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In Memoriam:

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OF THE

Celebration of the Great Bazaar

ON WEDNESDAY, 5th APRIL, 1876.

PROCEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO THE RELIEF FUND.

ABERDEEN: FREE PRESS OFFICE.

1876.







IN MEMORIAM.



ANY deplorable casualties involving great loss of human life have taken place on our coast and in our river in the course of the city's history, but the saddest calamity with which, in our time, the city has been visited was that which occurred on the Spring Sacramental Fast-day of 1876, when thirty-two persons perished in the River in sight of hundreds of their fellows, who were unable to

render them any assistance. The magnitude of the disaster (excepting only the case of the Oscar in 1813) is quite unparalleled in local history, and it is all the more saddening and distressing that it took place upon an occasion that is now practically recognised by the masses of Aberdeen as a holiday.

The day was clear and balmy—a good specimen of April weather at its best—and, as usual on a Sacramental Fast-day, Torry was visited by thousands of the lower and working classes. The fine weather tempted many hundreds out who otherwise would not have gone, and the scene at the Inches and at Torry during the entire day was one of bustle and animation. The river was very full, being heavily swollen by the rapid thawing of the snow in the upper reaches of its course, and about three o'clock, the tide being then about half-ebb, a very swift current was running. The current for the previous day or two had been running very rapidly, and so strong was it on Tuesday that, we believe, the tacksman of the ferry-boat, Mr. Kennedy, declined to run the ferry-boat. The boat

used for ferrying across the new channel was quite recently arranged to work with a wire rope and a wheel, the rope, which was securely fastened on each bank of the river, passing along the length of the boat and doubling over a wheel in the centre. The progress of the boat across the river was effected by the central wheel being turned by the ferrymen by means of the handles which were attached to it. This plan of propelling the ferry boat had been in use in the old channel of the river for several years past, but the system had just been newly introduced on the new channel passage, unknown, it is stated, to the Town Council who are the proprietors of the ferry, and contrary to the expressed opinion of several nautical men about the harbour, who say, and evidently with reason, that a boat crossing a channel where there is a heavy current should not be guided by fixed chains. The boat that was in use when the casualty occurred was quite a new one, and had been specially constructed for the ferry traffic. It was of larger size than the ordinary boats, and when built had been subjected to a very heavy dead-weight carrying test, which it had answered admirably. This test, however, had been applied in still water; the boat was now being tried under more severe conditions, and conditions such as it is questionable if the builders ever had in view. During the day the boat had been crowded by the vast numbers of citizens, both male and female, that left town to enjoy the day on the breezy slopes of Torry, or else to spend too much of their hard-earned cash in the public-houses of the village. There were the usual attractions of penny shows, shooting galleries, and the like, which ever turn up when a large town or extensive district is *en fête*.

About three o'clock in the afternoon—a little past that hour, it is believed—the boat having brought over a considerable number from the Torry side, was ready to again start from the Aberdeen shore. She was in charge of Wm. Masson, who was assisted for the day by John Mitchell, a married man, who lived in Torry, and was accustomed to do odd jobs of this sort. There were also on board the boat in a sort of official capacity, we are informed, two young boys from Torry, named George Robertson and John Cormack, both the sons of fishermen. Whenever the boat had touched the Aberdeen shore, the folks on board, or at least the abler and stronger portion of them, jumped out, and forced themselves as best they could through the crowd that was waiting to get across the river. Those who were thus waiting did not remain on the bank till all on board had got out of the boat. One girl at anyrate was unable to get out, and, having to return with the boat, was drowned. The impatient crowd, mostly composed of young men and boys, rushed at once into the boat which in the shortest possible space of time was positively packed to its utmost limits, and even far beyond them. We understand that the man who was in charge of the boat in his

official deposition stated that there were "over forty" in the boat; the tacksman himself is stated to have said that there were "fifty-one," while the spectators variously estimated the number in the boat at sixty, seventy, some fixing it at as high a figure as eighty. Not till twenty-four hours after the casualty was the sad task of making up the roll of the missing ones completed, and when that had been done, and the number of those saved had been summed up, it was definitely found that there had been at least seventy-seven persons in the boat when she started on her ill-fated voyage.

One or two incidents connected with the loading and departure of the boat seem to call for notice, so interesting are they now, when viewed in the light of the subsequent fatality. A working man, who had two of his children with him, went down to the edge of the water with the intention of going on board the boat. A woman, who was already on board, eased off somewhat to make room for the children, and she took a coloured air "balloon" from one of the boys to enable him the better to clamber into the craft. His father, however, had doubts about the appearance of the boat, and, saying that he would wait till the next boat, he took his children away from the waterside, the woman handing the "balloon" into the custody of the little urchin once more. By this circumstance the whole three doubtless were saved from a watery grave. One circumstance in particular may be mentioned, respecting which, however, contradictory statements are current. The man Masson, who was in charge of the boat, left it just as it was filled, and did not go back to it again. His own story is that, believing the boat to be overloaded, he asked the tacksman, who was standing beside, whether he thought she was fit to cross the river with so many on board. Mr. Kennedy gave him no answer to his question. He was then asked by his mate, Mitchell, to fetch him a glass of water, and he went away for this purpose. When he returned with the glass of water, the boat was off into the stream. This is the man's own statement, but it is very distinctly contradicted in its most important particulars by those who were at hand at the time. The current statement is that he told Mr. Kennedy that the boat was overcrowded, and that he would not risk his life on board her. Saying this in very emphatic language—rumour gives it the addition of an oath—he left the boat and made no attempt to return. These are the various statements as given, and, of course, the discrepancy between them is such that there is no way by which they can be reconciled as matters at present stand. One or two of the passengers who were in the boat distinctly state that Masson refused to cross with the boat, and since his deposition was taken officially, he is said to have acknowledged that he refused to go. It is currently reported that Masson lived some years in a foreign country, and that since his return he has not, from the state of his mind, been entrusted with any responsible

work, and if this statement is true, his vacillating declarations would be accounted for.

Along with the wire-drawn ferry boat another boat was loaded with passengers. This boat, which was an ordinary oar-pulled boat, was also crowded, but it started before the other, and made the passage pretty rapidly, though it was forced by the strength of the current as far east as the pier at Torry. This will give some indication of the great strength of the current that was running. Who it was that started the ferry boat has not been found out, and probably never will. There was only one ferryman on board, and it is needless to say that he could not have done it himself. Perhaps some of the eager and impatient passengers gave a helping hand; perhaps they started the boat without orders; possibly the ferryman had solicited help. The lips that could have made these points clear are silent now in death. The ferry-boat went very slowly after it started, and no wonder, when her gunwale was within an inch or two of the water. All on board behaved in the quietest and most orderly manner, and there was no shouting or swearing, as is often the case on such occasions. One little fellow, all unconscious of what was so soon to occur, was observed playing with his bonnet in the water. The boat, as we have said, proceeded slowly till she was fully into the middle of the stream, when the strength of the current began to be appreciated by those on shore as well as by those who were unfortunate enough to be in the boat, which was as far down the river as the elasticity of the wire rope would permit. The tension on the rope must have been very great when the boat was in mid-stream, for the appearance the rope then presented was something like the arc of a circle. Here it was found by those on board that the boat would make no way whatever—that she could not be got out of the bight, so to speak, of the rope, which, instead of being in the water, as it usually is, was, in the way we have described, stretched taut by the boat from bank to bank. Just at this moment, the boat—whether from the pressure of the current or the movement of those on board, is unknown—canted slightly over to the west side (up stream), and the water flowed into it freely, causing, as may be imagined, great consternation and terror on board, and great anxiety and excitement on shore. Shouts rent the air from the terrified spectators, while shrieks and screams and hoarse cries for help came from the passengers, who were now more or less submerged. The water continued to pour in, and shouts were made to cut the rope which held the boat, the belief of all seemingly being that if this could be done the passengers would be saved. The information as to whether the rope was cut or broken is not distinct. Some spectators assert that the rope was cut at the Torry side, while others are as confident in stating that it was not cut, but that it

snapped. One account that we have heard is that an attempt was made to loose the chain, but that it was only freed for about a yard, and that the jerk which the boat gave on getting this additional length caused the rope to snap.

In an instant the boat, taking a slightly down-stream direction, turned bodily over, amid such a scene of terror and excitement as, we believe, was never before experienced in Aberdeen. For a second or two every person stood silent and appalled at the great and unexpected catastrophe that had occurred. Several of those in the boat, apprehensive of what was to occur and feeling that the boat was no longer a safe place to remain in, jumped out into the water just before the huge clumsy structure turned bottom upwards. All those who had the presence of mind to take this step were, we believe, saved. They had the advantage of getting clear of the boat, and thus received no injury by its falling upon them; and they were also drifted by the current back to it again, and were able, some of them at least, to clamber up upon its side. Six or seven young men and one woman managed to secure a footing or a hold upon it in some way or another, and floated rapidly with it down the river.

Arousing themselves from the momentary stupor into which they had fallen, and instinct with the desire of saving human life, the crowd on both sides of the river at once rushed to the boats, and in the shortest conceivable space of time—though it seemed hours to the anxious onlookers and to the workers themselves—a number of small boats were launched, and were at once put off to the rescue of the men, women, and children, who were now struggling desperately for existence in the water. At first the persons immersed were all in a knot—on the heads of each other, it might be said—but the swift, remorseless current soon sundered them far apart; and dotted all over the surface of the water were to be seen the heads and wildly gesticulating arms of those now battling so fiercely for life. All that human beings could do was done to save them, and the strenuous efforts that were made were a credit to the heroism of our townsfolk, and did honour to our common humanity. Four boats were put off from the Torry side, and one was launched from the Aberdeen side, and with the aid of the second ferry boat, of which we have spoken, some thirty persons in all were rescued, nearly all of whom were exhausted to a greater or less extent. The remainder of those who were saved managed in one way or another to make the shore by their own unaided efforts. One case of a little lad, whose identity has not been established, is particularly sorrowful. He had swum bravely from the centre of the stream, and had reached within some five or six yards of the shore, when he suddenly stopped and sank, never rising to the surface again. Had he done so he would possibly have been saved, for the crew of one of the boats had observed him, and had made to help him. As he sank

one of the men on board clutched at his head, but only succeeded in grasping the bonnet.

Many of the cases of rescue were of the most wonderful and miraculous character. Two in particular may be noticed. Alexander Caie, sen., and Alexander Craig, fishermen, were standing on the beach at Torry when the boat was loading to come across. Craig, who was expecting his wife on her return from the city, whither she had been, creel and all, saw her enter the boat. He states that a presentiment came over him that something was about to happen, and he shouted out to her not to come in that boat. She, however, did not hear him, and entered the boat. As soon as it began to move into the stream Craig said to Caie (his wife's father) that the boat would never cross, an opinion in regard to which Caie did not coincide. However, at the urgent persuasion of his son-in-law, Caie assisted in getting out a boat and they plied into the stream. They were in mid-stream by the time the boat was in the bight of the rope and Craig had actually spoken to his wife just before the ferry-boat careened over. The unfortunate woman was encumbered with the creel upon her back, and a large number of those who were now in the water seized upon it, bringing her within an ace of being strangled as well as drowned. Her husband succeeded in catching hold of her just as she was sinking and pulled her into his boat. She was quite insensible when she was rescued, but she speedily came to herself, though it was three or four days before she fairly recovered from the effects of her immersion. These two men—her husband and her father—deserve the best thanks of the community for their services, for, had it not been for the presence of their boat on the river when the accident occurred, the number who were lost would have been much larger. We believe that they succeeded in rescuing about a dozen persons altogether. A girl named Williamina Strachan, residing in Gallowgate, was rescued by her own father, who, having been over at the Torry side, heard her cries for assistance and saw her floating past. A woman named Mrs. Farquhar, residing in Jute Street, was saved in a similarly providential way, being pulled out by a fisher's wife at the Torry side, towards which she had been swept by the current. She was very weak, but with motherly instinct she had tenaciously clung to her child, an infant thirteen months old, which reposed quietly in her arms. The poor mother was for a time in a sad way about her daughter, Jessie, who had also accompanied her, but she too had, in the meantime, been picked up by a boat. Two sisters named Mary Ann and Elizabeth Simpson, were saved by different boats, and one of them being conveyed to the Torry and the other to the Footdee side of the channel, each, for a few hours, thought that the other was drowned. The happy meeting between the two may be better imagined than described.

There were several parties of young men on board the boat. In

one case four companions were together—J. A. Badger, Robert Badger, James Leslie, and James Harvey, and of these only the first named was saved. In another case in which there were four comrades—Archibald Duncan, George Hogg, John Cowie, and John Grassie—the first named was drowned and the remainder saved. The saddest events in life have often somewhat of the amusing and the grotesque about them. The plucky way in which the man Hogg acted is well worthy of being mentioned. Hogg, who not only wants a leg, or at all events a bit of one, but also goes about the world with the aid of a crutch, was one of those who jumped out of the boat before it capsized, and he immediately swam towards the Torry side. He was just nearing the shore when he remembered that he wanted his crutch, and very complacently thinking that he would not get on very well without it, he coolly turned and swam back, and actually succeeded in getting it! By this time, however, his clothes had become thoroughly saturated, and he had quite enough to do to pull himself and his crutch ashore. George C. Selbie and his sister Margaret C. Selbie were on the boat together when the disaster occurred. The lad is a good swimmer, and made a strong effort to save his sister, but missed her in the confusion and brought another girl ashore instead. As showing the calibre of which this young lad is made, it may be mentioned that he took a gold watch which he was wearing, and which had belonged to his father, out of his pocket and placed it in his mouth, in order not to lose it in the struggle he would have to make to gain the shore.

James Mowat, of the Dee Swimming Club, who was in Torry when the boat capsized, entered the water with the intention of trying to save some of the people, but though he dived several times he was unable, owing to the darkness of the water and the strength of the current, to find anybody. Another young man, whose name has not been obtained, also swam into the river, but his efforts, from the same cause, were fruitless too.

It is quite impossible to make up an accurate list of those who made strong efforts to save, or succeeded in saving, life, and we prefer not to attempt the task, but we cannot refrain from mentioning James Brown, mate of the schooner "Speed," of Aberdeen, who was in a pleasure boat with his wife and family on the river at the time of the accident. He immediately landed his wife and family, leaving them to take care of themselves as best they could, and, with the help of two fishermen, succeeded in rescuing five persons from a watery grave. The ferry boat which left the Aberdeen shore before the chain boat started, landed its cargo of passengers near Torry pier just as the accident happened. Three fishermen at once sprang into the boat, and proceeded out into the centre of the channel. They managed to save three men and a woman. They saw several other bodies beneath the water being carried rapidly out to sea, but they could not reach them or give

any assistance. They landed those they had rescued on the Torry beach, nearly opposite the Captain Pilot's house. The town's salmon fishers, to the number of thirteen or fourteen, left off working whenever the boat capsized, and proceeded to the scene of the disaster. They succeeded, through their efforts, in saving several lives. On Mr. Adam, the manager, arriving on the ground from the city he ordered them to drag the river and the harbour entrance with a net, and this work was at once begun, and carried on for several hours, but no bodies were got, owing, doubtless, to the strong current and the very rough nature of the bottom. The salmon fishers complained very much of the treatment they received from the crowd of people at Torry, most of whom were drunk, and many of whom conducted themselves in the most offensive and indecent manner, jibbing and jeering at the unsuccessful result of the labours of the fishermen.

Of the forty-five persons who were in all saved at least thirty were landed at Torry. Two or three of these were seriously ill, so much so that for some time it was feared that they would not be got round. The worst case was that of a man named Morrison, a gardener, whose recovery for a long time was despaired of, and who could not leave Torry for a day or two. The whole of the persons rescued and taken to Torry were accommodated in the houses of the inhabitants, who acted in a very kindly way towards them all. Nothing brings out the latent kindness in the fishers' hearts so much as a casualty on river or on sea. Dr. P. B. Smith, who was sent for, did a large amount of work in the way of attending to the sufferers and prescribing for them. The persons who were brought to the Footdee side were all safely brought round, with one exception. This was a man who was picked up a little off Point Law—he was the last person that was got by any of the boats—and who was seen at once to be almost, if not quite, dead at the time. He was a strong, powerfully-built man, and, as it was thought that he might yet be saved, he was taken to the bath-house at the pier, and every effort was made to restore animation, but with no result. The body lay in the bath-house all the afternoon for identification, but it was not till the evening that it was recognised as that of Archibald Duncan, aged 29, a shoemaker in the employment of Mr. Lorimer. He had but recently come to the city. A Gordon's Hospital boy named Harte was also in a very bad way, and had it not been for the efforts of a lad named Robertson, who did all that he could for him till the arrival of the doctor, it is highly questionable if he would have got through. The poor boy, who had doubtless long been looking forward to his trip to Torry on the Fast-day, when he was undressed, was insensible, though he was still holding in his clenched fist the halfpenny wherewith he was to pay his journey back again. Mrs. Munro, a middle-aged woman who was taken to Foot-

dee, had been very severely cut about the knee, having come in contact with the boat; but the poor unfortunate woman had greater grief and sorrow to experience than that caused by her hurt, in the fact that her husband had gone down along with so many more. Dr. Burr and Dr. F. F. M. Moir did good service in the Footdee district, so far as the sufferers were concerned.

The news of the calamity that had occurred spread through the town with more than the rapidity with which bad news is proverbially said to become known, and the day being to all intents and purposes a holiday, the town may be said to have in the course of the afternoon emptied itself on to the Inches, the Reclaimed Ground, and Footdee. All these places actually swarmed with the populace, and for the whole of the afternoon till the shades of evening had begun to close around, there were thousands upon thousands of spectators constantly crossing the Market Street Bridge. While on this, we may note that it was perfectly astonishing to hear the unanimity with which all concurred in stating that this sad accident was the best argument for a new bridge across the river, in the line of Market Street, that was ever brought forward, and that the best monument to the unfortunate sufferers would be the erection of a handsome and stately bridge. Sheriff Comrie Thomson, Lord Provost Jamieson, Shoremaster Hutcheson, and the most of the Magistrates and Town Council were at the scene of the accident within a very short time of its occurrence, and saw that proper arrangements were made for the comfort of those who had been submerged, and for the identification of the articles that had been brought ashore. All through the afternoon and evening the excitement and anxiety of the public were at fever heat. Nothing was talked of but the deplorable casualty that had occurred, and we believe that in several churches where there was evening service special attention was directed to the unexpected and disastrous event. It was a sad and sorrowful sight to see wives and mothers rushing about and anxiously inquiring about their own dear ones, knowing they were out, and not knowing whether they had been in the ill-fated boat or not. Many a happy meeting there was to those who were so fearful of a blank having been made at their own fireside; but the sad fears of far too many were terribly realised. Those who saw some of the awful scenes of that night, when any of the found caps and bonnets had been identified as belonging to some near and dear one, will remember them as long as they live. The grief of the mothers and fathers over the loss of their children was too terrible and too sacred ever to be forgotten. In no fewer than two separate cases had families lost two of their members "at one fell swoop." All of the sufferers were in the poorer ranks of life, and that made the disaster all the worse, because in many cases it was the most helpful member of the family that had been removed. The whole of the caps, bonnets, and other articles that were got out of the water were in the evening conveyed to the City Police Office,

and laid out for identification, and numbers of these were claimed or identified in the course of the night.

Such a night of excitement and of weary watching has rarely, if ever, been passed in the city. Up till midnight, and even after that hour the street in front of the Police Office was crowded by anxious watchers, fearing the worst about missing friends and relatives, and fearful of going home to realise their dreary expectations. But what of the sad watching and waiting at many a grief-stricken home? of the fruitless listening for the foot-fall of those dear ones whose cheery step upon the threshold would never more be heard? Of twenty-eight persons reported missing in the course of the night, two only were found not to have been in the boat. These were two young men who, unconscious of the great disaster that had occurred, and of the fact that their names had been given up among the lost, had remained over-night with some relatives a little out of town. It must have been a joyful meeting to those at home, and the sad pity is that that was the only meeting of the kind. This reduced the number missing to twenty-six, but as the day after the disaster wore on the list again began to swell. An old woman called at the Police Office in the forenoon in great distress about her daughter, whose whereabouts she did not know, except that she lived "in the North Street." The poor old body, who is a hawker, had searched both the North Streets through, and had found no clue to her daughter, who had a child with her, and was last seen in the neighbourhood of the ferry boat a little before the sad accident. In the afternoon, however, the woman re-appeared with her child, having been away at some of her friends. Other six names were, in the course of the day, added to the list, bringing the total number missing up to thirty-two.

The list of lost and saved as finally adjusted in the course of Thursday was as follows :—

S A V E D.

1. Ann Livingstone, residing at 25 Regent Quay.
2. Mary Ann Simpson, residing at 32 Justice Street.
3. Elizabeth Simpson (16), sister of the above.
4. Mrs. Farquhar, residing at 10 Jute Street.
5. Jessie Farquhar, her daughter; and
6. A Child of Mrs. Farquhar's, 13 months old.
7. David Fraser, timekeeper, residing at 50 Charles Street.
8. Mrs. Fraser, wife of the above; and
9. John Fraser (5), son of the last two.
10. George Robertson (8), son of John Robertson, fisherman, residing at Torry.
11. John Cormack (9), son of John Cormack, fisherman, residing at Torry.
12. John Grassie, shoemaker, residing at 65 Chapel Street.
13. George Hogg, shoemaker, residing at 66 College Street.
14. John Cowie, shoemaker, residing in Gordon Street.
15. Williamina Strachan, residing at 115 Gallowgate.

16. Ann Seward, residing at 21 Water Lane.
17. Christina Guyan, residing at 21 Water Lane.
18. Mrs. Jane Caie or Craig, wife of Alexander Craig, fisherman, residing at Torry.
19. James Smith, residing in Hawthorn Place.
20. — Morrison, gardener—residence unknown.
21. George Forbes, bill-poster, residing at 97 Gallowgate.
22. James Eddison (11), son of James Eddison, carpenter, residing in College Street.
23. John Wilson (17), engineer, residing at 66 George Street.
24. James Bain (19), blacksmith, residing at 62 Upper Leadside.
25. Alex. Stewart (18), joiner, residing at 21 Springbank Street.
26. John Alex. Badger (12), residing at Links Battery—brother drowned.
27. Charles Harvey (18), stonecutter, residing at 1 King's Crescent—cousin drowned.
28. Roderick Campbell, plasterer, residing at 63 College Street.
29. Mrs. Morrison or Munro (40) residing at 29 Shuttle Lane—husband drowned.
30. Patrick Harte (13)—Gordon's Hospital boy—son of Widow Harte, residing at 56 Regent Quay.
31. Alexander Morrison (10), son of Leslie Morrison, residing at 29 Summer Lane.
32. Andrew Morris—residence unknown.
33. George Kelly (20), stonemason, residing at 40 Upperkirkgate.
34. William Jamieson, sailmaker, residing at 18 Chronicle Lane.
35. John Fraser (brother of David Fraser already given), fireman on board the Ban-Righ.
36. Alexander Cowie, miller, residing in Canal Place.
37. James Webster, clerk, residing at 11 Hutcheon Street.
38. James Gray, compositor, residing at 16 James Street.
39. George Thom, labourer, residing in James Street.
40. William Kynoch, Wire Works, Meal Market Street.
41. James Grant, labourer, residing at 11 Denburn Terrace.
42. David Sutherland, house carpenter, residing in Upperkirkgate.
43. George C. Selbie, residing in Gallowgate—sister drowned.
44. Agnes Melvin Hume (13), residing with her uncle, John Melvin, in Castle Terrace.

L O S T.

1. Archibald Duncan, aged 29 years, residing in Farquhar's Court, Upperkirkgate; leaves a widow and two children. Deceased was a shoemaker, and was in the employment of Mr Lorimer, Palace Buildings. He belonged to Banchory, and had but recently come to the city. His wife, whose maiden name was Ross, is, we are informed, a native of Birse. She is in very delicate health, and, having a nervous temperament, is in an excessively prostrate condition through the loss she has sustained. The children are both girls, the one being seven and the other five years of age. The family have all along been in poor circumstances, and now they are deprived of their only help.
2. John Mitchell, aged about 50 years, residing in Torry; leaves a widow and seven of a family. Deceased was a labourer at the Gas Works, and is reported to have borne a very good character. His family are quite young, only two of them being able to do anything for themselves. He took odd jobs to eke out his living and make ends meet, and in consequence of this was employed as an extra hand at the ferry on Sundays and at holiday times. His widow and family have absolutely lost their all in losing him.

3. Robert Cay, aged 15 years, apprentice lithographic printer, residing at 10 Hanover Street. This lad's father is dead, and his mother has been a widow for twelve years and a-half. She has had a great struggle in the bringing up of her family, who numbered seven in all. Her eldest son is married, and stays in the town; her other children all live with her, and these, with one exception (a little girl who is at school), aid in sustaining the household. Two of her girls are employed at the Lilybank Curing Works, and one is a domestic servant in the Lunatic Asylum. The boy who has been drowned was an apprentice lithographic printer with Messrs. Keith & Gibb, and was in the second year of his apprenticeship. His employers give him an excellent character, and all who knew him speak of him as a quiet and well-behaved lad.
4. George Dickie, aged 27 years, stonemason, residing in Nelson Street, leaves a widow and three children. Deceased was employed at Messrs. Petrie's works in Constitution Street. He had been at the church in the forenoon, and after dinner he said to his wife that he was going out for a walk and would be home by tea-time. It appears that he had met with some companions, along with whom he had proceeded to the Inches. Owing to the crush they got separated, and all went over in different boats. Deceased had refused to go in the preceding boat along with one of his friends, because he said she was overloaded. He belongs to Ellon, and returned from America, where he had been out working, some two years ago. His children are all boys, and the eldest is about four years of age. The family were in comparatively comfortable circumstances, but the sole income was the weekly wages of the head of the house.
5. William Bain, aged 20 years, unmarried, residing with his parents at 77 Broad Street. Deceased, who had charge of one of Messrs Wordie's carts, was the chief support of his parents. He was a great favourite in the home circle, and his loss is consequently all the more deplored—quite apart from the monetary consideration. His father is employed at the Police Stores in Frederick Street. Deceased had two brothers and a sister younger than himself.
6. James Leslie, aged 18 years, residing at North Broadford. The lad was a combmaker at Messrs. Stewart's. His father is a labourer at Messrs. M'Kinnon's foundry. There are five left in the family, one of whom is in the Oldmill Reformatory.
7. John Alexander, aged 22 years, stonemason, residing with his father at 18 Upperkirkgate. Deceased was an apprentice at Mr. Robertson's Granite Works, Wellington Road, and his apprenticeship would have been completed in August. His father is a grieve at a farm in the neighbourhood of the city. His mother has been dead for some years, and his sister kept house for her father and the deceased.
8. William Shearer, aged 18 years, stonemason, residing in Mrs. Hall's lodgings, 13 Upperkirkgate. Deceased was a native of Banchory, his father being a wood-turner at Inchmarlo. He was apprenticed at Mr. Robertson's Granite Works, and would have completed his third year at Whitsunday next. Alexander (the preceding young man) and he were friends together, as was natural, seeing they were engaged at the same work and lived in the same house, but they did not go out together on Wednesday. Shearer had been at church in the forenoon, and had gone out for a stroll after dinner. Deceased receives the best of characters from all who knew him.
9. James Munro, aged about 40 years, foundry labourer, residing in 29 Shuttle Lane; leaves a widow and seven children. Deceased had but recently married his wife, who had been a widow with five children at the time of the marriage. Two children have been born since. All the children are girls, and five of them are quite young and unable to do anything for themselves. The other girls are all engaged in some sort of employment, and one of them is employed at Torry as a nurse, getting

- her "keep" for payment. This may serve to show the extreme poverty of the family. Husband and wife were both in the boat together when it was capsized. After they were submerged in the water her husband continued to "grip hold" of her hand, as she says for some time, till at length his clasp relaxed, and she saw him no more. She got on to the bottom of the boat, and was rescued from that, after being severely hurt about the knees.
10. Jane Cooper, aged 14 years, half-timer, residing at 16 Seamount Place. This little girl was one of a family of five—all young. Her father is a combmaker. The girl had just been newly engaged as a half-timer at Broadford.
 11. John Gowans, aged 20 years, dyer, residing in Charles's Court, Upperkirk-gate.
 12. Thomas Gowans, aged 17, stonecutter, residing in Charles's Court, Upperkirkgate. These two lads were brothers, and lived with their parents, who are of the very poorest class. The elder lad was a dyer, and had been for twelve years in the employment of Mr. Ferguson, whose works are in the same court. The other had just newly begun his apprenticeship at Mr. Petrie's granite works, Constitution Street. The father, who is sixty years of age, is a working shoemaker, and is chiefly employed by Mr. Duncan, Broad Street. The mother, a poor weakly body, was entirely prostrate under the heavy affliction that has come so unexpectedly upon the family. There are two other sons, both of whom are married. The parents were to a great extent dependent upon the two lads who have been drowned.
 13. Margaret C. Selbie, aged 15 years, millworker, residing with her mother in Gallowgate. Deceased was a very nice girl, and was well liked by all who knew her. She was a scholar at the Porthill Evening School. Her father died about two years ago. There are other three children, one of these (a brother) being older than the girl that has been drowned. It is understood that deceased wrought at Broadford. The family are well circumstanced.
 14. John Reid, aged 17 years, stonecutter, residing in Grant's Court, 38 West North Street. This young lad had been only two years out of Gordon's Hospital, and was an apprentice stonecutter at Mr. Wright's Granite Works, John Street. His step-father is a soldier, but his mother has to make her living as she best can by going out and washing, cleaning, &c. The young lad was becoming a great help to her, and will now be sorely missed. There are four of a family still alive, two of whom are in the Girl's Hospital, Huntly Street.
 15. Benjamin Paul, aged 27 years, plumber, residing at 5 Well of Spa. He was unmarried, but it is believed that his marriage day had been fixed. He was the only support of his mother. His father's whereabouts are unknown.
 16. Andrew M'Killiam, aged 17 years, combmaker, residing at 97 Causeway-end.
 17. George M'Killiam, aged 14 years, residing in Boy's Hospital, King Street. The two last-named were brothers. The first-named was a combmaker with Messrs. Stewart, and had been helping his mother to the utmost extent he was able. The second would have completed his five years in the Boy's Hospital in May, and the poor woman had been looking hopefully forward to that time when she would have the additional help of the small wage he would then be able to earn. It is seven years since her husband died, and, apart from the beggarly pittance which she succeeds in making by going out to wash for other people, the only money that was brought into the family was that earned by Andrew. The widow has one son and two daughters remaining—all young.
 18. John Little, aged 19 years, plasterer's labourer, residing at Causewayend. Deceased was an only son. His father is a hawker, and it is said that

- his mother depended upon her son almost wholly for the means of subsistence. John was a great favourite in the quarter, and his mother seems to have almost idolised him.
19. James Slora, aged 17 years, painter, residing with his mother in Ewen's Court, Gallowgate. Mrs. Slora may be said to be more than a widow, for her husband has not been seen or heard of for more than eight years. The poor woman had brought up her son as well as she could, and had pinched herself to give him a little education. She is very industrious, and has creditably done her part by her boy, who was just beginning to be of help to her. He was apprenticed to Messrs. James Garvie & Co., painters, Union Street.
 20. William Duncan, aged 10 years, residing with his mother in a lodging-house in Stronach's Court, Exchequer Row. Very little is known about the boy except that his mother belongs to Turriff, and that she and her husband, the child's step-father, make a living by hawking about the country. The boy was at school.
 21. John William Hanson, aged 16 years, shore labourer, residing with his father in Scott's Court, Regent Quay. Hanson's father, is married to a second wife who is the step-mother of the drowned lad. It is said he was once an overseer in the Bannermill, but he is now a mere labourer at Blaikie's works. He has a large family, two of whom (girls) are in the Industrial School. The lad who has been lost was a "lifter" on the quays, that is, he lifted bags being discharged on to the shoulders of the carriers.
 22. George Burnett, aged 18 years, stonecutter, residing with his father at 16 Virginia Street. This lad's mother has been dead for about three years, and his father is a carter in the employment of the Commercial Company. Deceased had only served a year and a few months of his apprenticeship, and was just beginning to be a help towards the keeping up of the household. He leaves a sister aged twelve years. It had been proposed that he and his sister should go over to Nigg to see a cousin residing at Tullos. The girl had said that she would not go, but the lad went himself, and so he met his death.
 23. James Smith, aged 18 years, blacksmith, residing with his parents at 30 Summer Lane. Deceased was very strong and muscular. His apprenticeship was out in August last, and, as he was a good worker, he was in regular receipt of 24s. per week, the want of which, as well as the want of himself, will cause a sad blank in his father's house that will not be very readily filled up. One of the brothers of the deceased had crossed in a preceding boat, and was waiting for his brother when the boat capsized. He did not know at the time that his brother was in the boat, and that was not discovered till his bonnet and crest were identified in the Police Office in the evening. The deceased had two brothers and two sisters.
 24. George Alexander Young, aged 17 years, labourer, residing at Williams' Square. This lad was a labourer at Hall, Russell, & Co.'s. His mother, whose name is Mrs. Watson, had a great struggle to bring him up, and she now lies in a very weak and heart-broken condition. Her husband (the lad's stepfather) is a shore labourer.
 25. Robert Badger, aged 23 years, seamen and labourer, residing with his parents at the Links Battery. Deceased had left the sea about a year ago, and was a labourer in a woodyard on the Inches. His father is drill-instructor to the Aberdeen Artillery Volunteers. On Wednesday Robert and his brother, John Alexander, went over in the boat together, the folks at home knowing their destination. The little lad, John Alexander, did not see his brother when the boat capsized. The only person he saw was "the man with the cripple leg" who swam ashore. He saw and was conscious of nothing more till he was brought back to his senses in one of the fishers' houses in Footdee. There are about

seven in the family. One of the sons is in the hussars in India, and the others in the family are resident about Aberdeen.

26. William Robertson, 9 years of age, residing with his mother at 25 College Street. The poor mother of this boy is a widow, and struggles hard to keep herself from beggary by going out and washing, &c. The boy was a half-timer at the Asylum for the Blind. She has other two children, a girl and a boy, both of whom are at work.
27. William Jackson, aged 21 years, plumber, residing with his father at Deemouth. The father of this unfortunate lad—Mr. Jackson, billposter—is well known in the city. He has brought up a large family decently and honourably, and much sympathy is felt for him now in his sad affliction. The young lad who is drowned had been five years with Mr. Campbell, plumber, Dee Street.
28. John Paul, aged 16 years, newsboy, residing with his parents at 19 Marywell Street. This lad was a great favourite on the Caledonian Line, which was his beat in the selling of newspapers, and he made a considerable sum of weekly wages off his sales. His father, Alexander Paul, is an engineer at Messrs. Pirie's Works. His mother is alive, and there are in all seven children, exclusive of the lad who has been drowned.
29. Alexander Smith, aged 17 years, cabinetmaker, residing with his father at 53 Summer Street. Deceased, who was a deaf mute, was an apprentice cabinetmaker with Messrs. Allan. His father, who is an upholsterer, is said to have been three times married, and to have had a family of nine children in all.
30. Henry Paterson Mathieson, aged 21 years, cabinetmaker, residing at 95 Chapel Street. We understand that this lad was a deaf mute also, and that he and the lad preceding were in company together. Mathieson was an apprentice, and wanted but a very short time of finishing his term of indenture. His father and mother are both alive, and appear to be in pretty comfortable circumstances.
31. James Harvey, aged 19 years, combmaker, residing with his parents at 9 Hawthorn Place. This lad was the eldest of the family, of whom four are alive. He was employed at Messrs. Stewart's Combwork. His father is a blacksmith at the Great North of Scotland Railway Works at Kittybrewster.
32. Jessie M'Condach, aged 13 years, message girl, residing in Little Belmont Street. This, perhaps, is the saddest of all these sad cases. The girl's father, who was an ostler, died at Alford a little over a month ago; but her mother, it is stated, for years had to provide for her family as she best could, getting no assistance from her husband whatever. There are six of a family altogether—four sons and two daughters. One son and one daughter are married, and are, like the mother, in a very poor position. About three weeks before the accident the girl Jessie who has been drowned was sent to Messrs. Imlay's envelope work, Park Road, where she was employed as a message girl. From what has been learned it would appear that the girl had been over at Torry in the fore-part of the day, and that, having to be at the Post-Office at half-past four o'clock to get her employers' letters, she had entered the boat at the Torry side and come across with it. The unfortunate girl, however, never got out of the boat owing to the great crush that there was to get into it, and consequently she was taken back by the boat, and thus met her death.

The ferry-boat, after capsizing, floated down the channel out to sea, and was there picked up and brought into port again by a steam-tug.

The man Masson who had charge of the boat, but did not go

with her on her last voyage, says that when he came back to the river he saw the boat in mid-stream, lipping with the water on the west side. He did not know what to do. The people on the Torry side let go the tackle, and then the boat capsized towards the east side. He is quite certain that the casualty occurred from overloading. There was no disorder on board the boat. He denies that he refused to go on board the boat. He should have gone had it not been for his going for a drink to his mate, but he should have feared danger. He states that he warned both his mate and Kennedy that there was a very strong current running down the river. If it had been high water and calm he should not have apprehended so much danger, but, whatever the state of the water, the boat was overloaded. He did not hear any of the passengers complain that the boat was overloaded.

An eye-witness of the catastrophe, writing an hour or two after the occurrence, says:—"I was down as far as Point Law walking this afternoon, and being attracted by the great crowd, about a thousand, on this side of the river waiting to get across to Torry, I went as near as I could get to the landing-stage, and watched with interest the great crush of people, principally young men, to get into the boat. I was quite shocked at the number in the boat, and at those who were hauling in over their friends until every available standing place was filled. Not a few got wet feet while being hauled into the boat. When it started, I am confident in saying it was loaded to such an extent that the gunwale was scarcely four inches from the level of the water. When about half-way across, the boat heeled over a little to the west side, and water flowed into it freely. It was evident that something must be done, and the passengers cried to cut the chain by which the boat was being hauled across, and on its being slackened on the Torry side the boat went right over towards the sea side, and covered not a few, while it left the others struggling in the water. Without loss of time boats were launched from the Torry side, and one from the Aberdeen side, and several others which were in the tidal harbour at the time did all they could to save the struggling and drowning; but had the fishermen and others on the Torry side been able to launch their boats during the four minutes that the boat was filling with water and standing still, half of the calamity would not have occurred. There was no remedy tried until the boat swamped, although it was thought by hundreds that something would happen. I saw three persons go down and never rise to the surface again. The struggling and screaming were heart-rending. All along both sides of the river men, women, and children were crying. I never saw such a scene."

As indicative of this state of feeling in the country, and the anxiety that the accident caused amongst those having friends at a distance, it may be mentioned that upwards of 150 telegraph messages were received by people in Aberdeen on Thursday containing inquiries as to the welfare of the families of the recipients.

On Thursday, the police authorities took possession of the wire rope by which the ferry boat was guided across the river. The rope was of two thicknesses, joined near the centre, or about 80 yards from the Torry side. The length reaching from the Aberdeen side was a new coil, and much thicker than the rope which is fastened to the Torry bank. The piece which gave way was the smaller rope on the Torry side, some distance from the point at which the ropes were spliced together.

In the course of Thursday, a leather folding purse was found in the stake nets near the mouth of the Don, and on being dried the words "Ann Clark, 193½ Gallowgate," were discovered to be written upon it. No such name had been given among the missing, and it was for some time feared that this would be another name to add, but next day the purse was claimed by the owner, who had not been in the boat at the time of the accident, but had been over at the rocks and might have dropped it into the sea there.

Lord Ardmillan, at the close of the Spring Circuit Court of Justiciary, on Saturday, 8th April, in thanking the Lord Provost and magistrates for their attention and attendance, and the courtesy with which the Court had been received, said that "he could not close his very brief remarks without expressing the feelings of the Court in regard to the awful and distressing catastrophe which had taken place in the neighbourhood three days ago, a calamity which had brought sorrow and mourning to many a home, and filled the streets of the city with woe. The Court could not take their farewell of the city on this occasion without expressing their deepest sympathy with the friends of those on whom this awful calamity had fallen. Truly we do not know what a day or an hour may bring forth."

FORMATION OF A RELIEF FUND.

On Monday, 10th April, special meetings of the Town Council and Harbour Commissioners were held, when Lord Provost Jamieson stated that to seven, if not to ten families, substantial relief would require to be given. Each of these public boards gave a subscription of £50 to commence a Relief Fund; and at the same time a donation of £10 10s. was intimated from Lord Kintore; and a sum amounting to £3 12s. 6d., collected by Mr. Ross Hunter, of Baden-scoth. The public are subscribing liberally to the fund, but the small donation by the Town Council has caused a good deal of comment.

The Officers in the Barracks have announced that the free proceeds of three theatrical performances to be given by them, are to be handed over to this fund; the Aberdeen Musical Association are to give a special concert, with the same intention; Mr. Gomersal and Mr. J. B. Howard are to give one-half of the gross receipts of the first night's performance of the "Shaughraun"; and a day's receipts at the Music Hall Skating Rink are also to be handed over to the fund.

RECOVERY OF THE BODIES.

The search for the bodies of the missing ones was proceeded with on the day after the catastrophe, and a strict watch both day and night was kept along the beach as far north as the mouth of the Don, and beach even beyond that point was occasionally traversed. The general belief was that the bodies had been swept out to sea so far that it would be several days before they were thrown up on the beach. Ever since the day of the disaster, attempts of a more or less disjointed character had been made to discover the missing bodies, but up till the succeeding Wednesday, these efforts may be said to have been entirely fruitless. The body of Thomas Gowans, stonecutter, was got on Tuesday on the south side of the channel, but it was not found while a search was being made, having been thrown up by the influence of the tide. The finding of this body in such a spot led the pilots and fishermen, who knew all about the runs and currents in the entrance channel, to the opinion that after all it was possible that the bodies (or at least some of them) had not been washed out to sea as had generally been imagined, but had been caught in the eddy or swirl of the water, and kept within the limits of the harbour entrance. The whole of the ground had previously been very carefully gone over, and not the slightest indication had been found of the presence of any of the missing bodies, but the fishermen determined to make one grand final effort over the same ground. Prior to beginning the work, arrangements had been made whereby a considerable number of "creepers" had been constructed for use in the trawling by which it was proposed to discover the bodies. These "creepers," it may be explained, hang by ropes over the stern of ordinary fishing-boats, and consist of a long iron rod, to which numerous cords, bearing each two or three strong hooks, are attached. When in use the "crawler"—a formidable enough looking instrument truly—is let into the water until it is found to have touched the bottom. The boat, which is manned by five or six men, is then pulled slowly in a given direction, and whenever the "crawler" becomes entangled in sea-ware, or comes upon any heavy object to which it clings, it is pulled to the surface. It may be said that the entire fishing and seafaring community belonging to Footdee and Torry took part in Wednesday's proceedings, and for the arduous labours which they performed so generously, and with so laudable an object, they are entitled to the best thanks of the whole of the citizens of Aberdeen. From the very beginning, they had shown the deepest and most heartfelt sympathy with the many bereaved ones whom it had been their sad lot to see day after day visiting the neighbourhood of the harbour entrance, and along the seashore, in order to learn if any of their missing ones had yet been found. Animated with the kindly desire to find those who were so ardently looked for, they devoted the whole

of Tuesday from mid-day to the search. It was about noon, exactly, when the work began, the state of the tide being at that time considered exceedingly favourable for the operations that were to be prosecuted. Under the directions of Captain Clark, the captain-pilot, the boats, to the number of about a score, took up their position between Point Law and Abercromby's Jetty, and slowly worked their way eastwards towards the North Pier. They had not been at work for more than thirty minutes when the body of a young man was pulled to the surface. This success at such an early stage assured the workers that the previously-entertained idea as to the possibility of the great majority of the bodies being still within the harbour channel was correct, and incited them to still further exertions. The body in question had hardly been removed into the bath-house at the end of the pier when the cry arose that another one had been discovered, and closely following upon this the dead body of a girl was brought to the surface. The news of the success of the trawlers speedily got through the city, and within a very few minutes the quay of Abercromby's Jetty and the North Pier were crowded with spectators, most of whom it was observable were females. Once that a beginning had been made in the discovery of the bodies it almost seemed as if the work was to proceed with rapid regularity till the whole of the missing ones had been discovered. Within an hour and a half of the time that the first "creeper" had been dipped into the water no fewer than fifteen bodies had been recovered, only one of which was that of a female. All these bodies were got within a short distance of each other, leading to the supposition that they had been well kept together by the current, and that having once got into the eddy they had been swept round and round in a sort of continuous circle until at last they had got enmeshed amongst the sea-weed, which is there very abundant. In no other way can the fact of their discovery in that position be accounted for, because on several previous occasions, every inch of the ground, as we have already stated, had been gone over by the searchers for the lost. One very sad circumstance may be recorded. One of the boats succeeded in bringing to the surface no fewer than three young lads at a time. They were all clasped in each others arms, and evidently must have gone down together. As soon as they were brought to the surface, however, one of them slipped again into the water and sank, but the body was recovered in a very short space of time. After this large number of bodies had been secured and conveyed to the bath-house, the work of recovery slackened considerably, and it was not until close upon four o'clock that another body was found. Shortly after that hour two steamers left the harbour, and soon after they had passed other two bodies were discovered, and in the course of the afternoon, up till half-past six o'clock, three more bodies were found. No more bodies were discovered after that hour, and work was

dropped for the day about seven o'clock in the evening—the darkness, which had by that time set in, preventing operations being continued later.

In the course of the afternoon, great crowds of people from all parts of the town visited the points where the operations were being carried on, and watched with interest the process of recovering the bodies. We need not dwell at any length upon the many painful scenes which took place when the relatives and friends of the deceased identified any of their kith and kin. The spectacle was such a harrowing one as has rarely been witnessed in this city or neighbourhood, and we are sure that we are only repeating the prayer of all those whose sad lot it was to behold it, when we express an ardent hope that such a doleful scene may never again be witnessed within the confines of the city. What took place was simply heartrending, and no one could have witnessed it without being terribly impressed with the awful calamity with which our town has been so unexpectedly visited. We have more respect for the living and for the dead than to give names, but we cannot help stating that the most agonising spectacle of all was that which took place when a young woman recognised the form of him who, had he now been alive, was to have been her bridegroom. The poor girl fainted, and had to be removed by her friends.

After being taken out of the water the bodies, as we have already stated, were laid out on the floor of the bath-house, and the scene thus presented was a terribly touching one. There was nothing whatever repulsive about the spectacle—in fact, but for the dripping clothes, the tangled hair, and the clammy, water-sucked hands, there would have been somewhat of a mournfully attractive appearance about the dead. None of the bodies had anything of an unpleasant or distorted look about them. The evidences of a violent death were altogether wanting. Lying there as they did on the cold slabs, most of them with their hands crossed peacefully on their breasts, they looked more like persons slumbering through some happy dream than like people under the cold hand of death. The girl Jessie M'Condach, whose unhappy fate it has been our duty already to record, looked more like a waxen figure than anything else. She had a beautifully fresh complexion, and a sweet smile lighted up her handsome features. By her side lay a pleasant-featured little boy, who had all the appearance of being wrapped in healthy and refreshing sleep. Of the others we do not require to say anything, except that all had the same easy and pleasant look, suggesting that death had come upon them rapidly and painlessly.

The Lord Provost, in the course of the afternoon, gave directions that as soon as the bodies were identified, and certified to have been seen by the city medical officer, they should be enclosed in shells, and conveyed in hearses to the homes of their relatives. This was done in all the cases, and we understand that in three or four instances, where

it was found that the relatives were too poor to bury their dead, orders were given that respectable coffins should be supplied at the cost of the Town. A touching circumstance was revealed while the body of the boy Duncan, which was taken to the house in which his mother is living, was being "stretched." He had got fourpence from his mother before he left the house on the day of the casualty. It would appear he had spent a penny before reaching the boat, and then paid the boat fare with another halfpenny. The remaining coppers were found firmly clutched in the right hand of the corpse.

Twenty-one bodies were in all recovered in the course of the 12th April. On the following day six additional bodies were found, including those of the girls Selbie and Cooper. This left three bodies still missing, and notwithstanding that the fishermen have been unremitting in their exertions to discover these, they had not been found up to the time of this pamphlet being sent to press. The bodies still missing are those of Robert Badger, James Harvey, and James Leslie.

The whole of the bodies that had been found in the course of the week, were buried on Friday or Saturday, the various funerals being followed by vast numbers of the relatives and friends of the deceased, as well as by the general public. Perhaps the most affecting service of all was that held at the funeral of the two brothers M'Killiam, a service which was held at the Boys' Hospital, King Street, of which one of the brothers was an inmate.

A Board of Trade inquiry into the circumstances attending the disaster is now taking place; and if, as seems highly probable, the long projected bridge across the Dee in the line of Market Street be now constructed, it will be a fitting memorial to those whose sad fate it was to be drowned in the river on the *Black Fast-Day* of 1876.









