuity, the anniversary was observed by this club, until 1862, when it was taken under the wing of the Philosophical Society and carried on in the form of annual Watt lectures.

The Institutions

A monumental memorial was started with enthusiasm by the club, and in 1826, when £2,000 had been subscribed, it was resolved to raise a marble statue by Chantrey, for the reception of which Watt's eldest son, Mr. James Watt of Aston Hall, offered to erect a building. Mr. Watt had the gratification of observing that his native town was the foremost to do honour to his father's memory. The statue was delivered in 1838. The donation of Mr. Watt towards the erection of Library buildings was £3,500. The foundation-stone was laid in 1835 on a site in Union Street gifted by Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, the inscription on the plate bearing these words: "To receive and preserve for the contemplation of succeeding generations a marble statue dedicated by the inhabitants of Greenock to the memory of their illustrious townsman, James Watt, and to afford accommodation for a Scientific Library founded by him (in 1816), and for the Public Library of Greenock." The building was opened in 1837, and the statue deposited in 1838, the inscription on the pedestal, from the pen of Lord Jeffrey, being: "The inhabitants of Greenock have erected this statue of James Watt, not to extend a fame already identified with the miracles of steam, but to testify the pride and reverence with which he is remembered in the place of his nativity, and their deep sense of the great benefits his genius has conferred on mankind." The sum of £3,457 was at this time expended on the centre buildings of the original plan, two wings and a hall for a period being left incomplete.

In 1817 a subscription for finishing the design was opened by the Watt Club, whose donation amounted to £770, a ladies' bazaar realised £936, subscribers to the Library and their friends contributed £731 - the whole reaching £2,437 with which the work of completion was successfully overtaken. The following is the list of the purposes for which the Watt Monument Buildings were brought into existence: For preserving the statue of Chantrey; for preserving the books of the Watt Scientific Library, founded by Watt in 1816 by a donation of £100; for containing the books of the Greenock Library, instituted January 1st, 1783; and for containing the mathematical books, the bequest to his townsmen, of the mathematician Mr William Spence, who was born in 1777 and died in 1815, and to whom a memorial tablet, bearing an inscription by his schoolfellow, John Galt, was placed in the Mid Parish Church.

Museum and Hall

In 1876, through the munificence of Mr. James McLean, sawmiller, a building similar in architectural design, intended to provide a museum and lecture hall, was erected on the Watt Monument ground at a cost of £6,400. After enlarging the Watt Institution and Monument, Mr. McLean, on his death in 1877, left the free residue of his estate, heritable and movable, to his trustees, "to be used for the instruction and improvement of the inhabitants of my native town, and the further furnishing of the said building, and providing lectures on scientific, philosophical, literary, and other improving subjects, and providing a stock of suitable objects for the museum and works of permanent value for the library, and aiding in the maintenance and support of the said institution in other respects in a state of efficiency." There is a marble bust of Mr. McLean in the museum and a portrait in oils in the Watt Hall. The Library contains a portrait of James Watt (after Sir William Beechey), also autograph letters and many interesting photographs. In the museum may be seen a copying press and a balance which belonged to Watt.

Other valuable Watt relics are exhibited in the Watt Memorial School of Navigation and Engineering, Dalrymple Street. Mr. James Watt presented to the town in 1823 a bust by Chantrey. In 1843 the Watt Club struck a silver medallion of Watt for the best essay on shipbuilding or marine steam engines, illustrated by drawings. Watt Street is immediately behind the Institution.

A Universal Memorial

For nearly half a century the vitality of the Watt Club had kept the memorial subject constantly before the minds of the local public, and now and again had aroused the interest of the outside world. The erection of a cosmopolitan monument, on a Greenock site, grew almost to a passion with the leading spirits. The Town Council was in 1846 memorialised to reserve an elevated part of the new Cemetery for such a monument. Eight years later a formal resolution was made to set it on foot. Subscriptions were to be in kind-freestone, marble, or granite slabs and according to the nature and extent of the contributions the architect would regulate his design. The chosen site was commanded from every point of the river near the town, and on a clear day might be seen from Glasgow. On the anniversary dinner in 1854 the meeting resolved itself into a committee to further "this united effort of the whole civilised world." The idea had been suggested by the monument of Washington, full particulars of which were obtained from the U.S. Secretary. In the enthusiasm of the early stages the Club opened correspondence in Great Britain, America, and the Colonies. Sir Michael R. Shaw Stewart, a member of the Club, gifted a foundation-stone, ten tons in weight.

In 1859 1,000 copies were printed by the Cemetery Committee of the proposed Italian Campanile tower, upwards of 40 ft. square at the base, rising at the level of the main cornice to 163 ft., and surmounted by a turret or observatory 52 ft. high. The eminence is 289 ft. above sea level. Internally the rooms were to be 30 ft. square, with a circular staircase and an open gallery. This plan was prepared under the direction of Mr David McIntosh, architect of the Mariners' Asylum, and the original estimate of cost was £10,000. A letter from the Prince Consort approved of the design. A lithograph of the tower appears in Williamson's 'Memorials of Watt.'

Disappointment

The ultimate result was greatly disappointing. Within a few years contributions ceased, and the sum total, as seen to-day on the chosen site, is a mass of rude stones of varied shapes and dimensions, to the number of forty or fifty, heaped to the height of about thirty feet. Amongst the most important donations were four main corner stones, of massive size and weighing upwards of twenty tons, from Mr. Dugald Dove, of Nitshill and Arden Quarries; a great stone block from the Mechanics' Institute, St Helen's, Lancashire; granite block from Mr. Rollo Campbell, Montreal, a native of Greenock; a pentagonal column from Giant's Causeway; whin stone from Glasgow; shipped from Malta by Mr. John Grant, stone quarried from St. Paul's Bay, where the apostle was wrecked, presented by Major-General Sir William Reid, Governor of Malta; block of Sebastopol granite, by Mr. Henry Innes, Secretary to the fort Admiral; piece of marble from Tunis, by Sir Edward Baines, H.M. Consul-General there; a large block of marble from ancient Carthage, by Admiral Sir Houston Stewart; large block of stone quarried in Peru, from a townsman, Mr. Alexander Prentice, Lima; a stone from the railway incline up the Ghaut of India, a tribute from the Bombay Mechanics' Institution. The St. Helen's contribution required ten horses to convey it from the railway station to the cemetery.

The Embers

Nearly twenty years later a temporary interest was excited by the appointment of a special committee of the Town Council to consider the question of completing the monument, but it proved to be the flickering out of all hopes of realising the original aim. The impression had been deepening that the site was an unsuitable one. At a Water Trust meeting in 1861 Bailie Caird suggested Cathcart Square, which was reported to have been taken up cordially, Provost Grieve heartily approving, and liberal subscriptions being offered. A further reference to the subject is met with in 1873, when the Council definitely agreed that the cemetery was not a suitable place, that the monument would be too costly, and they were in favour of a bronze statue in Cathcart Square at a cost of from £3,000 to £4,000. Then in October, 1875, the Council unanimously agreed that the memorial should be on the Esplanade, and that the Cemetery ground should be disposed of. In March of the following year the decision was unanimously sent to the Cemetery Committee to carry out.

Watt Dock

A rare opportunity of perpetuating Watt's memory in a relation perhaps the most fitting that could be thought of occurred on the construction of the new harbours, and was taken in the face of a small minority. In a year or two there was a movement for a memorial on the site of Watt's birthplace. The house of his birth was demolished in 1796, and the later building came within the scope of the Improvement Trust operations in 1878. The moment was regarded as opportune for securing the site for a national or international memorial. The scheme was adversely criticised, almost exclusively on the ground that the site was unsuited to a monument on an extensive scale. Mr. John Scott, shipbuilder, started with a subscription of £250, but the example was not generously followed. The Improvement Trustees in 1887 conceived a design for an imposing building on the site to be known as the Watt Memorial of Greenock. Plans and specifications were prepared and other preliminaries entered upon, but the intention was afterwards released from and the site offered to the Watt Memorial Committee for £1,000, to which there was no favourable response, and the Trustees declined to give it or any portion of it free of charge.

Birthplace Memorial

Nothing more tangible was brought about until Dr. Andrew Carnegie rescued the town from a dilemma. He was on a visit in 1902 to inaugurate the Public Free Library, for which he had gifted £8,000, and was shown the site of Watt's birthplace. The result, to no one surprising, was immediate talk of a monument. He suggested "a public subscription to which all parties might subscribe throughout the world, but if it is thought best that I should give you £10,000 for the purpose, I shall only be too glad to be instrumental in erecting a suitable monument in the place of his birth. I do not believe in spending great sums in dead monuments. Nevertheless, I think for a pure memorial to such a benefactor as Watt it would be a good use of money to spend £10,000." On this offer the Police Board unanimously agreed to appropriate the site unreservedly for the purpose. An appeal, practically world-wide, was made for funds in augmentation of the gift. A generous response was looked for from America; Dr. Carnegie was "very sure that, as chairman of the American Committee, I could get you quite a fund here." At the close of the subscriptions the sum amounted to £700, of which £190 came from America. Dr. Carnegie agreed to the erection of a building to cost something over £7,000. On the suggestion of Mr. John Rankin, engineer, an endowment fund in subscriptions of one shilling was set on foot, and made considerable progress. Mr. David Barclay, Glasgow, was architect, the building is of two flats in the old Scottish style, and shows a statue of Watt at the north-east corner. It was opened on October 1, 1908. The site is somewhat limited in extent, 45 ft. by 20 ft., and the internal accommodation for practical purposes consists of two large rooms, utilised for the teaching of navigation and engineering. The building when completed and equipped was handed over to the School Board. The endowment fund amounted to £3,000, and the late Sir Donald Currie gifted £1,000 to be used for the benefit of the students. Relics of Watt were presented by Miss J. M. Thomas, Aberystwyth. A library, aided by public subscriptions, was established.

Greenock Library

Ranks in the first flight of local institutions with an ancient history. Its inception dates back to January 1, 1783, when in social and educational, if not also in ecclesiastical and religious status, Greenock was looking out on the world with eyes much different from those of to-day, when the population was only 12,000, and the comparative importance of her harbours in respect of foreign imports was indicated by a total sum of £100 as dues. The town was, then for the first time being illuminated by means of lamps, to the wonderment of the inhabitants, and in a general impetus towards municipal progress a clamouring for public wells had just been satisfied. The movement for reading facilities on an adequate scale for the more cultured, which was being experienced in all the chief centres of population throughout Scotland, had in Greenock an earlier function than in neighbouring towns. Stirling's Library, Glasgow, followed the Greenock lead eight years later, Paisley came next in 1802, and Glasgow Public Library was initiated in 1804. Greenock Library, which started with 82 members, had its infant home in the house of James Stewart, vintner; shortly thereafter it was removed to the Grammar School in the Royal Close, Rue-End Street, the head teacher or master, John Wilson, being appointed librarian at the modest figure of three guineas. On Wilson's resignation in 1787 owing to illness and advanced years, Thomas Thomson, his assistant, was appointed, and held the office until 1794, when he resigned because of the loss of books through carelessness. In this year, on the appointment of Robert Ferguson, English Master, the volumes were transferred to his school in Butter or Green Market, a small lane at the east end of Market Street, running behind the Mid Kirk, the site of which school was afterwards occupied by the Sheriff Court Hall. In 1807 the Library found a new lodgement in another portion of the same premises in the ownership of the town, and was placed in charge of Rev. John Dunn, teacher of languages, who continued librarian for thirty-three years.

It was contemplated in 1818 removing the centre of operations to the New Exchange and Assembly Rooms in Cathcart Street, where accommodation had been provided on a mutual agreement, but on the Magistrates offering to reconstruct the premises in Market Lane, and the Exchange proprietors having found other tenants to their satisfaction, the Library authorities closed with the municipal offer, at a rental of £25 a year. This arrangement lasted to 1831, when the necessity for larger premises to meet an increasing volume of business and books led to the occupancy of Masons' Hall, Charles Street; and after six years there the Library in 1837 became associated with the Watt Monument in Union Street. James Black, teacher of languages, took up the librarian's duties in 1839, carried on for four years, when his wife was allowed to assume the duties, which she performed so faithfully that on her resignation in 1868 the officials placed on record their sense of her value and the subscribers presented her with a testimonial of £150.

The reign of Mr. Allan Park Paton, scholar, poet, and student of high literary and artistic gifts and attainments, began in this year and continued until his retiral in 1894, when Mr. W. N. Shaw, assistant, was promoted to the office. On the death of Mr Shaw in 1913 Mr. Herbert Henderson, who has had many years' library experience in Liverpool and London, and who is a Fellow of the Library Association, was appointed.

It is interesting and instructive to note the growth of the institution. When the first catalogue was printed in 1786-7, by Wm. McAlpine, Greenock, the books numbered 400, and it is a recorded saying of John Galt that "the collection was formed with uncommon judgement, the useful prevailing." In 1792, on the printing of the second catalogue by Thomas Hurray, bookseller, the number of volumes had been doubled; the increase went on through the third and fourth catalogues, both printed in Glasgow; and in 1803, with the issue of the fifth by T. Stewart, bookseller,

Greenock, but from the Glasgow press, the Library comprised between 1,400 and 1,500 volumes. The sixth catalogue was printed by D. Abercrombie, of the 'Greenock Advertiser', the books then over 2000. An appendage in the form of a Foreign Library, the chief aim of which was to encourage the reading and speaking of French, German, etc., was instituted at this time and carried on distinctly until 1834, in which year it was incorporated with the Library in chief, the books being made over on payment of a small balance of debt and on condition that £15 would be expended annually in adding to this specific collection. John Mennons, Greenock, printed the seventh catalogue in 1826, with its 2,500 works and 6,000 volumes; in 1844, when Scott & Mackenzie, Greenock, published the eighth, the numbers had grown to 4,000 and 9,000; and in 1875, the catalogue printed by Mackenzie & Co., there were 7,000 and 15,000. The tenth catalogue, 1897, contained about 20,000 volumes. To-day the stock approaches 40,000 volumes, and is thoroughly up-to-date.

From time to time in the course of its long history the Library has been the recipient of many gifts, and a number of the more important of these were signalled by the formation of special subsections in the institution. Thus, for instance, the Watt Scientific Library was founded in 1816 through a donation of £100 from the immortal James Watt, who desired "to form the beginning of a Scientific Library for the instruction of the youth of Greenock." Two years later the widow of William Spence, conformable to the wishes of her husband, presented that gentleman's mathematical collection for the purpose of founding a Mathematical Library. He was honoured by having a biographical sketch written by John Galt, his intimate friend, to accompany an edition of Mr. Spence's essay on mathematical theories. The Williamson Theological Library was founded by the gift in 1856 of Rev. James Williamson, son of Mr. George Williamson, Procurator-Fiscal for the Lower Ward of Renfrewshire and author of the 'Watt Memorials', who died in 1854. In 1859 Mr. Thomas Fairrie bequeathed a legacy of £100, which was expended on works of history and general literature, and more particularly books of reference. The Buchanan Library was formed by the gift in 1861 of a collection from the library of Dr. Robert Buchanan, rector of Greenock Academy, and in this connection the mathematical and scientific departments were brought to date and works on language greatly enriched. The Caird collection, comprising mostly theological works belonging to Principal John Caird, was presented by his daughter, and contains the writings of the most eminent Puritan divines. There is also a valuable collection of books on engineering presented by Mr. John Scott, C.B., who in addition gifted many other valuable works. In more recent years several notable bequests have been made to the Library. In 1905 Mr Robert Miller, London, bequeathed a valuable collection of art books; in 1916 Mr Hugh Gray, Helensburgh, bequeathed £200 in lieu of books willed to the Library by his father Mr. John Gray; in 1917 a fine collection of 900 volumes was bequeathed by Mr. Stuart A. Caird; and in the same year Mr. George R. Macdougall left a legacy of £100 for the purchase of works of reference.

Among the rare and valuable works in Greenock Library is what is believed to be Shakespeare's own copy of "Plutarch's Lives," with his initials and marginal notes, and through the names of former owners it can be traced back to Shakespeare's circle. There is also a 1561 edition of Chaucer's works which formerly belonged to William Kingsley, descendant of Charles Kingsley, and it contains a note signed "C. L., 1800", accredited to Charles Lamb. Other works are the Virgil printed at the Plawlin Press; the first edition of Walter Raleigh's "History of the World," 1614; first edition of Sir Isaac Newton's "Principia Mathematica"; book presented by Benjamin Franklin to Professor Robert Simpson, Glasgow, 12th March, 1760; book in Italian by Gabriele Rossetti, father of Dante Gabriele Rossetti, with his autograph; and Huolet's Dictionary, 1572, which was in the Gibbon family for over 200 years. In the east window of the gallery is a case containing the evidence which proves that Charles Morrison, native of Greenock, anticipated Ampere, the great French electrician, by at least 68 years, thus establishing him as inventor of the electric telegraph. The autograph collection contains the names of Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Burns, Hazlitt, Macaulay, Watt, Gait, Carlyle, Hugh Miller, Tennyson, Gladstone, Wellington, Kingsley, Napier of Magdala, Lytton, Samuel Lever, Darwin, etc.

The Philosophical Society

Was formed on October 24, 1861, the membership of the James Watt Club merging itself into the new institution. The society has for its chief objects the promotion of literature, science, and art by the reading and discussion of original essays and papers and the engagement of eminent public lecturers. For many years the members met in the upper hall of the Watt Institution, but from the beginning they had in view the possession of a lecture hall and the formation of a museum. In the second year of the society's existence a conversazione was held in honour of James Watt's birthday, a meeting which had an important bearing upon the history of the organisation. On that occasion models of Newcomen's engine and of the Comet, along with a photograph of the Comet's engine and a balance which had belonged to Watt, were on exhibition. This was the beginning of this method of celebrating Watt's anniversary, the lectures continuing to be a distinguishing feature of the society's proceedings, which has effected much in the way of furthering original research and of attracting the friendly interest of scientific men. As already stated, Mr. James McLean in 1875 made the society a gift of £6,400, which was the total sum required for the erection of a lecture hall and museum on the ground behind the Watt Monument. The internal management of the hall and museum is vested in a committee comprising an equal number of members of the Philosophical Society and of the Greenock Library. Courses of public lectures granted by the Gilchrist and Combe Trustees, and several courses of university education and special lectures in different branches of science have also been carried through, and thus the society continues to maintain the high and laudable aims of its founders.

Greenock Hospital

Was opened on June 14, 1809. A dispensary for the sick poor had been inaugurated in 1801, in a house in Manse Lane, afterwards transferred to the ground floor of a house in Cathcart Street, the site of which is now occupied by the Exchange Buildings. The movement in favour of a hospital had its origin in an alarm caused by contagious fever on a Russian vessel in 1806, many deaths occurring. The first intention was to build merely a House of Recovery at a cost of £1,000, but subsequently it was resolved that the building should be on the footing of a hospital or infirmary for the sick and diseased poor. Sir John Shaw Stewart subscribed 400 guineas, payable in the grassum of 40 poles of ground between the Secession meeting-house and the new burying-ground on the east side of Inverkip Street. Weir states that many citizens excused themselves from subscribing on the plea that a Bridewell was more necessary, to which the reply was made that both were intended. This apparently had a good effect, for the promoters were enabled to set £500 apart for a Bridewell, and this was the foundation of such a fund. The total subscriptions amounted to £2,357 11s 7d, and the hospital cost £1,504 7s. Until 1828 the accommodation was adequate to any emergency that had arisen, but then owing to a fever epidemic two wings were added. In 1843 again the town was visited by a fever of a malignant type, and the Secession meeting-house, or Canister Kirk, at the northern extremity of the hospital, was in 1847 purchased for £500 and a new wing erected. The house was thus capable of receiving 100 fever and 50 surgical cases, the town at this time having a population of 18,000. A severe epidemic of fever broke out in 1864, when Kilblain House - purchased by the Commissioners of Supply as the site of the present County Courthouse and the now unused prison - was utilised as a convalescent house. The necessity of devoting the entire hospital accommodation to fever cases raised the question of providing another building for medical and surgical cases, and as a piece of additional ground had been bought in Duncan Street with part of a legacy by Captain MacNaught, the directors proceeded with this new house, which was opened in 1867. The entire cost from the first now amounted to £14,500, and the institution was considered the most perfect establishment of its size in Great Britain. Amongst the donations made from time to time the most notable is that of £25,000 bequeathed by Mr. David Martin Currie at the end of 1920. A further sum of £22,500 from the same source was intimated in August, 1921.

Eye Infirmary

Mr. James Ferguson, merchant and sugar refiner, Greenock, who died in 1865, bequeathed £6,000 for the founding of an Eye Infirmary. Owing greatly to the wording and directions of the will and codicil, there was considerable delay in carrying out the bequest. An accession of means coming into the estate through the death of a brother, the trustees were able to lodge the £6,000 in bank in 1878, and brought an action into Court to have it judicially declared that the bequest was valid and efficient. Mr. Ninian Gordon Cluckie was thereupon appointed oculist, and continued so until his death in 1920. Until 1894 patients were treated in Greenock Infirmary. Mr. Anderson Rodger, shipbuilder, Port Glasgow, generously subscribed £2,100 for the erection of an institution, which was built at the corner of Nelson and Brisbane Streets, in 1893. Dr. Gilchrist is now oculist.

Combination Hospital

Greenock and District Combination Hospital, which serves the three burghs of Greenock, Port Glasgow, and Gourock and the western portion of Renfrewshire, was opened in January, 1908, at a cost of £70,000, of which sum £40,000 was expended on the buildings. Accommodation was provided for 120 beds, on the separate pavilion system, for five classes of infectious disease - enteric fever, typhus fever, diphtheria, measles, and scarlet fever - provision is made in separate buildings for the observation of doubtful cases, isolation of cases of double infection, and a block is reserved for the special treatment of patients a few days prior to their discharge. When the Local Government Board approved of the designs, favourable comments were made as to the thorough and efficient manner in which the plans had been worked out. The site covers an area of ten acres, and cost £5,500. The architect was Mr. Alexander Cullen, F.R.I.B.A. Dr. Andrew Love was appointed superintendent.

Poorhouse and Asylum

For three years from the passing of the Poor-Law Act of 1845 the paupers of Greenock were accommodated in the House of Refuge. Captain Street Poorhouse, designed for 300 inmates, and built at a cost of £5,300, was opened in 1850. Lunatic wards that were added cost £2,200, and by 1868 the whole outlay amounted to £8,000. In 1874 the buildings were sold to the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company for £10,000. The erection of Smithston Poorhouse and Asylum was projected in 1872, the ground, 83 acres on the farm of Smithston, Inverkip Road, costing £7,000; the Earl of Mar and Kellie laid the foundation-stone in September, 1876; and the opening ceremony took place on March 29, 1879, by Mr. James Stewart, Member for the burgh. There was provision for 500 paupers and 220 asylum patients, and the entire cost was £122,904. The Parochial Offices, at the corner of Nicolson and West Stewart Streets, were opened in 1879, and cost £7,000. The extravagant outlays were the occasion of much adverse criticism. The 'Advertiser's' comment: "All their proceedings in connection with the new Poorhouse have been characterised by a reckless disregard of public opinion and a not less reckless disregard of economic considerations. No impartial person believes that the outlay was necessitated by the circumstances of the case." At the opening of Smithston, in defence of public representatives, Provost Lyle truthfully remarked that in serving the public they were apt to be criticised sometimes in an unfair way, and to have their motives impugned and misconstrued. If, however, they were careful to do the right thing, conscientiously acting to the best of their judgment, they generally in the long run met with approval. "To commemorate these two great events of Parochial extravagance," it was written by the 'Telegraph', "a metal plate has been stuck over the teakwood mantelpiece, with

the names of the great men engraved upon brass, so that posterity might be able to look: with wondering awe." Mr. John Black, chairman of the Parochial Board, admitted that the ultimate expenditure on Smithston had far exceeded what had been contemplated, because labour and material had been at their highest cost. He knew of no similar undertaking that had been exposed to more criticism.

Mariners' Asylum

Sir Gabriel Wood's Mariners' Asylum, Newark Street, was opened on October 17, 1854, the foundation-stone having been laid by Sir Michael Shaw Stewart with Masonic honours in October, 1850. The Asylum was founded by Commissary-General Sir Gabriel Wood, son of Mr. Gabriel Wood, merchant, Greenock, by Ann Stuart, who was connected with the Stuart family, Baronets of Castlemilk. The house in which his father resided is still standing in the Vennel facing the head of Charles Street, and well into the middle of last century had a large garden attached. In the 'Advertiser' of October, 1816, appears a notice of this and other properties of Mr. Wood being for sale. Sir Gabriel was born on May 19, 1767, and died at Bath on October 29, 1845, without issue but survived by his wife. Throughout his life, while at home and abroad, he was generous in his contributions to Greenock charities, and he was especially deeply impressed with the need for an institution for aged and destitute seamen. He bequeathed the whole of his residuary estate to his wife (daughter of General Fanning) and sister for the erection and endowment of such an institution. The site was given by Sir Michael Shaw Stewart on most liberal terms, £47 17s 7d per annum of feu-duty for nearly seven acres of ground. The contract price of the building was £8384 10s. The deed of constitution bears that a sum of £38,000 was applied towards the establishment and support of the Home or Asylum, for the reception of fifty aged and decayed merchant master mariners and merchant seamen, natives of Renfrew, Ayr, Dumbaron, Argyle, and Bute, and who should have attained the age of 55 years and be of good character. The institution is managed by a body of trustees numbering twenty-five, of which the Members for the burgh and Renfrewshire, the Provosts of Greenock, Port-Glasgow, Ayr, Dumbaron, Rothesay, and Inveraray, the Sheriff-Substitute at Greenock, and the minister of the West Kirk are members. In addition to the original bequest, Lady Wood bequeathed £5,200 in Russian bonds; Miss Frances Ann Wood (Sir Gabriel's sister) several properties in Greenock and Gourrock to the value of over £10,000; two sisters of Lady Wood a sum of £3,500 each. In 1893 the sum of £778 18s 11d was received from the American Government under curious circumstances. It appeared that at one time Mr. Gabriel Wood had carried on business in Maryland as a shipowner, and was owner of several vessels that were captured by the French when at war with Great Britain. A claim had been made by the American Government against the French Government for the value of those and other vessels, and the result was that the trustees having satisfied the American Government that they were legally entitled as testamentary trustees of Sir Gabriel Wood, the money recovered was divided between the Asylum and Gabriel Watson, of Paisley, whose great-grandmother was a sister of Sir Gabriel Wood's father. Miss Frances Ann Wood, Sir Gabriel's sister, was a liberal donor to local charities, and shortly before her death in May, 1856, she made a gift of the West Parish Church clock. In 1920 £10,000 was bequeathed through the will of Mr. David Martin Currie (brother of Sir Donald Currie), whose mother was a sister of Mr. John Martin, sugar refiner, Provost of Greenock in 1852. From the same source a further sum of £22,250 was derived in 1921.

Seamen's Friends

Greenock Seamen's Friends' Society was formed in January, 1820, at a meeting in the Mid Parish Church presided over by Mr Alan Ker. There was no stated location to begin with, and for years indeed the chaplain held meetings on board ships in the harbour. A special committee had the duty of inspecting and reporting on suitable lodging-houses for seamen. The ship Ornen, originally a three-masted schooner pierced for ten guns, then lying at the port, was received from the Clyde Marine Society to be utilised as a marine chapel and school for the children of seamen. She was berthed for some time at the Mid Quay, afterwards at the East India Harbour, where she lay until 1830, when she was condemned and sold. Negotiations were by this time in progress for the building of a Seamen's Home, and this was successfully established at the East Breast in 1833. The ground was granted by the Harbour Trust on lease, until such time as the Trust might require it for some necessary purpose. The Home was closed in 1917, when the Trust intimated that they would resume possession, which they did in part only, granting a lease for one year of the chapel buildings. The British and Foreign Sailors' Society came to an arrangement to take over the work of the local society, having previously agreed with the Trust to establish a branch in Greenock. On the transference the directors recognised that it was changed days for the port, at which there were now comparatively few seafaring men for whom the society had been carried on.

The Scott Institution

Was initiated in 1836, Mr. Wm. Scott, St Andrew's, New Brunswick, having bequeathed his estates there for the endowment of a school for the maintenance and education of indigent orphan children. The estate realised about £4,000.

Night Asylum

Buchanan Night Asylum, Captain Street, was founded in 1869 by means of a bequest of £4,000 by Mr. James Campbell Buchanan, of Bagatelle, for the purpose of affording shelter during the night to poor persons without a home, and supplying them with a nourishing meal on entering and leaving. The building was opened in 1871.

Medical Aid

The existing Greenock Medical Aid Society was constituted through a conjunction of two organisations with similar objects in the field of charitable work. The Destitute Sick Society was started in 1798 for the purpose of relieving by pecuniary aid necessitous persons of every religious denomination. In the course of time it fell into a semi-dormant condition, and for a while part of the income from the invested funds, which amounted to about £800, was distributed in the way of nourishment by the lady visitors of the Medical Aid Society, founded in 1876. In 1917 it was resolved to unite the two bodies under the above title, the total income to be applied in relieving cases of protracted illness in Greenock and district.

Mechanic's Institution

The Mechanics' Institution was founded in 1830, on the ruins of the Arts and Sciences Lectures Association, which had its meetings in the Methodist Chapel at the corner of Tobago and Sir Michael Streets. Mr. John Fairrie had been made the custodian of the 201 volumes belonging to this association, and on being solicited agreed to hand them over to a joint body of ship yard workers from east and west of the town. By a majority the name of Greenock Mechanics' Library was adopted. A split occurred in 1832, when Cartsydyke men hived off and formed a Library of their own.

Greenock portion coalesced with a Trades Library, which met in premises of the Mid Kirk at the foot of Bank Street. A removal was shortly made to Slater's School, Tobago Street, then to Simpson's Rooms, Sir Michael Street. A building site was selected in 1838, but it was autumn of 1840 before the institution at the corner of Sir Michael and Tobago Streets was opened, cost £1,600, Mr. Robert Wallace, M.P., being the principal speaker on the occasion. Baths, including a small swimming pond, were established in 1855, a Reading Room was opened, in 1862 the old Methodist Chapel was purchased for £360, and on a re-construction of the entire premises the Club was inaugurated. The Institution grew to be exceedingly popular with the better class of working men, for whom lectures, concerts, etc., educational classes, penny readings, and other forms of recreation and instruction were conducted for a long period of years. On the adoption of the Public Libraries Act in 1900 the usefulness of the Mechanics' Library was necessarily greatly curtailed, and within a year or two it was closed to all but the members of the Institution. Cartsydyke Library carried on until 1866, when it was dissolved.

Burns' Club

A meeting preliminary to the formation of Greenock Burns' Club was held in the summer of 1801, in the tavern of Mrs. Cottar, and the anniversary of the poet was celebrated in January following. The credit of forming the Mother Club belongs to Greenock Ayrshire Society, of which it was practically an offshoot, and the fact that a numerous Ayrshire colony was settled in town at the time ensured the immediate success of the movement. At this first meeting the famous musical composer, vocalist, and poet Neil Dougal declaimed a poem, and at the anniversary dinner on 29th January, attended by forty persons, an ode to Burns was given from the chair. The foundation-stone of Highland Mary's monument in the Old West Kirkyard was laid on 25th January, 1842. The early meetings of the Club were given to intellectual discussions, the study of the poet's works, and the encouragement of Scottish poetry. These lines have been followed throughout its long history, and to-day the cardinal objects are set forth as being the cherishing of Burns' name, the fostering of a love for his writings, and generally the encouragement of a taste for Scottish literature. No words could better describe the aims and labours of the Club than those used by Rev. Dr. Hugh MacMillan at the presentation of prizes to children in 1894: "The Club has got inspiration from the noblest side of their hero's character, and is endeavouring to carry out practically that inspiration in most interesting and profitable channels. Few if any clubs of a similar kind have done such excellent and praiseworthy work among the young people of the community. It has encouraged the reading of the great master's poems, singing of his pure songs, the gathering, naming, and understanding of the wild flowers of the fields, whose modest charms he has immortalised in touching verse, and created and fostered a taste for the works of the other poets and literary men who shine with him in the galaxy of enduring fame."

The rooms at 36 Nicolson Street contain a valuable collection of Burns relics, on the walls are portraits of men distinguished in literature and art, most of whom are honorary members or have delivered 'The Immortal Memory' orations at anniversary dinners, and the library comprises old and rare editions of Scottish authors. A winter session is an attractive feature, the programme consisting of lectures interspersed with musical evenings, and by means of competitions and otherwise school children are encouraged not only to study Burns and his works, but also to acquire a loving observation and acquaintance with the wonders of Nature as displayed in the wild flowers of glen and hillside. For a generation and longer the Club and its interests have been the especial care of Mr. Jas. B. Morison, the greatly esteemed authority on Burnsiana in all of its phases. Amongst the collection in the rooms is the membership card, No. 281, of John Galt, and a portrait of the novelist by Fleming of Greenock. In recent years St John's Burns Club has worthily followed the example of the Mother Club in the encouragement of study by school children.

Coffee Rooms

The Coffee Room was first located in the low flat of William Alexander's tenement in William Street; the second in the old Town Hall, Hamilton Street; the third in Exchange Buildings, built in 1814 at a cost of £7,000; and the fourth, in 1820, at the east corner of Cathcart Square, in a building specially erected at a cost of £2,500 for the proprietors after the split of the Reds and the Blues. This dispute was regarding debt and old furniture in the previous room. It

came before the Court of Session on the proprietors' complaint of the Sheriff's decree against them. The Court passed a Bill of Suspension, and at a meeting of subscribers a resolution was unanimously agreed to that the statements in the Bill were utterly groundless. The case was decided partly in favour of the committee, but it cost them upwards of £70 of expenses. The room in Cathcart Square was afterwards bought by the British Linen Company Bank, and was left as it is now. In 1855 it was taken over by the Chamber of Commerce, and has continued under their direction. Amongst the articles of value in the rooms are a bust of Watt by Chantrey, presented by the Magistrates during the reign of Provost Baine; and a portrait of Sir John Schaw, founder of Greenock, a copy from the original of Phillips, and subscribed for and presented to the Room in 1836. This was recorded as "an inadequate testimony of respect to the memory of a patriotic individual, to whom, as well personally as by the liberal grants made by him, the burgh owes its advancement, in something less than a century, from a fishing village of 4,000 to a commercial community little less than 40,000."

Chamber of Commerce

Greenock Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures was incorporated in 1813. The petition to George III was signed by Alexander Dunlop, James Leitch, Archibald Baine, John McNaught, Robert Ewing, Hugh Hamilton, John Buchanan, jun., John Denniston, jun., James Watt, James Ritchie, James Kippen, Gersham Stewart, and John Dunlop, merchants, shipowners, and manufacturers. The first meeting was held in the Tontine Hotel on January 5, 1814. It was set forth in the petition that "the town of Greenock is the principal seaport in the West of Scotland, and it would tend much to the encouragement and promotion of the trade and manufactures already extensively established and carried on there and in the vicinity of that town;" and the charter provides "that the directors shall have power to consider and suggest such plans and systems as may contribute to the protection and improvement of those branches of commerce and manufactures with which they may be connected, or which they may think conducive to the interests of the country, and by premiums or otherwise to give such encouragement to and follow out such plans and measures for promoting the commerce and manufactures of the town of Greenock and its neighbourhood as may be consistent with the nature and design of the institution." The first twelve petitioners were appointed the original directors, with Mr. John Dunlop as secretary.

In an official sketch prepared for the centenary commemoration it is stated that the Chamber has had a somewhat chequered career. It started life vigorously, dealing with commercial subjects of importance affecting local and national interests. These embraced the Bankrupt Act, the exemption of chief mates of merchant vessels from impressment, protection by ships of war to the mercantile marine, and the improvement of the road from Glasgow to Carlisle with the view of saving a day in the post between Glasgow and London. Later the Chamber joined in the agitation for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, and for the abolition in 1834 of the levy on seamen's wages towards the maintenance of Greenwich Hospital. In 1837 the members took an active part in the promotion of the Glasgow, Paisley, and Greenock Railway Bill. A period of less generous support and of spasmodic activity ensued, and continued until 1872, when the Chamber took a new lease of life, greatly helped by the passing of the Clyde Lighthouses Act of 1871, which gave the Chamber a representation of two members. In 1874 the Chamber joined the Associated Chambers of Commerce. Much time has been devoted to local matters - post office, telegraphic, and telephonic grievances, and the directors have given careful attention to Parliamentary measures of national importance. Investigations into periodic depressions in trade, and inquiries as to vacant sites suitable for new industries, have also been embraced in their comprehensive programme. A sugar section, a shipowners' section, and a shipbuilding and engineering section were formed in 1901, and a 'general trades' section in 1907. "Bound up in the recent history of the Chamber are the strenuous efforts made by it for the abolition of bounties on sugar. Not a year passed but the subject was dealt with by the directors; not an opportunity was lost in bringing before the country and His Majesty's Ministers the grievances of the sugar industry, which is of such paramount importance to the town of Greenock."

Provident Bank

The Provident Bank was founded in 1815, at a public meeting in the Town Hall presided over by Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, grandfather of Sir Hugh. The guarantors consisted of fifty-three leading citizens, and the original document of signatures is still on the wall of the directors' room. Accommodation was granted by the Town Council in the Old Hall, Bank Street, gratis to 1835, in which year, owing to changes brought about through the opening of the Sheriff Courthouse in Bank Street, transference was made to adjacent premises in the old Post Office buildings, entrance from Church Place, and for these £30 a year was paid to the Magistrates. This accommodation sufficed until 1857, when it was decided to build, and the property in William Street was opened in July, 1862, at a cost of £3,090. The ground floor and sunk flat were leased as a Post Office for twenty-one years, with a break at fifteen, at the expiry of which time, for the convenience of customers and the expedition of business, the Bank offices were transferred to the ground floor. In 1905 the directors acquired the adjoining property at 9 William Street and of stores behind, their extensions costing £3,050. In the first year of the Bank the sums deposited amounted to £2,535; in 1820 the funds were £5,539, this was almost doubled by 1825, by 1830 doubled again, in 1837 they were £50,000, in 1852 £100,000, in the next twenty two years they increased by as much again, and rose rapidly to the century of business, when they had reached a million sterling, and are now, notwithstanding the withdrawals in favour of War Stock, much above that figure. Branches were opened in Port Glasgow in 1901, in Gourrock in 1910, and in two districts of Greenock in 1912.

Post Office

A local Post Office was instituted in 1753. The Town Council minutes of August 6 in that year state that Lord Cathcart had interested himself in having a post-bag at Greenock, and had recommended John Paton as postmaster, "which would be a saving to the town in respect that they behaved otherwise to gratify him for his services in the town's business" as clerk to the Council. Part of a little shed originally built for the water engine was agreed to be fitted up as a Post Office, "whereat the Bailies and Council might also meet on occasions to do business, and likewise the Bailies might hold their weekly meetings there till better be provided." This ground belonged to Lord Cathcart, and was on the east side of New (now William) Street. The revenue in 1797 amounted to £2,800, and thirty years later to £4,153. In 1829 the Post Office was removed to Watt Place, and five years after to 1 Church Place. At this time R. Logan was postmaster, whose staff consisted of one assistant and three letter runners, which by 1842 had been increased to two assistants, four letter runners, and one deliverer of steamboat mails. Thomas McMillan was appointed postmaster in 1849, on the death of Mr. Logan. There were then three clerks, five carriers, and three messengers. In 1862 the Post Office was removed to the Provident Bank Buildings, William Street; at a break in the lease of fifteen years in 1877 it was located in the west side of Customhouse Buildings; and in 1882 in town buildings in Wallace Square. The present commodious premises in Cathcart Street were erected by the Government in 1899. The following is the list of postmasters in rotation: John Campbell, appointed 1796; John MacKechnie, 1797; Miss Jean MacKechnie (niece), 1816; Alexander May, 1822; Matthew Urie, 1823; Ralph Logan, 1834; Thomas McMillan, 1849; W. K. Bryson, 1889; H. J. J. Melsom, 1897; D. A. Millar, 1902; J. Macintyre, 1908; D. MacPherson, 1916; J. McMaster, 1921.

Public Library

The Public Libraries Act was adopted in 1900. In the following year Sir Andrew Carnegie intimated a gift of £8,000, for which sum the old Post Office Buildings in Wallace Square were handed over by the Improvement Trust, which expended £200 on the drainage. The Library was opened by Mrs. Carnegie on October 10, 1902. Mr. J. M. Leighton has been librarian since the opening.

Temperance Institute

For many years previous to 1863 the Temperance Society was provided with a meeting - place by Mr. Thomas Fairrie. The sum of £600 towards a building was raised by 1867, the site in West Stewart Street purchased for £800, and the Institute was built in 1868 at a cost of £3,500.

Y.M.C.A.

In 1839 a band of young men formed the Social Society, which in 1842 was merged into Greenock Young Men's Evangelical Society. There was a split in 1848, when the Christian Union was formed, and in 1861 the two bodies combined under the designation of the Young Men's Christian Association. The members were in 1871 on the lookout for a home, and in 1876 a citizen offered £1,000 if four others would do likewise. This came to nothing. The buildings in West Stewart Street were erected in 1887.

Sheriff Court

In 1794, while still the only Sheriff Court for the county was held at Paisley, the legal profession made an endeavour to have a Court established at Greenock. This met with unexpected opposition from the Town Council, who appreciated the benefits to be derived as solely those to go to the lawyers themselves. Twenty years later the authorities were of another mind, and the Court was accordingly formed on January 27, 1815. A Society of Writers was instituted and a charter granted by the Superior, but this original Faculty came to an end in 1820 and was not resuscitated until the passing of the Procurators' Act in 1865. Sheriff Court business was for eighteen years carried on in the Town Council Buildings, Hamilton Street, the first Sheriff-Substitute Mr. Claud Marshall, whose jurisdiction embraced the parishes of Greenock, Port-Glasgow, and Inverkip. In consequence of the additional duties imposed upon the Sheriff through increasing population, etc., it was found necessary to look for independent and permanent accommodation.

Court-Houses

A Court-house was built in Bank Street, on the site of the school conducted by Colin Buchanan, and above which was then a public market entering from Bank and Market Streets. It was begun in 1833 and was opened on May 9, 1834, by Sheriff Dunlop. The ground was a feu by the Magistrates, "who acted with as much liberality as was in their power consistently with a due regard to the interests of the community." There was no Act of Parliament or public assessment for the buildings, the cost of which was met from the unappropriated county fund and from private subscriptions raised mainly through Sheriff Marshall. The present Court-house in Nelson Street was opened in 1869. The first proposal, in 1864, was in favour of retaining a connection with the Town Hall Buildings, for which the strong argument was advanced by Provost Grieve and others that it would offer an opportunity of rooting out many of the old insanitary buildings. Other sites suggested were George Square, Bank Street, Cathcart Square, and Kilblain House. The Faculty and the general public declared for Cathcart Square neighbourhood, but this was overruled by a county meeting, which decided upon Nelson Street. The erection was delayed for nearly a year in consequence of an effort by Sheriff Patrick Fraser on the subject of a Circuit Court at Greenock, a movement that had to be abandoned owing to political difficulties. The new Court-house was opened on November 5, 1869, and was formally handed over by Provost James Morton. Sheriff Fraser on the occasion said that as a specimen of old

Scottish architecture of the 16th century it was in his opinion a great success. The cost was borne equally by the Treasury and the county. The present Sheriff-Principal is James Mercer Irvine, K.C., and the resident Sheriff-Substitute John Swan Mercer, advocate.

Circuit Court

A short-lived movement took place in 1848 to have a Circuit Court at Greenock for cases from Argyshire, Bute, and Renfrewshire. The Justiciary judges expressed strong opposition to any alteration from Inveraray as the Head Court. The Town Councils of Port Glasgow, Campbeltown, and Rothesay were in favour of the change, but Paisley was naturally decidedly against it. After an interval of years, a special meeting of the Town Council was held in 1862 to consider a memorial by the Faculty of Procurators to the Home Secretary praying the Government to make Greenock a circuit town instead of Inveraray, when it was unanimously agreed to memorialise in favour. In 1863 a meeting of Commissioners of Supply was held at Greenock to consider the proposal for Bute and Renfrewshire, when a majority resolved that a change was not desirable, and that if the Government should rule otherwise Paisley would be more suitable than Greenock. The Town Council unanimously agreed to oppose this resolution, but their action was unsuccessful so far as Greenock was concerned.

Police

No real police organisation existed in the town until 1800. Prior to this the duty of preserving order was carried out by special constables and the ordinary town officers, who had other and multifarious work to perform. A report for better regulation of the police had been called for in 1797, but it was in 1800 that a master of police was appointed for a year as an experiment, Nathaniel Wilson being elected. Wilson occupied the post for two years without payment of salary, and was then given £100 and remuneration fixed at an annual £50. That he did not continue to give entire satisfaction is clear from a reference in 1807 -- "Nathaniel Wilson, who is not re-elected as master of police, complains that he has not a proper officer to go along the streets with him to see what is wanted for pavement cleaning or dirt left on the streets." He was afterwards re-appointed, but the Council resolved "that an officer to go along with him, or in other words a depute under him, seems altogether unnecessary, and could tend only to create confusion and in a great measure to defeat the end of his own appointment." As the population in 1801 was 17,400, one would think that the force had quite enough to do. Certain police regulations were formulated in 1813, referring principally to street cleansing and minor offences. According to a remark of the time, officers were less like police constables than inspectors of nuisances. In 1815 John Lennox, who was reported to have manifested a disposition of activity and interest in the police, was appointed superintendent.

Harbour Police

Harbour police were first considered necessary in 1816, when there were great depredations at quays and ships, committed particularly by persons of the lowest rank and by children. It was then resolved to apply for power to fix and shut up gates at such quay heads as was deemed necessary, and to establish an effective harbour police, in which resolution the Trustees were confirmed by the Commissioners. By the Act of 1817 those powers were granted, and Lennox's successor in 1822, John McIlwraith, received the dual appointment of superintendent of the burgh police at a salary of £50, and of the harbour police at £10, and "such proportion of the fines accruing from police convictions as the Magistrates shall determine." This harbour police first consisted of six officers and three scavengers. Three years after his appointment McIlwraith had to swallow a dose of his own medicine. It is noted in the minutes that he was in jail at the instance of a creditor, and the Council was under the necessity of suspending him. This was in May, and there later appeared the satisfactory entry that he had been liberated and re-instated.

The dual arrangement was suspended in a few years. At various periods in the country's history from about the end of the eighteenth century onward there were rallies of the citizens in the cause of peace and good order. Special constables were enrolled for patrolling the streets; in 1819, for instance, when destitution was widespread, a police armed association was formed for the protection of property and the preservation of peace, and again in 1867 1600 specials were sworn in at the height of the Fenian agitation.

In 1832 Robert Lyle was made superintendent of the burgh police, his staff comprising two sergeants, five constables, three messengers-at-arms, and twelve night watchmen; and in that year also Lieut. Duncan Blair, R.N., was appointed superintendent of the harbour police. On the death of Lieut. Blair in 1842, Alexander Mann, who was then burgh police superintendent, was temporarily appointed to the harbour, and in November, 1843, given the post of joint superintendent. The burgh salary at this date was £100. Mann in the following year had a series of charges brought against him through a memorial to the Magistrates. A formal inquiry resulted in a decision that there was no truth in them. The Harbour Board of 1847 had before them the subject of re-establishing a separate master of police, the consideration of which was deferred, while the police were enjoined to be more active in their duties. In succession to Alexander Mann, William Newham, of London, was appointed Chief Constable in 1858. He occupied the office for five years only, when it was filled by David Dewar, of Hamilton. Captain Dewar was succeeded by Captain James Orr in 1876, Captain J. W. Angus was appointed in 1886, and on his retirement in 1913 Captain James Christie, second in command, was promoted to the post. The police staff to-day numbers 143 all told.

Prisons

The earliest prison of which there is any information was fitted up by the Magistrates in a thatched house at the foot of Broad Close. Jougs were affixed to the wall, and another set was put at the West Quay Head, at a place called the Inspector's Land. Sometime thereafter a change was made to the old Court-house and jail on a site between Cross-Shore Street and Broad Close, now occupied by the Post Office. On this being found insufficient as a prison, the Keep or Massimore of Greenock Mansion-house was utilised until 1765, when the Town Buildings were erected in Hamilton Street. Later there was a guardhouse in Market Street. In 1808 Sir John Shaw Stewart agreed to give ground behind the Mid Kirk for the building of a Bridewell, and private subscriptions were made for this purpose. The architecture was in the old castle style; with two towers in front and battlements on the top, and the cost was £1,500, of which £300 was subscribed by the town. It was at first under the inspection and special direction of the proprietor of the Greenock estate or his Baron Bailie and the Magistrates. The prisoners had to work to earn their own living. This building was in 1887 removed to make way for the Caledonian railway to Gourrock. A new prison was erected in Nelson Street, adjoining the Court-house, in 1869, and was in use until 1910, when the Combination Prison for Renfrew, Argyle, and Bute counties was erected at Gateside, Inverkip Road.

Others

It will suffice in respect of the numerous other institutions, societies, etc., to give little more than their names. Their beneficent character and labours must be well within the knowledge of the public. The list includes –

Female Benevolent Society, instituted in 1811;

Bible Society, 1807;

Total Abstinence Society, 1834;

House of Refuge and Inebriates' Retreat, 1853;

Training Home for Friendless Girls, 1865;

The Charitable Society,

Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society,

Children's Convalescent Home,

Working Boys' Home,

Nursing Association,

British Women's Temperance Association,

Societies for the Blind, for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and to Animals,

Sabbath School Union (1870),

Working Boys' and Girls' Religious Society,

Ambulance Societies,

Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association,

United Evangelistic Committee.

Greenock Highland Society was formed in 1873, for the fostering of the Gaelic language, literature, and music, and for the institution of a fund for the temporary relief of destitute Highlanders and assisting them to find employment. The Ragged School was opened in 1858 and closed in 1920. The Carmen and Carters' Society, 1791, was the oldest local trade union. It was established "for the purpose of supporting each other in time of trouble and making provision for our widows and children." The Merchants' House Society, organised in 1787, had similar objects. The entry fee was £5 5s and the annual subscription 5s. No part of the funds was expended until the stock amounted to £1,000, when the interest was distributed in charities among the decayed members. The society has long ceased to exist.

The Press

First Printer

There was no letterpress printer in Greenock before 1765, and printing was then introduced by William McAlpine, who was also the town's first bookseller. Nothing in the way of journalism was attempted until 1802, a year notable for two ventures in this enterprise. The honour of precedence belongs to 'The Clyde Commercial List', a small sheet, price 2d, published three times a week by William Johnston, and carried on for thirty or more years. It was issued from the premises in Hamilton Street in which the 'Telegraph' was started in 1857. 'The Clyde List' was the property of Customhouse officials and was edited by them, and its contents comprised shipping news and the exports and imports of the Clyde. In 1844 those gentlemen transferred their interest to the 'Clyde Bill of Entry', published in Glasgow. Andrew Johnston, who succeeded his father, continued the Greenock publication under the title of 'The New Clyde Commercial List', copying the items from the 'Bill of Entry'. An action was raised against him in the Court of Session, in which the decision was for pursuers, and the publication ceased. He petitioned Parliament on the question of being precluded from obtaining information from the Customhouse authorities, but received no redress.

The Advertiser

But the pioneer newspaper was the 'Advertiser', founded in the same year by John Davidson, writer, who was proprietor and editor, and the printers were J. Chalmers & Co. It began life in the, back court of a building immediately to the east of the old Town Hall, the rent £5, the sum that had been paid for the premises by the proprietors of the 'Glasgow Herald' in 1787. In 1813 the newspaper was purchased by Peter McCallum, bookseller, whose printer was A. Henderson, Hamilton Street. It had at first been published weekly at 6d; it was now issued on Wednesdays and Fridays, at 6½d. John Mennons, an able literary man, was editor, but having in 1817 been

refused a share in the property he resigned and started the 'Greenock Herald', price 7d. This competition was so successful that McCallum failed in business about 1820, and the 'Advertiser' became the property of Mennons, who then announced the combination of the 'Advertiser' and the 'Herald', which had been issued as a political, commercial, and literary journal, under the title of the 'Greenock Herald and West Country Weekly Journal', of eight pages, and published on Mondays. Mennons' father, with his elder son Thomas, was the original publisher and editor of the 'Glasgow Advertiser', afterwards the 'Glasgow Herald and Advertiser'. The office of the 'Greenock Herald' at its inception was on the west side of Cathcart Square. On the conjunction the paper was published twice a week. Further frequent changes took place in proprietary and location. Premises were occupied in Spence's Lane, east side of Cathcart Square, now Provident Bank Buildings; then in succession the head of Drummer's Close, Cameron's property in Bank Street, and finally 29 Hamilton Street, where it died in 1884. It was first of all issued weekly at 6d, then twice a week, later on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at 1d, and in May, 1877, there were two editions daily, ½d.

This is how it announced its own demise: "In memoriam. The 'Greenock Advertiser,' which, having survived empires and revolutions, dies at last because the [Conservative] party to which its best efforts were devoted is so inspired by the spirit of Christian meekness that it prefers journals which misrepresent its sayings and revile its policy. Born, 8th January, 1802. Died, 8th April, 1884. 'Too bad for blessing, yet too good for banning.' "

Various

For many years the 'Advertiser' was the only local newspaper. In 1827, when the rage for cheap papers was abroad, and when attempts were being made to evade the stamp duty by printing once a week under four different titles, the 'Independent' was published; but within a short time the Revenue authorities put a stop to it, and the 'Greenock Iris', issued by Rollo Campbell, met a similar fate. The 'Greenock Intelligencer' was brought out in 1832 by a syndicate, of which Dr. J. B. Kirk was editor, and the publishers were Malcolm & Co., Star Hall. It was said to have been badly managed, and to have contained a medley of articles, chiefly political. It died in three years. The 'Greenock Observer' (Liberal) appeared on April 14, 1840, published every Wednesday from 15 William Street, but printed at 75 Argyle Street, Glasgow, by James H. Kippen. It had a life of ten months, and was followed in 1849 by the 'Greenock News and Weekly Press' also printed in Glasgow. The publication was stopped at the expiry of six months, but was revived for another brief spell. The 'Greenock Record' of 1850, published by Andrew Johnston, Mondays and Thursdays, at 3d, from Cathcart Square, site of the present British Linen Bank Buildings, had an even shorter term of existence; so also the 'Mirror', a journal of literature, science, and art. Then came the second 'Greenock Herald' in 1852, first printed in the Star Hall, afterwards in the premises still occupied in the close at 40 Cathcart Street. For a number of years a special column, devoted principally to criticism of local affairs, appeared regularly over the pen name "Democritus." The writer was Mr. Robert Hendry, a reformer of the true, high-minded sort, who from his youth up was in the forefront of movements for the amelioration and education of the working men, and particularly conspicuous in his labours on behalf of the Mechanics' Institution. He was a man of personality, with a vivid and impressive style of expression, and it is not open to doubt that he was a great influence for good through this channel. It was said of him by one of his most intimate friends that "from his pen came, as from a perennial spring, quiet wisdom, happy utterances, and genial wit."

The 'Telegraph'

The 'Greenock Telegraph' was started in 1857 by Neilson & Mackenzie. Mr. Neilson, a native of Greenock, had for some years been the chief of 'The Times' Parliamentary staff, and Mr. Mackenzie was brother of the then editor of the 'Advertiser'. The original partners had but a brief career with the journal, as the following paragraph in the 'Advertiser' of October of that year shows: "Copyright, machinery, plant, of 'Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette' exposed to auction within their premises, 8 Hamilton Street, at upset price of £200, sold to J. F. Neilson at £230." The firm became Neilson & Campbell, and removed to Bank Street, where the lettering of the sign may still be seen on the front of the house near the bottom of the east side of the street. Within a year Mr. Neilson was sole proprietor, and at the end of another twelve months he sold the copyright and plant to Erskine Orr and John Mitchell Pollock, and Mr. Neilson returned to London to resume his previous place on the 'Times.' Not long after this the 'Telegraph' began as a weekly newspaper, subsequently it was bi-weekly, and in August, 1863, it was instituted as a daily evening journal, the first in the kingdom, and was followed in turn by the 'Glasgow Citizen' in 1864, at Bolton in 1867, London in 1868, and Belfast in 1870. Messrs. Erskine Orr and John Mitchell Pollock became proprietors early in the 'sixties, and the title of the firm continues to be Orr, Pollock & Co. From Bank Street the printing office was transferred to Charles Street in 1862, and there a new and commodious building was erected in 1885.

In 1866 the 'Greenock Advertising Gazette' appeared, printed by Joseph Blair for James McCunn, bookseller. It lived for a short time only. The 'Greenock Standard', brought out in 1890, ostensibly in the Conservative interest, continued for thirteen weeks.

The Newsclout

Quite the most interesting as well as the most unique efforts to establish a literary and news journal in Greenock were those made by John Lennox about the middle of the nineteenth century, which issued in the publication of the 'Greenock Newsclout' as a protest against the Government taxes upon knowledge. For a detailed and reliable

account of Lennox's doings in this capacity we refer the reader to the estimable work, 'John Lennox and the Taxes on Knowledge' published by William Stewart in 1918. Lennox, who came from Dumbarton in 1839 to settle in Greenock as a likely field for his talents, began with 'The Truth Teller' and 'The Story Teller', neither of which survived beyond a few numbers. The device of the time for the evasion of the newspaper stamp duties was to issue the same paper with a different title on each of the four weeks of a month. Thus 'Young Greenock' appeared on March 3, 1845, and successive numbers were variously named 'Nothing', 'The Chaldean Stories', 'The Second Precursor', 'Sam Slick', 'Aurora', 'Quilp's Album', 'The Ventilator', etc. In August of this year an editorial address announced the "disagreeable circumstance in connection with the publication of 'Young Greenock' that by ceasing to be issued only upon any one of the last two or first three days of the month it has become illegal; "and in December, on an instruction from the Court of Exchequer as to the illegality, the journal was discontinued". 'Young Greenock's Ghost' then appeared, followed by 'Quilp's Budget', in 1847 'The Elector' and a new series of 'Young Greenock', and on February 7, 1849, the first number of the 'Greenock Newsclout'. It was published as "an unstamped periodical, designed as a legal successor to 'Young Greenock,' 'Aurora', and 'Quilp's Budget,' all declared by the Solicitor of Stamps to be illegal. Some of our contemporaries may laugh at our effort to promote British cotton manufactures and Greenock intelligence, and ridicule our clout as a mere dishclout, but we hope by its instrumentality to bring the question of taxes upon knowledge to an issue." There were, so far as can be gathered, 41 numbers in all, the last of them in 1852. The number issued in October, 182, was entitled, "Old Greenock, or the Local Washing-Clout, an occasional publication of usefulness in Old Dirty". It contained one short paragraph that deserves to be preserved "Our doted defunct contemporary, 'Young Greenock,' was once unceremoniously kicked out of the Mechanics' Reading-room as being too fast for the readers," and adds that the 'Greenock Advertiser' was running the risk of the like treatment for erring the other way. Lennox lived to see the advertisement duty repealed in 1853, the year of his death; the stamp duty was repealed in 1855, and the paper duty in 1861.

Town Council Press

In the early municipal days Councillors did very much as they pleased with regard to the publicity of their proceedings, which were conducted in private and grudgingly communicated in meagre doles at their own good will. One looks in vain through the columns of the 'Advertiser' in the first decades of the last century for anything more than the briefest of references to meetings and doings of the authorities. The people's representatives claimed immunity from journalistic scrutiny, and so accustomed were the townspeople to subservience in civic affairs that they gave a willing acquiescence with apparently hardly a thought of remonstrance. This public apathy was doubtless partly responsible for the long continuance of privacy in the conduct of the town's business. Even on the part of the press there does not seem to have been any insistent protest.

So far as the minutes enlighten us, it was 1827 before any effort was made to introduce a more liberal-minded policy. It is recorded that a motion to admit a reporter was lost by a majority. Some months later Mr Mennons, editor of the 'Advertiser', wrote to the Magistrates: "In consequence of the proceedings of the Council being regularly published in a Glasgow newspaper, and being desirous that the readers of the local journal should possess an impartial report of these from notes taken on the instant, I take the liberty of soliciting your permission that a person in my employment be present for the purpose of detailing any public business which may be discussed at your meetings. That person will be in attendance to-day with this view, in case the indulgence solicited be granted." There was a motion to admit a reporter, to which the good men Robert Baine and John Fairrie proposed an amendment in favour of the plural reporters. The result was a hard knock for the press in general, for the motion was carried by five to two - Bailies William Leitch and Robert Ewing and Messrs. Roger Ayton, Robert Sinclair, and John Scott against Messrs. Baine and Fairrie, while Mr. John McCunn objected to the admission of any reporter. This limited privilege was adhered to for many years, the reporters of other newspapers having to content themselves with scraps of information gathered through the devious ways of hearsay.

The Third Ward Committee in 1833 passed a resolution declaring that in order to impose a wholesome check on public opinion publicity should be given to all Council proceedings by free admission of reporters to meetings of Council. At a meeting in November of the same year, when it was proposed to discuss the dry dock question in private, the newspaper correspondent who was present with considerable courage remarked that "even if the motion were carried he should not feel himself bound to withdraw, as the mere act of a public body resolving itself into a committee did not necessarily occasion the exclusion of strangers. The proceedings of Parliament in committee of the whole House were as open to the public as their ordinary sittings." The motion was a victory for the people, by seven to three. Three years later there was Councillor Dunlop asking - Have the public a right to be present? To which Provost Macfie replied that personally he had no objection, but it was not customary to throw their meetings open. The Town Clerk said the public could not claim the right. It was the practice at Paisley and Edinburgh only, so far as he had heard.

In 1836 Messrs. James Dunlop and William Simons endeavoured to have the meetings open to the public, and were defeated by twelve to three. Eleven years later the minutes contain the following paragraph "A message was delivered that a reporter from the 'Glasgow Saturday Evening Post' was in the adjoining room, desirous of admission to report the proceedings. Provost Grieve moved that no other than the reporters from Greenock be admitted, seconded by Mr. William Baine. Mr. John Ferguson moved that he be admitted, seconded by Mr. Hew

Mcllwraith. After some conversation the amendment was withdrawn, Mr. Mcllwraith dissenting. The influence of public opinion and the changing laws of the country on the subject by the middle of the century were reflected in the columns of the 'Advertiser', which by then was reporting the meetings verbatim, and having an almost continuous correspondence from indignant members of the Town Council who discovered their heated periods too profusely reproduced.

Some Periodicals

The first public literary periodical in Greenock, 'The Visitor, or Literary Miscellany', was issued in October, 1817, by John Turner, bookseller, 8 William Street. It was composed chiefly of voluntary original contributions, consisted of sixteen pages, and was published on Saturdays at 2d. It appeared in the winter season only. Ten of the numbers were printed in the 'Greenock Herald' office, and thereafter for the remainder of its existence, to December, 1818, it was brought out by Messrs. Donaldson & Macfarlan. No.1 of 'The Western Hydra' appeared on January to, 1821, printed at 17 Cross-Shore Street fortnightly, "which will consist of agreeable and amusing reading and short original essays, narratives, tales, adventures, original and selected." 'The Literary Coronet', by the editor of the 'Advertiser', began in July of the same year, and was carried on until 1828. Amongst other publications that were printed from time to time and had a brief existence were 'The Watchman'; 'The Chaplet' edited by John Mennons, and going out in 1843; 'The Mirror', a Roman Catholic organ; 'The Protestant and Standard'; 'The Temperance Standard, 1874'; etc.

Early Books

It seems most probable that the first book printed in Greenock was from the press of William McAlpine, in 1778. The following appeared on the title-page: "Poems full of Gospel Marrow and Sweet Invitations to Heaven's Blessings. Composed by William Tennent, wheelwright, Glasgow; and copied by John Finlayson, schoolmaster, Kilern. Printed by William McAlpine, Cathcart Street, Greenock, in 1778." The second book published in Greenock was "Genuine Narrative and Concise Memoirs of some of the most interesting exploits and singular adventures of J. McAlpine, a native Highlander, from the time of his emigration from Scotland to America, 1773. Greenock: Printed and sold by W. McAlister, bookseller, at his shop in Cathcart Street. 1780." William Scott printed 'Hutcheson's Dissertation' in 1810, 'Fisher's Catechism' in 1812, and two editions of 'Harvey's Meditations' in 1813 and 1816.

Daniel Weir, the first historian of Greenock, was born March 31, 1796, and died November 11, 1831. His father was a merchant. Weir served apprenticeship to bookselling, and had a business at 57 Cathcart Street. He contributed several songs to the 'Scottish Minstrelsy' of R. A. Smith, and for Messrs. Griffon & Co., Glasgow, edited three volumes of lyric poems under the titles of 'The National Minstrel', 'The Sacred Lyre', and 'Lyrical Gems', in which were many compositions of his own. Others of his poems appeared in Glasgow newspapers and in the 'Advertiser'. In an interesting notice of him Rev. Charles Rogers wrote that Weir had a decided claim to remembrance and was possessed of a fine genius, a brilliant fancy, and much gracefulness of expression. In 1829 he published his "History of Greenock", illustrated by engravings, and he left an unpublished religious poem. In 'Modern Scottish Minstrel', edited by Dr Rogers, are nine of his poems and a biographical sketch.

George Williamson, senior, Procurator-Fiscal for the burgh, the founder of the James Watt Club, published in 1840 'Letters respecting the Watt Family', dedicated to the members of the club, and the book was printed by William Johnston & Son, Greenock. His son, Rev. James Williamson, in 1856 published the memorials collected by his father, under the title of 'Memorials of the Lineage, Early Life, Education, and Development of the Genius of James Watt', printed for the Watt Club, of which during his life Mr. Williamson had been perpetual president. George Williamson, junior, clerk of Greenock School Board, published in 1886 'Old Greenock, from the earliest times to the early part of the nineteenth century, with some accounts of the Burgh of Cartsdyke and Burgh of Barony of Crawforddyke'; and in 1888 the second series, 'Old Greenock, embracing sketches of Religious, Ecclesiastical, Educational, and Literary History from the earliest times to the middle of the nineteenth century.' Dugald Campbell, who was Provost 1879-82, published two volumes of 'Historical Sketches of the Town and Harbours of Greenock', the first in 1879, the second in 1881; and Archibald Brown 'Early Annals of Greenock', in 1905; all three books having issued from the 'Telegraph' Office.

Gleanings

Greenock Arms

It is a matter of regret that the origin of the town coat-of-arms is in doubt, and that in point of fact there long existed a state of fluidity as to form and presentment. The Marquis of Bute, in his 'Arms of the Royal and Parliamentary Burghs of Scotland' (1897), says that the arms of Greenock is not recorded in the Lyon Office, that the device adopted is not really a coat-of-arms, and that it is to be regretted that something was not done originally of a more heraldic character.

The oldest Greenock crest was that of the Royal Fishing Company of 1661, which had a seal or coat-of-arms bearing a Royal Crown and under it two herrings in the form of a St. Andrew's cross; while the oldest motto is the coopers' crest, "Let herrings swim that trade maintain." Williamson holds that the natural emblem or crest was a ship in full sail, a specimen of which was shown on the regimental colours presented to the early Volunteers by the

Town Council, and another in the cutter on the Mid Kirk spire. This gilded gabbart, set there in 1790, was long regarded as representing the arms of the burgh. But the oldest form of the three-masted ship is to be seen on the old town drum, in possession of the Leitch family. This ship is encircled, the underneath figure shows a workman rolling casks, while round the outside of the circle run the words, "The Town of Greenock." Another and somewhat different crest is found on the right side of the Watt monument in Greenock Library. In this case the ship is engraved on, a shield surrounded by the scroll, "Sigillum Burgi de Greenock" and underneath are man, casks, and a uniformed officer directing.

Present Seal

The present official seal is a round stamp with a flat border engraved, "Sigillum Burgi de Greenock", and underneath are man, casks, and officers, with ships passing on the river. The crest used by the town-clerk exhibits a ship within an oval, an ornament surmounting, and over the oval, "Burgh of Greenock," which motto is said to have been suggested by Mr. John Ker Gray, town clerk, in 1877. On the Provost's badge of office are the words, "May God speed Greenock".

The municipal records throw little if any further light. There is, in fact, no reference whatever to the subject until the year 1862, when "the Provost stated that for some time back questions had been raised as to what should be the armorial bearings of Greenock, and that it was believed certain bearings had been adopted on various occasions, but as they had been lost for many years he moved that a special committee be appointed to enquire into the whole subject." The result was the seal now in use. In October, 1894, the town had an unexpected gift in this connection from a distinguished townsman, Sir Andrew Lusk, who wrote to Provost D. Shankland: "My regard for the town of Greenock and the memory of happy days I have spent therein as a townsman at a period now long gone by are my reasons for addressing you, to ask you to be so good as to accept for yourself and successors in the Provostship a badge and chain of office, Which I now have pleasure in forwarding you. Be pleased to receive an expression of my esteem for yourself personally, and my earnest wish for the continued prosperity of the town and trade of Greenock." The centre shield is enamelled in colours showing the Greenock arms, a wreath of oak leaves intertwining, and the side panels have raised emblems of a sword, sceptre, and crown surmounted by, Scottish thistles, while suitable inscriptions are engraved on shields on the upper and lower parts of the badge.

Harbour Trust

The seal of the Harbour Trust is a floriated shield with device of cogwheel, the seal supported by sea-horses. At the top of the crest is a ship, with Neptune's trident and a flag appearing from behind the shield, and on the ribbon below are the words, "God speed Greenock," while "Seal of the Trustees of the Port and Harbours of Greenock" encircle, with thistle at bottom.

Town Clerkship

The town clerkship was instituted by the charter of 1670. Mr. John Paton was the first of whom there is any account, and the fragment of the first Council minute extant bears his signature. He was also the first postmaster, and for a time collector of the tax on ale. Mr. John Campbell, writer, from Paisley, was the first regularly appointed town-clerk, in August, 1754. His appointment was for life, and for 22 years he acted as clerk to the Harbour Trust (which was also the Town Council), of which he became a member. In 1790 his son William, writer, was conjoined with him in the clerkship, and was made clerk on his father's death in 1797, the appointment then being made annually. In 1804 it was resolved to dismiss him, but on an application by Mr. Æneas Morison, writer, Edinburgh, a connection by marriage, the two were appointed joint clerks. In August of that year, however, their appointment was withdrawn and Mr. John Muir, writer, provisionally put in the office. It was thereupon claimed on behalf of Campbell and Morison that their appointment had been for life, and that the Council records would prove it so. The record, after a careful search, was discovered in Campbell's coal cellar, with 43 leaves missing. The case went in favour of Muir, who was annually elected until 1816, when Mr. Claud Marshall, just appointed Sheriff-Substitute at Greenock, was conjoined with him in the office. Marshall retired in 1821, Muir resigned, and Mr. James Bell, advocate, father of Mr. Henry Glassford Bell, was elected assessor and town-clerk. When he resigned in 1826 Mr. John Ker Gray, who had been acting as depute clerk since 1823, was made interim clerk for one month, and in March of that year Mr. Allan Swan, writer, was appointed until the election in September, then for one year, with Gray as depute, and Mr. Alexander Dunlop, advocate, received the assessorship. Swan resigned in 1828, Gray was again promoted interim clerk, and shortly afterwards Mr. Crawford Muir, writer, son of John Muir and business partner of Swan, was appointed his successor until the election in September. On a vote then being taken between Muir, John Turner, and Archibald McKinnon, Turner was elected by a majority of two. In 1830 the positions of Turner, town-clerk, and Gray, depute, were re-adjusted, and the arrangement continued for many years. Mr. Gray was in the service of the Town Council from 1820 to 1878, for the greater part of that time as town-clerk, acting under sixteen Provosts, and on his retiral it was remarked that he had exhibited a striking fidelity and devotion to the interests of Greenock. When first appointed an official the revenue of the town from all sources was £8,500, and in 1878 it had grown to £128,000. Mr. Gray was the victim of an outrage in the public street which escaped as by a miracle from a fatal result. A man named John Thomson took great offence against the authorities in 1848 for doing away with street auctions. Intent upon a vengeful satisfaction, he met Mr. Gray in Hamilton Street, and shot him in mistake for the Procurator-Fiscal. A double-breasted waistcoat saved the wound from proving fatal, and Mr. Gray recovered after some weeks. Thomson was sentenced to death, but this was commuted to confinement in a lunatic asylum, a

mitigation greatly brought about, it was said, through the efforts of Mr. Gray himself. Mr. Colin MacCulloch, Mr. Gray's assistant, was appointed his successor in 1878, and held office until his retirement in 1917, when Mr. Andrew Nimmo, assistant, was promoted to the post.

Bells and Clocks

The original Old West bell, the first in Greenock, is believed to have come from Holland, and was hung on a wooden spindle, with a large wheel and a rope led outside. It was 'riven' in 1675, and replaced in 1677. The new bell was inscribed, "R. P., for the Church of Grinock, 1677." The R. P. is supposed to stand for Richard or Roger Purdue, then amongst the most reputed bell-founders in England. It was known, from its characteristic ringing, as Tam o' Lang. It was removed to the new West steeple in 1856, where it hangs as second bell and chimes the quarters. In dimensions it is 18 in. long, 12 in. in circumference at the top, and 4 ft. 6 in. wide at the mouth. In 1786, when a steeple and clock were erected at the Mid Kirk, the Town Council put in a bell, manufactured in London, that was said to be equalled in sweetness of tone in the west country by that only of Gorbals, Glasgow. It was inscribed, "Ye ringers who would happy be, in concord live, and amity." Two new bells were in later years cast by Messrs. Duff & Sons. While the Mid Kirk congregation worshipped in the Royal Close loft, from 1741 to 1761, a bell was suspended on triangles. The West Church bell split in 1856, and a new bell was supplied by Messrs. James Duff & Sons, Greenock. It was struck on the key A, half a note higher than the old and intermediate between the Mid and the Well Park bells. It is over a ton in weight and measures 4 ft. across the lips. In May, 1856, a clock was presented to the church by Miss Frances Ann Wood (sister of Sir Gabriel Wood).

The first public clock was placed by John Spreull at Knock House, his property at Crawfurdsdyke, in 1688. It passed into the keeping of the Head Court of Cartsburn, and an annual cess for its upkeep imposed, which ended in 1798. The bell connected with this clock was rung at nine p.m. and on Sabbath for sermons in the Old West Kirk. When this custom ceased the following rhyme became popular: -

*"There is a steeple in our town
The tongue of which is now grown dumb;
There is a dial on our quay
Will tell the hour when the sun shows hie."*

The exact site is now occupied by the counting-house of Messrs. James McLean & Co., sawmillers.

The second clock shown in town was at the West Breast. When the erection of the town cellars between the Fish Market and the Vennel was sanctioned in 1752 it was arranged that there should be an entrance to the harbour through the middle of the buildings, over which was placed a wooden steeple with bell and clock. The Bell Entry clock and bell were in disuse in 1839, a few years later they were removed, and still later the Entry was widened. What became of the bell is not accurately known. An old bell inscribed 1616 is in possession of the Harbour Trust, and is alleged to be that of the Timber Steeple at the Bell Entry, but the claim has not been generally accepted. This was the only spire in town at the time. The clock was the only one in Greenock proper until 1786, when the steeple and clock were erected at the Mid Kirk.

Banks

The Greenock Bank was started on July 28, 1785, under the firm of Dunlop, Houston, Gammell & Co., as a bank of issue, and was the first banking concern opened in the town. Previous to this date all money operations of importance were conducted in Glasgow. As early as 1733 the funds of Greenock Corporation were kept with Peter Murdoch & Sons, the founders of the Glasgow Arms Bank. Before the opening of a local bank, when a deposit was made or money withdrawn a special messenger had to be sent to Glasgow by mail or stage coach or by express on horseback in cases of urgency. The item "To an express to Glasgow to bring cash" is an entry to be found in Town Council minutes during the eighteenth century. The original partners of the Greenock Bank were James Dunlop, Garnkirk; Andrew Houston, of Jordanhill; James Gammell, Greenock; Andrew Thomson, Newfoundland; and James Macdowall, merchant, Glasgow. The title of the Greenock Bank was bestowed in 1793. In 1828 the bank was robbed of £28,350, mostly in gold, on the morning of a Sunday, and while a verdict of not proven was returned against an alleged culprit it was understood that a considerable part of the money was recovered through private negotiation with the thieves. The bank began business in the building next to and west of the old Town Hall, Hamilton Street. Soon afterwards it was removed to the West Breast, next to the Custom-house, in 1820 to the ground flat of the Assembly Rooms, Cathcart Street, and last to the corner of Watt Place. The Greenock (the last private bank in Scotland) was absorbed in the Western Bank in 1843, the partners being John Scott, shipbuilder; Charles C. Scott, shipbuilder; James Hunter, of Hafton; William Smith, Liverpool; Alexander Thomson, banker; and John Thomson, banker. The Western Bank stopped payment on 3rd November, 1857, liabilities £9,000,000. Mr. John Patten MacDougall, writer, possesses a five shilling note of the Greenock Bank, dated 1st January, 1800, and signed by his grandfather, James Patten, cashier. The issue of fractional notes was mostly confined to the smaller private banks, while many manufacturers and traders were in the habit of issuing notes for such small sums as a shilling sterling, and some as small as a shilling Scots, the equivalent of a penny sterling. The Renfrewshire Bank began in 1802, and was sequestrated in 1842, liabilities £200,000. There was a run on the Greenock Bank, but through the confidence of the managers of other banks the situation was saved by a simple contrivance. As the

sovereigns were withdrawn from the Greenock Bank and deposited elsewhere they were as quickly returned, and thus kept circulating until the panic subsided.

Stage Coaches

A stage coach was running between Greenock and Glasgow about the middle of the eighteenth century. It was being advertised in June, 1763, as hung on springs, with accommodation for six passengers, who were allowed 10 lbs. weight of baggage, and the fare was 5s. Within a few years the Glasgow coach was leaving three days a week at four o'clock afternoon, the route by Clune Brae and Bishopton Moss. In 1804 the Union coach was announced to set out "every evening at four o'clock from the Black Bull Inn, Glasgow, and will arrive at the Buck's Head, Greenock, in 3½ hours, from which inn it will start every week day at eight o'clock. Notwithstanding the uncommon expedition of this coach, it is allowed to be the most agreeable and complete public convenience on the Glasgow Road. Inside passengers, 5s; outside, 3s".

About the same time a coach was on coast route between Greenock and Ayr, a little later three days a week to Largs. The mail coaches between Glasgow and Greenock were discontinued in January, 1813, and the mails conveyed on horseback. "What," exclaimed the editor of the 'Advertiser', "was the mortification of every one to see almost daily since its adoption the most miserable victims of human barbarity employed in this service, the most wretched spectacles that eyes could behold in the shape of living animals stalking into town, spectre-like, diseased and lame, bleeding and exhausted-in short, fitter for the receptacles of the dead than the service of the living!" There were nobby coaches long ago also on Greenock and Port-Glasgow run. They had been discontinued previous to 1822, as we learn from an advertisement in that year, "Messrs. Park and Fleck having been solicited by inhabitants of both towns to recommence, the noddies will start on Monday, June 3; ticket, 10d." The Royal Mail coach was resumed in the 'Twenties, and was running regularly until about 1830, when river steamboat traffic was becoming general. The Royal George started every day at eight a.m. from the Tontine, through Paisley to Glasgow; the Royal Mail every day at four afternoon; and the Ayr coach left every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at nine a.m., for Largs, Ardrossan, Saltcoats, and Irvine, where it halted until the following morning, then proceeding to Ayr and Portpatrick.

Fly-boats

The fly-boats of the Clyde, which were introduced about 1792, offered a cheaper and even more adventurous mode of travelling. With one exception, those boats were built by Thomas Nichol, Greenock, and the projectors and owners were John Fairlie, Malcolm Campbell, and Andrew Rennie, the last-named being town drummer. They were about 28 ft. keel, 8 tons, and wherry-rigged. Passengers enjoyed a four hours' passage from Glasgow when the wind was in the east and on an ebb tide. The boats drew about 4 ft. of water and had a way of grounding upon the stones, in which case the crew got out and pulled into deep water, and in the event of a bad stranding the passengers also went over the side to lighten the boat and lend a hand. The start from Greenock was made with the flowing tide, and with a fair wind the passage was fairly fast, but little way could be made when wind and tide were adverse. Rennie experimented with a wheel boat, which made several trips to the Broomielaw, but the labour proved more toilsome than that of the oars, and the novelty was given up. Henry Bell followed with a wheel placed in the stern, and then, this failing, a wheel on each side. This is believed to have helped greatly in the building of the Comet soon after. On the introduction of steam power the fly-boats for a time maintained a hopeless competition, and were discontinued about 1812-13.

A service of passenger vessels between Greenock and Belfast at the beginning of last century, prior to the introduction of steam power, was fairly regular. In 1812, for instance, the Maria, passengers only, sailed immediately on the arrival of the morning coaches from Glasgow, once a week. The schooner May Fly, "fitted up in a most superior style, having apartments for ladies and gentlemen, with every accommodation for the comfort and convenience of passengers," was in regular service. In 1817 the new boat Sally was on the route, 21s cabin, 5s fore-cabin, and did excellent business until sail was displaced by steam.

Theatres

Theatrical performances were first allowed in Greenock near the close of the eighteenth century. The building in which these took place prior to 1788 was situate at the eastern end of Cathcart Street, on the site afterwards occupied by Ewing, May Co.'s stores, now known as Anderson Place, Cathcart Street. In a theatre bill of June 8, 1788, it was announced "Will be presented, at the Assembly Hall, a dramatic medley or Folly's Mirror, being a compendium of all that is odd, queer, droll, witty, funny, comical, diverting, entertaining, out-of-way; selected from the productions of the greatest comic authors of the day." An advertisement in the 'Advertiser' of November 30, 1802, reads: "By permission of the Magistrates, on Wednesday evening will be performed Sheridan's 'The School for Scandal,' variety of singing between the acts, to which will be added the admired farce, 'The Children in the Wood.' Days of performance, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays."

A paragraph in the newspaper stated that "the Magistrates have permitted the theatre to be open, but with great propriety only during a short and determinate period. Treating, too, with respect the wishes of a large body of the inhabitants, they have forbidden any performance on Saturday." Another notice was to the effect that authority was given "to perform within the liberties of Greenock for the number of 36 days, excepting Saturdays, and within the

space of twelve weeks, such plays as may now be acted in any of the established theatres of the kingdom." The lessee and manager at this time was Mr. Moss, of whom Greenock knew much in after years in a music-hall connection. Stephen Kemble is said to have performed in a building at the West Breast previous to his erecting a theatre in Mansion-house Lane, which was opened in 1809, and was carried on for many years. In those days of strict Presbyterian supervision it was the custom to close all places of entertainment during the whole of the Sacramental Fast week. In 1806 the following singular notice appeared in the 'Advertiser': "By permission of the Magistrates for the benefit of Mrs. Royland, who feels the most poignant distress for the displeasure her husband's unthinking conduct has given to the respectable inhabitants of this town, but sincerely hopes that it will not militate on this occasion against the welfare of herself and family." Amongst the celebrated artistes who in their time appeared in Greenock were Macready, Pitt, Simmonds, Knowles, Brooke, J. P. Cooke, Matthews, Helen Faucit, Edmund Kean, Kemble, Mr and Mrs. Siddons, Chippendales, etc. Kean visited the town in April, 1816, on a two nights' engagement, appearing as Gloster in 'Richard III' and Sir Giles Overreach in 'A New Way to Pay Old Debts.' Macready appeared in 1828, while the taste for the play was at a low ebb, and had small houses. In the 'Twenties there was a place of entertainment called the Lyceum at the foot of the Vennel. When Kemble's Theatre was sold in 1854 and converted into a provision store the 'Advertiser' reported that it was "in such a state of dirt, disrepair, and discomfort, and the representations have been of such a mediocre description (to speak mildly), that we think its decline and fall will not be deplored as a public loss. In days of yore it was nightly frequented by the beauty and fashion of Greenock, but of late years its state of disrepair and the inferior nature of the dramatic entertainments led to its total desertion by the better class."

The Theatre Royal and West-End Music Hall, West Blackhall Street, was built by Edmund Glover, and was opened on December 27, 1858, with 'Much ado about Nothing'. Glover died at Edinburgh in October, 1860, in his 48th year, and his last public appearance in Greenock was in March of that year. Alexander Wright, who had been associated with the Theatre Royal from its opening, assumed the mantle of Glover, and ten years later became lessee and manager. In 1874 he was presented by the Greenock public with a silver tea service and one hundred guineas as a mark of their appreciation and respect. His first appearance on the stage was in the old Theatre Royal in Mansionhouse Lane in 1845, in the character of Richard III. He died in 1902, and in 1905 the Alexandra (now the King's) Theatre was built at the corner of Ker and West Blackhall Streets, and was taken over by his sons, A. B. and J. J. Wright. The old Theatre Royal was then converted into a music hall and re-named the Hippodrome.

Graveyards

The extent of the original Old West Kirkyard is unknown. The first extensions recorded were made in 1657, and in 1721, when the population of the town was between 3000 and 4000; the last Sir John Schaw gifted a piece of additional ground for burial purposes. Sixty years later, the population then 12,000, the kirkyard was less than an acre Scots in extent, and rather more than an acre Imperial. In 1773 an application for further ground was made to Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, out of which arose a protracted litigation, which eventually went to the House of Lords. The Superior's position was that such an extension would injure his property, which should be devoted chiefly for the benefit of the living, and that consequently the graveyard ought to be situated some distance from the town. The dispute lasted until 1786, and was then settled on a compromise by which Sir Michael granted the ground in Inverkip Street to be set apart as a cemetery. The last burial in the Old West ground was that of Mrs Ann Macnaughton Black, mother of Provost John Black, and it took place on December 4, 1876. An extension to Duncan Street was made in 1816, when the population had increased to 25,000. On the passing of the Burials (Scotland) Act of 1859 the Town Council made an exhaustive survey of the district in search of the most suitable site for a cemetery in keeping with the growing population and importance of the town. Amongst the places visited and considered were the Mount, then still well wooded; Prospecthill, to which, however, serious objection was taken on account of its proximity to the water filters; a field between Lynedoch and Baker Streets; and a number of other secluded situations. Ultimately the area bounded by Bow Farm and Inverkip Road was selected, one of the special advantages noted being that it is out of view of the river and that it was unlikely to have a high feuing value. Some of the townspeople and a number of the authorities had the notion of giving a title to the new cemetery, and in a notice of the register of burials appearing in the 'Advertiser' it was named the Necropolis. Sir Michael Shaw Stewart wrote to the Council to say that Lady Octavia and he decidedly objected to giving a heathen name, Necropolis or the City of the Dead, to the burial-place of a Christian community whose hope was to rise from the sleep of the dead. The Council then resolved that for all time coming the name should be simply the Cemetery. The first interment was that of Mrs. Russell, wife of Mr Alexander Russell, shipowner.

Cartsdyke Floods

The first Cartsdyke flood took place on March 15, 1815, when Beith's Dam, on the hill south-east of the town, burst its banks through abnormal rains, the water rushing for about a mile over the usual course into a smaller reservoir near to Cartsburn Mills, where the banks also gave way. In a short time a large portion of Cartsdyke was flooded, several small houses swept away, and other considerable damage to property done. No lives were lost, but a number of persons were injured. The second flood, arising from the same source, occurred on Saturday night, November 21, 1835, and was a much more serious affair, no fewer than 37 lives being lost. In consequence again of heavy rains Beith's or the Whin Hill Dam, at this time the property of the Shaws Water Company, burst its banks and the water poured down the hill with a force that swept everything before it. It carried away a substantial bridge over the Carts Burn near Cartsburn House, brought a mass of trees in the current, and flooded Cartsburn Street to

a depth of over seven feet. The main torrent turned westward as far as Virginia Street and the property in the whole of the district suffered severely. The greatest loss of life occurred in Stanners Street, many of the victims being surprised in bed and unable to escape. This reservoir was originally constructed by the Cartsdyke Cotton Mill Company in 1796 for driving the machinery of their works immediately above Cartsburn Mansionhouse. Over £2,000 in aid of the distress caused by the flood was raised in Greenock and elsewhere.

A Baronial Chair

The antique oaken chair which occupies the central place on the Town Hall platform is believed to have at one time served to grace the Baronial Hall of Greenock Mansion-house, whence it was transferred to the Magistrates' pew in the Mid Kirk, and subsequently to the Council Hall. In 1831 it was on exhibition in a museum held in the lower flat of the Academy, East Shaw Street. For a time it lay in a lumber room of the Town Buildings, and the exact date of its resurrection is now unknown.

Custom-House

There is no evidence to show where the original Custom-house was situated, but it is surmised that it may have adjoined the old Excise Office in Cathcart Street. The name of George Scott, Comptroller of Customs, is met with on a document dated 1755. In 1759 rooms were leased in John Clark's property in Cathcart Street, in 1778 a removal was made to the West Quay, where the Customs business was carried on until the new Custom-house was erected in 1818, at a cost of £30,000.

The Cross

The site of the original Cross of Greenock was east of Cross Shore Street, below the present Post Office, and the date 1669 was marked by white pebbles. Prior to the Reformation all the goods brought into the burgh for sale had to be exposed at the Market Cross, town officials making an examination and fixing prices.

Lyle Fountain

The Lyle Fountain, Cathcart Square, was gifted to the town by Provost Abram Lyle in 1880, and is the work of Mr. F. A. Scudamore, Coventry. Bronze shields which comprise part of the decorations bear the crests of the Ardgowan and Cartsburn families and of sixteen of the leading families of Greenock.

Seafield House

Corner of the Esplanade and Campbell Street, was built in 1830 by Mr Robert Angus, of Messrs. Ewing, Angus & Co., ship store merchants, Bogle Street. It was afterwards bought by the Caledonian Railway Company, tenanted in succession by Mr. Jas. T. Caird, Mr. Wm. Orr, blockmaker, and Mr. John Scott, and then purchased by the Government as headquarters of the R.N.V.R. Recently it was acquired by Messrs. Harland & Wolff as the new site of the North (Old West) Parish Church.

Batteries

The first Battery at Greenock was erected at Ropework Quay in 1760, and was named Fort Beauclerc, after Sir George, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Scotland. It mounted twelve 20-pounders, and brass guns were placed along the road. On the outbreak of the American War in 1776 great additions were made to the fort under the direction of Lord Frederick Campbell and the Western Fencibles, who were quartered in the town and accommodated free of charge in the sail-loft of Messrs. John Laird & Sons, east of the old ropework. Greenock merchants offered one guinea over the King's bounty to each of the first sixty able seamen belonging to Greenock, Crawfurdsdyke, Gourock, and Inverkip who should volunteer for the Navy; the Bass Herring Fishing Society a similar amount to the first hundred volunteers; and the town also gave a bounty.

In 1778 a correspondence took place between Glasgow and Greenock Magistrates on the defenceless state of the Clyde against the depredations of French and American privateers, with little immediate results; and on an application by Greenock Magistrates the Cumbrae Lighthouse Trustees took upon themselves to furnish the money for an extension and completion of the Battery. In this connection the town felt greatly indebted to Lord Frederick Campbell, of the Fencibles, who, with his officers, was given a public dinner by the Magistrates.

The next Battery was that of Fort Jervise, named in honour of Sir John, afterwards Earl St Vincent. It was erected in 1797, and was mounted with twelve 24-pounders and a regular breastwork of defence. At the same time an application was made for a ship of force for the protection of trade, but was not at once granted, though not long after H.M.S. Tourtorelle was placed at the Greenock station, and on her departure in 1805 the Town Council expressed their deep sense of the conduct of her commander, Captain Simpson. Fort Jervise was dismantled in 1809, and for a time there were practically no defence works. It is mis-stated at page 227 that this was the first Battery, and the date of dismantling is given as 1839 instead of 1809.

In 1813 there was a correspondence between the town-clerk and the Commander-in-Chief for Scotland and the Board of Ordnance on the subject of the defenceless state of the town and harbour, and the hazard to which it was exposed in consequence of the war with America. A committee waited upon Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, who promptly granted ground for a Battery at Whitefarland Point. A guardship was also asked for, but to no immediate

purpose. As to the Battery, the Board of Ordnance held it as a sine qua non that the possession right to the ground while it was so occupied should be conveyed to the Board. Sir Michael stated that from the entail of the estate he did not consider himself at liberty to make any grant otherwise than for a payment of an annual feu-duty of £3 6s 8d per acre, and he suggested that the community should take a feu at this rate and afterwards communicate the requisite right to the Board of Ordnance. Seeing no other way in which the erection of the Battery was to be accomplished, this suggestion was adopted.

Within a few months of the above application for a guardship, the Lords of the Admiralty directed a frigate to attend to the protection of the Clyde and to consider Greenock. As her station; and in addition six gunboats were ordered to Greenock on condition that the town undertook to man them with seamen who from disability or other causes were exempt from serving in the Navy. The West India Association, Glasgow, agreed to bear part of the necessary expense, and a satisfactory response was made to a call for volunteers for the Battery and gunboats.

Fort Matilda, the feu-contract of which was dated 1814, extended to over two acres, and was completed in 1819. The name is said to have been given in compliment to the wife of the Royal Engineer who superintended the erection, but Williamson was of opinion that it was more probably after Princess Matilda. The fort was dismantled during the Radical commotions of 1820, the guns, carriages, and ammunition conveyed to Dumbarton Castle, but a rehabilitation was made some years after, and in 1858 and later the works were greatly extended and improved.

Not many years ago it would have been rank heresy to suggest that the Clyde could be adequately safeguarded without the protecting presence of a battleship. Yet guardships were soon partially superseded by submarine mines. These, too, had their brief day, and in their place came electric searchlights and machine guns planted along the coastlines.

It is now over a generation since Fort Matilda began to break clear of its original circumscription and to assume a new shape and potentiality. The idea of blowing the ships of a temerous enemy to the clouds had captured the minds of the War Office. A squad of the Royal Engineers was established in quarters, and in the adjoining centres of population Volunteer Companies of Submarine Miners sprang up to aid the Regulars in laying the mines athwart the channelway, and to learn the lessons of manipulation against the day of emergency. Whether it subsequently dawned upon the authorities that our own ships might also run imminent risk, whether the explosives were judged to have been incorrectly located, or whether the methods had come to be regarded as obsolete, was never disclosed to the public. It was at any rate determined to construct a series of grouped forts or batteries, connected by telephone and under control of a headquarters, mounted with the most destructive of modern guns, and at the same time so built within the embrasures of the hillsides as to render them almost impervious. Three points were selected to complete, with Fort Matilda, the full plan of this conception. These are situated respectively at Port-Kil, to the north-east of Kilcreggan and facing the Greenock Battery; at Ardhallow, on the edge of the Bullwood, between Innellan and Dunoon; and on a tract of ground on the Renfrewshire side of the Firth surmounting the Cloch Lighthouse. This last was given up shortly after its selection, but early in the war it was proceeded with on a more extensive scale. Prior to this the old Battery at Fort Matilda had been demolished, and on the site a stronger emplacement and a larger set of buildings erected for the new order of things, possessing accommodation for powerful searchlights, magazine stores, engine and dynamo station, etc. The fort proper is enclosed by heavy walls of concrete, fronted with an embankment. At Port-Kil the buildings are practically underground, and comprise engine and dynamo station, oil and magazine stores, officers' quarters, and accommodation for over fifty men. The guns sweep the firth from Toward on the one hand to Dumbarton on the other. The fort is erected on massive concrete slabs, and the gun emplacements are exceptionally solid and strong. Beneath the gun platforms are apartments used as shell stores, and the cartridges and projectiles are raised by means of mechanical appliances. A special feature is the power and efficiency of the searchlight apparatus, the light being of such brilliancy as to render shipping clearly visible on the darkest night at a distance of seven miles. Ardhallow is a still stronger fortification. The concrete slabs on which the buildings rest extend into the ground to a depth of forty feet. As in the case of Port-Kil, the fort is all but invisible from the firth, only a thin white line of concrete coming into view. The outlook from the height is so extensive and clear of obstruction that the guns can be trained on any given point from Helensburgh on the north-east to far down the open waters beyond Garroch Head.

Torpedo Factory

The ground occupied by the Clyde Torpedo Factory at Battery Park, extending to ten acres of land and four and three-quarter acres of foreshore, was purchased from Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart for £27,225. The original buildings, which were opened in 1910 and cost about £30,000, were built of freestone from Gourock Quarries. They comprise a main structure of one storey covering about 6,000 yards. To the right are the two principal workshops, also extensive one-storey buildings, and there are separate premises of smaller size grouped around them. Other sections consist of the offices, the testing house, the experimental cell, pickling tanks, tradesmen's shops, a search-room, etc. The War Office property at Fort Matilda provided accommodation for storing torpedoes and for other purposes, and special arrangements were made for conveying the torpedoes to a jetty for shipment; while besides the factory and the fort are in direct communication by means of a subway. At the conclusion of the war all other torpedo factories in the country were closed, and in 1921 the sum of £10,000 was granted by Parliament for the reconstruction of the Clyde establishment.

Practice Range

The Torpedo Range in Lochlong is 7,000 yards long, starting from the mouth of Alt-a-Chalachain and extending in a straight line between Ardmay and Ardgartan Points, and running for three miles parallel with the Glasgow estate of Ardgoil. It is admittedly the best range for torpedo testing purposes in British waters. The necessities of the case called for a comparatively secluded area, with deep water and an uninterrupted line. The works in connection with the range are established on the Ardgoil side of the loch. At the northerly end is a Ferro-constructed pier, on the adjacent shore brick workshops, stores, and workmen's dwellings. There are eight targets, all strongly moored and marked off so distinctly that the risks to river steamers and fishing skiffs are reduced to a minimum. All torpedoes are fitted with collision heads before being despatched to the testing range, and when the trials are completed they are consigned to the Admiralty stations at Portsmouth, Portland, and Chatham, or to any of the ships on order. With each of the torpedoes goes a history sheet, or detailed record of the tests.

Volunteers

Greenock was the first town in Scotland to form a land defence force, sixteen years before the Volunteer service was sanctioned by Parliament in 1798 owing to the threatened invasion by Napoleon and the appearance of French and American privateers in the English Channel and on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland. Of the membership of this enrolment in 1782 no memorial exists beyond a portion of a roll of absentees and the fines imposed. In 1794 the Loyal Greenock Volunteers offered service to George III, and the offer, subscribed by 155 citizens of all shades of politics, was accepted. On the passing of the Service Act in 1798 a meeting was held for the purpose of forming an Independent Corps of Volunteer Infantry, Mr. Charles Ogilvie presiding. Of the 60 original members many were leading merchants, the only foreign name on the list that of Nicholas Kuhle, who was the first sugar refiner in Greenock. The two corps of 1794 had been disbanded, but the new company comprised nearly everyone who had previously been serving. A later corps was that of the Greenock Merchants' Volunteers, 200 strong, whose services were offered to the Lord-Lieutenant. There was besides a corps of sharpshooters, the first of the title in the kingdom, to which followed an Artillery Corps, 400 Sea Fencibles, and a corps of Yeomanry. The gabbart and lighter men of the Clyde gave their 60 vessels, personally manned, for transport service, and there was also the Greenock and Port Glasgow Regiment of Defence. Sir John Shaw Stewart in 1803 headed a list of subscriptions for expenses with £100, and the town gave £50. In February, 1804, a field-day was held for the presentation of colours from the Magistrates and Town Council, a ceremony performed by the only two Councillors who were not Volunteers. About the same time, at a muster on Glasgow Green, 800 Volunteers attended from Greenock. A declaration in favour of giving their services to the Militia was made in 1808, and accepted by the Government. In 1808, attacks from American privateers still going on, the Magistrates, on a representation from the inhabitants, remonstrated with the Government on the unprotected state of the Clyde, and as a result the Militia were called out. The Admiralty also sent H.M.S. President to the Tail of the Bank, and troops were quartered in the town.

The Greenock Volunteers of 1859 led the way for the country and for Scotland. The decision to form a corps was come to at a meeting in the Council Chambers in May of that year, which was presided over by Provost James Duff. The story of the movement and the success that followed it are well set out in detail in the volume published a few years ago by Colonel William Lamont. A commodious Drill Hall was erected on the site of the old building in Finnart Street, in 1910. This site, a very valuable one, was gifted by Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart, head of Renfrewshire Territorial Association, and at the close of the war he rendered invaluable service in the formation of a Battalion for the district.

Relic Guns

Five guns, all of them believed to be relics of the Spanish Armada, have found a place in front of the Watt Museum entrance, Kelly Street. The history of the largest is authentic. It was recovered from an Armada ship at Tobermory, and was given to the town of Greenock. It remained for many years on the West Quay, and was then purchased by Mr. John Scott, shipbuilder, who, in his desire to preserve the novel relic, had it planted as a pall at his dock. About 1840 Messrs. Scott ornamented it with a brass plate bearing the inscription: "Placed on the West Quay, 1710, where it remained for 100 years. Calibre, 12-pounder; circumference at breach, 3 ft. 6 in.; length, 8 ft. 3 in.; circumference at muzzle, 2 ft. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ in." Messrs. Scott & Co. presented the gun to the Museum in 1877. The four smaller guns are similar in size and design, and two bear inscriptions, one reading: "This gun was taken from the Royal Close Buildings, Bogle Street, where it formed a guard to the south corner of the store, built 1676. It is with much probability an Armada gun recovered from the Spanish warship wrecked at Portincross. Presented by Messrs. John Stewart & Co., Bogle Street, 1898". The second is inscribed: "Spanish gun, presented by the trustees of the late Malcolm Buchanan, Greenock, 1898." Several other guns for a long period about the Mid Quay were from the discovery-ship Adventure when under the command of Captain Cook, but are now relegated to obscurity. The two Russian guns in the Well Park were sent to Greenock in 1857. Lord Panmure, writing to Provost Hunter on the occasion, regretted that the pieces could not be accompanied by carriages, and added that the community would not grudge the cost of suitable mounting. The guns were handed over by a body of red-coats.

Paintings and Portraits

Sir James Guthrie, president of the Royal Scottish Academy and a portrait painter of pre-eminence, is the son of Rev. Dr. Guthrie, predecessor of Rev. Alexander Davidson in the pastorate of Nelson Street E.U. Church. John Fleming, who was called the father of landscape painting in the West of Scotland, was born in Greenock in 1794 and died in 1845. A number of his paintings are on public view in town. These include his own portrait, on the walls of the Council Hall, a view of the Steamboat Quay, presented to the Corporation in 1906 by A. R. Baird, registrar; in the Watt Museum Hall a portrait of himself and one of John Gilchrist.

William Clark was in his day admittedly without an equal in the country as a specialist in marine pictures. Two fine specimens are in possession of the Corporation, and are shown in the Council Hall - Queen Victoria's visit to the Clyde (off Greenock) in 1847, presented in accordance with the artist's expressed desire to his native town by his heirs, 1884; and the Channel Fleet off Greenock in 1861, acquired from the trustees of the artist.

Patrick Downie, another local artist who has risen in his profession from a humble station in life, became distinguished greatly through his faithful portrayal of striking bits of the old town and harbours. Two of his paintings were included in the bequest of Mr. Peter Mackellar to the McLean Museum, entitled East Quay Lane and Ducks and Ducklings; and there is a third on the walls showing a view from the foot of William Street to the Mid Kirk. James MacBeth is represented by the portrait of Rev. Dr. J. M. McCulloch, presented to the Watt Museum by the artist in 1881. Amongst the other paintings, etc., in possession of the Town Council are the following:

Queen Charlotte and George III by Allan Ramsay, 1713-84;

Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, 1826-1903, presented by Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart in 1907;

William's Return ("Black-eyed Susan"), by J. Lamont Brodie, exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1874, presented to the Council in 1880;

Sir Thomas Sutherland, M.P., 1884-1900, presented in connection with testimonial in 1900;

Bailie John Fleming, 1865;

James Reid, M.P., Depute Lord Lieutenant of Renfrewshire;

view from the river opposite the Customhouse, presented by Sir Donald Currie in 1906;

James Watt, reproduced from the original painting in possession of the late John Scott, C.B.;

Bailie John Hunter, by Sir Dan. Macnee, P.R.S.A.;

John Adam, town chamberlain, 1849-78, by Wm. Gair;

scene from the Bay of Quick, copied from Fleming by Cathcart W. Methven;

views of upper portion of Longwell Close, 1881, of Mid Kirk and vicinity, and of Greenock from the south-east about 1810 (original in Watt Museum Hall);

Alex. Murray Dunlop, M.P., presented by Mr. Macfie of Langhouse, 1920;

busts of J. J. Grieve, presented by his family; of James Watt, after Chantrey; Robert Wallace of Kelly, M.P., by Patric Park, R.S.A.; A. Murray Dunlop; Bailie Duncan Hendry, 1873; Provost Robert Shankland, 1885; Bailie John Duff, 1879-85; Bailie Dugald McInnes, 1894.

The portraits of Chief Magistrates on the walls of the Provost's room are as follows:- Provosts Walter Baine, 1840-4, by J. Lamont Brodie; T. O. Hunter, 1855-8; James Morton, 1868-71, presented by his son Robert; Robert Neill, 1871-6, presented by his nephew, Tom Neill; Abram Lyle, 1876-9; Dugald Campbell, 1879-82; Edward Wilson, 1882-5; Robert Shankland, 1885-9; Walter Washington Buchanan Rodger, 1889-93; Dugald Shankland, 1893-6, presented on retiral after 30 years' public service, and gifted by him to the Corporation in 1896; John Black, 1899-1901; John Anderson, 1901-4, presented on retiral after 25 years' service, and gifted by him to the Corporation in 1904; John Denholm, 1904-9, presented to him in 1909 and gifted by him to the Corporation, painted by G. Fiddes Watt, A.R.S.A.; William Bentley McMillan, 1909-19, "presented by his fellow-citizens in recognition of his valuable services to the community," and gifted by him to the Corporation in 1919.

In the Watt Museum collection, which includes important bequests by Stuart A. Caird and Peter Mackellar, there are in addition to those already named portraits of James L. Brown, a rector of Greenock Grammar School, to whose memory until a few years ago an annual dinner was held by old pupils, the painting having been presented by the Burgh School Board; of David Crawford, solicitor and Baron Bailie, presented by townsmen in 1856; a large unsigned painting of Greenock from the south-east, about 1810, presented by James McLean, Westbank; a view from the Bay of Quick up river as far as Dumbarton Rock; and The Prince's Choice, by Thomas Reynolds Lamont, presented by the artist. In addition to his gift of books and paintings Mr. Stuart A. Caird left a sum of £6000 to be funded in a trust investment and the income to be applied for the promotion of art in his native town, by purchasing works of art from time to time, these to form part of the Caird collection. The list of local painters of outstanding talent would be incomplete without the names of Peter Kerr, J. Fraser Paton, A. E. Taylor, David Ramsay, and Alexander McLellan.

The portrait of Sir John Schaw in the Rooms of the Chamber of Commerce is thus inscribed: "Sir John Schaw, Baronet, who granted the charter to the town of Greenock, painted by Thomas Phillips, R.A., after the picture by Wm. Aikman (obit 1731) in possession of the Right Honourable the Earl of Cathcart." Underneath is a copy of the original sheet of subscriptions to the amount of £25 8s 6d. The following is the list of subscribers' names: Provost Macfie, Andrew Ramsay, Walter Baine, jun., Robert Baine, Robert Steele, Archibald Baine, John Rodger, jun., A. Anderson, David Balderston, Alex. Rodger, John Denniston, James C. Buchanan, Dr. Buchanan, and Neil Leitch. A

reference to this portrait and also to a bust of Watt by Chantrey, presented to the Rooms by the Magistrates, will be found on pages 333-6.

For sketches, descriptive and pictorial, of the central part of the old town before it had come under the magic wand of the Improvement Trust at the close of the Seventies of last century, the reader is recommended to the unique volume, 'Views and Reminiscences of Old Greenock', published by James McKelvie & Sons in 1891, and printed at the 'Telegraph' works. The illustrations were from drawings by Patrick Downie, from photographs, and other pictures, and the letterpress from the pen of A. Williamson, a well-known citizen of literary gifts who was for some time on the journalistic staff of the 'Telegraph'.

Music is worthily represented by Hamish MacCunn and William Wallace. Mr. MacCunn, who died about two years ago at a comparatively early age, was the son of James MacCunn, shipowner. His genius so quickly developed that he was composing music at five, and as a youth he won a scholarship of the Royal College of Music for composition. When seventeen he produced 'The Land of the Mountain and the Flood', and a year later 'The Dowie Dens of Yarrow.' He was for some time conductor of the Carl Rosa, Moody-Manners, and other opera companies. William Wallace is the son of the late Dr. James Wallace. He studied for a year at the Royal Academy of Music, but is otherwise self-taught. Besides composing many orchestral works of great merit, he is a prolific writer on musical subjects and was editor of 'The New Quarterly Musical Review.'

Watt Relics

A few years ago two Watt relics were brought to public notice and disposed of by auction. The more important of these was an organ built by Watt while he resided in High Street, Glasgow, near the Old College. He played on it for many years, and sold it reluctantly when he had to go to England and could not arrange for its transference across the Border. It was bought by John Steven, music seller, Wilson Street, Glasgow, the only music seller in the city in those days. In turn it was acquired by Dr. Wm. Ritchie and the elders and congregation of St Andrew's Church. This purchase led to the stormy organ outburst of 1806. The organ again came into the hands of Mr. Steven, the music seller, from whom it was purchased by Mr. Archibald McLellan, the founder of the McLellan Galleries. He paid between £300 and £400 for it, and had it erected in his house in Miller Street. At night people gathered by his windows to hear him play it. He had it removed on one occasion to the Cathedral for a special concert, where it caused quite a sensation. Mr. McLellan in a memorandum recommended the organ to the special notice of his trustees and pleaded for its preservation, but for some reason or other the memorandum was not given consideration, and the instrument was sent to an auction sale room, where it was bought by Mr. Adam Sim, Coulter Mains, Lanarkshire. In June, 1918, on being put up for sale, it was purchased on behalf of Glasgow Corporation for £400, the gift of a son of ex-Deacon Convener Macfarlane. The other relic was a pair of empire brass candlesticks that had been the property of Watt's mother. The starting price was £30, and at £48 they were purchased by a former resident of Greenock.

A number of relics are on view at the Birthplace Memorial Buildings, corner of William and Dalrymple Streets. Most of these were presented by Miss J. M. Thomas, Aberystwyth, grand-daughter of James Brown, a native of Dundee, who was an ultimate partner at the Soho Manufactory, Birmingham. They include the following: Portrait of Watt, from life, by John Henning, Paisley, signed and dated 1803; engraving of Watt, taken from Arago's 'Life', presented to Brown in 1834; engraving after Beechey; medallion modelled by Mr. Taylor, Soho Works, purchased in 1827; medal struck by Dundee Watt Institution (1824), Watt on the obverse, the institution on the reverse; memorial medallion of Matthew Boulton; two drawings and a detailed description of a perspective machine, all in Watt's penmanship; portrait of William Murdoch, who died in 1839; plan by James Brown showing adaptation of Watt and Boulton's steam engine to marine propulsion; two chairs that were in Watt's house in Glasgow, and were taken by him to Birmingham; two others and a sideboard were presented by Miss Thomas to Birmingham Corporation Museum.

John Galt

Was an adopted son of Greenock. He was born at Irvine on May 2, 1779, his father a ship captain, and with the Gait family came to Greenock when he was ten years of age. On completing his education he became a clerk in the Customhouse. He is said to have been in his youth an assiduous reader of the Watt Library, [*This cannot be true; Galt died on 11th April 1839, the year the Watt Library opened. The reference seems more likely to have been Greenock Library founded in 1783 – Ed.*] that he was prominent in literary and debating societies, and a contributor of verses to the 'Advertiser'. Early in life his literary bent drew him to London, where he produced a great deal of his best work. He subsequently went to Canada, where he entered upon certain commercial enterprises, and while he is credited with having founded the flourishing town of Guelph he was not quite so successful in his personal fortunes. After a lengthened period of foreign travel he returned to Greenock to end his days, in straitened circumstances. A few years before his death he published his 'Autobiography and Literary Life'; from the proceeds of which and a grant of £200 from William IV he subsisted from 1834 till his death on April 11, 1839. He resided with his sister in an upper flat at the northeast corner of West Blackhall and West Burn Streets. He was buried in the family lair in Inverkip Street Churchyard. A tablet is affixed to the gable of the house, and a drinking fountain to his memory was erected at the foot of Rosneath Street, Esplanade. References to the latter are to be seen in the minutes of Greenock Town Council.

In October, 1867, Mr. Allan Park Paton waited upon Provost Grieve, and showed him a design for the fountain, estimated to cost one hundred guineas. The Police Board approved, and the Esplanade Committee was appointed to see the work carried through. Apparently the necessary funds did not flow very freely, for in May, 1869, Mr. Paton stated that he had then £92 in hand. A small committee co-operated with Mr Paton in obtaining the remainder, in which they were successful. At a Town Council meeting in February, 1915, a letter was submitted from Messrs. Laurie & Fleming with reference to the purchase of a miniature statue of Galt by George Mossman, R.S.A., which had originally been intended for a monument to his memory in Greenock Cemetery. The price was £20, and on taking a month to consider the offer the Council agreed that the statue was not quite suitable for the Municipal Buildings, and declined to purchase. Galt is stated to have been physically in his prime a fine, handsome man, over six feet in height, with jet black hair, straight nose, piercing eyes, and a broad, well-developed frame.

The name of Fairrie ranks very high on the list of distinguished citizens. James Fairrie, shipmaster, Irvine, was born in 1688; his son James (1730) was a West India merchant and shipowner; and the third James (1754) was in command of his father's ship at nineteen years of age, was twenty-five years at sea, and thereafter, in 1799, became the pioneer of James Fairrie & Co., sugar refiners, Greenock. There were seven sons in all, three of whom – John, Thomas and Adam - were partners and successors to the father, who died in 1815. John went to London in 1830, and established the firm of Fairrie Bros. & Co.; Adam to Liverpool in 1847, to conduct the firm of J. T. & A. Fairrie; and Thomas remained as manager at Greenock, dying there in 1858, when the firm was wound up. The London business was carried on until the death of John in 1865, and the concern at Liverpool was continued by Adam's sons. Several of the other sons of James Fairrie emigrated to the West Indies and became sugar planters. Adam was for many years a Magistrate in Greenock, and was twice Provost, in 1839 and in 1844-6; for a quarter of a century he was treasurer of the Infirmary, and in periods of destitution subscribed generously to its funds in order that the institution might not suffer. On his removal to Liverpool he was presented with a testimonial, "from a deep sense of benefits conferred on the suffering poor and of an untiring devotion to the Infirmary." He died in 1879, aged 81 years. At a dinner to John in 1831 it was said that "from his first entrance into active public life he had uniformly shown himself the steady friend and zealous promoter of every institution that could in any way tend to advance the honour and interest and the happiness of the community." Thomas was a pure philanthropist. His time and means were devoted with unsparing liberality to the moral and religious elevation of the people. Largely at his own cost he carried on three free schools, maintained several local missionaries, and left an educational bequest to the town. Of the extent and amount of his charities it was said to be impossible to form an estimate, so unostentatious was his bounty and so numerous the channels through which it flowed.

Few if any will find fault with the placing of James Johnstone Grieve in the forefront of prominent public men, and this despite the fact that he was not a native of the town. He came, in his youth, from the farm of Glenfalloch, Perthshire, and for at least a quarter of a century he took a dominant part in shaping and determining the destinies of Greenock. He was four times elected Provost, and sat as Burgh Member from 1868 to 1877. His entrance to municipal service was made at a time when the industrial life of the country was specially charged with the spirit of progress, and the natural resources of Greenock as a town and port were waiting to be developed. A Town Council colleague stated that under him "the town enjoyed a career of prosperity, extension, and improvement such as no other period can lay claim to. His sagacity, largeness of view, liberality of heart, aptness for business, and indomitable perseverance did very much to make Greenock what it is." A man of such outstanding qualities and characteristics could not hope to pass untouched by opposition. "No kind of history is ever made without more or less controversy and bitterness, and during the Grieve regime these elements were not altogether absent." He was especially subjected to keen criticisms in schemes for the improvement of the town and harbours. This was most pronounced and even bitter in relation to the Gryfe water project, from which he issued with the honours. Towards the close of a distinguished career, in a day of provocation, he defied his enemies to point to an instance of management of public affairs for personal interest. It was certainly true of him, as put by a newspaper editor of the time, that "when threatened with opposition he became restive and assumed an autocratic bearing." Throughout a lengthened business life Mr Grieve was closely associated with the Newfoundland trade in the firm of Bain & Johnstone. Grieve Road is named after him.

Robert Neill and Provost Grieve were the protagonists of that exciting period in local politics. He, too, was an incomer to the town, having been born in Irvine, but, brought to Greenock when four years of age, he may justifiably be deemed a native. While at the head of a leading firm of solicitors he literally immersed himself for many years in town affairs, sat for long in the Town Council, and was Provost from 1871 to 1876. It was the 'Telegraph' that commented on "the pluck and resolution with which Neill, then at the foot of the table, stood up against the heavy odds when Grieve was at the head, and combated the Provost's views and policy with unconquerable will and determined single-handed opposition." His municipal career was said to have been one of the most interesting in the annals of Greenock, and that throughout the keenest critical inspection failed to detect any taint of self-seeking. "There never was the slightest reason to doubt the purity of his motives or the utter devotion of all his powers and influence to the promotion of the public good." In later years, when the bitterness of contention had ceased, the two men became personal friends, and Mr. Neill was a loyal supporter of Mr. Grieve as Parliamentary candidate.

Robert Wallace of Kelly was the first Member for Greenock, and sat from 1832 to 1845. He was the second son of Mr. John Wallace, of Cessnock, Ayrshire, latterly of Kelly, Wemyss Bay. The family is in direct descent from Sir William Wallace. The name of Robert Wallace is most widely known in relation to postal reform, and he is justly credited with having been its zealous advocate for years before Sir Rowland Hill appeared on the scene. A marble bust of him, by Park of Edinburgh, may be seen in the Watt Institution, and a copy is in possession of the Town Council. A monument to his memory was erected on the highest part of the cemetery, and is inscribed as follows: "Robert Wallace of Kelly was the descendant and representative of William Wallace. He was the indefatigable and successful advocate of legal and Post Office reform, and by his casting vote as Chairman of the Committee of the House of Commons carried the vote in favour of the penny postage." He was in 1844 presented with the freedom of Paisley, the box made of Queen Mary's Yew and the Wallace Oak. He died in 1855 in his 81st year.

Dr. James Wallace, more perhaps than any other public man, deserves to be held in revered memory by the inhabitants of Greenock. What he achieved on behalf of the public health, and this often in face of great discouragements, is beyond estimate. He himself more than once referred to the difficulties he had to contend with in his efforts to free the town of many of its slums, and in the words of Dr. James Whiteford, another man of great eminence in his profession, "he did not suppose that at that time there was a town in the kingdom that required more of the benefits of the Public Health Act." Dr. Wallace practiced his profession as a profession, not as a trade, and was able to say that no one could charge him with besmirching or soiling his escutcheon. He served the Parochial Board as medical officer for 52 years, the Town Council for 25 years, and throughout his long career he bestowed a special care on the Infirmary. He was also a member of that most distinguished company the first School Board under the Act of 1872.

In 1768 Robert Macfie, a native of Rothesay, came to Greenock and opened a shop in William Street. Twenty years later he was one of the promoters of the second refinery in town, and purchased Langhouse, Inverkip. Mr. William MacFie, his elder son, who was Provost in 1835-7, built Bogle Street Refinery, and the younger son, John, opened a new refinery at Leith, his son Robert Andrew becoming M.P. for Leith Burgh. From Greenock the family established a great refinery at Liverpool, and took up residence on the estate of Airds. "This family," wrote Mr. J. M. Hutcheson in his book on the sugar industry, "is entitled to the respect of Greenockians not merely on account of their exceptional endurance in the refining industry, but also for their capable and earnest service of many years in Corporation work and in every philanthropic institution Greenock had until far on in the nineteenth century."

John Rennie, who designed the elaborate dock plans referred to in some detail on page 122 from which issued the construction of the East India Harbour in 1809, had another interesting association with Greenock. He was the son of a farmer and was born at Phantassie, East Lothian, on June 7, 1761. After working as a millwright, he studied at Edinburgh University from 1780 to 1783, and a year later he entered the employ of James Watt. He began business on his own account in London as an engineer, and became famous as a builder of bridges. The first Southwark Bridge was his, and he made the plans for the existing London Bridge which were carried out by his son John. He designed the London Docks, as well as docks at Blackwall, Hull, Leith, Liverpool, Greenock, and Dublin; and he also designed the breakwater at Plymouth, said to be one of the most remarkable engineering feats in the world.

Alan Ker, the founder of the Seamen's Friends' Society in 1820 and of Ann Street School in 1829, was a man of a singularly fine character, and alike in the Town Council and amongst the general public held in the highest esteem. It was written of him by Rev. Herbert Story, an intimate friend, that he was a man of remarkable simplicity mingled with considerable shrewdness and a great deal of sterling worth; a cripple and an invalid, but his mental powers were of the finest order. His chief delight, when his health allowed him, was in going about on his crutches doing good. Ker Street perpetuates his good name.

Rev. Dr. J.M. McCulloch for forty years minister of the West Parish, had a wonderful hold upon the affections of the people. In this sense we still hear many persons speak of 'McCulloch's Clock'. He bequeathed £400 for the James Melville McCulloch bursary, Glasgow University, to a boy educated at a Greenock school. A fine monument to his memory was erected in the cemetery. Dr. McCulloch was widely known as the compiler of the popular school classic, 'McCulloch's Course of Reading.'

John Caird, Principal of Glasgow University, and Edward Caird, Master of Balliol, the theologian and the philosopher, sons of John Caird, founder of Caird & Co., are two of Greenock's greatest men. The former was Professor of Theology in Glasgow University in 1862, Principal in 1873, and was appointed Gifford Lecturer in 1890. It has been said of John Caird that he was "great as a teacher, greater as a preacher, greatest of all in the unaffected beauty of his character."

David Crawford, Baron Bailie, who was 38 years in the service of the Superior and for upwards of 20 years Dean of the Faculty of Procurators, died in 1861, aged 71 years. It was written of him that no man ever stood higher in public estimation, that every movement for the promotion of the town's welfare had his hearty support. He was in 1856 presented with a public testimonial in the form of his full-length portrait by Macnee.

John Davidson, poet, was born at Barrhead in 1859, and was brought to Greenock while a boy. He was the son of Rev. Alexander Davidson, Nelson Street E.U. Church, was educated in the Academy, in which he was afterwards a teacher. 'Scaramouch in Naxos', amongst his first efforts, was printed in the offices of the 'Greenock Telegraph.'

The Baine family long held a high position in the work and councils of the town, and its members were remarkable in their personal characters and for the disinterestedness of their services. Robert Baine was the first Provost of Greenock, and his brother, Walter Baine, was twice Provost, 1840-44, and Member for the burgh in 1845-7. At the helm of local affairs at a very arduous time, when men's tempers were excited, Robert is said to have conducted the burgh in safety and peace throughout the struggle.

George Robertson, a native of Bute, migrated to Greenock early in life, and became the leading partner of the Newfoundland trading firm of Hunter, Robertson & Co. He was a Senior Magistrate under the 1751 charter. Much of the credit in connection with the Shaws Water Scheme was due to him. The mansion in Ardgowan Square that is now the Tontine Hotel was built by Mr. Robertson.

Robert Buchanan, LL.D. was the first Rector of Greenock Academy in 1855, and afterwards Principal of Kilblain Academy, many pupils of which rose to eminence in various professions, amongst these Sir Reginald Wingate, a former Sirdar of Egypt, who with his two elder brothers came from Broadfield, Port Glasgow, in the 'Sixties to attend the classes.

David and Charles MacIver, who along with the Messrs. Burns and Cunard inaugurated the Atlantic service of steamships in the Cunard Line, were natives of Greenock, sons of a bookseller whose shop was in the Rue-end and residence in Regent Street opposite Well Park.

The present (1921) representatives of the Cartsburn family are Mrs. Lillian Parkinson Orr Macknight Crawford, life-renter, who resides in France, and Robert Arthur Christie Crawford, fiar, of Beveree, Hampton-on-Thames. The estate agents are Messrs. Neill, Clerk & Murray, solicitors, Argyle Street, Greenock.

Two town plans, the first of 1818 and the other of 1838-42, were drawn up on an elaborate scale, with much detail, and are worthy subjects of study for those who take an interest in such matters. That of the earlier date is to be seen in the rooms of the Chamber of Commerce, William Street, and bears the title, 'Plan of the town of Greenock and its environs after the intended improvements. By David Reid, 1818.' This feuing plan is referred to at pages 102 and 103. The later was by Andrew Macfarlane, land surveyor, 135 Buchanan Street, Glasgow, and is dated 9th May, 1842. It was mislaid for many years in a Corporation room, from which it was recently recovered and renovated by Mr. Andrew Nimmo, town-clerk, in whose room it is now hung. It is described as a 'Plan of the town of Greenock and its environs laid down from an actual survey executed by the subscriber during the years 1838-42; respectfully dedicated to Sir Michael Robert Shaw Stewart of Greenock and Blackhall, Baronet, and to the Honourable the Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of Greenock.' Several excellent views are shown on the borders of the plan - The old oval town seal displaying a ship, barrels on quay, and the inscription, "Sigillum Burgi de Greenock"; the Mid Kirk, the New West Kirk, Customhouse, Railway Station, and the view of the town from the south-east as it appeared over a century ago.

Unemployment in town became widespread towards the end of 1921. The funds in the hands of the Corporation having become exhausted, the work of relief was laid upon the Parish Council. By the close of October 3,000 applications had been made, and the sum of about £7,000, equal to 3d per £1 on the rates, had been paid out. A certain amount of relief work was being provided at the widening of Inverkip Road, at Battery Park, and at Smithston grounds. A sum of £3,000 had in 1920 been laid aside for the improvement of Battery Park. In common with every other industrial centre in the country Greenock was suffering acutely through the dismissals of workmen from shipyards, engineering shops, etc.; the unemployed were organising public meetings and street demonstrations in appeals to the authorities, who with the assistance of leading citizens were doing their utmost to devise means of relief. A fresh effort in aid of the Provost's fund was begun in October by the proprietors of 'The Telegraph'. The subject is referred to at pages 310-11 [*in the original edition – Ed.*]

In connection with the Provisional Order referred to on page 80 [*in the original edition – Ed.*] it would be strictly accurate to say that it originated in the pressing need for a greatly increased water supply, and that the clauses dealing with the assessments were included in the application. The total amount paid by the Corporation to the millowners was £102,358, made up as follows: Distillers' Company, Ltd., £40,000; Neill, Dempster & Neill, £20,000; Fleming, Reid & Co., Ltd., £17,500; Westburn Sugar Refinery Company, Ltd., £13,858; Scotts' Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, Ltd., £11,000. While the outlay on a scheme to provide an additional 30 days' supply was estimated at over £300,000, the greater scheme necessary for the 55 days' extra supply acquired by this arrangement would have cost about £500,000.

The House of Refuge, which in 1893 was certified as a home for inebriate women, the only institution of the kind in Scotland, was closed in October, 1921. The number of inmates had been steadily decreasing, and it was reported

also that the very efficient police supervision of such cases throughout the country had rendered institutions unnecessary.

The Masonic Temple, corner of Argyle and West Stewart Streets, was built in 1897 by the brethren of Lodge St. John, No. 175. The foundation-stone was laid by Bro. James Reid, R.W.M. and Depute Provincial Grand Master of Renfrewshire West.

Greenock War Memorial was getting into shape in the autumn of 1921. Five competitive designs were then selected for final consideration. The site is Well Park, and a sum of over £8,000 was at that time subscribed.

St. Lawrence Bay was at one time named the Bay of the Sun.

The last man to be executed in Scotland for forgery was Billy McCoy, an Irishman, who in 1812, at Glasgow Circuit Court, was found guilty of forgery on the guinea note of the Greenock Bank and sentenced to death.

The Whinhill explosion, which took place at wooden huts at Beith's Dam on September 11, 1870, was caused by a band of young men, who struck a nitro-glycerine can with a heavy forge hammer. Six persons were killed, and of six injured one subsequently died.

Extract from the Old West Kirk Session records, 1779 - "The session, hearing that the granting of the meeting-house to those who call themselves the Reformed Presbytery proves offensive to some of the members of our congregation and a stumbling-block to others, agreed that the meeting-house should not be granted to them anymore."

During the gutting out in 1865 of the lower flats of a building in Market Street opposite the Gardners' Arms, then a hundred years old, it was discovered that a portion of the flooring was resting on the top of a large water-worn whinstone boulder upwards of 6 ft. in diameter, close to which another of smaller size projected several inches above the foundation. It was regarded as possible that at one time the waters of the Clyde reached the spot where these boulders stood.

Garvel Park House was built by Bailie James Gammell, who later retired to the North of Scotland, and died in 1825. In 1832 Mr. John Scott acquired it from Gammell's trustees, and it was sold by him to the Harbour Trust in 1868.

The last of Greenock windmills was situate in the neighbourhood of George Square, and the locality was known as Windmill Croft. An old pictorial view of Greenock in 1768 showed this on the high ground to the south of the Old West Kirk.

The house with five gables was situated in Dalrymple Street, corner of Taylor's Close next to Jibboom Square. It was removed during the operations of the Improvement Trust in 1878.

The Anchor Inn, on the south side of Shaw Street between Highland Close and East Quay Lane, is supposed to have been built in 1703. It also was demolished in 1878. The Museum Hotel, William Street (now a common lodging-house), was built about 1750, the White Hart Hotel, Cathcart Square, about 1770 (Clydesdale Bank now on the site), and the old Tontine Hotel, Cathcart Street, in 1801.

There were at one time quite a number of quarries in what is now the town. Among the best known in Wester Greenock and Finnart were the Ford, Glen, and Fergusland quarries of freestone, whinstone, and limestone; in Easter Greenock were Gibb's Hill, Woodhead, etc. Weather stones from these were used in all the old houses of the town, the breasts of the harbours, the town cellars at the Bell Entry, Mid Kirk, etc., and specimens are still to be seen in Shaw, Dalrymple, and Market Streets. The quarry from which the Mid Kirk was built was behind 35 and 37 Newton Street, and at the feuing of the ground in 1853 it was only partially filled up, large cubes of sandstone being found during levelling for gardens. Other quarries were at Drumfrochar, Dellingburn, and head of Duncan Street. Sir John Schaw in some of the old charters retained quarries in his own hands for repairing his houses and the walls enclosing his parks, and chiefly to build the more modern portion of the Mansion-house.

For some years about the middle of last century there was a camera obscura on Customhouse Quay.

It is doubtful if there is any one now living who can remember the Old Ferry House at the Bay of Quick. A view of the house and a general scene of shore, firth, and hills, from a sketch by Miss Ann Mowat in 1840, is shown in McKelvie's 'Views and Reminiscences of Old Greenock'.

John Galt is said to have fallen out with John Davidson, editor of the 'Advertiser', in 1818, for refusing to print Thomas Campbell's poem, 'The Battle of Hohenlinden' on the ground that it was not worthy of a place in his journal.

In 1854 John Gray presented to the Watt Institution a photograph by Charles Kidston, Glasgow, of a then recently discovered profile likeness of Watt by his friend John Henning, sculptor, the original of which, executed in 1803, is in the possession of Watt Navigation School.

In October, 1921, the directors of Sir Gabriel Wood's Mariners' Asylum changed the title of the institution to Mariners' Home Incorporated.

Father Lemoine, who was the second émigré Roman Catholic priest to settle in Greenock after the Reformation, was buried in the Old West Kirkyard. His name could be distinguished on a fractured recumbent stone, known as "Dumesque, 1792," until one half of it was removed in 1864. The fragment is supposed to have been the last line of a Latin inscription indicating the pastorate of Father Lamoine in France till the Revolution made him a refugee. He resided in Cathcart Street, nearly opposite the railway station, east of East Quay Lane, and was also a teacher of French.

It is recorded of a Hamilton Street grocer named Kerr and of a number of the other inhabitants that on the arrival of Father Capron, the first French émigré of that time they were very kind to him, and pleaded that they "must not let the poor stranger starve". A convincing testimonial to the practical benevolence of the Catholic section of the community is to be seen in the Union Street Home for aged poor persons. The movement began over thirty years ago with the Little Sisters of the Poor, who first rented a villa, which was purchased in course of time, two adjoining villas were taken later, two blocks connecting the three houses were built, and then a chapel for the use of the inmates.

In the early years of last century it was the fashion to plant butchers' stalls in every quarter of the town.

Owing to the great scarcity of capital, the first Magistrates of Greenock were frequently under the necessity of interposing their personal security in order to provide immediate funds for the payment of tradesmen and others.

The Burgh area is 2,945 acres, and the rateable value, including railways and harbours, is £567,568.

On page 13 [*in the original edition – Ed.*] the name of Robert Arrol, first master of the Grammar School, is in error given as John.
