



---

---

THE OLD VALE &  
ITS MEMORIES

---

---

7R 253.d.



ON ADMIRALTY LIST.

*The Dennytown Brass Works Ltd.*

TELEGRAMS, "BRASS, DUMBARTON."

TELEPHONE N°7.

*Dabreoch.*

*Dumbarton.* 22nd March, 19 28.

Dr. Dickson,  
Librarian,  
Advocates Library,  
Parliament House,  
EDINBURGH.

Dear Sir,

I have been asked by Mr. James Ferguson, London, to write you with a view to your accepting for the 'Advocates Library' a copy of the Book entitled, "The Old Vale and its Memories". The Book has been compiled by Mr. James Ferguson, and Mr. J. G. Temple, and gives incidents, events and reminiscences of the Vale of Leven.

Thanking you in anticipation, and trusting to hear from you at an early date.

Yours very truly,

*J. W. Thomson.*



R 253 d

Yours very truly,

*James Ferguson*

From you at an early date.

Thanking you in anticipation, and trusting to hear  
miniscences of the vase of heaven.

and Mr. J. G. Temple, and gives incidents, events and re-  
memories". The Book has been compiled by Mr. James Ferguson,  
Librarian, a copy of the Book entitled, "The Old Vase and its  
to write you with a view to your accepting for the 'Advocates

I have been aided by Mr. James Ferguson, London,

Dear Sir,

EDINBURGH.

Parliament House,

Advocates Library,

Edinburgh,

Dr. Dickson,

Sund March, 1882

TELEPHONE NO. 1  
WELLS ROAD, DUNDEE

DR. ADRIAN HILL

*Handwritten notes and signatures, including "James Ferguson" and "Sund March, 1882"*

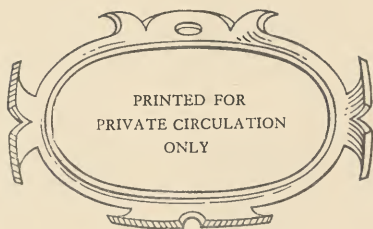
NATIONAL LIBRARY  
OF SCOTLAND  
EDINBURGH





\*

# The Old Vale and its Memories

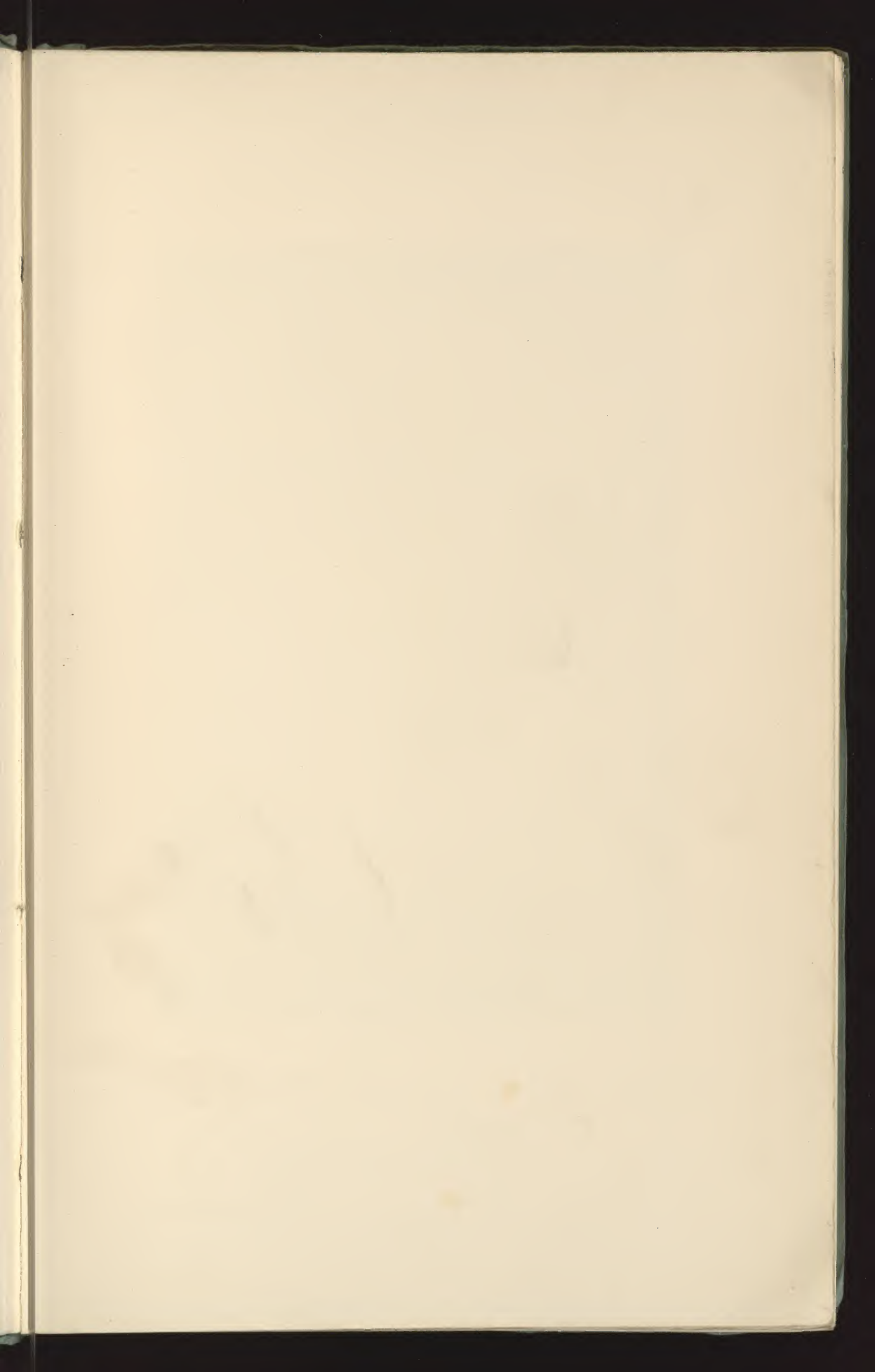


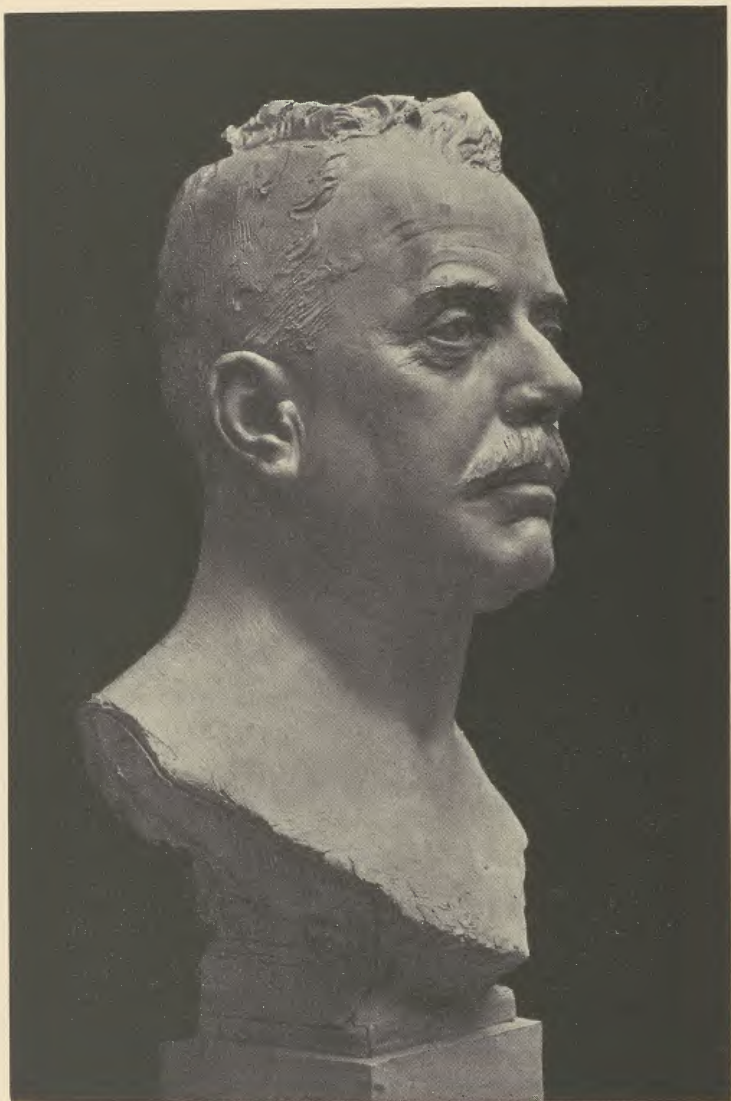


*Forget me not*

*Reproduced from Original Drawing by Duncan Ferguson*







With warmest regards to all  
Yours faithfully  
James Ferguson



## FOREWORD

IN submitting these incidents, events and reminiscences of the Vale, no attempt is made to give them in anything like consecutive order. Merely in a haphazard way are they compiled : the one desire is that they may yield a pleasant hour.

With the compliments of James Ferguson and J. G. Temple.

*September 3rd, 1927*



QUEEN VICTORIA AND PRINCE ALBERT WITH PRINCESS ROYAL AND PRINCE OF WALES (AFTERWARDS KING EDWARD VII) LANDING AT DUMBARTON CASTLE, MONDAY, 16TH AUGUST, 1847



To the Memory  
OF  
DUNCAN FERGUSON  
AND  
HIS CLOSE FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE  
JAMES GRAHAM TEMPLE

“ When to the sessions of sweet, silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past,  
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,

. . . . .  
—But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.”

—From Shakespeare's Sonnet on "Memory"



*From the painting by Alexander Jamieson  
in the collection of James Peigson, London*

THE VALE OF LEVEN FROM DUMBARTON CASTLE



## The Old Vale and its Memories

**T**HE OLD VALE! When one hears or reads these words, he naturally associates them with the Old Vale of Leven Football Team, quite forgetful of the fact that they also include the men and boys who lined the ropes—ay, and the women-folks who were ever eager to hear the results and stirring details of the play. Many of these spectators are still to the fore, and to-day they vividly recall incidents on the field which the players probably have quite forgotten. It is rather remarkable that, while there are in the wide world many Vales of “this” and Vales of “that,” there is only one Vale, and that is the Vale which lies between Loch Lomond and Dumbarton. Some little time ago when James Ferguson and J. G. Temple, who compiled this little brochure, were discussing what form it should take, the former asked:

“Do you know how Alexandria came to be known by that name?”

“How?”

“It was called after an Alexander Smollett.”

“Then what about the ‘Grocery’?”

An old Vale friend, John Wilson, wrote me: “The name ‘Grocery’ was derived from a grocer’s shop situated on the south side of the Oak Tree at the junction of Main Street and Bank Street. The grocer’s name was Buchanan (a forebear of my own). As the village then was only a ‘clachan,’ consisting of a few

## The Old Vale & its Memories

houses, the shop was the centre of attraction and, along with the Oak Tree, the meeting-place of the few inhabitants. In my time the small houses of one storey and attics, all with small windows, were in existence, but not the grocery. There was no trace of it. Bank Street was a thoroughfare for passengers and cattle to cross at the ford near the present bridge, and I believe that ford is still left open. There was neither ferry nor bridge when the ford was used. Cattle herded to Falkirk tryst crossed at this ford."

"Well, at the outset," observed James Ferguson, "my idea is that you, James G. Temple, might work into this booklet some of the reminiscences of 'The Vale in Days Gone By' that came from your pen, and appeared in the *Lennox Herald*."

"I willingly agree, provided you bring together some of the many valuable items you possess, which I know would be read with avidity by the older generation in the Vale."

"Agreed!"

"Do you remember the telling observation that was made by one of the Old Valeites at the second trip you so kindly gave to the Old Vale Team and friends?"

"It has escaped me."

"If ye are born in the Vale an' brocht up in Campsie, ye are fit for onything."

### A UNIQUE POSITION

THE Vale of Leven occupies a unique position. Is there any other place in Scotland that has a Veterans' and Residenters' Association within its borders? One hears of Natives of Districts—say, resident in Glasgow or London—having an Annual Dinner or Dance, but I repeat—"Is there any other place in Scotland that has a Veterans' and Residenters' Association within its borders?" The members of the Vale Association have their annual outing in the summer, and their social evening in the winter; both functions are as enjoyable as they are well patronised, and what transpires at these is read with deep interest by Vale of Leven folks at home and far across the seas.



NATIVES AND RESIDENTERS OF THE VALE OF LEVEN OVER FORTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE  
FIRST OUTING TO LUSS, 1911





BONHILL BAND—Instituted 1817

- |                |                 |                    |               |                |                 |                |                        |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| John Longworth | Robert Mitchell | James McDonald     | Thos. Rennie  | Peter Mitchell | Wm. Cuthbertson | Hugh McVean    | Wm. Crawford           |
| Cornet         | Cornet          | Cornet             | Bass          | Bass           | Clarionet       | Clarionet      | Clarionet              |
| Thos. Forrest  | John Ferguson   | Duncan Cuthbertson | J. McEwan     | Hugh McKinlay  | John Craigie    | John Graham    | John Crawford          |
| Cornet         | Euphonium       | Horn               | Horn          | Horn           | French Horn     | Horn           | Horn                   |
| Wm. McLean     | Alex. Boyd      | George Battison    | Hugh Ferguson | P. McDougal    | Wm. Hamilton    | Alex. Ferguson | Wm. Cuthbertson, senr. |
| Clarionet      | Bass            | Clarionet          | Trombone      | Bass           | Trombone        | Bass           | Trombone               |
|                |                 |                    | Charles Glen  | John Fisher    |                 |                | Wm. Duncan             |
|                |                 |                    | Cymbals       | Side Drum      |                 |                | Bass Drum              |

George Park  
Clarionet  
Conductor

The above Photograph was taken by Duncan Ferguson, Pattern Designer, Dalmonach Works (Messrs. Drew, Gray & Co.), in 1867

# The Old Vale & its Memories

## OLD MEMORIES

As the reminiscences which I venture to give are of no particular interest to the young Vale, I suggest that the old folks should be left undisturbed by them; that, if the old folks are not what Barrie calls "practically totlars," the young folks should place before them, say, a glass of hot porter with oatcake in it; that they should draw their easy chairs towards the fire; that they should pull down the gas bracket; that they should place in their hands the *Lennox* and point: "There's something about the Old Vale that may probably interest you"; and I am egotistical enough to believe that between the mouthfu's o' porter, the old man will turn to his life-partner and remark: "The man wha wrote this seems to hae kent everybody that you and I kent."

## BONHILL'S FAMOUS BAND

WHAT an outstanding night that was when the Vale team first came home the victors! The Fountain was playing, the Bonhill Instrumental Band was at the station, and as the players were carried down the stair, their ears were assailed by deafening cheers through which came the strains of "See the conquering hero comes." The mention of the Bonhill Band recalls to the white-haired Vale the time when, after hours, the Band practised in Dalmonach Hall, and I remember as a boy standing on the opposite bank listening with pleasure, and occasionally smiling when one or two of the players got off the rails, and did not exactly discourse the notes in the music book. In its day the Bonhill Band was famous, and the Vale folks were naturally proud when it came out, especially on New Year's Day. Ever was the Band willing to head a Masonic funeral, and play "The Dead March" from "Saul." As the Band, in cadence to the slow music, would go up Bank Street, round by the Fountain, and turn to the left for Kidd's Kirkyard, I would follow, looking forward to marching in front on the way home, and keeping step to the rollicking air they played. Ay, and if a restive horse was met, the music suddenly melted away, to be resumed after it had been passed.

This above photograph was taken by Duncan Ferguson, Pattern Designer, Dalmonach Works (Messrs. Drew, Gray & Co.), in 1867.



## The Old Vale & its Memories

### VALUED LETTER FROM AN OLD BONHILL BANDSMAN

THE following interesting and, indeed, valued letter deserves to be given in these reminiscences of the Vale.

35 Church Street, Alexandria,

14th March, 1927.

Dear McPherson,

In reply to yours of the 19th, I am delighted that Mr. Ferguson has such an interest in the Old Band of which I was a member for forty years. Of the date and year that the photo was taken I cannot say, but I have a cutting from the *Glasgow Herald* dated 27th June, 1864, describing a Band Contest which took place in the College Green, Glasgow; 25 Bands competing for prizes to the value of £70, mostly in instruments. The Bonhill Band, then the D.R.V., was awarded Fourth Prize, and it is my opinion that the photo would be taken about that time. If Mr. Ferguson would like, I could give you the names of everyone in the photo, and any information you want I will be very pleased to give you about the Old Band.

From yours truly,

GEORGE PARK.

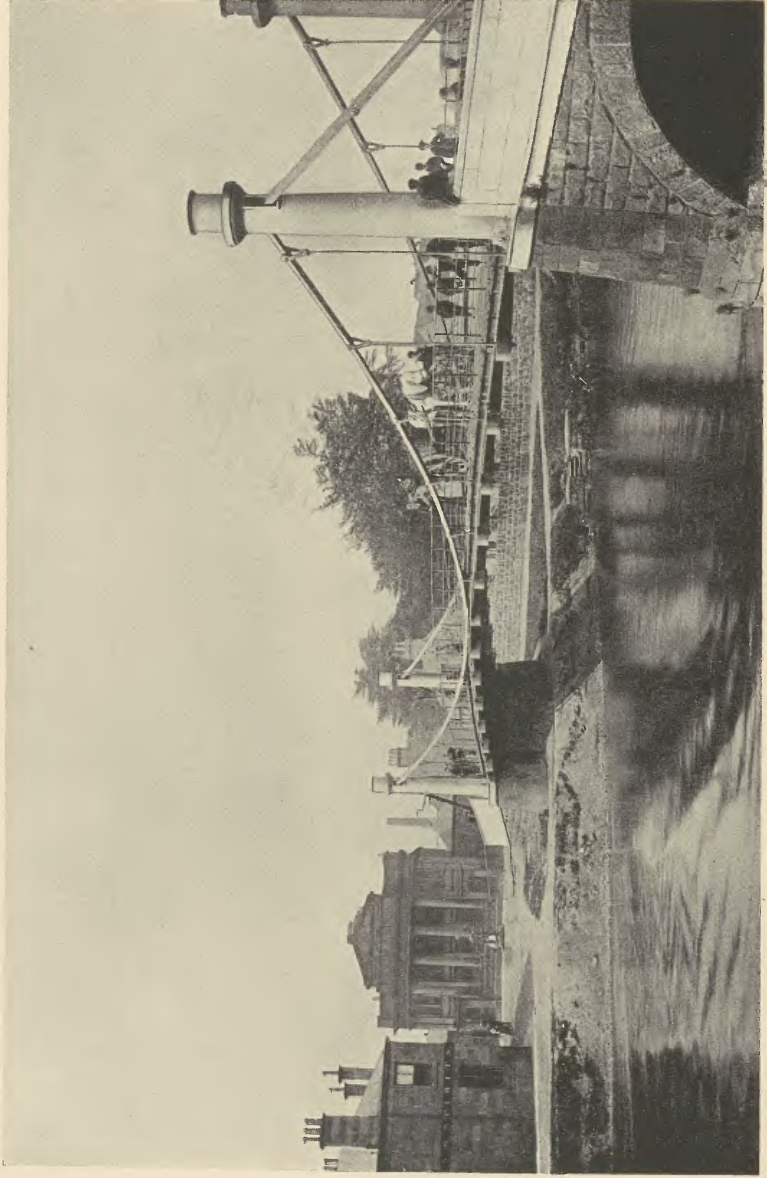
### A MEMORABLE PHOTOGRAPH

IN a letter dated 13th June, 1927, to Mr. John McPherson, Mr. George Park threw further light on the photograph of the Bonhill Instrumental Band given in this book. He stated: "It was a Mr. Ferguson who took the photograph of the Band in 1867, and I am quite sure that it was Mr. James Ferguson's father." In confirmation of Mr. Park's statement, a copy has been handed to me of a letter that Mr. Duncan Ferguson sent to Mrs. Gray, London, dated 10th December, 1867, and written from Mitchell Street, Alexandria. The letter stated: "With this I have the pleasure of sending you, per book post, a print of the group of the D.R.V. Band. I enclose a key to it, by the aid of which you will be able to recall





"THE OLD OAK TREE"



OLD BONHILL BRIG AND THE MECHANIC'S INSTITUTE

## The Old Vale & its Memories

to memory some of the faces. Mr. Gray will doubtless remember many of them, as I understand there have been few changes amongst its members since he used to march to their music. Your oldest son, Robert, will also, I think, know the most of them."

### EARLY DAYS OF DALMONACH HALL

SIDELIGHT BY MR. DUNCAN FERGUSON

As a side-light on the early days of Dalmonach School and Hall, I find from the observations made by Mr. Duncan Ferguson at a social gathering, that for thirty years previous to that meeting the building, although private property, had in a great measure belonged to the public of the Vale of Leven. Through the liberality of the successive proprietors of the Works, it had been employed in a variety of ways for promoting the social and intellectual elevation of the community, and to this might be added its religious well-being, for it had often been used for preaching. When the Bonhill Parish Church was being rebuilt its congregation occupied this house to worship in, and at the time of the Disruption the Free Church Dissenters used it for some time for their religious services, and other denominations had occasionally employed it for a similar purpose.

### WHEN PRINCE ALBERT PASSED THROUGH THE VALE

Indeed, for everything that pertained to the good of the people, the School was always granted in the most free and ungrudging manner; for concerts, soirées, and all sorts of miscellaneous gatherings, such as swearing-in the Rifle Volunteers, or the special constables to guard Prince Albert when he passed through the Vale.

At this meeting it was explained that the Dalmonach Printing Company had decided to discontinue the School as a school. Their reason for this was not that they grudged the expense it caused them—for they still subscribed liberally to education in another way—but because on looking at the great facilities that existed in the locality for obtaining a good education, they thought they



## The Old Vale & its Memories

might now be relieved from the necessity of alone supporting a school of this description, but when they resolved to give up the School, they at the same time decided that the building should continue to partake of an educational character, and they accordingly decided to make the experiment of converting it into Reading and Club Rooms for the instruction, amusement and recreation of their own workers.

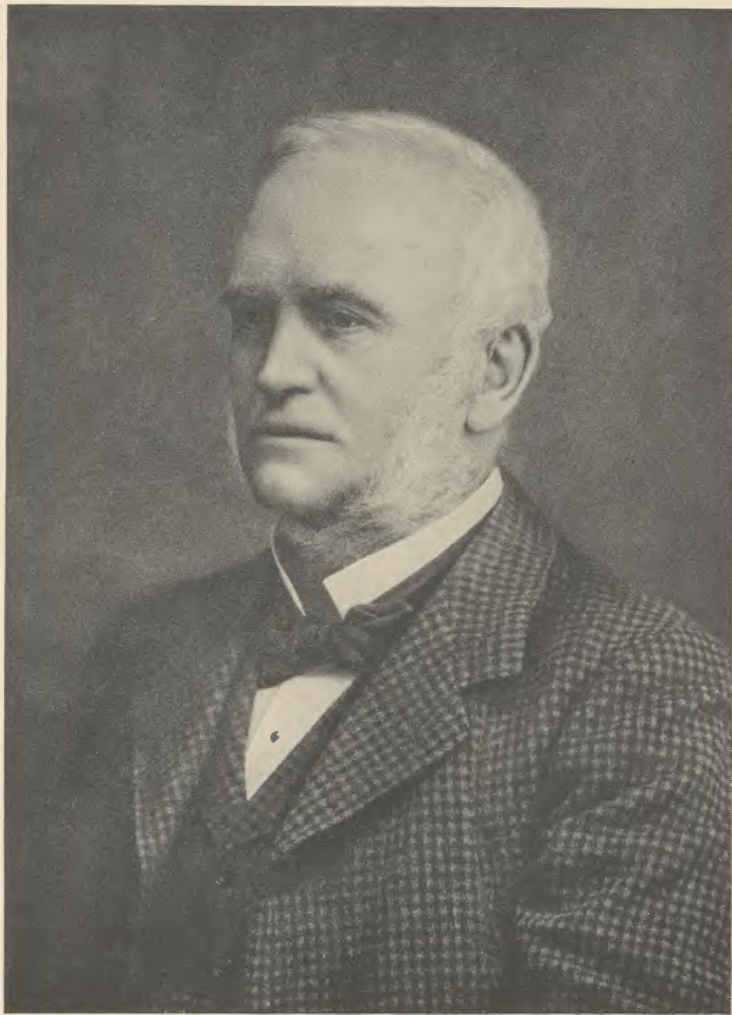
### THE FATHER OF MACHINE PRINTING AT DALMONACH

INTERESTING SPEECH BY MR. DUNCAN FERGUSON

At the opening of the Dalmonach Printing Company's New Machine Shop, an inauguration supper was held in Dalmonach Schoolroom on Friday, 15th April, 1859, and Mr. Duncan Ferguson mentioned that the first cylinder printing shop at Dalmonach was built about half-a-century before, and that the architect of that shop was no less a distinguished man than Henry Bell, well-known as the pioneer of steam navigation on the Clyde. The man who printed the first piece in that shop was still amongst them and respected by all, and by none more so than his employers. He was a man of long-trying integrity and they regarded him as the father of machine printing at Dalmonach. That man was none other than their worthy friend, Mr. John McAdam.

#### OUTPUT AT DALMONACH IN FORMER DAYS

He had no means of knowing to a certainty what the work-producing capabilities of Dalmonach were when Henry Bell's shop was built but he had the means of knowing what these capabilities were when Matthew Gray's shop was built, and he did not exceed the limits of truth when he said that there was more work done in one month now than was done then in a whole year. They would understand what he meant by that statement when he informed them that in the previous month there were printed and finished at Dalmonach upwards of 90,000 pieces.



MATTHEW GRAY

Born, 1821. Died, 16th December, 1901



OLD RED ROW AT THE CRAFT GATE

And Sandy Brown's Engraving Shop with some of the men on the stair



THE GARDEN OF WM. COLQUHOUN, THE PHOTOGRAPHER,  
AT THE WATERSIDE

From it you will see Linbranc Hole and the old Blue Works at the Craft Gate



## The Old Vale & its Memories

### RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE VALE

“Dalmonach having been mentioned,” put in Mr. Ferguson, “reminds me that we must bring to the memory of some readers of these old-time stories, Mr. Matthew Gray, who went from Dalmonach and founded Silvertown Cable Works, London. Mr. Gray was a famous product of the Vale, and in the largeness of his heart distributed pensions, through my father, till the day of his death. In the course of a chatty letter to Mrs. Gray of Gray’s Lodge, St. John’s Park, Blackheath, London, dated 10th December, 1868, my father stated: “Building is rather rife in this village at present. Mr. McLean of Bonhill Bridge has taken up the feu contiguous to mine. Several blocks of buildings have recently been erected in Bridge Street, and the entrance to the ‘Public Playground’ will soon be built upon. Hard by the ‘Oak Tree’ a handsome building will be put up in summer by Mr. Greenlees, who, by the way, is my obliging architect. He lately bought a row of old dilapidated houses from Mrs. Beattie (the Rev. Mr. Beattie’s wife) for this purpose. Here also, on the very site of the now defunct ‘Oak Tree,’ it is proposed to erect a handsome drinking fountain in honour of Mr. Smollett of Bonhill. I presume the expense will be defrayed by his feuars, in order that they may testify, during his life, to his uniform courtesy and honourable conduct as their feudal superior.”

#### WHAT COMES TO US ALL

And then about a year later—on the 8th October, 1869, to be precise—Mr. Ferguson, on paper having a deep black border, wrote to Mrs. Gray: “The time and circumstances of my last letter are too deeply imprinted on my mind and heart to be effaced. I was then overwhelmed with grief at the loss of a pleasant boy, and when everything looked dark and gloomy, your sympathising hand comforted me. . . . In the moral as in the natural world, distance diminishes views: so time gradually soothes sorrows that at first appear inconsolable. We are now calmer and more resigned to the will of Heaven, but the many mementos of our dear departed boy that meet us at every turn

## The Old Vale & its Memories

keep our grief ever green. And, perhaps, it is well that it should be so, for this enables us constantly to remember our own latter end. . . . Our youngest boy is over three years and promises to be our Benjamin. . . . Remember me kindly to Mr. Gray."

### MR. J. G. TEMPLE, THE FRENCH INTERPRETER AT THE SECRET WORK

WHEN travelling with Sandy McLintock to Ayr at the merry outing to the Old Vale Team and friends, he observed that he once attended a function at which my father's name—J. G. Temple—was associated with the toast of "The Imperial Forces," and at first he could not understand why this should be the case, as he had never heard of Mr. Temple having anything to do with either the Army or the Volunteer Rifles, but he added: "Once he spoke, I knew the reason," and then he went on to say that my father told the gathering that he had stood close by Napoleon when he gave up his sword at Sedan. He also described some of the horrible sights he had witnessed on the battlefield and dreaded what would happen in the next war. My father was a Correspondent at the Franco-Prussian War. He was sent because he spoke French like a native. In his early days he was the French interpreter in the Secret Work in the Vale, and acquired the French accent through being for a period in the French quarters of Quebec and Montreal. Originally he came from York, from whence he was taken at the age of four years to Tarbolton in Ayrshire; and he used to tell how he once met or heard of an old man, who had seen Robert Burns, who de-



THE LATE J. G. TEMPLE

pendent at the Franco-Prussian War. He was sent because he spoke French like a native. In his early days he was the French interpreter in the Secret Work in the Vale, and acquired the French accent through being for a period in the French quarters of Quebec and Montreal. Originally he came from York, from whence he was taken at the age of four years to Tarbolton in Ayrshire; and he used to tell how he once met or heard of an old man, who had seen Robert Burns, who de-

## The Old Vale & its Memories

clared that great as Burns was as a poet, he was inimitable as a raconteur, all the folks of the village running to the smithy, where he would stop to have his beast shod, to hear his side-splitting stories. My father brought from the battlefield of Sedan a French sword which he gave to Mr. Shearer, my grandfather, and a German sword which he gave to Dr. Andrew Fergus, Glasgow.

### VALE OF LEVEN LITERARY ASSOCIATION FIRST ANNUAL SOIRÉE

I AM sorry I cannot vouch for the exact date, but it was in the fifties that the first Annual Soirée of the Vale of Leven Literary Association was held in Mr. Walker's (Parish) Schoolroom, Alexandria. Upwards of eighty persons—so record states—consisting of, if not all, at least the majority of the literary-inclined young men of the Vale, with their sweethearts, sat down to tea at half-past seven o'clock. After tea, which was served in the good old, genuine, fireside style, with all the accompaniments of trays, spoons, sugar bowls, cream pots, etc., etc., the Chairman, Mr. James Airlie, opened the more important part of the evening's enjoyment by a neat and appropriate speech, in which he took occasion to express his felicitations to the members on the seemingly auspicious inauguration of the annual meetings in connection with the Association. He was happy to say that since the Society was formed, a gradual and healthy progress had been manifested both in numerical strength and literary benefit. Its ostensible object was the literary improvement of its members by Essay-writing; Debating; and having a Manuscript Magazine, which had proved an excellent medium for practising the pointed pens of the, mayhap, yet-to-be-dreaded literary gladiators of the Vale.

Interesting addresses were delivered by Messrs. Robertson, Hunter, McLeod, McDonald, Dunachie, Sillars and Walker. Mr. J. G. Temple, the secretary of the Association, and to whom the Chairman said it owed its paternity, read a concise report of its proceedings for the past half-year. Suffice it to say that Mr.



## The Old Vale & its Memories

Temple was much pleased with the Association's past, and full of hope in its future. The proceedings were most agreeably interspersed with a variety of songs, glees, recitations, etc. The purveying department, we are further told, was tasteful without fastidiousness, and liberal without extravagance. Altogether this "private tea-party on a large scale," as someone correctly termed it, was well worthy of praise and imitation.

### MR. JAMES AIRLIE

OF GLASGOW CITY HALL SATURDAY EVENING CONCERTS' FAME

MR. JAMES AIRLIE, although not a son of the Vale, having been born in Glasgow on 20th May, 1829, was transplanted there as a boy, his father, Mr. Henry Airlie, having been appointed Works' manager at one of the Calico Printing establishments. All the sons on leaving school became attached to some branch of the same trade. James was a pattern drawer, but his energies were not exhausted at his trade. He was actively interested in all ameliorative



JAMES AIRLIE

and social reform work. In Alexandria he occupied such positions as Secretary of the Mechanics' Institution, President of the Temperance Society, Secretary of the Horticultural Society, and President of the Young Men's Literary Society. He returned to Glasgow in 1857 where, at first, he became Assistant Secretary and Collector to the Glasgow Abstainers Union, and six years later was appointed Secretary, a position he occupied with distinction until he retired in 1905. He died on 29th October, 1913.

## The Old Vale & its Memories

Mr. Airlie was a most versatile Social Reformer, best known, perhaps, as Manager of the City Hall Saturday Evening Concerts and the Kilmun Seaside Home, but other schemes under his control were Sunday Evening Lectures, Domestic Missions, Cookery Classes for the Poor, Saturday Afternoon Excursions, Excursions to London and the Continent, Public Houses without Intoxicating Liquors, and even Street Coffee Stalls, indeed anything that would combat the evils of the Drink Traffic. Mr. Henry Airlie, who emigrated to Brazil, became British Vice-Consul in Maranham.

Some years ago the Brothers Airlie, my father and uncle and other Vale men, along with a party of ladies, had "a grand day up the loch." The late Mr. James Airlie and the Rev. Dr. F. L. Robertson were close friends, and I hope I am not disclosing any sacred memory when I say that in the winter months they had a standing social engagement every Monday evening in Mr. Airlie's house. After having faithfully served the Royal Insurance Company in Glasgow, Mr. Airlie's son James has recently retired. His other son, David, occupies an important position in the Tube Works of Messrs. Stewarts, Glasgow.

A stranger to the Vale reading "A grand day up the loch," might naturally ask: "Why say



JAMES MCKINLAY

Dalmonach, Bonhill, and Silvertown, London, E.

## The Old Vale & its Memories

'up'? why not say 'on'?' Well, the answer is: Vale folks would never dream of saying anything else than "A sail up the loch."

### MEN OF THE TIME

"THESE reminiscences," observed Mr. Ferguson, "remind me that I have by me a letter from J. B. Freebairn, written from Napiershall School, Glasgow, and dated 22nd March, 1901, which says:

'Do I remember James McKinlay? He was to me, "Jeems" McKinlay of Dalmonach—one of my boyhood's "Men of the Time." Your father was another. How stately was their march homeward from business! We boys used to look upon them as models. It is many years since I saw James McKinlay, but his face and figure are in my mental gallery.'

### VALE TEACHER WHO MADE HIS MARK

On the 25th February, 1908, the *Glasgow Herald* with regret recorded the death of a well-known Glasgow teacher, Mr. John B. Freebairn, which occurred at his residence in Park Road, Glasgow. Mr. Freebairn began his professional training as a pupil teacher in Dalmonach School, Vale of Leven. He afterwards spent two years in the Established Church Training College, Glasgow, and took a prominent place there in the various classes. He was sent to South Kensington to study biology under the late Professor Huxley. Subsequently he was assistant master in Dundivan Academy, Coatbridge. In December, 1873, he was appointed headmaster of St. Paul's Sessional School: in 1886 he was transferred to the headmastership of Alexander's School, Duke Street, and four years later was selected by the Glasgow School Board for the headmastership of the large new Napiershall School, which position he occupied till the time of his death. He was a Graduate of Glasgow University and a descendant of the Rev. John Freebairn, a former minister of Dumbarton. Later a bronze medallion to the memory of J. B. Freebairn, M.A., was unveiled in Napiershall School by the Rev. Andrew Laidlaw, D.D., Vice-Chairman of the School Board of Glasgow.





JOHN B. FREEBAIRN

## The Old Vale & its Memories

### S.F.A.'s FIRST PRESIDENT A VALE MAN

ONE way and another, so much has been written about the Old Vale Football Club, that there is scarcely anything fresh to add. However, having just read a very interesting cutting from the *Lennox Herald* by "A. McL.," I find that a Vale man had the honour of being the first President of the Scottish Football Association, Mr. Donald McFarlane having been elected to that office on the 13th March, 1873. Mr. McFarlane was the first President of the Vale of Leven Club. It was on the 11th January, 1873, that the Vale's field in "Cameron's Park," Doctor's Loan, was formally opened by the Queen's Park F.C.—the game ending in a draw. No goals were scored. Several times the game was stopped so that the Glasgow experts could explain the various points of play to the inexperienced Levenites.

### BOB PARLANE AND THE OLD CHAMPIONS

I RECKON that the late Robert Parlane was perhaps the tallest man that ever guarded a goal. Through the kindness of my friend Mr. John McPherson, I have been privileged to read a letter which Robert Parlane sent to him from Belfast on 21st November, 1913, and I take the liberty of quoting here several sentences which I know will interest his old Vale friends.

"I have been recalling in my mind's eye some of the events in my past life, and I can candidly say that the years I spent in the Vale of Leven, with my companions on the cricket and football fields, were amongst the happiest, and ones which I still look back on with pleasure. Yes, I have had many happy days since, both at work and play, and still I have no reason to complain, although I am nearing the allotted three score years and ten. I am glad to think that so many of the old brigade are still left, and able to meet together. I wish I could grasp each one individually by the hand and say: 'God bless you!' Neither do I forget those who have gone to a brighter and happier home, nor can I imagine with any degree of certainty how they are now

## The Old Vale & its Memories

employed, but I have no doubt that the same earnestness of purpose which characterised their actions here will be employed in a much nobler and more dignified manner. In my mind's eye I see the faces of some of those as they were in the flesh: for instance, Mr. Wood, Johnny Macfarlane, Jackie Baird, Bobby Paton. Ah! my heart warms to think of them! One can hardly think that was over forty years ago, and still so many of the old champions and their supporters and friends left and able to meet together in a social capacity, and brighten one another's lives and talk over the old battles."

### BIG BOB PLAYED THE GAME

"There is one thing regarding those encounters which is a source of pleasure to me after so many years, and that is the knowledge that I never, in victory or defeat, harboured an ill-feeling towards an opponent, or tried to do him an injury, but always played for pleasure and the honour of victory. I do not think that any of us made an enemy of an opponent, although some of the crowd might feel a bit antagonistic to us at times in their excitement. In imagination, if not in reality, I stretch out my hand in loving friendship to you and each one of my old friends."

### IN THE GLOAMING OF LIFE

Expressing genuine regret that he could not be at the Social of Old Warriors and Friends, the writer, in a jocular vein, added:

"I hope Johnny Ferguson, McDougall and McGregor will be kept within bounds, and that Andy McIntyre, Sandy McLintock, Archie Michie, Will Jamieson, Jamie Baird and others, including yourself (Jack McPherson), will be able to look after the goal altho' 'Big Bob' is not present."

Regretting that he could not be with the Old Vale Team at their trip, Mr. A. S. MacBride wrote on the 18th June, 1920, to Mr. J. McPherson:



## The Old Vale & its Memories

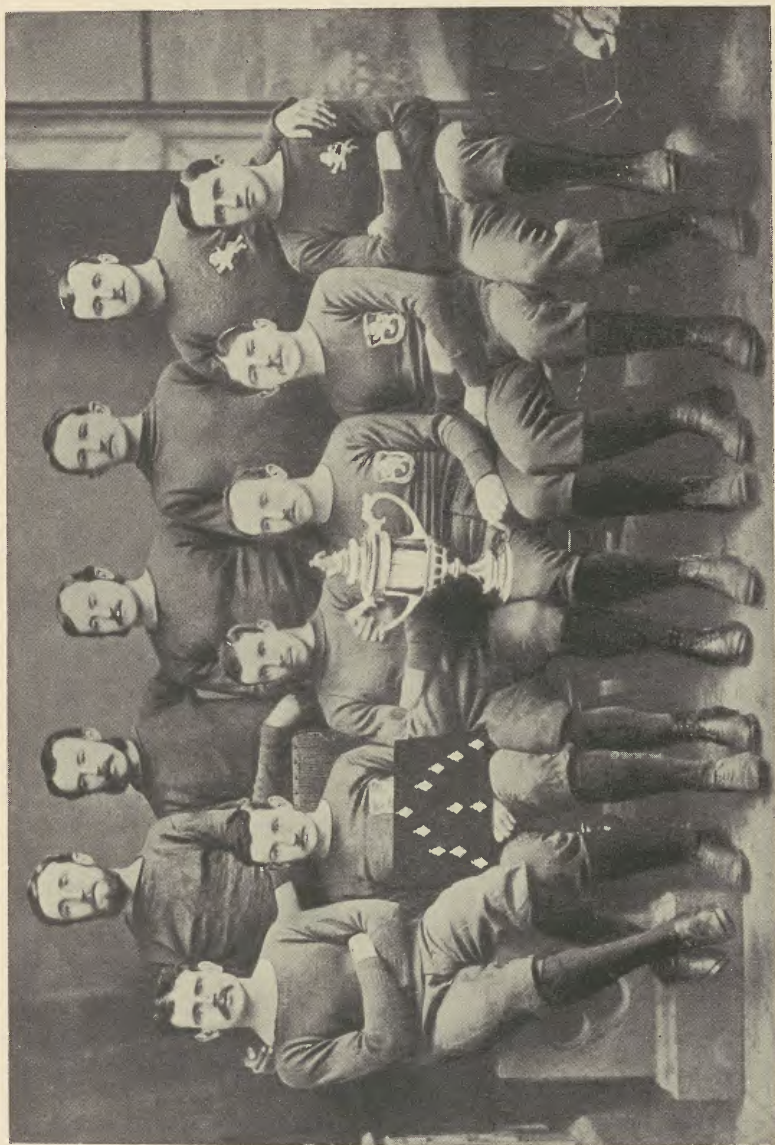
“In the gloamin’ of life the scenes and friends of early days become doubly dear, and of the associations of the Old Team—its victories and disappointments, its difficulties, its triumphs, and its many happy meetings—it may be truly said: “Time but the impression stronger makes  
As streams their channels deeper wear.””

### THE LOVING CUP

ALL who have had conversations with the Old Vale Team have heard or read about the Loving Cup that was the gift of Messrs. McBride, Glass and McAdam. The cup is bequeathed to the survivors, the condition being that it shall be held by each of them for one year, and that the last survivor of all shall become possessor of the cup, which will then be handed down to his family, or failing that, bequeathed to some local institution in the Vale. “Bauldie,” of *The Scottish Referee*, writing on this subject in June, 1905, said: “I do not, nor does anyone, happily, know who is to be the last survivor on Old Earth’s solid ‘ba’,” but whoever he be, I am sure his latter days will be cheered and solaced by the many happy memories which are associated with this cup of cups, and on which is inscribed—shall I say for all time?—the names of the lads in red and blue who made Leven’s Vale so famous in Scottish football story.

“MR. ROBERT PARLANE travelled over from Belfast specially to attend the re-union of the Old Vale Team, and it was most appropriate that the once stalwart keeper should bear away the cup for the year to the home of his unwilling exile. He, too, in speaking, touched a chord in all hearts, and the big manly cheek was for the nonce bedewed with that not unwilling tear which told that the heart-strings were thrilled by true love and genuine friendship. I have digressed somewhat from the subject proper of this article, but you will pardon this, in view of the exceptional relationship of the old Vale to the old Rangers—a relationship which I wish were in existence between all our clubs, so that they could be brought together in a fraternal bond of good fellowship.





VALE OF LEVEN FOOTBALL TEAM

Scottish Cup Winners, 1876-7-8-9

- |             |                |            |             |              |
|-------------|----------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| W. Jamieson | A. Michie      | W. C. Wood | A. McIntyre | A. McLintock |
| R. Paton    | D. C. McGregor | D. Lindsay | J. Ferguson | J. McDougall |
|             |                |            |             | J. C. Baird  |



## The Old Vale & its Memories

“Just a word about JOHN McDougall, a true sportsman. In his day he was a most famous player, a close and brilliant dribbler of the M'Mahon type. Modest to a degree, he played away, shirking no part of his duty on the field, and ever manfully endeavouring to place the 'Leven Lads' in the forefront. He played for Scotland v. England in 1877, 1878, and 1879, and v. Wales in 1877 and 1879. Gritty to a degree, he, but for an accident to his knee, would have played longer than he did, but this forced his retirement when he was at his prime. His retirement was as much regretted by other clubs as it was by his own, for he was a thorough gentleman afield, and a true sportsman.”

Alas, John M'Dougall is no more!

### MR. W. C. WOOD

#### GOALKEEPER OF THE OLD VALE TEAM

At the death of Mr. W. C. Wood the following touching “In Memoriam” was circulated amongst his friends:

“The death of Mr. W. C. Wood, Alexandria, which took place on Thursday last, caused an intense feeling of grief throughout the district. Mr. Wood was the goalkeeper of the old Vale team, which first won the Scottish Cup in 1876-77, and this is the first break in the eleven who took part in that memorable contest. The funeral took place on Saturday, and was one of the most largely attended ever seen in the district. Mr. Wood, who was of fine physique, was laid low about a year ago with influenza, and although he rallied from the attack, it soon became painfully evident to his many friends that his constitution had been shattered; but it was only within the last few weeks that he had to relinquish the responsible duties as manager in the Alexandria Works of the United Turkey Red Co. Ltd. As the funeral cortege passed through Alexandria the streets were crowded with the public; and the closing of the places of business all testified to the affection in which the deceased was held. Following the private mourning coaches were the ten members of the old Vale team, namely, Messrs. J. C. Baird, J. M'Dougall, J. C. M'Gregor,

## The Old Vale & its Memories

J. Ferguson, R. Paton, D. Lindsay, A. M'Lintock, W. Jamieson, A. Michie, and A. M'Intyre; who were augmented by J. C. M'Pherson, James M'Intyre, and J. M'Farlane, of later years. From the gates of the cemetery to the grave, the coffin was carried by deceased's comrades of 1876-77; who also added to the many beautiful wreaths one with the following verse penned by Mr. A. S. MacBride—

“Companion : staunch and trusted, upright, strong.  
Dear friend ! true-hearted, manly-minded, rare;  
Within our heart of hearts thou'lt live as long  
As memory lasts, and life itself beats there.  
Thy goal thou'st reached 'mid early manhood's years;  
The struggle in life's field with thee is o'er;  
Ours is the loss, the pain, the bitter tears;  
Thine is the gain, and peace for evermore.”

At the time the following appeared in print :

### “FIRST BREAK IN A BRILLIANT COMBINATION

“On Saturday last the grave closed over the mortal remains of Mr. W. C. Wood, who, 21 years ago, was a member—goalkeeper—of the immortal Vale of Leven team that participated in the ever-memorable and historic triple struggle for the Scottish Cup with the young and rising Rangers at Partick and Hampden. The demise of Mr. Wood is specially noteworthy to footballers from the fact that it forms the first break in that famous team. Up till last week, it was the unique and proud boast of Alexandria that all the members of that eleven were not only an unbroken brotherhood, but all residing within the confines of the beautiful Vale of Leven. Indeed, the circumstance was specially referred to and emphasised at the celebration of the 21st anniversary of the epoch-making matches referred to last month. But that boast is now for ever impossible. Death has taken away one of the best of the brotherhood. Mr. Wood's football, we are pleased to know, did not prevent him getting on in the world, for he held a respon-

## The Match of the Vale Brigade!

Hampden Park, December 30th, 1876.  
(*Dumbarton Herald*, 4th January, 1877.)

**H**AVE a kick, have a kick,  
Have a kick onwards,  
All into Queen's Park ground,  
Rushed the Vale forwards.  
"Forward the Leven team!

Charge for goal," they scream:  
Down falls the fortress!—while  
Cheered many a hundred.

"Forward the Vale Brigade!"  
Was there a man dismayed?  
Not though the players knew

That Queen's men ne'er blundered.  
Theirs but to make a try,  
Theirs not to reason why;  
Theirs but to have a shy  
Through the goal which had defied  
Shots many a hundred.

Great guns to right of them,  
Great guns to left of them,  
Great guns in front of them,

Charged, dribbled, and ran-hard;  
Stormed at with shot and kick,  
Boldly they played till slick  
In through the jaws of goal

Twice went the ball—the role  
St. Mungo dumfounded.  
Flashed the red stockings there,  
Flashed as they spun through air,  
Beating the stunners there,  
Conquering the champions—while  
All the West wondered.

Stormed at with shots so well,  
The Hampden Park heroes fell,  
Thrashed by the valiant Vale—  
Left cupless and Sundered.

Praise to the Vale be given,  
Which nobly to win has striven,  
Henceforth its—*first eleven*,  
'Mongst heroes are numbered!

## The Football Victory of The Vale!

(*Dumbarton Herald*, 19th April, 1877.)

**I**T was a Friday evening,  
Old Mungo's work was done,  
And he to Hampden Park repaired  
To have some football "fun."  
And with him on that famous green,  
Ten thousand of his sons were seen.

He saw the captain of his team  
Take up the leather round,  
Which he, through having lost "the toss,"  
Kicked first along the ground;

The stalwart youth was cheered all round—  
The ball went off with such a bound.  
Old Mungo saw his "Rangers" boys,  
Run, kick, pass, at goal shy,  
And then the old fool shook his head,  
And with a jubilant sigh—

"These country fellows shall," said he,  
"This evening score no victory."  
"My plucky Rangers," Mungo cried,  
"Shall put the Vale to rout,  
And ere we leave the field to-night  
Their victory we'll shout—  
For all my sons do swear," quoth he,  
"I'll be a home team victory."

With hoots and groans the crowd around  
The Vale men did deride,  
And many a curse from Mungo's mouth  
Was thrown—the ropes inside.  
But things like these—in town—must be,  
When Leven scores a victory.

They say it was a saddening sight  
After the cup was won,  
For thousands then of Mungo's men  
Were speechless every one,  
But things like this—in town—we see,  
When Leven gains the victory.

VERSES BY DUNCAN FERGUSON

## On the Loss of the Football Cup!

Hampden Park, March 30th, 1878.  
(*Dumbarton Herald*, April 4th, 1878.)

**T**OLL for the teams,  
The teams that are no more,  
All beaten by the boys  
From Leven's winding shore.

St. Mungo's crack Clubs three  
With courage of the best,  
Fought hard the Cup to keep  
In city of the West.

The Vale besieged the goals,  
And, one by one, they fell,  
Down went the Rangers—it  
That, erst-while, stood so well.

Toll for the teams,  
The brave Queen's Park is gone,  
Three "final ties" it fought,  
Three "final ties" it won.

Not that it is aught weaker,  
Than in the days of yore,  
But other teams are stronger,  
And abler now to score.

Toast the "Senior team,"  
Still I read by its foes,  
And mingle with the cup  
The tear that Football owes.

Its timbers yet are sound,  
And it may score again,  
Full charged with Football thunder  
The lost Cup to regain.

Toll for the teams,  
The "Red Coats," too, are done,  
Their "final" fight is fought  
And lost—no goal to ONE!





**JOHNNY FERGUSON**  
The Grand Old Man of the Old Vale Team



**TOM VALLANCE**  
One of the Old Vale's greatest friends

## The Old Vale & its Memories

sible position in the eminent firm of Messrs. John Orr Ewing and Company, with whom he had been a trusted and faithful servant for exactly a quarter of a century; and although he has been taken away in the prime of life, he has lived long enough to merit the exceptional honour of a public funeral. Football, we rejoice to know, has its triumphs no less than its failures.”

### LETTER FROM MR. THOMAS VALLANCE

Argyll Hotel, Strone,

29th September, 1926

My dear McPherson,

I was very pleased to see you had another great day, which was so graphically described in the *Dumbarton Herald*, the only fly in the ointment being my inability to be with you. However, next August completes our fifty years of association, as it was in that month The Vale and The Rangers first met on Burnbank, so I hope, if I am in the land of the living, nothing will happen to keep me from being with you. The occasion will be unique, and worthy of some interesting reminiscences.

Yours sincerely, THOMAS VALLANCE

### LINES

To my old friend, Johnny Ferguson, Captain of The Old Vale Team, in remembrance of 50 years of friendship, on and off the Football Field, by Tom Vallance, 1876-1926 :

John Ferguson, my frien' John,  
When we were first acquaint,  
Your comely heid had hair on't,  
But noo its unco scant;  
Your sturdy legs were soople then—  
You could run like any fawn,  
But, whatever ails your auld shanks noo?  
John Ferguson, my John!

## The Old Vale & its Memories

John Ferguson, my frien' John,  
We've played fitba' thegither,  
And often did we try, John,  
To dodge and jink each ither.  
But tho' noo oor jinkin's done, John,  
Oor tongues can still wag on,  
It wid try you sair, if yours wagged nae mair,  
John Ferguson, my John!

John Ferguson, my frien' John,  
What pleasure did it gie  
To a' your frien's around the ring,  
While makin' rings round me.  
But it didna aye come aff, John,  
For my legs were whiles too long,  
And I'll play you yet, if new legs ye get,  
John Ferguson, my John!

John Ferguson, my auld frien' John,  
What pleasure does it gie  
To a' your frien's aroun' this board,  
An' to nane mair sae than me,  
To see your cheery smile, John,  
That's frae your face ne'er gone,  
May you leave tae be a hunner yet,  
John Ferguson, my John!

John Ferguson, my frien' John,  
When you to Heaven will gang,  
Or will it be the ither place?  
But sure you'll no gang wrang.  
But, whichever place it be, John,  
You will tell them the auld, auld tale,  
That you are the best fitba' player  
That ever cam' frae the Vale.





JOHN McDOUGALL

## The Old Vale & its Memories

John Ferguson, my frien' John,  
When first you played the game,  
You had a staunch and hardy team  
Wha brocht the Vale to fame—  
But they're maistly gone before you, John,  
And we hope they'll have lang to wait  
For the day of the great reception  
They're gieing ye at the Golden Gate.

John Ferguson, my frien' John,  
We've climbed life's hill thegither,  
And many a happy day like this,  
We've spent wi' yin an' ither—  
But, tho' we're tottering doon noo, John,  
For the "Loving Cup" haud on,  
Tho' the race is long—you're still going strong,  
John Ferguson, my John!

### GREAT FOOTBALL MATCH BETWEEN THE VALE OF LEVEN AND THE WANDERERS AT KENNINGTON OVAL, LONDON

(*Dumbarton Herald*, 18th April, 1878)

It is with pleasure that we reprint the account of the great football match between The Vale of Leven and The Wanderers at Kennington Oval, London, which appeared in the *Dumbarton Herald* on 18th April, 1878. The description was written by Mr. John Miller, Alexandria, who latterly became a colleague of my father on the *N.B. Daily Mail*, Glasgow. Mr. Miller was an able journalist, and specialised as an art critic. He was a close friend of the late Tom McEwan, the well-known artist.

Last year the Vale of Leven Football Club carried off the Scottish Association Cup, defeating the 3rd Lanark, Queen's Park, and Rangers in succession. Triumphs so unprecedented, it was predicted, would never be repeated, yet this season the successes of

## The Old Vale & its Memories

the Vale team, instead of diminishing, have fairly eclipsed the proud victories of the past. Not only have they again won the Association Cup, but they have defeated the premier club of England on their own ground, and under their own rules, a victory more marked when the disadvantages under which the Vale played are fully understood. Fatigued by travel and sight-seeing, strange ground, the superior weight of their antagonists, and last, but not least, the whole of the game being played under the "English throw-in," to which the Vale were almost entire strangers. Many of the partisans of the Vale club, while admiring their courage in challenging the Londoners for a friendly match, were not very sanguine as to the result, and such feelings were well grounded considering the prestige of the Wanderers. Besides defeating the Queen's Park, they are the owners of the English Association Cup, having won it no less than five times, 1872, 1873, 1876, 1877, 1878. Much of the credit of bringing about this match, and the satisfactory arrangements connected with it, are due to the indefatigable energy of the hon. secretary, Mr. J. B. Wright. The team, accompanied by a few friends, left Alexandria on Thursday evening at 7 p.m. in a special carriage, per N.B. Railway, via East Coast route for London. A considerable crowd assembled at the station, and loudly cheered the departure of the train. A number of friends also witnessed the departure of the team from Glasgow at 8.50 p.m., and wished them a hearty "good-bye." Before Edinburgh was reached the team had established a system of communication between the separate compartments of the carriage by the windows, the result of which was that messages and refreshments of all kinds were freely passed to and from each member of the party. Indeed we doubt if the Vale ever played a better "passing" game. The right wing passed well to the centre, who, in turn, passed to the left wing, in the most unselfish manner. At Edinburgh, a brief promenade was enjoyed on the platform, during which the team and their friends were the observed of all observers. One gentleman of the party, a proficient performer on a penny whistle, kindly favoured them with a selection of popular airs on that wonderful instrument. Another looked quite picturesque in a bright striped night-cap, while a third, with an enormous worsted Tam-o'-Shanter and a tiger skin rug, placidly smoked a pipe curiously carved from the branch of a tree, to the amazement of the sober-sided "Capitalists." Berwick



## The Old Vale & its Memories

was reached at midnight, and here the party danced a reel in costume, to the wonder of the sleepy officials.

### WHEN THE VALE FIRST PLAYED THE ENGLISH "THROW-IN"

Off again, and in a few minutes the Tweed was crossed, the moon shining brightly on its rippling waters, as they flow to the German Ocean, which comes rolling in white breakers to the shore. An endeavour was afterwards made to snatch "forty winks," but the wakeful would not permit the drowsy god to close the eyes of those who could, and so the "wee short hour ayont the twal" crept on as the express dashed through the landscape, all bathed in moonlight, until we halted at Newcastle at 1.50 a.m., and were unexpectedly welcomed at this unearthly hour by the sight of a party of enthusiastic natives of the Vale rushing to shake hands with the team and wish them success. What a five minutes followed, and what a ringing cheer was sent after the departing train, can better be imagined than described. York was reached just before the break of day, and another attempt at sleep followed with more or less success. When the party congregated at King's Cross Station on Friday morning they looked rather seedy, after their vigil, but a good wash and a substantial breakfast entirely removed the stains of travel. In a couple of hours they were proceeding to the Tower, the Zoo, Madame Tussaud's, etc., retiring early to rest in order to be prepared for their formidable antagonists on the morrow. After witnessing the Boat Race on Saturday morning, the team proceeded at 2.30 p.m. to Kennington Oval. The captain of the Vale team tried to induce the Wanderers to play the match from half-time under the Scotch "throw-in," but did not succeed, consequently the whole game was played under the English rule. The appearance of the Vale team on the field was the signal for a general round of applause from a crowd of about 2,000 spectators—considered large for a London football crowd; and besides, though it may seem strange, the match was unadvertised. Rain commenced shortly before the match, and continued throughout the entire game. The teams were represented as follows:

# The Old Vale & its Memories

## VALE OF LEVEN

### Goal

R. Parlane  
(12 st. 7 lbs.)

### Backs

A. McIntyre  
(11 st. 7 lbs.)

J. McPherson  
(11 st.)

### Half-backs

Wm. Jamieson  
(11 st. 8 lbs.)

A. McLintock  
(11 st. 2 lbs.)

### Forwards

#### Right

J. Ferguson  
(10 st. 3 lbs.)

R. Paton  
(10 st.)

#### Centres

J. McGregor  
(9 st. 9 lbs.)

Jas. Baird  
(10 st. 12 lbs.)

#### Left

J. McDougall, *Capt.*  
(10 st. 7 lbs.)

J. C. Baird  
(10 st. 7 lbs.)



### Forwards

#### Left

J. Kenrick  
(10 st. 3 lbs.)  
C. A. Denton  
(10 st. 5 lbs.)

#### Centres

H. Wace  
(11 st. 5 lbs.)  
J. G. Wylie  
(13 st. 4 lbs.)

#### Right

C. H. Wollaston  
(10 st. 4 lbs.)  
W. S. Otter  
(12 st.)

### Half-backs

Hon. A. F. Kinnaird, *Capt.*  
(11 st. 9 lbs.)

W. C. Bailey  
(11 st. 2 lbs.)

### Backs

A. H. Stratford  
(12 st. 4 lbs.)

W. Lindsay  
(11 st. 4 lbs.)

### Goal

H. S. Jackson  
(11 st. 4 lbs.)

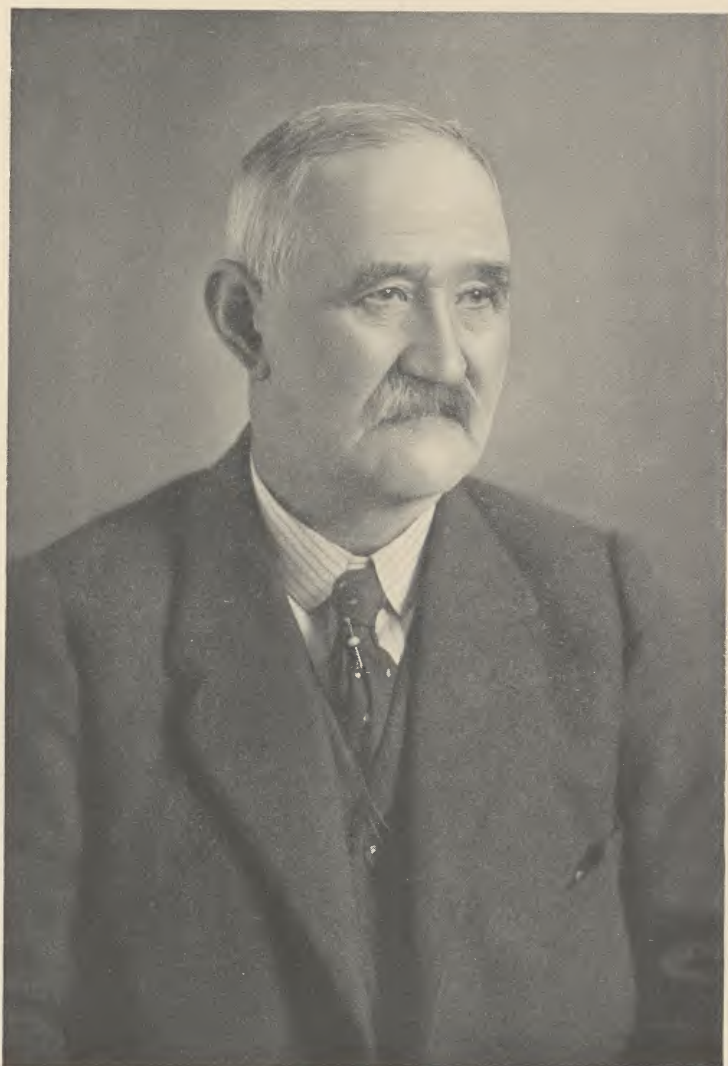
## WANDERERS

## The Old Vale & its Memories

### VALE TWO UP AT HALF-TIME

The Wanderers having won the toss, chose to defend the western goal, and at 3.25 p.m. McLintock kicked off against a slight wind. Kenrick got on the ball at once, made a dashing run among the Vale backs, when Bailey kicked the ball over. Parlane's free kick was passed by Jamieson over to the right wing, where Ferguson piloted the ball well up, amid the cheers of the crowd, till it went, unfortunately, into touch, and the advantage was lost. The throw-in by Bailey traversed more than half the field, and landed right in front of goal. McPherson got it out of danger but Wace again threatened the goal and the ball was kicked behind for safety. The corner-kick was fruitless, and another kick-off fell to Parlane. McGregor and Jas. Baird dribbled well up, but lost the ball in touch. Another long throw-in from Kinnaird looked serious, when McDougall interposed his head and sent it back. A "hand" against the Vale, though well placed in front of goal, and backed by the forwards, came spinning back from the foot of McIntyre. A fine run by J. C. Baird was turned by Bailey, and Wylie speedily ran it back until McPherson cleverly captured the ball, amid cries of "Played, Leven!" The game was now fifteen minutes old, and no goals had been scored on either side although the play had been almost entirely confined to the Vale territory and often dangerously near goal, but the strong back play and good goalkeeping of the visitors kept their fortress intact. Unfortunately, McPherson had got partially disabled, but bravely held his position on the field to the last. The throwing-in of the Wanderers was wonderful, and fairly paralysed the Vale forwards, who, besides, had also to contend against the most powerful back play ever witnessed on a football field. After a fruitless corner-kick for the Wanderers, Ferguson, ably supported by Paton, ran the ball well up the field until it got lost in touch, and Bailey once more sent the ball flying into goal, when Jamieson cleverly countered it with his head amid great applause, and amid renewed cheering. Paton, by a smart piece of tackling, kept possession of the leather and unselfishly passed to Ferguson, who succumbed to a charge from Kinnaird, and the ball was again in front of goal, which was further jeopardised by a "hand" against the Vale. The free-kick went well among the Englishmen and came flying out in a straight line for goal, but before it reached the post Parlane's





*W. H. Harrison.*  
*W*



DAVID LINDSAY



J. C. MCGREGOR

## The Old Vale & its Memories

fist made it rebound into play and enabled McGregor, James Baird and Paton to start a splendid run amid cries of "Played, Scotland!" from every side of the field. The run was only stopped by Bailey kicking behind in self-defence. The Vale corner-kick was fruitless, but the team were now beginning to settle into their play, the passing often quite bewildering the backs of the Wanderers. A fine individual effort by Wylie followed, who although encouraged to "bust" McLintock, had to relinquish the ball to the Scotch half-back, amid the most enthusiastic applause, which continued unabated as Ferguson, backed by Paton, cleared the half-back, but a heavy charge forced the ball into touch. Bailey once more made the ball fly from beyond midfield right into goal where it had to be kicked behind for safety. The corner-kick enabled Wace to shoot for goal, but Parlane was waiting and sent it out, only to be kicked over by Kenrick. Jas. Baird, tackling successfully, got away with the ball till checked by Otter, who made a dashing run to the corner flag and centred well, Wollaston sending it over the bar. After some good runs by Wace, Wylie and Wollaston, which were lost by shooting high or wide, the ball was transferred to the Wanderers' goal, Ferguson's shot going over. A similar result followed a smart piece of play by McGregor, Baird, and Paton. Wylie getting possession of the ball after the kick-off, ran well down the field, his weight, pace and close dribbling standing him in good stead until he met McIntyre, and the ball was sent on a return journey, but was quickly captured by Otter, and as quickly recaptured by Baird, who in turn was collared successfully by Stratford, and the ball sent to the Vale goal, only to be headed by Jamieson on to McGregor, who passed the ball smartly to the left wing, where McDougall and Baird were in waiting, and swiftly ran it up to the corner flag, Baird dribbling well to Ferguson, who shot for goal and, Jackson missing, it went through amid the greatest excitement, which fairly reached a climax a couple of minutes afterwards, and before the Wanderers appeared to realise the situation. The Vale forwards came away in a body, passing and repassing beautifully, until, getting into range, Ferguson gave it the final and successful kick. Half-time was called without any further change, and the hopes of the Vale ran high with two goals to their credit and the wind, which had, however, abated, owing to the steady downpour of rain.



## The Old Vale & its Memories

### ANOTHER GOAL FOR THE VALE

The first item of interest was a run by Baird, which looked dangerous, but was sent beyond the lines. A throw-in by Jamieson was followed by some close play near the Wanderers' goal, who were getting hemmed in, but, freeing themselves, came away in grand form until stopped by McPherson near the strangers' goal. Another attempt by Otter, who had been playing splendidly, was lost by going beyond the line. By good passing the Vale soon had the ball over the Wanderers' goal. The kick-off was brought back by Ferguson and Paton, and sent into touch, when Otter came



“JOHNNY” AND “BOBBY”  
(Ferguson) (Paton)

away once more, and by close dribbling got well up to goal, and shot swiftly. Parlane caught the ball, and dodging Wylie, who charged him, kicked it into midfield amid the greatest applause, and Paton, getting charge of the leather, ran for the Londoners' goal, which he missed by a couple of feet. Jackson's kick-off was followed by a smart run from Wylie, who was thrown off the ball by McLintock, but before he could get it turned Otter went off

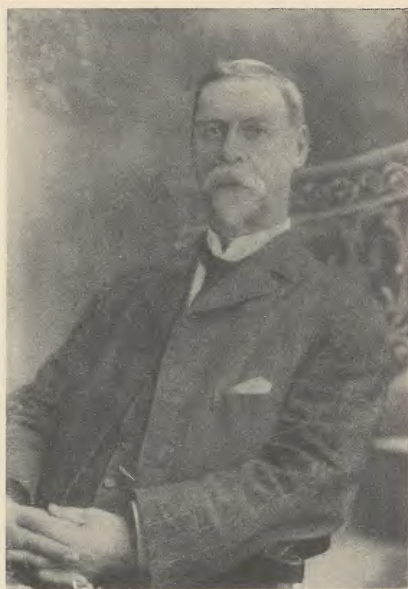
## The Old Vale & its Memories

with it and being joined by Wollaston, McIntyre came to the rescue and made a gallant endeavour to secure the ball, when Wollaston sent it smartly through amid a round of well-merited applause. The ball was sent up from midfield, and ran up by Ferguson and Paton, the former crossing to McDougall, who narrowly missed sending it between the posts. The Vale were now assuming the aggressive and the Wanderers were being called upon to "wake up." Otter did so and got the ball well into the Vale corner flag, when Baird made a splendid run the entire length of the field, Lindsay kicking behind in self-defence. A "hand" against the Vale liberated the besieged Londoners, and the game was transferred to the visitors' quarters, when McIntyre, tackling well, got the ball at his foot, and crossed it to Ferguson, who ran swiftly down on the touch line till fairly met by Stratford, when he sent it back to Paton, who brought it on. Spying danger he passed to Ferguson, who ran across the field and scored the third goal, amid cries of "Another goal to the Vale." The game lasted some time afterwards, but no further scoring took place.

The strangers on retiring from the field were warmly applauded, each member of the team receiving quite an ovation on entering the pavilion.

### REMARKS

The first fifteen minutes' play was decidedly favourable to the Wanderers, owing in a great measure to the "throw-in"; but the result of the match plainly shows that individual dribbling, though it be of the highest order, cannot stand against the passing game and to this style of play the Vale are indebted for their victory. Never before had they to contend against such good individual play as that exhibited by the Wanderers



JAMES BAIRD



## The Old Vale & its Memories

on Saturday last at the Oval. The dribbling of Otter, Wace, Wollaston and Wylie was desperately close and very fast—the back play, all round, perfection. The Vale, after the first fifteen minutes, played a splendid game, the Londoners openly expressing their admiration at the smart passing of the forwards and the clever tackling of the backs. Ferguson never played better, and that is saying a great deal, Paton backing up in the most unselfish manner. The centres, J. McGregor and Jas. Baird, though opposed to Wylie and Wace, played hard throughout, and never hesitated in passing the ball to the wings. J. McDougall and J. C. Baird played with their usual dash on the left. McLintock was repeatedly cheered for his brilliant tackling. Jamieson's head work took immensely with the spectators. McIntyre was in grand form and turned the tide of battle again and again. Before getting disabled McPherson played with great precision, always placing the ball well among his own forwards. Parlane caught every shot for goal in an admirable manner; the goal which was lost could not have been saved by any keeper.

The Wanderers entertained the Vale of Leven team to supper in the Freemason's Tavern. The Hon. A. F. Kinnaird presided, and in proposing the Vale of Leven team said he was sorry to have to congratulate them on their defeating his team: but they would endeavour to go to Glasgow next year and pay them back in the same manner as the Vale had done to them that day. The Scotch teams had already taught them how to dribble, and they had seen that day how much they yet required to learn in the "passing." They meant to profit by the lesson, and intended to wipe off the debt that had just been contracted. The chairman, coupling the toast with the captain of the Vale team, hoped they would visit them often. The captain of the Vale team having briefly responded, proposed "The Wanderers," pledging the toast in the English Association Cup, now the permanent property of the Wanderers.

### POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE VALE

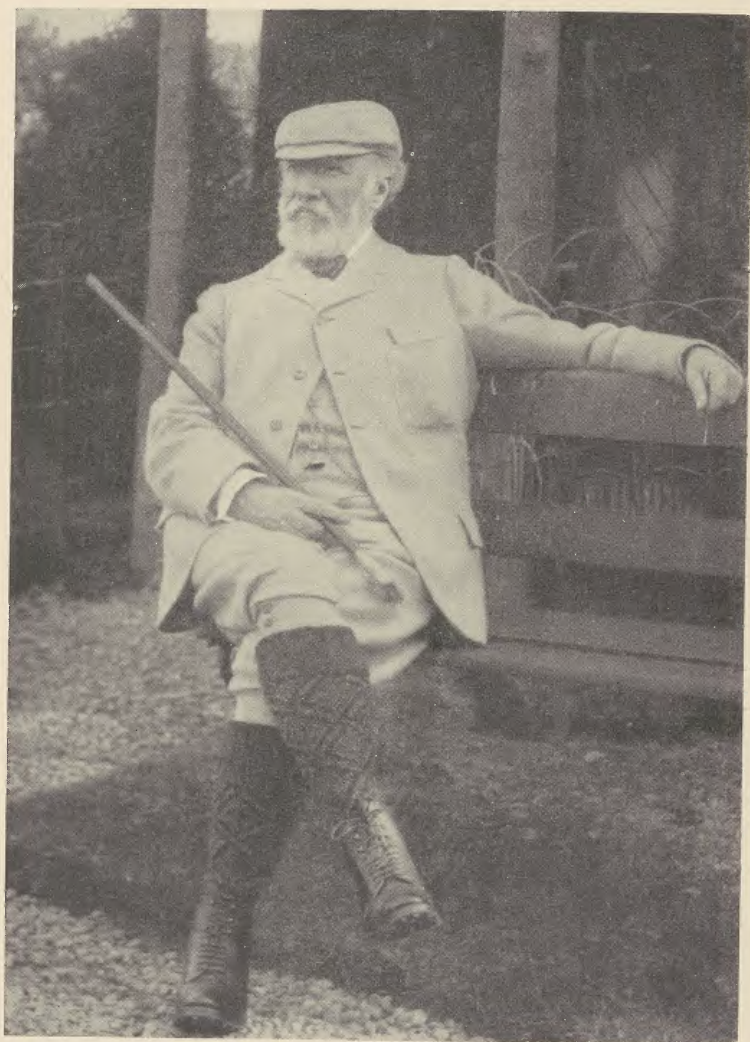
THROUGH the good offices, I presume, of Mr. James Campbell of Tullichewan, and the local Liberal Association, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman once addressed a crowded meeting in Alexandria. Sir R. T. Reid was also heard in the Vale. He un-





THE OLD VALE OF LEVEN FOOTBALL TEAM AND SOME FAVOURED FRIENDS  
 AT INVERBEG, 26TH APRIL, 1896

John Robertson (Proprietor, Inverbeg Hotel) D. Lindsay John Adams (Trainer)  
 T. C. Highet (Q.P.) Jas. Glass (One of the Donors of the Cup) W. Jamieson  
 J. McPherson W. C. Wood A. McIntyre A. McLintock A. S. McBride J. G. Temple (*North British Daily Mail*)  
 J. C. McGregor R. Paton J. Ferguson J. C. Baird J. McDougall



JAMES CAMPBELL  
of Tullichewan Castle

## The Old Vale & its Memories

successfully contested Dumbartonshire in the Liberal interest. Subsequently he became Lord Loreburn. Captain Sinclair, once the County representative in Parliament, will also be remembered. He latterly became Lord Pentland and was Secretary for Scotland for a time. On both sides of politics—for in those days there was no Labour Party—big guns were heard in the Public Hall, and no meetings were better attended and evoked more interest than those which Sir Archibald Orr Ewing, the Member, addressed.

The collectors of these reminiscences, believing that the late Mr. James Campbell of Tullichewan had refused a title, to “mak siccar” on the question, decided that J.G.T. should communicate with the Campbell firm, and also ask if they recollected a great meeting that was held in the Vale in a marquee which collapsed. A courteous reply was received from Mr. Adair Campbell which stated that his father, the late James Campbell of Tullichewan, was simply James Campbell. He was offered and refused a knighthood. As far as Mr. Adair Campbell could remember, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman did speak on one occasion at a meeting in Alexandria, but he had no recollection of the incident of a marquee collapsing. It might have happened, he added, for he was away from home a good deal in those days, being two years in the Mounted Police in South Africa, etc.

### VALE GAS LIGHT COMPANY

ONE would actually think that in the data which the late Duncan Ferguson left of events which happened in the Vale in his day, he had an idea that in after years it would prove useful. Some of the newspaper cuttings and letters which Mr. James Ferguson handed to me certainly contained arresting reading. I find that away back in July, 1876, the Vale of Leven Gas Light Company—of which, I think, Mr. John Bryce, my father-in-law, was the first or an early chairman—had in course of construction, at a short distance from its Works in Alexandria, a new tank for an additional gasholder, capable of storing 115,000 cubic feet of gas, in order to enable it to meet the growing wants of the locality.



## The Old Vale & its Memories

At that time it was also arranged to lay pipes connecting Bonhill with Jamestown and intermediate districts.

### COOPER'S SHOP AT BRAEHEAD

I WAS once nearly suffocated on Bonhill Bridge. That was when a funnelless steamer was passing under it on its way to the Loch. Practically everybody was out to see the steamer being dragged up by horses, and now and then propelled by its paddles. The only occasions on which I crossed the Brig were at the New Year time, when I went to Freebairns to buy squibs and whirly-gigs, or when the Bonhill Fair was on. Bonhill Fair, however, interested me little. I was afraid that I might get a kick from a horse when the couper's men were trying its paces. Old Bonhill folks will remember the Coopers' Shop at Braehead; the Bryces had been there for generations as coopers. In Bonhill Churchyard their graves, with the cooper's adze on the flat stones, can yet be traced. Practically opposite the coopers' shop was the South U. P. Church, of which for many years Mr. Thomas Collins was the respected pastor.

### MOIR'S BANK—THE COMMERCIAL

THEN opposite the foot of the Burn was Mr. Patrick Moir's Bank—the Commercial—opened in 1842, latterly managed by Mr. James McMurray, a highly esteemed man, and now under the able charge of Mr. J. F. Henderson. I do not know for the truth of it, but I recollect hearing it said that one of the reasons for the popularity of the Commercial Bank was that the "Grocery" folks—the Alexandria folks—did not grudge the "brig" money so long as their neighbours did not see them doing their banking business. Sometimes I wonder what a change would have been effected in Bonhill to-day if the proposed railway had been allowed to go through. The idea was to have a station either in Burn Street or George Street. I mentioned Bonhill Churchyard. The Rev. Dr. Simpson, once Minister of Bonhill Parish Church, sleeps there. He was an arresting preacher. His sermons were



ANDY McINTYRE



THE LATE MR. ALEX WYLIE, EX-M.P.



## The Old Vale & its Memories

delivered from shorthand notes. It was before my day when Dr. F. L. Robertson was the Bonhill Parish Church Minister. He went to St. Andrew's Parish Church, Glasgow.

### A BONHILL LEGEND

IN making a reference to the Coopers' Shop at Braehead, I ought to have added the legend that when the workers going in the morning to the "fields" saw casks being carted to Dumbarton for shipment to the sugar refineries in Greenock, they would grunt—"Chach! It's gaun to be a wat day; there's the cooper's cart awa' by laden wi' barrels." That came to be quite a saying in Bonhill. Another well-known and highly respected figure in Bonhill was the late Mr. Richardson, Baker, whose business is still carried on by his worthy son and two daughters, while opposite the Leven were the baker shops of Mr. John Angus and Mr. William Angus, and Mr. Peter Buchanan, the Grocer. Every Vale person up in years will remember Mr. McLean of the Brig; his son, Mr. Thomas McLean, of the British Linen Bank; Mr. Orr of the Clydesdale Bank; Mr. William Lochhead, who was transferred from the Clydesdale to the Head Office in Glasgow, thence to the London Office, and thence to a more important post in the Glasgow Office. Mr. Lochhead died recently. Mr. McFarlane of the Ferryfield was also an outstanding man, and I just feel that I have been somewhat invidious in mentioning names, for mostly a' folks in the Vale were worthy.

### MUCH RESPECTED MEN

BUT other names might be mentioned with the greatest respect—Sir Archibald and Mr. John Orr Ewing; Mr. John Christie; Mr. W. E. Gilmour; Mr. John McMurray; Mr. E. J. Jones of Dalmonach; Mr. Wylie, who was at one time the Member; Mr. Henry Brock; Mr. Archibald Wilson, the Road Surveyor; Mr. John Barr; the Brothers Wright, and it is pleasing to note that Mr. J. B. Wright's energies are still unabating; Mr. McKinnon, the Coal Merchant; Mr. Izatt; Mr. A. H. Lindsay; Mr. Webster;

## The Old Vale & its Memories

Mr. Macbrayne; Mr. Arthur Pollock; Mr. Robert Pollock; Mr. Brown, the Registrar; Mr. James Brown, the Lawyer; Mr. Robert McLintock; Mr. William Menzies; Mr. William Davie; Mr. Wedgewood; Mr. Menzies, who was instrumental in getting the Robert Burns' Dumbarton Freedom Ticket; Mr. John McLintock; Mr. McIntyre, the Plumber; Mr. Joseph Russell, the Painter; Mr. Taig, Tinsmith, Plumber, Gasfitter, and Velocipede and Bicycle Maker; Mr. Leckie, the Hairdresser; Mr. Mathieson, Junr., and I should have bracketed the last-named with Mr. James Campbell of Tullichewan, for these two took a big interest in philanthropic and musical affairs, being prominently identified with the Glasgow Orchestral Concerts; Mr. Allan Duncan, President of the Residenters' and Veterans' Association; Mr. Hugh Brown, the Teacher; Mr. Vance, the Tobacconist; Mr. Bauchup, the Butcher; Mr. Thomson A. Ferguson, the Clothier; Mrs. Macgowan, who had a Private School (she was the mother-in-law of Mr. James Dalrymple, late Manager of the Glasgow Corporation's Tramways); Mr. Mackinlay; Mr. Norman Nicholson; Mr. James



THOMSON A. FERGUSON

Nicholson; Mr. Matthew Nicholson; Mr. Duncan Newlands, Steward of "The Lord of the Isles"; Mr. William Lang, Steward of the Loch Lomond Steamers; Mr. Duncan Gordon, Photographer & Publican; Mr. Colquhoun, Photographer; Mr. Hector Morrison, of London Stock Exchange: he left the Vale when he was a boy (his sister, Miss Morrison, who resides in Kilmacolm, was a close friend of the late Miss Blair of Bridge Street); Mr. Robert Scott; Mr. Greenlees; Mr. Charles Glen; Mr. Andrew Biggam of Bon-

## The Old Vale & its Memories

hill, whose garden in the season produced delicious fruit; Mr. John Robertson, J.P.; Mr. John Campbell; Mr. George Sutherland; Mr. James Strang; Mr. Maxwell, Draper; Mr. Andrew McKean, Boot-maker; Mr. Andrew McEwan; Mr. A. McQuattie; Mr. Thos. Kinloch; Mr. Peter Weir, a true Highlander and a thorough sportsman; Mr. John Wilkie, Grocer, and Mr. James Ferguson, whose cottage was in the "Doctor's Loan." He was well known in the Vale, and it was said of him that if he came upon a man in rags he would cast his coat, hand it to him and go home in his shirt sleeves. Mr. James Ferguson, who assisted in compiling these reminiscences, was called after him.

### SIR JOHN PENDER

LEARNING that a book about the Old Vale was being compiled by his friend James Ferguson, and his colleague J. G. Temple, Mr. John Wilson, London, an Old Vale lad, suggested that something should be said in it about Sir John Pender, Bart., who laid the first Atlantic cable. His connection with Bonhill was considerable at one time. Sir John, I think, had an interest in a "wee field" at the foot of the Bonhill Brae, immediately south of where the Commercial Bank stands to-day. I am not sure on that score. I remember Mr. James Bryce, an uncle of my late wife, stated that John Pender and he were playmates, and when John Pender left the district to remind him of their early days, he handed over to him his toys.

### CHURCH WITH CHERISHED HISTORY

CELEBRATED Divines came out of the Vale. There was Dr. Wallace of Bridge Street Church, who, I believe, married my grandparents; Dr. Sprott, of the same Church, who baptised me; the Rev. Mr. Johnston, who sometimes wore black gloves in the pulpit; the Rev. Mr. Drummond; the Rev. James Allison; the Rev. John Mansie, now of Dundee; and the present Rev. Wm. Hamilton, who worthily occupies the pulpit in the—shall I call it the new?—Church at the head of Bridge Street. A cherished history Bridge Street Church possesses! Some of the



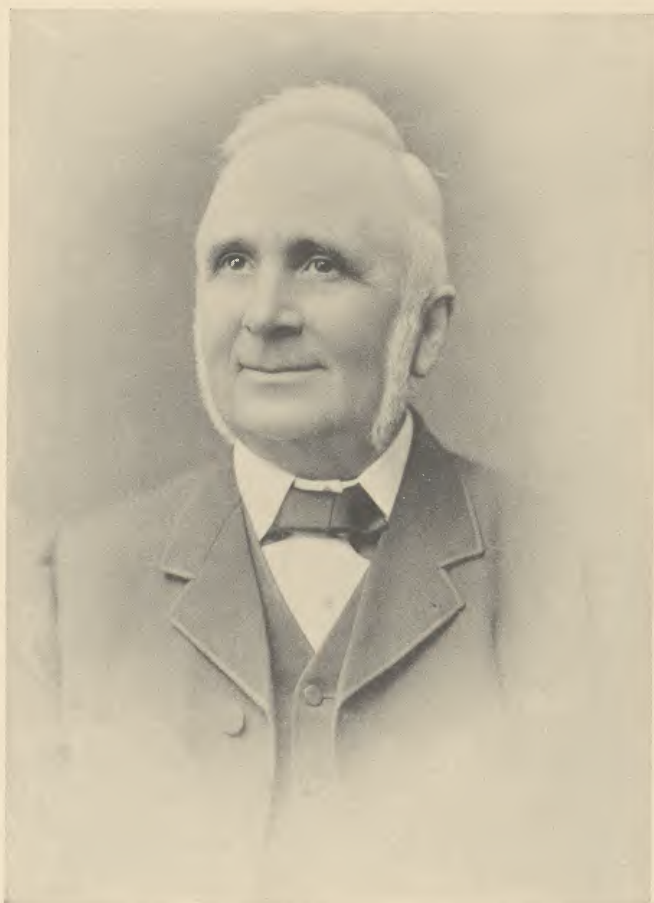
## The Old Vale & its Memories

Vale's most esteemed men took an active interest in its work. The late Mr. John Christie was a manager, as was also Mr. James Shearer, the County Councillor. I think I see the late Mr. Gilbert Rankin and his family sitting in the front row of the gallery in the old Church; Mr. Walter Brown, who, I am glad to say, is still hale and hearty; the Ritchies, Bairds, Macleans, McQuatties, Brysons, Mr. George Sutherland, and Mr. Donald McLaren in the precenter's box. During the earlier years of the Rev. Mr. Hamilton's ministry, Mr. James Rouse was an Elder in Bridge Street Church, but before that he was Beadle. One of his sons is a Minister of the United Free Church in Leith. I mentioned Mr. McLaren's name: he was a powerful singer and numbers he delighted concert-goers with as encores were: "I fear no foe in shining armour," and "I am a Friar of Orders Grey." Mr. McFarlane, the Druggist, was also a member of Bridge Street U.P. Church. Outside the door of the Church on the Sundays was a large can filled with water with a cup by its side. I usually had a drink before entering. The can was away when the kirk scaled, the very time that the can, in my opinion, should have been there. No implied reflection on the service. My drought was merely due to my having had one of "Boorock's" herrings for my breakfast. Old folks will remember Jamie McFarlane, better known as "Wee Boorocks." Spelling his name "Bourax" satisfied the ear better than "Boorocks."

### THE LAST OF "WEE BOURAX"

HEREWITH we give a photograph of "Wee Bourax." He was the Town Crier in Bonhill Parish, and used to go round with Campbell's herring cart. One day the horse ran away and the poor man was thrown off and killed. I have just read a very interesting letter that a Vale man, now resident in London, sent to Mr. John McPherson regarding "Wee Bourax." He said:

"How Jamie McFarlane came to be called 'Wee Bourax' I cannot tell. I do not know whether the name 'Bourax' is spelt correctly. I should have said 'Boorocks' was more



JAMES SHEARER



OLD CAPTAIN WM. PATTERSON AND HIS WIFE WITH THEIR  
DAUGHTER, MRS. D. FERGUSON  
At Lea Park Cottage about 1870



THE PATTERSON SISTERS, LEA PARK COTTAGE, 1872  
*"Faith, Hope and Charity"*



"A FAMILY GROUP"



## The Old Vale & its Memories

likely, but I have nothing to go on. I can very dimly remember an old Bonhill rhyme as follows:

“Peeps McGown, the Mally Pokes,  
Wee Bourax and Humphy Joks (or Jokes).”

“I never saw it in print and even the spelling is probably wrong. I don't know the meaning of the 'Mally Pokes' and 'Humphy Jokes,' so you can see how vague my memory is. However, I remember one thing vividly. We had a Ferryfield trip one year to Inverbeg, in waggonettes, and we had an improvised band, which would have beaten any modern Jazz band. I can remember a concertina, a bugle, a melo-dion, a cornet, a trombone, a pair of cymbals and 'Bourax's' drum. This drum some one had got from a man named McCrae, who had it carefully stowed away as a 'Bourax' relic. I remember the drum well, as it had to be returned to McCrae after the trip. I should have added that I do not remember 'Bourax,' but I do remember Old Dan Jardine, who was probably his successor in distributing hand-bills and announcing news.”

### THE CRICKET PARK

#### VALE VETERANS “HOUF”

DIRECTLY behind Bridge Street U.P. Church was the Cricket Park; that was before Mr. John Angus's bakery was erected. The



“WEE BOURAX”

James McFarlane, Town Crier, Bonhill Parish

## The Old Vale & its Memories

mention of the Cricket Park calls up Delany's Circus, at the close of whose entertainment was a fine firework display. Then there were the sports. Old Mr. James Shearer, my grandfather, was usually entrusted with the erection of the Grand Stand.

Having occasion to mention Bridge Street, calls up several memories. What a traffic in coal was carried on from the N.B.R. Bridge Street "Shoot" to Dalmonach! To see the coals sliding down the "Shoot" from the railway level to the platform, where the carts were, always intrigued the children.

We cannot leave Bridge Street without a reference to Willie Carlisle, the famous Sculler. He used to compete at the Loch Lomond Regattas, and, talking about the Regattas, Vale folks will remember how the boats of the Glasgow or Dumbarton crews were fixed to the tops of the passenger coaches in the trains going and coming from the Loch on the day of the races.

When I was a youngster, the auld chaps used to meet at a ramshackle seat under the big tree in the Cricket Park. There was another and smaller tree further south in the park, but there was no seat at it. Do any of the worthy sons of the Vale who meet in the Christie Park recall a Volunteer sham fight that took place in the old Cricket Park? I was a small shaver at the time, but I remember the roar of musketry, and if my memory further serves me, I think it was a very wet day. How did the Vale of Leven Football Club's ground come to be called Millburn? I never remember a mill there. The park in my early days was called Turnbull's or "Trummels."

Mr. Ferguson put in: "Ah, my friend who gave us the information about the 'Grocery' tells me that there was a mill with a big waterwheel worked by the burn. It was there before the Turnbells bought it up. And this same friend asked: 'What about the tree at Bonhill Place, where Smollett wrote some of his novels? I think a small portion of the tree still exists.'"

A large number of the new generation—at least, many of the incomers—will never have inquired the history of the names of some of the streets, such as Random Street—called after Roderick Random—and Raglan Street, called after Lord Raglan, and



**VALE OF LEVEN CRICKET CLUB, 1877**

T. Duncanson	T. Wilkinson	R. Bell	A. Lindsay
I. B. Purdon	D. McPherson	H. Bell	
J. Brodie	M. Davie	H. McNicol	D. Currie
	J. Smith	James Bishop	John Bishop





SMOLLETT'S FOUNTAIN AND MAIN STREET, ALEXANDRIA  
Kidd's Kirk in distance

## The Old Vale & its Memories

Smollett Street. And the mention of Smollett brings to my mind a conversation I had with Sandy McLintock, Scotland's famous half-back. We were talking about the Fountain in Alexandria, and he said that he remembered playing at the "bools" at the big tree near where the—shall I call it Smollett?—Fountain stands to-day.

### A BET PLACED AND LOST

I was present at the laying of the foundation stone of the Fountain, and I recollect, after it was erected, my uncle told me that there was a heron on the top of the Fountain. I made a pilgrimage to the Fountain, and came back and bet him a sixpence that he was wrong. He took me on. I returned to the Fountain, had another look, returned and said, "Make it a bob." "Right." "Well, that's one and six you give me," I said. "Come on; it's one and six you give me," he answered. I was so confident I was right, that I felt tempted to make the bet half-a-crown. "Will you come up to the Fountain and I'll get witnesses to prove you are wrong," I said. "Right, I will," he replied. Off we set, and, arriving at the Fountain, I said, "Show me where there is a herrin' there?" "I'll not take the one and sixpence off you," he answered, "for it would be taking advantage of you." "Taking advantage of me!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean? All I ask is, show me the herrin'." "Up there!" he replied, pointing. "That's a bird!" I sneered. "Ay, it's a heron," he said, and he spelt it "H-E-R-O-N—a sea bird. Naw, naw, keep your money!"

### OBITUARY OF AN OLD OAK TREE

THE *Dumbarton Herald* of 12th October, 1865, contained the obituary of the "Oak Tree." For long it was used as the village rostrum. Here during the exciting days of the Chartist agitation had many a stump orator stood manfully forth in defence of the "six points" or nothing. Here, too, was the great resort of revival preachers, strolling players, menageries, shows, Cheap Johns, etc., and the newspaper added: "The site of this tree deserves to



## The Old Vale & its Memories

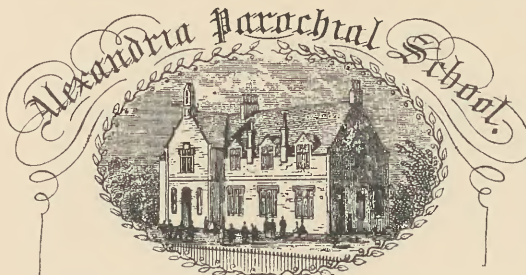
be remembered, and we fondly hope that those who issued the warrant for its execution will see fit to erect a drinking fountain or a pulpit for itinerant open-air orators, or some such fitting memorial object, to mark the spot where stood the 'Old Oak Tree.'”

### PLACE NAMES IN THE VALE

As already hinted, there are several place-names in the Vale of Leven that it would be interesting to know something about, and to no body of men could an appeal for such information be better made than to the Residenters' Association, or the Veterans who, on moderately fine days, foregather for a smoke and crack in the Christie Park, Alexandria. "Tooral-laddie" was a "through gaun" between Bank Street and Bridge Street, Alexandria. How did it come to get that name? Then there was the Cannon Row in Bonhill. It was said—I rather think inaccurately—that when there would be a drunken row on a Saturday night opposite the "Cannon Row," heads would instantly lean over window-sills and it was through these heads popping out that the place got to be nick-named the "Cannon Row."

### ABLE AND RELIABLE CORRESPONDENTS

THE first Vale correspondent of the *Lennox Herald* and Glasgow papers I recall was Mr. Duncan Ferguson, father of Mr. James Ferguson; then there was Mr. John B. McKenzie, who married Miss Mushet, the schoolmaster's daughter. Mr. McKenzie studied for



"MUSHET'S"

the Church, and for years did faithful work as the Parish Minister at Polmont. He died some time ago. His son is an able Divine. And then there was latterly a colleague of my father, Mr. J. Miller, who was married to





ALEXANDER McLINTOCK AND HIS WIFE

1876—Golden Wedding, March 10th—1926



JAMES MUSHET



HUGH BROWN'S CLASS AT MUSHET'S SCHOOL

## The Old Vale & its Memories

a daughter of Sergeant John Taylor, Bonhill. As already stated he was an able and versatile writer; his articles on the great football matches of the late 70's were a perfect treat. Mr. John Neill, Bonhill, was an interesting and smart correspondent; while Mr. Russell, the present reporter, is highly accomplished, ever alert, and ever discriminating.

### MEMORIES OF THE PUBLIC HALL

A SURE sign that I am not so young as I used to be is found in the fact that I was born in the year that the Public Hall, Alexandria, was in course of erection—1861. It was opened, I believe, in the subsequent year. Some time ago I dwelt on several of the artistes who appeared on its platform, and therefore I shall not repeat myself, but this I will add, that all artistes agreed that the acoustics of the Alexandria Public Hall could not be excelled. Great nights when the Mechanics' Institute was at its zenith! Especially when the Glasgow Select Choir, conducted by Mr. Lambeth, came; when there was a concert on the Glasgow Fast Night by the Glasgow Whitebait Company; when there were trapeze acts, the ropes being fastened from the ceiling; when Miss Bessie Aitken, Jamie Houston, Louis Lindsay (the nigger), Johnnie Mathewson (the clown), with a pantomime; Dr. Leo Ross, Rev. David Macrae, Moffat (the elocutionist), Brownlow North, Walter Bentley, the Kennedy family, Miss Aitken (the reader), Rushbury, W. F. Frame, Wolf, who sang "Saw ye Rory Murphy comin' through Dumbarton?" and other well-known people appeared. The Vale audiences were regarded as hard to please, but once the artistes had got them, the applause and whistling could be heard in Bonhill, and as far as the railway station. I have seen many entertainments in my time, but for sheer enjoyment I don't think those I attended in the Public Hall, Alexandria, could be equalled. You ask "Ay, but were you not more easily pleased then?" Maybe; still I feel inclined to say that in one particular I differ from the Bible, where it asserts: "Say not that the former days were better than these." In my opinion, so far as



## The Old Vale & its Memories

entertainments were concerned, they were healthier, happier, and more elevating in the former days.

### VALE'S OUTSTANDING SINGERS

THE Vale had three outstanding singers, Miss Minnie Holland, Mr. Halder Jack, and Mr. Donald M'Laren. If there were others—and I am sure there were—equally outstanding, their friends will pardon me for not mentioning them. I speak of those I heard. On dangerous ground I tread if I venture an opinion as to the best-sung kirk in the Vale; this, however, I'll say: to be in Bonhill Church on a summer forenoon, with the balmy, hawthorny air coming in at the open door to the south of the pulpit, and to hear the congregation lift its voice to the tune "Kilmarnock," was to feel that you had banished mundane affairs and were truly in the House of God.

### THE TEETOTAL CHOIR

FROM a valuable record I find that closely associated with vocal music in the Vale in early days were Messrs. John Nelson, John Craig, William White and Andrew McGregor. One of the first musical combinations in Alexandria was called "The Teetotal Choir," conducted by Mr. William Moodie, and associated with the organisation were Messrs. James Airlie, Robert Leggat, William Houston and William Ferguson. The last-named went to Busby. He was a great canary fancier. The last time I met Mr. William Ferguson was in Queen Street, Glasgow, during the early stages of the War. I recollect a question I put to him: "Do you think Italy will join the Allies?" and his characteristic reply was: "I would not be surprised if she came in the night." Mr. Ferguson was an enthusiastic Liberal, and when any Liberal statesman came to Glasgow, my father always managed to wangle an admission ticket for his old friend Willie Ferguson.

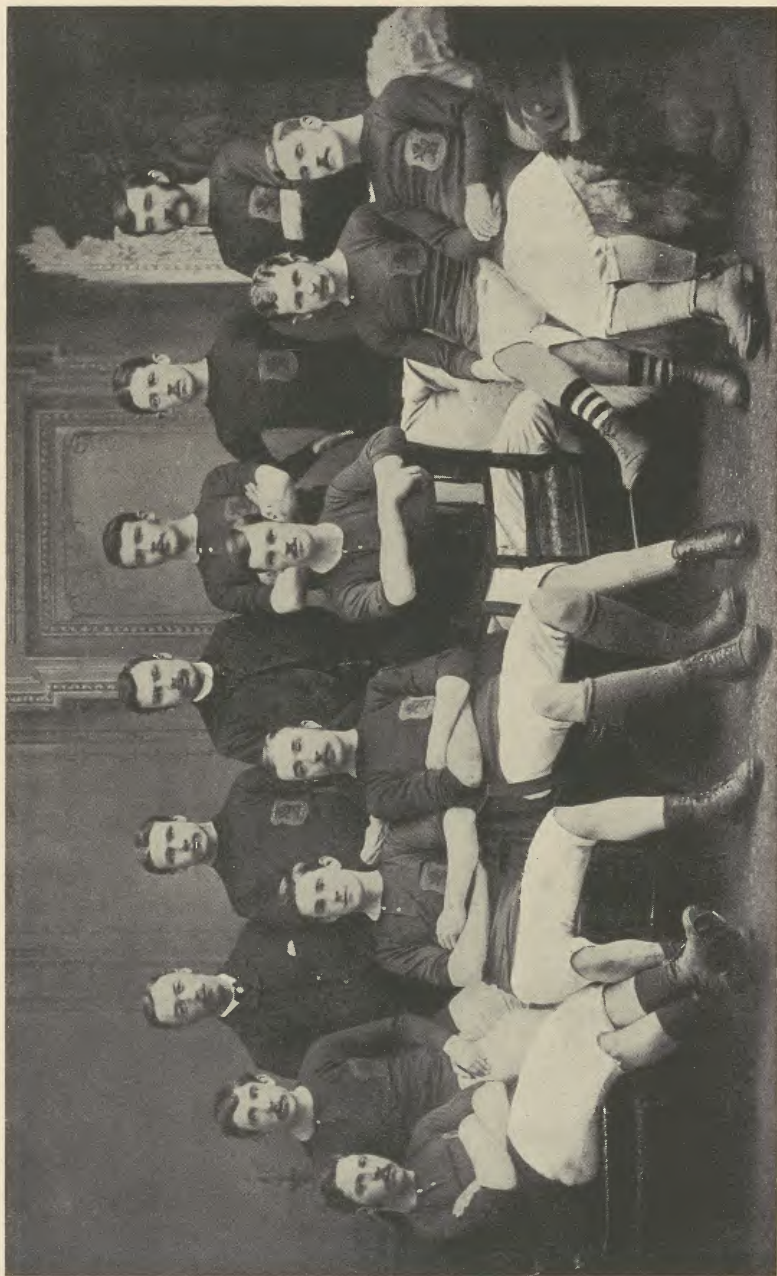
Then there followed the Tonic Sol-fa Association, Mr. Peter McMurray having a prominent hand in its inauguration, and



INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL MATCH—SCOTLAND *v.* ENGLAND  
 Played at Glasgow, 13th March, 1880

\*J. Allan (Caledonian) \*J. Nicholson (Vale of Leven) A. Rowan (Queen's Park) R. W. Neill (Queen's Park) †D. Hamilton (Park Grove) J. Kaye (Queen's Park);  
 C. Campbell (Queen's Park) A. McLintock (Vale of Leven) J. Smith (Mauchline) C. Kerr (Queen's Park) J. McPherson (Vale of Leven)  
 M. McNeil (Rangers) J. McGregor (Vale of Leven) J. C. Baird (Vale of Leven)  
 \*Members of the Scottish Football Association †President of the Scottish Football Association





SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL TEAM v. ENGLAND, 1884

J. K. McDowall (Secy. S.F.A.) Jas. McAulay (Dumbarton) Mr. Sinclair (Referee, Irish Assn.) R. M. Christie (Q.P.) J. Forbes (V. of L.) J. McPherson (V. of L.)  
W. Anderson (Q.P.) G. Lindsay (Dumbarton) F. W. Shaw (Pollokshaws Athletics) C. Campbell (Q.P.) Dr. Smith (Mauchline) W. Arnot (Q.P.) W. McKinnon (Dumbarton)



## The Old Vale & its Memories

subsequently came the Vale of Leven Choral Union and The Harmonic Society, all of which organisations were a credit to the Vale.

### VALE'S FAITHFUL DOCTORS

THE Vale was faithfully served by doctors. There was Dr. Cullen, the father of the present doctor; Dr. J. F. Cullen Brown, who usually sat bare-headed in his brougham, and Dr. Alex. McLelland, who usually made his rounds in a hansom. Then there was Dr. James McLauchlan, now of Dornoch. Nobody could have been of more value to the Vale than the late Mr. Peter McFarlane, the Druggist. When there was an accident at any of the Works, the injured were carried to the Apothecaries' Hall, where Mr. McFarlane was able to render first aid. What a busy man was Dr. Cullen! Always, at least, a dozen folks waiting to consult him at the hours he visited the Apothecaries' Hall. I think I see him sitting in his waggonette. It was ever a mystery to me that in the dark he risked driving up the "watter side."

### HECTOR C. McPHERSON AND VALE DIVINES

I RECOLLECT Mr. Kidd, the Minister—a fine old man. When some of these reminiscences appeared in the *Lennox Herald*, I stated that my memory did not serve me, and I asked—was he Dr. Kidd? My friend, Mr. Allan Maclean, late of Alexandria, in a kindly-worded letter, informed me and the Vale readers that the much respected and venerable Rev. Wm. Kidd, of the Alexandria Parish, was never the recipient of the honour "Doctor of Divinity," but his name and fame would long be cherished by those who heard him, "when in the humour," sing "'Twas merry in the Hall." He was no Dismal Daniel, but a bright, cheery, happy, lovable Minister, who was known and respected by every citizen in the Parish. He was ordained on January 25th, 1844, and died in 1891, being 47 years in charge of the Church, which to this day is by many Levenites called "Kidd's Kirk." Previous to being called to another important charge, the Rev. J. Cromarty Smith occupied the Alexandria Parish Church pulpit with much acceptance.

## The Old Vale & its Memories

Then there was the Rev. Mr. Smith of the U.P. Church, to the left of Bonhill Bridge, a man who served the Lord faithfully for many years, and was beloved by his people. And when on the subject of Vale Ministers, old folks will call up the articles which the late Hector C. McPherson wrote for the *Lennox* on the Vale Divines. These were read with great interest. Hector C. McPherson, through the instrumentality of my father, went to the *Evening News*, Edinburgh, and latterly occupied, I think, the Editor's chair.

### A SERMON IN A LETTER

Mr. Hector C. McPherson was a most outstanding journalist, and it was said of him that everything he touched he adorned. On political and other subjects his articles were illuminating. He possessed a most loving nature, and while the letter he wrote to the Ferguson family on the death of the father was private, a sentence or two quoted here will show the tenderness of his heart and the genuineness of his sorrow. The letter was addressed to John Hamilton Ferguson and was sent from Edinburgh :

“When I spent the evening with your father, just a fortnight ago to-night, I little thought that I had seen him for the last time. So well he looked that night, so genial, so full of humour, so tender and hopeful, that even yet I scarcely realise the tragic and overwhelming turn which events have taken. From the bottom of my heart I sympathise with you all, but particularly with your mother. Death is at all times sad, but its sadness is intensified when it steps in and separates two lives which, as in this case, were blended and united for so long—they seemed indeed to be but one life. The blow in such a case is very, very severe, and I need scarcely say that it remains for those who are left behind to endeavour by loving attention and tenderness to fill up the void (in some degree) in your mother's heart. . . . True friends here below are scarce, but in your departed father I found a friend indeed. . . . At critical and depressing moments in my own life, I was encouraged by his cheering and sound



Believe me  
Yours sincerely,  
D. Ferguson.



NAPIERSTON

*After the Original Sketch of his birthplace by Duncan Ferguson*



## In Memoriam

# DUNCAN FERGUSON



OUR Obituary to-day contains the name of Mr. Duncan Ferguson of Lea Park Cottage, Alexandria. For nearly a quarter of a century our staunch and trusted friend, it is with soreness of heart that we make this announcement. Of late in almost daily communication with him, his correspondence gave no indication of coming ill. The last letter we had from him we received on Tuesday forenoon. As usual, it was a beautiful specimen of penmanship, a model of conciseness, lucidity, and accuracy in respect to composition. We replied to it the same day, little thinking that before our letter reached its destination he to whom it was addressed would be cold in death.

Mr. Ferguson was a native of the Vale of Leven. His father having occupied a position of trust in connection with what was then known as Lennox Bank Print Works, and now forms a part of Messrs. A. Orr Ewing & Co.'s Levenbank Works, the family became well known and highly respected in the Vale. Trained to the business of pattern designing, the subject of our remarks had for a very lengthened period occupied the position of chief in the department of Dalmonach Works with which he was connected. In this capacity his ability, steadiness, industry and integrity secured him the favour of his employers and the respect and esteem of the various managing partners with whom he was more immediately brought into contact. Married about twenty-eight years ago his domestic life has been a happy one, and he has left behind him a sorrowing wife, a daughter, and four sons—the youngest, a boy, being still at school. Brought up in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Renton, he continued in connection therewith on its becoming Levenside Free Church, and to the last. Quiet and unobtrusive in manner, he was still very widely known in the Vale, and gave valuable assistance in the management of the Mechanics' Institution and other public institutions. His election as a member of the first School Board of the parish of Bonhill, in preference to candidates of greater wealth, proved how widely his sterling qualities and honesty were known and appreciated. In the early days of volunteering he was an efficient member of the Bonhill corps; and though himself the most sedate of men, his sympathies were broad, and not alone in all movements of social improvement, but also in the sports and recreations of the people he took a kindly interest.

But it was in what we may without flattery call his literary capacity that he was by us best known and most valued. Almost at the starting of the *Dumbarton Herald*, in 1851, by our late brother Samuel, Mr. Ferguson became a welcome contributor to its columns. Some of his earliest effusions, of the nature of smart comments on the men and events of the time, were issued as Leven Bank Notes, and on the completion of the series he commenced to contribute under the signature of L.B.N., the initials of the title of his previous efforts. The friendship thus established has never been broken, and, in later years, led to the proprietors of this paper inducing Mr. Ferguson to cease being an occa-

sional and to become a constant and regular contributor to its columns. Having got into the way of devoting portions of his leisure hours to press work, his services were speedily in request, and he contributed also to the Glasgow and Edinburgh dailies. He thus came to occupy a position in which it will not be easy to find for him a successor. Not once, but frequently, he spoke to us of finding that he was getting too much in the way of extra duties, and but, we believe, for his friendly feeling towards the local papers, it is very doubtful whether he would not long ere this have given up the work. And now that death has come all unexpectedly and set him free, not we alone but many in the Vale and other places will not soon cease to miss his aid, or to regret the loss we have through his death sustained. As a writer Mr. Ferguson was possessed of many excellent qualities, and had he ever had sufficient time at his disposal to have essayed something higher and less ephemeral than contributions to the newspapers, it was quite within his power to have secured success. Possessed of a quiet, genuine humour, a punster of the Hood stamp, and remarkably clever in the use of the Hudibras measure, these gifts were often exhibited in his contributions to our columns. But his kindly feelings and good sense always kept his "quips and cranks" and parodies free from bitterness, and those he "poked his fun at" could join with others in the laugh it was so sure to raise. To write thus of our friend recalls to our memory many incidents over which we could linger, but time and space forbid. Suffice it to say that so far as his business and literary connection with the publishers of this paper was concerned, nothing could have been more satisfactory, and not alone by the writer of this notice, but by every one connected with the firm or on the staff of the *Dumbarton Herald* and *Lennox Herald* his merits were cordially recognised and appreciated, and by all his associates who survive him he is mourned for, not alone as a talented colleague, but also as a dear friend.

We have already indicated that the end came suddenly. On Tuesday night, Mr. Ferguson spent the evening with his family, and seemed not merely in good health but in good spirits. Soon after retiring to bed he became restless, and about three o'clock he complained to Mrs. Ferguson of suffering from a severe pain in the head, said he feared he was going to have a "shock" of some kind, and to send for the doctor. His fears were speedily realised, and before Dr. Cullen, the family medical adviser, arrived he had sunk into an unconscious state from which he never rallied. From the first Dr. Cullen could hold out no hope of recovery, and about six o'clock—only three hours after the blow came—one whom we had hoped had many years of usefulness and comfort before him here had entered the unseen world. Abstemious and temperate in an eminent degree, Mr. Ferguson on the whole enjoyed good health, but was subject to rather severe attacks of illness, not, however, so far as we are aware, of the nature to which, at the age of 55, he has succumbed. A useful, good man has been taken away, and for many a day to come he will be missed and mourned in his native Vale.

T. BENNETT

Vale of Leven, March, 1879.

## The Old Vale & its Memories

advice, and always cherished for him feelings which words fail adequately to express. . . . You have lost a loving father, I a steadfast friend, and the best tribute we can offer to the memory of the departed, is to embody in our lives his teachings and example."

### MOSS O'BALLOCH

It was a custom—I wonder if it prevails to-day?—for Vale folks not to put on a fire in the parlour until after the Moss o' Balloch—the 15th September—and not a few held the superstition that, if they got "by" the 10th March, there was little fear of their being cut off by pneumonia or any other dire malady. A walk round the Moss o' Balloch Fair Ground in the afternoon or evening was an institution. Probably the most popular booth was that in which the boxing took place, and in many a bout the boxers who ran the show were up against tough metal in the Vale lads. In those days tramways and motor buses were undreamt of, and the persons frequenting the show enclosure mostly hailed from the Vale, Renton and Dumbarton. The naphtha flares, the strident music from the Merry-go-rounds; the shouts of the Showmen; the resounding blow from the "try your strength" hammer, followed by the rattle of the ascending mark; the skelpin' o' drums by the Clowns; the cracks from the Shooting Saloons and the occasional ringing of the bull's-eye bell, and the laughter of the lads and lasses as they tried to knock over the Aunt Sallies, went to make up a scene never to be forgotten. And how many men are there in the Vale to-day, who, when boys, witnessed every show by creeping through a gap in the tent?

### BILL RUSSELL: A DESCENDANT OF ROB ROY

"THERE is a photograph of our Loch Lomond hero, Bill Russell," said Mr. Ferguson. "It is taken from a pictorial postcard that my friend, J. B. Purdon, sent to me away back in 1914. The actual photograph was taken by Mr. Harry Flowers, Alexandria. It will



## The Old Vale & its Memories

always arouse memories as will the following which appeared in the *Glasgow Evening News* the day after Bill Russell died :

'The death took place yesterday forenoon in Dumbarton Hospital of a well-known Loch Lomondside figure in the person of "Bill Russell." Deceased was born in Renton fully 74 years ago, and was well known to the visitors to Loch Lomond. Parties so favoured never forgot the tales of Rob Roy recounted by the subject of our sketch, who was proud of his descent on his mother's side from the famous outlaw. Bill early commenced his work as a "scow" man on the River Leven, but in later years he was engaged supplying coals to the various ports on the loch. These he carried in bulk on board his little craft, "Rob Roy." This vessel he lost by fire, and since that misfortune the veteran led a nomadic life, with his headquarters in a small houseboat at Balloch. In his day he rescued over a score of people from drowning.'

### DOCTORS CULLEN, FATHER AND SON

It is with pleasure that we are privileged to give a photograph of old Doctor Cullen, and in the same breath we state that he was never old, for he maintained his youth until the last. If the writer's memory serves him, the Doctor was in a railway accident at Dumbarton, and it was the effects of that which eventually told on him. The older generation in the Vale had as high an opinion of the old Doctor as the present generation has of his son, Dr. John Robert Fleming Cullen, M.B., better known as "Dr. Jack" by white-haired Vale folks, who remember him as a little boy. The Doctor is valued and very active, and, being in the profession he is, no one knows more about the family life of the Vale than he.

### WILLOCK'S DANCING CLASS IN PUBLIC HALL

ONE cannot forget the parties of our youth and the Dancing Classes. It is an old story, Willock's Dancing School in the side-room of the Public Hall, and those who chance to read this will be reminded of these happy days. Dancing was dancing then.





“OLD BILL” RUSSELL



DR. J. F. CULLEN

## The Old Vale & its Memories

Young men, when they went to a Ball, invariably took a spare collar. As there were no taxis and few cabs, it was a case of seeing the ladies home, and take it from me, that was one of the best bits of the Show. After midnight no "bawbee" was exacted to get across the Brig, for the reason that the gates were thrown wide and there was no Tollman there. I mentioned the mode of conveyance. Old folks in the Vale remember, too, that when there were marriages the guests were "lifted" and given a drive round the town. Ay, and the horses wore "lugs." Those were merry "hoochin'" weddings!

### THE GOLOSHANS

ONLY once did I hear a troupe of Goloshans in the Vale go through their entertainment. It was a pretty crude performance, the artistes being backward and cowed, doubtless due to their alleged efforts not being too welcome in houses which they had previously visited. Had the Goloshans selected a season other than round about the close of the year, they might have evoked more enthusiasm. The truth is that the Vale housewives tried to have their homes spotlessly clean—especially at that period—and they simply were not going to allow a when laudies wi' glaury feet to come in and make a mess of their kitchens, even although they had all the talent of the "C.C.C." or Queen's Minstrels. How much could be written about the Vale and music? Worthy men and women throughout the last fifty years have maintained the musical standard, and, although I have not the pleasure of his acquaintance, it interests me to see in the public prints what Mr. Archibald Macfarlane and those associated with him have been doing in the direction of entertaining the people in the Vale of Leven.

### "A MAN IN THE WATTER!"

I RECOLLECT a piece of vacant ground to the right of the Brig on the Alexandria side where "Cheap Johns" used to have their stances. Amidst the roaring of the paraffin lights, the rattling of



## The Old Vale & its Memories

the dishes, the banter of the "Cheap John," and the remarks of the spectators, we boys used to play at tig, and many a "clout" we got to "chuck" it. I remember when a sale was at its height a shout got up, "A man in the watter!"—and instantly everybody ran. The boat hook and life-buoy under the bridge were got out as well as the life-buoy hanging in the box on the Ferryfield wall. "Whaur's the man?" "I don't see any man!" cried a hundred voices. It was a hoax.

### KIRK SOIRÉES

IN my early days the Vale was noted for its Kirk Soirées. Only one drawback ladies felt to these social meetings; the humiliation of having to accept a "poke" in the vestibule. But the "poke" was the only way out of the difficulty, as it was impossible for a plate filled with cakes to sit on the sloping book board. Blocks of wood, however, were occasionally fixed upon which the cups sat. The false humiliation or indignity of the "poke" was more than neutralised by the ladies seeing the tea pouring from the highly polished brass kettles which they had lent for the occasion. The great thing in those days was to lend your brass kettle when there was a soirée in the Church or a "spree" in the Public Hall.

### WHERE THE OLD VALE LOVERS DID THEIR COURTIN'

IN the lives of some of us there is a period when we are keen on amateur theatricals. In a piece which I had actually the hardihood to play in, there was a scene—"An Evening Cruise." Whilst enacting the part of a Highland Captain, I had a little nipper trained to rush on to the stage—look up to me on the bridge, and shout: "Hey, Captain, stop the boat! I waant tae sklim hulls!" and, leaning over the canvas, I confidentially inquired: "Noo, whaat kin o' hulls would you like to skleem? Would you like to skleem the wan at the back o' Harry Lauder's hoose or the wan at the opposite side o' the chennel?" And at that moment a lady passenger observed "What weird sound is that I hear, Captain?"

## The Old Vale & its Memories

and I replied, "Mem, it's only a steamer calling to its mate," and thereupon another lady grumbled "I cannot possibly powder my nose, Captain, when the paddles are going," and I swiftly informed her: "We cannot stop the poat for that, mem, for we are due in Motherwell in ten meenits, and we are half an hour late as it ees."

It was the memory of these attempted interruptions to the navigation of the steamer, of which I was in charge, that made my mind jump to the hills on each side of the Vale which I have "skleemed" time and oft.

I suppose many young lads and lasses in the Vale to-day, when the weather is suitable, do some of their courting and kissing up Carman Hill, the Stoney mullen, Noblestone Brae, Murrich Glen, and on the path to the Pappert Well. Ay, and many a lassie on these paths has whispered "Yes," and received a film kiss, and many a lad has come back, with his arm round her waist, declaring inwardly that "he wadna ca' the King his cousin."

At certain periods of the year there were and, I reckon, still are, numerous pilgrims to the Pappert Well, whose water was declared to be as cold as ice. I remember an old Bonhill lady telling me that more than once in her young days she walked over the Pappert Well Hill to Stra'blane, where dwelt quite a number of people who had family ties with the Vale. In those days the Vale lads were great walkers, and there is scarcely one living to-day who has not from the lofty Ben Lomond seen the sunrise.

### A VALE WORTHY'S RETORT

In my early days it was the invariable custom, if one visited a house, to be shown the family album, and recalling this to an old Vale man, I added: "The way the young men long ago made themselves look like old men, by the style they wore their hair, and the way they cultivated whiskers from ear to ear, and shaved the rest of their face, made me often wonder how the lasses could ever fall in love with them," and my friend's reply was characteristic. He said: "They didna ken ony better."

## The Old Vale & its Memories

### JEELY PIECE EATERS

SOME time ago I was having tea in the lounge of a hydropathic. By my side was a Vale man. We were on such friendly terms that we could take the valued liberty of not speaking when we chose. Through the swinging doors came a man past middle age and bronzed. My Vale friend bent forward and said to me, "Surely I know that face?" The newcomer, catching my friend's eye, instantly came forward and, seizing his hand, asked, "And hoo are ye gettin' on, ye jeely piece eater?" "Fine! Fine! It's years since I heard that expression 'jeely piece eater,'" said my friend. In the Vale to-day I reckon there are hundreds of people who don't know that natives of the Vale and Dumbarton in the old days were designated "jeely piece eaters." How that came about, I suppose, was this: in those times fancy cakes were not so much in vogue, and folks in entertaining their friends gave them bread and jelly. Many of the "field" employees, too, had home-made jelly between the slices of bread they carried to the Works.

### TRAVELLING NO JOKE IN THE OLD DAYS

BEFORE the railway was extended to the Vale, buses plied between Alexandria and Dumbarton, and in an old article I came across, the query was put: "Who does not remember the 'Chieftain,' 'Rose,' 'Rapid' and 'Defiance'?" I recollect an elderly man telling me that in order to get from the Vale to Glasgow and back in the same day, he had to set out early on foot to Bowling, catch a steamer there, and return in the same way. If he had managed to lift some substantial accounts in Glasgow, he always felt very eerie as he walked past Dumbuck in the deepening darkness.

### "PEDS." IN THE HEATHER AVENUE

THE Vale of Leven never pretended to have anything aristocratic about it, but, nevertheless, it boasted of possessing an Avenue—the Heather Avenue—and, if anyone in the old days took a stroll there on a summer or autumn evening, he could be pretty sure





RUNNER WITH DESPATCHES



JAMES McLEAVY

## The Old Vale & its Memories

of witnessing some very fast running. It was in the Heather Avenue that the Vale's budding Peds. practised. So inborn was running in the Vale youths that, when the Football Club was formed, some of the players, including Johnny Ferguson, held corks in their hands. Wherein did the Vale become associated with running? Chatting once with Johnny Ferguson on that subject, he believed that what was chiefly instrumental in making runners in the Vale was the Sunday School Trips. Certainly in his case it was as a very small shaver he first got a taste for running at the Sunday School Trip. It would be very interesting to learn when shinty was first introduced into the Vale. All I remember is witnessing shinty players in the Old Cricket Park. At one of the trips of the Old Football Team, Mr. McGregor admitted that any success and pleasure he derived from golf was due to his having been a shinty player in his young days.

*I am indebted for the following information regarding Vale "peds." to a pamphlet supplied to me by Mr. Ferguson.*

### THE GREAT JAMIE McLEAVY

JAMES McLEAVY, of undying fame, must be given the honour of premier position in this brief sketch of famous athletes. I understand he was born in Bonhill. James McLeavy's brilliant career and many of his great achievements are of sufficient merit to command a place in the national annals of sport. In 1873, at eighteen years of age, he competed for the 4 miles championship of the world, at Lilleybridge, and won easily in 19 min. 52 sec. Some years afterwards, at Springfield, on snow-covered ground, he won a 4 miles handicap in 19 min. 58 sec., and thereafter issued a challenge to the world. He also assailed the mile championship, of which Hindle was holder, and beat Ridley in 4 min. 21 sec.; Hindle was third, 100 yards behind. McLeavy was a shining star, of whom the Vale might well be proud. His athletic career was a series of victories which earned him undying fame.

JOHN FERGUSON, Alexandria (now of Kilmarnock), was one of the most consistent and honest runners that ever toed the mark.



## The Old Vale & its Memories

Among his other victories, he won two half-mile handicaps in Glasgow from fields of 28 and 32 respectively. At Edinburgh he carried off first prizes in one mile and 180 yards handicaps, the entries being very large in both. Perhaps one of his greatest achievements was at the Gymnasium, Edinburgh, when in a 315 yards £20 handicap he was favourite, and ran so strongly that in the final heat he was only beaten close on the tape. Another to which he looks back with the greatest glee was the winning, with ease, of the half-mile at the Football Games, Alexandria—the great McLeavy being second. The excitement was intense.

ROBERT TAIG, as a cyclist, was one of the very fastest of Scottish wheelmen, and carried off an extraordinarily large number of trophies. His early retirement from the racing path was a heavy loss to the cycling world.

### CURRIE THE CLUGGER AND WRESTLER

JAMES CURRIE, Alexandria, was born in Ecclefechan (famous as the birth-place of the greatest of literary Scotsmen—Thomas Carlyle). During the period he resided in the Vale he built many thousand pairs of clogs. Currie, unlike most athletes of the past, clung to one form of sport—Cumberland wrestling. At eighteen years of age he was induced to compete in the yard of a Border publican for a silver belt. The entry-money was threepence; there were 32 competitors, and Currie, who was a total stranger, won easily. Soon afterwards he appeared at the Border Tournament, known as the “Carlisle Ring,” and after a great struggle in the final with John Strong, a noted wrestler, was awarded first prize. At this contest former first prize winners were barred. For twenty years he seldom suffered defeat—except at the hands of Loudon, Hexham, Clark, and Steadman. He successively overcame Geo. Davidson and G. H. Johnstone, Aberdeen; Kenneth McRae, Nairn; McCulloch, Oban; Anderson, Stirling; Bain, Elgin; Mellis, Huntly and Dumbarton; and all the minor Scotsmen and Englishmen. Currie had a neck as strong as a bull, and once pitched Mellis, who weighed about 17 stone, and was a very strong

## The Old Vale & its Memories

man, clean over his head, without other than balancing assistance from his arms. At the opening of the Vale of Clyde Running Ground he defeated Donald Dinnie. Later, at Luss, he overthrew Dinnie, the stake being a special purse subscribed by those on the grand stand—Currie having arrived too late for the regular event. Just before Dinnie left this country, he and Currie met at Greenock and Donald was vanquished. On the return of Gunner Nicol from his tour in the East, fresh from many victories over the Saracens and Greeks, Currie and he met twice at Busby, and, after a struggle of over an hour's duration on each occasion, the contest was abandoned. Some time later they met at Biggar, and Nicol, who possessed exceptional strength and agility, was worsted. These combats with the Gunner were in the Scotch style—Nicol being no match for Currie in the Cumberland mode.

### ANDREW HANNAH, CAPTAIN OF RENTON'S FAMOUS TEAM

ANDREW HANNAH at Renton Games in 1886 won first prize for hop, step and leap—distance, on level ground, 47 ft. 9 in. At Coalburn Games, in the following year, he was first with 47 ft. 7 in., level ground. At Tillietudlem Games, springing from behind a board, he made 48 ft. (first try), and, at the Committee's request, attempted to clear 50 ft., but tripped and injured himself. At Dumbarton Castle Grounds he did 46 ft. 10 in. His best long jumps were made at Renton (20 ft. 10 in.) and Coalburn (20 ft. 9 in.); standing jump, 9 ft. 7 in.; standing hop, step and jump, 29 ft. 7 in.; hitch and kick, 8 ft. 7 in. Whilst in football outfit, he often kicked the cross-bar of the goal posts. He carried off all the jumping events at Everton and Liverpool Games for years, and in a 150 yards' handicap there, off 5 yards, ran second to Fred Geary, the Nottingham flyer. He was tied to jump Tom Burrows (hop, step and leap champion of the world), but the stakes were withdrawn. He won a bowling tournament of the Liverpool Club; was in the first three in several billiard handicaps; could putt a 16 lb. ball 33 ft., and pole vault 9 ft. Hannah also had the great

## The Old Vale & its Memories

honour—the lustre of which he did not tarnish—of captaining the famous Renton Football Club when they won the championship of the world. He captained the renowned Everton Club when they won the English League Championship, and was three years Captain of the formidable Liverpool Football Club. Whilst in the latter city, Hannah accepted the challenge of the proprietor of a travelling menagerie to enter the den of lions. His reception was quite friendly. A gold medal was his reward. He retired on his laurels.

### A PILLAR OF SPORT

PETER CAMPBELL, of Renton, was a native of Lochaweside, but had been in the football village since he was quite a lad. He made a name for himself in early years. At his second outing, which was Alexandria Games, he beat Gavin Tait at hop, step and leap. For years he had few equals at a quarter-mile race, but was generally very severely handicapped. He was a couple of seasons in England preparing for the leading short distance events, and beat Dobson of Bradford and G. Walsh of Royton, both men of great speed, at trials, but was displaced in the finals, by, on one occasion, a breast. He competed against Buttery, the world's quarter-mile record holder, and was credited with doing very fast time. He was the chief supporter of the once almost unconquerable Renton Football Club, and the greatest pillar of sport in the village.

JOSEPH NEWTON, Alexandria, won a 3-mile handicap at Sheffield with a very small start, considering the calibre of the competitors ranged against him. He won many prizes at Highland Games, including Renton, Dumbarton, and Bridge of Allan. At distances from two to four miles it required a very good man to beat him.

RICHARD NEWTON, Alexandria, was a fast half-miler, and secured numerous prizes at nearly all the leading athletic gatherings. He crossed the Border and entered the lists against the Englishmen in a two-mile walking match, and won easily.

P. LILLEY, Renton, was remarkably successful at Highland Games at distances up to 440 yards.

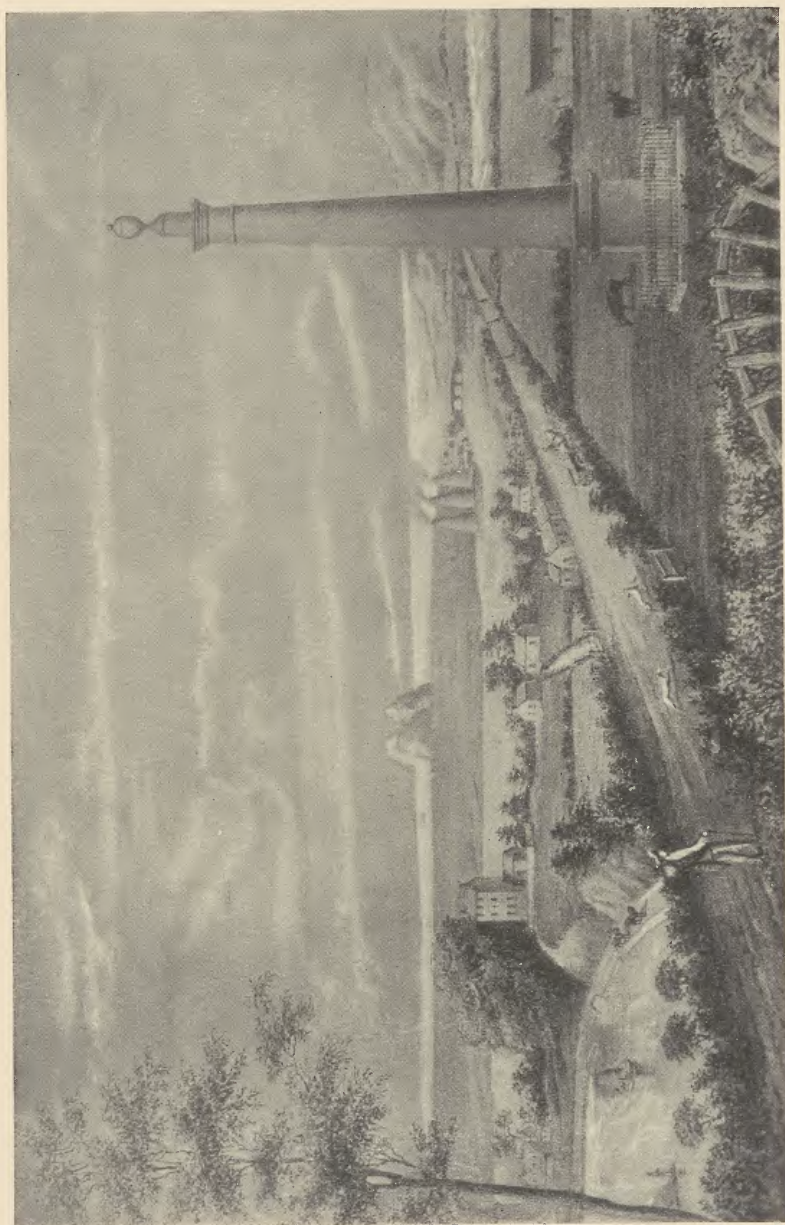




### RENTON FOOTBALL TEAM

"Champions of the World"

R. Ketso, halfback    A. Hannah, back    J. Lindsay, Goal    A. McCall (Captain), back    D. McKechnie, halfback  
N. McCallum and H. Campbell, right-wing    J. Kelly, centre half-back    J. Campbell, centre    J. McCall and J. McVee, left-wing  
Winners of the Scottish and Glasgow Charity Cups



RENTON IN 1775

## The Old Vale & its Memories

JOHN DRUMMOND, Renton, had also a fine turn of speed, and annexed many prizes at short distances.

ROBERT WILSON, Alexandria, won a half-mile handicap in Glasgow, the Brewers' Prize at Renton Games, and quite a number of other prizes of considerable value.

THE BROTHERS LOGAN, Bonhill, were amateur runners, and won over eighty prizes each. James tackled all distances from half-a-mile to 10 miles. He held the half-mile and one mile Scottish Championships for one year. Peter was best at from 100 yards to 440 yards. He was at one time a prominent member of the Vale team, as was also John McLeish, who played back.

### OTHER STARS

The following attained considerable fame in the various forms of athletic sport, but space is too limited to admit of their being dealt with in detail:—

Daniel Friel won 200 prizes (short distance runner); David McLay, Robert Kilpatrick, James White, Bonhill; John Campbell, Alexandria; James Kelly, Renton; John Davie, Alexandria; Robert Hendry, Alexandria, who beat Cochrane Cook at 150 yards; James Gray, of Alexandria (hop, step and leap); Walter Calder, of Alexandria (hammer, ball and weight thrower); Gabriel Ewing, Alexandria, who could clear the bar at 5 ft. 7 in. The foregoing names represent the flower of the athletes of the Leven Valley in—shall we say—recent times, although they probably do not include the whole of the men renowned for speed and agility.

### JAMIE McLEAVY AND DONALD DINNIE AT LUSS GAMES

At Luss Highland Gathering on 25th August, 1876, James McLeavy was first in the half-mile race; second, J. Campbell; third, R. Wilson. Heavy stone: first, Donald Dinnie, 36 ft. 10 in.; hammer: first, Donald Dinnie, 112 ft.; caber: first, Donald



## The Old Vale & its Memories

Dinnie; wrestling : first, Donald Dinnie; high leap : first, Donald Dinnie, W. Barlow and J. Barlow, equal.

### QUOITING IN THE VALE

ON Saturday, 28th October, 1876, John M'Gibbon, Glasgow, and Gilbert Wingate, Dumbarton, met on the Thistle Club's ground at Alexandria, and engaged in a game of 51 up, 18 yards, which resulted in favour of M'Gibbon—the numbers being, M'Gibbon, 51; Wingate, 17.

### BOWLING

WE first hear of Bowling in 1870, and a reliable record states that amongst the first members were Messrs. James Wilson, James Shearer, William Thomson, John McLintock and John Campbell. The Club greens to-day are situated close by the Christie Park, and the game is still highly popular.

### EPIDEMIC OF FIRES IN 1876

THE first of a series of fires which occurred in 1876 in Messrs. William Stirling & Sons' Works at Dalquhurn, broke out on Saturday morning, 20th May. Fortunately the fire was speedily subdued but not before £700 damage had been done. Then, at two o'clock in the morning of the 28th May of that year, fire was discovered in the shop of Mr. Alexander Ritchie, junr., grocer and flesher, Bridge Street, Alexandria. Being observed in time, the fire engine from Croftengea Works was speedily procured, and the fire was rapidly got under. Damage to the extent of £400 was done.

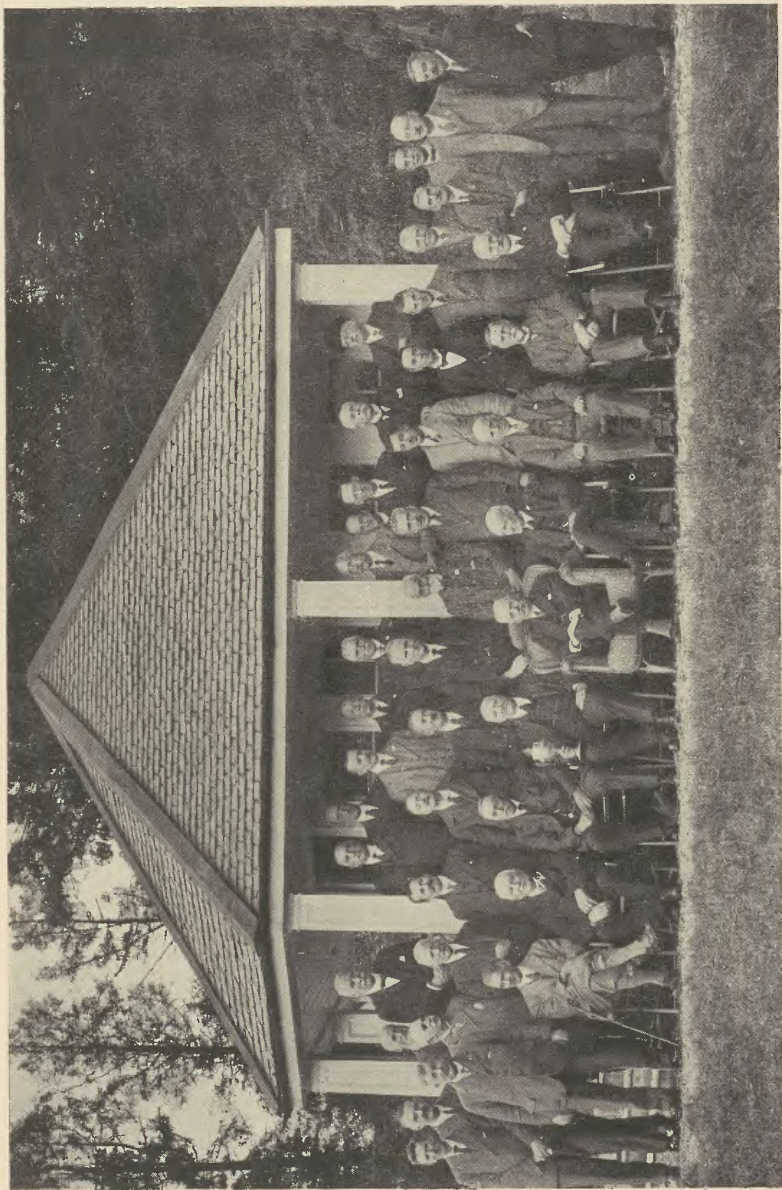
Late on Friday evening, 2nd June, 1876, fire was discovered in one of the Turkey Red Stores at Dalquhurn Dye-works, belonging to Messrs. William Stirling & Sons. By the prompt exertions of the night watchman and others, aided by the powerful steam fire-engine of the Works, the fire was confined to the building in which it originated. The damage was estimated at £1,200.

Early in the morning of the 1st October of that year, fire was discovered to have broken out in the extensive Turkey Red Dye-works at Dalquhurn belonging to Messrs. William Stirling



TARBET, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1923





THE OLD HEROES SURROUNDED BY THEIR FRIENDS, TARBET, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1923

Mr. James Ferguson in the Chair



## The Old Vale & its Memories

and Sons. The fire originated in the finishing warehouse which contained a large quantity of cloth and yarn, and was entirely destroyed. It then extended to a fringing house and also to a large drying shed, both of which buildings, with all the material they contained, were burned to the ground. The damage was estimated at £10,000. In the paragraph which appeared in the *Herald* at the time, describing the fire, there was also the observation: "These Works have of late been singularly unfortunate in respect of fires, this being the fourth that has occurred within the last six months."

Later appeared the following paragraph: "Messrs. William Stirling & Sons, the proprietors of Dalquhurn Works, have offered a reward of £100 for such information as will lead to the conviction of the offender or offenders by whom the fire on the 1st inst. and also the three previous fires occurring lately at the same Works were caused."

A Vale man, now resident in London, told me that he remembered a great conflagration at the Croft, three buildings being destroyed. He could not recall the date. All he remembered was that the fire happened on a Saturday night and attracted a large crowd.

### LATE ADAM R. COLQUHOUN

MR. ADAM R. COLQUHOUN was well known in the Vale. He was born in Dumbarton in 1845, and when quite a young man became an ironfounder in Alexandria—his Works adjoining the Old Football Park. In 1892, owing to the great depression then prevalent, he migrated to Canada, where in Broadview he built up a large and prosperous general merchant business, in which his only son, John, was partner. His health giving way, Mr. Colquhoun returned to Scotland in 1909, and died at Helensburgh in his 65th year. During the years he was in Broadview, it was stated in his obituary—"Whether it was as Justice, as President of the Board of Trade, or as Mayor, he showed an acumen and foresightedness which made his services in these capacities valuable to the community at large."

## The Old Vale & its Memories

### DISTRESSING ACCIDENT IN ALEXANDRIA

TWO MEN KILLED : SEVEN INJURED

A DISTRESSING accident occurred on 6th December, 1876, in Alexandria Turkey Red Works, belonging to Messrs. John Orr Ewing & Co., whereby two men were instantly killed and seven others more or less seriously injured. The men were engaged laying tile flooring over a series of brick arches in the upper storey of a building put up six months before, when two of the arches suddenly gave way, with the result stated. Dr. Cullen was promptly on the spot and, aided by Mr. Christie, the manager of the Works, and others, rendered every assistance possible in the circumstances. The sad event created great excitement in Alexandria.

### THE LATE SIR JAMES COLQUHOUN

MEMORABLE ACCIDENT IN DECEMBER, 1873

THE trustees of the late Sir James Colquhoun, Bart., of Luss, gave £50 as a donation to the Vale of Leven Humane Society. This was intended as a recognition of the assistance rendered by the society in the search for the bodies drowned in Loch Lomond in the memorable accident of December, 1873, the real extent of which assistance the trustees, it seemed, were not till recently made fully aware.

### THE BRIDGES OF THE LEVEN

THE following interesting letters appeared in the *Glasgow Herald* in January, 1877 :—

“25th January, 1877.

“SIR—In a recent number of your issue I observed a statement in effect saying that Captain Neilson, of the ‘Chancellor’ (a Loch Long steamer), had in one day navigated the ‘Prince of Wales’ steamer from Loch Lomond to Dumbarton, there to undergo repairs, and in going down the Leven had only to lower the funnel so as to pass Mr. Archd. Orr Ewing’s bridge without obstruction. Now, will you

## The Old Vale & its Memories

allow me to supplement this statement by informing your numerous readers that the steamer left her moorings at Balloch on Saturday and did not reach her destination at Dumbarton till the following Wednesday—a long time, certainly, for a boat under full steam. In order, it appears, to pass under Ewing's bridge, a great quantity of water had to be pumped into the 'Prince of Wales' to deepen her in the water, so as to enable her to pass under the Dillichip erection with safety. This little bit of information has, no doubt, been inadvertently omitted by your correspondent.—I am, &c.

“M. C.”

“103 West Regent Street, Glasgow.

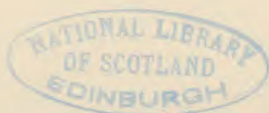
“27th January, 1877.

“SIR—In a letter headed 'Bridge on the Leven,' in your impression of Thursday last, we see it stated that—'In order, it appears, to pass under Ewing's bridge a great deal of water had to be pumped into the steamer "Prince of Wales" to deepen her in the water so as to pass under this Dillichip erection in safety.' We beg to state, as the engineers from whose plans the bridge at Dillichip was erected, that the under sides of the main girders, or lowest part of the bridge spanning the river, stand 2 feet higher above the water than Sir James Colquhoun's bridge over the Leven at Balloch, and 9 inches higher than Mr. Smollett's bridge over the same stream at Bonhill, both of which bridges the steamer had to pass under before reaching the Dillichip bridge on its way down the Leven.—We are, &c.,

“R. YOUNG & SON, C.E.”

“Renton, 25th January, 1877.

“SIR—In your impression of to-day 'M. C.,' under the above title, comments upon a previous statement regarding the passage of the 'Prince of Wales' steamer down the Leven to Dumbarton for repairs. 'M. C.'s statements are not correct, and his inferences are unfair; and as my name has been





## The Old Vale & its Memories

mentioned in the matter, perhaps you will allow me to put the facts before your readers. The steamer left Balloch on Saturday, 30th December, but on proceeding about a quarter of a mile down the river it was found that, from the low state of the water, she could not then be navigated. Accordingly she lay moored until the following Tuesday, by which time the Leven, in consequence of heavy rains, had risen about 14 inches. By reason of this rise it was necessary that the steamer should be lowered in the water to enable her to pass under Bonhill Bridge, and for this purpose about six tons of water were let into the hold. She left her moorings at 11 o'clock on Tuesday, and at half-past 12 was in Messrs. Wm. Denny & Brothers' shipbuilding yard at Dumbarton, the passage having thus been accomplished in an hour and a half—one of the quickest I ever made. In addition, I may mention that in passing under Bonhill Bridge we had only about half an inch of clear way, but while passing under Mr. Orr Ewing's bridge at Dillichip we had from six to eight inches to spare.—I am, &c.,

“ALEX. NEILSON,

“Captain of the Steamer ‘Prince of Wales.’”

### TWO WORTHY DIVINES

IN the letter which Mr. Duncan Ferguson wrote on 10th December, 1867, to Mrs. Gray, London, regarding the photograph of the Bonhill Band, he added the following:

“The Rev. Mr. Alison leaves next week for a five months' sojourn in Egypt for the benefit of his health. I am informed that he is going along with Mr. A. Orr Ewing and his daughter; the latter is also in search of health. Mr. Alison's pulpit is to be well supplied during his temporary absence by a number of his brother clergymen in the West of Scotland. Have you noticed that we are likely to lose the Rev. Mr. Hamilton, Renton? There was a paragraph in the *Glasgow Herald* stating that the Presbyterian Congregation



ALL THAT WAS LEFT OF THEM  
with Mr. James Ferguson at the Brig o' Doon, 26th September, 1925





BRIG o' DOON, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 1925



## The Old Vale & its Memories

of Regent Place, London (the late Dr. Hamilton) was about to give him a unanimous call. I know he preached two Sundays for Dr. Hamilton lately—indeed, he occupied the Doctor's pulpit the very day on which he (the Doctor) died, which was on the 24th ult. If he gets the offer, I am afraid we will not manage to keep him here."

### CALL TO JAMESTOWN CHURCH

A MEETING was held on Tuesday, 14th November, 1876, in Jamestown Church for the election of a minister in room of the Rev. J. M'Gavin Boyd, who was recently translated to New Monkland. The Rev. Mr. Martin presided. The Congregational Committee recommended two candidates, namely, the Rev. Thomas Rutherford, of Portobello, and the Rev. Daniel Miller, assistant in St. Stephen's Parish, Glasgow. On the vote being taken, Mr. Miller was elected to the vacant charge by a majority of 41 votes.

At a later date the Established Presbytery of Dumbarton met at Jamestown for the ordination of the Rev. Daniel Miller, late assistant in St. Stephen's Parish, Glasgow, to the pastorate of Jamestown Church and Parish, vacant by the translation of the Rev. J. M'Gavin Boyd to New Monkland. Mr. Ballingal, Balfroun, Moderator of Presbytery, presided, and preached from Ephesians, v. 1-2, after which he put the usual questions, and addressed both pastor and people on their mutual duties and responsibilities. There was a good attendance, and on retiring the members and adherents gave their new pastor a cordial welcome. In the afternoon the members of Presbytery and friends, to the number of 50, dined in Balloch Hotel. Mr. Archibald Orr Ewing, M.P., presided, and amongst those present, besides the members of Presbytery, were the Rev. Messrs. Ferguson, Strathblane; Boyd New Monkland; Drummond, Alexandria; Captain Roxburgh, Levenbank; Messrs. T. M'Lean, Alexandria; M'Alester, Auchencarrach; Miller, Young and White, Balloch; Menzies, Bonhill; and Brown, Drever, and M'Callum, Jamestown. In the evening a numerously attended soir e was held in the church, at which

## The Old Vale & its Memories

the new pastor was presented with a handsome pulpit gown and cassock, also a pulpit-bible, psalm-book, and hymnal, gifts of the ladies of the congregation.

### CALL TO LEVENSIDE FREE CHURCH

A MEETING was held in December, 1876, for the election of a pastor in room of the Rev. George Davidson, recently translated to the Free Barony, Glasgow. The Rev. Arch. Bell, Paisley, was unanimously elected to the vacant charge.

### WAT BRYSON, A WORTHY SON OF BONHILL

WAT BRYSON was a well-known and worthy son of Bonhill. He had a fund of Vale lore; he died 20 or 25 years ago. The boys in Dalmonach School used to get sketches from him of comic events to amuse them. Wat Bryson had been a pattern drawer and could draw and colour, much to the joy of the boys. He was a real lover of the young. The family of Brysons were highly respected. James Bryson, the present representative, I am sure could tell some racy stories about his uncle Wat which would appeal to a great many of the older inhabitants of the Vale.

### BONHILL PARISH COUNCIL

#### OPENING OF THE NEW OFFICES

IN the *Lennox Herald* of date 2nd April, 1927, there appeared an account of the opening of the handsome New Offices of the Bonhill Parish Council, in Gilmour Street, Alexandria. The Chairman, Mr. Donald M. Aitken, was presented with a gold key from the Architects and Contractors. After tea racy speeches were made, and while this booklet has ostensibly dwelt on "The Vale in Bygone Days," we have pleasure in giving a few excerpts from the observations made on that happy occasion.

#### "POSTMASTER'S HUMOROUS SPEECH

"Mr. MacGregor, in proposing the toast of 'Bonhill Parish Council,' said he had the greatest possible sympathy with the



"THE LOVING CUP," ALLOWAY, SEPTEMBER, 1925





BONHILL LOCAL AUTHORITY, 1890

A. McCallum	D. McCallum	And. McEwan	John Barr	Duncan Gordon	John McDonald	Daniel McIntyre	Supt. Water Works	John Wilkie	Thomas McLean
Gilbert Rankin	Thomas Gray	Thomas Kinloch	James Shearer	W. E. Gilmour	E. J. Jones	John Christie	James Parlanc	John McKinnon	Robert Urrie
A. H. Lindsay	J. Wilkie	P. Talbot	James McDougall	James Lindsay	Charles Glen	James Campbell	D. Livingstone	A. McQuattie	

## The Old Vale & its Memories

Councillors in their work. It said a great deal for such a body of men that they should shoulder such heavy responsibilities. He thought their load of debt was lying heavier on their hearts than their sins. (Laughter.) If the majority of them were consulting their own interests, they would be sitting by the fireside with their feet up on the mantelpiece. (Laughter.) Mr. MacGregor then went on to say that he dreamt that he went down to the Parish Council meeting one night. He found the Councillors all busy. Each of them had a pad in front of him. Mr. Davie was writing a pamphlet on 'Why go to Switzerland when you can get good ski-ing on Ben Lomond, and splendid accommodation at Tarbet Hotel —(laughter)—while Mr. Russell, the reporter, had just finished a picture in which he had capped Ben Lomond with its last coat of snow. Major Wright was listening in to Adam Shearer in New Zealand. Adam was busy singing 'Danny Boy' and 'Count your blessings.' (Laughter.) Mr. Barton was writing an essay on 'The rise and fall of the Irish egg,' and beside him were two postcards, one of Jimmy Quinn and another of Patsy Gallacher. Mr. M'Coll, the painter, was wondering, now that the spring cleaning was on, how he could be in three places at once, and beside him was a resolution he had drawn up abolishing the use of fly cemeteries, so that the flies could get walking up and down the walls at their will. John H. Paton had just finished a plan of a new putting green, and had marked in red ink that had there been a putting green in Eden, there would have been no trouble about the apples. Eve would have been too busily engaged marking up Adam's score. Then he came across Dan O'Hare. Dan was the only one of the Councillors who appeared to be happy in his task. He was humming the song, 'Will ye go to Kelvingrove, bonnie lassie, O?' —'Will ye go to the Orange Groves, bonnie lassie, O?' The others were busy filling up football coupons and marking up cross-word puzzles. He awoke just as Mr. M'Leod's two assistants entered the room and were handing him a drink. (Laughter.) They were all looking forward to a revival of trade in the Vale, and he was delighted to see them with such palatial premises." (Applause.)

"Mr. Barton, in reply, said that to him the Parish Council meet-



## The Old Vale & its Memories

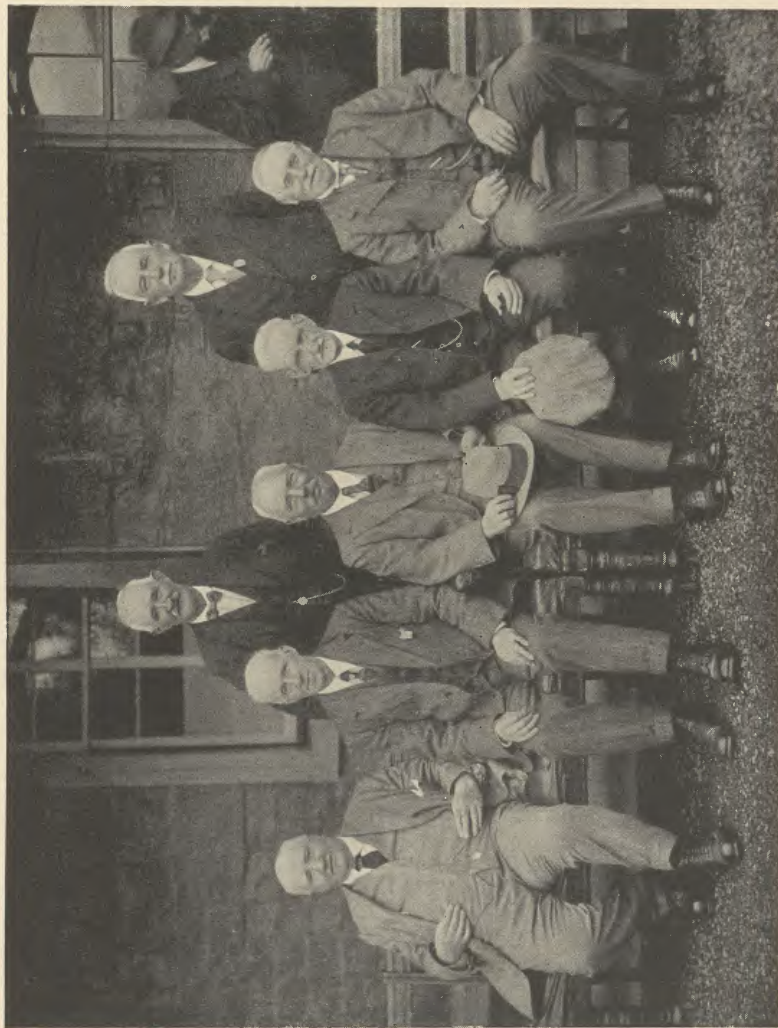
ings were very real indeed. They had had many a good fight, and had always agreed to differ. Mr. Barton spoke of the excellent work of the late Mr. Lindsay, and stated that Mr. M'Leod was proving a worthy successor." (Applause.)

### INTERESTING RECOLLECTIONS

"Mr. M'Intyre gave 'Former Members.'

"Mr. James Lindsay, in responding, recalled that he was a member of the old Parochial Board and Local Authority. Up till 1844, education and the relief of the poor were attended to by the minister and the elders of Bonhill Church. After that an inspector was appointed. The first was John Battison, then there were William Barr, Walter Smith, Mr. Risk, and, he thought, the late Mr. Lindsay. The first meeting-place was next door to the shoemaker's shop at the very foot of Bridge Street. Since then they had climbed up the hill. The water supply worried the Vale then, and it was remarkable that the great Henry Bell of 'Comet' fame, then employed in Dalmonach Works, was heard to declare that the only satisfactory solution of the difficulty would be to go high up the hills round Loch Lomond and bring the water down by gravitation, a plan which they knew had been adopted. For a long time there was no other supply than by pump wells, or from the Leven, till an enterprising member, Mr. Wm. M'Kinlay, pushed a scheme, and all the houses west of the railway were supplied from a spring on the hill above Middleton Farm, where the water was collected in a dam. But that left all the east side out, as well as Bonhill and Jamestown. Then came the idea of pumping from Loch Lomond; it was never satisfactory, and the Parochial Board was sorely exercised, and meetings often lasted till midnight. Other important schemes kept them busy. As far as he remembered, the prominent members of his time of service were Messrs. Alexander M'Quattie, E. J. Jones, John Wilkie, James Shearer, John Christie, W. E. Gilmour (in whose Institute they were now assembled), and his friend, Mr. Denis M'Callum, who was with them that night." (Applause.)





THE OLD SURVIVORS WITH MR. JAS. FERGUSON AT ARDLUI, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 1926



ARDLUI, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 1926



## The Old Vale & its Memories

### WILLIAM GAY, WHOSE SONNETS RANK WITH THE GREAT CLASSICS

ONE who in his modesty wishes to describe himself as "JUST A VALE MAN NOW IN ENGLAND" supplies us with, in our opinion, the gem of the book in the following most interesting details regarding Vale men, who truly made their mark and will long, long be remembered.

\* \* \*

"I think of the little band of boyhood, scattered, broken by death, in some cases with high hopes unfulfilled. Willie Gay, Walter Smith, James Rouse, William Primrose—what plans we planned for the future! William Gay, although born outside the Vale, came there as a little boy, and so was practically a Vale man. Born in 1865, he became a monitor in the Alexandria day school, and after a course of study there, won the Orr Ewing bursary, which carried him to Glasgow University. A restless ambition seized him: he gave up his university career, and went to London, full of dreams such as our other young Dumbartonshire poet, David Gray, dreamed; with the same sad result, a breakdown in health. Threatened with consumption, he went to Australia and there he secured a mastership at the Scotch College, Victoria. But ill-health pursued him and he died at Bendigo in 1897, at the early age of 32. A number of prose works came from his pen, and in addition a volume of poems. J. Glen Oliphant, who wrote the preface to the latter, said: 'William Gay's sonnets will rank with the great classics of the English language.' And, like all true poets, he was a prophet. Ten years before the Federation of Australia was accomplished, he prophesied its coming in the sonnet 'Australian Federation,' beginning with the words:

From all division let our land be free,  
For God has made her one: complete she lies  
Within the unbroken circle of the skies,  
And round her indivisible the sea.

"And this prophecy was made when Federation seemed very doubtful and difficult of accomplishment. His book of poems



## The Old Vale & its Memories

was published simultaneously in London and Melbourne, and made his fame secure.

A SONNET BY WILLIE GAY

### FAITH

O steep and rugged Life, whose harsh ascent  
Slopes blindly upward through the bitter night!  
They say that on thy summit, bathed in light,  
Bright Ones receive the climber, travel-spent;  
But I, alas, with dusty garments rent,  
With fainting heart and failing limbs and sight,  
Can see no glimmer of the shining height,  
And vainly list, with body forward bent,  
To hear athwart the gloom one wandering note  
Of those glad anthems which (they say) are sung  
When one emerges from the mist below.  
But though, O Life, thy summit be remote,  
And all thy stony path with darkness hung,  
Yet ever upward through the night I go.

WALTER SMITH, A POET OF NO MEAN ORDER

“Walter Smith, a Bonhill boy, also entered the University of Glasgow in preparation for the ministry, and had there a promising career which, alas, was cut off by comparatively early death. Successful in the class of English literature, he was a poet of no mean order, and a favourite student of Professor Ramsay. Many a night we walked together and ‘saw visions and dreamed dreams.’ I was reminded of those rare lines from the Greek, supremely translated by Cory :

“I wept as I remembered, how often you and I,  
Had tired the sun with talking, and sent him down the sky.”

DR. WILLIAM PRIMROSE

“William Primrose, another of them, who left the Vale for Glasgow University, won a scholarship in chemistry, and success-

## The Old Vale & its Memories

fully passed through, and became an eminent Glasgow doctor. Quiet, unobtrusive, capable was he. Now retired from his professional work, he is living among beautiful surroundings 'on the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomond.' And then there was James Rouse, who, with indomitable pluck, and that Scots characteristic which has been described as 'a downright refusal to give in,' fought his way on, and is now a much-respected minister, with a devoted congregation.

"Such were some of the comrades of our youth!"

### TOM FERGIE, THE DALMONACH BUYER

Many Vale folk still remember Thomas Ferguson, the commercial buyer for Dalmonach Works: Tom Fergie, he was familiarly called. A kindly, lovable man, sterling in his principles, no turning to the right or the left, but going straight on: always helpful to those in trouble; cheery ever.

### JOHN CHRISTIE, A LEADER OF MEN

John Christie began his career as a young chemist at Croftengea, then became manager and finally assumed the position of head of the great United Turkey Red Works. He died at the ripe age of 90, "a shock of corn fully ripe." He was an outstanding figure, a born leader of men. I can see him now, "standing at the plate," in the old U.P. Kirk in Bridge Street, where he was one of the managers. Carlylean in his outlook, he would tolerate no shams. A hard worker himself, he had no time for shirkers, and his sons still carry on the worthy tradition. Who can forget his valedictory address to the workers, written when sorely stricken himself? I read it as one who reads the words of a great Captain of Industry, and inwardly wished I had been under his leadership, as I once nearly was, but for my being too young. Yes, he was one of those of whom Shakespeare said:

"And the elements  
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world 'This was a man.'"

## The Old Vale & its Memories

THE following letter, practically the valedictory address of Mr. John Christie, first appeared in the U.T.R. Magazine:

Levensfield,

Alexandria,

Dumbartonshire,

December 1922.

To one and all in the U.T.R.

Another year draws to a close, a new year approaches. Soon another Milestone will be reached and we shall set out again on our way.

This should be a time of thankfulness and of good cheer. I am trying to write such a message.

For over 60 years you and I have worked together. Together we have faced trials and difficulties, together we have met prosperity and adversity, together we have shared joys and sorrows. It is with thankfulness I recall these days.

And we have always won through. It is this thought that sustains me in my message of good cheer.

The last eight years have been unprecedented in my lifetime. Following the horrors and wreckage of the war, want of business and unemployment has laid a heavy hand on all of us. But I feel sure, in the light of past experiences that by united effort and cheerful co-operation we shall win through yet again.

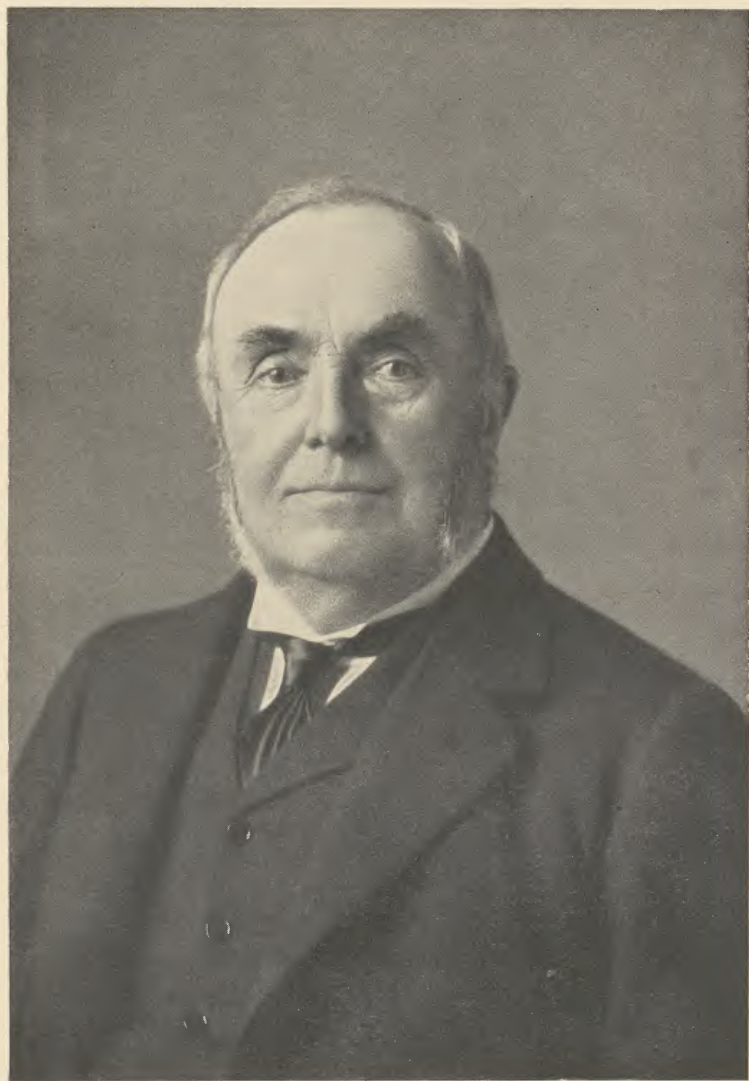
Let us endeavour to understand one another better, let us appreciate each other's difficulties and let us be determined by putting our shoulders to the wheel to keep our Industries going.

It is my hope that the success of our Company will benefit everyone and be reflected in the homes and lives of all of us.

I wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Yours faithfully  
John Christie





JOHN CHRISTIE

*Photo by Elliott & Fry, Ltd.*



WILLIE MACKINNON  
OF "QUEEN'S PARK" F.C.

A worthy opponent and staunch friend of the Old Vale

## The Old Vale & its Memories

But there are so many others, many men of the rank and file too numerous to mention in the time at my command. I recall big-hearted Hugh McVean, the Burns lover and Gladstone worshipper, with his cronie, kindly Dan McMillan, who still survives him; James Gentles, one of Nature's noblemen, gentle by name and by nature; my old Sunday school teacher, with a class of wayward boys, hard to manage, but he did do it. And now that he is long cold in death, we boys who are left never forget him. We remember possibly little of our lessons; "with a mist of unshed tears," we see in memory that patient face. Then there was Sandy Campbell. Who can ever forget Sandy's rendering of Murray's poem "The Whistle"? A very centre of mirth was Sandy, the life of the company wherever he went. He, too, has "passed over."

### WE'VE DONE IT AT LAST!

PEOPLE in the Vale will remember Peter Ewing, a man who was sure, steadfast, turning neither to the right nor the left, firm in his religious and political beliefs, and with it all, kindly, tolerant and human. A Liberal of the old school was Peter. Election after election he saw his candidate go down to defeat but he never forsook the beaten side. Years intervened, another election came round, and this time the Vale man who supplied these notes, young and enthusiastic, fought by the old man's side. Fought, and again lost. "I left home soon afterwards. A further election came when I was far away. Peter's candidate won! I went home on a holiday, and one of my first calls was on the old man. I can picture it all now; he was practically in his dotage, a faithful unmarried daughter looking after him in his little cottage. I lifted the latch on the old garden gate; one of those gardens with old-world flowers, wall-flower and sweet-william, thyme and southernwood and roses, and there, sitting under a tree, was the old man and his daughter. I heard her crooning to him an old song, one of the 'auld Scots sangs that make our een grow dim.' His daughter looked up: 'Oh, here's a friend come to see you!' The old man rose; he was, as I have said, in his second childhood, but the old recollection



## The Old Vale & its Memories

flashed out. He tottered towards me, his eyes glistening. The memory of old political battles came back. As I observed, I had been away from it all, and in the interim his candidate had won! He took me tremblingly by the hand and, in a voice shaken with emotion, cried: 'We've done it at last! We've done it at last!'

### DONALD MACFARLANE, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF NATURAL PHILOSOPHY

"I REMEMBER, very dimly, Donald Macfarlane, who went from the Calico Print Works, and, climbing on, became Assistant Professor of Natural Philosophy in Glasgow University, under the great Lord Kelvin, then Sir William Thomson. There is a story told of the Professor and his Assistant. Sir William addressed the students but, his mind soaring into the cloudland of the Higher Mathematics, he suddenly became nonplussed, and asked his Assistant: 'Mr. Macfarlane, Mr. Macfarlane, what are 9 times 9?'

"I can remember the Assistant Professor, after years of strenuous work (he was one of those, I believe, engaged in the laying of the Atlantic Cable), coming back to the old U.P. Kirk in Bridge Street. He was an old man with silvered hair and a bit feeble. With reverence he took part in the plain, bald Presbyterian service of those old days, as he had done when a boy.

### THE BLUE ROSETTES AND THE RED ROSETTES

"AND should we not include in our list of Vale Worthies, those Englishmen who became almost akin to ourselves? Edward James Jones, Tom Partington, the music lover, who never failed to visit me when he came across the border; his brother William; Harry and Bill Holland, and many others. Tom Yates was a later addition to the band, one of the most lovable men I have ever known. Tom was one of the friends of my youth. He was a rigid Tory and a strict Episcopalian churchman. He travelled three miles on Sundays to his own Episcopal Church at Dumbarton; and I liked him for it. Some Scotsmen in England, I fear, too quickly forget their mother church, and are apt to 'swim with the stream'; but



CYCLING CLUB

J. Murphy	S. Kinnear	A. Young	M. Nicholson	J. Smith	Colonel Orr
J. Mathers	J. Kinnear	W. C. Wood	A. H. Lindsay	P. Gilbert	R. S. Soutar
		Jas. Wright	J. W. Ritchie	W. Downie	



SHOOTING TEAM, F COMPANY, ALEXANDRIA, 9TH ARGYLE AND SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS

Cpl. White	Sgt. Harvey	Pte. Smith	Pte. W. Sharp	Pte. Nelson	Cpl. Paton
Pte. Gillespie	Cpl. Craig	Pte. McFarlane	Cpl. Graham	Cpl. Gillies	Cpl. Williamson
Sgt. Ferguson	Col.-Sgt. McGlashan	Lieut. Bell	Major Wright	Lieut. T. Gordon	Sgt.-Inst. Riley
					Cpl. D. Ritchie



## The Old Vale & its Memories

Tom didn't. While holding strongly to his political principles, and his own church, he just as strongly respected the convictions of those who differed from him. I was on the opposite side of politics, very much so, and, being young, was inclined to be a little bit intolerant of my opponents. But Tom was one of a few who taught me to be tolerant, because he said he knew that I held my opinions honestly, and so, he added, 'you must give credit to your opponents likewise.' When the election day came we were in separate committee rooms, but Tom, meeting me, took my arm, and we walked up the street together arm in arm, he with his blue rosette and I with my red.

### ALLAN BAYNE

"SHALL we, can we forget Allan Bayne? That gentle, kindly soul! I remember lying on the heather, on the moor, one far away Saturday afternoon, reading. A stranger came towards me and we began to talk. Boylike, I was thrilled, yet puzzled by his conversation. He talked poetry, clairvoyance, telepathy, and such like. He had the fundamentals. 'Sandy,' he said, 'the Law of the Lord is perfect, perfect as a square in mathematics.' I had read the words in the Old Book: 'The Law of the Lord is perfect'; but, as he repeated the words, they burned themselves into my very soul and have remained there ever since. Allan was ubiquitous—here, there, and everywhere. Walking, sketching, skating, and uttering such keen things! I used to meet Allan on my annual visits north. In his 'wee den' were books on the shelves, books on the table, books on the chairs, and books on the floor. It was said that he sent a little book of his poems to the different crowned heads of Europe and to the Pope. A character, unique and sometimes not easily understood; a door difficult to open, except with one key—love! Peace to his ashes!"

Time would fail me to tell of them all, and I may by omission give pain to some of the relatives of men who still have memories of their companionship, but I can only ask them to forgive my attempting an impossible task.

And lastly, good and true Vale men, we remember, those who

## The Old Vale & its Memories

went down in life's battle, the so-called "failures," the unfortunate "also rans." Burns remembered them when he wrote :

"Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,  
Their fate we should na' censure,  
For still the important end of life  
They equally may answer." . . .

It may be hard sometimes for those who still stand erect, fighting with a certain degree of success, to understand how those who failed, and fell, do "equally answer the important end of life." But the Supreme Judge holds the scales, He judgeth justly. What the world often calls failure, He may deem success! With bowed heads let us remember that!"

### BONFIRE ON CARMAN TO CELEBRATE THE MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

WHEN the Prince of Wales (later King Edward), was married to Queen Alexandra, the Vale rejoiced by a fireworks display at the front of the Hall, which was then just newly finished. To Carman Hill the youths carried coals, wood, tar, etc., and had a grand bonfire which could be seen in many counties. The fire cracked the big rocks badly and the damage can be seen to this day.

### A SIN TO WHISTLE ON THE FAST DAY

MANY people still alive remember the strictness with which the Fast Days were kept by many families in the Vale until these became annual holidays for excursions, etc. During this period of strictness the "steerin'" boys of Alexandria used to go to a neighbouring parish where the Fast was on a different day, and had the pleasure of a frolic and feeling very wicked by whistling which, of course, was not allowed inside the parish where the Fast was being held.

### THE GAME OF BULLETS

THE block cutters and printers played this game generally on Saturday afternoons on the Luss road between Alexandria and the Loch shore. This road having stone walls on each side allowed

## The Old Vale & its Memories

this game to be practised without losing the bullets. The game seems to have been—who could throw the bullets one or two miles in the fewest number of strokes. These bullets, weighing 6 or 7 lbs., were “fired” along the road and followed up by the competitors. How the foot passengers escaped injury has always been a mystery as the road was a twisty one and these bullets came hurtling round the corners in a most hair-raising manner.

### ANOTHER FAVOURITE COURTIN' PLACE

ANOTHER son of the Vale now located in England writes: “The Heather Avenue ran from Tullichewan to the intake of the Croft Lade and was lined with well-grown trees on both sides nearly all the way. The road being made up of cinders, and there being no wheel traffic, it had a fine smooth surface, and was the favourite resort of young men on summer evenings practising running and such like sports. When velocipedes came in, the Heather Avenue was perfect for learning to ride, and there was many a spill before the main road could be ventured on. It was also a favourite “courtin’” place in the dark nights.

### VALE STORIES

THE Vale being in the “Rob Roy” country, many of the inhabitants were believers in fairies and death stories. One sad instance was the experience of the mother of a promising young man, a tutor who had gone to fish with his pupils. During the evening the mother heard a crash on a window-sill like a stick being brought down on it sharply. She was convinced there was to be a death in her family. Next morning the news was received of the drowning of her tutor son about the hour she heard this premonition.

\* \* \*

In the Vale Print Works there were not a few officials imported from Lancashire and their families were fair game for the boys at school. One favourite amusement was to get them to say “loch” and another to ask them to say “humplock o’ glaur,” and further

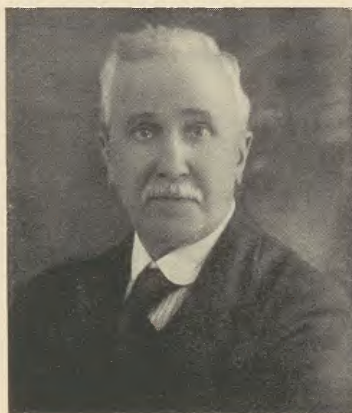
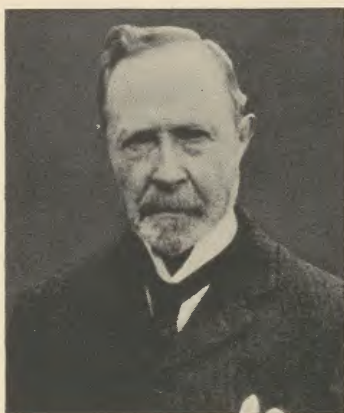


## The Old Vale & its Memories

to ask them to translate the latter. These and other tests caused great amusement to the local scholars.

\* \* \*

A story is told of a worthy grocer in the Vale who, in serving a customer with "saut herrin'" out of the barrel, discovered that the scale had gone down too heavily, and he there and then nipped off the head of one and flung it back into the barrel. A case of being "jist richt before being generous."



TWO OLD CRONIES OF THE VALE

### A HUMAN SERIES OF RECOLLECTIONS

A SON OF THE VALE who regarded it as a privilege to read a proof of these reminiscences and look at the portraits, wrote the following letter, which is so full of interest to Old Valeites that we take the liberty of giving it in this book :

Dear Mr. Ferguson,

I return herewith the Vale MS. and portraits, etc. The latter brought back many well-remembered faces and scenes, and the MS. many memories, some interwoven of pleasure and pain. I thank you sincerely for sending me the papers, and I must congratulate the author and collectors for a deeply interesting and human series of recollections. They are *human*, and that is the main thing.

## The Old Vale & its Memories

A visit to the Vale now is to me largely a pilgrimage through a kirkyard. I used to delight, in my yearly visit to the Vale, to foregather with old friends and fight old battles over again. Now there is hardly one left. "New men, strange faces, other minds."

All this is inevitable, and I do not state it to grieve. One has always the Leven and the Loch, and the Everlasting Hills! . . .

I did not know until I read your MS. that John McDougall was no more. He and Andy McIntyre and Sandy McLintock were all three in Ferryfield a great many years ago; as was Sandy Lindsay, the cricketer. I remember Sandy when the Works were on overtime (Sandy "kept" the big engine and rang the bell), practising bowling on summer nights at the Ferryfield lower gate, beside the Leven. Inside the closed gate was an iron rod for wicket, at which Sandy delivered successive balls!

I was closely associated for two or three years with politics in the Vale, on the Liberal side, being Secretary of the Liberal Association. To use Dr. George Macdonald's fine old phrase: "the man who stands highest in the oratory of my memory," is Robert Threshie Reid, then Q.C., who became Lord Chancellor, Earl Loreburn, G.C.M.G. There was something so big about the man. He held strong opinions, held them tenaciously; but never offensively. For clear, terse statement he was unequalled. And, with it all, he had a great, warm, human heart. James Currie, the wrestler, like R. T. Reid, a Dumfriesshire man, was a great henchman at Liberal meetings. Woe betide anyone who attempted unfair interruption!

Mr. Reid's defeat was regretted by some of the staunchest Tories, apart from politics; he had fought so straight and so clean. And in the hour of defeat, standing in the room with his committee, after the result was declared, when "wild and whirling words" were spoken by some of the tired and disappointed men present, he was the one calm,

## The Old Vale & its Memories

strong figure, "holding everything in due proportion," and refusing to be cast down. "My Liberalism forms a part of me," he said, "in the same way as my religion forms a part of me, and no defeat can alter that."

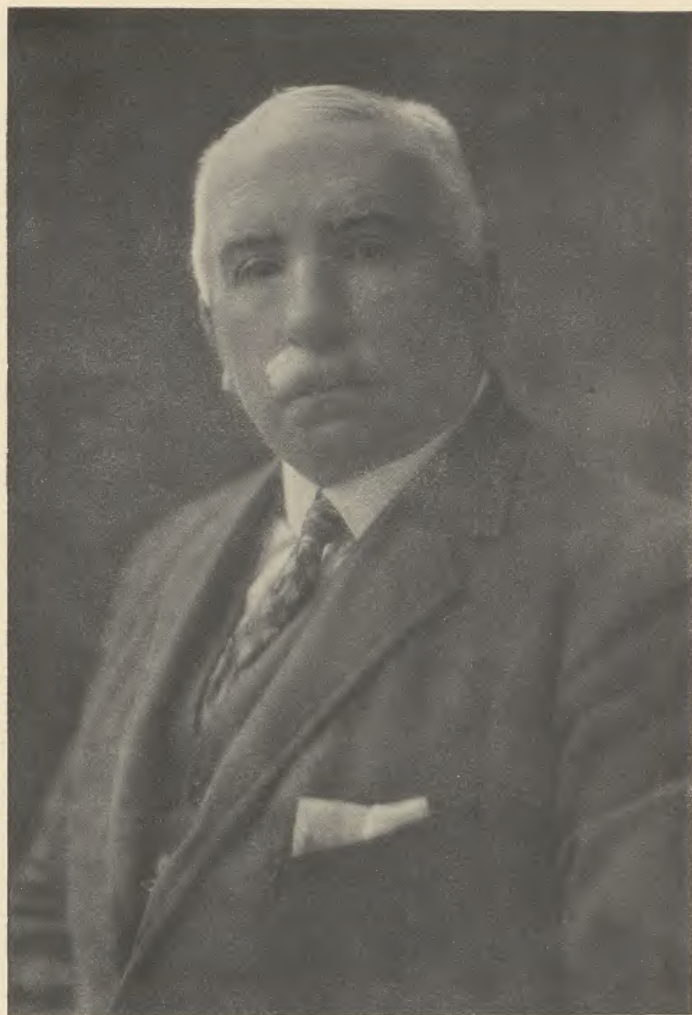
He rose to the highest rank in his great profession, became, as I say, Lord Chancellor, and his services, along with Sir Richard Webster, in the Venezuelan Arbitration were rewarded by the Conservative Government of that day with the G.C.M.G. In it all he remained the same simple, loyal gentleman; he was no party hack, and had friends among all parties in both Houses. He was known as "Bob Reid."

He favoured me to the end of his life with wise counsel in correspondence. His remains were placed in the old churchyard at Mouswald, Dumfriesshire, "*within sound of the Solway that he loved.*" . . .

### HAPPY DAYS ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES "SAIR HAUDEN DOON"

THE other day, sitting in Kensington Gardens, turning over the leaves of a magazine, I came upon the following sentence: "A man who can intelligently talk about the happenings in the 'sixties cannot be a dull companion." Had the words "in an ornair way" been substituted for "intelligently," my friend Ferguson and I might have flattered ourselves by saying that the sentence could have been applied to these Old Tales of the Vale. Some of us, when we get up in years, welcome a bit of flattery, probably because we rarely remember getting it in our youth: in our early days we too often thought we were occasionally, and perhaps deservedly, "sair hauden doon." All the same, we got a good deal of pleasure one way and another, and most of the pleasure was in the daft things we did. As a boy, I regarded it as a great privilege and joy to be permitted to play at "Key Hoi" with Mr. Reddoch's son in the Public Hall. Mr. Reddoch was a faithful servant, and the condition he laid down was that if his son and I played in the hall, it must be in our stocking soles. When the play ended





James S. Carey.  
J. G. Temple.

---

## The Old Vale & its Memories

we had little stocking soles left. Mr. Reddoch latterly became Beadle of the Rev. Dr. Walter C. Smith's Church at the corner of Dundas and Holmhead Streets, Glasgow. When there was a soirée in the Public Hall, my grandfather usually supplied the tables and trestles, and on the following morning, when these were being removed, my eyes gleamed as I came upon dropped conversation lozenges, Scotch mixtures and raisins. I never forget the remark of a Bridge Street woman to the query of one of my grandfather's joiners as he was placing a table on a barrow. "An hoo's John keeping noo? Ony better?" "Oo ay: he's awa' up to the lair for a smoke."

### MR. JOHN NEILL'S RECORDS AND REMINISCENCES OF BONHILL PARISH

THIS "bit crack" about old days in the Vale, which, by the way, I need hardly say, yields my friend, Mr. James Ferguson, and myself much pleasure to submit to our friends, had been completed, when my colleague handed to me "Records and Reminiscences of Bonhill Parish," by John Neill, published in 1912. Then and there I read the book from cover to cover; every item interested me, and I felt when I came to "The End," that had I known that such a valuable work had already been published, I would seriously have considered whether I should have dared to associate myself in giving these reminiscences embraced in "Our Old Home and its Memories." However, I console myself in the fact that our mission, while not exactly a consecutive record of the "Vale in Days Gone By," is one that will, at least, prove acceptable to not a few people on each bank of the Leven. Already I have referred to the capability of the late Mr. John Neill as a correspondent; now, I add my high appreciation of his "History of the Vale" embraced in "Records and Reminiscences of Bonhill Parish."

## The Old Vale & its Memories

### A WORD IN CLOSING

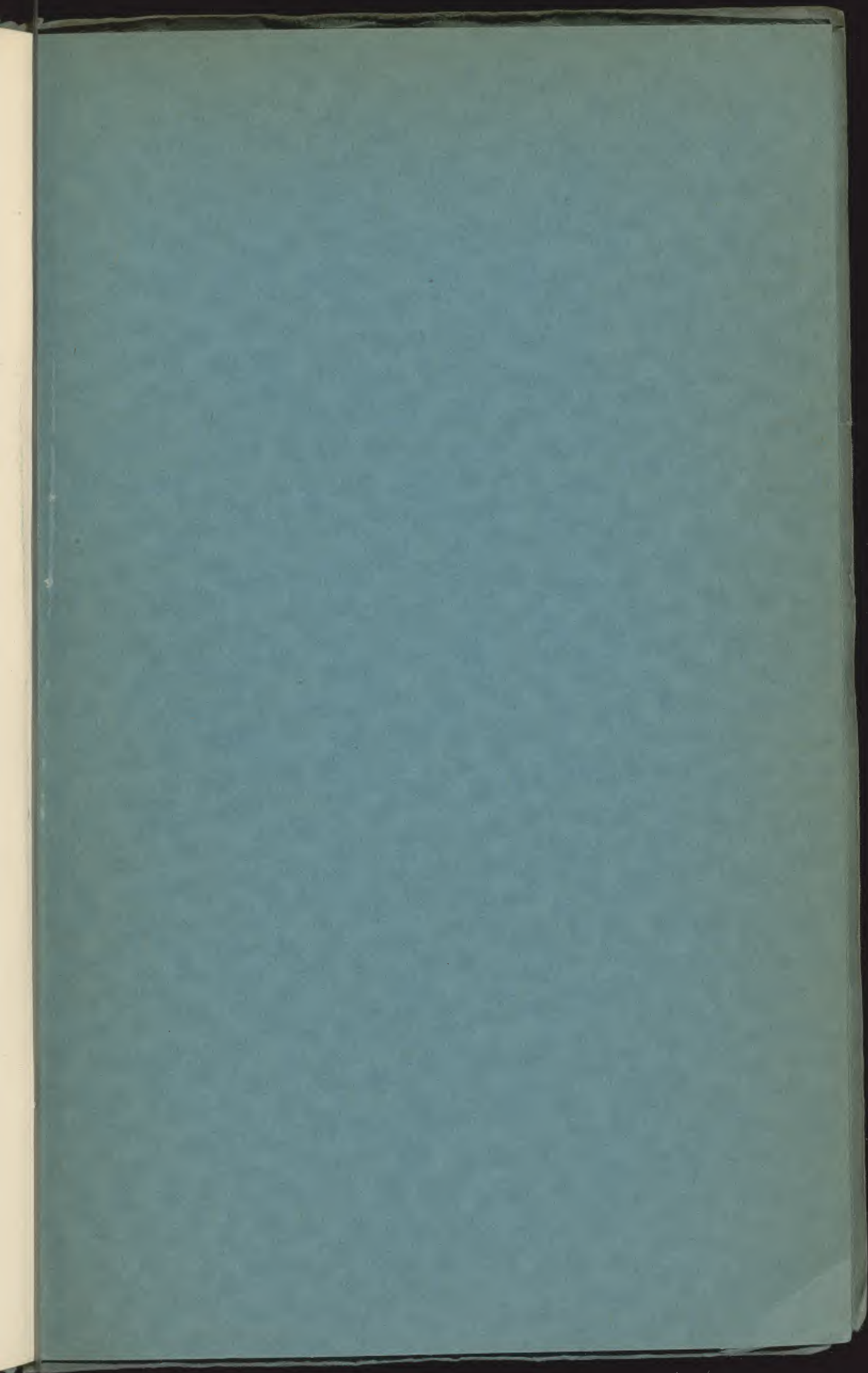
IN these early days of pump wells, some situated periously near ash-pits, the idea of the Vale having a water supply from the hills beyond Luss was never dreamt of; and if one had predicted that there would be electric cars and motor chars-à-bancs plying from Glasgow to Balloch, he would have been regarded as speaking through his hat. We set out to deal with events which happened forty, fifty and nearer sixty years ago, and we hope we have not wearied you. The Vale owes much to the men who lived in these bygone times, but it owes vastly more to its gallant sons who in later years laid down their lives in order that we, our children, and our children's children, may live in safety and in peace.

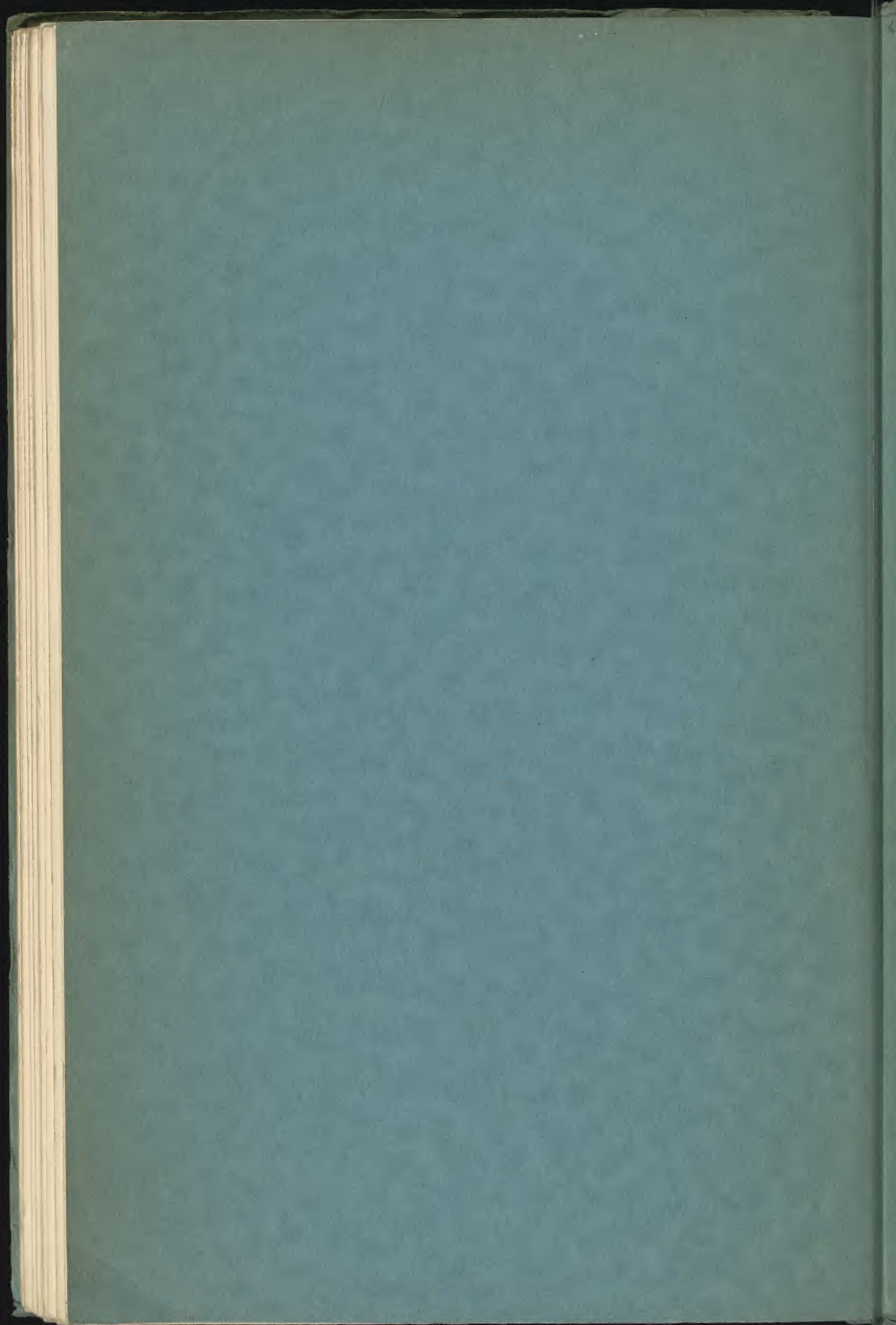
Your aul' friens,

J. F. and J. G. T.

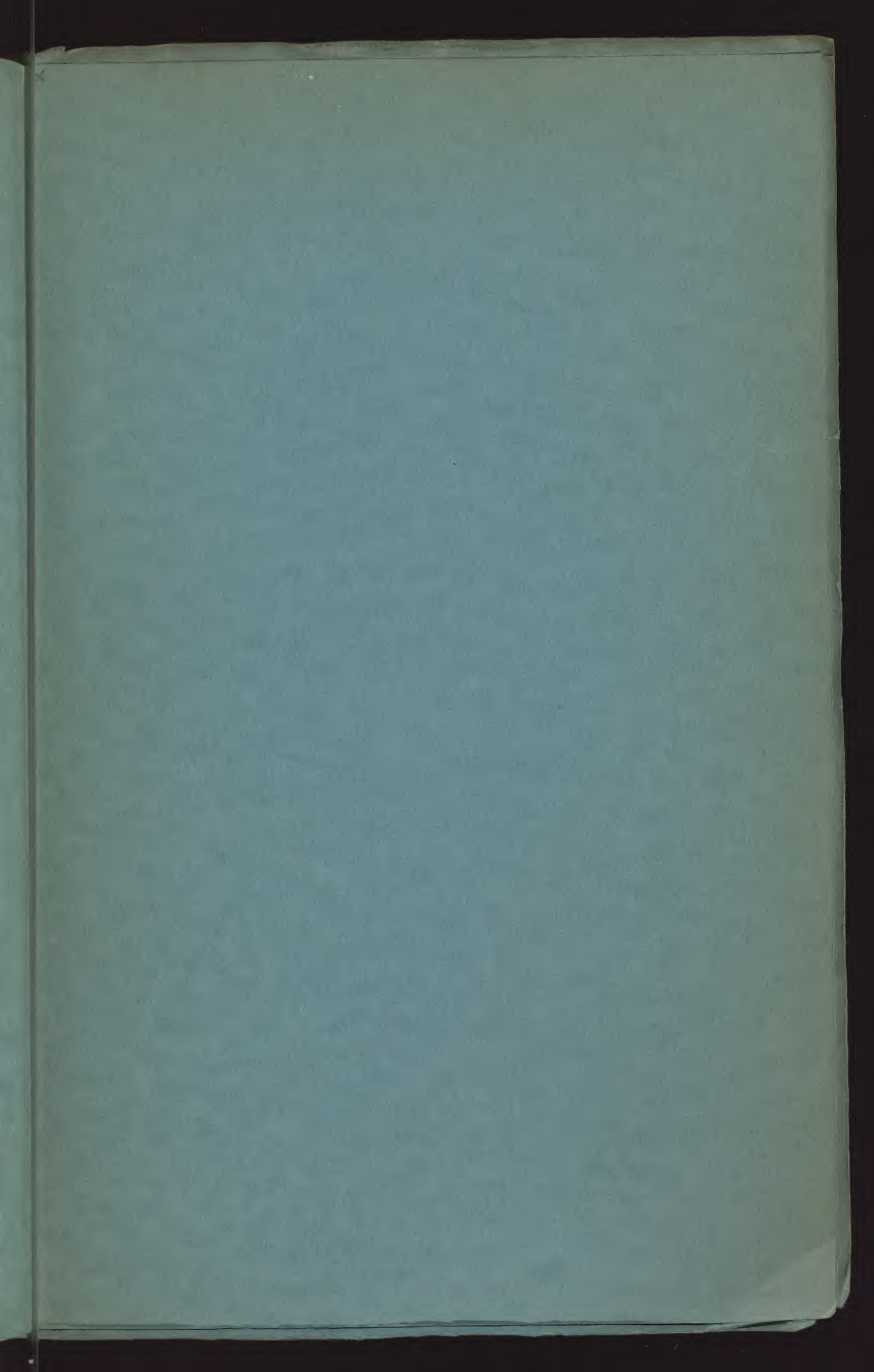


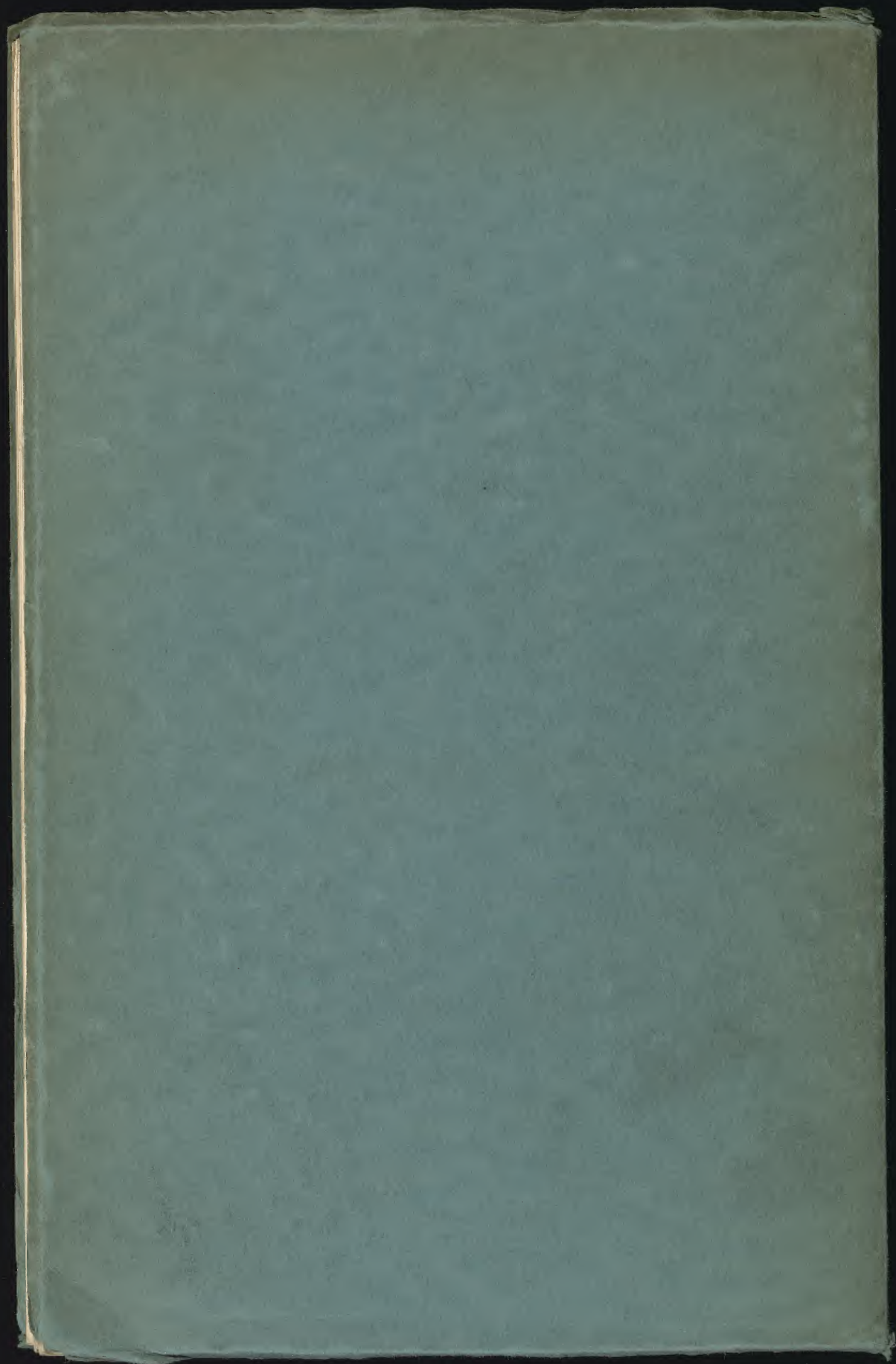
Printed by  
GEORGE W. JONES at *The Sign of The Dolphin*  
in Gough Square, Fleet Street,  
London, E.C.4











colorchecker CLASSIC



xrite

mm



colorchecker CLASSIC



mm

x-rite