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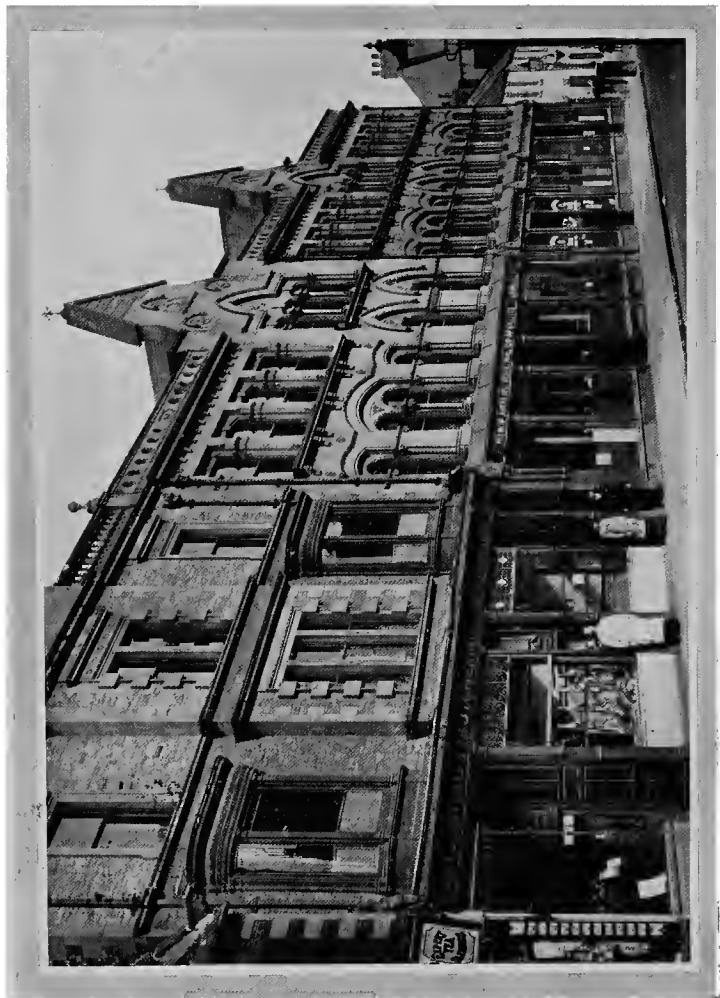


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HISTORY OF THE
BISHOP AUCKLAND CO-OPERATIVE
SOCIETY LIMITED.



CENTRAL PREMISES IN 1910.

HISTORY

OF

THE BISHOP AUCKLAND INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE FLOUR AND PROVISION SOCIETY LTD.

FROM 1860 TO 1910.

BY
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1910.

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PREFACE.

SHOULD the literary critic deign to notice this little book, he will find in it abundant room for the exercise of his art. The writer has had no literary experience, and makes no claim to literary ability; having therefore neither fame to blast, nor vanity to wound, he can with a degree of equanimity accept the critic's verdict.

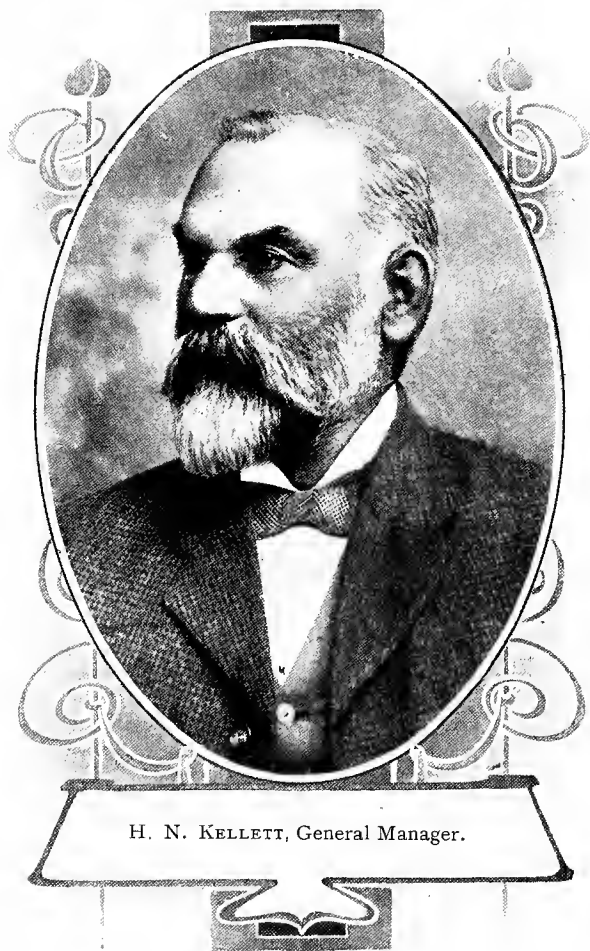
The purpose has been, in writing this book, to place before the reader as complete and coherent a view of the rise and progress of the Society as the materials at his disposal and his ability would allow. The task has not been easy.

The distance from some of the most interesting periods, the scarcity of authentic information, the loss of the minute books of ten most interesting years, and the fact that much of it has been written in the spare moments of a somewhat busy life, have all combined to limit its comprehensiveness, and mar its continuity. We have not followed a strictly chronological order, but rather a consequential order, grouping together events which are of a kindred nature, and this we venture to think will give the reader a clearer conception of the various lines of development.

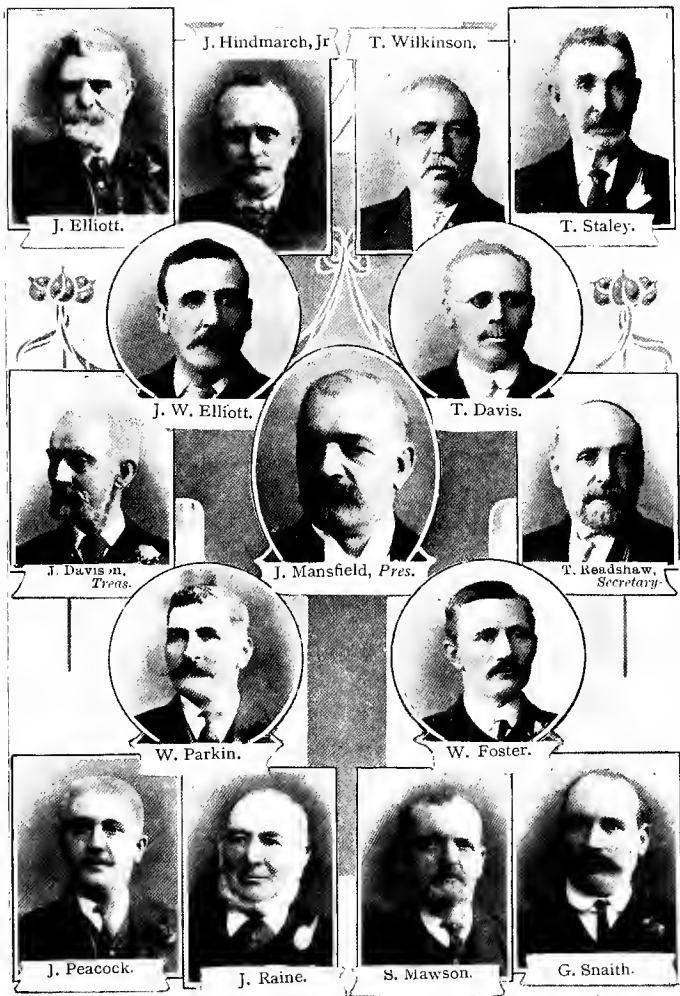
We offer our sincere thanks to Mr. Kellett for information supplied and help in arranging illustrations, to Mr. J. T. Lowthian for revising proofs, to Mr. J. Greenwell for typing the manuscript, to Mr. T. Blenkin for arranging index, to those who have lent photographs, and to all who have in any way helped.

We send this little book out in the hope that it may tend to strengthen the loyalty and attachment of the members, and more closely cement the bonds of unity.

T. R.



H. N. KELLETT, General Manager.



Officers and Committee, 1909-10.

CHAPTER I.

Sources.

"There is a mean curiosity, as of a child opening a forbidden door, or of a servant prying into her master's business ; and a noble curiosity, questioning in the front of danger the source of the great river beyond the sands, the place of the great continent behind the sea."—*Ruskin*.

"On we march, then, we, the workers, and the rumour that ye hear
Is the blended song of battle, and deliverance drawing near,
For the hope of every creature is the banner that we bear,
And the world is marching on."

—*Morris*.

IN attempting to find the sources from which the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society took its rise, we must go further afield than mere local events and circumstances. The district itself would undoubtedly, in its position and happenings, furnish some of the causes that would lead the Pioneers of the Society to take the important step of opening a Co-operative Store in its midst. But a step so important, so fraught with far-reaching consequences, and involving so much risk, sacrifice, and enterprise, would require deeper impulses and higher sources than mere local circumstances. We must, therefore, go further abroad, and fall back upon causes more remote and general, but possessing a dynamic force sufficient to accomplish such a purpose.

It is in the national sentiment of the age, the industrial spirit of the times, that we shall find the real source from which the Society takes its rise.

The middle years of the nineteenth century were years of marked significance and great import in the industrial world. The working man was beginning to rise in the social scale. He had begun to realise his own importance, to assert his independence, and to make himself felt as a force and factor in the national life.

Hitherto he had been regarded as a mere tool in society, had been manipulated by the landowners and capitalists for their own advantage, and had to be content to rise at their beck and move at their call. What he had received in exchange for his labour had been bestowed as a boon, and not as a right, and he must accept it with bended knee and hand on forelock, as evidence of his dependence and gratitude.

But a marked change was taking place. A new type of working man was being evolved, who was no longer content to be a puppet in the hands of others, but who was feeling his own strength, realising his own possibilities, and demonstrating that by organisation and combination he could hold his own against the powerful forces of the aristocrat and capitalist.

For a long period of time a great industrial revolution had been slowly but effectually taking place.

Mr. H. de B. Gibbins, M.A., dates back the beginning of this revolution to the days of the Whig ascendancy in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Previous to this the landowning class had been practically supreme in social and political influence, and the working classes had been under their domination. But from this time forward the commercial and industrial classes gained supremacy, and, although the landowner still holds high position, the capitalist becomes a powerful and successful rival, and the working classes come largely under his power.

Then the introduction of steam power, the invention of machinery, and the application of these to industrial pursuits, brought about other drastic changes in the industrial realm, and proved powerful factors in effecting the industrial revolution. The inventions of Watt, Arkwright, Boulton, and Hargreaves completely revolutionised industry, brought into operation the factory system, and still further increased the power and furthered the ascendancy of the commercial magnate and capitalist.

Many important results followed in the wake of this industrial development. The wealth of the country is said

to have increased tenfold, the population increased at a rapid rate, the great coalfields of the North were opened out, and there was a large migration of the people into the Northern counties.

The great wars in which this country was for many years engaged had also their effect upon industrial conditions. They opened out new markets for it, and increased its commercial advantages.

Thus the industries of the country had for many years been undergoing great changes, and had been developing new phases, but these changes and developments had not brought as a result any real benefit to the working man. There had been a change of masters, but the change had not been for the better. The worker had escaped the grip of the landowner only to find himself under the heel of the commercial capitalist. The introduction of machinery had not materially bettered the position of the worker, but in some respects had rendered it worse. The increase of national wealth had not flowed into the workers' pockets, but the capitalist had largely benefited thereby. The influx of population gave the worker no help, but increased the masters' leverage of power. The country's wars had opened the world's markets to the commerce of the nation, but the heavy cost of these wars was wrung from the blood and sinews of the working man. The capitalist and aristocrat pocketed the gains, the worker paid the expenses, and the condition of the working classes during a considerable portion of the period covered by the industrial revolution had been extremely hard and bitter.

The eighteenth century had many seasons of acute poverty and suffering for the working classes, and its closing years found this country in a most deplorable condition. England was nearly in a state of collapse. Excessive taxation, caused by the costly wars, the dearness of provisions, scarcity of employment, low wages, and long hours of labour, brought about a condition of sheer starvation and hunger revolt, and the opening years of the nineteenth century did not show signs of much improvement.

"In the year 1801 bread was at famine prices, the poor not being able to obtain wheaten bread at all, and even the well-to-do had to curtail its use. The price of the quartern loaf averaged 1s. 4½d. all the year through. In March, 1801, it reached 1s. 10½d.

Wages during that time were low, and employment scarce and precarious, so that the condition of the wage-earning classes was reduced in all ways even to the verge of starvation. Bread riots broke out in various places, and seething discontent, verging on revolt, was to be found everywhere, the people being only kept down by the constabulary and the military forces of the country, under a set of barbarous laws administered with unmitigated rigour.

Such was the state of the nation in 1801, and such in general it continued, though in a less acute form, for the next twenty years."*

It was from this trough of industrial depression that the country was slowly emerging during the earlier middle years of the nineteenth century, and it was from the trammels of this industrial oppression that the working classes had been shaking themselves free.

An awakening having taken place amongst them, they began to shake themselves from the dust, to writhe beneath the iron heel of the oppressor, to revolt against the unjust conditions of their lot and against the sharp distinctions that existed between the autocratic capitalist and the humble worker.

The slumbering embers of freedom and justice began to catch fire, and the downtrodden classes began to claim to have a voice in the settlement of conditions and a share in the government of things. But, for a long time, the only means they had of making themselves heard or felt, was through riot and insurrection. They were gagged and bound, hand, foot, and voice.

By the "Assessment of Wages Act" the wages of labour in each district were fixed by the Justices of the Peace for

*George Howell, F.S.S.—"The Rich richer, and the Poor poorer."

that district. These were chiefly wealthy capitalists or landowners, who fixed the rates in their own interests, and so low were they in some instances that they had to be eked out by contributions from the Poor Rates.

By the "Combination Laws," labourers were prohibited from coming together to discuss their interests, or agitate for the betterment of their conditions. By the "Settlement Acts" workmen were prohibited from migrating from one district to another, where better labour conditions prevailed; and the only outlet for whatever active public spirit might exist, was through lawless acts and by revolutionary methods.

It was evident that this condition of things could not always exist, and the eyes of the nation began to open and to see the injustice of the workers' lot.

The French Revolution was one of the means of awakening the country to the seriousness of this question, and directing attention to the condition of the poor. The terrible uprising of the masses in Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, and other large towns in France presented an object lesson to the ruling classes of this land, which they were not likely to forget. The British working classes deeply sympathised with the movement, although they dared not openly express their feelings.

It was an awakening of the working classes that vibrated right throughout Europe, and stirred up the slumbering spirit of dissatisfaction and revolt that existed amongst the oppressed in all lands.

The growing middle classes of this country, who were favourable to reform and progress, also espoused the cause, and this helped the workers' position.

The national awakening once begun, grew and slowly spread, and its fruits began to appear in ameliorative enactments and in a widening of the bounds of freedom.

One of its first fruits was the repeal of the Combination Laws in 1824 and 1825. This measure, pushed forward through the persistent exertions of Mr. Joseph Hume, M.P., was one of the first legislative measures for many years that

had been passed, favourable to the working class. It was a measure of great importance, fraught with far-reaching issues, and has greatly helped in the improvement of the industrial position. It struck one of the fetters from the shackles of the working man, and opened the way for the formation of trade unions and other societies, where workers could discuss their position and, by associated effort, seek to improve their condition.

Trade unions began to spring up here and there throughout the land, and have proved powerful factors in bringing about improved conditions of labour, both as regards wages, shorter hours, and better conditions of employment.

Other results of this industrial awakening are to be seen in the agitation for Parliamentary reform, the repeal of the Corn Laws, the Ten Hours Factory Acts, and other measures and movements, all of an improved and progressive trend.

The whole temper and tendency of the times now was progressive and ameliorative, and the atmosphere was charged with elements favourable for developing the strength and independence of the hitherto downtrodden classes.

The decade ending 1860—the year in which this Society had its birth—was an era of great industrial progress.

The great questions of social reform, intellectual advancement, material and industrial development, and projects of universal peace and brotherhood were brought to the front and discussed with fervour and determination, and many movements set on foot for the realisation of the ideals that had been raised.

Considerable practical progress was also made. Wages improved in many important industries of the country, and a distinctly higher standard of living was reached.

Acts were passed for the improvement of the dwellings of the working classes, to legalise the formation of Industrial and Provident Societies, to extend the Factory Acts, prohibiting night work for children, to amend the Criminal Laws, and promote sanitation in the large towns.

Several important institutions also took their rise at this time. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a society

of true national and industrial import ; the establishment of South Kensington Museum, the institution of Schools of Design, the extension of the movement for promoting open spaces for the people, the first Free Libraries Act, and the abolition of the Paper Duty, all belong to this period.

Everywhere signs of intense industrial and intellectual activity and advancement were abroad, and it was evident that the working man was coming into his own.

It is on this high table-land of industrial, social, and moral progress that we will find the watershed from which the Bishop Auckland Society took its rise.

Doubtless there would be some local springs that would help to swell the stream and give colour and character to it, but the higher reaches of the movement are to be found in the intense industrial spirit of the times.

The Co-operative movement is inherently and distinctively a working-class movement. It was born amidst severe industrial travail. It is the child of a great industrial aspiration. It was cradled and nursed in suffering and privation. Its sponsors were men who had drunk of the bitter cup of poverty, and knew what it was to struggle with adverse circumstances.

The twenty-eight weavers of Rochdale, who established the movement on its present permanent basis, had touched the bottom rock of poverty when they could only muster the sum of 2d. per week towards this great idea of theirs, but they saw in this idea the rising of a day star of hope and the promise of a renewed industrial world.

In the first rules of their Society they state their position thus :—

The objects and plans of this Society are :—To form arrangements for the pecuniary benefit, and the improvement of the social and domestic conditions of its members, by raising a sufficient amount of capital by shares of £1 each, to bring into operation the following plans and arrangements :—

The establishment of a Store for the sale of provisions, clothing, &c.

The building, purchasing, or erecting a number of houses in which those members desiring to help each other in improving their domestic and social conditions may reside.

To commence the manufacture of such articles as the Society may determine upon, for the employment of such members as may be without employment, or who may be suffering in consequence of repeated reductions in their wages.

As a further benefit and security to the members of the Society, the Society shall purchase or rent an estate, or estates, of land, which shall be cultivated by the members who may be out of employment, or whose labours may be badly remunerated.

That as soon as practicable this Society shall proceed to arrange the powers of production, distribution, education, and government, or, in other words, to establish a self-supporting home colony of united interests, or assist other Societies in establishing such colonies.

High aims, noble ambitions, far-reaching projects were these for men on the lowest step of social status ; but they are eloquent of the spirit of liberty, and proclaim the rising hopes of an aspiring people.

It is not to be wondered at that the Co-operative movement, which met and fulfilled the new-born hopes and aspirations of the common people, should take root, grow, and prosper at this period.

We have no reliable data to guide us as to the real strength of the movement, prior to 1862, in the published statistics of the Co-operative Union.

In the revised Co-operative Directory, issued in 1905, we are able to gather some information which confirms us in the statement that the times were favourable for Co-operative enterprise.

Doubtless some Societies existing at that time have ceased to exist, and others may have been swallowed up by amalgamation ; but of the Societies now existing 179 were in existence in 1860. Of these, 145 were founded in the decade 1851-1860, and 70 were commenced in the year 1860.

A statement issued by Mr. W. Cooper (Rochdale) shows that the number of members in 1860 would be about 48,184, with a capital of £333,290 and an annual business of about £1,512,117.

In the year 1862 these numbers had grown to—Societies, 454 ; members, 90,341 ; capital, £428,376 ; business, £2,333,523.



Entrance to
Park & Screen.



Castle Chapel,
Bishop Auckland.



Castle
Bishop Auckland.

These figures show that the times were ripe for Co-operative development. Co-operation was in the air, but was not staying there—it was distilling and descending in refreshing showers, and was being formed into streams bearing different names and flowing through different localities, but each bubbling with life and diffusing hope and help throughout the districts over which they flowed.

One of these is the Society with which these pages have to do, and at its beginning was a tiny rivulet, but has grown into a mighty stream, bearing on its bosom many departments of Co-operative effort, and has proved a boon to the district and a valuable friend to many a family and home.

The Bishop Auckland Society can boast of being one of the pioneer Societies in the county of Durham.

A writer in the Co-operative Wholesale Society's "Annual" for 1885 says:—

In no part of the United Kingdom has more progress been made in Co-operative work than in the counties of Durham and Northumberland, where at least one-third of the population purchase their requirements from the Co-operative Stores.

Yet, in this fruitful county only three of the existing Societies were in existence when the Bishop Auckland Society commenced.

The Teesdale Workmen's Industrial and Provident Society traces its formation back to the days prior to the Rochdale Pioneers, being founded in 1842.

The Blaydon District Industrial and Provident Society was established in 1858, and the following year saw the commencement of the Sunderland Economical and Industrial Society, which is now the largest Society in the county.

In the wake of these comes the Bishop Auckland Society in 1860, and it holds the proud distinction of not only being one of the earliest to raise the banner of Co-operation in a county which to-day has its Co-operative Store in every town and nearly every village, but also of being the second largest Society in the county, and the third largest in the Northern Section.

CHAPTER II.

Formation.

“ Hope was ever on her mountain,
Watching till the day begun,
Crowned with sunlight over darkness
From the still unrisen sun.”

—*Tennyson.*

“ Hence it happens that the whole interest of history lies in the fortunes of the poor. Knowledge, virtue, power, are the victories of man over his necessities, his march to the dominion of the world.”

“ Every man ought to have the opportunity to conquer the world by himself, only such persons interest us—Spartans, Romans, Saracens, English, Americans, who have stood in the jaw of need, and by their own wit and might have extracted themselves and made man victorious.”—*Emerson.*

THE town of Bishop Auckland is prettily situated on the south bank of the River Wear, occupying a kind of peninsula, or narrow tongue of land, lying between the Wear and its tributary, the Gaunless.

The town was originally called “North Aclet,” and can be traced back to a very early period, mention being made of it in the early years of the eleventh century.

It owes its present name and much of its celebrity to the fact that it is the seat of the See of Durham.

The Castle, the episcopal residence of the Lord Bishop of Durham, lies at the northern end of the town.

“ The sacred pile, in Gothic grandeur reared
Where Durham’s mitred princes palaced live,
Fills the bold eminence, and crowns the scene.”

This celebrated structure, which constitutes one of the features of the town, may be described as consisting of a number of buildings of various dates and characters, having received many additions and alterations from its successive

occupants. It forms an irregular line of square masses, combining the character of an old English mansion with some features of the castellated style. It claims to be Gothic in style, but its architecture is not pure.

It stands in the midst of an extensive and magnificent park, beautifully wooded and plentifully watered, and possessing all the variety of surface to make it a most agreeable and pleasing scene. Ancient oaks, beautiful hawthorns (said to be the most beautiful in Britain), tangled brushwood, bold cliffs, the flowing Gaunless, and gentle, undulating slopes and swells, all meet the eye in agreeable succession, and make this lovely old park one of the beauty spots of our land.

This park is mentioned in records as early as 1311, and it figures in a noted historical event in the year 1346. In that year, while King Edward III. was engaged in war with France, David, King of Scotland, invaded England, and Philippa (Edward's Queen) placed herself at the head of some English troops to resist the invasion.

The decisive battle was fought in the county of Durham ; and it is of interest to know that on the night of October 16th, 1364—the night before the battle—16,000 of the English forces lay encamped on the High Plains of the park at Bishop Auckland, and on the following morning marched to meet the Scottish forces, and inflicted upon them the crushing defeat known as the battle of Neville's Cross.

This event was commemorated by the erection of an elegant cross of stonework by Ralph, Lord Neville, near Red Hills, the scene of the conflict, and is named Neville's Cross.

But if the town of Bishop Auckland gains its name and fame from its connection with the See of Durham, it owes its position and support to the fact that it lies in the midst of a thriving and thickly populated mining district.

On every side for miles around are to be seen the signs of busy industrial life. The rapidly revolving "pulley wheels" on the colliery heapstead ; the long lines and tall chimneys of the coke ovens, which on a dark night throw

out their lurid light like an extended line of fire ; the stretching lines of railway, along which huge loads of coke and coal are continuously rolling, are sights that are common and familiar ; and while these do not improve the scenery of the district, they do constitute a staple factor in its life and prosperity.

On the southern side of the town lies Shildon, famed for its connection with the commencement of our vast railway system, and said to be the "cradle of the locomotive engine." It was here at New Shildon that the first regular construction of engines was carried on, and from here that the renowned "No. 1" engine made its first journey.

The original railway station is supposed to have been the first station in the world, and the present station retains many of its features of antiquity and inconvenience.

Shildon, along with East Thicky, has a population of something like 13,000, and in its collieries and North Eastern Railway Company's Works, which have been recently extended, employment is found for its numerous workers.

The Shildon "Sidings" are regarded as the most extensive in the kingdom, there being twenty-seven miles of siding accommodation for the purpose of shunting the mineral trucks and arranging them into loads for their various destinations.

On the borders of Shildon, on the south-east of Bishop Auckland, is the little rural village of Middridge, where there is a colliery belonging to Sir Christopher Furness.

On the road leading from Bishop Auckland to Shildon lies another little interesting village, South Church, in which stands the beautiful and ancient church of St. Andrew, from which both the village and parish (St. Andrew Auckland) take their name. This venerable edifice occupies a commanding position in the district. It is cruciform in shape, consisting of nave, aisles, transepts, spacious chancel, south porch, and western tower. It is said to date back from the early part of the thirteenth century, although from certain relics found in its vicinity it is evident that a



Town Hall and Market Place,
Bishop Auckland.



Newgate Street, Bishop Auckland.

church must have existed here from the earliest Christian times. Many interesting examples of early Christian and mediæval art workmanship are preserved in the church, and it is a feature of considerable interest to archæologists.

On the eastern side of the town we have another busy and interesting district. Here is Eldon, at whose colliery, fit up with all the latest improvements in machinery, employment is found for a very large number of men.

Auckland Park and Black Boy, belonging to Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, and Co., provide work for hundreds more. Beyond these lie Coundon, Leasingthorne, and the modern village of Leeholme, all teeming with busy life.

Just a little further on the north of these lies Binchester, one of the most ancient, though at the present, less populous places in the district. In bygone ages it was the seat of the large and famous Roman city, Vinovia, of which many remains have been discovered. Near by lies Byers Green, another busy colliery village.

Then to the north-east we have the sister town of Spennymoor, which is allied by many interests to Bishop Auckland. Spennymoor in ancient times seems to have been an extensive waste or moorland stretching from Park Head to Hett, but coal apparently was worked there in very early times. To-day it is a thriving business town, with a population of 17,000.

On the northern side we have another busy hive of mining life, in which are the villages of Hunwick, Newfield, Sunnybrow, and Willington, and, on the north-west, Crook.

On the western side lies the Etherley district, including Witton Park, Toft Hill, Evenwood, and Ranshaw, while to the south-west lies the West Auckland district, embracing St. Helen's Auckland, Tindale, and Fyland's Bridge, and then stretching away still further westward is Cockfield Lands, Butterknowle, and South Side. In all these districts mining is the principal industry.

It is in the very centre of this thriving industrial locality that the town of Bishop Auckland nestles, the natural

metropolis of the locality, into which a considerable portion of the hard-earned wages of the workers finds its way, and from which the necessities of life for them and their families are supplied.

In the year 1860, the point from which this history commences, the population was not so numerous, nor the works so fully developed, as to-day, but the general industrial features were the same. Most of the existing collieries were then working, in addition to some which have since been closed.

The population of some of the parishes and townships in 1860 we here give:—Bishop Auckland and Pollard's Lands, 7,632; St. Andrew's Auckland, 1,401; Shildon and East Thickley, 4,089; Middridge, 369; Eldon, 311; Coundon Grange, 552; Coundon, 2,765; Merrington and Middlestone, 1,272; Chilton, 1,456; Ferryhill, 1,423; Windlestone, 154; Binchester, 35; Byers Green, 1,643; Tudhoe, 1,359; Hunwick and Helmington, 1,203; Willington, 2,475; Newfield, 1,024; Sunnybrow, 3,469; Crook, 5,800; Escomb, 3,755; Evenwood and Barony, 2,674; St. Helen's Auckland, 842; West Auckland, 2,581; Cockfield, 1,004; and Lynesack and Softley, 1,084.

It was here that the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society was born.

It naturally made its seat and centre in the town, but the impulse, that created and established it came from the surrounding villages. Of the first recorded members of the Society only four were residents of the town. It was among the horny-handed miners and workers of the outside villages that the movement began. Many of these had felt the pinch and grip of the privation and hardship of the preceding years.

Sixteen years previous to this time, the great mining struggle, known as the "'44 strike," had taken place. This conflict between masters and men was waged by the men in defence of a great principle—the principle of liberty. It was a fight against the "yearly bond."

This struggle, which struck the death-blow to the system, also strengthened the spirit of freedom in the county, and



SHILDON STATION.

showed the miners the necessity for association, and although the Durham Miners' Association was not established until the year 1869, yet, the spirit that created it, was abroad in these days, and had begun to manifest itself.

The men of the Bishop Auckland district had, along with others, drunk in of this spirit. They had not only felt the pressure of the past, but they began to chafe against present conditions, which were far from satisfactory—wages being low, and the price of provisions high. They began to realise that there were better things lying within the range of possibility. Some of them had seen the vision of the future. They had

‘Dipt into the future far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that
would be.”

and they began to form schemes for the improvement of their present position, and the inauguration of a movement to provide better things for the future.

Tradition has it, that the idea of forming a Co-operative Society first took shape in a miner's house in the Black Boy district, where a few of the men used to meet together at night, and, as they smoked their pipes, discussed the events of their own locality and of the wider outside world. News had reached them of the commencement of Co-operative Societies, and what they were doing in other places. They knew something of the evils of the credit system that was in existence. They saw how, through it, the local trader held them in his grip, and the life of many a family was crippled and bound by its operations. Slowly the idea of forming a ready-money Store grew, and with their own combined capital buying their goods, and by their own labour distributing them, and themselves sharing the profits accruing therefrom.

The scheme would be eagerly discussed by the men as they came together on the “pit heap” in the morning before descending to their work, at the “deputy's kist,” down the pit, as they waited to have their lamps tried and receive orders for the shift, and at the various points of rendezvous as they congregated together. Some would laugh at the

scheme as ridiculous ; others would try to dissuade their fellows from joining a project so ruinous ; others would pass it by in silent scorn ; while some with unprejudiced minds would give the matter serious consideration. At any rate, the idea spread and began to shape itself into an actual fact.

Strange to say, however, it was not at Black Boy, but at Shildon that the first public step was taken towards carrying this scheme into action.

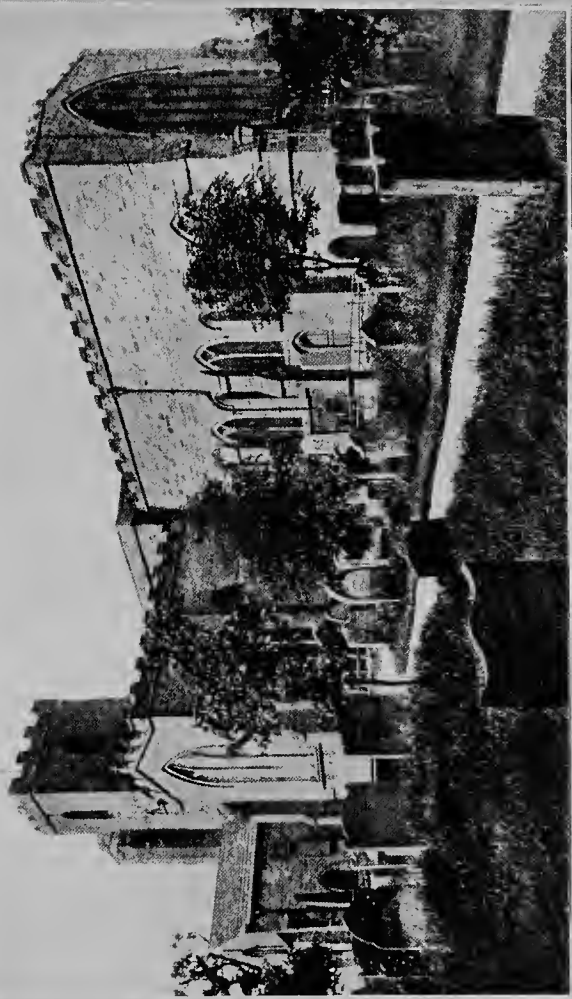
On Saturday, February 25th, 1860, in the National Schoolroom, Shildon, the first recorded meeting of the Society was held.

It is but fitting that this Schoolroom, the birthplace of the Society, should finally pass into the possession of the Society to which it gave birth. This noted structure, after playing an important part in the educational life of Shildon, was made into a joiner's shop, and was purchased by the Bishop Auckland Society from the late Mr. J. F. Adamson in the year 1901, and now forms part of the premises of the Shildon Branch.

The recorded resolutions of this historic meeting are not numerous, but they are weighty. A foundation was laid that night that has never been moved, and upon it there has been reared a huge and magnificent structure. These few working men, with little education and no experience in organisation, went to their work in a business-like manner. The meeting had been called to "take into consideration the question of establishing a Co-operative Provision Society," and this is the subject that first engages their attention. "To be or not to be" is the supreme question of the moment, and they settle this primary question by their first resolution: "That there be a Co-operative Provision Society established."

Having settled this point, all other things become possible and fall into their places. The question of how, what, and where, all have attention in their turn.

This first brief but pregnant resolution breathes a spirit of courage and determination that we cannot help but



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, SOUTH CHURCH.

admire. There is no hesitation or doubt in their attitude, but a brave uncompromising spirit, that is not likely to be daunted by any of the other matters that will follow.

The next point to be settled is that of ways and means. How are the funds to be raised to commence and carry on the Society? This is a knotty point, and they resolve, in order to meet this, that to become a member each person shall pay 1s. entrance fee and take up one £1 share, and that no member can take up more than one share. It must be kept in mind in this connection that these men—as will hereafter appear—had not the rules of any other Society to guide them. They were digging their own foundation and hewing their own stones, and by determining that the basis of membership shall be financial they show true business insight, and prove that all these matters have been carefully thought out beforehand.

It will also appear that these pioneers were in a better position than the Rochdale Pioneers, for, whereas the latter could only muster 2d. per week towards their shares, the former decide to pay “1s. per week until the share is paid up,” and by limiting each member to one share they evidently feared that some members by reason of greater financial ability might gain a preponderance of influence, and therefore determined that each should stand upon an equal financial footing.

The next question that turns up is the question of a name for the Society. This may seem a minor point—

“A rose by any other name
Would smell as sweet.”

and this Society by some other cognomen might have flourished, as it has done. Yet a name is necessary, and the same shrewd spirit is evident in the choice of a name as has been shown in the other matters that came up for consideration. The name selected was “The Bishop Auckland Industrial Co-operative Provision Society,” which was just sufficiently descriptive of the character and sufficiently comprehensive as to its aims to fully fit and describe it. It would appear that the term “Flour” was immediately

added to follow the term "Co-operative," and it is worthy of note that this remains the name of the Society to-day. There has never been any reason to alter it. Amidst all the extensions, developments, and changes in the Society, its name remains untouched.

The objects of the Society next claim attention. It was resolved that "The objects of the Society shall be to supply all articles for domestic purposes, as funds will permit." This programme, though not so comprehensive as that of the Rochdale Pioneers quoted in the preceding chapter, is yet sufficient to embrace the whole range of a Distributive Society's operations. And, although the resources at the disposal of these men were far from being sufficient to cover the ground outlined in these early days, yet their outlook was sufficiently wide to cover the whole of the trading operations of the Society even to-day.

The question of locality had likewise to be settled. It can readily be conceived that in a meeting where men from different localities were present, local feeling and prejudice might find expression. Yet these were made subordinate to the general good. Although, as previously stated, only four of the first members resided in the town of Bishop Auckland, the meeting, with shrewd business insight, saw that the natural centre for the Society's trading operations was the town, and they therefore decided that "Bishop Auckland be the place for the Central Store, and that four miles be the limit for delivering goods from the Store."

The final question to claim consideration is the question of government. Who should conduct the Society's affairs, collect and dispense its funds, and carry on its operations. The members seem to have fully realised the importance of this question, and wisely determined not to make any definite appointments at the fag end of the meeting, but to take time to fully consider the matter. A kind of Provisional Committee was appointed to act in the meantime, and forward matters for a future meeting.



JOINER'S SHOP, SHILDON.
(Where the first Meeting was held.)

A Secretary was necessary to record the doings of the Committee and conduct correspondence, and for this purpose Mr. John Henderson (Eldon Lane) was selected, and he had evidently acted as the Secretary for the meeting, and finally was appointed as the first Secretary of the Society.

A Treasurer was also required to collect the entrance fees and share contributions, and Mr. Thomas Gardiner (Shildon) received this appointment for the time.

In addition to these, five Directors were appointed, as follows :—

Mr. Richard Morley, Eldon Lane.	Mr. John Simpson, Gurney Villa.
„ Peter Marlow, New Shildon.	„ James Little, Gurney Villa.
Mr. John Tinkler, Shildon.	

There were also “seven District Agents” appointed at this meeting. What their duties were, or what standing or authority they possessed, is not stated. Probably each would be a kind of missionary in his district to give information to inquirers, seek information as to the feeling and requirements of the inhabitants, and spread the principles of Co-operation amongst his fellows.

Their names are :—

Mr. Ralph Brown, West Auckland.	Mr. John Walton, Woodhouse Close.
„ John Hudson, Newton Cap.	„ Peter Marlow, New Shildon.
„ Thomas Gardiner, Shildon.	„ John Simpson, Gurney Villa.
Mr. Jonathan Parkin, Escomb.	

Here end the records of this famous meeting, at which the names of sixty-three members were enrolled, and who paid their entrance fees and affiliated themselves with the Society on this date. Surely the time was fully ripe for this movement, and the promoters of the meeting had accurately gauged the feeling of the people.

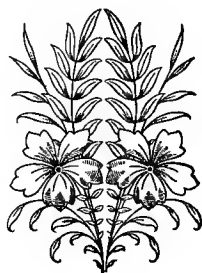
In looking back over the work done at this meeting, we cannot but be struck at the sane and sober, yet determined and purposeful, spirit that prevailed. These few working men without social standing, experience, or any exceptional educational advantages, embark upon an enterprise involving serious work and great self-sacrifice that would require brains, courage, and skill to carry it through, yet

every resolution they have recorded is the expression of unfaltering faith and unwavering determination. There is no provision made for turning back. Forward is their watchword.

Thus by one masterful stroke they inaugurate a movement, which is destined to become one of the most helpful and beneficial institutions of the district.

Surely here we may quote the words of Emerson :—

Every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of some enthusiasm. The victories of the Arabs after Mahomet, who, in a few years, from a small and mean beginning, established a larger empire than that of Rome, is an example. *They did they knew not what.*



CHAPTER III.

Constitution.

“ They only who build on ideas build for eternity. The form of government which prevails is the expression of what cultivation exists in the population which permits it.”—*Emerson*.

“ For modes of government let fools contest,
That which is best administered is best.”

—*Pope*.

ALTHOUGH the General Meeting, whose decisions we have just chronicled, had definitely decided that a Co-operative Society should be formed, and had defined some of its characteristics, the work of the establishment of the Society had yet to be done.

Some very important questions had to be faced and settled. One of these was the question of its constitution.

Hence we find that ten days after the full meeting the Provisional Committee met together to consider the question of rules.

The meeting was held in the house of Mr. Richard Morley, Eldon Lane Cottages.

Eldon Lane would be a central position, convenient, and easy of access to the majority of these members, but whether the meeting-room possessed the same elements of comfort and convenience is a query.

Eldon Lane Cottages, better known locally as “ Paddy’s Row,” had not been built or designed for the purpose of holding Committee meetings, but the best that this true, loyal Co-operator had, was placed at the disposal of his fellows, and the question of comfort was a minor matter in the minds of these earnest Pioneers.

The question that these men had to deal with was a large and vital question, one that lay at the very foundation of their movement.

It was not now a question of the persons, who were to administer the affairs of the Society, but of the laws that were to be administered, and the principles upon which the government of the Society would be based.

To weld a number of working men into one solid body for united aims, purposes, and benefits, and yet leave sufficient individual freedom to harmonise with the democratic spirit that lay behind the movement ; to safeguard the interests of the Society and maintain the rights of the individual, was a huge task to essay.

“ Experience,” it is said, “ is a wise teacher,” and whether it is our own personal experience or the experience of our fellows, the wise man is ever ready to avail himself of the knowledge which it brings.

These few men had little or no personal experience of self-government or organisation, and they therefore decided to appeal to the experience of others.

There was at that day no Co-operative Union, with its Model Rules or its well-informed and obliging Secretary, to help them in their difficulty ; but there were a few flourishing Co-operative Societies in existence, and to these it was decided to go.

It was resolved that “ we write to the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers, the Leeds Co-operative Society, the Sunderland Co-operative Society, and Mr. Watkins (London), and obtain a copy of their rules, to enhance the making of a code of rules for the government of this Society.”

Two of these Societies had been established for some years, Rochdale Pioneers having been in existence sixteen years, and the Leeds Society thirteen years, and were both now flourishing institutions. Sunderland had only been established the year previous.

Who Mr. Watkins was, we cannot definitely ascertain. There was a Mr. William Watkins holding a prominent position in a Co-operative Society named the Second London

Society, whose meeting-place was in Golden Square, in the year 1830, but whether he is the gentleman referred to here we cannot say.

Although this is the only meeting of the Committee, of which we have any record, held between the first and second General Meetings, other meetings must have been held, for we find that when the next General Meeting of members was held, on March 31st, a code of rules had been drawn up, and were ready for adoption or otherwise by the meeting. And it would seem that so carefully had the rules been prepared, and so complete was the confidence of the members in the Committee that had prepared them, that they found ready acceptance.

They resolved "that two copies of the rules, as now read, be printed and sent to the Registrar General for his signature, and that these become the rules for the government of this Society."

We have by us a copy of these rules, and we must say, after perusing them, that they afford us another illustration of the sound judgment and foresight of these founders of the Society.

There are no eccentricities, none of the crudeness of 'prentice hands, and on essential matters the constitution of the Society is the same to-day as that which was formed by these men.

The name of the Society had the term "Flour" added to the name selected at the first meeting.

The objects are defined as being "to raise by voluntary subscriptions a fund for the better enabling them to purchase food, firing, clothes, and other necessities by carrying on in common the trade or business of general dealers."

The terms of membership, and the raising of capital are the same as decided at the General Meeting, except it is enacted that

Each member shall, half yearly, if circumstances will allow thereof, receive out of the surplus receipts of the Society a dividend, not exceeding 5 per cent per annum, upon the paid-up amount of his shares.

The amount to be held by any one member, or person claiming by or through any member, shall not exceed in amount one hundred pounds.

This is a modification of the resolution passed at their first meeting on the matter of shares. The management is entrusted to a

Committee of Management, consisting of eight members, three Trustees, and the Treasurer, who shall have the control of all business carried on by, or on account of the Society, the determination of the persons to be employed therein, the rates of payment to be made for work or services done on account of the Society, and the appointment and removal of the salesmen or other officers necessary for conducting the business, and may assign to any such officers such duties and salaries as they think fit, subject to the approval of the Half-yearly Meeting.

The Officers of the Society were : Secretary, Treasurer, Trustees, Committee, three Auditors, and five Arbitrators. The Trustees appear to have been permanent officers, the others to be appointed yearly ; the Secretary, Treasurer, Arbitrators, and Auditors retiring at the Annual Meeting in November, and "four of the Committee retiring each half year in rotation," all being "immediately re-eligible."

A statement of the accounts is to be presented to the members every half year, and the Auditors shall make to the meeting a report on the balance sheet. Every such balance sheet, signed by the Auditors, shall, after it has been approved by the meeting, be binding upon all members, except as to any error not exceeding £2, discovered within one calendar month thereafter. If need be, the majority of the members present at any General or Special Meeting shall have power to appoint an Accountant to audit the books, who shall be remunerated by the Committee of Management at the expense of the Society.

The General Meetings are to be held half yearly on the first Saturdays of the months of May and November, the latter to be the Annual Meeting.

The Committee have power to call Special Meetings. Each meeting shall choose a Chairman, who shall be one of the Committee, if any are present, who, if at any meeting the votes are equal, shall have the casting vote.

The net profits of all business carried on by the Society, after paying or providing for the expenses of management, interest on borrowed money, and dividends upon paid-up subscriptions, shall once in every half year be applied in the first place to the repayment of monies borrowed, or any instalment due in respect thereof, and, subject thereto, to all or any of the following purposes, viz. :—To

increase the capital or business of the Society, to any provident purpose authorised by the laws in force in respect to Friendly Societies, to a division or return to or among the members of the Society in proportion to the amount of their purchases of the goods made or sold by the Society during the past half year, and to the payment of any part not exceeding one-third of such net profits, to or amongst the members or other persons employed on account of the Society in respect of any work or services done by them respectively on behalf of the Society.

The servants of the Society shall be a Clerk or Secretary, head salesmen, and under assistants, all of whom shall be appointed by the Committee.

The position and duties of the Agents of the Society are defined as follows :—

All the Society's goods purchased or manufactured for the benefit of the members shall be supplied to them and others, either at the Society's principal place of business, or through the medium of Agents, to be appointed in various localities of the district, not exceeding eight miles from the Society's principal place of business.

The Committee shall have power to appoint Agents in any locality within the above distance, either at their own discretion or at the request of the members residing in that locality, and may at their discretion remove any such Agent. The retail prices at which the Agent shall sell the goods of the Society, and the remuneration which they shall receive for the sale of such goods, shall be fixed by the Committee. Every Agent shall pay ready-money for the goods he may purchase, and be strictly confined to the purchase and sale of such goods as are produced and sold by the Society, and shall not in any case be allowed to purchase other goods for the purpose of sale. Any Agent violating this rule shall be fined 10s. for the first offence, and for the second offence shall have his agency withdrawn.

The rules bear the signatures of Messrs. James Little, John Simpson, and Richard Morley, as members; Mr. John Henderson, Secretary; and the Certificate of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, signed John Todd Pratt, and dated May 4th, 1860.

The meeting which adopted the rules, of which the foregoing extracts form part, also decided that 300 of these rules, after receiving the Registrar's Certificate, should be printed at the works of Mr. Hollis, the *Herald* Office. Mr. Hollis was one of the members belonging to the town of Bishop Auckland.

How strong the confidence of these men must have been to decide at this early stage of their career to print 300

copies of rules ! Not a tinge of foreboding or doubt as to the success of their undertaking seems to have entered into their calculations.

The month of April seems to have been spent in general organising work, and no record is made of any meetings held ; but on May 12th we find them gathered together once more in General Meeting in the Shildon Schoolroom.

At this meeting the appointments of the Officers, who for the half year were to manage the affairs of the Society, were made.

The names of these first members, who took upon their shoulders the work of conducting the infant Society that was about to be launched upon the world, are full of interest. So far as we know, none of them are living to-day, but they have as deserving a claim to have their names enrolled upon the scroll of fame as many whose memories are inscribed on records more widely spread than these will ever be. We gladly give their names here :—

TRUSTEES.

- Mr. John Walton, engineer, Woodhouse Close.
- „ Richard Morley, engineman, Eldon Lane.
- „ James Little, Miner, Close House.

SECRETARY.

- Mr. John Henderson, banksman, Eldon Lane.

TREASURER.

- Mr. William Moore, miner, Gurney Villa.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT.

- Mr. Martin Scwell, joiner, Woodhouse Close.
- „ Henry Welsh, blacksmith, Shildon.
- „ Ralph Brown, miner, West Auckland.
- „ John Tinkler, blacksmith, Shildon.
- „ John Simpson, miner, Gurney Villa.
- „ William Thompson, merchant, West Auckland.
- „ John Hudson, blacksmith, Newton Cap.
- „ William Earnshaw, fitter, New Shildon.

The appointment of Auditors or Arbitrators was not made at this meeting, nor do we find any record of such appointment during the half year. A salesman, however, was appointed at the meeting, and for this important position Mr. James Watson, engineman, Gurney Villa, was selected, at a wage of 30s. per week.



RICHARD MORLEY, First Chairman.

The present-day man of the world may be inclined to laugh in derision at the idea of taking a man from the engine and appointing him to conduct and superintend the sales and the trading operations of a new undertaking, that would have to compete against the experience, the prestige, and the vested interests of the prosperous private traders of the day. But these men had faith in themselves and in their own class, and from amongst themselves they selected the men who were to buy and sell their goods and conduct their business operations, and results have proved that their selections were made with wise discrimination and their confidence was not misplaced. Mr. James Watson remained as the General Manager of the Society until March, 1863, and during that time the Society shows steady and constant progress in all its operations.

Of the members of the first Board of Management some passed quickly out of the Society's records ; others continued for some years as active workers in the movement ; while one or two have deeply engraved their names upon the history of the Society, and their memories will remain so long as the Society exists.

Mr. Richard Morley, the man who first opened his doors and placed his house at the disposal of the Committee in which to hold their meetings, continued for some years to hold the responsible position of Trustee, and was generally selected to preside at their meetings ; and his signature is attached to nearly all the minutes in the early stages of the Society's existence.

Mr. John Henderson, the first Secretary, was a banksman, also residing at Eldon Lane, and would most probably be employed at the Adelaide Colliery. He ceased to be Secretary in May, 1861, and was appointed "order man," his wages being fixed at £1 per week, with half the entrance fee of each new member. He was also to stand in position next to Mr. James Watson, General Manager, with the understanding that he was to have the first offer for either Branch or General Manager. His connection with the Society terminated in the year 1868.

Mr. John Simpson, Committee-man, was an enthusiastic Co-operator, and did much hard pioneer work in the early days of the Society. He ultimately became an employé, being engaged as Warehouseman, and ended his days in the service of the Society.

Another true and sterling Co-operator was Mr. John Hudson, the son of "Vulcan," of Newton Cap. His close and intimate connection with the Society continued from the opening of the Society until his death, which took place on March 3rd, 1896. His value to the Society, and the confidence which the members had in him, is seen in the fact that he held the position of a Committee-man up to the year 1877, having only been about eighteen months out of office from the commencement up to that time.

But the man who, perhaps more than any other amongst that group of early promoters, has left his mark and impress upon the Society, is the horny-handed miner of Gurney Villa, Mr. William Moore, the first Treasurer of the Society. With the exception of one year Mr. Moore was actively and officially connected with the management of the Society from its commencement until the day of his death in 1876. He held the office of Treasurer for two years. He was then appointed Secretary in May, 1863, and he acted in this capacity until his appointment as General Manager in 1867, and this position he held for nine years, with great credit to himself and immense advantage to the Society.

This is but a brief outline of a few of those worthy stalwarts into whose hands the reins of the Society's government were first placed, and who were selected to steer its frail barque through the stormy waters into which it was being launched. The highest tribute and noblest monument to the worth and memory of these men is to be seen in the Society as it exists to-day.



BELVEDERE FIRST SHOP (May, 1860) IN SOUTH CHURCH LANE.

CHAPTER IV.

Opening.

“ They could not steal the human will
Nor sell within the busy mart
The dauntless soul that conquers ill—
The ever-loving human heart.
These still are ours, whate’er may come,
These still are ours by day or night,
In forest glade or city slum,
And we shall conquer in their might.”

—*W. E. A. Axon.*

“ Can anything be so elegant as to have few wants and to serve them oneself, so as to have somewhat left to give, instead of being always prompt to grab? It is more elegant to answer one’s own need than to be richly served ; inelegant it may look possibly to-day, and to a few ; but it is elegance for ever and for all.”

—*Emerson.*

THE object of the Society was, as previously stated, to carry on the trade of general dealers, but up to this point no provision has been made for this particular and specific purpose except the appointment of a head salesman.

At the next meeting of the Committee of Management, however, once more held at Mr. Richard Morley’s house, it was resolved to purchase “ two sets of scales and weights, one large coffee mill, and one large pepper mill, six tea caddies, and one treacle tank.” The following week they determined to have the scales adjusted, the shop counters fixed, and two signboards painted and put up on the top on each side of the window. They also resolved to exchange their bit of capital for goods, and an order had to be given to a Newcastle wholesale tradesman for £100 worth of groceries.

All these preparations and appointments point to the fact that some place had been secured in which the business of the Society was to be conducted, but no record is made here or elsewhere, that we have been able to find, where a shop had either been applied for, or secured.

It may be that they were aware of some determined opposition on the part of the tradesmen of the town, who would use every effort to prevent them securing a place of business; and they were compelled to move with the greatest caution and secrecy, and they would not even risk putting their actions on record. Or it may be that the fact of securing a place was of such transcendent importance, and, so eager and busy were they in their search and preparations, that the record was considered of such trivial importance that it was never made. Certain it is, that this important item finds no place amongst the recorded acts of the Society.

A place, however, had been secured, consisting of a house and shop situated in South Church Lane, known as Belvedere, and here, on May 28th, 1860, the trading transactions of the Society commenced. This historic building is still in existence, little altered since those days, not having undergone the transformations that many of the places of business in the town have been subject to. Still, it is not an objectionable place even to-day; certainly quite presentable in comparison with the room in Toad Lane, Rochdale, where the Pioneers first opened out their business, and it has reason to be proud of being the progenitor of the noble pile of buildings which adorn the west side of Newgate Street, the Society's business premises to-day.

The opening of this Store, as we look back to it from the vantage coigne of present attainments, seems an event of paramount importance, fraught with the most stupendous issues; yet not even a line is devoted to it in the archives of the Society. The function—if function it may be called—seems to have been of the quietest nature: no ado, no heralding of the event with poster or bill, no procession with bands and banners to announce it, no tea festival to commemorate it, no national, county, or even local magnate

to perform the opening ceremony, but quite unostentatiously on this spring Monday morning the shutters were taken down, the door was opened, and the few small wares of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society exposed for sale.

We can well imagine the Committee of Management and the shareholders looking up at the signboard bearing the name of the Society, and realising a sense of importance they had never felt before as the thought was borne in upon them: "This is our shop." We can also realise some of the anxious thoughts, the alternating hopes and fears, as they conned over in their minds the chances of failure or success in their venture.

We can also see without any great stretch of imagination the indignant, self-confident private trader of the town passing by, and, as he peeps in, noting the slender stock in trade, the coffee mill, pepper mill, the six tea caddies, and the treacle tank, laughs in disdain at the idea of a few working men becoming shopkeepers on their own account, and prophesies that a month at most will be the limit of their existence.

But that small, insignificant affair, so quietly and simply begun, which was to succumb in a month, has reached its Jubilee Year, and takes its place amongst the giant Societies in the movement.

At the end of the first fortnight, as they totalled up their takings, they found that the total sales had only reached £16. Surely a very inauspicious beginning, which did not savour greatly of success, nor bespeak any very extensive patronage from the membership; but when we remember the very few commodities in which they were dealing, we have some explanation of the small amount of their first fortnight's sales.

The position of the Society in membership and capital at the time of opening would be as follows: 118 members had paid their entrance subscription, thus attaching themselves to the Society. Of these 71 had taken up their share of £1 and had thus been enrolled as shareholders; while 37 had by contribution paid part of their shares. The financial

position would be: entrance contributions, £5. 18s.; paid-up shares, £71; share contributions, £16. 6s.; making a total amount of capital of £93. 4s.; and this had been more than swallowed up by the order given to the Newcastle tradesman for £100 worth of groceries, besides the stock in trade that had been purchased.

The financial situation, therefore, was a peculiar one, and the outlook gloomy: £100 worth of groceries and other bills coming in, and only £93. 4s. in hand with which to pay.

But these brave men were not going to be daunted and defeated by their financial difficulties. Two of their men at once came to their rescue, Messrs. James Watson and William Moore, who each offered £10 as a loan to the Society, and the offer was readily and gratefully accepted by the Committee. They were able to pay their first bill with a little to spare, and they resolved "to open up an account with the National Bank" and deposit what spare capital they had therein.

Their financial difficulties, however, had not entirely passed away, for in July they determined to borrow £100 from the Adelaides and South Durham Friendly Society, which met at Shildon, and also £30 from a member residing at Shildon. On July 28th, 1860, three of their members met the Committee of the Friendly Society before-mentioned, and the following bond and agreement is drawn up and signed, viz. :—

That the £100 is payable (repayable) on the 28th day of July, 1863. But if the members of the Bishop Auckland Industrial Co-operative Flour and Provision Society wish to pay the aforesaid sum before the period above-mentioned after one year's investment, they must give notice as follows :—Three months for £50, and six months for £100. Also if the members of the Adelaides and South Durham Friendly Society wish to withdraw before the expiration of three years after one year's investment, they must also give notice as the aforesaid conditions.

By these transactions they were able to meet present needs, to raise sufficient capital to purchase goods, pay wages, meet incidental expenses, and thus keep their heads above water. Still, we cannot but see how slender their resources were in those days, and how near the margin they were moving.

These transactions, however, furnish pleasing evidence that confidence had been inspired in the district ; the people evidently believed in this new venture, and were ready to help it.

The Adelaides and South Durham Friendly Society was for many years a strong and flourishing sick club, with its headquarters at Shildon. Although composed mainly of working men, it had some clear-headed, far-seeing men in its ranks. Most probably some of its members would be members of the Co-operative Society. At any rate, the club evidently recognised that the two institutions were kindred in their aims and principles, and they were willing to risk the investment of a portion of their surplus funds, under proper safeguards, in the Society. This sick club finally failed, but it received from the Co-operative Society all that it had advanced to it, and many of its aged members found in the Co-operative Society a friend in their need, when the other institution had failed them.

The localities from which the first-enrolled members of the Society came, and the occupations they followed, are not without interest. Looking over the list, we find that 10 of them resided in the town of Bishop Auckland or its immediate vicinity, 23 in Shildon and New Shildon, 13 in West Auckland, 11 in St. Helen's Auckland, 11 in South Church, 8 in Woodhouse Close, 5 in Coundon and Canney Hill, 14 in Gurney Villa, 2 in Witton Park district, 6 in the Eldon district, 2 in Black Boy district, 7 in the Etherley district, 3 in Tottenham, 1 in Middridge, 1 in Cockfield, and 1 at Wensleydale in Yorkshire. Their occupations are classified thus : miners (including those engaged in and about a mine, *i.e.*, putters, deputies, enginemen, firemen, rolleywaymen, horse keepers, banksmen, onsetters, and coal hewers), 65 ; railwaymen, 5 ; blacksmiths, 8 ; joiners, 7 ; labourers, 11 ; masons, 3 ; innkeepers, 2 ; farmers, 2 ; and one each of the following callings : engineer, butcher, pattern maker, agent, merchant, clerk, carrier, stationer, miller, cartman, rolleyman, greengrocer, auctioneer and broker, and one lady.

As we scan this list we are impressed with the fact, that, while the mining industry, which is the staple industry of the district, is most numerously represented, nearly every trade and calling existing in the locality is represented, more or less ; and also, that the whole of these first members belonged to the working class, earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, and possessing none of the advantages likely to assist them in building up an association for the reformation and elevation of society, except those primal possessions of courage, faith, perseverance, and truth :—

“ The dauntless soul that conquers ill—
The ever-loving human heart.”

Having secured for themselves a place of business, they were also able to provide for themselves a room in which to hold their Committee meetings, and were no longer under the necessity of entrenching upon the good nature of their hospitable member, Mr. Richard Morley, at Eldon Lane. The meetings henceforth are held at the “establishment,” and they would undoubtedly feel much more comfortable when they could meet in a room of their own.

The note that rings through the proceedings of this first half year is one of progress and development, although they knew something of the vicissitudes that attend the course of all progressive movements.

They resolve very soon to add bacon, lard, cheese, cheap coffee, and 4½d. sugar to their stock of commodities.

Very soon they have to face the difficulty of delivering goods to their members. A Special General Meeting of members was called on August 18th, and met in the Infant Schoolroom, South Church, to consider this question, and it was there decided to “purchase a pony fourteen hands high, and a spring cart to deliver out goods and for other domestic purposes.” Messrs. John Roxborough and Richard Morley are deputed to buy a pony, and Mr. Martin Sewell has to go to “Darlington and purchase a new cart with six plated springs and neatly made.”

These proceedings all are evidences of growth and progress, and of a forward policy on the part of the members.

Progress creates need, and these needs have to be met as they arise.

But all was not straight sailing with them in these early transactions.

A few untrained men, without expert knowledge in the business of buying and selling, would be regarded as easy dupes by the smart merchant ; hence we soon hear of goods having been supplied not being of the quality ordered and agreed upon.

The treacle tank and coffee mill had to be returned as not being according to agreement. Goods, too, were found to be of an inferior quality, and had to be sold at a cheap rate in order to get them off their hands.

But the smart merchant soon found that if he had untrained buyers to deal with, he had men with brains, hard-headed, straightforward, who knew their own minds, knew what they wanted, and were determined to have it, and he found out that he was not going to "get it all his own way."

The aim of these early Co-operators was to provide a pure article at a reasonable price, to rescue the people from the hands of the unscrupulous tradesman, and to cleanse and regenerate the people's markets by making them their own buyers and sellers.

The task was a difficult one, rendered still more difficult by the inexperience of those to whom this work was entrusted ; and in these days, prior to the commencement of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, many a hard battle would have to be fought upon these lines, and we are glad to find the fathers of this Society battling in line with others for this object.

The fight is not yet ended, adulteration is frightfully common to-day, and the markets of the world are stocked with piles of spurious goods, some of them produced under the most inhuman conditions. But the great opponent to this evil is Co-operation, and the aim of our fathers to purify the commerce of the world must not be lost sight of amongst the many other worthy ideals of the movement to-day.

Another significant note is struck in a minute passed on June 27th, in which it is enacted that "No person is to remain in the Committee-room during business hours, except the officers authorised by the Committee. If any tradesman enter on any business, his account to be settled as soon as he enters, and not to return again."

What the particular cause of the prohibitive measure had been, we are unable to determine, but it seems to point to some attempt of the trading community to pry into the inner workings of the Society, or to tamper and interfere with them; but "hands off," say the Committee, we can do our own work and manage our own business, and do not want either the help or interference of the outsider. And we admire their independence.

The records of these early days are also coloured with a sad and gloomy tinge. The calling of the miner is, as is well known, beset with many dangers, and casualties are sadly too numerous amongst the ranks of this class, both in inside and outside labour, and it was the lot of the infant Society to lose one of its early members by a fatal accident. Mr. William Stokoe, of Black Boy, wagon rider, had the misfortune to lose his life on June 14th, 1860, and the Committee agreed to refund to the widow the entrance fee and share contributions which he had paid into the Society.

Thus, through the usual vicissitudes and experience of mortal things—progress, difficulty, joy, and sorrow—the Society journeys on to the end of its first half year, when stock is taken, the accounts are cast up, the balances struck, the trading results and financial position of the Society ascertained and submitted to the scrutiny of the Auditors, and finally to the members for their approval or otherwise.

The Auditors to whom the accounts were submitted were Mr. George Fryer (Shildon) and Mr. Joseph Black, the latter not being a member of the Society.

Mr. George Fryer took an active interest in the working of the Society. He was usually selected to take the stocks, and continued to be the Auditor until the year 1865.

This first half year covered seventeen weeks, from May 28th to September 30th.

The number of members at the time was : 167 who had paid their entrance fees, 122 had paid up their shares, and one who had died, making the total 166.

The total sales were £569. 2s. 1½d., and the amount upon which dividend was paid was £456. 17s. 7½d.

The profit realised, after paying interest on shares and borrowed money, was £20. 19s. 6½d., which was returned to the members as a dividend of 11d. in the £ upon the amount of their purchases.

The share capital at this time stood at £147. 8s., and they had borrowed money to the amount of £170.

They had fixed stock to the value of £63. 19s. 1d., and a stock in trade of £164. 1s. 3d.

The balance sheet states :—

The Committee have great pleasure in congratulating the members on the prosperity of the Society. Many obstacles have had to be surmounted, but the results have exceeded all their expectations.

They are satisfied with the past, and sanguine as to the future.

The rapidly increasing number of members, and increasing business of the Society, combined with a strictly economical Committee, and the encouraging and judicious manner in which the business has been conducted by the Manager, have already secured the confidence of the members, and will no doubt secure the permanent success of the Society.

We have pleasure in presenting to the reader a facsimile of this interesting document, which is a striking testimony to the business ability of the Committee and the success of the Society.

The Half-yearly Meeting met in the Adelaides Colliery Infant Schoolroom, South Church, on November 3rd, 1860, when the report, stock, and balance sheets were read by the Auditors. The meeting seems to have been jubilant in tone and unanimous in spirit. No resolution was passed except to order the printing of 200 copies of the balance sheet.

As we scan the short record of the first Half-yearly Meeting, so gladsome and thankful is the spirit it breathes, that it almost makes us envious and desirous for a return of these good old times.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

LIABILITIES.		ASSETS	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To Members' Claims	147 8 0	By Fixed Stock	63 19 1
" Borrowed Money	170 0 0	" Goods on Stock	164 1 3
" Interest on £309.. ..	4 0 11	" Cash	125 19 5½
" Owing for Goods	11 11 4		
Balance Profit.. ..	333 0 3		
	20 19 6½		
			£353 19 9½

PROFIT ACCOUNT.

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Dividend on £456. 17s. 7½d. Purchase Money,		Balance brought down	20 19 6½
at 11d. in the Pound	20 18 9½		
Balance	0 0 9		
	£20 19 6½		

JOHN HUDSON,
RALPH BROWNS,
MARTIN SEWELL,

COMMITTEE.

JAMES WATSON, MANAGER.
WILLIAM MOORE, TREASURER.
JOHN HENDERSON, SECRETARY.

GEORGE FRYER, }
JOSEPH BLACK, }
AUDITORS.

J. HOLLIS, PRINTER BY STEAM POWER, MARKET PLACE, BISHOP AUCKLAND.

CHAPTER V.

Progress.

“ We maun do first the thing 'at we
Ken, an' syne we may think aboot
The thing 'at we dinna ken.”

—*George Macdonald.*

“ For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled ;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.
Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base,
And, ascending and secure,
Shall to-morrow find its place.”

—*Longfellow.*

IT has been said that “ the world values a man at the rate of his own valuation.” There is a truth in that, applicable not only to men, but to institutions.

The man who lightly esteems himself is held in light esteem by others, and the institution that does not create enthusiasm in the minds of its adherents will gain small regard from the outside public, while an institution that is conscious of its own potentiality, and its ability to do great things, raises expectations in the minds of the world, and thus creates a condition favourable to the accomplishment of its aims.

One factor that helped the success of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society was the faith which the pioneers had in its ultimate success, and their intention to succeed.

True, their early days were the days of small and feeble things but they were days of foundation-laying for greater things in the future. The constitution and framework of

the Society was fashioned in the anticipation of success and development. The fathers of the Society were wise enough ever to "do first the thing 'at they kenned," but they did not lose sight of the fact that the "unkenned" was before them, and the possibility of entering its misty realm ever gleamed before their vision.

During the year that followed their first Half-yearly Meeting the Society's affairs moved very steadily and quietly along. No serious disturbing influences seem to have been at work to impede progress or upset working arrangements. Some slight changes took place in the official staff. Mr. John Hudson was appointed Trustee in place of Mr. James Little, who had voluntarily withdrawn; and Mr. John Tinkler was appointed Secretary in place of Mr. John Henderson, who had been appointed Orderman by the Committee.

The progress of the Society in members, business, capital, and profits had nothing phenomenal about it, but was steady and satisfactory. The membership had increased from 166 to 189, the sales had more than doubled themselves, and the profits had increased threefold, while the share capital stood at £187.

The financial position of the Society was not by any means strong, and a single stroke of mismanagement might have sent them on their beam ends; but they were able to steer through safely, and their slender resources proved sufficient for the day.

They had begun, too, the work of propagandism. A supply of Co-operative tracts had been procured and circulated amongst the people. This literature, which found its way to the people's homes, would explain what Co-operation really meant, what were its principles, and what its aims; and thus prove a corrective to the many misleading opinions and misconceptions that were abroad, and were being so vigorously disseminated by the enemies of the movement. The true principles that underlay the local movement would thus be brought home to the public, and they would be better able to understand what the Store in their midst meant, and what it stood for.

They would be led to see that this movement amongst the working people in the district was something more than a mere local affair—that it was part of a national movement, aiming at the elevation of the working classes of the land, and based upon the universal principles of brotherhood and mutual trust. They had also decided to advertise their Society and their own goods in the district and county papers.

A tea party, too, was organised and held. The tea party to-day is not such a popular event, but at that time no more effective method could have been adopted to reach the people, draw them together, unite them in social converse, and thus advertise the cause under whose auspices it was held. Along with the tea party a public meeting was arranged, and a lecture on "Co-operation," delivered by Mr. J. C. Farn. Thus the bodily wants and the intellectual needs of the people were being catered for, and the general principles of Co-operation, as well as the particular claims of their own Society, were enforced. Propagandism is the outcome of the spirit of earnestness and of faith. Wherever there is propagandism there are some earnest souls behind it. It is the easy-going, careless, and indifferent spirit, that sits down quietly, and allows things to go as they may. But the eager, intense, and aggressive spirit is ever seeking to push things forward, to conquer fresh territory and win new fields, and to press his cause before the attention of the public. Propagandism is also born of faith. It is the product of a firm belief in the cause espoused—in its righteousness, its fitness, and truth; and this belief leads the propagandist to urge it upon the attention of his neighbours.

The Pioneers of this Society were propagandists because they believed in the righteousness and fitness of Co-operative principles, and because they were zealous for the progress of their own particular Society. These men had some of the prophetic spirit in them as well. They were not only seeking success, but anticipating it. From the plain of their present small attainments their eyes beheld the mountain peaks of greater things. They were doing the things they

“kenned,” but sometimes they would “speir” into that which they “didna ken.”

The minute passed on May 22nd, 1862, when Mr. John Henderson was appointed Orderman, was significant. His fee was to be “20s. a week, and half the entrance fee of each new member, his wages to be increased as the business increased,” thus encouraging him to canvass for new members, and holding progress before his eyes as an incentive and hope.

But there is also this significant clause in the minute, “that he is to stand in the shop next to Mr. James Watson, and should any Branch Store commence, to have the first offer as Manager.” Was this an illusive offer held out, or had the idea of expansion already entered their minds, and the anticipation of extending the Society’s borders by the establishment of Branches appealed to their imagination? Some years passed before any Branches were opened, but their prophetic spirits, even at this early stage, had seized upon the idea as a practical possibility. These aspirations after expansion, however, were not altogether the product of imagination, but had a basis of solid fact. On August 14th, 1861, this minute is recorded:—

In consequence of our shop being too small, and Mr. R. Powton’s premises being for sale, and it being a convenient shop for our business, it was agreed that some circulars should be printed and sent to every member for him to set on the amount which he feels disposed to lend at 5 per cent per annum.

Here we see that the want of room was making itself felt, and circumstances were compelling them to seriously consider the question of new premises.

The Society’s business at this time would represent a weekly trade of a little over £50. This would not all be counter trade, as they had a pony and trap to deliver out goods to their members. Hence we ask ourselves the question, was it present need only that brought this question of premises to the front? For purposes of present trade we venture to think that the shop was sufficient, but it was the anticipated increase, gauged by the success

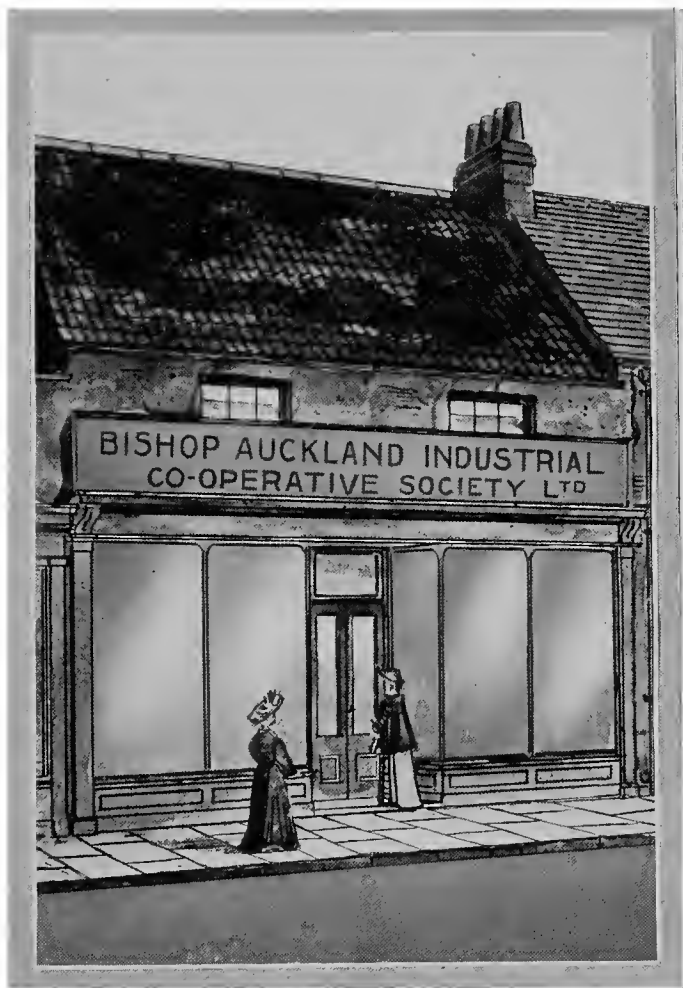
of the past, and the state of feeling in the district created by their propagandism, that led them to foresee that their premises were rapidly becoming too small.

Possibly other considerations occasioned this step. The fact of having to transact their business in rented premises, subject to the will and caprice of a landlord, made their position both insecure and uncertain, while the prospect of owning their own premises and being independent of any outsider would be an alluring thought, and have its influence in leading them to the decision which that minute recorded. At any rate, a place was in the market possessing the advantages and conveniences which they required, and, with characteristic courage and enterprise, they decided to make a bid.

Now, this was a new move, a step in a direction that they had not gone before. To buy goods at a stated scheduled rate, was one thing ; to buy property—business premises—situate in the centre of the leading business thoroughfare in the town, was quite another matter. All their business qualifications would be called into requisition in ascertaining the true value of such a place, and in conducting the transactions for its purchase with credit to themselves and satisfaction to the members.

Two of their men were appointed to inspect the premises and open negotiations for its purchase, Mr. John Walton, engineer, Woodhouse Colliery, and Mr. Richard Morley, Eldon Lane, being selected for this purpose. They inspected the premises and offered a price, which was not accepted. Negotiations, however, continued until June of the following year, when an agreement was arrived at, although the actual transference of the property did not take place until September of that year, when it was turned over to the Society for the price of £720.

The property was situate on the west side of Newgate Street, one of the best business sites in the town, and consisted of a shop and dwelling-house. The shop was on the ground floor and fronting into Newgate Street, the kitchen of the house being at the back and the other rooms on the first floor.



FIRST SHOP IN NEWGATE STREET, 1861.

We gladly give the readers the accompanying illustration of this property—the first installation of that majestic stretch of buildings comprising the Society's Central Premises to-day. The price paid may seem to be large for that day, and would undoubtedly be considered so by that little struggling community of working men; but when we consider the position secured, and what it has proved itself capable of becoming, we cannot help but admire the enterprise, the foresight, and the sound business capacity of these men, who dared to make such a purchase, involving as it did the expenditure of a sum over three times as large as all their share capital.

Now came the crucial question, where is the money to come from to enable the Trustees to purchase this desirable piece of property? The total share capital of the members at this time was only £209, and, in addition to this, there was £120 borrowed money. The difficulty was a serious and important one and, in approaching it, the Society's characteristic note of self-reliance was again struck. In the minute of August 14th, 1861, previously referred to, the members are to be approached first, and they are to be asked to shoulder this financial burden, or as much of it as they could, and again on June 14th, 1862, when the purchase price had been agreed upon, it was decided:—

That all the members be noticed concerning the amount of money to be paid for the property of Mr. R. Powton, which was bought on Friday, June 13th, so that it can be ascertained what amount of money can be raised among our members.

There were at that time no Co-operative agencies in operation to help struggling Societies with loans, and the hostile attitude assumed by many of those outside the movement might render it difficult for them to obtain money on reasonable terms outside, so that they would be compelled to look to themselves for help.

But from the very commencement of the Society there has ever been evinced a disposition to do their own work, fight their own battles, and conquer their own difficulties without help from the outside.

It would be interesting to know how much of the money required was obtained from the members, but we have no reliable data to inform us.

During the half year ended September 28th, 1862, £687 had been borrowed.

No resolution had been passed during the half year empowering the Trustees to borrow money from any other source, so that there is reason to assume that the membership had manfully rallied to the rescue, and the bulk of the money, if not the whole of it, had been raised within their ranks.

The premises were transferred to the Society by deed on September 3rd, 1862, and at the Half-yearly Meeting on November 1st, 1862, another question of extension arose, viz., the need of a new storeroom or warehouse, and the Committee were empowered to deal with the question.

Their stock in trade was rapidly increasing, and, although larger and more commodious premises had been secured, the need of some larger place where they might "bestow their goods" was apparent. Long strides in advance had been taken since the days when the "coffee mill and pepper mill, the six tea caddies and treacle tank" sufficed for their needs.

A Special Committee, consisting of Messrs. John Walton, Richard Morley, John Hudson, Martin Sewell, William Eales, and George Fryer, were appointed to consult "upon plans and specifications for a new warehouse" suitable for the Society's business.

Here, again, the Committee were called upon to break new ground. To erect new premises was quite another thing from purchasing premises ready built.

But again they proved themselves equal to the demands laid upon them, and once more they determined that the work should be done within their own ranks as far as possible. Mr. John Walton (the Woodhouse Close Engineer) was appointed to draw up plans and prepare the specifications for the work, and the members in General Meeting assembled

also appointed him clerk of the works as far as the wood-work was concerned ; and Mr. John Mundell (a stonemason of Bishop Auckland) was to superintend the masonry.

Tenders were advertised for, and on February 16th, 1863, the masonry work was let to Mr. James Bainbridge for the sum of £96. 15s., and the joiner's work to Mr. John Braithwaite for the sum of £28. 10s. The work appears to have been completed by May of that year, for May 2nd was a day of great things amongst them. A monster tea party was held in the new warehouse, sixteen stones of flour having been baked into bread for the occasion, and provision made for 800 to tea, after which the members formed into procession, paraded the town with band and banner, and then proceeded to the new Town Hall to hear another lecture on "Co-operation" by Mr. T. C. Farn.

The Half-yearly Meeting, which should have been held on that day, had to be adjourned till the following week.

Such was their celebration of the opening of their new warehouse, the first new erection under the auspices of the Society.

The building seems to have cost about £150 altogether, and, as was their wont, they determined to find the money amongst their own members if possible ; they were to have circulars upon the subject, and what money could not be raised in this way the Trustees were to procure in the "cheapest market."

The amount of borrowed money was now becoming a considerable item ; at that half year it stood at £786. 10s., while their share capital was £520. 18s. 10d., but it must be remembered that the bulk of this borrowed money had been got from the members of the Society, and not from the outside, and with this money they were not only meeting the needs of the present, but making provision for the future—they were laying a strong and sure foundation upon which a great and mighty structure could be reared.

Other signs of progress are also apparent in this period.

There appears to have been abroad in the county some efforts towards a federation of Co-operative Societies.

Some federations were in existence prior to this time amongst the Societies in and around Manchester, and several Co-operative Congresses had been held, but these federations were not very widespread in their influence or work.

A desire, however, was manifesting itself in favour of the union of Co-operative Societies for mutual protection and help, and the Bishop Auckland Society seems to have been in sympathy with this spirit that was abroad.

On February 21st, 1863, a resolution was passed at the Committee Meeting:—

That the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Flour and Provision Society Limited contribute their farthing per member for the purpose to meet the expenses of the Committee in carrying out the resolution of the Conference, viz., to remedy a few defects in the Act of 1862, in the present session of Parliament, prepare plans for a central agency, or wholesale depot, and consider plans for insurance, assurance, and guarantee in connection with Co-operative Societies.

This resolution was passed in response to a circular or letter that was sent out to every Co-operative Society by Mr. William Cooper, who was at that time the acting Secretary of the Conference Committee of the Manchester District.

The circular was issued by order of a Conference of Delegates from Industrial and Provident Societies, held in the King Street Stores Meeting-room, Oldham, on December 25th, 1862, when it was resolved "That all Co-operative Societies be requested to contribute $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per member to meet the expenses that may arise." The objects for which the expenses were needed are those stated in the resolution passed by the Committee, which we have just recorded.*

This was the effort which culminated in the formation of the Co-operative Wholesale Society in 1864, so that this Society was really in at the commencement of this gigantic Co-operative federation.

Another Conference of Co-operative Societies was held in Newcastle-on-Tyne on May 16th, 1863, and at that Conference this Society was represented by two members—Messrs. William Moore and William Eales—who had been appointed as Delegates by the Committee.

* History of Co-operation, Vol. II., Page 354.

At another meeting it was decided to contribute $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per member towards sending a Delegate to Parliament. So that it is evident that the true spirit of Co-operation was growing in their midst, and that they were in perfect sympathy with the aspirations of the movement after unity and federation of forces.

The activity of the Society was also apparent at that time.

These were busy days. Special Committee Meetings were frequent, and important decisions come to.

The Society at the end of 1863 was doing a trade of over £90 per week, and new developments and needs were constantly arising, which required constant care and attention.

It must not, however, be supposed that these were days of unruffled serenity, and that their waters flowed in a still and unbroken stream.

Activity and progress ever disturbs still waters and ruffles the placid peace of affairs.

Perfect unanimity of opinion amongst men of sincere convictions is an impossibility, and to have expected all the members to be in agreement with the policy of the Committee in their schemes for development and progress would be to expect the impossible.

Immediately after the purchase of the new premises, applications for the withdrawal of shares became very numerous. Perfect concord does not seem to have prevailed at their meetings, as a resolution was passed to impose a fine on those members who would persist in interrupting a speaker while on his feet.

Trouble also seems to have arisen in relation to the Manager.

In 1862 resolutions were passed restraining the Manager in his buying, and prohibiting him from attending the butter market, and on February 25th, 1863, it was determined to advertise in the *Manchester Examiner* and the *Auckland Herald* for a Manager for the Society, who must be a married man, give security, and produce good references.

On March 5th the Committee met together to choose a new Manager, when it was decided that Mr. Thomas Sewell (Rumby Hill) have the situation at 28s. per week, house and gas free, and that he give security for £200.

Their troubles, however, were not all over with the appointment of a new Manager; explanations had frequently to be given by the outgoing Manager on difficulties that presented themselves, and on occasions he had to be summoned to the Committee Meetings.

Complications arose, too, in respect to the securities offered by the new Manager, and solicitors' opinion had to be taken on certain wills, bonds, and property relating thereto.

The difficulties, however, got smoothed down, the new Manager secured the confidence of the Committee for a time, and he was commissioned to buy in any market for the benefit of the Society until further orders were received from the Committee.

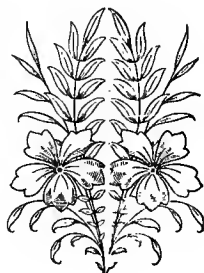
One result accruing from the change in Manager was an increase in trade profits, enabling the Committee to declare a larger dividend than they had ever done before.

The highest dividend paid under the old regime had been once 1s. 7d. in the £, but the first half year after the change in Managers they were able to pay 2s. 8d., and the following half year 3s. in the £. After this they paid 3s. 3d. one half year, the highest rate of dividend paid for very many years. Whether these larger profits and higher dividends were evidences of true progress or not is open to question. We only quote them as events that took place.

Thus amid the varied experiences and fluctuations, trouble and triumph, difficulty and development, the Society held on its way, and every half year as it passed along found them stronger and more firmly established, stronger in membership, in capital, increased in trade and profits, and inspired by a broad and progressive policy. These had come—

“ From out this noise of strife and groaning
A broader and a juster brotherhood.
A deep equality of aim, postponing
All selfish seeking, to the general good.”

In the first five years of their existence the membership had increased to 345, the share capital to £1,535, the sales to £4,597, or £176 per week, and their profits for the half year ending March, 1865, was £608, while they possessed property with a value of over £1,000. No mean record for five years' work, which completely falsified the owlish prophecies of their adversaries of immediate disaster and ruin.



CHAPTER VI.

Development.

"How one likes to see the burly figure of him, this thick-skinned, seemingly opaque, perhaps sulky, almost stupid, man of practice, pitted against some adroit son of theory, all equipt with clear logic, and ready anywhere to give good Why for Wherefore !

The adroit man of theory, so light of movement, clear of utterance, with his bow full bent, and full of arrow arguments. Surely he can strike down the game, transfix anywhere the heart of the matter, triumph everywhere, as he proves he shall and must do. To your astonishment it turns out oftenest NO !

The cloudy-browed, thick-soled practicability, with no logic utterance, in silence mainly, has in him what transcends all logic utterance—a congruity with the unuttered. The speakable is his or is not his, but the doable, which reaches down to the world's centre, you find him there."—*Carlyle*.

THE Bishop Auckland Society did not, like some other noted Societies, commence its operations with the sale of flour, although its name would seem to imply that it did. "Flour," says Mr. G. J. Holyoake, "was the beginning of the famous Leeds Society." Flour was also the commencement of the Teesdale Workmen's Society, but, strange to say, flour was not one of the commodities sold in the early stages of this Society's career.

Why this was so we cannot say. Probably there were local circumstances that would account for the fact, but it is quite safe to say that Co-operators could not long be satisfied to purchase this staple necessity of life from the private trader or miller, while purchasing their other articles of consumption from the Co-operative Store. And it was not long before this matter began to claim attention and a movement was made for the supply of flour.

But this movement contemplated something more than the mere sale of flour ; it had the audacity to consider the question of production. No doubt this aspect of the question was forced upon them by the difficulties they had encountered in procuring goods of the right quality and according to agreement. Again and again, as we peruse the records of this Society, do we come across instances where goods had to be returned, or else sold at a cheap rate in order to get rid of them, because they were found to be of an inferior quality. Sometimes merchants had to be met, and the matter fought out with them, and on one occasion legal proceedings were instituted "in order to recover damages from a soap merchant for not sending soap according to the sample bought from." These constantly recurring troubles would undoubtedly raise the question of "merchant" and "quality" when flour was under consideration, and the query arose, "can we not mill our own?"

In those days (says Mr. G. J. Holyoake) millers sold flour which would give a boa constrictor indigestion and reduce it to ribs and skin. Before the days of Co-operative Stores the poor man's stomach was the waste paper basket of the State, into which everything was thrown which the well-to-do classes could not or would not eat.

At the Half-yearly Meeting held on November 2nd, 1861, the following resolution was passed :—

That there be a Special Meeting held in the Infant Schoolroom, South Church, on Saturday evening, December 14th, 1861, to take into consideration the propriety of establishing a Co-operative Corn Mill Society.

What the findings of this meeting were is not stated. No record is made of them in the minute book of the Society. Certain it is, however, that some short time after this a Society came into existence known as "The Co-operative Corn Mill Society." The first mill belonging to this Society was situate at the Town Head, Bishop Auckland, which served the purpose of the Society for a time, but, proving inconvenient as to position and insufficient as to size, a new mill was built at Blue Row, on the side of the railway running from Bishop Auckland to Shildon on the site of the present ruins of the mill known as "Scrafton's Mill," which was destroyed by fire some years ago.

How, and exactly when, this Corn Mill Society came into existence ; what was its constitution ; who were its shareholders and leaders, does not appear in the annals of our Society.

It had an existence separate and distinct from the Flour and Provision Society, but a very close relationship existed between the two. Though separate and distinct, they worked together as sister organisations, and are frequently referred to as the "Shop" and the "Mill," the people being supplied with flour from the mill, and with other provisions from the shop.

At the same Committee Meeting when it was decided to secure Mr. R. Powton's property as a shop, it was also decided "That the shop take up shares in the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Corn Mill Society, subject to the conditions of the Mill." Only five £1 shares were purchased. This was a very small share of the financial responsibility which the shop in its corporate capacity took upon itself, but it must be borne in mind that nearly all the shares in the mill were held by the shareholders of the shop, separately and individually, and that the same men practically were running the two Societies, but running them separately.

On January 3rd, 1863, a young man named Robert Young was engaged by the Committee of the Provision Society, his wages to be 12s. per week, and his duties are thus specified :—

He is to solicit the orders for the shop and the mill, and to do anything he is requested to do by the Managers of each place, and to keep accounts, and to keep a separate account of his time at each place.

This minute shows that the two Societies were working in line, having an interchange of working arrangements.

The Corn Mill Society appears never to have been a very robust or flourishing concern. It was run on small lines, and was often crippled for want of capital, but it was a plucky attempt on the part of these men to tackle the thorny question of production. In 1867 the mill got into

difficulties, and the Committee of this Society agreed to grant them a loan of £10, and to invite the sympathy of the members on behalf of the aforesaid mill at the next Half-yearly Meeting.

The Half-yearly Meeting, which met on May 4th, heartily responded to the appeal for sympathy, and generously converted the loan into a gift by deciding "That the £10 be given to the Co-operative Mill which was lent under pressing circumstances."

In the following year the mill failed, its fall being hastened by the sudden disappearance of its Manager. The Co-operative Provision Society as a whole did not seem to be seriously affected by the fall, but many of the members in their individual capacity would be sufferers. Strenuous efforts were put forth to lighten the blow. Appeals were issued by Mr. Moore, then Manager of the Store, to all Co-operative Societies in the county, which were fairly generously responded to.

The Store undertook to supply its members with flour, and at once commenced a separate Flour Department, and from the profits of this department, and the contributions of other Societies, the loss to the shareholders was considerably reduced.

In July, 1863, the Committee determined to still further extend their operations by commencing a Drapery Department. Here once more they are compelled to break new ground, and face problems more abstruse than those faced before. The drapery business has its own peculiar difficulties, both in the matter of buying and also of selling, and differs in many respects from the grocery trade. The question of fashion, vagaries of taste, texture and quality of material, and the varying markets, ruled by so many conflicting considerations, are all factors that enter into the work of conducting a drapery business and give it peculiar complications. The same spirit of courage and enterprise, however, which had enabled them to overcome the difficulties of the past, led them both to encounter this problem and to master it.

Most probably they were forced to take this matter up by the demand of the people. The members were not likely for any great length of time to be content with merely being supplied with groceries. The Store which had done so much for them was capable of doing more. If it could supply their breakfast table, why not supply the other material needs of their life. At any rate, an attempt was to be made to proceed another step in advance.

A new Manager had been appointed who probably knew something of the drapery trade, and under his management a Drapery Department was opened and succeeded.

In the year following a further extension of the drapery business was decided upon by opening a millinery establishment. This decision necessitated the bringing in of a new factor, namely, female labour. No females up to this time had been regularly employed.

It was decided on one occasion to present the Manager's wife (Mrs. Sewell) with £1 as some recompense "for coals used in the Committee-room, and for labour done by her in the shop for the benefit of the Society."

At this period there must have been some difficulty in obtaining labour for the shop, and in their need Mrs. Sewell had apparently come to their rescue and given her labour without being appointed by the Committee. But now it is decided to commence the millinery business, a female hand is necessary, and Hannah White was employed as Milliner, and to assist in the drapery business. The venture seems to have been a success for a time, and the choice of Milliner a wise one, for, in two months after the commencement, it was decided to advance the Milliner's wage by 2s. per week.

This department appears to have had its fluctuations, and after a time to have been discontinued.

In the meantime another change takes place in the management. Some differences seem to have arisen, and a month's notice was given to the Manager on May 3rd, 1865, and at the Half-yearly Meeting on May 6th it was decided "That the Committee has the confidence of the members."

The new Manager who was appointed was Mr. Joseph Mitchell, who appears to have had some experience in Co-operative work, for he was at the time of his appointment an employé of the Southport Store.

Soon after the appointment of the new Manager it was decided to recommence the millinery business. Mrs. Mitchell was consulted as to the terms on which she would accept the management of the department, and she was appointed to this position at the wage of 15s. per week. Five hundred small bills and 100 large ones were printed and circulated, to advertise the commencement of the millinery business, and the Manager was empowered to go to Manchester to purchase a stock of spring goods for the department, and towards the end of the year Mrs. Mitchell was despatched to Manchester to purchase winter goods.

Thus, step by step, they extend the border-line of their operations, and if on occasions their efforts meet with failure, they simply watch opportunity, and, when it comes, they seize it to renew their efforts until success rewards them.

The progressive temper and spirit of the Society finds expression in a minute passed at the Half-yearly Meeting in November, 1863. It was decided that the Committee be empowered to commence shoemaking or any other profitable business at any time they think the Society is in circumstances to do so.

The permission to commence shoemaking was not taken advantage of until many years after, but this resolution shows that these men's idea of what a Co-operative Society should be, was not cast in any narrow or restricted mould.

Extension and development must ever be kept before the minds of the Committee.

The result of extending the departments, and the consequent expansion in trade, was that the shop became inconvenient, and they were compelled to alter and remodel it so as to make it more convenient for their growing trade.

It was decided, too, in 1863, to insure their property and stock in trade against fire. The shop and warehouse was insured for £400 and the stock in trade for £600, making

£1,000 in all to be recoverable in case of fire. This appears a somewhat small amount, seeing that their house and shop property stood to them at this time at the value of £879, and their stock in trade at £450. It would seem that they appraised the value of their site at a high figure.

Another step decided on in 1863 was to purchase the *Co-operator* and send it out to each member at a charge of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each.

The *Co-operator* was the journal of the Co-operative movement, representing principally the Yorkshire and Lancashire Societies, and was conducted solely by working men. It commenced its career in the same year as this Society—1860—and was at first a penny monthly, but afterwards became a weekly journal. It was the predecessor of the present *Co-operative News*.

From this decision to circulate the *Co-operator* it will be seen that the leaders of the Society were not absorbed with the mere idea of material progress, but were likewise seeking to nurture and intensify the true spirit of Co-operation amongst their members by the circulation of its literature.

By putting the *Co-operator* into their hands they were constantly bringing before their attention the principles and the progress of the movement, and bringing them into contact both with its idealists and its practical workers, and by so doing they were taking one of the most effectual steps towards securing the permanence and success of their own Society.

Another form of extension that marks the Society's early operations is the extension of the border-lines of its area. At the first meeting held it had been decided that four miles was to be the limit to which goods should be delivered to the members, and of the 166 original members only two would be resident outside this four-mile limit. One of these resided in Wensleydale, in Yorkshire. He was a carrier, and his business would often bring him into the town of Bishop Auckland. The other resided in Cockfield, an outlying village of the Bishop Auckland district.

But the whole area of South Durham, with the exception of a small patch covered by the Teesdale Society, was a wide arid desert so far as Co-operation was concerned at this time. The land lay before them waiting to be possessed, and it was not likely that a Society with the aims, spirit, and aspirations that possessed it, was going to be bound in within the narrow limits of a four-mile area.

If the temper that is abroad to-day, seeking to draw around each Society a geographical line that is to define its area of operations, had inspired the Pioneers of Co-operation, its position in this land would have been a different thing from what it is.

It is the missionary, aggressive spirit which animated these men, that caused Co-operation to spread.

South Durham to-day is no longer an arid desert, but a fruitful garden of Co-operation, and many of the streams that have watered it flowed from the Bishop Auckland Society.

Very soon the four-mile limit disappears, and the question of supplying the districts beyond has to have serious attention.

In 1862 it was decided to supply a member living at Wingate with goods.

Then Willington, Crook, Spennymoor, Witton, and Evenwood made claims for supplies, and within the first five years of its existence the Society had spread to Wolsingham, Stanhope, Brancepeth, Willington, Newfield, Oakenshaw, Toft Hill, Butterknowle, Bildershaw, and Redworth. Thus east, west, north, and south the Society sent out its shoots and yielded its fruits to the people.

How it became settled and put down its Branches in some of these districts outside, will form matter for another chapter.

The developments in the Society's operations and spirit naturally brings with it an increase of trade, and this again creates need for still further extensions.

The shop accommodation was felt to be insufficient for the purposes of the Society, and on December 16th, 1863, it was agreed by the Committee to borrow £50 and to alter the shop and make it more convenient for the growing trade.

This growing trade also made it necessary to employ additional labour. The supply of labour did not seem to be so plentiful in those days as it is at the present time ; indeed, it did not seem equal to the demand. If there happens to be any vacancy to be filled to-day the Committee are simply inundated with applicants, and the work of selection becomes very difficult, but in these early days the difficulty seems to have been to secure hands.

Immediately after the decision to alter the shop—on January 13th, 1864—a minute was passed : “ That each Committee-man try to get a lad or lads as apprentices for the shop, and that the Manager have power to get more help if he can.”

The Society would not be in a position to offer the same advantages to labour as it can to-day, and, besides, there would undoubtedly be abroad in the community a certain amount of suspicion and doubt as to the permanency of the Society, and the stability of the employment.

Alongside the increase in labour came the necessity for fixing its conditions. The question of wages demands attention, and at a Committee Meeting held on February 8th, 1865, the following minute was passed :—

That the boys' wages at fourteen years of age be 6s. per week, 2s. advance the first year, and 1s. per year after, except the last year to be advanced 3s., and that all boys be bound.

This would mean that on reaching the age of 21 a youth would receive 16s. per week—certainly not a princely wage, but, in view of the times and the position of the Society, this rate of wage was not at all discreditable to the Society.

The hours of labour likewise required attention.

In the first years of the Society's operations we can understand it would be difficult to fix definite hours for opening and closing ; they were just beginning to find their

way and would have to learn by experience. The convenience of the members would be the first concern of the management, and circumstances would have largely to determine the hours of opening, and more particularly the hours of closing the shop. But now that they had found their feet and gauged the circumstances, and especially that they were assuming the position of employers of labour, it became necessary that regular shop hours should be appointed.

On March 8th, 1865, the following hours were fixed : Open at 7-30 a.m., close at 7 p.m. on every day of the week except Thursdays and Saturdays. These are the town's market days, and therefore it was felt necessary to keep open until a later hour, but that hour is not specified.

So that now members know the hours in which they can be served, and employés know the hours in which they are expected to be present in the shop—a regulation that would be advantageous to both sides. Again, considering the circumstances of the case, we think this regulation as to hours was framed in a reasonable spirit.

We shall have occasion to refer in another place to the policy of the Society in reference to the conditions of labour laid down for its employés. We can only say here that the spirit and temper of the Pioneers of the Society in relation to this matter seem to have been humane and sensible, and in accordance with the principles of the Co-operative movement.

The position of Manager to the Society does not appear to have been a very inviting position in these days. Considerable unrest evidently prevailed, and changes were often made.

Mr. J. Mitchell, who succeeded Mr. T. Sewell, did not continue long with the Society. He was appointed on May 22nd, 1865, and resigned the position in March, 1867, giving "ill-health" as his reason for retirement. At any rate, he appears to retire with the goodwill of the Committee and the respect of the members. The Committee proposed to

make a presentation to the retiring Manager, and the members in Half-yearly Meeting assembled confirmed this proposal.

A huge Tea Meeting was organised, which was held on June 29th, 1867, the shop being closed for the occasion, and each employé presented with a free ticket. A monster Public Meeting was also held in the Town Hall, when Mr. John Simpson, on behalf of the Committee and Society, presented Mr. Mitchell with a watch and chain, and Mrs. Mitchell with some articles, as a token of the Society's goodwill and esteem. Thus the Committee did honour to its servants, and at the same time sought to strengthen the foundations of the Society.

Upon the recommendation of Mr. Mitchell, the Committee appointed Mr. John Ogden, Manager of the Mossley Society, to the vacant position. This gentleman came and stayed a fortnight with them. He then returned home, ostensibly to bring his family and household goods, but wrote to inform them that he did not intend to return. His stay was very short, and it is said his only purchase during his term of service was a quantity of currants, which proved to be useless for the Society's purpose.

The Half-yearly Meeting was held on May 4th, and that meeting recommended the Committee to appoint one of their own members (Mr. William Moore) to the vacant position. This the Committee, by a unanimous vote, at their next meeting proceeded to do, and thus once more they fell back on their former policy of finding the men to fill important positions from amongst their own ranks. Mr. William Moore had been connected with the Society from its commencement, and had taken an active interest in all its affairs. For four years he had been its Secretary, and had invested nearly all his savings in it as shares and loans. His appointment to this very important position by the recommendation of its members, and by a unanimous vote of its Committee, is a fitting tribute to his character and work; is a mark of the esteem he had won from his fellow-men; and was followed by the happiest results to the Society.

We shall at this juncture transcribe a minute that was passed just a little time previous to this event (May 16th,

1866)—a minute that would not seem to possess any uncommon features, and yet the event which that minute records is one that has been fraught with momentous issues to the Society. The minute reads :—

That Henry Kellet* be engaged by the Society as book-keeper and assistant to the grocery and drapery business, as the Committee and Manager shall direct, at 16s. per week.

This is the first introduction into the annals of the Society of a name that is more closely interwoven with its subsequent history than any other name, and which supplies an explanation of very much of the success that has marked its operations. We shall have occasion to refer at various times to this name, and we only mention it here to show the humble entrance into the Society of its most successful Manager.

And now the end of the first decade of the Society's history draws near, and it may be interesting to the reader if we close the chapter with a statement of the position of the Society at the end of its first ten years' work.



MR. KELLETT
at 19.

The twentieth half year ended on March 22nd, 1870, and the membership was reported to have reached 514; the share capital stood at £2,620; the sales for that half year had been £7,337; the net profit realised had been £498; and they were able to declare a dividend of 2s. in the £. Surely this is no mean record. These had been years of hard work, in which stern difficulties had had to be faced, and some real spade work done. But the Society had overcome its difficulties, had more than fulfilled the hopes of its founders, and justified its existence to the people.

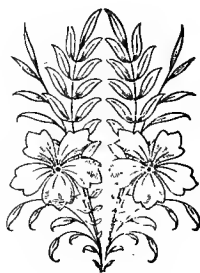
The Committee's report to the members appended to the balance sheet of that date breathes the spirit that animated the Society. It says :—

Your Committee have great pleasure in congratulating you on the very satisfactory position of your Society, and beg to thank you for your confidence and support in the past, knowing from past

* Full name, Henry Nicholson Kellett.

experience that it is only through the confidence of the members that your Committee are able to conduct the affairs of the Society with satisfaction, and as the members are increasing, and trade increasing, your Committee are very hopeful for the future. Trusting that each member will hold forth the interests of the Society to his friends and neighbours. In conclusion, we beg to inform you that from March, 1868, to March, 1870, there has been paid out of the funds of the Society to members the sum of £1,756. This, you will all remember, has been done during a period of bad trade, and we think will bear a favourable contrast with the old system of having to run up a score at the shop in hard times.

This spirit of satisfaction at past success, of sanguine anticipation for the future, and of trust and confidence in the membership, has been characteristic of the Society right through its career, and has helped it to attain its present position.



CHAPTER VII.

Branches.

' Have patience . . . ourselves are full
Of social wrong ; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth ;
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half science, fill me with a faith.
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience ! Give it time
To learn its limb. There is a hand that guides."
—*Tennyson.*

" Such visions are of morning.
Theirs is no vague forewarning.
The dreams that nations dream come true,
And shape the world anew."
—*Russell Lowell.*

"**T**HE only limit to Co-operative effort," says one writer, "is the needs of the people." If this be so, Co-operation has far to travel before it reaches the frontiers of its territory.

Instead of the need of the people proving a limit to Co-operative effort, it has hitherto been a spur to goad it on to break down limits and extend the boundaries of its operations. It was so with the Bishop Auckland Society. The four-mile fence was soon knocked over, and as the Society widened its area and increased its membership, the problem of meeting the growing needs of the increasing membership from one Central Store became acute, and the necessity of adopting some other method became apparent.

"Coming events cast their shadows before," but the length of the shadow is determined by the position of the sun. If the sun be shining in his meridian splendour high in the heavens, the shadow is considerably shortened ; but if he be just rising over the eastern hills, or setting over the

western hills, then the shadow is lengthened. The sun of Co-operation was just rising over the district of Bishop Auckland in the year 1861, and it cast the shadow of a Branch Store across the path of the Committee, and they made provision for the substance. The substance was yet eleven years in the future—but it was there, and the need of the people transformed the shadow into a reality.

The members living in the far-off outlying districts would naturally feel themselves at a disadvantage, and be put to much inconvenience by their distance from the shop. Uneasiness and dissatisfaction would follow, and the Committee begin to realise that something must be done to meet the situation and prevent a break in their ranks.

In 1866 the question of a Branch Store for Willington was before the members, and the Committee were "empowered to take steps to establish a Branch Store at Willington, and, if they deem it necessary, to have a summoned meeting of members for that purpose." No practical results, however, followed from this resolution. Efforts were made, one or more meetings were held in the village, but the members did not rise to the occasion, and that Branch was never formed, but in 1872 a separate Society was commenced, formed very largely by members from the Bishop Auckland Society.

In the same year (1866) a separate Society was formed in the Crook district, where at the time over fifty members of the Bishop Auckland Society were residing.

Again, in 1870, the Cornforth and Coxhoe Society was founded on the far eastern side of Bishop Auckland, but yet within the range of its operations.

It seems strange that the Committee, who, as early as 1861, had contemplated Branches, and with all these warnings occurring around them, showing that it was impossible to satisfactorily meet the needs of these outlying places from the Central Store, should have been so tardy in taking steps to plant down Branches. They seem to have been more intent on strengthening the centre than on spreading the boundaries. And yet the area kept spreading on every side. Perhaps one of the secrets of this Society's

success lies in the fact that it has ever kept a strong, vital, and healthy centre. Branch-forming until the last few years has never been one of its features.

It is unfortunate that the minute books for the decade 1867 to 1877 should be missing. Most probably they were destroyed in the fire that took place in 1876. We therefore find ourselves without any comprehensive, accurate, or authentic record of these years.

In the year 1872, however, a step was taken to form a Branch at Spennymoor. A General Meeting of members was held on March 19th, and it was then decided that the Committee take steps to put down a Branch shop for the Spennymoor district.

Spennymoor is a town of about 17,000 inhabitants, lying about four miles to the east of Bishop Auckland. Its chief industries are coal mining and ironworks, to-day the former predominating, as the ironworks have nearly all been closed. In the year 1872 the population would be considerably less than it is to-day; but it was then a busy, stirring town, with a somewhat evil repute; but to-day it will take a favourable position in comparison with any other northern town for sobriety, intelligence, and morality. The means of transit between Bishop Auckland and Spennymoor in the year 1872 were horse traction, by wagon, cart, or 'bus, as the North-Eastern Railway Company had not opened out the line now connecting the two towns. The need for a Branch Store in this district had made itself keenly felt, and the Committee realised that they must take action.

The membership of the Society had increased to 594, and the sales had reached £26,048 per annum, or £500 per week. The Central Premises were becoming much too small for the trade demands.

An additional warehouse had been built in 1871, and the Committee in their report to the members on the balance sheet informed them that "The growing and increasing business will very soon require other improvements and enlarged accommodation for your numerous customers."

There had been in two years an average increase in the trade of £139 per week, and everything was pointing to a

continuation of this progress, so that extension was becoming inevitable, and they felt sure that the money spent in enlarging their shop "would be money well invested."

The members considered that another way to relieve the pressure at the Central was to open a Branch at Spennymoor, which would have the effect, not only of providing additional accommodation, but also of quietening and consolidating the membership in that quarter. A shop was therefore rented at Tudhoe Grange, near Spennymoor, and a Branch opened for business there on June 31st, 1872. Mr. John Henderson, who had been promised the post of Manager to the first Branch to be opened eleven years before, had now left to take up a position in the Darlington Society, and the Committee had to look elsewhere for a Manager for the Spennymoor shop.

Mr. Henry N. Kellet, who as a youth had entered the Society's service six years previously to take up a very lowly and subordinate position, had, by dint of perseverance, assiduous attention to duty, and careful observation, risen until he stood next in position to Mr. Moore, the General Manager, and the post of taking charge of this new interest was assigned to him.

From the first this Branch was a success. The Committee report to the members at the Half-yearly Meeting in November, 1872 :—

According to a resolution passed at the meeting on March 19th, 1872, your Committee have opened a Branch Store at Tudhoe Grange, Spennymoor. The increasing trade done there since the opening is very encouraging. The business for the two weeks ending July 30th was £149, and for the two weeks ending October 8th, £245. Our Branch at Spennymoor we have no doubt will be a success.

A year after that we find them again expressing their satisfaction at the progress made :—

We also beg to inform you that the Branch Store at Spennymoor is doing very well; the present weekly receipts are about £240, an increase since the Store opened in June, 1872, of £180 per week. The increasing business at the Spennymoor Branch will soon require some increased accommodation—that is, the present shop will soon be too small. This subject we will bring before you at the proper time.

In the following half year the trade had increased to £350 per week, and the question of accommodation was



First Shop,
Tudhoe Grange, Spennymoor.



New Premises, Spennymoor, 1832.



becoming acute. A quest for a suitable site on which to erect new premises was instituted, and the Half-yearly Meeting empowered the Committee to enter into negotiations for the purchase of land for this purpose. Meanwhile, the trade had increased to £400 per week, and we are led to wonder how, in a small place consisting of a shop, 18 feet by 12 feet, a flour house which had formerly been a kitchen, and other small outbuildings, a trade which ultimately reached £30,000 per annum could be conducted. Advantage must have been taken of every inch of space, and it must have been used to its utmost capacity.

At last a site was purchased from R. D. Shafto, Esq., in Beaumont Terrace, Spennymoor, being part of the Whitworth Estate, containing 2,640 square yards, for which the sum of £396 was paid. Plans were speedily prepared by Mr. W. V. Thompson, and the contract let for the erection of suitable and commodious business premises and a Manager's house. The contractors for the work were : masonry and plastering, Mr. Thomas Winston ; joinery, Mr. T. H. Thompson ; slating, Mr. J. Maschall ; painting and glazing, Mr. R. R. Almond. The work was commenced in 1875, and was finished in the early part of 1876, and the new premises constituted a considerable addition to the Society's property, and a great advantage to their business.

They were now able to add a Drapery Department to the business, and in their report to the November Half-yearly Meeting, 1877, the Committee say :—

The Drapery Department at Spennymoor has been furnished with a well-selected stock of all kinds of drapery goods, and members will do well to inspect goods at *their own place* before purchasing elsewhere.

The Tailor also visited the Branch every fortnight, showing samples of ready-mades, patterns of cloth, and taking measurements and orders for suits.

Thus the Society went on to prosper and progress, the Branch at Spennymoor contributing a fair quota to this success.

And now a change takes place. In 1876 the health of Mr. Moore (General Manager) failed, and he was incapacitated from his labours. His son-in-law, Mr. John

Rogerson, filled his position for a while, and then Mr. Kellett (Spennymoor Branch Manager) was appointed the Society's General Manager. The appointment of Mr. Kellett to the position of General Manager rendered the position of Branch Manager vacant, and Mr. William Crake (an employé) was appointed to succeed him in that position.

Under the charge of Mr. Crake the Branch continued on its successful way. At one period the business done there exceeded in value that done at the Central. This was caused by the inclusion in the Spennymoor area of some busy, big trading districts such as Binchester, Leasingthorne, Byers Green, and Newfield. All the branches of trade carried on at the Central, viz., grocery, drapery, boots, tailoring, and ready-mades, were also in operation at Spennymoor.

Notwithstanding that so recently as in 1876 new premises had been erected, so rapidly had the business grown that in 1881 the cry of "more room" began again to be heard. The Branch by this time was doing a weekly business of £1,402, and had thirty-five hands employed, so that the cry was not without a good and sufficient reason.

The land purchased from Mr. Shafto had not been all utilised in the first erection, and now that the need had arisen for further extensions it was determined to use this vacant land for the necessary additions. Plans were prepared by the Architect (Mr. Thompson), submitted to the Committee, and approved by them at a Meeting on April 28th, 1881, and on June 2nd the contract was let for the sum of £1,257. In January of the following year the works were completed, and on January 27th the premises were opened for business. The event was celebrated, as usual, by a monster tea, at which between 3,000 and 4,000 people were regaled, and a great Public Meeting at night, at which Messrs. John Wilson (Durham) and H. R. Bailey (Newcastle) were the principal speakers. Thus once more accommodation was provided for their growing business.

Disaster, however, was close at hand. The grim forces of nature are no respecters of persons, nor do they consider the fitness of things or the claim of circumstances when

their devastating powers are abroad. On the night of April 27th, 1882, a serious and disastrous fire broke out on the new premises at Spennymoor, and in a few short hours the buildings erected by strenuous efforts, patient industry, and careful thrift of these working men were wrecked, and a large portion of the stock in trade destroyed. Fortunately the loss was sufficiently covered by insurance, but the work, that had cost so much thought and toil, was all to do over again.

The Committee now found themselves full-handed. Meetings are held three and four times a week, and very frequently at Spennymoor. With characteristic energy and courage they determine to meet present needs in the best way possible. The building was not all destroyed, and they resolved to make the part not destroyed into a grocer's shop, and the upstairs room into a draper's shop, and a shed in the yard into a warehouse.

Plans were again prepared for the re-building of the premises, and on June 26th, 1882, the contract was let for the sum of £730. The work was completed in the early part of 1883, and the business premises re-opened on February 24th. A Public Meeting, addressed by local men, was held on the occasion, as a celebration of the event.

Very shortly after the fire a change took place in the management at Spennymoor. Mr. Crake resigned the position he had held for six years. He was succeeded by Mr. John Rogerson, who held the position of Head Clerk at the Central, and was the next in position to Mr. Kellett. Mr. Rogerson took charge of this Branch under inauspicious circumstances. The accommodation for the tremendous business was too small, owing to the fire, and the whole of the trade was dislocated. Yet they managed to do a trade of £870 per week, which gradually grew as conditions improved. New departments were commenced, ironmongery, furniture, crockery, and millinery were added, and several structural alterations had to be made to accommodate these new departments. Thus matters go on until once again the need is felt for additional premises.

In the meantime the butchering business had been commenced, and, for a while, the old shop in Tudhoe Grange was used as a butcher's shop. This was found to be unsuitable, the Committee, therefore, with their usual enterprising spirit, determine on radical alterations and extensive additions. Another acre of land, adjoining their premises, was purchased from Mr. Shafto, for which they paid £732. 16s.

Plans and specifications were prepared for converting the Manager's house into Furniture and Boot Departments, to reconstruct the millinery and mantle rooms and flour house, to erect a new Manager's house, a commodious block of stables, and all the necessary buildings for carrying on an extensive butchering trade.

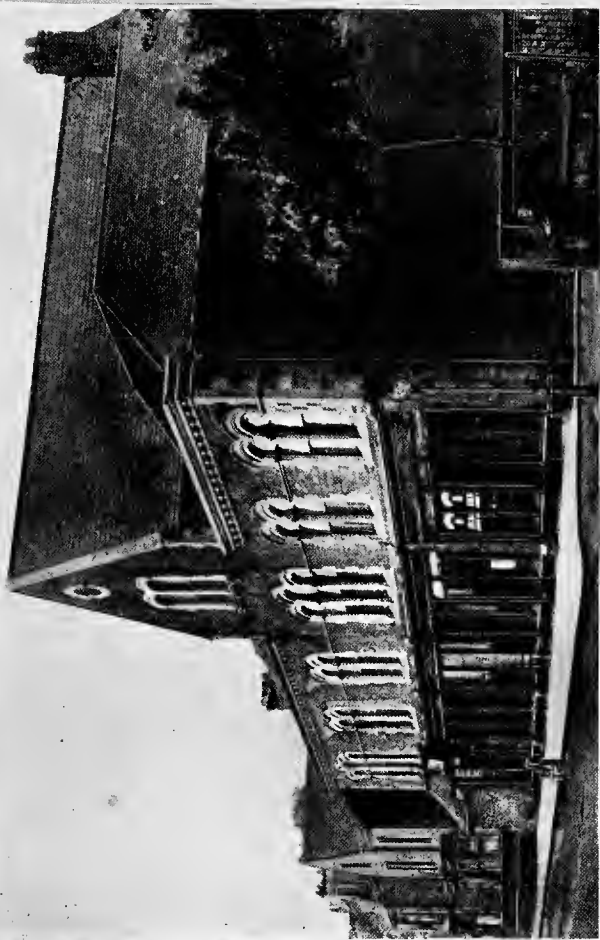
With remarkable courage they resolve to ask the members at the Quarterly Meeting, held on February 1st, 1896, to grant them £5,000 for the purposes stated. The meeting, after considerable discussion, granted their request by a "preponderating majority," and at once steps were taken for carrying the proposal into execution.

On March 28th the contract for the whole of the works, exclusive of fixtures, counters, &c., was let to Mr. William Hudson (son of Mr. John Hudson, the Pioneer, who had just died) for the sum of £3,718. 15s.

The Branch at this time was doing a trade of £1,614 per week, in addition to which their butchering business was turning over about £120 per week.

The new erections and alterations were completed and formally opened by the General Manager (Mr. H. N. Kellett) on October 23rd, 1897, and after the opening ceremony, the company adjourned to the new commodious covered-in yard, where a most enthusiastic and successful public meeting and concert was held.

These are practically the same premises as are standing to-day, in which an annual business is being done of over £113,000, notwithstanding the fact that another Branch has been formed at Ferryhill Station, which takes up a certain portion of the area previously covered by the Spennymoor Branch.



PRESENT PREMISES, SPENNYMOOR.

It is somewhat remarkable, considering the splendid results that followed the opening of the Spennymoor Branch, that nothing more was done in the way of Branch forming for other 11 years, and when the next step was taken it was not so much any movement inside the Society, but an appeal from the outside that led up to it, and it took the form of amalgamation.

Shildon was really the birthplace of the Bishop Auckland Society, and some of its most staunch and ardent supporters came from its midst, and it has ever since then been one of the Society's strongholds ; yet it also was the seat of one of its keenest rivals, which existed for some time under the name of " The Shildon and Neighbourhood Co-operative Corn Mill, Flour and Provision Society."

We are not in a position to give a history of the rise or progress of this Society.

As its name indicates, it was not simply a distributive Society, but contained a productive department in the shape of a corn mill.

That it was a rival Society is seen from the fact that its business operations extended over a considerable portion of the Bishop Auckland Society's area. The " Neighbourhood " indicated in its name included Bishop Auckland, South Church, Eldon Lane, Fylands Bridge, Black Boy, Gurney Villa, Coundon, West Auckland, Evenwood, Cockfield, Etherley, Crook, Willington, Byers Green, Redworth, Rushyford, and Coxhoe

The Society had a large corn mill situate in Mill Street, New Shildon, and a Distributive Store and Manager's house situate in Church Street, Shildon, being in close proximity to the old schoolroom where the first meeting of the Bishop Auckland Society was held.

The Society does not seem to have had a very robust constitution, or to have been doing a very flourishing trade.

The turnover for the half year ended March, 1883, was : for the Distributive Store, £6,905. 12s. 0½d., or £256 per week ; and for the Corn Mill, £4,579. 6s. 3½d., or £176 per week, being just a little over one-half of the trade done by the Spennymoor Branch at the time.

Doubtless this Society began to realise the folly of maintaining a separate existence, and the futility of opposing its more progressive and flourishing neighbour ; it therefore began to open negotiations for amalgamation.

The following letter was sent from the Committee of the Shildon Society to the Committee of the Bishop Auckland Society :—

Gentlemen,

We, the Committee of the Shildon Co-operative Society, unanimously agree to ask the Committee of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society if they have any objection to meeting a Committee of our Society with respect to amalgamating together the two Societies, and, should it meet your Committee's approval, eight of our Committee have been appointed as a deputation to meet your Committee on the subject.

T. WILD, Secretary.

A meeting was arranged on September 3rd, 1883, when the deputation was cordially received and heartily welcomed by the Chairman of the Bishop Auckland Society.

Mr. William Cummins, a respected resident of Shildon, headed the deputation and explained the object of their visit. Their object in proposing to amalgamate, he said, was to spread the principles and benefits of Co-operation, by which, if the proposition was carried out, the membership of Bishop Auckland would increase much quicker than was being done at present. It would also save carriage and labour, as the Shildon members might then be supplied from the existing Stores at Shildon.

Mr. Wright, another Committee-man, agreed that amalgamation would be a benefit all round. It would prevent overlapping, and more business would be done ; the Shildon people who are now members of Bishop Auckland would get the whole of their groceries instead of a part, as some of them now did.

All that would be reasoning likely to interest the Bishop Auckland Committee, as it was all on the side of benefit to them, and they must have realised that they had some warm well-wishers on the Shildon Committee.

The managing miller stated that they had three pairs of stones in the mill, and could grind 100 sacks of flour per week. They also had space sufficient to put in two sets of rollers and purifiers, and thus produce more flour of a better quality.

The Grocery Manager explained that they had about 742 members, 500 of whom resided in or about the Shildons.

The Bishop Auckland Committee agreed, after hearing their statements, to go to Shildon on Saturday, September 9th, to look over the buildings at both shop and mill.

They record that they found both places in fair repair, and that the mill had sufficient space for extension should it be required.

The result of the conference and examination was, that both Committees agreed to submit the matter to their members at their forthcoming Half-yearly Meeting, when, if agreeable, steps would be taken to amalgamate.

In the interval preceding the Half-yearly Meeting, preparations for the amalgamation continued, and the Committee evidently anticipated with confidence the consent of the members being granted.

A very lengthy and well-arranged form of agreement for the transfer of the property, stock, and business of the Shildon Society to the Bishop Auckland Society was drawn up by Mr. Wilkinson (Eldon), one of the Bishop Auckland Committee-men.

This document, which we reluctantly exclude from this record on account of its length, is evidence that the Bishop Auckland Society had men upon its Committee of marked ability.

The Half-yearly Meeting of the Bishop Auckland Society was held on November 3rd, 1883, when the question of taking over the Shildon Co-operative Stores and Flour Mill was discussed.

A motion was moved : " That the matter be postponed until another meeting, say, in a fortnight's time."

An amendment was moved : " That we go in for it, and leave the other arrangements in the hands of the Committee."

On being put to the vote over 500 voted for the amendment, and six for the motion.

The road was now clear on the Bishop Auckland side for completing the arrangements.

At a General Meeting of the members of the Shildon Society, held on Saturday, November 17th, the Committee reported on the negotiations with the Bishop Auckland Society for the sale of the mill, house, and premises at New Shildon, and the houses, shop, and premises at Old Shildon, also the stock in trade, fixtures, and effects of the Shildon Society, to the Bishop Auckland Society for the sum of £6,644. 11s. 2d. The meeting confirmed the action of the Committee, and authorised them to take all necessary steps for dissolving and winding up the Society.

The stocks of the Shildon Society had been taken, Mr. Kellett and Mr. High, on behalf of the Bishop Auckland Society, being present to verify the same, and the whole of the property and effects were transferred to the Bishop Auckland Society for the price stated to the Shildon meeting, as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
For Mill and Premises	1,500	0	0
„ Stores at Old Shildon	1,600	0	0
„ Stock in Trade, Plant, &c.	3,544	11	2
Total	<u>£6,644</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>2</u>

The draft conveyance prepared by Mr. Proud (solicitor) was presented to the Bishop Auckland Committee at their meeting on December 14th, and approved by them, and the Secretary was ordered to get the purchase completed as soon as possible.

Mr. William Hill, who held the position of head clerk at the Central, was appointed Manager of the Shildon Branch, and Mr. John Walker, who was the Shildon Grocery Manager, was transferred to Mr. Hill's place at Bishop Auckland.

Mr. Henderson (the Mill Manager) was retained in that position, to be under the supervision of Mr. Kellett (the General Manager).

Thus the Shildon Branch came into existence as an integral part of the Bishop Auckland Society, and has proved not the least progressive part of its dominion.

For a time, some uneasiness prevailed amongst the Shildon members regarding the transfer of the business and the changes made, and much misunderstanding got abroad.

The Committee, therefore, determined to hold a meeting at Shildon, and to invite the Shildon members to be present. A detailed statement of the assets and liabilities of the Society was prepared for presentation to the meeting, which was held in the Co-operative Hall, on January 26th, 1884. The statement of affairs of the Society was read, showing that the duly ascertained assets of the Society, after all liabilities were met, would leave a balance of £2,310. 13s. 5d. to be paid to the shareholders according to the amount of their shares, which would give about 13s. 4d. in the £. The statement was unanimously accepted by the meeting, and, after some questions had been answered and some general information given as to the working of the Branch in future, the meeting ended, having been of a very genial and enjoyable character.

By this transaction of taking over the business of the Shildon Society, the Bishop Auckland Society had come into the management of a new phase of Co-operative trade, viz., that of corn milling. The Bishop Auckland Society had never before been in possession or had control of a corn mill. The idea, however, had been abroad for some time. Notwithstanding the unfortunate experience of the Bishop Auckland Corn Mill Society and its unhappy collapse, negotiations were opened, and proceeded for a considerable length of time, for the purchase of a corn mill in Bishop Auckland. A price for the mill was fixed, and a General Meeting of members called to discuss the question of purchase, but the matter went "off the board." The amount of flour which they were disposing of at this time would doubtless cause this idea of milling their own flour to assume a desirable aspect. Their flour sales in the half year ending September, 1883, were £24,383. Some knowledge and experience of corn milling would have been

gained from the working of the defunct Bishop Auckland Corn Mill, but it must be remembered that the personnel of the Committee had almost entirely changed during these years, and very few, if any, of the men who had been connected with the old Corn Mill Society were in any way connected with the management of the Society at this time. The situation, however, was faced by the Committee with their characteristic courage and decision. Very soon steps were taken for improving the working of the mill and increasing its output. An order was placed with a firm of manufacturers for new machinery, which would cost for material and labour over £500. A new boiler was purchased costing £305, and arrangements made for the mill to run night and day. Then the system of milling was changed, and an installation of the roller system put in at a cost of £1,750. This department seems, however, ever to have been a thorny branch both to the Committee and members. It called for constant care and attention, and many of the hours of the Committee Meetings were spent in discussing its pros and cons, and many a heated debate took place over it. From the time it came into the Society's possession until the time of its disappearance in its "wild chariot of fire" over £9,000 had been expended upon it, and, whereas its balance sheet value in 1883 stood at £1,500, in 1888 it stood at £10,609.

On the morning of February 3rd, 1888, the whole structure was completely destroyed by fire. This fire on that cold winter's morning, afforded a spectacle of wild grandeur such as Shildon has seldom or ever seen, and it is said that some of the enemies of Co-operation even danced with delight beneath its lurid glare, because they vainly thought it presaged the ruin of the cause; but there are those who tell us that this fire was one of the Bishop Auckland Society's greatest friends, as it removed a huge monster whose open maw was swallowing its funds most voraciously, and which threatened its entire overthrow. At any rate, the Society survived the fire, and the dancers have since had to dance to a different tune.

The Committee assembled on Saturday, February 4th, and went and examined the scene of the fire. The Quarterly Meeting of members was held at night, and the Committee reported what had occurred, and asked the members "to express as little opinion on the matter as possible, as it might lead to complications with the Insurance Company." The question as to future action had very careful consideration. A General Meeting of members was called on June 2nd to consider what had to be done about rebuilding or otherwise. A motion was submitted: "That the mill be rebuilt." An amendment was moved: "That the matter be left over for the present, and in the meantime the Committee look about for a more favourable position on which to erect a mill;" while a counter resolution was put forward and eventually carried: "That the rebuilding of Shildon Mill stand over until the Half-yearly Meeting, and in the meantime the statement, as prepared, on the value of the buildings, be sent out to the members, and the buildings and site be offered for sale, and the same be reported upon."

The Half-yearly Meeting on November 3rd determined that the mill be sold, and this decision was final.

The Insurance Company had gone thoroughly into the damages with the Committee, and finally paid over to them the sum of £7,977. 10s. They also sent the following letter to the Chairman of the Society:—

Re Fire.

DEAR SIR,—I wish to tender you, and every member of your Committee, my thanks for the patient and forbearing manner in which you conducted the recent negotiations with me. I would that you had seen your way to be more lenient in the matter of amount claimed for your Society, but the case was a difficult one, and if you unduly pressed me for a large amount I am sure you acted according to your honest convictions. On the other hand you were honourably and handsomely met by the Insurance Companies, and I trust that the work of your Committee and the liberalities of the Companies will receive from your members that appreciation and approval which I am sure they deserve.

I wish to take this opportunity of acknowledging the great pains your chief officers, viz., Mr. J. Lindsay, Mr. Kellett, and Mr. Henderson, took to satisfy me, and the large part they played in making the Companies disposed to treat your Society in so liberal and handsome a manner.

I am, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

J. R. WARWICK.

Mr. Warwick was the Agent for the Manchester Fire Insurance Company (since incorporated with the Atlas Fire Assurance Company) which held the risk for the affair.

The boiler and salvage stock were disposed of by tender for £282. The buildings and sites were put up for sale by public action, and on December 29th, 1888, were sold to Mr. R. A. Brown for the sum of £210. The loss to the Society would be over £2,000, which they cheerfully bore, and the Shildon Corn Mill was written off the Society's books. This closed the business of corn milling in the Society, and it has never since been reopened.

The general business in the shop at Shildon made very satisfactory progress. The Committee set in operation the following departments: grocery, drapery, millinery, furniture, ready-mades, boots, and ironmongery, and in less than three years from the time of taking the Branch over the sales more than doubled those of the old Society. Very soon the premises became too small, and in the latter part of 1887 plans were passed for enlargement and alterations, and on February 2nd, 1888, the contracts for the various works were let for the amount of £2,022. 10s. In 1892 an adjoining piece of property was purchased for the sum of £450. In 1897 the premises were found to be altogether inadequate for the trade, and extensive additions and alterations were decided upon. A handsome and commodious drapery shop was built on the ground floor, and a spacious showroom for furniture on the first floor, with a good storeroom above. A packing-room was also added to the Grocery Department, which proved a great advantage, and they were now able to do a trade of over £1,000 per week.



Shildon Boots.



Shildon Grocery.



Shildon Drapery.

The Shildon Branch has been under the careful management of Mr. Hill since its commencement, and under his judicious supervision has quietly and steadily developed, and is to-day doing a business of £78,000 per annum.

In less than two years after the taking over of Shildon, the question arose of forming Branches in some of the Society's outlying districts. On June 17th, 1885, the following resolution is recorded :—

As it is thought desirable to have Branches at Butterknowle and Wolsingham, it is unanimously agreed that two Sub-Committees visit each place and report to our next meeting.

At the following meeting the Sub-Committee appointed to visit Butterknowle and district, reported :—

That there were neither houses nor shops to let at Butterknowle, or anywhere near where we require a shop.

One house and shop had been offered for sale, but the terms and conditions were considered unsuitable, and it was therefore decided that the matter rest in abeyance, and further inquiries be made. The other Sub-Committee appointed to visit Wolsingham, reported :—

That there are some hopes of us getting a shop there, but as it is thought desirable to hold a public meeting there, it was agreed that a public meeting be held on the 13th July.

The Public Meeting was held, as arranged, and it was recorded that a good Public Meeting was held at Wolsingham on "Co-operation" with a view to opening a Branch Store there, and it has already produced good results.

This district, which at that time promised to be the most fruitful in Branch forming, has proved to be the least fruitful. The anticipated Store has never been opened.

A Society was then existing at Stanhope in Weardale, and another at Tow Law, both of whom claimed to have members living at Wolsingham, and resented the idea of Bishop Auckland opening a shop in their midst.

Joint meetings of the three Societies were held, and although Bishop Auckland had a preponderance of members in the district, Tow Law Society was allowed to open a Branch in Wolsingham. In order to prevent overlapping and promote good feeling, the Bishop Auckland Committee

assembled their members living at Wolsingham and Frosterley together, and urged them to join Tow Law Society, which was offering special facilities for their entrance, having agreed to take over whatever amount of share capital they might have standing to their credit in the Bishop Auckland Society.

The members at this meeting, however, most indignantly and emphatically refused to leave the Bishop Auckland Society, one member remarking: "If you won't open a Branch here, or won't deliver any goods, I'll come to Bishop Auckland with a wheelbarrow and wheel my groceries home, rather than get them anywhere else." The Wolsingham scheme was therefore abandoned, yet some of the Society's most loyal members and enthusiastic supporters are to be found in that district, and they have agitated on several occasions for a Branch shop in their village, but the Committee have declined to open a place in opposition to Tow Law.

The inquiry instituted at Butterknowle turned out to be more fruitful in results than that at Wolsingham. On July 29th, 1885, it was reported that Mr. Dowson (Butterknowle) had been interviewed regarding his shop. He asked £40 per year for house, shop, fixtures, and warehouse, and goods at invoiced prices. The Committee decided to offer him £30 on a lease of five years, and take the fixtures and stock at valuation. It was also decided to hold a Public Meeting there on August 15th.

This meeting was held, but no record is made as to its character; it is evident, however, that an agreement was come to regarding the shop, as an amended form of lease was read over at their meeting on August 26th, and approved, and on September 3rd, 1885, the Society's seal was affixed thereto.

Mr. James A. Parkin, a young man in the Office at Bishop Auckland, a son of Mr. Jonathan Parkin, the Treasurer, was selected to be the Manager of the Branch.

The Committee decided to carry on a business in groceries, flour, draperies, and boots, and arrangements were speedily completed for commencing.



OLD SHILDON PREMISES.

The opening of this Branch would undoubtedly prove a great boon to the people living in that far-off south-western border of the Society's domain, who at the time of opening were doing a trade with the Society of £125 per week. Whether or no the Committee had fixed upon the most central or most convenient place for their shop may be open to question. At any rate, the Branch has done its best to meet the needs of this widely-scattered and sequestered district. In the first half year of its existence it managed to do a trade of £135 per week, and kept increasing until 1889. On December 7th of that year a Committee Meeting was held there, when the Committee looked over the whole of the buildings, and examined several other building sites. A petition was presented to the meeting, signed by a large number of members, asking for more shop accommodation. The Branch was at that time doing a weekly trade of £274, and it was thought much more could be done if better accommodation could be provided.

The Committee realised that the next step to be taken would be to procure or provide premises of their own. They therefore at their next meeting instructed their Secretary to inquire the price of several eligible pieces of property, which they had seen on the occasion of their visit there.

Another Committee Meeting was held at Butterknowle on December 28th, 1889, when various owners of property met them and stated the terms on which they were prepared to sell. It would appear that marketable property was pretty plentiful in Butterknowle at that time, and there was no disposition on the part of the owners to handicap or cripple the Committee by withholding their property from them. No less than six parties met them with their offers, varying from a five-roomed house, yard, and garden, to five acres of land with three houses, and in the following week other three offers were presented to them. The Committee having thus ascertained that there was no scarcity of sites, determined, before proceeding further, to secure the sanction and authority of their members

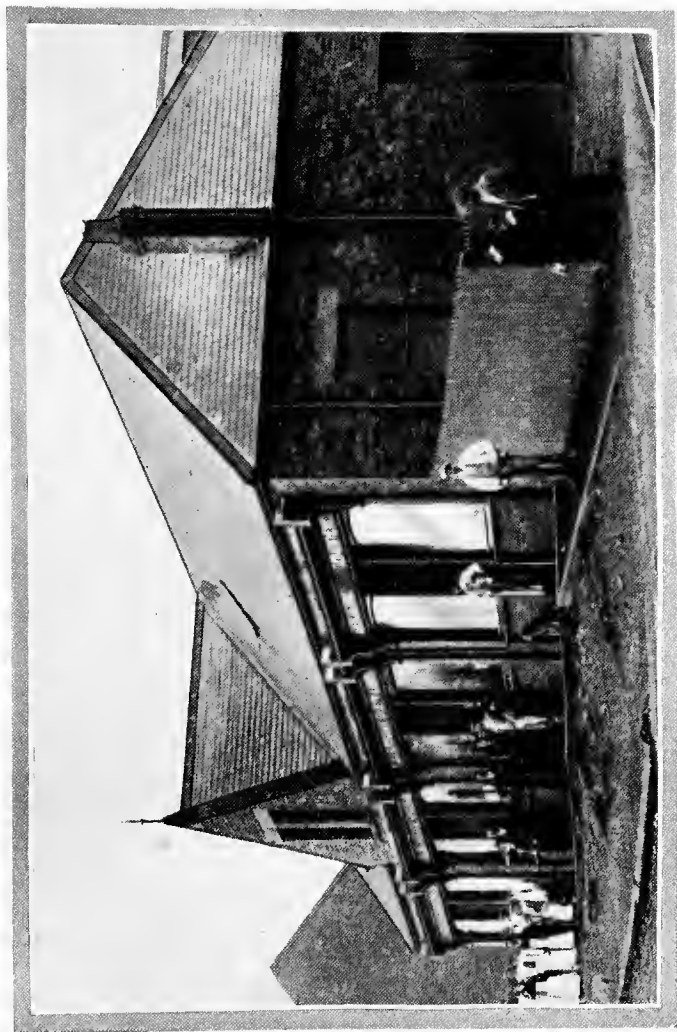
The Quarterly Meeting was held on February 1st, 1890, and the Committee made the following recommendation: "That, owing to the increased trade at Butterknowle, we recommend the members to make the necessary provision for this trade." The meeting resolved: "That the question of shop accommodation at Butterknowle be left with the Committee, and that they be authorised to make provision for the carrying on of the trade."

Armed with this authority, the Committee proceeded to the work of selecting a site from amongst the various offers before them. They speedily weeded them down to two, one of two acres of land for £200, and another of four acres of land and three cottages for £750, and went out once more to Butterknowle to negotiate. Finally, after much consideration, they decided to purchase the larger piece of land and cottages from Mr. Thomas Heseltine for the price of £730.

The selection was a wise one, the land fronting on to Pinfold Lane on the south and to Wham Lane on the north, and offered a most eligible site for the erection of a good shop.

The Committee now found their hands full, and for several months Butterknowle looms very prominently in their business transactions, and several visits are paid to the place. It was decided to build on the south-east corner of the land, and Mr. Robert Linday (brother to the Secretary) was instructed to draw up plans, but they decided to take charge of the works themselves, and, instead of having an Architect or Clerk or Works, to keep the supervision in their own hands. Two men were appointed each week to visit the works and report thereon, and thus the responsibility of the work rested directly on themselves—another exhibition of that characteristic self-reliance, which has ever marked the Society's operations. The estimated cost of the building was put down at £750, which was a somewhat modest calculation, as the building by the time it was finished had cost £2,500, including fittings, stables, &c.

The Committee, in undertaking to supervise this erection, did not escape the usual difficulties and delays that attend the accomplishment of work of this kind. An offer of £5 each



BUTTERKNOWLE PREMISES.

to the foreman joiner and mason if the work could be completed by the end of July was made, but it was not until November 8th, 1890, that the place was opened, the event being, as usual, celebrated by a Tea and Public Meeting, addressed by their own men.

This building, as an example of what can be done in the way of erection under the supervision of men, who are neither experts nor skilled in the work, is a very creditable piece of work, and has up to the present answered its purpose admirably. This step was an experiment in this line, and the experience seems to have been sufficient, as it has never been repeated.

Very little addition has been made to this building, only a few structural alterations required by modifications in the business, and the industrial outlook of the district does not presage any need for development for some time.

A minute recorded on March 19th, 1890, has considerable significance in view of future developments in this locality. The minute reads : " A letter was read from Mr. Richardson (Solicitor, Barnard Castle) in reference to the coal beneath the land of Mr. Heseltine, as to whom responsibility may be attached in case of shrinkage. Resolved—That Mr. Richardson proceed with the deeds." This question of shrinkage by reason of working the coal has been the outstanding question for some time at Butterknowle, and the part which the Bishop Auckland Society has played in the matter will be detailed in a future chapter.

Other eleven years elapsed after the opening of the Butterknowle Branch before any other steps were taken in the direction of Branch forming. During these years the Society's operations had developed in a most marvellous degree. Several new departments had been added, the membership had increased from 8,541 to 12,781, or nearly 50 per cent, the share capital had grown from £83,060 to £254,798, or over 200 per cent, and the trade had risen from £137,249. 17s. 10d. to £241,810. 2s. 3d., an increase of £4,026 per week or 76 per cent. During that time the question of putting down Branches at various places had often been under consideration, and appeals from different

places had been placed before the Committee, but without any effect. The steady progress the Society was making satisfied them, and they did not care to effect any changes.

But with the incoming of the new century a new spirit began to manifest itself, and an epoch of branch forming set in.

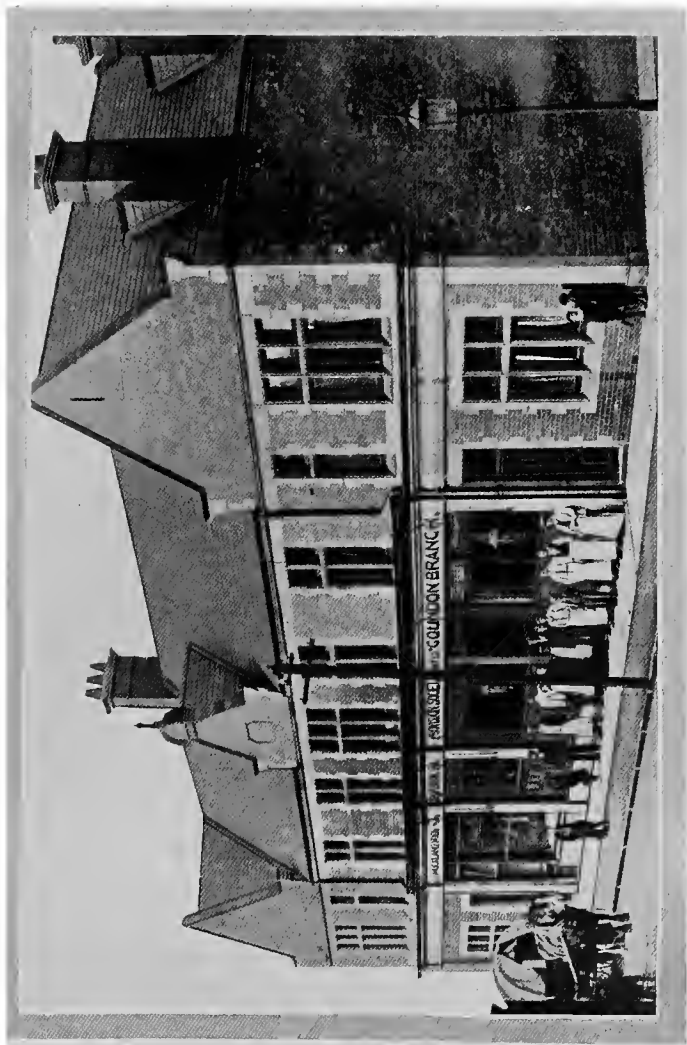
The formation of the four new Branches in the first five years of this century are matters of recent history, and need little mention here.

Coundon was the first to claim attention, the question being considered in 1890. This district had not at that time entered upon the period of wondrous development it has recently shown, the membership being something like 850. A Branch of the Butchering Department already existed in the place, but the premises, which were rented, did not prove satisfactory, and the question of purchasing or erecting premises of their own began to have attention. A close of land belonging to Sir William Eden, Bart., coming into the market was purchased for the sum of £1,500. And now the question arose as to the policy of erecting a grocery shop as well as a butcher's shop, with the result that it was determined to erect a grocer's shop, with warehouse accommodation and rooms above for draperies and boots; also a butcher's shop.

The contract was let on December 19th, 1901, the various works to cost £3,801, exclusive of land.

Considerable delay was experienced before the building was complete, but on April 24th, 1903, the place was declared open for business by Mr. James Davison, the esteemed and genial Treasurer of the Society, in a neat and characteristic address, supplemented by addresses from Mr. Kellett, the General Manager; Mr. T. Readshaw, the Secretary, and other members of the Committee.

Since the opening of this Branch the population in and around Coundon has rapidly increased, and the new village of Leeholme has sprung up on its outskirts in a short space of time, so that the need of a shop to supply the increasing needs of the locality is fully apparent, and



COUNDON PREMISES.

until now the place has justified its existence. In 1908 extensive additions were made, which have considerably increased the facilities for trade.

The Branch is under the management of Mr. George Parker, and has the following departments: Grocery, drapery, boots, hardware, and butchering, and has a turnover of £890 per week.

The next Branch to be established was at Ferryhill Station, one of the outlying districts belonging to the Spennymoor Branch.

This place was beginning to show signs of industrial development, and there were several indications abroad showing that this was likely to become a very busy and populous coalfield.

The Society had a large number of members living in the locality, others were emigrating thither, and it was evident that there would soon be a very large increase in the population. The Committee, therefore, decided that, if they were to retain their hold of the situation, some provision must be made to meet its growing needs.

It was decided to look out for a suitable site for a shop, and after some investigation a plot of land was secured for the sum of £225. It was agreed to erect a grocer's and a butcher's shop, two houses, and a public hall above the shops.

Plans were speedily prepared for this purpose, and the contract let on April 16th, 1903, the various buildings to cost £1,867. 8s. 7d., which, in addition to the price of the land, would make the total cost about £2,092.

The Branch was formally opened on June 4th, 1904, by Mr John Rogerson, the esteemed Manager at Spennymoor.

A monster tea was held on the occasion, and, as the day was beautiful and fine, the members from all quarters flocked to the event, and the new hall was tested to its utmost capacity. About 500 people were regaled with the cheering cup, and a most successful concert followed the tea and ended a day which will long be remembered as a red-letter day in the locality.

The Ferryhill Branch opened under the most auspicious circumstances, and has since rendered good service to the community, and the Society.

It is doing a business of about £560 per week, and, in response to a desire expressed by the members, it was decided to convert the public hall into a room for the sale of draperies and boots.

Mr. Joseph Bainbridge has the management of the Branch in his hands, and there are eighteen employés, including four butchers, engaged in its service.

The opening of the Branch at Ferryhill Station was closely followed by the opening of the Evenwood Branch, which took place in the same year.

This Branch came into existence, not so much in consequence of any industrial development in the district, or in anticipation of any such event, but rather in response to a strongly expressed desire on the part of the members resident there.

Evenwood, after the establishment of Butterknowle Branch, became one of the outlying places on the west of the Central, and was supplied therefrom with its goods.

The distance of the place from the Central shop was felt to be an inconvenience, and feeling in favour of the establishment of a shop in their midst began to arise.

A petition, signed by a considerable number of the members, was forwarded to the Committee, asking them to consider the question of establishing a Branch at Evenwood.

This petition not producing the desired effect, a meeting of the members was held in February, 1903, at which Mr. Liddle, a member of the Committee representing the Evenwood district, was present.

A resolution was passed at that meeting which was strongly in favour of the opening of a Branch at Evenwood, and respectfully calling upon the Committee to take the necessary steps for this purpose. Mr. Liddle reported this meeting to the Committee, and handed in a copy of the



FERRYHILL STATION PREMISES.



EVENWOOD PREMISES.

resolution that had been passed. He also gave his own opinion as to the strength and value of the agitation that was abroad.

After careful consideration of the question, the Committee on February 18th expressed the following opinion : " That we express ourselves in favour of the establishment of a Branch shop at Evenwood."

Considerable time was spent in endeavouring to find a suitable site, and at last a close of land was purchased for the sum of £440.

Plans were speedily prepared, and on December 3rd, 1903, the contract was let out for £1,273. 13s. 6d., the premises to consist of a grocer's shop, warehouse, stables, and Manager's house.

The buildings were finished and opened on October 1st, 1904.

The occasion was made a time of great rejoicing and excitement. A brass band paraded the locality, and another notable tea, public meeting, and concert were held.

The opening function was gracefully performed by Alderman House, the President of the Society. Mr. Kellett, the General Manager, presided, and, on behalf of the Committee and members, presented the Alderman with a beautiful gold breastpin, gold scarf ring, and a set of studs.

Mr. John Metcalfe was appointed to manage the Branch, which is doing a weekly trade of £368.

The opening of Dean Bank is of recent date—in fact, it is not yet recognised as a separate Branch.

Dean Bank is contiguous to and within easy reach of Ferryhill Station, being in reality an extension of Ferryhill village.

Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, and Co. Ltd. have recently opened out very large and extensive coal mines there, and, for the accommodation of their workmen, have built a large number of houses, and this locality, which but a short time ago, scarcely contained an inhabitant, has become a densely populated village.

Many of the workmen who have migrated into this district were members of the Bishop Auckland Society, and the Committee, wishful to retain these members, and realising the importance and possibilities of this part of the Durham coalfield, and also knowing that the shop at Ferryhill was not sufficient to cope with the growing needs of the population, determined to erect a place of business at Dean Bank.

The Committee went out and inspected the district, and having seen the rapid growth of the locality, and considered its industrial prospects and importance, it was agreed :—

That, having made a careful inspection of the Dean Bank district and of the land specified in the plan sent us, it was decided that we purchase from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, through the Dean and Chapter of Durham, the piece of land specified on the said plan, containing $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres, or thereabouts, but that we consider the price asked is excessive, and that our agent be instructed to respectfully ask for some reduction.

This minute was recorded on August 4th, 1905, and the Quarterly Meeting of members was held on the following day, and this minute, along with the others, was agreed to.

Negotiations as to price continued for some time, and eventually the field was purchased for £1,185, being a reduction of £175 upon the price first asked.

In order to meet present needs it was decided to put down at once a small cash shop of corrugated iron.

The work was entrusted to the Society's own Joinery Department, and was estimated to cost £426. 6s. 2d., but it was completed for less than this amount.

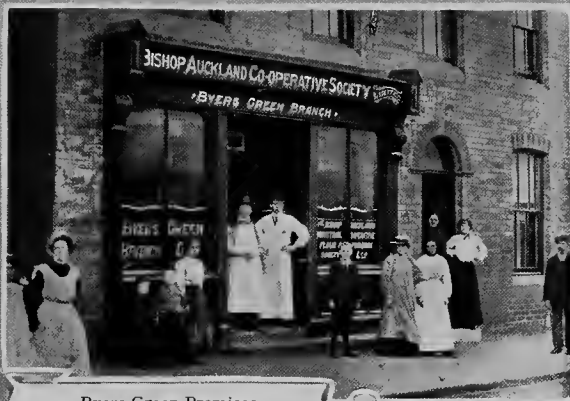
Owing to delays in the transference of the land, the work was retarded, and the place was not opened until May 19th, 1906, when the ceremony was performed by Mr. T. Readshaw, the Secretary of the Society, amidst a phenomenal down-pour of rain, which continued incessantly through the day, but was not sufficient to damp the enthusiasm of the members of the company present.



Dean Bank Premises.



Chilton Premises.



Byers Green Premises.

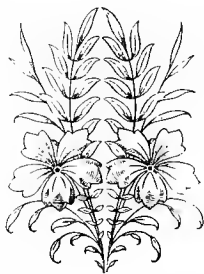


Close House Premises.

Again a huge tea party was organised, and a most successful concert held at night, presided over by Mr. Hann, the Colliery Manager, and addressed by Messrs. House, Peacock, and Readshaw, to inaugurate the Society's operations in this important locality.

In addition to the Branches enumerated, the Society has also cash Stores for the convenience of members at Mount Pleasant, Spennymoor, Byers Green, Close House, New Shildon, and West Auckland, and a butcher's shop at Hunswick.

Thus the resources of the Society are being utilised for the purposes of meeting, as far as possible, the members' needs, and these continuously increasing needs are ever making demands for a progressive and enterprising policy on the part of the management.



CHAPTER VIII.

Central Extensions.

“ A toil that gains with what it yields,
And scatters to its own increase,
And hears, while sowing outward fields,
The harvest song of inward peace.”

“ What is it that the crowd requite
Thy love with hate, thy truth with lies.
And but to faith and not to sight,
The walls of Freedom's temple rise.
Yet do thy work, it shall succeed
In thine or in another's day,
And if denied the victor's meed
Thou shall not lack the toiler's pay.”
—*J. G. Whittier.*

IN following the career of the Society's Branches in these pages we have been leaving in the rear the story of the expansion of the parent stem. To this we must now return, because, whatever may have been the growth of the Branches, the heart and centre of the Society's activities is in the Central Store.

In the year 1873, so rapidly had the Society grown, it was found that the premises in Newgate Street, as then constructed, were inadequate for the purpose of the trade.

In the report to members attached to the balance sheet for the half year ended March 17th, 1873, the Committee say :—

Your Committee have much pleasure in congratulating you on the prosperous state of your Society. Owing to the large increase in business, and in accordance with a resolution passed at the last Half-yearly Meeting, we have decided to pull down and enlarge the shop premises. The plans have been passed by the Board of Health, tenders have been received and accepted, and we shall commence operations at once.



West Auckland Premises.



New Shildon Premises.

During alterations the business will be carried on in the large warehouse behind the present shop, the entrance to which will be from the back street. The road to the street is up the street called Great Gates, past the corner of Mr. W. Donaldson's large wholesale and retail hardware shop.

We kindly ask you to bear with any inconvenience you may be put to during the alterations.

The warehouse in which they intended to conduct their business for a time would be the warehouse erected in 1863.

The Central at this time was doing a weekly trade of nearly £700.

It is easy to conceive the difficulties they would have to face in order to do a trade of anything like the dimensions we have quoted in a warehouse difficult of approach and temporarily arranged. And yet the loyalty and true-heartedness of the members never flinched because of a little trouble, and the Committee were able to announce on their next balance sheet: "We have had a very inconvenient place to do business in, but we have much pleasure in stating that the increase in business has been almost £3,000."

The Architect for the alterations was Mr. W. V. Thompson, and the work was rapidly pushed forward, so that on New Year's Day, 1874, the new premises were declared open.

The occasion was one of great rejoicing, tea, speech-making, and processioning being the order of the day, and hundreds of the members and their friends celebrated the event in right royal style.

The premises opened at this time are the premises now utilised as the grocery and provision shop, boot and shoe shop, and boot stockroom.

Prosperity continued to shine upon the Society, and phenomenal increases were recorded on all sides.

In 1875 the membership had reached 1,140, the share capital stood at £12,076, and the sales for that year were over £1,500 per week.

The question of accommodation for the Society's horses and vehicles now makes a claim for attention.

The "pony and trap for business and domestic purposes" has now a progeny of six horses, four wagons, and other vehicles, and it was found necessary to have some suitable stabling accommodation erected. Negotiations were opened for this purpose, and in May, 1875, a piece of land containing bricksheds and offices, situate in what was then called King Street, but is now named Durham Street—where the Society's tobacco factory and six cottages stand—was purchased for the sum of £500 from Mr. James Thompson. Here stables were erected which were sufficient to meet their needs for the time, and accommodation provided that was considered sufficient for the requirements of their present trade, and for anything that was likely to arise in the way of ordinary expansion in the near future.

Whether they ever anticipated that any further extensions would be required we cannot say. Certainly the need for extension did come, and not with any laggard foot.

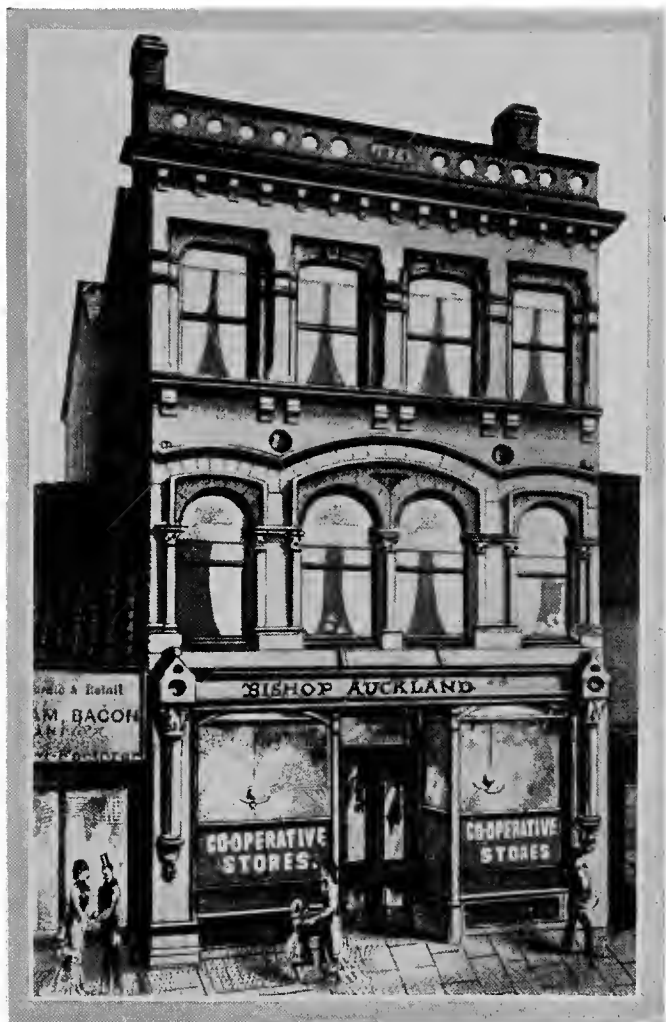
The decade 1870–1880 had witnessed many changes and fluctuations in trade, but it was a period of almost unparalleled success in the affairs of the Society.

During these years the membership had increased from 514 to 2,840, being at the rate of five-and-a-half times.

The share capital had multiplied over seven times—from £2,620 to £19,135—and the sales had gone up from £282 to £2,225 per week, or nearly eight times.

The cry for more room once more is heard, the space at their disposal being quite inadequate to supply the requirements of the customers with anything like ordinary comfort.

Fortunately, just at this juncture—in 1880—some property adjoining the shop on the north side came into the market. This property belonged to a Mr. John Adamson, who had died, and the trustees were putting it up for sale by auction. The premises consisted of a shop, workshops, yard, and a large garden, occupied by Mrs. Preshous, and constituted a most desirable piece of property for the Society. But how to secure it was the question. If the tradesmen of the town knew that the Co-operative Society were intending purchasers they would have leagued



CENTRAL SHOP, NEWGATE STREET, 1874.

themselves together to bid it up to an impossible figure. But the men sitting round the table in the Society's Committee-room were men who were wise in their generation.

They knew that great caution would be necessary in order to obtain their hearts' desire, and they went about the business in a business-like manner. They appointed their President (Mr. T. Mitchison) and two of the Committee-men to attend the sale, giving them discretionary power to make such arrangements as they deemed best for the purchase of the property.

The sale was held on September 7th, 1880, in the Commercial Hotel, Bishop Auckland. The Committee-men kept themselves well in the background, but they had secured the services of a gentleman in whom they had confidence, who was well disposed to the Society, but who was unsuspected by the tradesmen to have any leanings that way and to him the property was knocked down for the sum of £1,130 ; and the rage and consternation that reigned in the enemy's camp can be imagined when it was announced that the Co-operative Society were the purchasers. But their desires were not fully satisfied even with this purchase.

The property they had purchased, at the back, adjoined the burial ground of the Society of Friends, but, on the front side there was a shop standing between them and the Friends' Chapel. If only they could get this shop, too, there would be a splendid block of property, with good frontage and plenty of room at the back for shops and warehouses, which they so much needed. Why not try and secure this, too ?

At their very next meeting they talked the matter over, and the President and Manager were instructed to open negotiations, and empowered to make the best bargain they can. Three days after a form of agreement was drawn up whereby the Society agreed to purchase the shop and yard for the sum of £615, a deposit of £50 was at once paid down to bind the agreement, and on November 26th the purchase was completed.

Thus, for the sum of £1,745 this most advantageous block of buildings, 85 and 86, Newgate Street, constituting the

northern boundary of the Society's premises, came into their possession.

It was not, however, until the year 1882 that anything was done in the way of adapting the newly acquired premises for the business purposes of the Society.

In the early part of this year—1882—it was decided to pull down the old buildings and erect a set of new, commodious premises, consisting of shops, warehouse, and cellar.

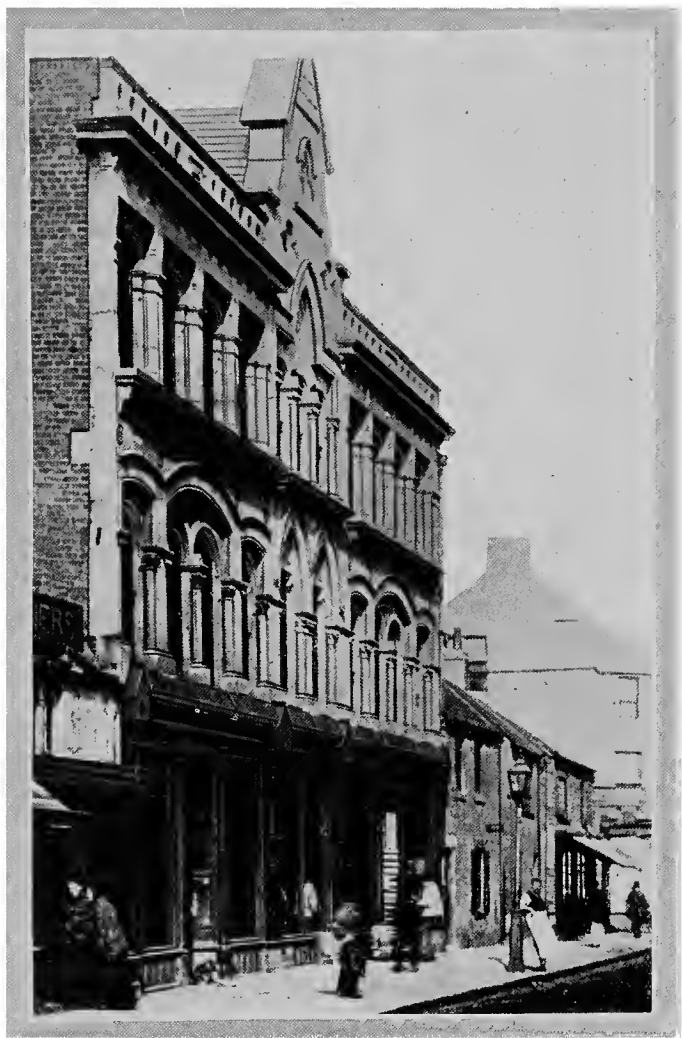
Mr. Robert Thompson had been engaged as Architect, and he prepared plans and specifications, which were accepted on March 23rd, 1882.

On May 11th tenders for the shops and cellar were received, and the contracts let to the following contractors, viz.: masonry, Mr. G. H. Bell; joinery, Mr. Thomas Manners; plastering, Mr. S. Kirby; slating, Mr. W. Pulford; plumbing, Messrs. Cooke and Bell; painting, Mr. Pallister—all of Bishop Auckland, the total cost for the different works to be £1,877. 4s.

The buildings were finished in April, 1883, and on April 21st they were opened in the presence of a great crowd of people. The Town Hall was engaged for the purpose of holding a tea, and provision was made for 3,000 people to be served.

Tenders were asked from the leading confectioners in the town to cater for the occasion, but when they heard that provision had to be made for 3,000 people they all respectfully declined. A Sub-Committee was therefore appointed to arrange the tea, and the provisions were secured from the Co-operative Wholesale Society's Confectionery Works at Crumpsall, and thus the event was satisfactorily managed, and proved a great success.

Directly the new shop premises were finished it was determined to erect additional warehouses, and the contracts for these were let on April 23rd, 1883, for the sum of £2,613. 11s. 9d.



CENTRAL SHOP, NEWGATE STREET, 1883.

So provision was once more made for the demands of the time, and the ordinary spectator would have said that the business premises then standing would be sufficient for anything that the Society would ever require.

The membership had now reached 5,025, and the sales that half year were £87,197, the Central alone doing about £2,000 per week. The employes numbered: at Central, 85; and at Spennymoor, 43; and the horses in use at the Central were 9, and at Spennymoor, 6.

But the zenith of the Society's progress had not yet been reached. Half year after half year as they passed by the Committee were able to report increases in all departments, and in the half year ending September 2nd, 1884, the sales had reached the unprecedented sum of £100,112. This high figure was not maintained during the three following half years, although the membership continued to increase—these being periods of rather severe trade depression; but in 1886 the sales again went up and were maintained during the decade.

In 1887 the Committee again ventured to acquire additional property. Two cottages adjoining the Society's premises at the back, belonging to a Mrs. Elcoat, and of which the Society were the tenants, were purchased for £350, and these were kept in reserve for the next extension.

In the decade March, 1880, to March, 1890, the membership had grown from 2,840 to 8,160; the share capital had increased from £19,135 to £75,802; and the sales had gone up £2,761 per week, and had now reached nearly £5,000 per week. The Society were owners of fixed stock, consisting of shops and warehouses, to the value of £15,787; cottages to the value of £2,121. 7s. 11d.; and stables worth £1,833. 14s. 10d., and their horses and wagons were valued at £1,198.

And now once more the Central trade had outgrown its premises, and once again the Committee had to consider the question of further extension of their borders. But in what direction were they to turn? There seemed no possibility of extending northwards, so their attention

had now to be directed to the south. Adjoining them on the south side there were three shops, formerly belonging to the late Mr. John Donaldson, and now in the hands of his trustees. This block of premises was most desirable for the purposes of the Society, and the Committee, with their usual spirit of enterprise, determined to make an effort to secure it. On September 24th, 1891, Mr. John Raine, President of the Society, and Mr. Kellett, General Manager, were appointed to interview the trustees in whose hands the property was vested, with a view to purchasing the same. The interview was satisfactory, the trustees were willing to sell, and a price was arranged. On October 14th Messrs. Raine and Kellett reported. The Committee accepted their report, and determined to purchase the property and paid a deposit of £390.

Some delay was caused in the transaction on account of legal difficulties that arose in relation to the title, but on January 15th, 1892, this large block, consisting of three shops fronting Newgate Street, and seven cottages behind, was conveyed to the Society by deed for the sum of £3,900.

This year, 1892, witnessed that great disastrous strike referred to in Chapter XI. The time therefore was inopportune for spending much money in the way of extensions. Yet in the latter months of the year the question of pulling down the buildings they had acquired, and erecting a new block of business premises in line with those already standing, came on the board. Mr. James Linday, who had previously been Secretary of the Society, but who had withdrawn in order that he might take up its architectural work, was instructed to prepare plans, specifications, and estimates for the erection of a block of buildings to cover a space of 3,449 square yards. The plans were presented and passed, and tenders were received on December 27th, 1892, but the contracts were not let until a later date. Eventually the contracts for the various works were let and signed, the total cost to be £7,891. 3s. 4d., as follows : masonry, Mr. Marshall ; joinery, Mr. William Hudson ; slating, Mr. Marshall ; plastering, Mr. S. Kirby ; painting, Mr. Thompson ; plumbing, Mr. Kilburn. The

erection of this building was a large and arduous task, and many unforeseen difficulties were encountered in its execution, and it was not until July, 1894, that the premises were ready for the opening ceremony. During the erection a sad accident occurred, by which a young man employed on the building, and a son of one of our employes, lost his life.

In the meantime huge preparations had been made for the great opening event. Being summer time, and with no room available sufficient to accommodate the multitude that was expected on the occasion, the Committee decided to have the tea and meeting in the open air. The Lord Bishop of Durham was asked for the use of the Park, which was granted, and arrangements were made for one of the greatest events that the town had ever witnessed.

The event took place on July 14th, and fulfilled the Committee's highest expectations. Mr. John Raine, the esteemed President of the Society, was selected to perform the opening ceremony, and a handsome gold key was purchased to be presented to him as a souvenir of the occasion. Unfortunately, Mr. Raine was called upon to suffer a serious loss, which prevented him from being present at the function. His wife died that morning, and, instead of being able to join in the jubilation of this event, he had done so much to bring about, he had to mourn the loss of one, who was very dear to him. Under these painful circumstances, which threw a gloom over the proceedings, Mr. Jonathan Parkin, Treasurer of the Society, performed the opening ceremony in the presence of a large concourse of people, having been introduced by Mr. Thomas Staley (Auckland Park). The company then formed into a huge procession to the Park, headed by the Shildon Brass Band, and followed by the Bishop Auckland Brass Band, when a monster tea was prepared, to which nearly 5,000 people sat down. Three large tents for the tea, and a huge marquee for the public meeting had been erected.

The Lord Bishop of Durham had been asked to preside at the meeting, but was unable to accede to the request, and his place was ably filled by the General Manager (Mr. H. N. Kellett).

Several influential gentlemen had been asked to be speakers, including Messrs. John Burns, M.P., John Wilson, M.P., J. M. Paulton, M.P., W. Maxwell (President, Scottish Wholesale Society), J. T. W. Mitchell (President, English Wholesale Society), and T. Tweddell (President, Newcastle Branch, Co-operative Wholesale Society). Some of these were unable to attend, but Messrs. Mitchell, Tweddell, and Maxwell did splendid service on the occasion, and this great function will long be remembered by the members and the residents of the town.

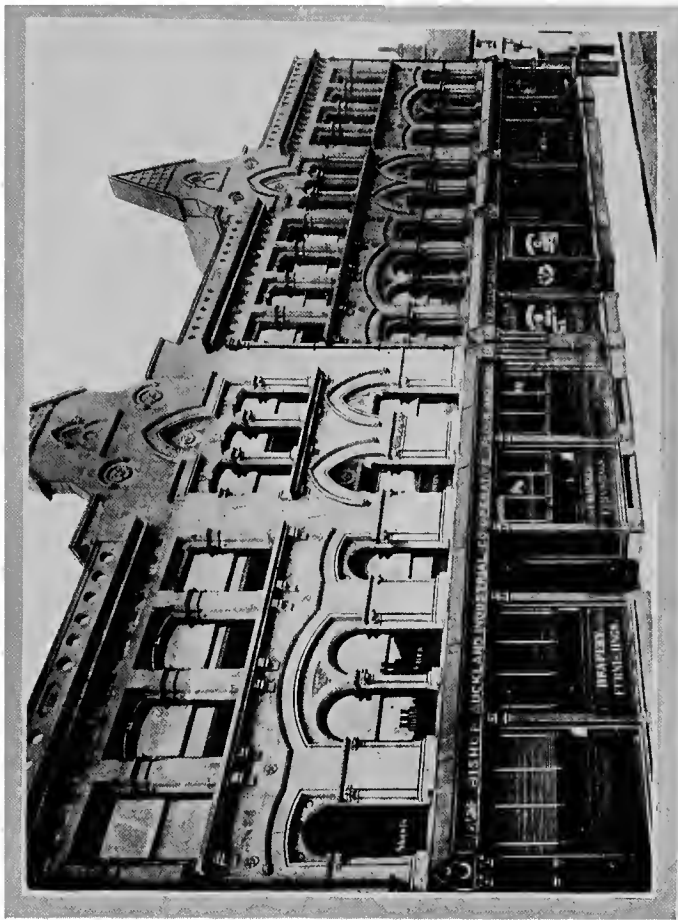
The part of the premises erected and opened at this time is that now occupied by the Drapery and Earthenware Departments on the ground floor, the Carpet and Mantle Departments on the first floor, and the Furnishing Departments on the second floor, with the large warehouse behind.

The Committee in their report to the members for the half year ending September 11th, 1894, say :—

We have great pleasure in stating that our magnificent new premises in Bishop Auckland were opened under most auspicious circumstances on 14th July, 1894, and since then have been visited by scores of hundreds of members and others, who have invariably expressed their appreciation of the splendid accommodation we now possess in the Drapery, Millinery, and Furnishing Departments, for transacting an extensive trade.

The following trades were now being carried on at the Central : grocery, flour and provisions, drapery, millinery, boots (manufactured and ready-made), tailoring and ready-made clothing, ironmongery, furnishing, jewellery, dressmaking, kerseymaking, and stocking knitting; and, in the half year just quoted, they reported a turnover of £2,785 per week. The Society's total turnover was £5,710 per week, and its total membership 11,131.

And still the business continued to increase, until in the latter part of 1900 the question of accommodation came up again. Notwithstanding the large stretch of premises in use for trade purposes on December 20th, 1900, the Manager informed the Committee that, on account of the growing trade and the large number of wagons which delivered goods to the Society, and the large number of the



CENTRAL SHOP, NEWGATE STREET, 1894.

Society's wagons being loaded to deliver the goods to the members, the congestion in the yard and in the warehouse had become acute, and that something must be done speedily. Several complaints had come to hand from the railway company and others because of the delay of their wagons, and the Committee resolved:—

That, having heard the statement of the Manager concerning the congested state of the business at the Central, it was resolved that in our opinion it is necessary that immediate steps should be taken to extend the premises, and make such alterations as are necessary to meet the demands of our growing trade.

They also decided to make an inspection of the flour yard and other two sites outside, to see which was the most convenient for the purpose in view. The result was, that they decided to make extensive alterations at the back of the premises by pulling down the cottages standing there, and erecting the necessary buildings on that site.

On January 12th, the Manager presented a rough sketch of the alterations and extensions needed, showing separate roads of ingress and egress, cellars, warehouse, stockrooms, packing-room, and manufacturing rooms, and the Committee decided to agree with the general idea of the plan, but to engage an Architect to draw plans and specifications and supervise the work. Mr. F. H. Livesay was engaged as the Society's Architect, and he was instructed to prepare the necessary plans and specifications, which he did, and on June 16th, 1901, the contract was let for the sum of £2,382. 2s. 3d.

These extensions, which were completed in the early part of 1903, provided a most useful area of yard space, and splendid warehousing, stocking, and manufacturing rooms, which have proved of great value.

In the meantime, while these works were in course of erection, the question of certain rights and privileges belonging to the adjoining property on the south side, owned by Mr. C. Manners, came up, and, in the course of negotiations on these matters, an offer to sell this property to the Society was made to the Manager.

This certainly seemed to be the easiest and best method of settling the little difficulty, but the question was, did the Society not already own sufficient property for all its purposes? Numbers 81 to 86, inclusive, in Newgate Street, were now all in its possession, and was not this sufficient for any purpose? The question was a difficult one, and for a time the Board of Management were sharply divided upon the point. There were some who saw very great advantages in the project to buy; they believed the Society had by no means exhausted its possibilities of development, and could foresee improvements and trade extensions in the future to justify the step. There were others who were timid, and thought the Society had as much property as it could advantageously use, and feared that the cost of upkeep and the heavy expense and depreciation would be too heavy a burden on the Society's resources, and would eventually drag it down.

The progressive party, however, triumphed, and the President and Manager were appointed again to negotiate for the purchase.

After considerable delay and much hard bargaining the purchase was made for the sum of £6,725, the indenture of transfer being signed on May 17th, 1902, and the Society came into possession of this fine block of premises, comprising on the front three shops with dwelling-house, and butcher's premises behind, and three cottages facing the back street.

The front premises were well built and in good condition, and of a design and style similar to the other front buildings of the Society, and so required no outward alterations to fit them for their purpose.

The two butcher's shops were very much needed, as there was no butcher's shop on the front, and were at once utilised for this department, the other shop being fitted up for the Tailoring Department.

The Office arrangements were very inconvenient and out of date, and a splendid suite of Offices upstairs and downstairs was fitted up.

The Committee had been enlarged from eleven to fifteen members, and one of the rooms on the first floor was fitted up for their use, and another was fitted up for the Manager's Office, while the room on the second floor was prepared as a meeting-room or mealroom for the employé's, but was afterwards utilised as a furniture stockroom.

These adjustments made room for extensions in several of the other departments, and thus the newly-purchased premises were profitably and judiciously utilised.

And now the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society owns the most extensive and one of the finest piles of business premises in Newgate Street, or in the town of Bishop Auckland, with a frontage of 155½ feet, of a most imposing appearance, and stretching backward 183 feet, with cellars, warehouses, storerooms, manufacturing rooms, hoists, machinery, and engines of the most approved pattern, enabling them to do a distributive trade of £4,450 per week.

A system of pneumatic cash carriers is also in operation all over the premises, the rooms are heated by a low-pressure steam system, and are lighted by Keith's system of compressed gas, having been installed by Messrs. J. J. Spoor and Son ; and quite recently the whole of the premises have been protected from fire by an installation of the Grinnell sprinkler.

Looking at the present princely pile of buildings, watching the constant stream of purchasers passing in and out and around the different departments, noting the huge wagon-loads of goods being delivered, and the piled-up wagons loaded to distribute goods to the members, and standing by the delivery office of the cash carriers as it pours out its constant stream of coin, and comparing these with the little shop in South Church Lane, sending out its pony and trap and turning over its £28 per week, surely it may be said : " The little one hath become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation."

CHAPTER IX.

Farther Developments.

“ Experience is by industry achieved,
And perfected by the swift course of time.”
The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

“ Through heat and cold, and shower and sun,
Still onward cheerily driving,
There’s life alone in duty done,
And rest alone in striving.”

—Whittier.

TO anyone who has made a careful study of the subject of Co-operation it will be quite apparent that the great ideals and purposes of the movement will never be attained or achieved until the intricate and thorny problem of Co-operative production has been attacked and solved.

Distribution has done much along its own plane, but it has only scaled, and only can scale, the lower reaches of this great cliff ; above it and beyond it there stretches the rugged peaks which production alone can reach.

So long as Co-operative distribution is dependent for the article it retails upon the producer and manufacturer outside the movement—the capitalist, unrestrained by Co-operative principles or uninspired by Co-operative ideals—so long will the movement have an insecure stone at its foundations, and so long will its efforts for the emancipation of labour be retarded.

Towards the solution of this problem some of the best minds in the movement are giving their attention, and it has ever loomed largely before the eyes of its leaders and workers.

One of the articles in the stated objects of the Rochdale Pioneers was the "manufacturing of such articles as the members may determine upon," and this has ever had a place amongst the objects of the movement.

Mr. T. W. Allen, in his inaugural address to the Co-operative Congress at Newport in 1908, says :—

The ideals of the movement involve the production, at the best wage and under the best conditions, of every article which the Societies distribute. . . . Co-operative production and distribution are but two phases of one movement, interrelated and interdependent. For either to be permanently successful, both must work hand in hand.

Very early in the history of the Bishop Auckland Society did this question in some form enter the minds of its leaders, and steps in the direction of the goal of production were taken.

Most probably this was forced upon them by the difficulties encountered in dealing with the merchants and manufacturers, already referred to, and would cause them to see the necessity of becoming independent of the "middleman" merchant, and of manufacturing and importing their own goods.

The Co-operative Wholesale Society was only a project in the early days of this Society, and many of the evils which this federation was formed to abolish had to be encountered single-handed, so that the question of commencing to manufacture some of the goods they had to retail, would often be forced upon their attention.

In this chapter we shall endeavour to narrate how they essayed to enter some of the productive fields.

We have seen their attempts to tackle the question of corn milling, and its results. Whether or not the last step in this direction has been taken, time alone will prove.

Over 1,260 sacks of flour and meal are being retailed every week by the Society, so that this "field is white unto the harvest."

Perhaps some day the old adventurous spirit will again seize the management, and they will arise and reap.

We have also seen how the millinery business commenced, and it has continued on its way amidst various fluctuations, and is to-day a thriving branch of the Drapery Department.

The next step in manufacturing was taken in 1874, when the Committee decided to tackle the tailoring trade. In the balance sheet for the half year ending March 18th, 1874, the Committee say :—

We also beg to inform you that we have commenced the tailoring business in connection with this Society. Although it has only been commenced a short time, it is very promising, and we think will be a great advantage to the members.

The results justified the action of the Committee. The department prospered and grew, and in March, 1876, there were employed in the department one cutter, fifteen tailors, and one machinist.

In the following year a Ready-mades Department was opened to work in connection with the Tailoring Department, and for some time they worked together, but in July, 1894, the Ready-mades was made a separate department. The Tailoring Department, however, retails its own productions, and is therefore reckoned as distributive, although it is also productive in its operations. This department in its early days seems to have had to steer its way through somewhat rough waters. Disputes between the Committee and the men were very frequent. The work being new and somewhat complicated, together with its rapid development, created difficulties, which were ever and anon making themselves felt. The question of log prices, time work, and piece work were very frequently before the Committee, and at one time friction became so great that a lawsuit was commenced by the men against the Society, and the Committee engaged Mr. Skidmore, Solicitor (Darlington), to defend them in the action. The case ended in favour of the Committee, and things seemed to have worked somewhat smoother afterwards. This took place in 1877.

This department at present is under the supervision of Mr. J. P. Aydon, at the Central, who has twenty men employed on the boards, and one assistant cutter, and they

are doing a business of £93 per week. The Spennymoor Branch has seven men employed in this department, under the supervision of Mr. T. Alderson, and is doing £36 per week.

Although the question of boot and shoe making was under discussion as early as 1863, and leave was given to the Committee at that time to commence this branch of manufacture, it was not until 1877 that a commencement was made with this business. Boots and shoes had been sold previous to this, but not manufactured by the Society. This business has always been considered as productive, the distributive sale department taking its goods at manufacturing prices. The department has had a chequered career, and on occasions, on account of the unremunerative returns, the question of its discontinuance has been under consideration. This has, perhaps, been the most thorny branch of the Society's operations. Ever and anon difficulties have been cropping up—the question of log prices, conditions of labour, &c., and on one occasion there was the beginning of a strike. The firm, but respectful, manner of the Manager, the fair spirit of the Committee, and the good sense of the workmen, however, on that occasion—and on all others—have come to the rescue, and the difficulties have been smoothed over.

To-day, under the supervision of Mr. S. Forrest, who has held the position of foreman in this department for twenty-two years, there are forty-eight hands employed, and twenty-seven machines of the most up-to-date type are at work, and they are doing a trade of £168 per week.

Branches of this department are also in operation at Shildon and Butterknowle, but the work done there is mainly boot repairing.

The next step in the line of development has proved to be one of the most important of latter-day movements that the Society has taken. In 1895 it was decided to commence the butchering business. As on a former occasion, the impulse leading up to this action came from Shildon. There was in existence in Shildon a Co-operative Butchers' Society, which dealt in butchering alone, and had

no connection with the defunct Shildon and Neighbourhood Corn Mill, Flour, and Provision Society. This Society had good premises, consisting of shop, slaughter-house, and other buildings, besides a Manager's house and large hall in Garbutt Street. The Society was composed mainly of members of the Bishop Auckland Society. It had not had a very successful career, and had often been in difficulties for want of capital and from other causes. A few of the members realised, however, the vast possibilities of the trade, if worked by a Society like the Bishop Auckland Society, with its capital, membership, and prestige, and a desire for amalgamation had often found expression. As early as 1888 the Committee had been approached with this view, but their hands at that time were full, and nothing came of it.

The question of the advisability of taking up the butchering business began to force itself to the front, finding its initiative in the Shildon district. Considerable divergence of opinion prevailed amongst the members on the matter. There were those, who saw a splendid opening for the Society in this venture, and believed there was a great future for it, and that it would tend very materially to its increase and expansion. There were others, who saw danger ahead in the venture, and feared, that, because of the intricacies of the trade, the facilities it offered for fraud, and the difficulties in buying, it would prove ruinous in its effects. While there was another class, who, because of their long connection with the family butcher, with whom they had no quarrel, hesitated to give their countenance to such a scheme.

At last the question came before the members in General Meeting assembled, on May 4th, 1895, although it was not on the programme of business. A member threw out the suggestion "that the Society commence the butchering business." Quite evidently the time was ripe for the suggestion, and the Committee were prepared to accept it, but, considering the divided feeling on the matter and not caring to take such a risk unless there was the promise of a fair amount of support, it was decided that the members be



SHILDON BUTCHER'S PREMISES AND CO-OPERATIVE HALL.

balloted upon the question. The ballot was taken on July 25th, 1895, with the result that 5,371 voted in favour of the scheme, 2,240 voted against it, and 814 were neutral. This vote was sufficiently decisive, and showed a strong progressive spirit to be abroad amongst the members.

The Committee at their next meeting after the vote had been taken resolved :—

That, in accordance with the voting on the butchering business, we determine to make arrangements to commence this business as early as possible, and to keep it entirely on its own basis, allowing a certain percentage for the amount of the Society's capital devoted to this purpose.

The Quarterly Meeting was held on August 3rd, when it is recorded :—

The Committee's recommendation on the strength of the voting, that we commence the butchering business, was carried unanimously.

With this satisfactory expression of feeling favourable to the project, the Committee felt that they were fully justified in taking immediate steps to commence this new line of business. Consequently, at their next meeting they set about to secure premises suitable for the purpose in various parts of the Society's area.

The Shildon Butchers' Society was approached with a view to securing the very desirable premises which they possessed. Sub-Committees were also formed to look out for suitable shops in Bishop Auckland, Spennymoor, West Auckland, and Auckland Park.

It was also arranged to visit the Societies at Newcastle, Gateshead, Wallsend, Jarrow, Chester-le-Street, Birtley, Hartlepool, Stockton, and Middlesbrough, all of whom had Butchering Departments, with a view to collecting data to guide them in their new departure.

The Shildon Society very promptly responded to the approach of the Committee, and at once opened negotiations for the sale of their premises and the transfer of the business. The Committee went out to Shildon, carefully inspected the property, and investigated the position of the Society. Offers on both sides were made. No agreement was arrived at just then, but both parties left themselves open to renew

negotiations. On September 14th, 1895, a deputation from Shildon, with full power to settle, waited on the Committee. The deputation consisted of Messrs. J. Peacock, J. Johnson, G. Robinson, W. Steele, and S. Mahaffey, all of them true Co-operators and members of the Bishop Auckland Society, and, after some consideration, an agreement for the amalgamation of the two Societies was arrived at and signed. This agreement, which was confirmed by the unanimous vote of 600 members at the Half-yearly Meeting held on November 2nd, 1895, was as follows:—

That the Bishop Auckland Industrial Co-operative Flour and Provision Society Limited become amalgamated with the Old and New Shildon Industrial Co-operative Butchers' Society Limited as one Society, and be henceforth carried on as the Bishop Auckland Industrial Co-operative Flour and Provision Society Limited.

That the Bishop Auckland Industrial Co-operative Flour and Provision Society take over the premises and business of the Old and New Shildon Industrial Co-operative Butchers' Society Limited, consisting of their entire premises at Shildon, stock in trade, and cash in hand of the last-named Society, and, in consideration of such transfer, the Bishop Auckland Industrial Co-operative Flour and Provision Society undertakes to pay the members of the Old and New Shildon Industrial Co-operative Butchers' Society Limited the amount of their claims at the rate of 19s. in the £, and also to pay off a mortgage of £250 upon the said business, with interest due at the rate of 5 per cent per annum.

After the signing of this agreement steps were at once taken for altering and rearranging the Butcher's premises at Shildon, and commencing business there. Shops were also secured at West Auckland, Coundon, Butterknowle, and Spennymoor, the shop at Tudhoe Grange, in which the Society's first Branch was opened, having been secured for the last-named place. The Central not having, or being able to secure any place suitable for the purpose, the whole of the business for that district was done at Shildon. The shops at West Auckland, Spennymoor, and Coundon were rented, temporary premises were also erected at Butterknowle, but the Committee took steps at once to build stables and butchering premises there.

On October 3rd the Committee took applications for the positions of Butchers at the various places, and on October 5th the appointments were made. Mr. James Moody, who



CENTRAL STABLES AND SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

had charge of the Shildon business under the old Society, was appointed to take charge of the department at Shildon, with four assistants under him. J. Armstrong was appointed for Spennymoor, with three assistants; James Bowser, with one assistant, was put in charge at West Auckland; H. Swinbank at Coundon, with two assistants; and J. H. Dowson at Butterknowle, making fifteen hands which were employed as a commencement.

Full operations were commenced in the early part of the half year September 10th, 1895, to March 10th, 1896, and the turnover for that period was £9,827. 17s. 10½d., which yielded a profit of £1,395, and the Committee were able to pay purchasers a dividend of 3s. in the £ upon their purchases in this department.

Twenty-one thousand stones of beef, mutton, and pork had been disposed of, and the Committee in their report to the members say:—

We are glad to draw your special attention to the splendid results of our Butchering Department for the first half year's transactions. Notwithstanding the numerous difficulties encountered in the formation and establishment of this business, we are in a position to congratulate you upon the results attained. In connection with this business we have renovated and beautified the premises purchased from the Shildon Co-operative Butchers' Society. We have prepared and opened out shops at Spennymoor, West Auckland, and Coundon. We have nearly also completed the erection of commodious premises and stables at Butterknowle, and we sincerely trust that the facilities now afforded to members in connection with this trade will encourage them to give it their most loyal support.

Thus this important department started off under most promising conditions, and its future operations have justified the high hopes, which its promoters foresaw. In the second half year of its existence it yielded a revenue of £15,503. 10s. 6½d. and made a profit of £2,325.

In the meantime a compact butcher's shop had been provided at the Central at the back of the grocer's shop, a most commodious block of butchering premises were in course of erection at Spennymoor, and arrangements were

in hand to erect a large block of premises, consisting of slaughter houses and stables, on a plot of ground that had been purchased near Grey Street, Bishop Auckland.

The erection of these last-named premises was a huge undertaking, as they were intended to be of the most approved pattern. The contract for the work was let to Mr. James Manley (Bishop Auckland) for the sum of £4,060, on September 5th, 1895, and was completed in the early part of 1898, the cost before completion totalling over £4,500.

In June, 1897, a butcher's shop and house were purchased at Hunwick, and a Branch of the trade was opened out there. Butcher's shops have also been built at Coundon, Ferryhill Station, and West Auckland, in connection with the new Branches in these places.

There are now eight Butchering Branches in operation, viz., Central, Spennymoor, Shildon, Butterknowle, Coundon, Ferryhill Station, West Auckland, and Hunwick, with fifty-five hands employed. The weekly turnover is over £1,900, and 3,350 stones of meat are being retailed out to the members every week.

Recently several rearrangements have been made. Mr. Moody has been transferred from Shildon to the Central, and has given a splendid impetus to the trade in that district. Mr. Bowser took the Shildon Branch, and has done well there. The following are the Foremen Butchers at each Branch, with the number of men and boys now employed under them :—

Branch.	Foreman.	No. of Men and Boys.
Central	J. Moody	14
Spennymoor	J. Robinson	10
Shildon	J. Bowser	7
Butterknowle	J. Dowson	2
Coundon	G. Stainthorpe	4
Ferryhill Station	J. Holmes	3
West Auckland	T. H. Dowson	5
Hunwick	T. Johnson	2

Under the supervision of these men this department is promising to be one of the most successful of the Society's operations.



Hunwick Butcher's Premises



Hunwick Butcher's House

The rapid progress of the butchering business turned the attention of the Committee towards another new venture, which was looked upon as a necessary adjunct to it, namely, farming. Co-operative agriculture has not developed very rapidly, nor have its results been very reassuring. Only a few Societies, comparatively, have ventured into this field, and of these many have proved unsuccessful. The Bishop Auckland Society, however, took its place amongst the adventurous ones, and found itself amongst the unsuccessful ones. The Committee announced on the balance sheet for the half year ending March 8th, 1898 :—

We have made a new departure during the half year by taking Lowfield Farm, near Windlestone Hall, Rushyford, and Staindrop Field House Farm, near West Auckland, which we anticipate will prove advantageous to the Society, and especially as regards increased conveniences and facilities for the Butchering Department.

These two farms contained 373 acres, and were devoted to feeding purposes. Notwithstanding unremunerative results, the Committee in 1900 decided to take Greenfield Farm, Etherley, in addition to those which they already rented. This farm contained 50 acres, and was in good condition and conveniently situated, which is more than could be said of the other two.

This departure, unfortunately, did not prove so successful as most of the other ventures had turned out, and the anticipations of the Committee were not realised. Year after year losses were reported, until at last the membership became impatient and the Committee despairing of success.

After serious and lengthy consideration it was decided to turn the Etherley Farm into a dairy farm, for which it was well adapted, as an experiment, and, as they were only yearly tenants, to get rid of the other two. The Committee therefore announced to the members at the Half-yearly Meeting on May 6th, 1905 :—

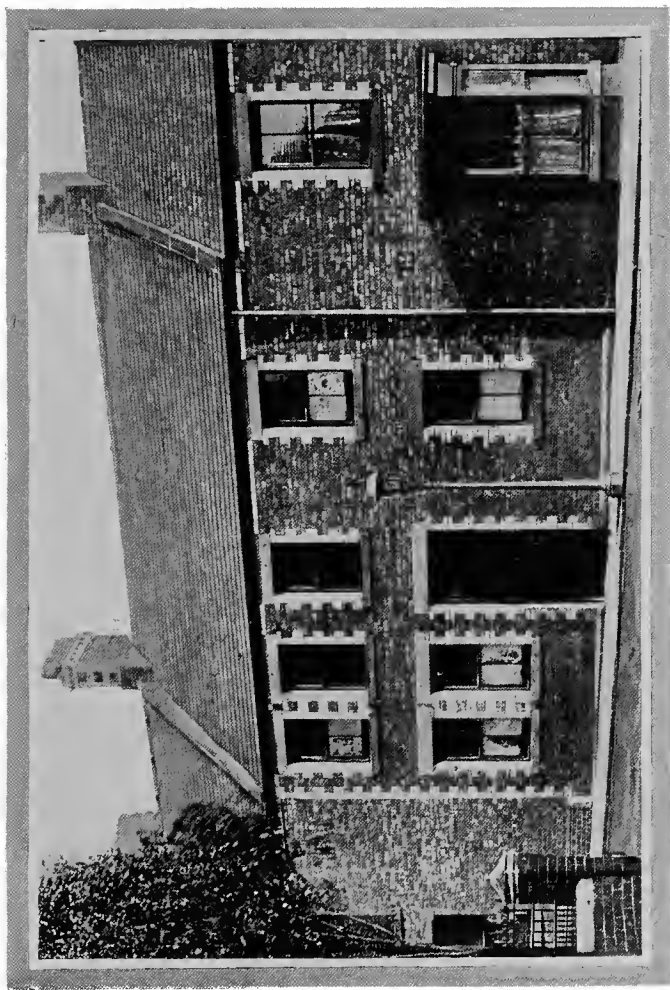
In consequence of the unremunerative results of our farming operations we have deemed it wise to give up the farm at Lowfield and at West Auckland, and our tenancy ceases at May Day of this year. We have turned the Etherley Farm into a dairy farm, and are supplying the members within easy reach of the farm with milk and dairy produce. We trust this experiment will prove successful.

So far this hope has been realised. The venture has succeeded beyond all anticipation, and the only cause of dissatisfaction is that the farm is capable of supplying such a very limited number of members with milk, and the Committee have been compelled to purchase a large quantity of milk from other farmers in order to supply the demand.

At the Half-yearly Meeting in May, 1895, when the question of butchering was sprung upon the meeting without notice, another question was introduced, which was on the programme. A suggestion was submitted "that we manufacture our own tobacco," and this was remitted to the Committee for consideration during the quarter.

From beef to tobacco does not seem a far cry, seeing that both form a considerable item in the working man's bill of fare. We make no comment on the wisdom or otherwise of this fact. Our purpose is not to moralise, but to state facts. That the Society was not strongly anti-tobacconist is evident from the fact that the members at this time were consuming about twenty tons per annum of the weed. "My Lady Nicotine" was thus held in considerable favour in the Society. The question therefore was not unnatural, if our people use tobacco, and the Society sells it, can the Society not, with profit to itself and benefit to the consumer, manufacture it?

But the manufacture of tobacco was quite a different thing from killing beasts or pigs. It was a branch of manufacture altogether new to the Society, and little known in the district. The *modus operandi*, the machinery required, the method of getting the raw material, and the mixing of the various brands, were matters of expert knowledge which the Committee of Management did not possess. Hence this suggestion did not find so ready a response from the Committee as the suggestion to commence butchering had done. The Committee do not seem to have looked upon the suggestion in a very serious light, and, if it was ever discussed at all, no minutes are recorded upon it during the quarter. When the Quarterly Meeting came round no questions were asked upon it, and it seems to have dropped out of sight until the year 1898.



TOBACCO FACTORY, DURHAM STREET, BISHOP AUCKLAND.

By this time the new stables in Grey Street had been completed and occupied. The old stables in Durham Street were vacant and the Committee had to consider how to utilise these premises to the best purpose. Just now tobacco again came up, and the Manager suggested that the old stables could be converted into a Tobacco Factory. The suggestion found favour with the Committee, and the scheme for manufacturing tobacco began to assume shape.

Before taking any definite steps, however, the Committee determined to reconnoitre a bit, so as to gain some information regarding the requirements of room, machinery, hands, and leaf, and the results of experience in the trade of other manufacturers. It was thought wise, therefore, to inspect some factories in operation. Being aware that no private manufacturers would welcome a deputation on such an errand, they began to inquire if there were any Co-operative factories in existence. Scanning the advertisement columns of the *Co-operative News* they found there were two such, viz., the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, Glasgow, and the Equitable Pioneers' Society, Rochdale. These were written to asking them if they would receive a deputation to visit their works. Favourable replies were received from both places, and they were consequently visited by deputations from the Committee.

At each place the deputations were received with the greatest kindness and treated with every courtesy. They were conducted through the works, shown every detail, and all information possible was placed at their disposal. On their return, the Secretary was instructed to convey to the Committee of the Rochdale Society and the Manager of the Glasgow factory, an expression of very sincere thanks for the kindly way in which the deputations had been received. The deputations reported on July 21st, 1898, and the following resolution was recorded:—

The Tobacco Manufactories at Glasgow and Rochdale having been inspected, and due inquiries having been made, a satisfactory and encouraging report was presented, and it was resolved thereon to instruct our Manager to proceed to make arrangements for the establishment of a Tobacco Manufactory at the Central.

A commencement was made at once with the work. Certain structural alterations in the old stables were required and made, the engines were procured, and on September 24th, 1898, Mr. James Tait (Newcastle-on-Tyne) was appointed as Manager of the department. He was only a young man for the position, but he has proved himself a capable and successful Manager, and under his supervision this department has proved very successful.

Operations were commenced on November 21st, 1898, and on the balance sheet of that half year the Committee report :—

Since our last report we have commenced the Tobacco Factory, and it is now in full operation. The turnover has met our highest expectations, and the tobacco produced has, we believe, given general satisfaction. Arrangements are being made for still further extensions, which will result in a largely increased output.

The output for its first half year was £2,132, and it yielded a profit of £161. 13s. 2d. In the following half year the output had more than doubled itself, being £4,471, and the profit was over £400. To-day it is turning out nearly £280 worth of tobacco per week. There are twenty-two hands employed, sixteen being females.

The department from its commencement has worked smoothly and quietly, and has proved most successful, one half year yielding a profit of over £900.

It is worked entirely as a productive department, and has received the patronage of some neighbouring Co-operative Stores. No venture on the part of the management has repaid them better than this.

Although there were people who were beginning to wonder what Bishop Auckland Society was going to grow to, and were of the opinion it had already more irons in the fire than it could manage, and that it was going far beyond what a Distributive Store was ever intended to go, yet the Committee were not of that opinion, and believed that the horizon of their possibilities had not yet been reached.

With a bank balance of over £200,000 they believed that there were yet lands of fair renown within their reach. So, in 1901 another venture into productive fields was made.

In connection with the butchery premises at Shildon there was a large room that hitherto had been used as a Co-operative Hall. This hall, which at one time had been in great demand and proved fairly remunerative, had for some time been little used, as another public building had been erected in a more convenient part of the town.

As the hall was falling into decay and needed several repairs, it was decided "that the Committee go out to Shildon and examine the Co-operative Hall, and consider what shall be done with it." Accordingly the visit was made on March 14th, 1901.

The place was carefully inspected, the takings for the past year examined, the possibilities for the future considered, and the cost of repairs, renovations, and fittings estimated, when it was thought that the probable income would not be sufficient to repay the Society for the cost of repairs.

Mr. Hill, the Shildon Branch Manager, then outlined a scheme for utilising the room to good purpose. He believed that there was an opening for the Society to commence cabinet making, general joinery, and undertaking, and that the hall would make an excellent workshop.

The Committee present therefore resolved :—

That, having made a careful examination of the Co-operative Hall, Shildon, and having heard the statement made by Mr. Hill regarding the rents realised during the last few years, it was decided that we recommend to the ordinary Committee Meeting that we commence the business of cabinet-making and undertaking, and that the hall be utilised as a workshop for this purpose.

This question was discussed at the ordinary Committee Meeting held on March 30th, when it was decided to adopt the recommendation of the previous meeting and commence this business.

Immediately after this an offer was made to the Committee by Mr. J. F. Adamson to sell them his property and machinery. This property consisted of a front shop, joiner's premises, and dwelling-house, and adjoined the Society's premises on the south side in Church Street, Shildon.

Having decided to go into the cabinet-making and undertaking business, this property was most eligible for the purpose, and negotiations were at once opened, with the result that on June 3rd, 1901, the whole of this property, together with all machinery, plant, engines, horses, hearse, and cab, came into the possession of the Society for the sum of £1,800, and by this transaction the building in which the first meeting of the Society was held on February 26th, 1860, became the property of the Society.

This branch of the business began, but, unfortunately, it did not prove as satisfactory as some of its promoters anticipated.

It did not create the interest or enthusiasm of the members, nor did it receive that attention and careful supervision from headquarters it required, and the result was that frequent losses were reported, and on October 6th, 1904, the Committee decided to give all the workmen notice and close the department for the present.

It was not intended that this suspension of the business should be more than temporary. For some time, divided counsels prevailed upon the Board, regarding the reopening of the business, and at last it was decided to submit it to the members for their opinion thereon.

The question was, therefore, discussed at the Quarterly Meeting held August 5th, 1905, when, by a narrow majority, it was decided to recommence the joinery business, and in November of that year the department was reopened.

The reopening was on a very modest scale, and did not attempt much beyond repairing work. It gradually extended, however, and was entrusted with the work of erecting the temporary shop at Dean Bank, and also with the joinery work of some of the houses, which were being erected there.

For a time, however, its fate hung in the balance. Losses were again reported, and altogether great dissatisfaction was felt with its operations.

In 1897 it was felt necessary to make a change in the management, and that change seems to have proved the turning point of the department's fortunes.

On August 3rd, 1907, Thomas Dent (Shildon), who had formerly been employed as a joiner by the Society, was appointed the Manager, and under his supervision the department has made such good headway that it has now become a Building Department, having thirty-four hands employed, of whom ten are masons, eleven labourers, ten joiners, and three apprentices.

The new Manager, being able to draw plans and do architectural work, the Architect's duties have been assigned to him, and several important pieces of building work have been entrusted to and carried out by this department, notably the designing and executing of the enlargement of the Shildon Co-operative Hall, the designing and erection of nine new cottages at Dean Bank, the execution of the extensions at Coundon Branch, the alterations at Hunwick shop, the designing and execution of the work of pulling down and erecting butcher's and grocer's shops at West Auckland, the extensions at Evenwood Branch, and last, but not least, the important work of designing the new Bakery.

The whole of the work of the Bakery, from drawing the plans to finishing the building, is in the hands of this department, and is the most important venture it has undertaken. We are hoping for a successful issue.

This at one time unpromising department, is, therefore, now an important part of the Society's operations.

The mention of the Bakery brings us to the last phase of development in the Society's operations.

Many times wonder was expressed that the Society did not commence a Bakery, and the question had passing mention at the Committee Meetings.

Owing, however, to the fact that Bishop Auckland is a mining district, and that many of the members of the Society were provided with free coals, being miners, and for other

reasons, the question never had serious consideration until about the end of 1906, when it was arranged that a number of Societies which had Bakeries should be visited.

Accordingly visits were paid by members of the Committee to the following Societies: Chester-le-Street, Sunderland, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Gateshead, North Shields, West Stanley, Jarrow, Stockton, and West Hartlepool.

These visits produced a favourable impression, and when the reports were presented at a meeting held on January 31st, 1907, it was resolved:—

That, being satisfied with our investigations and inquiries as to the results and prospects of this business, as carried on by other Co-operative Societies in the North of England, we are of opinion that we ought to commence the Bakery business as soon as arrangements can be made.

This minute created considerable discussion at the Quarterly Meeting held on February 2nd, and an amendment was moved against the adoption of the minutes bearing on the point.

By a large majority, however, the meeting decided in favour of the Committee's findings, and thus the scheme had the sanction of the members.

For various reasons, however, the project was allowed to lie in abeyance until May, 1908, when it was again resolved that steps be taken as early as possible for erecting and commencing a Bakery for the Society.

In the meantime, as several new members had come on the Board who had not visited a Bakery, it was agreed to pay another visit to West Hartlepool, which was considered one of the most up-to-date Bakeries in the North.

This visit was paid shortly after, and so satisfied were they with what they saw, that, at the next meeting held on June 25th, it was resolved:—

That T. Dent be instructed to go into the question of laying out the land near the stables for the purpose of erecting a Bakery thereon.



BAKERY.

The land was surveyed and measured up, and a rough sketch plan presented to the Committee, who in the meantime had themselves inspected the place, and agreed that the Bakery should be erected on the piece of land on the north side of the stables and slaughterhouses.

Full plans and specifications were then prepared, and a Special Meeting called on January 30th, 1909, to consider them. The plans presented were for a Bakery capable of turning out 52,000 loaves per week, the estimated cost being £3,856. 12s. 7d.

Although the Committee realised that the building would be much larger than the business at the commencement would demand, yet they had faith that the business would ultimately and quickly develop to such an extent as to occupy the whole of the premises, and therefore accepted the plans, and instructed the builder to get on with the work.

The next question demanding attention was that of ovens and machinery.

For some time the Committee had been inundated with catalogues and prospectuses of firms of baking engineers from various parts of the country.

The work of selection was somewhat difficult, as they were anxious to secure the very best plant on the most reasonable terms, and every firm who had approached them assured them that they had the very articles they required.

Seven firms were invited to send their representatives to interview the Committee, on March 18th and 25th, 1909, respectively.

The firms were then reduced to four, viz.: Messrs. Werner, Pfleiderer, and Perkins Ltd. (Peterborough), Messrs. Joseph Baker and Sons Ltd. (Willesden Junction, London), Mr. Alfred Hunt (Leicester), and Messrs. W. F. Mason Ltd. (Manchester), and a deputation from the Committee appointed to visit the works of these firms and Bakeries equipped by them.

These visits were paid, and reports presented, and on April 29th, 1909, it was agreed to place an order with Messrs. Werner, Pfleiderer, and Perkins Ltd. for two drawplate ovens and the other necessary plant and machinery, for the sum of £789. 12s.

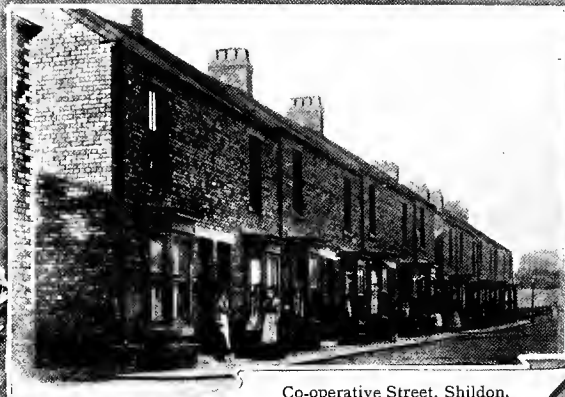
The way being now clear, the builder was instructed to get on as quickly as possible with the work, so as to have the building ready for the opening ceremony on the occasion of the celebration of the Society's Jubilee.

This building, which is the latest phase of the Society's developments, is a large and imposing structure, 102 feet long and $54\frac{1}{2}$ feet in width, rising to a height of 46 feet in three storeys and cellar underneath, and occupies a site of 620 superficial yards. It is entirely fireproof, the floors are all concrete, sustained by steel stanchions and girders, and are capable of carrying an average of 30 cwt. per superficial yard throughout the building. The windows and roofs are all of steel construction. It presents an imposing appearance, and it is confidently hoped that the business, to be conducted there, will prove to be amongst the Society's most successful enterprises.





Durham Street Houses,
Bishop Auckland.



Co-operative Street, Shildon.

CHAPTER X.

House Building and Mortgages.

“ Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.”

—*Daily Songs.*

“ The free, fair homes of England !
Long, long in hut and hall
May hearts of native worth be reared
To guard each hallowed wall.”

—*Mrs. Hemans.*

AMONGST the many questions that have loomed before the minds and pressed themselves on the attention of social reformers in late years, there is none of greater importance than that of “ Housing Reform.”

As the working man has risen in importance and power, so all the elements that surround and enter into his life have demanded attention proportionate to the position he has attained. Not the least important of these elements is his home.

That the home life of the people, and especially the working people, is vitally affected by the kind of houses in which they reside, cannot be questioned.

The accommodation, the sanitation, the aspect, and the environment of the homes of the people are important factors in determining the comfort of their lives, and the quality of characters, that are being formed therein.

Hence, in all schemes for the upraising of the working classes the housing question forms an important part.

It would appear that the Rochdale Pioneers understood this, and foresaw the importance of this housing question in the future, when they stated as one of the objects of the Society :—

The building, purchasing, or erecting a number of houses in which those members, desiring to assist each other in improving their domestic and social condition, may reside.

In advocating this line of action the Pioneers, as in many other matters, proved themselves to be real pioneers by clearing the path and leading the way to true social reform.

This work of housing reform can only and will be accomplished very largely by the people for themselves.

The legislative and municipal authorities can assist, and their aid, wisely applied, will be welcomed, but in this, as in nearly all other questions of reform, the people must work out their own salvation.

Mr. C. M. Knowles, in the Co-operative "Annual" for 1901, thus sums up an instructive article on "The Housing Problem in the Towns" :—

The housing problem has so many ramifications, and it bears so many different aspects in different situations, that it cannot be solved by any single measure of heroic legislation. Indeed, it is a problem which legislation alone can never hope to solve. There must be fostered in the people themselves that desire for healthier surroundings, and that aspiration toward a higher standard of life, without which all the efforts of law makers must come to naught.

The Co-operative movement, following on the lines indicated by the Pioneers, has become a very powerful agent, not only in arousing this aspiration, but also in providing means for attaining the desired end.

Statistics, which from time to time have been published by the Co-operative Union, show that a large number of Societies are doing good work in the house building line.

In the latest report on this question, published in 1907, it was shown that 413 Societies were doing something in the way of providing houses for their members, that 46,707 houses had been built or purchased by members through the agency of these Societies, and that over nine-and-a-half

million pounds had been expended or advanced on these houses. Amongst these 413 progressive Societies, Bishop Auckland takes an honourable place.

Not only has it done a marvellous work in the way of advancing money upon mortgage to its members to buy or build for themselves—as will hereafter be shown—but it has also ventured pretty freely into the house building business.

The first attempt in this direction was made in a modest way, and was only done for the purpose of providing houses for some of its employés, but this modest attempt shows something of the progressive spirit of the Society.

The land purchased in what was then known as King Street (now Durham Street) in 1875, after sufficient stabling had been erected, left a considerable space unoccupied, and on this it was decided to erect six cottages for the purpose of letting them to the employés.

These houses were built by Mr. T. Hilton (Bishop Auckland) in the year 1888, and they cost £926. 15s. 10d., or under £155 each. They are of a substantial and convenient type, containing two rooms on the ground floor, two on the first floor, with scullery and pantry, and the usual outbuildings, and are let to-day at a rental of 5s. per week each.

Similarly in the year 1888 a plot of ground was purchased at Shildon from Mr. Marley, lying contiguous to the Co-operative butcher's premises in Co-operative Street, and on this plot the stables for the Shildon Branch were erected, and seven cottages were built for the employés.

These cottages were built by Mr. T. Hilton, and cost £1,488. They are well built, contain four rooms with the usual conveniences, and the present rental is 4s. 6d. per week.

It was not, however, until 1894 that any house building scheme, commensurate with the Society's dimensions, was projected. In the latter part of that year some land at Bishop Auckland, belonging to Dr. Copeland, was known to be for sale. The Committee had got their eyes on this land, and, seeing its advantages for house building purposes,

they determined to enter into negotiations for its purchase, and on November 21st, 1894, they decide "that we purchase the field belonging to Dr. Copeland for £1,000. It contains about four acres."

The situation of this piece of land is one of the most pleasant and picturesque in the whole district. It lies on the western outskirts of the town at the top end of Princes' Street, on the side of the road leading from Bishop Auckland to Etherley, and is named Etherley Lane.



Allotments, Etherley Lane, Bishop Auckland.

The position is high and lofty, the outlook beautiful, the air salubrious, and, on the north-western side, the land slopes down towards the River Wear.

Now, this piece of land possessed some very advantageous features for building purposes. From its position and contour it formed a suitable situation for the erection of villas, or a more stately class of houses to be used for residential purposes, such as would suit the prosperous tradesman or well-to-do inhabitants of the town.

These advantages, however, were really disadvantages to the Society, as the class of houses they required were not semi-mansions or villas, but comfortable houses to suit a working man.

Considerable difference of opinion prevailed as to the purpose for which this land should be utilised, and it was not until the year 1896 that any practical steps were taken. It was then decided that the portion situate on the slope facing north-west should be laid out into garden plots, to be let to the members at a small rental, while the other part of the plot should be laid out for building purposes.

A ground plan was drawn up by the Architect and approved by the authorities. The sites were then advertised for sale as being considered the easiest way out of the difficulty. The only piece that was sold, however, was a plot containing about 2,338 square yards, and was purchased by Mr. Nicholas Kilburn, upon part of which the Society built him the house known as "The Gables."

After some time the Committee determined to build themselves, and to put up a class of house in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood. On July 4th, 1896, the contract was let to Mr. James Manley for the erection of nine houses, five of them being in West Street, and four in Raine Street, the amount of the contract being £2,557. These houses, when completed, were valued at £3,490, being an average of £387 each.

Very considerable dissatisfaction was expressed among the members when this became known, as it was felt that the houses were quite out of the reach of the ordinary member, either for purchase or rental, and that, therefore, no practical benefit had been achieved in the way of housing reform.

Other nine houses of a similar class were erected in 1898, in Kellett Street, facing the main road leading to Etherley, one of them being erected for the purpose of a Nurses' Home. The other eight were retained by the Society, and when completed were valued at £500 each.

They were erected by Mr. Thomas Hilton (Bishop Auckland), who had the contract for the whole of the works, the contract price being £4,899.

Thus the Society owns seventeen houses at Etherley Lane, and whatever may be said of the dissatisfaction expressed by the members, and it was not entirely groundless, yet the property in that district is an honour to the Society and an ornament to the locality. The houses are of good design, well situated, well built, with stone fronts, commodious, and convenient.

There is one large house with seven rooms, and the others have some five, and some six, good rooms. They are all occupied, and are bringing in a rental of £326 per annum.

If, however, the Society had done nothing more in the way of house building than the erection of the Etherley Lane property, its claim to stand in the list of housing reformers would only have been small indeed. But other steps of a more practical nature were taken.

In 1895 another piece of land came into the market, and had been offered to the Society. It consisted of two fields, formerly belonging to the late Mr. J. Thompson, then in the hands of his trustees, and situate in Grey Street, near to the Durham Street property on the west.

On November 20th the Chairman and Manager were appointed to "try and effect a bargain," and on November 23rd it was decided to purchase the two fields, containing about five acres, for the sum of £502.

Two things seem to have been in the minds of the Committee in making this purchase—1st, to build stabling and butchering premises in conformity with the Society's position and prospects; and, 2nd, to erect a number of houses of a type, and at a cost, that would be more in harmony with the members' desires and needs. Steps were taken to have the site laid out for the purposes named, and, after considerable trouble with the local authorities, a commencement was made with the work of building stables and butcher's premises, as previously stated.



Kellett Street.



Parkin Street.

ETHERLEY LANE HOUSES, BISHOP AUCKLAND.

It was not until 1897 that anything was done in the way of utilising the space set aside for house building on this site. In April, 1897, the Architect was instructed to prepare some sketch plans of cottages—a three-roomed cottage to be let at a rental of 3s. 6d. per week, and a four-roomed cottage to be let at 4s. per week, inclusive of rates and taxes. In this decision we can see that the Committee were anxious to adapt themselves to the spirit and condition of the members, and to profit by their former experience.

Eventually it was decided to build fifty houses, thirty of them to contain three rooms, thirteen to have four rooms, and seven to have five rooms, to accommodate families of varying sizes. When the tenders came before them, however, it was found that they were too high to enable them to carry out their former resolution with regard to rate of rent, and the whole matter was referred back to the Architect to have the cost reduced.

Amended tenders were considered on June 10th, 1897, when finally the contracts were let for the sum of £7,973 12s. 2d., the contractors being : For masonry and joinery, Thomas Hilton (Bishop Auckland) ; slating, John Mascall (Bishop Auckland) ; plumbing, Sykes and Co. (Darlington) ; painting, Mr. Pallister (Bishop Auckland) ; plastering, J. J. Airey and Thos. Manners (Bishop Auckland).

The buildings were completed during the course of the following year, and it was decided at first to offer them for sale, but this decision was afterwards reversed, as it was thought best to retain and let them out to the members.

A thorough and searching examination into the cost was made, and this examination revealed the fact that the cost, as often happens, had exceeded their estimate, and that, therefore, their first intention as to rental value would have to be increased.

It may be of interest here to give a short description of these cottages, together with the total cost, including land, buildings, street making, and drainage.

The cottages are of three classes :—

CLASS A.—Cottages containing on ground floor living-room, scullery, pantry, also self-contained yards, with the usual out-buildings. First floor: two bedrooms.

CLASS B.—Ground floor: parlour, living-room, scullery, pantry, yard, &c. First floor: two bedrooms.

CLASS C.—Ground floor rooms same as Class B, but larger. First floor: three bedrooms.

COST.—Class A: For land, draining, and street making, £33 8s.; for building, £133. 6s. 8d. total, £166. 14s. 8d. per house. Class B.: For land, drainage, and street making, £41. 19s. 3d.; for building, £193. 4s. 2d.; total, £235. 3s. 5d. per house. Class C.: For land, drainage, and street making, £42. 14s. 7d.; for building, £219. 10s.; total, £262. 4s. 7d. per house.

After adding about 5 per cent for outlay of capital, the Committee fixed the following valuation either for sale or rental purposes :—

CLASS A.—Value, £175. Rent, 4s. 3d. per week clear.

CLASS B.—Value, £246. Rent, 5s. 3d. per week clear.

CLASS C.—Value, £275. Rent, 6s. 6d. per week clear.

As soon as this decision was made known to the members applications from tenants began to pour in, and the great difficulty from that time has been to keep in check the numerous applicants who are waiting for their turns to get one of these houses.

In view of the large demand for houses, the Committee determined to utilise some land still left vacant on the same estate, and erect other twenty houses of a similar type as the above.

The contracts for these were let in 1903, and the houses were finished in 1904, and were speedily tenanted. These houses occupy what are known as Hutchinson Street, May Street, and Garden Terrace. One house in Hutchinson Street has been sold; the others are all in the possession of the Society. The houses are all freehold, pleasantly situated, and convenient in structure, and have been favourably commented on by housing reformers on occasions at Housing Reform Conferences.

Mr. H. R. Aldridge (the Secretary of the National Housing Reform Council for England and Wales) visited Bishop Auckland in March, 1905, and, in company with the President of the Society (Alderman House), made a tour of inspection to ascertain the housing conditions of the town. He comments on the Society's property in a letter to the Secretary, in which, amongst other things, he says :—

We also visited the Co-operative property in Bishop Auckland, erected by your Society, and I desire to very sincerely congratulate you in regard to it, especially those houses in Hutchinson Street let at four shillings and threepence per week. It is comparatively an easy task to plan and build houses to let at five shillings and sixpence and six shillings per week clear, but I know that these houses at four shillings and threepence have required much more careful planning.

They have what every house ought to have—a little garden in front—and are, I am sure, a real benefit to those who live in them.

Now, I should like very much to have (1) a photograph of these houses, and (2) a statement of the cost of building, and the rate of interest on capital invested yielded by these rents.

I wish, when I make a report of the Bishop Auckland district, to refer specially to your houses.

I see no reason why powerful Societies like the Bishop Auckland Society should not set an example by the building of a Co-operative Garden Village Suburb, and developing it on proper lines. This, however, is a Co-operative development which needs a fuller consideration.

With best wishes for your continued success,

I am, very sincerely yours,

HENRY R. ALDRIDGE.

This is the opinion of a gentleman whose knowledge of the housing question is very wide, and whose ideals are high, and his eulogy is a very satisfactory comment upon the Society's house building projects.

The energies of the Society, however, were not exhausted by these efforts, and another enterprise was embarked upon in 1906. On this occasion the scene of the Society's operations was at Dean Bank, near Ferryhill.

As previously stated in Chapter VII., a field of about four-and-a-half acres had been purchased here, and a temporary Store erected. The Architect was instructed to

lay this field out for building purposes and prepare a ground plan. This was done, when it was found that 110 houses could be erected on the estate.

Plans were next prepared for the erection of fifteen houses, submitted to the Committee, and passed. Tenders were received and contracts let on May 3rd, 1906, for the erection of fifteen houses, nine of them to be of a smaller type and six of a larger kind, the total amount of the contract being £2,611.

Immediately after, the Committee decided to put up other twenty-two houses of the larger type, and on June 28th the contracts for these were let, which were to cost £4,474.

For various reasons it was thought advisable to offer these houses for sale to the members, and the Committee resolved, after a careful consideration of the cost of land, buildings, street making, and sewerage, to offer them at the following prices :—

CLASS I.—Nine smaller houses, containing on ground floor living-room, scullery, with bath and pantry. First floor: two good bedrooms. Second floor: large attic. Price, £195.

CLASS II.—Eighteen larger houses, containing on ground floor, parlour living-room, scullery, and pantry. First floor: two good bedrooms and bathroom. Second floor: large attic. Price, £255.

CLASS III.—Six larger houses, same as Class II., with small garden in front. Price, £257.

CLASS IV.—Four corner houses, same as Class II. Price, £256. All houses are self-contained.

These are considered the cheapest houses in the district.

The streets are named after great Co-operators of either general or local fame, viz., Owen Street, Holyoake Street, Neale Street, Blandford Street, Mitchell Street, Hartley Street, Moore Street, and Hudson Street.

Unqualified success, however, is not often the lot of any man, or body of men; disappointments and unfulfilled expectations are not infrequently experienced by both progressive men and causes. And this has been the experience of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society.



May Street, Bishop Auckland.



Hutchinson Street, Bishop Auckland.

This Dean Bank building scheme, which at one time promised so well, did not prove to be as satisfactory as was expected. The work proceeded at a most exasperatingly slow rate, serious trouble was experienced with some of the contractors, and much of the work had to be re-done. And then, when the accounts came to be squared up, it was found that the Committee had been seriously misled with regard to the cost, as the houses were costing more than they were being sold for.

Twenty houses had been sold, but the Committee determined to sell no more, but to retain them and let them at 6s. 9d. per week, as they were all of the larger class of house that were unsold.

Notwithstanding, however, this set-back in their house-building projects, the Committee were not discouraged, but with undaunted courage resolved to make another attempt.

On May 21st, 1908, plans were presented and approved for the erection of other nine houses. But this time the Committee resolved to act upon different lines, and revert to the old principle of doing the work themselves.

They had had enough of architects and contractors, and they instructed their foreman joiner, Mr. T. Dent, to prepare the plans, and, these being satisfactory, they entrusted to him the work of building and completing the property. This was successfully carried out, the valuation of the houses being fixed at : Seven middle houses, £205 each, or 5s. 9d. per week rent ; and the two end houses, which were larger, at £215 each, or 6s. 6d. per week. This allows a very respectable balance of profit to be carried forward to the credit of the Building Department. With this cheering result there is no doubt but that the remaining sites will be built upon, and soon a small colony of houses adorn this prosperous district, and stand out as a memento of the enterprising spirit of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society.

At the close of the half year ending September 7th, 1909, the Society possessed houses as follows :—

Bishop Auckland	95
Spennymoor	2
Sildon	15
Butterknowle	5
Coundon	2
Evenwood	1
Ferryhill Station	2
Hunwick	1
Byers Green	1
Dean Bank	26
Total	150

Of these, eighteen are occupied by Managers or employes, rent free, and the others are let, and bring in a rental of £1,956. 15s. 6d. per annum, and their present nominal value is stated to be £31,266. 7s. 6d.

But building houses for its members is not the only way in which the Bishop Auckland Society has helped in the solving of the housing problem, indeed, it is only a small item in its operations in comparison with what is being done in the way of advancing money to members on mortgage to enable them to build or buy houses for themselves. No department which has been opened out has exercised a greater influence on the Society, or progressed with such marvellous rapidity, as its Mortgage Department. The department was opened in 1896, but as early as 1888 the matter was under consideration, and on July 11th of that year Mr. Raine (the President) and Mr. Kellett (the General Manager) were commissioned to go to Wallsend in order to gather information regarding the methods in operation for selling houses, and advancing money as mortgages upon them. A report of their visit was presented and adopted, but nothing was done in the matter just then.

But in 1895 the question is once more to the front. On this occasion the impulse came from the Auckland Park District, in which there are a large number of most loyal, devoted, and progressive Co-operators.



Owen Street, Dean Bank.



Holyoake Street, Dean Bank.

The matter had often been discussed by the men at work, and at their various gatherings, and it was thought that the time was ripe for the Society to take some steps in the way advancing money to members as mortgages on property. But as nothing was being done by the Committee, and in order to give the necessary impetus to the movement, a petition was got up in the district and sent in to the Committee Meeting on August 8th, 1895.

The petition asked that a Special Meeting might be called to discuss the question of altering the rules and putting the Society under the Building Societies Act. The petition was received and preparations at once made for summoning a meeting.

The Special Meeting was held on September 28th, 1895, when Mr. Ralph Porter, on behalf of the requisitionists, made a statement explaining the object they had in view. After some discussion the following recommendation, drawn up by the Committee, was adopted :—

That the Committee take immediate steps to have the present rules so altered as to allow the Society to advance money as mortgages to members on their property, without putting the Society under the Building Societies Act.

Notwithstanding that the Committee's hands were at this time full, as they were just setting the butchering business on to its feet, yet they took this matter up as well. They suggested the alteration of the rules dealing with the objects of the Society and investment of surplus capital to read thus :—

OBJECTS.—The objects of the Society are to carry on the trade of general dealers, both retail and wholesale, and manufacturers of any article so dealt in as any General Meeting may direct or authorise. The objects of the Society shall include dealings of any description with land. The Society shall have full powers to do all things necessary or expedient for the accomplishment of all objects specified in its rules, including the power to purchase, hold, sell, mortgage, rent, lease, or sub-lease lands of any tenure, and to erect, pull down, repair, alter, or otherwise deal with any building thereon.

POWER TO INVEST SURPLUS CAPITAL.—The Committee of Management may make advances to members on the security of real or personal property, and may, with the authority of the members present at any General Meeting, invest in the stock or shares of any company incorporated by Act of Parliament, or by charter, or

established under the Companies Act with limited liability, or of any Society under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893, or the Building Societies Act, any part of the funds not required by the Society for use in its current business.

Also to add new rules for the Building Department, copies of which were open for inspection by members at the various shops belonging to the Society. The new rules provided for the advance to members, on the security of lands or buildings, amounts not exceeding £500, nor more than 80 per cent of the ascertained value of the property. The rate of interest to be 5 per cent per annum, and the principal to be repaid at the same rate.

These amended and new rules were unanimously adopted by the members at a Special General Meeting held on November 30th, 1895, and this new feature was introduced into the Society's operations in the early part of 1896, the first advance being made on March 14th, 1896.

During the first half year seven members took advantage of the arrangement, and £1,640 was advanced.

In the report to the members for the half year ending September 8th, 1896, the Committee announce :—

There has been advanced upon house property the sum of £1,640, and there are other applications which we are arranging to meet. This branch is likely to do considerable business in the immediate future, and will, no doubt, be found of immense service to the members requiring financial assistance.

Whether the "considerable business" anticipated was anything like what has been realised we cannot say, but we venture to think they would have been considered wild visionaries had they dared to anticipate anything like the business which the department has done since that time.

For the first four years things went very quietly, the amount advanced averaging something like £4,500 per year. But on October 31st, 1900, a requisition, signed by forty-five members, was sent in, asking that the rules should be altered, and the rate of interest on borrowed money be reduced from £5 per £100 per annum to £4. 3s. 4d. per £100 per annum.



Neale Street, Dean Bank.



Blandford Street, Dean Bank.

This alteration was adopted at a Special Meeting held on February 9th, 1901, and from that time a new era in the Mortgage Department set in.

In the year March, 1901, to March, 1902, no less a sum than £20,263 was advanced, and this rate has been maintained during the after years.

Since the commencement over 1,400 members have applied for mortgages, and have had their applications granted, and during thirteen years about £283,000 has been advanced for this purpose. The Society holds the deeds of 920 pieces of property, representing a value of close upon £200,000, upon which they have money lent to the amount of £136,208.

This department has proved itself, not only a great benefit to a large number of thrifty members, in helping them to provide for themselves houses of their own, and thus help to solve the housing problem, but, it has also provided a useful outlet for their surplus capital, which otherwise might have been a drag to the Society. It is bringing in, in the shape of interest, about £5,360 per year.

That it is not without its features of danger the Board of Management are fully aware. To have such a large amount of their capital sunk in house property, which can only be realised by a very slow process, involves serious responsibility and some risk, but by very careful supervision and management this department can become fruitful and beneficial.

It is by operations such as are outlined in this chapter that the Society has shown itself to be, not simply enterprising and progressive in spirit, but also, what it has become, a great social factor, working toward the solution of great social problems, and helping to uplift and improve the conditions of the people.

CHAPTER XI.

Backward Influences.

“ Evolution ever climbing
After some ideal good,
And reversion ever dragging
Evolution in the mud.”

“ It is better to fight for the good
Than to rail at the ill.”

—*Tennyson.*

THE path of progress and reform, like the course of true love, does not run smooth. If it did, then these powers would be less effective in their accomplishments and results than they are.

Just as the little tiffs and troubles that disturb the placid waters of true love bring into play the finer elements of character, such as constancy, fidelity, and faith, so the obstructing powers that plant themselves in the pathway of the reformer call into operation the higher forces of character—courage, resourcefulness, endurance, and strength.

We have been endeavouring in these pages to tell the story of the progress and success of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society, and it is a story worth the telling by a more powerful pen than ours ; but it must not be imagined that this progress has been along an uninterrupted pathway, or these results achieved without trouble or loss. Far from it. This would have been contrary to all experience and expectation. It has been in the face of head winds and fierce tempests, through dangerous straits, and past threatening rocks, that this barque has steered her way and reached her present moorings.

Some of the backward influences that have beset the Society have come from within its own circle.

It is a characteristic, but not a peculiarity, of Co-operative Societies, to be often the scene of fierce dissension and heated debate. This arises from the marked democratic nature of the movement, where freedom of opinion and freedom of speech are dominant features of the institution. Thus the Co-operative meeting provides an arena where every crank and critic can display his power.

The thing to be regretted is, not that there is perfect freedom of opinion in these meetings, but the fact that very often it is not the true Co-operator with high principles and noble aims whose voice is most frequently heard, or whose opinions find expression, but he is often eclipsed by the empty, windy orator, the ambitious or disappointed place seeker, or the aggrieved and jealous egotist, and these members have been a greater barrier and a graver danger to the Co-operative movement than any outside foe.

It was not to be expected—human nature being as it is—that the Bishop Auckland Society should escape the presence of the “household foe.”

We cannot read the record of the Society, as related in its minute books, without realising that opposing forces and conflicting opinions have been constantly exercising their influence.

Ever and anon we come across a resolution of confidence in the Committee and Manager, showing that assertions had been made and opinions expressed throwing doubt on their integrity or ability, and tending to undermine the confidence of the members in its Board of Management.

The enterprising policy of the various Committees has had on all occasions to meet the opposition and distrust of the fearsome, the faithless, and the feeble-minded. None of the progressive movements of the Committee received unanimous approval.

Immediately after the purchase of the first piece of property in Newgate Street, withdrawals of shares became very common. In one night, viz., October 25th, 1861, not

less than ten members were granted leave to withdraw their shares, and during that half year nearly 20 per cent of their share capital was withdrawn, just at the time when it was so sorely needed.

This act of procuring premises of their own, which ought to have commended itself to every open-minded Co-operator, and commanded his best help, only frightened these timorous members, and, like rats on a sinking ship, they scuttled and fled—only in this case the ship was not sinking, but all afloat.

And so in every new development the Society has made, there have ever been those who saw a lion in the path, and cried "Danger!" at every forward move.

The sane level-headed member, who is slow to make changes, and looks carefully into the *pros* and *cons* of every new venture, refusing to sanction any new departure until fully convinced as to its utility and safety, may be regarded by some of the more advanced members of the Society as a trouble and a bore, but he is a valuable asset; he acts as a restraining influence on the reckless and impulsive, and his sagacious counsel is always of value. But the unreasoning, distrustful, and self-centred member, who has no vision of the future, no confidence in his fellows, and who throws suspicion on every proposed step in advance, and suggests some sinister motive lying behind the movement, is ever a menace and a drag, and of such the Bishop Auckland Society has had its quota.

The internal dissensions that have raged in the Society, fierce though they may have been at times, have only on two occasions developed into anything like a split, and on one of these occasions it was, perhaps, not so much internal dissension, as an aspiration for freedom and independence of action that was its cause.

Reference has already been made to Willington and the formation of an independent Society there. There were a considerable number of the members of the Bishop Auckland Society living in Willington, and the question of establishing a Branch in the village had often been under consideration.

From very early times it would appear there had been an element of rebellion in that locality, as there is a minute in 1863 which seems to point in that direction. Again, in 1866, the trouble was renewed, and the minute relating to the formation of a Branch was passed.*

Once more, in 1872, dissatisfaction broke out, and a meeting was summoned, Mr. Moore (the General Manager) and Mr. George Parkin being deputed to address the meeting and make arrangements for the formation of a Branch. But the attempt to conciliate and bring the members into line failed, and the meeting rose in revolt, and decided there and then to form an independent Society. Thus the Willington contingent split off and were lost to the Society, but not to the movement, a flourishing and active Society being in existence there to-day.

The other split, strange to say, took place in the same quarter of the Society's area.

Tudhoe Colliery was honoured by becoming the seat of the first Branch the Society established, and yet it became the quarter in which the Society's second split took place.

After the removal of the Spennymoor trading centre from Tudhoe to its new premises in High Spennymoor, considerable dissatisfaction seems to have got abroad. Various grievances and complaints were presented to the Committee, and an uneasy, irritable temper prevailed in the Spennymoor district. At length affairs began to assume a rather serious aspect, and the Committee began to realise the necessity of some steps being taken to quell the rising storm.

A minute passed on May 5th, 1884, sets forth the condition of affairs. It says :—

Considerable discussion has taken place with reference to the dissension at Tudhoe Colliery amongst the members of this Society, and a few others belonging to neighbouring Societies, and the newspaper reports say that steps have been taken for the formation of another Store. The Secretary is instructed to go to Tudhoe Colliery and, as far as he is able, ascertain their grievances and report to our next meeting.

* See page 96, Chap. VII.

Two days after, on May 7th, the Secretary reported that he had had an interview with one of the principal agitators, and it was decided to have a Special Meeting with the members at Spennymoor on the following week, for the purpose of discussing the various grievances under which they alleged they were labouring. This meeting was held on May 17th, 1884, in the Town Hall, Spennymoor, and there were 208 members present. The minute recording the meeting says :—

The Committee of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Stores having agreed to meet the members of the Spennymoor Branch to hear their complaints and grievances with a view to remedying such as might be in their power, and also to stimulate such of the members as had grown apathetic in the Co-operative movement, the Chairman opened the meeting, and Mr. Marsh said that the Spennymoor members had many grievances, and, after mentioning a few, asked the meeting to consider them separately.

The first grievance was that the Half-yearly Meeting, being always held at Bishop Auckland, did not give the Spennymoor members a chance to attend, and thus take their rightful share in the discussion of the Society's affairs.

It was unanimously decided :—

That this meeting suggests for the consideration of the general body of members that triplicate Half-yearly and Quarterly Meetings be held at Bishop Auckland, Spennymoor, and Shildon.

The next cause for complaint was with regard to the fair representation of districts upon the Committee, and, to remedy this, it was recommended that the Society be divided into electoral districts for the election of the Committee.

The next two matters brought forward were of general interest rather than local. One referred to entrance fees, and the meeting decided in favour of reducing the entrance fee from 2rs. to 1s. 6d. ; the other referred to trading and interest on share capital.

A resolution was moved :—

That all members who have £20 in the Society be paid 5 per cent interest, but all amounts above that sum be paid not more than 2½ per cent.

This, however, was set aside in favour of another resolution :—

That we first get all non-trading members to withdraw.

Several other small matters were discussed, after which the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and a vote of confidence in the General Manager (Mr. Kellett).

The recommendations made at this meeting were speedily brought before the members, and a Special General Meeting of members was held at Bishop Auckland on April 21st, 1884, to discuss them, with the result that the first matter of holding triplicate General Meetings was considered not feasible, and the whole question was left in the hands of the Committee to consider the best mode of having a general and universal vote taken.

The recommendation to have the Society divided into electoral districts for the election of the Committee was adopted, and the other matters were allowed to slide.

The outcome of these recommendations was, that a change was made in the method of voting for the election of members of the Committee. Previously, each member attending the Half-yearly Meeting was supplied with a voting paper, containing the names of those parties, who had been nominated at the previous Quarterly Meeting. The votes were to be counted at the meeting, and the results declared at its close. This system was considered unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it only gave those the privilege of voting who attended the Half-yearly Meeting.

The following method was devised by the Committee in its stead, viz. :—

That ballot boxes be placed at Bishop Auckland, Spennymoor, and Shildon, under the care of each Manager, the keys of which shall be locked in the safe of the Central Stores, and not to be taken out until the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer be present under whose care the boxes and keys shall be taken to the Half-yearly Meeting and opened when the meeting commences, afterwards to be taken into the room and counted.

That there be a list of trading members made out for each shop (three in all), and each member to sign his name when he has received a voting paper, in the presence of the Manager, or some other person whom he may appoint, and that the time allowed for voting shall be one week previous to the Half-yearly Meeting, notice of which shall be given on the balance sheet,

This change in the system of voting received the approval of the members at the Half-Yearly Meeting, and a vote of thanks was given to the Committee for the arrangement, but it was decided to extend the time for voting from one week to four. These changes and concessions, however, did not satisfy the insurgent members on the Spennymoor side.

A rival Society, which is still in existence, was commenced at Tudhoe Colliery in the year 1884, and, while the split took away a number of malcontents, it made little appreciable difference in the membership or trade of the Bishop Auckland Society.

While we cannot but regret the reasons that gave rise to any cleavage in a Society, and while we deprecate the feeling engendered on such occasions, we are not sure but that good rather than ill has been the final result of the split just referred to, and neither the Bishop Auckland Society or the Co-operative movement is any the worse to-day because of it.

Other passing phases of discontent have arisen at times, created as a rule by some irreconcilable fault-finder. "There are," says Mr. G. J. Holyoake, "always some persons in every party with whom dissatisfaction is constitutional. Discontent is their vocation. . . . This kind of person is in every Co-operative Society, whose sole happiness consists in the belief that there is something wrong, who disagrees with everything, and, if you did not contradict him, he would die."

These chronic alarmists have often been in evidence in this Society, and at times have succeeded in creating a feeling of uneasiness amongst the members, but it is satisfactory to know that they have never been able, in any serious degree, to impair the cohesion or solidarity of the Society.

It is not only from within that difficulties have proceeded, but there have been other influences proceeding from outside sources that have been unfriendly to progress.

Industrial conditions have had a great influence in determining the Society's position. A Co-operative Society, whose members belong almost exclusively to the industrial classes, is very sensitive to any changes that take place in the industrial atmosphere. The wage question is an important factor. The purchasing power of the members, their ability to allow their shares to remain in the Society, and their temper in dealing with the affairs of the Society, are all seriously affected by the wage thermometer.

It is well known that the industrial atmosphere is exceedingly fickle, subject to continuous changes, the thermometer sometimes registering a high rate, at other times sinking very low, and occasionally dropping to zero. This is particularly true in mining districts.

The Bishop Auckland Society has experienced the varied changes of condition, having passed through seasons of great prosperity, and also times of severe depression and suffering.

As has been previously stated, at the time the Society was formed, England was just emerging from a deep trough of industrial depression, and, with various fluctuations, wage conditions kept improving until they reached what is locally known as the "good times" in the early seventies. These years were followed by a season of depression, and the years 1876 to 1879 were years of great hardship for the Durham miners. Work was scarce, wages low, and kept constantly coming down, until at last the culminating point was reached in the early part of 1879, when the struggle, known as "the six weeks' strike," took place.

During these years—September, 1875, to September, 1879—the membership of the Society increased by 80 per cent, showing that the benefits of Co-operation to the working man were becoming more and more realised, but the sales decreased by over £100 per week, witnessing to the depleted purchasing power of the people. These are the times, that test the soundness and stability of a Society's position.

Sales decreased to the amount of £16,000, and, in addition, the Society's resources were drained by the sum of £36,445 being paid out to the members, in these four

years in dividend. But the Society bravely stood this severe test, and triumphantly emerged from the ordeal, to enjoy many years of great prosperity.

Other occasions of testing have been experienced by the Society, through reduction of wages, or sometimes by the closing of works, or reduction of hands in some district, but none of these have seriously affected its position.

The severest test it has had to stand, however, was experienced in the year 1892. On March 12th, 1892, the miners of Durham once more came out on strike, against a proposal of the masters to reduce their wages. From the commencement, the struggle showed signs of being very severe, both sides showing a very determined front; and such it proved to be, work not being resumed again until June 11th, the strike having continued for thirteen weeks.

Now the Society's stability was put to the test, and the question as to how it would stand this trial was seriously asked by many an Auckland miner. There were signs of foreboding and feelings of uneasiness on many sides.

The majority of the miners in the district were members of the Co-operative Society, and no other institution was likely to feel the brunt of the storm so severely. Quickly the sales went down to the tune of £1,432 per week. The Store being the only place where the poor people could get a few shillings to live on, withdrawals became terrific, and no less a sum than £43,992 was paid out during the half year, being at the rate of £1,692 per week. The sufferings and privations of the people became great, and the feeling on all sides was sympathetic.

The Committee of Management, feeling their responsibility, bravely rose to the occasion. Fifty pounds was voted by them to the relief of needy cases, the travellers were instructed to inform the members that in the present crisis they would be allowed to have goods to the amount of shares standing to their credit, and the Manager was empowered "to give credit to members, who make application, upon their purchases during the present half year." Thus every facility was offered to help the people during the crisis, and, when the critical moment was passed, work was resumed,

and at the end of the half year the Society was in a strong and secure position, with a bank balance of £71,973 standing to its credit.

But it has not been from human or social sources only that backward influences have proceeded, even the forces of nature have at times assumed an unfriendly aspect, and have conspired to oppose the Society's progress. On three occasions, have the members been called upon to helplessly stand by and behold a goodly portion of their property, that had been gathered together with much struggle and sacrifice, rapidly departing on the flaming wings of fire.

In the year 1876 a disastrous fire took place at the Central. The premises had been but recently re-modelled and fitted up with suitable conveniences for the trade, when, on the night of July 19th, 1876, a fire broke out in the warehouses, completely destroying them, the Committee-room above, and very much valuable property and stock, including the Committee's minute books from the year 1867. The conflagration raised great excitement in the place, and so great a hold had the flames got that the whole of the Society's property, as well as some of the adjoining premises, were threatened with destruction, when a most threatening and dangerous agent became the means of salvation. A quantity of gunpowder had been stored on the premises, and when the flames reached that point a terrific explosion took place, and the concussion caused by this explosion had the curious effect of extinguishing the flames. Considerable damage was caused by the explosion, but yet it did what neither Fire Brigade or any other agency could accomplish—it saved the premises from complete destruction.

Fortunately, the front shops were preserved, and with them and a temporary warehouse, which were speedily improvised, the Society was able to continue its business as usual.

A slight check was made upon the sales for that half year, but the members stuck manfully to the Society. The Manchester Insurance Company, who held the risk,

honourably met their obligation, and paid over the sum of £1,044. 14s. 9d. in discharge of their claim, and the Society speedily recovered its position.

Unfortunately, the General Manager (Mr. Moore) was helpless in bed at the time, and the news of the fire was never conveyed to him, and he passed away without the knowledge of the Society's loss.

The cause of the fire is shrouded in mystery, and although suspicions were abroad at the time as to its source, sufficient reliable data was not forthcoming, to enable the Society to take any steps.

The next fire took place at Spennymoor, and has been referred to in a previous chapter. This fire broke out about 11 o'clock on the night of April 27th, 1872, and the whole of the grocer's shop, the draper's shop above, and the warehouse behind were completely destroyed.

The loss on this occasion was very serious. The Atlas Insurance Company paid over the sum of £7,563, but this would be a long way from covering the loss, which was estimated at considerably over £10,000. Not only was the destruction of property very great, but the loss in stock was also a tremendous item. Unfortunately, the drapery buyers had just been to the market, and bought very largely of spring goods, which had been delivered and stocked, and all were destroyed.

There were grave grounds for serious suspicion of foul play in connection with this fire. Not only was there an absence of any plausible cause for the origin of the fire, unassisted by some incendiary hand, but also a very suspicious event occurred while efforts were being put forth to extinguish it. The workers found all at once that their supply of water from the water main was stopped. On seeking to find the cause it was found that someone had got to the valve in the main water pipe, had cut off the supply, and thrown away the key into a field close at hand. So clearly did this point to some enemy's hand that the Committee offered a reward of £10 for the apprehension and

conviction of the person or persons, who had committed this dastardly deed. The perpetrator of the foul action, however, was never discovered.

The catastrophe, serious though it was, did not in any great degree interfere with the arrangements for supplying the members with their usual delivery of goods. The strain was great, but the Managers rose splendidly to the occasion.

Strange to say that, contrary to usual custom, the wagonmen had loaded their wagons the night previously, ready for an early departure the next morning. These wagons were placed outside the conflagration area and escaped destruction, so that they went out as usual that day, and, before the next day, arrangements had been made for a supply of goods to be sent from the Central, so that the usual delivery was never stopped.

The other fire was that which took place on February 3rd, 1888, resulting in the complete destruction of the Corn Mill at Shildon, and which has been referred to in Chapter VII.

It is by no means a pleasing spectacle for Co-operators to stand and watch the results of their thrift and the fruits of their labours consuming away in fire. Such happenings cause very considerable anxiety and uneasiness among the members. It is true the property may be well covered by insurance, but it cannot adequately compensate the loss occasioned by a great fire. The dislocation of trade, the strain upon the Management, the extra labour entailed, and the throw-back to progressive schemes are serious extras that insurance never touches.

The loss to the Society by the three fires referred to will not be less than £8,000, but it has never faltered in its activities because of these events. The Management, by courage, promptness, and resourcefulness, has risen equal to every emergency, the membership has remained loyal and confident, the movement has been sympathetic, even outsiders have been kindly and helpful, and, in spite of many a cross current and head wind, the Society has steadily held on its way.

CHAPTER XII.

The Butterknowle Law Case.

“Thrice armed is he
Who hath his quarrel just.”

“It doth appear you are a worthy judge ;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound.”

—*Shakespeare.*

AMONGST the valuable possessions of the county of Durham must be placed the great coal seams that lie hidden beneath its surface. But these, while they constitute one of its chief sources of wealth and industrial prosperity, also constitute one of its great drawbacks and dangers. It is not alone in the appalling toll of human life which the working out of these seams demands, where the danger lies, but also in the insecure and precarious position, in which the property, lying on the surface, is placed thereby. As these great layers of mineral wealth are excavated the superincumbent strata begins to subside, and this subsidence often seriously affects the surface.

Especially is this the case in those parts where the seams lie at no great depth from the surface. It is not an uncommon sight in such localities to see great depressions formed in the fields, or the houses and other property wrecked and ready to fall.

It was this condition of things that gave rise to a case, which at one time threatened to have serious consequences to the Bishop Auckland Society, but eventually proved to be one of its greatest triumphs.

The district in which the Society's Butterknowle Branch is situated, constitutes one of the south-western outposts of the Durham coalfields, the coal measures here sloping out very near to the surface, and the insecure condition of the surface property is evidenced by the disturbed aspect which the land presents, even to the most unobservant passer-by.

That the question of possible contingencies arising from these causes was not absent from the minds of the Committee when they agreed to purchase the four acres of land from Mr. Heseltine, is shown by the minute passed on March 19th, 1890, and recorded in Chapter VII., but it is very doubtful if ever they anticipated anything arising, with such far-reaching and important results, as that now known as the "Butterknowle Law Case."

The first evidence of anything wrong was noticed at a Committee Meeting held at Butterknowle on May 14th, 1898, when a slight crack was observed in the wall of the house then occupied by the Branch Manager. Considering the conditions obtaining in the neighbourhood, this crack, though only slight, assumed a somewhat ominous aspect, and the occupants of the house were instructed to keep a close watch for signs of any further disturbance. These signs did present themselves, though it was not until four years after this event, that they began to cause serious apprehension.

It was thought desirable, however, to ascertain how the Society stood in regard to any compensation for damages in case of further subsidence, and, at the meeting following that held at Butterknowle, the Manager was instructed to take the deeds of the property to the Society's Solicitor, in order to get his opinion upon the matter. That opinion was not at all encouraging, and did not hold out any hope of a satisfactory recompense for any damage through the medium of the law.

In the meantime the evidence of subsidence slowly developed. First in one place, and then in another, cracks and dislocations began to appear, both in the house occupied by the Manager of the Branch, and also in other

two houses belonging to the Society, finally resulting in a total wreckage of some of the property, the others being very severely shaken.

In February, 1902, the condition of things was such that Mr. Kellett had to report to the Committee Meeting, held on the 19th, that serious damage was being done to our property at Butterknowle through the colliery workings, and to ask for instructions as to what should be done. The matter was seriously discussed, and different opinions prevailed, but, considering the unfavourable opinion that had been obtained from the Solicitor on the matter, it was thought wise first of all to approach the colliery owners, and see if any amicable arrangement could be come to.

Mr. Kellett was instructed to open out negotiations, and, both by correspondence with the company and by personal interviews with their local representative, he sought to obtain some redress, either by compensation for damage or a promise to repair the damaged property. All efforts, however, proved abortive.

A conference was next arranged between representatives of the Butterknowle Coal Company and Messrs. Kellett, J. Raine, W. Liddle, and the Society's Solicitor, but nothing came of it.

Then a prominent gentleman of the town, friendly to the Society, was asked to have an interview with the colliery Manager on the subject, but no promise of redress could be obtained.

And now the Committee began to realise that all hopes of any mutual arrangement being come to were about at an end, and the great question that had now to be faced was, "what is the next step?"

The alternatives which presented themselves were either to sit quietly down and see the Society's property wrecked, with no redress, or to take the case into court and seek redress there. Either of these steps was distasteful to the Committee, and the question as to which of the two was preferable occupied many hours of serious consideration and much anxious thought. The issues at stake were so

momentous, that it was felt that the matter needed the most careful consideration, and that no step should be taken hastily.

For a time diverging opinions prevailed. There were some—and these at first a majority—who argued that in face of the unfavourable legal opinion that had been obtained it would only make bad worse to go to law, and, by losing the case, add all the expense of a costly action to the losses already incurred and likely to be incurred in the future; while there were a few, to their credit be it said, who from the first stoutly held that they ought to take the case into court.

Mr. John Raine, then President, and at present a member of the Committee, held this view, and from the time of the first appearance of shrinkage argued that they had a case for damages.

The late Mr. William Liddle, who represented Butterknowle on the Committee, also held the same opinion, and it was largely due to his persistent and plucky insistence on this course that the case finally went for trial.

Mr. Thomas Wilkinson (Newfield) also championed the same opinion, and argued that even if they lost the case they would do good service in exposing the iniquitous provisions of an Act like the "Hamsterley Common Act."

To these members of the Committee belongs the credit of arranging themselves on the side of fighting the case, even when the tide of legal opinion was strong against them.

It may be of interest to state here that lands situate at Butterknowle are held under an Act, which is popularly known as the "Hamsterley Common Act." This is an Enclosure Act of 1758 (31 George II., c. 10.) By this Act the waste lands of the Manor of Wolsingham, in the Chapelry of Hamsterley (such lands containing about 7,000 acres), situate within the townships of Hamsterley and South Bedburn, and Lynesack and Softley, were enclosed and divided and allotted amongst the several persons entitled to a right of common thereon.

The Lord Bishops of Durham, in right of their Church and See of Durham, were lords of the manor.

The Act recited that—

The lord of the manor shall have, hold, and enjoy all mines and quarries in and under the said common lands, together with the liberty of searching for, winning, and working the said mines and quarries, and other usual liberties, as fully and freely as he might or could have had or enjoyed the same in case the Act had not been made, and that without making or paying any satisfaction for so doing. That any damage done to persons by reason of the searching for, winning, and working the said mines and quarries, under their respective allotments by the lord of the manor, without making or paying any satisfaction for so doing, shall be assessed by one or more justices of the peace for the county of Durham, in the manner prescribed, and shall be paid and borne by the occupiers of the several other allotments lying and being in such and the same township as was the allotment so damaged accordingly to the yearly values or rents of such allotments, in such proportions or shares as the said justice or justices shall direct or appoint.

This Act, as popularly construed and understood, seemed to be fatal to any hope of obtaining compensation from the mine owners, who were working the mines under a lease from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England, who derived title from the Lord Bishop of Durham.

As the land owners (except the lessees of the mines), in the district had derived, or were deriving, no benefit from the working of the coal, and as most of them were poor men and many of them members of the Society, to seek redress or satisfaction from them would be both unjust and fruitless. This, then, was the dilemma in which the Committee found themselves placed.

A copy of the Act had been procured, and the Society's Solicitor was asked to peruse it, and see if any loophole of escape could be discovered. Then the Solicitor was asked to meet the Committee and discuss the situation with them. Not content with this, it was decided to send the copy of the Act to the Solicitors of the Co-operative Union, and get their opinion, the whole situation having been lucidly placed before them. But no assurance of success came from this quarter.

In the meantime the condition of the property had become serious, both houses and land being very much damaged. Happily, the Society's branch shop remained intact, but disquieting rumours were afloat that workings were proceeding in its direction, so that great uneasiness prevailed.

The feeling in favour of testing the case in the law courts was growing, and was intensified largely by the cynical and unsympathetic way in which every attempt to secure an amicable settlement with the Coal Company had been met. Even an expression of sympathy, and the promise of some small help to repair the damaged houses would have been accepted, and might have averted the contest, but every advance was met in a cool, contemptuous, and unfriendly spirit.

The final attempt in this direction was made by the Secretary on September 1st, 1902.

At a Committee Meeting held on August 28th, 1902, the reply from the Co-operative Union Solicitors was read and discussed, and the following resolution passed :—

A letter was read from the Solicitors of the Co-operative Union, *re* Butterknowle damages. There being a strong feeling in favour of going to law, it was decided that the Secretary write Mr. Robson, the Manager of the Butterknowle Coal Company, and make another appeal for a satisfactory settlement.

The following letter was therefore sent :—

September 1st, 1902.

Mr. Robson, Butterknowle.

DEAR SIR,

re Damages to Co-operative Property at Butterknowle.

Our Committee have had under consideration for some time the question of damages to our property at Butterknowle, caused by colliery workings, and a strong preponderance of opinion now prevails in the Committee in favour of taking legal action to recover such damages.

Before doing so, however, I am instructed to write and make another appeal to the Directors of the Butterknowle Coal Company, respectfully asking them to reconsider the case, and grant us some just and equitable terms. The reasonableness of this request is too obvious to need statement.

It must be obvious to all that to call upon the allotment holders in the district to pay for damages they have neither caused nor received any profit from, would be a hardship and injustice, grievous and intolerable.

At the same time it would be just as manifestly unjust for the Co-operative Society to sit quietly down and see their property wrecked, and that the hard-earned savings of its thrifty members should be taken to cover such wreckage, while the real causers of such damage enjoy immunity from any serious consequences arising therefrom.

To assert that they who reap the profit should pay the damage is to state that which will receive the assent of all true moral sentiment.

All we ask, however, is some reasonable compensation for repairs.

In our opinion the Hamsterley Common Act is altogether out of harmony with the spirit of this age, and its operation in this case would be morally unjust.

One reason that would prompt us to take legal action would be to expose the iniquitous provisions of this Act, and we feel sure that the enlightened moral sentiment of this age and the strong desire for fair play that dominates the British mind, will rise in protest against it and sweep it out of existence.

We trust that your Directors will recognise their moral obligations in this case, and agree to some reasonable settlement.

I am, yours truly,

T. READSHAW, Secretary.

The only result produced by this strong appeal was to bring a cool rejoinder in which they repudiated all legal and moral responsibility, alleging that the coal under this porperty had not been worked by them—a statement that was not substantiated by investigation.

This closed the chapter of negotiation. It was now perfectly evident that no redress was to be obtained by appealing to the Company, and the only courses available were either to appeal to the law or submit and bear the loss.

Submission was too bitter a pill to swallow easily, and an appeal to law, with such a tide of adverse legal opinion flowing against them, caused them to hesitate before venturing on such a hazardous path.

The Solicitor being again appealed to, suggested that Counsel's opinion might be taken on the matter.

This suggestion was adopted, and the Solicitor was instructed to state the case to some eminent Counsel, send on a copy of the Hamsterley Common Act, and ask his opinion thereon. This was done, and happily proved to be a most fortunate step, for by it a break was made in the clouds, and the first faint streak of legal hope that had yet been seen was thrown on the situation.

The opinion of Counsel was that the Act was not absolutely against a claim for damages, and expressed a hope that a judge might possibly construe it in the Society's favour.

This opinion, which contained no promise of success, and was only probable in its hope, and might have been considered by some as a bait to lure the Society on to litigation, was sufficient for the Committee. Cheered by this faint ray of hope, they threw away their hesitation and braced themselves for conflict. "To horse!" said they; "give doubt to those who fear," and on January 30th, 1903, they recorded this momentous minute:—

That we commence an action against the Butterknowle Coal Company, according to instructions from our Solicitor.

And now, having taken this decisive step, it became necessary to have the case thoroughly prepared, and to leave no stone unturned in order to make the position as strong and secure as possible.

The Coal Company, having denied working the coal under the damaged property, it was advised that the mine should be examined.

An application to the Company for leave to inspect the colliery workings was presented, but not granted, and therefore application to the Court for authority had to be made, and this was granted by the Judge in Chambers.

The Solicitor was instructed to engage three of the most expert mining engineers for this purpose, and Mr. Simon Tate, Mr. Weeks, and Mr. Bradford, were called in to do this work, and their inspection and findings altogether took the feet from under the Company, in their contention that they were not liable for the damages done.

Then plans and sections of the buildings were prepared, and photographs taken of the wrecked and damaged property. Independent and competent valuers were appointed to value the damages that had been done. The Secretary and Mr. Liddle were instructed to spend some time in the locality, to get information and collect evidence for the case, and a whole host of activities were set in motion in order to make the case as complete as possible.

All this took up some time, and the year 1903 was well advanced before the case was ready. The Committee were informed that as the case stood far back in the list, it was not likely to come on for hearing before the beginning of the year 1904. Still, preparations went forward under the direction of the Society's Solicitor (Mr. G. W. Jennings), who, having undertaken the case, spared no pains to make it a success. The Committee wisely placed themselves under his guidance, at the same time keeping a strict look-out that no unnecessary or superfluous expense was incurred.

Mr. Kellett (General Manager) watched this point very carefully, and his advice on many occasions was very valuable.

It was very necessary to obtain the best Counsel to plead for the Society, no expense was being spared in this direction, and the Solicitor, through his London agents (Messrs. Meredith, Roberts, and Mills), was fortunate in securing the services of Mr. Upjohn, K.C., assisted by Mr. O. Leigh Clare.

In January, 1904, it became known that the case was on the list, and was likely to be heard during the month. The Solicitor warned all the witnesses to be in readiness for a journey to London at any time.

Some time previous to this, the Solicitors for the defendant Company (Messrs. W. J. and H. C. Watson) intimated that they would not contest the point of having caused the damages, but would simply rely on the question of liability for compensation according to the Act.

In that case it would not have been necessary to call any witnesses, but afterwards information came that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who were interested in the case, would not agree to this course, and therefore it was thought safer to have all the witnesses ready. These included the mining engineers who had surveyed the mine, two valuers, the Society's Architect, the Secretary, and others—a somewhat formidable array.

On Wednesday, January 20th, 1904, the witnesses were summoned to London, as the case might be taken at any time. It can scarcely be said that that journey was undertaken with any great hope of success. Neither the travellers nor the friends left at home who wished them "God speed," either by word or look expressed any note of jubilant hope.

The case aroused very considerable local interest, but the trend of public and legal opinion was dead against the Society, and the Committee were not infrequently told that they were simply throwing the Society's money away. The sequel shows of what value these opinions were.

The case was heard in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice, London. It was cited as "*Bishop Auckland Industrial Co-operative Flour and Provision Society Limited v. Butterknowle Colliery Company Limited*," and was heard before Justice Farwell.

In this action the plaintiffs, who were owners in fee simple of the surface of certain lands (four acres), situate within the Chapelry of Hamsterley, in the Manor of Wolsingham, in the county of Durham, against the defendants, who were the lessees of the mines of coal, subjacent and adjacent to such lands, sought for a declaration that the defendants were not entitled as against the plaintiffs to work the mines so as to lower or depress the surface of the lands in question, or injure the plaintiffs' buildings thereon, an injunction to restrain the defendants from so working, and damages.

The Counsel for the plaintiffs, as before stated, were Messrs. Upjohn, K.C., and O. Leigh Clare; and for the defendants Messrs. Dankwerts, K.C., and MacSwinney; whilst Messrs. Miles, Jennings, White, and Foster, watched the case for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

The case was heard on Saturday, January 23rd, and resumed on Monday, the 25th.

At the end of the hearing on Saturday the plaintiffs were informed that no witnesses would be called, as only the legal hearing of the case would be taken, and therefore all the witnesses returned home, except the Secretary of the Society, who stayed to hear the case to the end.

The pleading of the case was opened by Mr. Upjohn, on behalf of the plaintiffs. In a very lengthy and learned argument he held that the plaintiffs were entitled to have the surface supported. He quoted from various cases which had been tried in the courts in support of the case, and argued that there was nothing in the Enclosure Act to negative the *prima facie* presumption that when a land owner sells the surface, reserving to himself the minerals, and the right to win them, he does not thereby retain the right to destroy the surface in the absence of clear implication or express provision.

Mr. Dankwerts, on behalf of the defendants, commenced his plea on the Monday morning, and, in a lengthy speech, held that in the true interpretation of the Enclosure Act the defendants were entitled to destroy the surface, without compensation, and quoted a number of decisions in several courts to uphold this plea.

Mr. Upjohn briefly replied, and the case ended. Justice Farwell reserved judgment. There was nothing now but to await the delivery of judgment as patiently as possible. What the result would be it was impossible to forecast.

The Junior Counsel for the plaintiffs, in a conversation with the Secretary, expressed himself hopeful for a favourable verdict, but beyond that there was little to indicate the probable result.

There was one thing, however, noticeable, and that was the changed demeanour of the defendants. It was almost amusing to see the air of assurance which they assumed at the commencement of the case, and the supercilious way in which they treated the plaintiffs, and their array of witnesses, which they had needlessly caused to be present. Certainly that air of assurance was absent as they left the court.

Justice Farwell delivered judgment on February 1st, 1904. It was a carefully considered and learned judgment. He had taken plenty of time to carefully weigh up all the arguments advanced, and to read up all the law bearing on the matter. It would have been interesting to have quoted this judgment fully, but space forbids. The gist of the whole matter is, that in his judgment the surface owner has, by common law, the right to have proper support to his surface, so as to prevent its subsidence. If the mineral owner contests this right the burden is on him to displace it. He examined all the cases quoted by the defendants in defence of their plea, and showed them to be inadequate. He therefore gave the declaration sought by the plaintiffs, granted the injunction, and directed an inquiry as to the damages, which were granted. The defendants had to pay cost of action, cost of inquiry of damages to be deferred.

This was a verdict entirely and completely in the Society's favour. The case was won.

When the news reached Bishop Auckland it can well be imagined that the rejoicing was very great, and signs of jubilation were displayed on all sides, and it is hard to say whether the pleasure or surprise was greater.

The sense of relief which the Committee experienced was very real, and their pleasure was expressed in a minute passed at their next meeting, held February 4th, viz. :—

A verbatim report of the judgment delivered by Justice Farwell in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice, London, on the action "*Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society Limited v. the Butterknowle Coal Company*," in which judgment was delivered in favour of the plaintiffs. . . . It was decided that we receive with pleasure the judgment delivered, and congratulate the Society on the victory gained.

The case created great interest all over the country, but nowhere was the feeling keener, or the joy greater, than in the Butterknowle district, for there were many sufferers besides the Society in that locality, and it was realised that the judgment was a great boon to all such. Nearly all the northern newspapers, as well as some of the London papers, gave the reports of the case, and some of the local papers gave an almost verbatim report of Justice Farwell's judgment.

The Society's Quarterly Meeting was held on February 6th, when Mr. T. Tomlin (Shildon) moved—

That the thanks of the meeting be tendered to the Committee, and the Society's Solicitors, for the victory gained in the High Court of Justice, in the case recently heard, "*Bishop Auckland Industrial Co-operative Flour and Provision Society Limited v. the Butterknowle Coal Company Limited*," special mention being made of the name of Mr. W. Liddle.

This was carried with acclamation, and gave considerable pleasure to the Committee, who all along had realised the great risks they were running, not only of losing the case and the members' money, but also of losing their confidence.

This resolution expressed the approval of the members, and confirmed the action of the men, who had so strenuously fought in favour of taking the case to law.

The joy and satisfaction of the Committee, however, was not without its alloy of uncertainty and apprehension, for it was now known that it was not merely the Butterknowle Coal Company they were fighting, but behind them were the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who had very much more at stake in the case than the Coal Company, and it was generally thought that they would not be satisfied with a verdict in the lower court, but would carry the case higher.

These apprehensions proved to be true. Notice was given to carry the case into the Court of Appeal, and the Committee resolved that they would defend the case there. While they were not without some misgivings regarding the matter, certainly they had much more confidence on this occasion than on the previous hearing of the case, for, although they knew that not infrequently the Court of

Appeal had reversed the verdict of the lower court, yet the previous victory had given them courage, and the judgment of Justice Farwell was so decisive in its expression, and had been delivered evidently only after the most careful investigation of the law on the matter, that they had reasonable hope for another favourable decision.

The appeal came on for hearing in the Court of Appeal, London, in June, 1904, and lasted from June 6th to June 15th, and was heard before Lord Justice Vaughan Williams, Lord Justice Romer, and Lord Justice Cozens-Hardy.

The appellants were again represented by Mr. Dankwerts, K.C., and Mr. MacSwinney, and the respondent Society was represented by Mr. Upjohn, K.C., and Mr. O. Leigh Clare.

Judgment was again reserved, and was not delivered until July 15th, 1904, and was once more decisively in the Society's favour.

Lord Justice Vaughan Williams delivered a very lengthy and learned judgment, in which he stated that—

The keystone of the law is as stated by Lord Halsbury, "The mere fact of giving a right to sink pits, and to work or to get coal, does not of itself establish a right to get rid of that which is the Common Law right of the surface owner, to have his surface undisturbed."

He then goes on to minutely examine the Act in question, also other decisions on the question, and ends by saying, "I think the decision of Mr. Justice Farwell ought to be affirmed."

Lord Justice Romer read another lengthy judgment, examining the case from his standpoint, and he ended by saying, "The result is that, in my opinion, the appeal must be dismissed."

Lord Justice Cozens-Hardy: "I agree."

The appeal was therefore dismissed with costs. Once more victory had been won, and the victors were exultant.

A minute expressing satisfaction with the result was again passed by the Committee, and confirmed by the members.

But the end was not yet. There was yet another court before the case was finally settled, and the question was often anxiously asked, "Will they carry it forward to the House of Lords?"

After considerable delay information was received that the case had been put down for hearing in the House of Lords. "So be it," said the Committee; "this, at any rate, will end all suspense, and settle the case for ever."

The appeal was not heard until March 5th and 6th, 1906.

The appellants on this occasion were represented by Messrs. Neville, K.C., Dankwerts, K.C., and Mac.Swinney with them, while the Society was defended by Messrs. Upjohn, K.C., Cave, K.C., and F. H. Schwan with them.

On May 7th, 1906, judgment was delivered by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Loreborn, and was once again unanimously in favour of the Society, the findings of Mr. Justice Farwell and the Court of Appeal being upheld on all points, with costs, and this was agreed to by all the Lords sitting with him.

So once again, and finally, a great and signal victory was achieved, and all fears of any reversal of these successive triumphs for ever set at rest. The highest court in the land—a court from which there is no appeal, had decisively and unequivocally declared that the lands and buildings belonging to the Society must be protected from damages from subsidences caused by colliery workings, that the colliery owners must be restrained from so working as to cause such damages, that compensation must be paid for damages already caused, and that the costs in the actions of all three courts must be allowed the Society; a more complete and signal triumph could not possibly have been obtained.

The action of the Committee in taking the case into court in face of so much adverse opinion had been fully justified, and the attitude of the members who had so resolutely stood out in favour of this course was vindicated.

At the following Committee Meeting it was resolved:—

That we receive with great satisfaction the announcement that the House of Lords has given judgment in our favour in the case of the Society *v.* the Butterknowle Coal Company, having dismissed the appeal against Justice Farwell's decision, with costs, and that we express our pleasure at the satisfactory conclusion of the case.

It was also decided that the Secretary send a report of the case to the *Co-operative News*.

At the Quarterly Meeting of members held on August 4th, 1906, the President of the Society commented pretty fully on the case, and the members received his remarks with great satisfaction.

The case was fully reported both in the London and provincial papers, as well as in the local papers, and it created a tremendous sensation.

It was stated that the case had "made law," and it was realised on all hands, that it was fraught with most important issues to both mine and surface owners, and it was generally admitted, that it had established a more just and equitable condition of things, than had hitherto been supposed to have prevailed.

Needless to say, consternation and indignation was created in the camp of the royalty owners, and it was asserted that to some it meant the loss of a million of money, but it brought great relief and satisfaction to the surface owners, and more especially to those thrifty working people who, by their industry and care, had been able to purchase for themselves the houses that they occupied, and who now felt that their position was very much more secure.

Soon as the result of this law case became spread abroad letters began to pour in to the Committee, and for a time the Secretary was almost inundated with inquiries from all parts of the country, and from all sources—Societies, Associations, and individuals—all asking for information and advice on the case. These had to be dealt with in the best way possible, but it is somewhat significant that, notwithstanding the great importance of the case, the great interest it created, and the numerous inquiries elicited, the first word of congratulation or of thanks, and the first offer of help, has yet to come.

A great battle had been fought, not simply in defence of the Society's interests, but also for the defence of the principles of equity and justice, and a great victory had been won, the spoils of which would be shared by a large

number of interested parties besides the Society. The Committee, not unnaturally, expected that some encouragement and help might have been forthcoming from the Co-operative movement, and others outside likely to be benefited thereby.

There is not the slightest tinge of regret for what has been done. The results have fully justified the action ; but the cool and unsympathetic attitude which the Co-operative movement, as a whole, has taken towards this great struggle has been somewhat disappointing to the Committee. The Society has had the satisfaction of fighting the battle, of winning the victory, and also of paying dearly for it, as the sequel will show.

Whatever may have been the moral issues of this great case, the financial results have been far from satisfactory. It is true that costs were allowed in all the courts in which the case was tried, but these costs, when taxed, came far short of meeting the actual expenses incurred. The actual cost of the case in the three courts was £2,344. 15s. 8d. ; the amount allowed by the taxing master was £1,499. 16s. 6d., a difference of £844. 19s. 2d.

This was only what was to be expected, and had the Society secured the amount awarded it would have been satisfied, but they only received £505. 9s. 10d., being one half of the costs in the two higher courts. Damages had likewise been awarded, the amount to be fixed on inquiry. These damages could have been claimed immediately after Justice Farwell's award, but they were not pressed at the time. When the case was cited for the House of Lords the Society was advised that it would be judicious to allow the question of damages to rest until the case had been finally settled. This advice, unfortunately, was acted upon, with the result that immediately after the House of Lords had decided the case the Coal Company went into liquidation and closed the colliery.

This act was a serious blow both to the Society and the Butterknowle district, for not only did it prevent the the Society getting its just dues, but the closing of the

colliery threw a number of men out of employment—most of them members of the Society—and thus spoiled the good effects produced by the winning of the case.

A liquidator was appointed to wind up the affairs of the Coal Company, and a long series of tedious and disappointing negotiations proceeded between the Committee and the liquidator, lasting from August, 1907, to February, 1908, before an agreement as to damages could be arrived at. As the amount of assets available for division amongst the various creditors was very small, the liquidator was anxious to have a settlement, without sending the case to a Court of Arbitration, as such a course would swallow up in expenses nearly the whole amount available for division, and with this desire the Committee agreed.

A curious complication that was created by the Coal Company going into liquidation was that a number of those who had benefited by the Society's victory now became its rivals and competitors.

The lands and property of several others had been damaged by the colliery workings, and these had put in their claims for damages, which had been admitted, and the higher the amount of the Society's claim the less the amount that remained for the others, and they sought, and the liquidator on their behalf sought, to reduce the Society's claim to the smallest possible amount.

The Committee in October, 1904, after having had their property carefully valued, had assessed their damages at £1,000. To this was to be added the loss of rent from 1904 to 1907, besides further shrinkage that had taken place. But, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the case, they resolved to reduce their claim to £790. This the liquidator refused to accept, as a valuer appointed by him had assessed the damages at a ridiculously small sum, which the Committee could not for a moment entertain, and the relations between the two parties were for a time somewhat strained.

Mr. William Hudson (son of the Pioneer, John Hudson), who was one of the valuers who had been appointed at the

commencement of the case, was again appointed to represent the Society, and he, along with the Secretary, had an interview with the valuer on the other side, but no agreement could be come to.

Mr. Hudson was then given a free hand to conduct negotiations on the Society's behalf, and to secure the best terms possible. After a considerable time, and much wrangling and disputing, Mr. Hudson was able to report that an agreement had been arrived at, the damages being fixed at £640.

This was considered a very satisfactory agreement under the circumstances, and it was confirmed by the Committee at their meeting on February 5th, 1908.

As the Coal Company, however, were only able to pay their creditors 3s. 10d. in the £, the only amount received from the liquidator was £122. 13s. 4d., which came very far short of meeting the actual loss sustained by the Society through the damage done to its property. So it will be seen that this great victory had been purchased at a very considerable cost in hard cash. This was cheerfully borne, however, by the members.

In the balance sheet for the half year ending September 8th, 1908, the Committee report :—

BUTTERKNOWLE LAW CASE.—This long and wearisome piece of litigation has now come to an end, and we place before you the result so far as it affects our Society. The case has cost £1,387. 7s. 6d., and we have recovered the sum of £628. 3s. 2d., which leaves a loss of £759. 4s. 4d. To meet this and the cost of repairing the damaged property, viz., £135. 3s. 10d., we propose allowing (from profits) £1,250, which will allow the sum of £355. 11s. 10d. against the loss of value to cottage property.

The Half-yearly Meeting of members, without a murmur, accepted the proposal.

The damaged property has been repaired and put into a habitable condition by the Society's Building Department, from designs prepared by its foreman (Mr. T. Dent), and all the houses are now occupied.

Thus ended an episode in the Society's history which at one time assumed a most ominous aspect, and had caused



Butterknowle Damaged Property
(exterior).



Butterknowle Damaged Property
(interior).

the Management more anxiety and unrest than perhaps any other incident in its career, but which has brought to the Society lasting renown, for the name of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society will be quoted in the annals and courts of law through future generations as having determined a case and established a principle in law, in the interest of equity and right.



CHAPTER XIII.

Joining Forces.

"In no self-spun cocoon of prudence wound,
He by the touch of men was best inspired.
And caught his native greatness at rebound,
From generosities itself had fired."

—*J. Russell Lowell.*

'That each who seems a separate whole
Should move his rounds, and fixing all
The skirts of self, again, should fall
Remerging in the second soul.'

—*Tennyson.*

THERE are two terms used by philosophers in speaking of their philosophy of the universe—the "macrocosm," which is the great universe, in which the individual is the merest atom; and the "microcosm," which is the little world of personality, in which the individual is the centre and circumference. These two terms represent entities, which, while separate and complete in themselves, are yet co-related and dependent on each other.

The macrocosm is but an aggregation of the microcosm, and the incentive and support of the life and purpose of the microcosm is to be found in the macrocosm.

In the realm of Co-operation there is that which corresponds to these two terms. There is the macrocosm, or the great movement as a whole, with its vast ramifications and activities, which has been described as "a State within a State," in which the Society is but an atom, and there is the microcosm, or separate Society, which in itself is complete and constitutes a little world of its own.

And as in the wider world, so in Co-operation, these two are interrelated and dependent.

The Co-operative movement is but an aggregation of the various Societies that compose it, and has been made what it is by the independent action of the separate Societies, who, in their own realm, have worked out their own salvation, and made themselves complete personalities.

And the Society has found in the great movement the true reason for its existence, and the support and inspiration which has enabled it to fulfil its purpose.

The Co-operative movement would never have become the great force it is in the world, or attained its present commanding position, had there been no federation of forces, and had the separate Societies simply done their work in their respective districts in isolation, and out of touch with their fellow Societies. The very name, and spirit, and purpose of Co-operation demands for its true and perfect expression, that there should be unity and association in effort and operation.

We find, therefore, that very early in the history of the movement various efforts were made to unite the Societies together in some federated form. These efforts, in their early stages, were only narrow and circumscribed in their operation, and attempted little beyond a local or district union, but these initial efforts were an indication of the need and spirit of Co-operation, and they finally culminated in the formation of great permanent federations, which practically embrace the whole movement.

The first of these great institutions to be formed was the Co-operative Wholesale Society, which commenced in March, 1864. The C.W.S., as the Society is popularly known, is a commercial and trading institution, and exists for the purpose of manufacturing or importing the goods and commodities required by the Distributive Societies, and supplying them at wholesale rates. It thus displaces the "middleman merchant," and it came into existence in response to a great necessity and desire for such a source of supply, which soon began to be felt.

It may safely be said that the C.W.S. has been one of the saviours of Co-operation. Had it, or some such institution, not arisen, the combined opposition of the private traders would have crushed the movement out of existence.

As Co-operation began to spread, the traders became alarmed and began to combine their forces in order to prevent the merchants from supplying the Societies with goods, by threatening to close their accounts with them if they persisted in so doing. As a result many wholesale houses and manufacturers, under this boycott, refused to deal with Co-operative Societies, and thus the markets were being closed against them. As a further result Co-operative Societies began to say, "If the merchants won't supply us, we will supply ourselves," and thus the C.W.S. came into existence.

Now the situation is changed. Instead of the merchant refusing the Co-operative Society's order he is exceedingly glad to get it, and is willing to invoice his goods through the C.W.S.

This institution is composed of Co-operative Societies, who take up shares in proportion to the number of their members, and who have the right of representation at its General Meetings, and of voting for the election of its Directors.

The beginnings of this gigantic institution were on a somewhat modest scale. Fifty Societies, with a combined membership of 17,454, were its first shareholders, the share capital being £999, and the sales for the first thirty weeks £51,857. But its growth and development have been phenomenal. At the close of the year 1908, 1,139 Societies, with a membership of 1,845,416, had joined the federation; the paid-up shares were £1,570,732; loans and deposits, £3,031,924; reserve fund, £447,370; and insurance fund, £692,547. The sales for the year had reached £24,902,842, and the net profit realised £371,497.

It commenced business in small premises in Cannon Street, Manchester. To-day, while Manchester is still its headquarters, where some of its largest and most important

warehouses and factories are planted, it has Branches of great dimensions at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and London, and there are offices, warehouses, depots, factories, mills, &c., erected in nearly all the great centres of the country.

It has a large fruit farm and convalescent home at Roden, creameries, bacon factories, and depots in Ireland; depots in Spain, Denmark, and Australia; a tea estate in Ceylon; and four large steamships to convey its goods from distant ports. Its productive works are yielding over £6,000,000 per annum.

It owns land, buildings, steamships, machinery, plant, fixtures to the value of £4,363,432. 4s. original cost, and now standing at a nominal value of £2,170,781. 5s. 10d. Surely this is an institution of no mean import or value in the Co-operative world.

Another institution of a somewhat different order from the foregoing—working on different lines and existing for other purposes, but not less important as a factor for bringing about the solidarity and protecting the interests of the movement—is the Co-operative Union. This Association exists for protective, progressive, and consolidating purposes, and its methods of work are advisory, propagandist, and educational.

Very early in the history of Co-operation the need was felt for some organisation to unite and consolidate the loose forces of the movement. Initial steps in this direction were taken by leading workers, which resulted in the formation in the year 1870 of what was then known as the Central Co-operative Board, but which afterwards changed its name to the Co-operative Union Limited.

This Board in the first instance consisted of fifteen persons residing in or near London, with an equal number from Lancashire and Yorkshire, and two from Scotland, with no stated times for meetings, and no very definite line of work. Afterwards the Board was changed, and made into a representative Executive, with stated periodical meetings. The Newcastle Congress of 1873 arranged it upon its present basis of sections and districts.

The Union is at present divided into seven sections, viz., the Midland, Northern, North-Western, Scottish, Southern, South-Western, and Western, these being again sub-divided into Districts or Conference Associations.

The Sectional Boards are composed of representatives from the districts, and the Central and United Boards, whose seat is at Manchester, are composed of representatives from each Section.

The first General Secretary was Mr. Nuttall, and he was succeeded by Mr. Edward Vansittart Neale, a gentleman of high repute and distinguished standing in the social world. Born in affluent circumstances, educated at Oriel College, Oxford, and practising at the bar as a lawyer, he gave himself up to the cause of humanity and to the interests of social progress. His legal knowledge and wide acquaintance with social questions and Co-operative principles, fitted him admirably for the position of legal adviser and General Secretary to the Union, and during the years he filled the post—1875 to 1891—he did much to firmly establish it on a sound basis and lift it to the commanding position it now occupies in the Co-operative world.

The present General Secretary is Mr. J. C. Gray, who succeeded Mr. Neale, and he has laboured most assiduously and successfully in the interests of the institution.

The Co-operative Union is not a trading or commercial concern; therefore its funds are not raised by shares, but by contributions from the affiliated Societies, who contribute according to the number of members in the Society.

These contributions are paid direct to the Central Office, and the Sections and District Associations are financed from the Central Office.

The Central Board, in their report to the Co-operative Congress at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1909, were able to show that 1,249 Societies were affiliated with the Union, and these represented a membership of 2,376,126, while 311 Societies, with a membership of 140,068, were still outside.

The income for the year from contributions and donations was £10,478. 1s., and from others sources, such as the sale of publications, &c., £2,137. 15s. 10d.

The functions of this great organisation are administrative, and, to some extent, legislative ; for, while the separate Societies are self-governing, yet membership in the Union and standing in the movement are conditioned by certain controlling principles, and legislation as to the application of these principles of control is not unfrequently under consideration at the Annual Congresses. But its great work is administrative, and it administers the affairs of the movement. It gathers all the statistics of the various Societies, tabulates them, and presents them for consideration to Congress.

The administration of the various functions of the Union is entrusted to Special Committees appointed from the Sections, who attend to all the matters relating to their department. There is the Office Committee, Committee on Education, Joint Propaganda Committee, Joint Parliamentary Committee, Joint Exhibition Committee, Joint Committee of Co-operators and Trade Unionists, Co-operative Defence Committee, and Committee on Credit, while occasionally Committees are appointed to deal with special matters referred from the Congress.

The great Parliament of the Union is the Annual Congress, which assembles at Whitsuntide of each year, and usually continues its meetings for three days. This is accompanied by a large Exhibition of Co-operative Productions, organised by the various Productive Societies.

At this Congress the various Committees of the Union present their reports for consideration and adoption or amendment, and special resolutions are proposed and papers read on social or Co-operative topics, and the varied opinions of the movement are registered and embodied in resolutions or legislative enactments.

Each Society enrolled as a member is entitled to representation in this great assembly according to the amount of its contribution.

The great interest which this great event arouses is evidenced by the fact the last Congress at Newcastle-on-Tyne was attended by 1,556 persons.

In addition to the Annual Congress there are Sectional and District Conferences held at stated periods during the year. These are mainly deliberative in their nature, where subjects relating to the working and principles of the movement are discussed.

The work which the Co-operative Union has accomplished for the Co-operative movement has justified its existence, and cannot be fully enumerated here. It has thrown its strong arm of defence and help around many a weak and defenceless Society, and rescued and helped it in its hour of need.

Through its advisory department much valuable assistance and counsel has been given. Any Society in need of advice or direction upon a matter about which they are in doubt, either legal or otherwise, has only to send a letter to the General Secretary, and it may be assured of a prompt, respectful, and helpful answer.

In the recent "Co-operative boycott" by the private traders it rendered invaluable aid by raising a defence fund and adopting effective measures to meet the boycott, which were successful in defeating this disgraceful attempt to destroy Co-operation.

But in other ways the Union has done most valuable work. In the early days of the movement the laws of the land were not very friendly to Co-operative Societies. Restrictions and limitations of various kinds hindered and hampered their operations. To the removal or modification of these the Union set itself, and has done much. It succeeded, by the valuable aid and untiring zeal of the late Mr. E. V. Neale, in getting the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1876 passed.

And then, as the institution grew and experience was gained, it was found necessary to have that Act replaced by a better and more comprehensive enactment, to more fully secure and safeguard Co-operative interests. Therefore, with great care and at considerable expense, it succeeded in getting a new Act drafted and passed, viz., the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893.

And in various ways have legislative advantages been obtained for Co-operative Societies by its aid and influence, not the least of these being the exemption of Co-operative Societies from paying income tax on the profits arising from their trade.

The Co-operative Union may safely be styled the head and heart of the Co-operative movement, guiding its steps, safeguarding its interests, strengthening its forces, and intensifying its spirit.

Besides these institutions there are others in the movement which may be named, viz., the Co-operative Productive Federation Limited, which is, as its name implies, a Federation of several small Productive Societies, which have united together to protect their interests and find markets for their goods. This Federation is distinguished by the adoption of the principle of Co-partnership and profit-sharing—a principle that in its spirit is truly Co-operative.

Then there is the International Co-operative Alliance, which is an Association embracing and uniting the Societies of all lands and nations. Its objects, as stated in its rules, are :—

1. To make the Co-operators of all countries acquainted with one another.

2. To study in common with a view of improving the condition of the working classes, and to extend among Co-operative Societies of every kind, among different nations, and in the public opinion of all the world, the true principles and the best methods (a) of Co-operation in every form, organised without the interposition of the State, (b) of profit-sharing, (c) of an association of labour with capital, (d) of the remuneration of workmen and other employes.

3. To hasten by all means of propaganda at its disposal the sharing of profits, with its employes being equally admissible in all forms of Co-operation, the moment when all Societies bearing the name of "Co-operative," whether productive in agriculture, or industry, distributive, or devoted to credit or house-building, will have organised for the benefit of labour, a system of profit-sharing, extended to their entire staff, without exception, and will have laid down in their rules the duty of practising such profit-sharing.

4. To establish in the common interest commercial relations among Co-operators of the several countries.

This Alliance admits as members either Societies or individuals. Its funds are raised by subscriptions or legacies, the smallest annual subscription entitling to membership for a Society being 10s., and for an individual 5s.

This organisation has made considerable progress, and is doing good service. To-day it includes the following lands in its list of members : Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cape Colony, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, India, Italy, Roumania, Russia, Finland, Servia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States, United Kingdom, and West Indies.

Thus the Alliance is seeking to throw the golden girdle of Co-operation around all the nations of the world, and by this means unite them in one common bond of brotherhood.

All these organisations, whose features and operations we have briefly outlined, have sprung up within the movement—born of its spirit. They are seeking—in their own particular way and along their own special lines—to federate together the separate forces of Co-operation, to guide its activities and agencies into true Co-operative channels, and thus effect the solidarity of the movement, and carry into practice the timely advice of Lord Rosebery, which he gave to the Glasgow Congress in 1891, when he said, " Above all, move unitedly, for union, which to all causes is strength, to yours is existence itself."

In the early stages of the history of the Bishop Auckland Society these Federations had not come into being ; some of them would be unthought of, and others were merely in a condition of embryo, struggling into life. Yet there is evidence that in these days the Society was in perfect sympathy with these aims and aspirations, which were painfully shaping themselves into form, and seeking to express themselves in being.

As we have shown in Chapter V., the Committee readily expressed their willingness to contribute their quota towards the expenses involved in the formation of these agencies. They sent delegates to some of the Conferences where these things were discussed ; they distributed the literature and

engaged the speakers of the movement ; all these things bearing witness to the fact that they were in harmony with the spirit that was abroad.

It seems somewhat strange, therefore, that when these Federations had burst into life—had become actualities and not projects—that the Bishop Auckland Society should for many years have stood aloof from membership or association with them. Yet such is the case. For a number of years the question of membership in the Co-operative Union and the C.W.S. were subjects of sharp division and heated controversy. Various reasons may be assigned for this attitude.

In the early days of the Society, as it had to struggle to find its feet, it would be painfully conscious of its own weakness and its need of mutual help and some supporting hand, but as it grew and increased, this feeling of need began to subside and a feeling of self-sufficiency to take its place.

Then, again, the spirit of independence, this desire to do its own work, and work within its own resources, which has ever marked the Society (to which we have made reference on previous occasions), may partly account for this attitude.

Then, again, another reason may be that these were busy days, when the hands of the Management were fully occupied with their own extensions and developments, and they became so absorbed in these things, that they forgot the claims of the larger world outside their own.

All these may be urged as excuses, but none of them can be accepted as a vindication of their position.

Independence and concentration are good and necessary in their places, but when these develop into and induce an attitude of aloofness and isolation, like the oyster which encloses itself in its shell, then they become alien to the true spirit of Co-operation.

Be that as it may, however, the fact remains that Bishop Auckland Society for a considerable time stood apart from federation with these Associations. The matter was discussed at its Committee Meetings, and fought out on the

floor of its General Meetings on many occasions. Appeals were frequently sent in to the Committee to have the question discussed and decided, and these were on occasions referred to the members.

The first of these Associations, which the Society joined, was the Co-operative Union. In the year 1882 a request was sent by the Union to bring the matter before the members, and on April 13th of that year the Committee decided—

That we put on the programme of business for the Half-yearly Meeting the advisability of joining the Co-operative Union, as per request sent in to the Committee.

The Half-yearly Meeting was held on May 6th, but as it was found impossible to deal with the subject at that meeting, it was adjourned to a Special Meeting to be called by the Committee on a suitable date. This meeting was held on June 17th, in the Temperance Hall, Bishop Auckland, when this matter of joining the Co-operative Union was the first question to be considered.

Mr. James Linsley, a Spennymoor member, introduced the subject, and he outlined the various advantages that would be gained by becoming affiliated with the Co-operative Union. A number of questions were asked, which Mr. Linsley undertook to answer.

Mr. William Liddle (Butterknowle) moved "That we, as a Society, join the Co-operative Union." This was seconded by Mr. John Marsh, another Spennymoor member. A counter resolution "That we do not join the Co-operation Union" was moved and seconded by two members of the Committee (Messrs. John Raine and George Oates). Thus a clear, square issue was placed before the members, and on being put to the vote forty members voted in favour of joining the Union and 143 against. So the motion was lost, and by a majority so decisive that it settled the matter for some time.

Other nine years elapsed before the subject was again brought forward. As before, the incentive came from the Union, the Northern Section having communicated with

the Committee on the matter, and a reply was sent to the effect that the subject would be duly laid before the members.

The Quarterly Meeting was held on February 7th, 1891, and the second item on the programme of business was "The advisability of joining the Co-operative Union."

The cudgels in favour of joining the Union were taken up by Mr. Henry Jemison (Etherley), who represented the Butterknowle district on the Committee, and who moved a motion in favour of this course. This was seconded by Mr. Hannam Place (Shildon).

The amendment was moved by Mr. Pattison and seconded by Mr. T. Mitchison (an ex-President).

The voting on this occasion went in favour of joining the Union, ninety-four voting for and seventy against. Thus the Society became a part of this great Federation, and has remained closely associated with it since that time.

The Society has been regularly represented at its great Annual Congress, also at its District and Sectional Conferences, and has entertained the District Conference on several occasions.

The South Durham (No. 6) District Association, in which the Bishop Auckland Society is placed, has had on its Executive Committee for several years a member of the Bishop Auckland Society. The Society's Secretary at present holds that seat, and he filled for some time the post of Statistical Secretary, until the office was abolished.

The question of becoming a member of the Co-operative Wholesale Society was a much more hotly contested subject than that of joining the Co-operative Union, feeling at times running very high. Many a skirmish and some hot pitched battles were fought over it. In fact, it constituted a kind of test point, and at one time anyone who dared to confess himself in favour of joining the Wholesale Society had small chances of securing a seat on the Committee of Management.

The strong spirit of opposition that for many years prevailed against the C.W.S. is somewhat difficult to account for, and seems strange in view of the fact that the Society during all these years was trading with the C.W.S. as a non-member, thus getting only half dividend on its purchases. It was once stated by an official of the C.W.S. that the Bishop Auckland Society had built them their West Blandford Street premises at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the money the Society had lost through loss of dividend and interest on share capital. This is, perhaps, a somewhat wild statement, but the amount of money which the Society might have received, but did not, during the years it stood outside the Federation, is undoubtedly considerable.

Certain wrong impressions got rooted amongst the members regarding compulsory trading, shares not being withdrawable, and the nature and work of the C.W.S., and it took many years to eradicate those errors.

That this spirit of antagonism prevailed in the Committee-room as well as outside is evident as we peruse the minute books of the Committee. At one time we read they decided to purchase no more goods from the C.W.S. because of a letter that had been received, and at another time the Secretary is instructed to write a letter to protest against certain statements made at their Quarterly Meeting anent the trading of the Society with them, and informing them that the Society is capable of deciding on the advisability of becoming a member for itself, without their interference.

The first time we read of the matter coming before the members was at a Special General Meeting held on July 2nd, 1881, when a resolution was moved :—

That, in the opinion of this meeting, it is advisable that our Society becomes a member of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and that the Committee be hereby authorised and requested to apply for the requisite number of shares to secure our admission as a member of the Society.

An amendment was moved, "That we stand as we are." On being put to the vote the amendment carried.

Other eight years elapsed before the matter came before the members again, when a notice of motion for the Quarterly Meeting to be held on February 2nd, 1889, was sent in by Mr. Thomas Wilkinson (Newfield), who has ever been a stalwart supporter of the policy of joining the C.W.S.

The consideration of the question was adjourned from that meeting to a Special General Meeting held in the Town Hall, Bishop Auckland, on March 23rd, 1889, when Mr. Wilkinson moved, and Mr. J. Linsley seconded, "That we become members of the Co-operative Wholesale Society." An amendment, "That the question go off the board," was moved by the Secretary (Mr. James Linday), and seconded by Mr. Richard Brown (Auckland Park).

The whole question on both sides was thoroughly discussed in a good-natured way, and, on being tested by vote, the Chairman declared that the amendment was carried by a large majority.

Two years after this the question again comes forward, through a notice of motion sent in by Mr. John George (Shildon) for the Quarterly Meeting held on August 1st, 1891, and it shares the same fate as the former resolution, *i.e.*, "That it go off the board."

The question then lies in abeyance for another ten years, so far as the members are concerned, although it had occasionally been discussed around the table of the Committee-room.

On February 9th, 1901, the usual notice of motion appears in the programme of business for the Quarterly Meeting, the case being again championed by its old supporter, Mr. T. Wilkinson. After a long and heated discussion the question, as usual, goes "off the board."

In the meantime, however, certain events were taking place, which tended to modify and remove some of the misapprehensions and opposition that prevailed against this great institution. The Committee had visited, by invitation, the premises and works of the C.W.S. at Newcastle, and the cordial reception they had, and what they saw, produced very favourable impressions.

Limelight and cinematograph lectures, showing views of the rise and progress of the institution and some of its principal works, were delivered at Shildon, and gave considerable enlightenment to the members there.

But the event that produced, perhaps, the best results was a great Exhibition of C.W.S. Productions that was held at Bishop Auckland on October 26th to 30th, 1901.

The Exhibition was opened by Sir David Dale, the opening ceremony being presided over by Mr. H. N. Kellett (General Manager), and was preceded by a meeting and procession. Thousands of members visited the Exhibition, which was held in the Drill Hall, and what they saw of the productive results of the C.W.S. works tended to remove much of the prejudice that existed against that institution and to induce a more favourable spirit towards it. At any rate, on February 7th, 1903, the Committee of Management put on the agenda for the Quarterly Meeting of members a suggestion, "That we become members of the Co-operative Wholesale Society."

Mr. Wilkinson again takes his stand in favour of the resolution. He was supported by Mr. T. Tomlin (Shildon), who seconded the motion, and the Secretary, who supported it. The opposition was led by two doughty debaters, Alderman W. House (Bishop Auckland) and Mr. T. Staley (Auckland Park). The discussion engendered some considerable heat, hard blows were struck on both sides, and, on being submitted to the vote, seventy voted for the motion and sixty-three against. So victory was declared on the progressive side.

As the majority was very small in favour of joining the Wholesale Society, the Committee were for a time somewhat hesitant about taking advantage of the vote and applying for shares, but after due consideration it was decided to apply for membership at the Quarterly Meeting of the C.W.S. held on March 14th, 1903. The application was granted, and the Committee decided to take up 1,962 shares, as per rule, and, these being issued, the Society

became affiliated with this huge federation, and its connection therewith redounds to the credit and benefit of the Society, both from a business and Co-operative point of view.

Although the Society is not a member of the Productive Federation, it has shares in, and does business with, many of the Productive Societies embraced in the Federation, and is on friendly terms with it, having had Conferences and lectures under its auspices.

The Society is a member of the International Co-operative Alliance, paying its contribution regularly, and having been represented at one of its Conferences.

Step by step the Society has allied itself with the progressive forces of the movement, and fallen into line with the agencies that are working in the interests of the great principle of human brotherhood, and seeking to bring in the time when

“ The war drum throbs no longer,
And the battle flag is furled
In the Parliament of Man—
The Federation of the World.”



CHAPTER XIV.

Guiding Hands.

"It takes a soul
To move a body ; it takes a high-souled man
To move the masses . . . even to a cleaner sty ;
It takes the ideal to blow a hair's-breadth off
The dust of the actual. Ah, your Fouriers failed
Because not poets enough to understand
That life develops from within."

—*Mrs. E. B. Browning.*

"They are not kings who sit on thrones,
But they who know how to govern."

—*Emerson.*

WE have, in these chapters, been endeavouring to present to the reader a general view of the progress, the developments, and the achievements of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society. These developments and achievements, however, are but the outward expression of certain inner forces, that have been at work, and require to be taken into account.

It has not been by a mere mechanical process that the Society has grown. Its success is not due merely to the "nature of things." Behind all these developments and achievements there has been the force of personality, the touch of the human hand shaping its policy, and the impetus of the human spirit impelling it forward on its onward course. There have been hearts burning with intense passion, heads planning and devising, and hands patiently working to bring it to its present commanding position.

No record of the progress of this Society can be accurate or complete, which does not take into account the personal element, that has done so much to rear and consolidate this huge structure.

Casual allusions to some of these have been made, but it is for the purpose of giving a somewhat fuller and more consecutive account of the men who have played a prominent part in making, moulding, and maintaining the Society that we devote this chapter.

Before passing on to this, we take the liberty of making mention of an element, which may not strictly come within the scope of the purpose of this chapter, but which has contributed in no small degree to success, and to which due credit should be given. We refer to the loyalty and attachment of the members. This feature has ever been prominent, and accounts largely for the colossal size to which the Society has grown.

While, like all similar institutions, it has its quota of indifferent and even refractory members, its strength lies in the large number of true, leal-hearted men and women, who take a real pride and interest in it, and who have stuck faithfully to it under all circumstances.

So highly do many prize their membership, that they refuse to withdraw even when removing outside its area.

This attachment, at times, has proved to be somewhat embarrassing to the management, and has tended to give it a somewhat evil reputation on the subject of overlapping.

The Committee have never encouraged removing members to retain their membership, but—apart from going to the extent of summarily shutting the door against them—have discouraged the practice; notwithstanding this, there are a large number of families resident in all parts of the country, miles away from Bishop Auckland, who continue their membership with, and purchase their goods from the Society.

The following instance of this attachment was related to the writer by a gentleman who had been asked upon one occasion to have tea with a Co-operator residing on the banks of the Tyne. As they sat down to a well-spread

and inviting meal, the host pointing to the table, exclaimed, with a note of real exultation and pride, "Everything you see on this table has been purchased from the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Store."

The sturdy old Weardalian, referred to in Chapter VII., who protested that he would wheel his goods from Bishop Auckland to Frosterley rather than purchase them elsewhere, illustrates the same spirit of attachment and loyalty. This spirit is both widespread and deep-seated, and in its existence we have the reason, which has enabled the Society to retain its firm hold upon the large outside area which it covers, as well as the thickly populated districts lying close to its centre.

But this element of loyalty would never have been created or maintained, had it not been that the character and policy of the management had been such that it inspired respect, confidence, and trust.

This brings us back to the point from which we digressed.

MANAGEMENT.

In this term "management" we do not simply include the Committee of Management, but also all the officers of the Society, into whose hands are entrusted the conducting of its affairs.

And first of all we place the office of *General Manager*, not because constitutionally this is the highest office, but because, as a contributing factor to the progress and success of the Society, this office has played a most prominent part, especially in these later years.

Constitutionally the rules do not recognise the office of General Manager. He is appointed by, gets his authority from, and is directly responsible to the Committee of Management. All the same, the position is one of great importance.

All the business operations of the Society are entrusted to his charge. He is the chief business adviser to the Committee; is responsible under them for the buying of

all goods ; for the conducting of the sales in all departments ; and for generally carrying into execution all their plans and policy. He attends all Committee Meetings, although he has no power to vote.

The Bishop Auckland Society has never found it necessary to abolish this office, and make the heads of departments Managers of their own departments. This is due to the fact that the system which has been in operation from the first has produced such satisfactory results, that there has never been any reason to change it.

Although the Society has only had five Managers during its fifty years' existence, three of these held office during its first seven years.

Reference has already been made to the men who held this appointment in the early years, and little addition to these references is needed.

Mr. JAMES WATSON was the first appointed Manager, and he held the post from 1860 to 1863. He evidently lost the confidence of the Committee, and left at their instigation. Seeing that he had to take up this work without the benefit of any previous experience, without any precedent to follow, or model to copy from, considerable credit is due to him for the results achieved during his term of service.

Mr. THOMAS SEWELL, the next in order, was Manager for two years. He came to Bishop Auckland from Rumby Hill, and had evidently had some business training, but whether he had any Co-operative experience we cannot say. The Society continued its career of progress under his supervision, as the following figures will show :—

	March, 1863.		March, 1865.
Members	230	345
Sales	£1,810	£4,597
Share Capital	£227	£1,535
Net Profit	£81	£608

He vacated the position through having a month's notice tendered to him by the Committee, which expired on June 3rd, 1865.

Mr. JOSEPH MITCHELL succeeded, and he held the position from June, 1865, until April, 1867, when he retired voluntarily for health reasons. Mr. Mitchell hailed from Southport, and had been engaged in Co-operative service under the Society at that place. There is no arrest in the general line of progress during his short period of management. The membership showed an increase of 122, the sales had advanced £536, and the share capital £757. The profits realised showed a decrease, the average during the two years being £315 per half year, against £414 per half year during the two previous years.

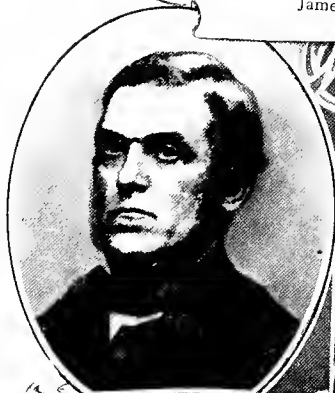
Up to this point the position of General Manager had been somewhat disappointing and unsatisfactory. These short periods of service, and the frequent changes, had an unsettling influence, and prevented this important office from giving any true lead or settled policy to the trading transactions of the Society. True, the Society grew during this period, but it may safely be said that it grew in spite of, rather than because of, the influence of this office.

But now a change is effected. With the appointment of Mr. WILLIAM MOORE on May 15th, 1867, upon the recommendation of the members' meeting, and by the unanimous choice of the Committee, there is brought into the position a personality which transforms it into one of the most powerful and important offices. We have in Chapter VI. made reference to this appointment, and may supplement that reference here by saying that Mr. Moore brought to the work the very qualities, which the Society at that time required in a Manager. Although without the advantage of a business training, or much education, yet he possessed good business instincts and real ability. He had a clear, well-balanced mind, sound judgment, keen penetration, deep insight, and true courage; above all, he was sound in principle, sincere in aim, and honest in action. Although somewhat taciturn and reserved in manner, yet he could be affable and genial when occasion demanded.

He took hold of the affairs of the Society at a most important juncture.



James Watson.



J. Mitchell.



W. Moore.

Past^rManagers.

Notwithstanding the growth and progress that had been realised, certain evils had insidiously crept in, which threatened serious consequences. Stocks had become inflated, loose business methods prevailed, and the credit system had grown until it had become a huge menace, and altogether the Society was heading on to disaster, and, had not a strong, capable hand gripped its affairs at the time, its ruin could not have been long delayed. With true courage Mr. Moore set himself to steadily face the situation, tackle the difficulties, and arrest the evils. This had to be done in the face of much opposition and prejudice, as many of the unsound business methods, which were in operation, were very convenient to the members; but he never flinched or halted until he had established the Society on a safe business basis. It is to be regretted that the strain and worry of the work was such, that at a comparatively early age, after the strenuous labours of a miner's life, his health gave way, and, after nine years' service in this capacity, he passed away, respected, honoured, and lamented, on August 20th, 1876, at the age of fifty-seven, and was interred at South Church, where a monument was erected by voluntary subscriptions of the members, to his memory.

That the Society prospered really and substantially during his regime will be seen by the following comparison of its position at the beginning and at the end of his term of service. At the May Half-yearly Meeting, 1867, the number of members was 467. At the November Meeting, 1876, there were 1,620, an increase of 1,153. In May, 1867, the sales were £5,133; in November, 1876, they were £46,082, an increase in weekly sales of £1,575. The share capital in 1867 was £2,292, being an average of £4. 18s. per member; in 1876 it was £17,594, or £10. 17s. per member. During the period intervening between the two dates compared the business done had realised a profit of £29,706, and the members had received in the shape of dividend paid out to them £19,929. The comfort and help which this sum would carry to the working men and their families who

had received it is incalculable, and especially as this period covered a time of severe industrial depression. Well may the Committee, in their report in March, 1877, say :—

Notwithstanding the severe depression in trade, your Committee have to congratulate you on the highly satisfactory state of the Society, and wish to remind you that it is to *individual efforts* that the Society owes its existence and prosperity. We invite you—and, indeed, all right-minded working men—to join in heartier Co-operation with us, feeling satisfied that a portion of the great wealth of the country—the wealth we help to make—can only be reached by it.

Mr. HENRY N. KELLETT became the successor to Mr. Moore. He commenced his duties on September 16th, 1876, and retains the position at the present time. To say that in this appointment the Society found its most capable and successful Manager, is but to express a part of the truth, for, of all the men who have taken part in the making of the Society, none have played a more important part, nor filled a more prominent place than he. So close has been his relationship with the Society, and so thoroughly has he identified himself with all its fortunes and interests, that their names have become almost synonymous, and the history of the Society from 1876 until now, constitutes in a large degree the life story of Mr. Kellett. On account of this intimate relationship, and important and lengthy term of service, something more than a mere passing reference to this officer in these pages is due.

Mr. Kellett is a native of the county of Durham, having been born at Shincliffe Colliery, October 31st, 1846. The son of respectable parents, Thomas and Dinah Robinson Kellett, and reared in a working man's home—for his father was a miner—he knows something of the privations and hardships of the workers' lives. He is never reticent in referring to the lowly days of his boyhood, nor has he ever had reason to be ashamed in mentioning the name of his father or mother.

Like many others who have succeeded in life, the calling he has been led to fill is one neither of his own nor his parents' preference. His own personal predilections

would have led him, not to a business career, but to the ministry. He has always confessed to a leaning toward "the cloth," and those who have heard his public utterances think he might have done good service even if called upon to "wag his pow in a pu'pit." The intention of his parents was to put him into the teaching profession. He had been trained and had passed the necessary examinations for becoming a school teacher. This, however, was not to be.

Just before the time for commencing his duties it was discovered that he was too young, and would have to wait another year. His father, knowing the family needs, said he could not afford to keep him at school another year, and so it was determined, to his own disappointment and likewise his parents', that he should go to work at the pit. Accordingly he commenced work in the year 1857 at Shincliffe Colliery.

Whatever may have been the thwarted hopes, and however uncongenial this work may have been to a lad of his parts, it did not sour him. Manfully he faced his destiny and determined to make the best of the situation. If he had to be a miner he resolved to do his lowly work well, and with characteristic thoroughness and keen observation set himself to master all the details of his work, and fit himself, not only for his present position, but for future promotion. So thoroughly did he acquaint himself with all the varied operations of working a mine, and so keen were his powers of observation, that during the short period he worked down the pit he gained such a knowledge of all the technique of pit work, that he is able even to-day to converse with wonderful accuracy and knowledge on mining matters.

A serious accident which happened in 1865 cut short his mining career. This accident might have had fatal consequences, and some of its effects are felt to-day, but it may be regarded as one of those providences that shape the ends of life. On recovering, after having been laid up over sixteen weeks, young Henry Kellett learned that a young

man was wanted as clerk at the Co-operative Stores, and he resolved to apply for the situation. The result was, as recorded in Chapter VI., that on May 16th, 1866, he was engaged to assist in book-keeping, and in the Grocery and Drapery Departments, at 16s. per week.

Now the current of his life is changed, and his energies and activities are turned into a new channel, along which they have flowed ever since. One is led to wonder if, on that May morning, as he entered on his new sphere of duty, there came to him any premonition of the important part he was destined to play in connection with this little Society, into whose service he was entering.

The remuneration was not very inspiring, and to be a sort of general factotum at the beck of three departments did not promise a sinecure. Much of the work was new to him; book-keeping presented few difficulties, and his scholarship enabled him to easily master it; but to serve at the grocery and drapery counters was another matter. However, with his usual determination he braced himself to learn all that could be learned, and to make himself proficient in all the branches of his work. Every spare moment was spent at the counter, every opportunity for tackling some difficult or unfamiliar task was seized, until he has mastered every detail. He did not confine himself simply to the duties which he was engaged to perform, but, as opportunity presented itself, essayed duties outside his own sphere, and by dint of keen observation and untiring industry, by keeping his eyes and ears open and his hands employed, he soon gained a knowledge of, and attained a proficiency in, every department of the Society's work.

The habits formed and fostered, and the knowledge gained in these early days, stood him in good stead in after years, and helped him to successfully manage the various branches of business which the Society has established. By reason of his activity and ability he soon became recognised as a valuable servant, and higher duties were assigned to him.

When Mr. Moore entered on his duties he found in young Kellett a valuable helper. The superior scholarship he

possessed supplemented Mr. Moore's limitations in this respect, and together they worked to remedy the evils which were threatening to wreck the Society at the time. Had it not been for the assistance rendered by his young adjutant, Mr. Moore would not have been so successful in establishing the Society on a sound financial basis.

When the new Branch at Spennymoor was formed the Committee recognised in Mr. Kellett the man to successfully establish and work it, and when they wanted a man to fill the vacant post of General Manager they instinctively turned in the same direction to find the man they wanted. Well for the Society has it proved to be that there was one in its service whom it could so readily find, and so confidently appoint to this important position.

In his appointment to this position Mr. Kellett found his life work, and from the day of his appointment until now he has given to that work of his best—not simply his best years, but his best thought, energy, and devotion. For thirty-four years he has stood at the head of the Society, one of its most trusted servants, and one of its most enthusiastic workers. He has made all its interests his own, and in all its aspirations, in all its developments, and in all its difficulties he has been its central figure, planning, directing, executing, and helping.

For the position of a Manager Mr. Kellett possesses a fine blend of excellent qualifications, both impelling and restraining. An open and alert mind, controlled by sound judgment, and a strong will; quick and ready in grasping general principles, yet most patient and painstaking in working out details. Frank, kindly, and generous—almost impulsive in his generousities—yet able, when occasion demands, to encase himself within a wall of reserve almost impenetrable. Keen business instincts—able to drive a hard bargain or conduct a business transaction with firmness—yet ever under the restraint of a finely adjusted moral sense, which prevents him from ever taking an undue advantage. Possessing just sufficient of the *ego* to make him self-reliant, dignified, and somewhat sensitive, yet never making him

offensively egotistic. A strict disciplinarian, who cannot brook insubordination, yet most kindly and fatherly to his employés, far more ready to admonish, advise, or help, than to reprove or punish.

The marvellous capacity for work which Mr. Kellett possesses, is a striking feature in his character. Those who know him, and the amount of business which he is called upon to despatch week by week, are often led to wonder how he does it. He is a most voracious worker, and manages to get through business at a most amazing rate. This is due largely to his orderly methods, and to his power of concentration and mental detachment. He is able to give to a matter in hand whole-hearted attention, and, when that is completed, to fully detach his mind from that subject, and give to the next in order his undivided attention.

Another feature that deserves mention is his unimpeachable integrity. During the years he has held office huge trusts have been committed to him, and great authority has been placed in his hands, but we do not think it can be said that one trust has ever been betrayed, or that his powers have ever been used for personal purposes—indeed, a less self-seeking man it is difficult to find. We once heard him assert at a public meeting of members, just at a time when some unfounded aspersion had been cast upon him, that, when he took office, he made one great resolve—"That he would go straight, whatever happened," and that resolve has been faithfully adhered to. Like an anchor that vow has held him moored, and whatever the inducements or temptations may have been, he has kept his hands unsullied. This has been both to himself and the Society a most valuable asset.

Mr. Kellett is a member and local preacher in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and, when in more robust health, his pulpit services were in great demand. He has never been an aspirant for public honours, but for three years he sat on the Auckland Board of Guardians for Byers Green. He retired because of the pressure of his other duties, to the regret both of the Society and his colleagues on the Board.

The years 1876—1910 have been important years in the history of the Society—years of marvellous expansion and unprecedented progress. From a one-shop Society with four departments, it has grown to a Society with fifteen shops, and embraces nearly all departments of distributive trade and many branches of productive business. Its membership has risen from 3,237 to 16,774, representing an average increase of nearly 400 per year. Its sales have increased by over half a million pounds per annum, and its share capital from £4 to £22 per member. During these years it has made a net profit of £1,866,437, and paid out to its members in the shape of dividend, £1,670,140.

To say that this amazing progress is due to any one man would be to make a most absurd assertion, but when we remember how closely the General Manager has been identified with all the fortunes of the Society, he cannot well be separated from its success. To these successes he has contributed no small share, and no small amount of credit is due to the man, who has stood for so many years at the head of an institution, that has made such remarkable advancement.

Although the strain of years of strenuous toil is making its impression on his health, it is to be hoped that for many years yet to come he will continue to fill his place in, and contribute his services to, the Society.

President.—For many years in its early stages Bishop Auckland Society had no President, neither was the position of Chairman a recognised office. The Chairman was appointed by the Committee to preside at its own and General Meetings, but not elected as such by the members. To-day the position of President is looked upon as an important one.

It was not until May, 1881, that the members were called upon to elect, by popular vote, a Chairman as an officer, although in 1879 the balance sheet bore the signature of a President.

Amongst the men who were called upon to occupy the chair in the days before the position became an annual permanency may be mentioned the names of Messrs. Richard Morley, John Pescod, Andrew Bryson, George Elliott, and George Oates, all of whom played important parts in the early stages of the Society's history.

From the time that this has been a recognised office (1881-1910) only four men have occupied the position.

Mr. THOMAS MITCHINSON, of Black Boy, was the first elected Chairman. Mr. Mitchinson was an official at the Black Boy Colliery, under Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, and Co., and one time wielded considerable influence in that district. This is evident from the fact that for ten years successively he was elected to some position in the Society. For one year, March, 1876, to March, 1877, he was Auditor. From 1877 to 1881 he was a member of the Committee, and occupied the Chairman's position by the vote of his fellow Committee-men. From 1881 to 1886 he was the elected Chairman of the Society. He was an enthusiastic Co-operator, and rendered good service to the cause during the time he held official positions.

Mr. JOHN RAINE succeeded Mr. Mitchinson, and for seventeen years (1886 to 1903) he creditably and successfully upheld the traditions of this office. Mr. Raine is a somewhat familiar figure, and is greatly respected not simply in the Bishop Auckland district, but throughout the Northern Section of the Co-operative Union, where he is fairly well known. He is a native of Redmire, in Wensleydale, and bears some of the traits of the sturdy dalesman. When he was about four years of age his parents removed into the county of Durham, and when quite a little fellow he had to begin his career as a breadwinner in the pits. For forty-two years he worked at various collieries in the neighbourhood of Bishop Auckland. He therefore knows something of the vicissitudes of a miner's life, and can speak of the hardships and unjust conditions under which the miners had to work prior to the formation of the Miners' Union. While working he was an ardent trade unionist,

and was selected by his fellow-workmen at the Black Boy Colliery to represent them as their delegate at the Durham Miners' Council Meetings, and for twelve years he held this position to their satisfaction.

In the year 1884 he was able, through his industry, steady habits, and thrift, to retire, and for twenty-six years he has occupied the coveted position of a "retired gentleman."

Mr. Raine joined the Co-operative Society in the year 1869, so that he has been connected with it for over four-fifths of its lifetime. In 1876 he was elected on to the Committee, and, with the exception of two-and-a-half years, has been connected with the management ever since. Since leaving the chair he has served four-and-a-half years on the Board of Management, and is there to-day, occupying the position of the "Father of the House." He has rendered valuable service to the Society by his honesty, straightforwardness, and trustworthiness, and, though he cannot be said to be a progressive, yet his sturdy and sane conservatism and sound common sense, have on many occasions been very useful in restraining wild and impulsive schemes. Though an octogenarian he is still hale and hearty, a fact which he owes largely to his well-ordered habits of life, being a total abstainer and non-smoker. It is to be hoped that his years may yet be considerably lengthened, and spent in great serenity and peace.

ALDERMAN WILLIAM HOUSE, J.P., who, after Mr. Raine, was appointed to fill the President's chair, is a man of note and public standing. From a lowly position in life he has risen, by dint of force of character, self-culture, and sheer hard work, to the high position he now occupies in the mining and public world. He was reared in the West Auckland district, worked at the colliery there, and at one time showed no promise of becoming anything more than an ordinary pitman. His fellow-workmen, however, elected him to be their delegate to the Durham Council Meeting, and this brought him into contact with some of the ardent spirits who were working for the betterment of

their class. Association with these men led him to begin to study industrial questions, and soon he was found amongst the ranks of those reformers, who were agitating for better conditions for the mining community. He began to culture his mind, to train himself for public speaking, and eventually became known as a miners' leader, and one of their most powerful advocates.

He secured the position of checkweighman at his colliery, got elected on the Miners' Association Executive, became an agent of the Association, and finally was appointed to the proud position of President, which he now fills. He is also an Alderman of the Durham County Council, a Justice of the Peace for the county of Durham, and Chairman of the Bishop Auckland Education Committee.

He has been prominently associated with several philanthropic schemes promoted in the Bishop Auckland district, notably the Lady Eden Cottage Hospital, and the Aged Miners' Homes movement.

Alderman House is an effective public speaker, his native humour and vigorous language always keeping his audiences awake and compelling their attention.

He may be described as a strong man, strong in physique, in mind, in conviction, and in courage. He is not afraid to take up the unpopular side of a question when his convictions lead him to do so, and to stand single-handed in its defence. This he has frequently done.

In the Durham Miners' Strike in 1892 he took up an attitude which was extremely unpopular at the time, but which ultimately proved to be right; and both by pen in the press, and by voice in the men's mass meetings, he dared to defend his attitude, even when threatened with serious personal violence.

At the Parliamentary Election of 1910 he unsuccessfully contested the Bishop Auckland Division in the Labour interest. Although defeated on this occasion, it may safely be augured that, if spared, he will yet find a seat in St. Stephen's, and rouse the echoes of the House with his vigorous eloquence.



JOHN RAINE.



Alderman W. HOUSE, J.P.

Past Presidents.

For several years Alderman House has been connected with the management of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society. From 1891 to 1900 he sat on the Board as a member of the Committee. In 1903 he was elected to the Presidential chair, which he ably filled until 1907. During these years he rendered splendid service, his standing in the public world and his wide connections giving him many advantages which he gladly used to the benefit of the Society. Particularly in the purchase and the laying out of the Dean Bank Estate he did yeoman service. The conducting of the negotiations for its purchase was largely in his hands—in fact the whole scheme, in which he was intensely interested, was his.

As a Chairman he has few compeers, his powerful personality enabling him to conduct the largest or most unruly meeting, and get through its business in a proper manner. He is still deeply interested in the Society's welfare, and never hesitates to render it friendly help.

The present occupant of the President's chair, Mr. JOHN MANSFIELD, is perhaps one of the best-known men within the area of the Society, and needs little description—indeed, his is a personality that almost defies description.

He is a native of Barnard Castle, and a saddler by trade. Like the other occupants of the chair, he had previous experience on the management before he became President. He was elected to represent the Bishop Auckland district on the Committee from November, 1900, to 1902. He then was compelled by rule to retire for one year, but secured re-election from 1903 to 1905, all testifying to his popularity in the Society. In 1907 he won the Presidential seat, and, although each year since the seat has been hotly contested, he has been able to hold it against all comers. He is certainly an interesting personality, enthusiastic, whole-hearted, and intense. Whatsoever his hand finds to do, that he does with all his might.

Before coming to the Board of Management he was one of the Committee's most inveterate critics, and from the floor of the house he has administered to it many a vigorous trouncing, and since entering the Board has been one of its most ardent defenders.

He is one of the most voluble speakers it has been our fortune to hear, language and words being simply at command. Quaint expressions, scriptural quotations, fierce invective, and high-flown phrases simply chasing each other from his lips with a volubility that amazes all who hear him, and, like a cataract, carries all before it.

He is just as enthusiastic and whole-hearted in his attachment to Co-operation as to all other of his interests in life, and is passionately devoted to his own Society. Anyone daring to say a word against it in his presence may rely upon a hot reception. For many years he has taken an intense interest in all its affairs, an interest which, it is hoped, will continue for many years yet to come.

SECRETARIES.

The Office of *Secretary* is a somewhat anomalous one in the Bishop Auckland Society, for while, by constitution, he is responsible for all the Society's accounts and books, by practice he is little more than Secretary to the Committee, being only expected to give his spare time to the work of this office, and has to come up for election every year.

Of late years the work has grown until it is too much for mere spare time occupation, and the remuneration is not sufficient to enable the holder to give his whole time to it. The question has sometimes been asked why a Society of the dimensions of Bishop Auckland has not appointed a permanent Secretary, but hitherto no step in that direction has been taken. The present system till now has sufficed.

There have been in all twelve Secretaries in the Society's service. As some of these only held office for a short period, and as space is limited and information scarce, we forbear any lengthy reference to the men who, in the early stages, wielded the Society's pen.

We give a list of their names and the periods their services in this position covered.



JOHN MANSFIELD, President.

Mr. JOHN HENDERSON.—May, 1860, to November, 1861. Mr. Henderson was the first Secretary, and left the Secretaryship to become an employé.

Mr. JOHN TINKLER.—November, 1861, to November, 1862. He was a blacksmith living at Shildon, and one of the first selected Directors of the Society.

Mr. GEORGE BURRELL.—November, 1862, to May, 1863. Mr. Burrell resided at Escomb, and entered the Society in 1861. He occasionally held the position of Chairman, and was also Treasurer for a short period.

Mr. WILLIAM MOORE.—May, 1863, to May, 1867. He left the Secretaryship to become Manager.

Mr. WILLIAM EALES.—June, 1867, to May, 1869. When Mr. Moore became Manager the Secretary's office became vacant. Mr. George Elliott officiated for a month, then Mr. William Eales was temporarily appointed by the Committee, and held the office for two years. Mr. Eales resided in Bishop Auckland. He became a member of the Committee in 1862, and rendered good service to the Society.

Mr. JOHN COWEY.—May, 1869, to May, 1871. He was a joiner residing at Tottenham, near Coundon.

Mr. JACOB CRAWFORD.—May, 1871, to June, 1880. Mr. Crawford was a blacksmith at Black Boy Colliery, and was the first to hold this position for any lengthy period. It is a pleasing fact that this veteran Secretary survives to the Jubilee Year. He resides at Coundon, and, though confined to the house through the infirmities of age, is still deeply interested in the doings of the Society.

Mr. JOHN McCRICKARD.—June, 1880, to November, 1880.

Mr. ALFRED WILLIAM MONK.—November, 1880, to May, 1882. Mr. Monk was a clerk in Messrs. Stobart and Co.'s offices, Etherley, and a curious case arose in relation to his Secretaryship, which eventually came to the law courts, where the Society was beaten. The Half-yearly Meeting, held November 5th, 1881, decided that the Secretary's salary should be at the rate of £28 per annum, but a Special General Meeting, held on December 10th, 1881, recorded

another resolution that the Secretary's salary be at the rate of £14 per annum. Mr. Monk was paid at the rate decided upon at the Special Meeting, but he claimed at the rate fixed by the Half-yearly Meeting, and he won his case.

Mr. JAMES LINDAY.—May, 1882, to November, 1890. Mr. Linday was for many years well known in the Bishop Auckland and neighbouring districts. He resided in Bishop Auckland and was engaged by Messrs. Pease and Partners as chief surveyor and head clerk at their Adelaides and St. Helen's Collieries. He was a member of the Society of Friends, and interested himself in the religious, educational, and philanthropic work of the town. In addition to his work as a surveyor he had qualified himself as an architect, and drew plans for several buildings in the district. When the Society's great extension scheme at the Central was decided upon, the architectural work was assigned to Mr. Linday; consequently he resigned the Secretaryship in order to take up the work, and the whole of these extensions were carried out under his supervision. As a Secretary he was painstaking and careful, and did good service in this position. He ultimately took up the position of colliery manager, and, in pursuance of his duties in this connection, removed from Bishop Auckland some years ago.

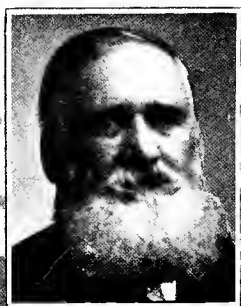
Mr. STEPHENSON STOBBS.—November, 1890, to May, 1898. On the resignation of Mr. Linday the Committee, in accordance with powers they possessed according to rule, appointed Mr. Stobbs, who was a member of the Committee representing Spennymoor district, to fill the vacancy for the time being. He had sat upon the Committee since May, 1888.

In certain circles Mr. Stobbs was one of the most popular and prominent men in the North of England. As a preacher and public speaker he had few equals, his fame was in all the churches, the demand for his services was very great, and he perhaps did more special work for the various Primitive Methodist Societies than any other layman in the North.

He is a native of Allenheads, a little village said to be the highest in England, situate in South Northumberland, lying on the borders of Durham. He belongs to a most



Wm. Eales.



Jacob Crawford.



John Henderson.



James Linday.



Stephenson Stobbs.

Past Secretaries.

respectable and highly esteemed family in the village, and, receiving a good education, he took a good position in the Beaumont Lead Mine offices. He afterwards removed into the county of Durham to take up the post of surveyor under Messrs. Bell Brothers, at their extensive collieries and quarries.

He resided for some time at Page Bank, near Spennymoor, but afterwards, for greater convenience to his work, became located at Middlesbrough, where he still resides. In his work as Secretary he willingly devoted his gifts and attainments to the service of the Society and rendered to it valuable help. He was highly esteemed by his fellow-committee-men, his geniality, buoyancy, and splendid conversational powers rendering him a most enjoyable companion. At the Half-yearly Meeting, held May 7th, 1898, when his services as Secretary came to an end, the following resolution was moved by Mr. W. Steele, who had sat with him on the Committee, and unanimously carried:—

That we accord to the retiring Secretary (Mr. Stephenson Stobbs) a hearty vote of thanks for the eminent and valuable services he has rendered to this Society during the term of years he has served as Secretary.

The Committee also made for him a complimentary supper, and presented him with a gold watch as a mark of their appreciation and esteem.

Mr. THOMAS READSHAW.—May, 1898, to May, 1910. The present Secretary belongs to the little village of Nenthead, situate in East Cumberland, which lies contiguous to the home of his predecessor, and which joins the county of Durham on the Pennine Peak known as Killhope. He only received the limited education afforded by a village school, and any other attainments have been gained by personal effort and self-culture. During the good times in the early Seventies which prevailed in the county of Durham, he removed, in 1873, to Shildon, leaving the work of a lead miner to become a coal miner. In 1885 he received an appointment as master wasteman under Messrs. Pease and Partners, at Adelaide Colliery. The disastrous strike in 1892, however, brought the appointment to an end, on

account of his associating himself with the position of the men. Prior to his Secretaryship, he had had no connection with the management, but had been a member of the Society from the time of his removal into the district.

He has interested himself not simply in the work of his own Society, but in the greater work of the Co-operative movement outside.

As a member of the Executive of the No. 6 District of the Northern Section, Co-operative Union, he has taken part in several Conferences, and in 1900 he was appointed to read a paper on "Co-operative Ideals" at a Conference held at Spennymoor. This paper was printed by the Co-operative Union and adopted by them as a Conference Paper, and has been read at several Conferences in various parts of the county.

His Committee selected him to write this story of the Society's rise and progress.

TREASURERS.

In the early stages of the Society's career the office of *Treasurer* would be a somewhat important and responsible position, all the cash being under his care and entrusted to his charge. With the growth of the Society, much of this work and responsibility has been taken over by the Cashier.

Only eight men have been entrusted with the purse of the Society:—

Mr. WILLIAM MOORE.—The first Treasurer, 1860 to 1862.

Mr. GEORGE BURRELL.—May, 1862, to November, 1863.

Mr. JOHN HUDSON.—November, 1863, to May, 1864.

Mr. JONATHAN PARKIN.—May, 1868, to December, 1897. This honoured veteran was one of the first members of the Society, having paid his entrance fee at the first meeting that was held, his name standing No. 11 on the list. He was a miner, at one time residing at Escomb, afterwards at Bishop Auckland, and the respect and confidence which he inspired amongst the members is clearly shown by the fact that, for an unbroken period of nearly thirty years, they entrusted to him the responsible office of Treasurer.



T. READSHAW, Present Secretary.

He died in harness, and no finer appreciation of his character can be recorded than that which finds its place in the Committee's report to the members in their Balance Sheet, September, 1897, to March, 1898 :—

The Committee cannot conclude this report without making a brief reference to the death of Mr. Jonathan Parkin, the late honoured and lamented Treasurer of this Society, which took place at Bishop Auckland on December 18th, 1897.

Mr. Parkin was connected with the Management of the Society from its very inception to the time of his decease, extending over a term of thirty-eight years. During this lengthened period he stood firmly by the Society, amidst all its vicissitudes and struggles, and had at last the satisfaction of knowing that he had assisted in building up one of the most magnificent and prosperous Co-operative Associations in this country.

By his constant and untiring devotion to the business arrangements of the Society, by his frank cheerfulness, generous manners, and sympathy with all by whom he was surrounded, he has made his memory a treasured inheritance with the members.

The dominating principles of his life and conduct were to be honest, kind, and cheerful, to keep the golden rule of doing unto others as he would that men should do unto him, and to leave the world better than he found it. The best interests of the Society he had always at heart, and though in some respects we may be poorer by his passing away from our midst, yet we are rich in having the memory of such a loyal, faithful Co-operator.

For several months prior to his demise his physical strength gradually declined, till at last the weary wheels of life stood still, and he gently passed into eternal rest in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

Mr. FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.—May, 1903, to May, 1904. Although Mr. Featherstone only held this office one year, yet he had been connected with the management for fourteen years, representing the Shildon district—where he resided—on various occasions, from November, 1881, to 1899. He is a native of Weardale, but came to reside in Shildon, where he was engaged as storekeeper at the Shildon Lodge Colliery, under Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan & Co., but he also having espoused the cause of the men in the strike of 1892, had to leave his situation and take up an insurance agency. He is a true loyal Co-operator, and although he has returned to his native dale, he retains his membership, attends

the meetings, and interests himself in all the affairs of the Bishop Auckland Society, to which he is most deeply attached.

He voluntarily retired from the Treasurership on account of his business.

Mr. JAMES DAVISON.—February, 1898, to May, 1903; May, 1904, to May, 1910. The present Treasurer has a long connection with the Society's Board of Management, having been first elected thereon in 1885, and, apart from short intervals, has been a member of it ever since. On the death of Mr. Parkin the office of Treasurer became vacant, and the Committee appointed Mr. Davison to fill it for the time being, and with the exception of one year, 1903 to 1904, he has held the office from that time and has proved himself worthy of the confidence thus reposed in him. The whole of his life has been spent in the town and neighbourhood of Bishop Auckland, and for many years he has been employed as deputy overman at the Auckland Park Colliery, and has deeply interested himself in the trade union affairs of his colliery. He is a most social and piquant personality, his unfailing cheerfulness, his exuberance of spirit, his quaint philosophy, and his droll sayings constitute him one of the most interesting characters on the Board.

AUDITORS.

The Auditing of the accounts of a Co-operative Society is a very important matter, and it is most essential that the work should be efficiently done, in order that the financial position may be safeguarded and the confidence of the members inspired. The question of the engagement of certificated Auditors in lieu of Member Auditors has been frequently pressed on the attention of Societies in late years, and it is probable that this will be made compulsory by law in the near future.

The rules of the Bishop Auckland Society have always made it optional for the General Meeting of members to order its accounts to be audited by an Accountant or Public Auditor, and the present rules make it obligatory "That once at least in every five years a special audit of its accounts shall be made by a Public Auditor appointed under the



John Hudson.



J. Parkin.



F. Featherstone.

Past Treasurers.



J. DAVISON, Treasurer, 1910.

Act." This has been done twice under this Rule—September, 1904, to March, 1905, when the special audit was conducted by Mr. W. Heslop (Darlington), Certified Auditor under the Co-operative Union; and September, 1909, to March, 1910, by Mr. B. Tetlow (Newcastle-on-Tyne), Public Auditor under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act. These audits have been made in conjunction with the ordinary audit made by its Member Auditors.

With the exception of one half year, March, 1882, to September, 1882, the members have selected men from amongst their own ranks to act as their Auditors.

In the first years of the Society's existence the examination of its accounts would be a comparatively simple matter, but to-day, with its huge turnover, its numerous branches, and its multitudinous departments, it has become a most complicated affair, and demands the highest ability and most unrelaxing attention.

Although the Society's original rules provided for the appointment of three Auditors, never more than two under these rules were appointed, and occasionally there was only one.

Below we give the names of all the Auditors up to the present, with the periods in which they acted in this capacity:—

Mr. GEORGE FRYER.—May, 1860, to May, 1865.

Mr. JOSEPH BLACK.—May, 1860, to MAY, 1862.

Mr. JAMES TACKET.—May, 1862, to May, 1864.

Mr. R. STEPHENSON.—May, 1865, to November, 1865.

Mr. STEPHEN OLIVER.—November, 1865, to May, 1867.

Mr. A. M. BRYSON.—November, 1865, to November, 1866.

Mr. CHARLES A. PRESHOUS.—May, 1867, to November, 1872.

Mr. WILLIAM DAVISON.—November, 1869, to November, 1876; November, 1877, to November, 1878; November, 1879, to November, 1880.

Mr. JAMES S. RACE.—November, 1872, to November, 1873.

Mr. GEORGE ELLIOTT.—May, 1874, to May, 1876.

Mr. T. MITCHISON.—May, 1876, to May, 1877.

Mr. CHARLES BIRCH.—November, 1876, to May, 1879.

Mr. J. McCRICKARD.—May, 1878, to November, 1878.

Mr. WILLIAM COLE.—May, 1879, to May, 1880 ; May, 1888, to May, 1889.

Mr. WILLIAM GAINES.—May, 1880, to November, 1881.

Mr. J. THOMPSON.—November, 1880, to May, 1882.

Mr. JAMES REED.—November, 1881, to May, 1882 ; November, 1882, to November, 1884 ; November, 1891, to November, 1892 ; May, 1893, to May, 1894. Mr. Reed voluntarily retired from the Auditorship in May, 1882, and a public accountant (Mr. John Staton, of Durham) was appointed for that half year. Mr. Reed was a schoolmaster in Bishop Auckland, of more than ordinary ability. He died during his term of office (May, 1893, to 1894).

Mr. RICHARD UNDERWOOD.—November, 1882, to May, 1884.

Mr. C. N. BARKER.—May, 1884, to May, 1888 ; May, 1889, to May, 1892.

Mr. JOSEPH JOHNSON.—November, 1884, to November, 1891 ; November, 1892, to November, 1903.

Mr. GEORGE R. BROWN.—May, 1894, to May, 1899.

Mr. J. W. CRAGGS.—May, 1899, to May, 1900 ; November, 1904, to May, 1910.

Mr. JOHN T. LOWTHIAN.—May, 1900, to May, 1910.

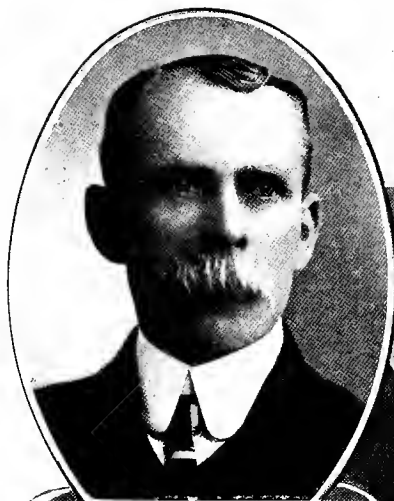
Mr. THOMAS CLOUGH.—November, 1903, to November, 1904.

Many of these men did excellent service for the Society, bringing to their work abilities of a high order, and qualifications that were unquestionable.

In the present Member Auditors (Messrs. CRAGGS and LOWTHIAN) the Society has a duad, which it will be difficult to equal, both of them being eminently fitted for the work they have in hand.



Past Auditors.



J. T. Lowthian.



J. W. Craggs.

Present Auditors.

Mr. CRAGGS is a cashier under Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, and Co., and is an expert at his work. As an accountant it will be difficult to find his peer. He simply revels in figures, and has a thorough knowledge of the essential principles of book-keeping and accounts. He has a most retentive memory, a quick, penetrating mind, combined with marvellous analytical powers, which enable him to dissect accounts with rapidity, and most readily detect any inaccuracy or error in their arrangement. Beside all, he loves his work, and spares neither time nor trouble in having it well done.

Mr. LOWTHIAN makes a fine counterpart to his colleague. A schoolmaster by profession, though not at present engaged in it, he, too, brings to his work a competent knowledge of all its requirements. In addition, he possesses great tact, clear discrimination, a genial, pleasant demeanour, with just a touch of ideality tinging the whole of his character.

Having in its ranks men of such ability, and who, being members of the Society, understand it thoroughly, are personally interested in its welfare, and have their own characters and local standing at stake, the Society has never yet found it necessary to exchange its Member Auditors for an outsider.

COMMITTEE.

Originally the Committee of Management consisted of eight members and a Treasurer, but was enlarged in 1863 to nine members, Secretary, and Treasurer, making eleven in all.

Another modification took place in 1882, when the President was constituted an officer, and the Committee was made to consist of eight members, President, Secretary, and Treasurer. This order continued until 1904. In the year previous a thorough revision of the rules had been made, and, among other changes, the constitution of the Committee was enlarged to twelve members and three officers, and in May, 1904, this order came into operation and continues to the present time.

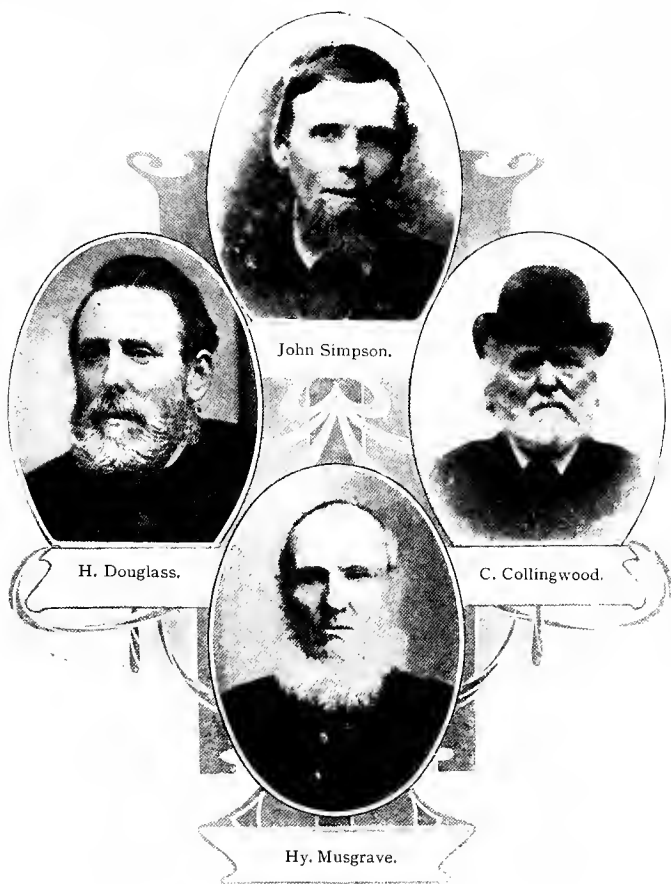
These Committee-men were in the early years selected promiscuously, with no limitations of district or residence, but, as the membership increased, it was found necessary to

have some form of district representation. Accordingly, in August, 1889, the members decided, on a motion moved by Mr. Robert Moses, that the area of the Society's operations be divided into districts, each district to have its quota of representation on the Committee according to members. The Society was therefore divided into eight districts, viz., Bishop Auckland, Mount Pleasant, Old Shildon, New Shildon, Newfield, Black Boy, Spennymoor, and Butterknowle, each district to have a member on the Board, who must reside within the area covered by the district, but to be elected by a popular vote of the members of the whole Society.

In the year 1897 an agitation arose in favour of district voting and a time limit for service on the Committee. A requisition for a General Meeting to discuss the subject was sent in, and a Special General Meeting was held on December 18th, 1897.

Mr. John Cox (Evenwood) was the spokesman for the requisitionists, and he moved the alteration of rules to the effect that "members of the Committee shall be elected by the members only of the district wherein they reside," and also "that members of the Committee who have sat on the Committee of Management consecutively for two years shall not be eligible for re-election for at least one year." Neither of the proposed motions secured a two-thirds majority of the meeting, which was necessary for their adoption, and were therefore lost for the time being. But the agitation grew in force, and it was at last decided to take a ballot vote of the whole of the members on the matter. The ballot was taken in July, 1898, and the result was, that a majority voted in favour of the alteration of the rules to allow these changes to be made, and a Special General Meeting of members, held on November 19th, 1898, adopted the regulations in favour of district voting and a time limit of service.

When the Committee was enlarged in 1904 the districts were revised, and the number reduced to six, each district being represented by two members.



Early Committee-men.

The Society is now divided into the following electoral districts, viz., Bishop Auckland, Spennymoor, the Shildons, Butterknowle and Evenwood, Coundon and Close House, and West Auckland.

The method of voting for the election of the Committee has been a matter of evolution, and the system now in operation arrived at by degrees. First, the election was by show of hands in the General Meeting, then by a ballot vote in the meetings, next the system of voting at the shops (as recorded in Chapter XI.), and, finally, the present method of delivering voting papers to the members at their residences, the papers being delivered by an employé one day and collected in ballot boxes the next, and counted on the Saturday preceding the Half-yearly Meeting. This system, while it involves considerable labour and expense, is the most satisfactory, as by it each member is afforded an opportunity of voting, and the members elected may be said to fairly represent the choice of their constituency.

Elsewhere we give a list of the men, who have been selected in the fifty years of the Society's existence, to be its Directorate and Managing Board. This list is lengthy, the names numerous, and much as they deserve it, and much as we would like to give some reference to them separately, the exigencies of space forbid. Although drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of the workers, they represent the various grades into which the working class is divided. Many of them were men of weight and worth and influence, of strong individuality and well-defined lines of character, who could command attention and recognition, and their memories survive to succeeding generations ; while there was ever a sprinkling of commonplace men, without any outstanding features or well-marked traits of character, but who did their duty according to their ability. The list embraces various types and shades, both in mental calibre, in temperament, in outlook, and in disposition. Some were idealistic, others practical, some progressive, others conservative, some educated, others with little learning, some great talkers and good speakers, while others were quiet and unobtrusive. These silent and

retiring men are apt to be overlooked and their services undervalued, but it must never be forgotten that many such men do noble work in their quiet and gentle way. "Silence is golden," even on Committees, and the man who never speaks unless he has something to say which is worth saying, is a rare and valuable member.

To safely guide the Society in its formative period would require varied gifts and powers, and these the Committeemen of the early days were able to bring to its service, and they have handed on to their successors a legacy of great value. In the latter years, the Society has had a larger constituency and a wider range of choice from which to select its Committee, and on the whole has made a very wise and suitable selection. At times the Board has attained a high standard of character and ability. Of some of these men of latter times, who are not now connected with the Board of Management, we cannot forbear making mention.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON (Etherley) represented the Butterknowle district from 1888 to 1900. He was a prominent and well-known man, not simply in his own locality, but throughout the North of England. He took a leading part in the trade union movement, being a checkweighman at the Etherley Colliery, and sat for some years on the Executive Committee at Durham. He was appointed in 1900 an agent for the Permanent Relief Fund, and went to reside at Newcastle. Unfortunately, his health gave way under the strain of his work, complete nervous prostration followed, and he was compelled to give up his position, which he was so well fitted to fill. He returned to Etherley, where he lived in retirement for a short time, and then passed away, greatly regretted by all who knew him. Though only comparatively a young man he did some valuable service, both on behalf of the Co-operative movement and the industrial classes generally, and managed to crowd a lot of hard work into his somewhat short career.

Mr. WILLIAM STEELE (East Howle, Spennymoor) was another familiar personage on the Committee for some years. He first appeared in this connection in 1880, and,



James Linsley.



T. Mitchell.



Henry Butcher.



W. Steele.



Hy Jemison.



S. R. Clarke.



George Parkin.



Johnson Welch.

Past Committee-men.

with the exception of some short intervals, continued to play his part until 1897, when he voluntarily withdrew from the Committee for business reasons. He took a deep interest in the work of the Society, and, being a man of more than average ability, did some good work on its behalf. He was a good speaker, a skilled debater, a clear reasoner, and was often selected to be the spokesman for the Committee at the General Meetings. Anyone who cared to meet him in argument always found a foeman worthy of his steel, his dialectical skill, and his cold, incisive logic being difficult to withstand. He was well versed in the questions of rule and law, and was quite an authority on points of order. Indeed, his mind was cast in the legal mould, and, had he had a legal training, might have won a good position at the bar. He is still a member of the Society, although not residing within the radius of its area, and continues to take a lively interest in all its affairs.

Mr. JAMES LINSLEY (now of Black Boy, but formerly of Spennymoor) is another Committee-man who figured somewhat prominently in these years. He first came on to the Committee in May, 1879, and from that time until 1895, very frequently formed one of its number. He is still connected with the Society, one of its most interested members, attending all its general meetings, and his voice is frequently heard from the floor of the house, taking an intelligent part in all its discussions. He is a strong advocate of low prices and low dividends, and favours generally a forward Co-operative policy.

Mr. THOMAS MITCHELL (formerly of Byers Green, but now residing at Spennymoor) belongs to a somewhat later period. He was first elected in May, 1895, and continuously represented the Spennymoor district until May, 1902. He was one of the quieter members, seldom speaking, but when he did, his words were always wise, and his counsel received with respect. He was a valuable member on the Committee, and it is cause for regret that, having taken up a brick manufacturing business, its demands have prevented him from further service on the Board.

Mr. HENRY BUTCHER (Spennymoor) was elected in 1896, and represented the Mount Pleasant district until November, 1901, and from November, 1905, to 1907, he sat for the Spennymoor district. He is a well-known figure in religious circles, having done considerable evangelistic work in the North. He has this year been elected a member of the Spennymoor Urban District Council.

Mr. SAMPSON R. CLARKE (Cockfield) has represented the Butterknowle district for four years, viz., May, 1900, to May, 1902, and May, 1904, to May, 1906, and in these years showed great devotion to his work.

Mr. RICHARD BROWN, J.P. (Auckland Park), has also had four years' service, viz., May, 1901, to 1903, and May, 1905, to 1907. He holds the proud distinction of being the first *bona fide* miner in the locality to have had accorded to him the honour of being made a Justice of the Peace for the county of Durham. He was for many years a deputy overman at the Auckland Park Colliery, and was held in the highest esteem both by his fellow-workmen and employers, and the honour which was bestowed upon him gave the utmost satisfaction to all who knew him. He afterwards got an appointment as School Attendance Officer, and has just lately been appointed Assistant Overseer and Rate Collector for the Coundon Grange Parish.

Mr. ROBERT WILLEY (Ferryhill) occupied a seat on the Committee from November, 1901, to 1903, and November, 1907, to 1908. He holds various offices in the Ferryhill district—clerk of Parish Council, assistant overseer and rate collector, and is a prominent and highly respected figure in the locality.

Mr. ARTHUR BROWN (Close House) is the son of Mr. Richard Brown, J.P., and succeeded in securing his father's seat in May, 1903, and has served altogether three years. Being a joiner by trade, he has been able to render good service to the Committee at times.

Mr. THOMAS TOMLIN (Shildon) has represented Shildon for four years—November, 1901, to 1903, and November, 1904, to 1906. He is a well-known figure in Shildon, holds an important and responsible post in the offices of the



COMMITTEE AND MANAGERS, 1902.



Committee, Managers, &c., 1903.

North-Eastern Railway Company's Works at New Shildon, and was for many years secretary of the famed Shildon Flower Show.

Mr. LEONARD CLOUGH (West Auckland) has had a five years' term on the Board—November, 1901, to 1902, May, 1904, to 1906, and May, 1907, to 1909. He has always manifested great interest in his duties.

Mr. WILLIAM LIDDLE (late of Butterknowle) was elected five times to represent that district, but, sad to say, did not live to complete his fifth year. The years comprise May, 1902, to 1904, May, 1906, to 1908, and May, 1909, to July, 1909. During these years he did some excellent service, especially in connection with the Butterknowle law case, in which he took a great interest. He was a checkweighman at the Railey Fell Colliery, and also held the position of clerk to the Parish Council of Lynesack and Softley, and other offices of trust and responsibility, and belonged to the Order of Freemasons.

The following note was inserted in the Committee's report to the members on the balance sheet for the half year ending September 7th, 1909:—

DEATH OF MR. W. LIDDLE.—It is with great regret that we have to report the removal by death of one of the members of our Committee during the half year. Mr. William Liddle, who represented the Butterknowle and Evenwood district, was only elected on the Committee on May 4th, 1909, and attended all its meetings up to the end of June, when he contracted a serious illness, which terminated in his death on July 18th. Mr. Liddle had represented this district on several occasions since 1902, and by his genial disposition and steady devotion to the interests of the Society had won the esteem and respect of all his colleagues. Honesty, straightforwardness, and devotion to duty were the outstanding features of his character. We sincerely regret his removal from our midst, and our deepest sympathy is with his bereaved family.

He was interred on July 21st, and his funeral was one of the largest that has ever been known in Butterknowle, the large concourse of people of all classes, the long line of vehicles, and the numerous floral tributes, all bearing eloquent testimony to his worth and character.

Mr. GEORGE ROBINSON (New Shildon) has rendered some excellent service during the four years he has sat upon

the Board of Management, being most conscientious in the discharge of his duties, and bringing good business ability and a real interest to his work. He has represented The Shildons district from November, 1902, to 1904, and November, 1906, to 1908.

Mr. GEORGE PARKIN (Evenwood) sat on the Board for two-and-a-half years—May, 1904, to November, 1906. He is a colliery manager at the Randolph Colliery, Evenwood, and the demands of his work have prevented him seeking re-election. Although not a great talker, he is possessed of good business instincts, and proved himself a very efficient member of the Board.

Mr. JOHN HINDMARCH, SEN. (St. Helen's Auckland), has a good record of four years' directorship—November, 1904, to 1906, and November, 1907, to 1909. An official under Messrs. Pease and Partners Limited at their St. Helen's Colliery, in whose service he has been for fifty years, he has good qualifications for Committee work. He is well known and respected in the St. Helen's and West Auckland districts, is a keen angler, and a most agreeable companion, his ready wit and inexhaustible stock of good stories making his company always acceptable.

Mr. JOHN ELGIE (Coundon) is a sterling Co-operator, loyal to his Society, and attentive to his duties. He served on the Committee from November, 1905, to 1906, and May, 1907, to 1909.

The following have sat for two years only :—

Mr. JOHNSON WELCH (Evenwood), a colliery manager. November, 1906, to 1908.

Mr. CHARLES SCURR (Merrington), a farmer. November, 1903, to 1905.

Mr. REECE GITTINS (Toronto), a colliery under manager, May, 1907, to 1909.

Mr. JOSEPH ELLIOTT (Spennymoor), an ex-inspector of police. May, 1907, to 1909.

Mr. WILLIAM KIDD (Shildon), a miner and miners' leader. May, 1907, to 1909.



J. W. Elliott



R. Parkin.



Jos. Elliott.



W. Kidd.



J. Mansfield.



A. Brown.



T. Readshaw.



H. N. Kellett.



J. Davison.



J. Raine.



J. Elgie.



L. Clough.



R. Gittens.



J. Hindmarsh, sen.



J. Peacock.



W. Parkin.

Committee, Managers, &c., 1909.

There are a few who have only had one year's experience, among whom we may mention Messrs. JOHN DACK, (Eldon), THOMAS WEARMOUTH (Shildon), JOHN R. CARRICK (Bishop Auckland), WILLIAM HESLOP (High Grange), and RICHARD PARKIN (Evenwood).

The present members who constitute the Committee in this, the 100th half year of the Society's life, include some who have a long record of valuable service behind them, and others who are just new to the work.

Of the former Mr THOMAS STALEY (now of Coundon) easily takes the premier place, for—with the exception of Mr. J. Raine, who already has had mention—he has sat longer on the Board than any other member now living, beside having a connection with the Society through his ancestry from its very inception. He is the son of Mr. Jonathan Staley, who was one of the very first members and Committee-men, so that he is in the true "apostolic succession." For considerably over one half of the Society's lifetime Mr. Staley has been connected with its management, having been elected on to the Committee for the first time in November, 1881, and, although he has not sat continuously since that time, he has very frequently been on the Board, his years of service numbering altogether twenty-six. His membership dates back to 1875. On account of this long and close connection with the Society he brings to his position experience, deep interest, and true devotion.

He was for many years associated in a very prominent way with the trade union movement, and put in some strenuous work on its behalf. He was employed in these years at the Auckland Park Colliery, and was regarded as one of the foremost labour leaders of the county, the Auckland Park Lodge being at that time one of the best organised and most powerful Lodges in the Union. He represented it as its delegate, and for three years sat on the Executive Committee at Durham. He was twice chosen to sit on important arbitration cases at London, and was regarded as one of the coming agents of the Durham

Miners' Association. Having accepted an official position as overman at the Auckland Park Pit, he gave up his active connection with the Association. He rose from the position of overman to be under manager, which position he filled at Auckland Park, Black Boy, Shildon Lodge, and finally at the Leeholme Colliery, all under Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, and Co. Limited. A few months ago he retired from active service, having been employed under the company for twenty-eight years. He is still actively associated with the progressive movements of the district, but no work gives him greater pleasure and joy than his Co-operative engagements. He regards it as one of his chief honours to be allowed to sit on the Committee of his Society in its Jubilee Year, and he rejoices in the marvellous success that has attended its operations.

Mr. THOMAS WILKINSON (Newfield), though not of such long standing as Mr. Staley, comes next, being just now completing his tenth year on the Committee. Mr. Wilkinson hails from Alston Moor, in East Cumberland, and is a typical dalesman—stalwart, sturdy, and true. A checkweighman at Newfield, he is also connected with the trade union and other progressive movements, and is a convinced Co-operator, and has always been a champion of the C.W.S.

Mr. JOHN PEACOCK (Shildon) has had eight-and-a-half years on the Board, and during this time has proved himself a very useful member. He is a native of Shildon, and has taken a very prominent part in its public life. For nine years he has been a member of the Shildon Urban District Council, acting as its Chairman one year, and for three years has represented the district on the Board of Guardians. He has twice contested in the Labour interest a seat on the Durham County Council, and, though unsuccessful on both occasions, the number of votes that he polled showed that he had the confidence of a large number of the people. He is a manager of the St. John's Church Schools. He has always been a pronounced trade unionist and an ardent Co-operator, and has associated the principles of the two movements very closely together. He has

had at times to suffer for his adhesion to, and advocacy of, trade unionism, having been made a marked man and unable to get employment at the collieries. For some years he has been checkweighman at the Adelaide Colliery, and is looked upon as one of the leaders of the Labour movement. On two occasions he has been selected to sit on the Durham Miners' Executive, and is also a member of the Executive of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund.

MR. JOHN W. ELLIOTT (Spennymoor) comes next to Mr. Peacock, as he is now sitting his sixth year, having only been two years off the Board since his first election in 1902. He represents Spennymoor district, where he resides, and his popularity among the people is evidenced by the number of public bodies on which he has been elected to represent them. Although a working man, he has sat since 1904 on the Durham County Council, having been returned without a contest at the last two elections. He also sits on the Board of Guardians as a Spennymoor member, and has a seat on the Assessment Committee. He, too, is a great trade unionist, and has sat for one year on the Durham Executive Committee. He brings to his work on the Committee a well-balanced mind, and, although only a young man comparatively, and a progressive, he never favours wild or extravagant schemes.

MR. SAMUEL MAWSON (Leeholme) represents the Coundon district, and has had three years' experience. He is a Northumbrian and hails from Morpeth. He, too, is a checkweighman, a trade unionist, and has had experience in public work, having sat on the Board of Guardians for several years.

MR. GEORGE SNAITH (West Auckland) is sitting his second year, and is likely to prove a useful member. He has been elected this year to represent West Auckland on the Board of Guardians, and also sits on the Parish Council. Like the others we have mentioned, he sits in the miners' interests, being also a checkweighman. Quiet in his demeanour, he has a store of good common sense, and has just a touch of dry humour which adds spice to his occasional utterances.

Mr. THOMAS DAVIS (Cockfield), another checkweighman, is just completing his second year as a representative of the Butterknowle and Evenwood district. He, too, has had considerable experience in public work, being one of the first working men to be appointed on a public body, when he was selected to sit on the Burial Board and Rural Sanitary Committee of the Evenwood Parish. He has served six years on the Barnard Castle Rural District Council, and on the Teesdale Board of Guardians. He has been a member of the Cockfield Parish Council since the passing of the Local Government Act, and is now Chairman for the fifth year. In 1898 he secured a seat on the Durham County Council for the Teesdale Division, holding the seat for nine years, and serving on the following Committees :—Asylum, Works, and Education, besides being a member of the Agricultural Committee, of the Armstrong College, and is local manager of two Elementary Schools. He unsuccessfully contested the Witton-le-Wear Division this year. He takes a keen interest in all movements for the uplifting of the class to which he belongs, especially on the education question, and has been co-opted to sit on the Durham County Education Committee this year. As a politician he belongs to the advanced progressive school. He is an interesting personality. Born at Evenwood, he commenced work at an early age as a trapper boy, and was afterwards for some time engaged in agricultural work. He is a fine type of the more intelligent section of the working class, is well read, has a good acquaintance with the English classics, can converse most intelligently on or about any topic, and is an effective speaker. To his work on the Committee of this Society he gives intelligent and active attention as well as to all his other duties.

Mr. WILLIAM PARKIN (Evenwood) is the colleague of Mr. Davis, and is sitting his second year. He is the brother of Mr. George Parkin, and is of the quieter type, not having much to say, but is always ready to act when called upon. He is an overman at the Randolph Colliery.

The other three members of the Board are all just completing their first year, and, if re-elected, will undoubtedly prove to be efficient members.

Mr. JOHN ELLIOTT represents Shildon, where he was born, where most of his life has been spent, and where he is highly respected. An assurance agent by business, he has spent most of his public life in religious work, being one of the most active members of the Primitive Methodist Church there, and holds the offices of local preacher, trustee, and superintendent of the Sabbath School. The latter office he has held for twenty-one years, and, in view of his efficient services in this office, his fellow-teachers some time since made him a presentation of a marble timepiece. He takes a deep interest in his Co-operative work, and has been most attentive to his duties.

Mr. WILLIAM FOSTER represents Spennymoor. He was for many years an employé under the Society, being engaged as a wagonman. He was obliged to give up this work on account of his health failing, but continues to be an active member of the Society. His experience as an employé has been of great advantage to him and to the Committee while he has had a seat thereon, and has enabled him to contribute advice based on practical experience, which has at times been valuable.

Mr. JOHN HINDMARCH, JUN., is the son of Mr. John Hindmarch, sen., and for six months they sat together on the Board, an event which is unique in the history of the Society. During his year of office Mr. Hindmarch has been of great value to the Committee. Being engineer at St. Helen's Colliery, and, possessing a thoroughly practical knowledge of electricity, he has been able to give expert advice and render expert help to the Management in their work of fitting up the Bakery with electrical plant, and also replacing the gas engine at the Central with electric motors. He represents the West Auckland district, and is a most agreeable member.

As we write these lines it is known that a change will take place in the personnel of the Committee in the coming year, and that some of the sitting members will be replaced.

by others who have been selected to take their seats—some of them new to the work, and others who have had previous experience on the Board, but it is the men whose names we have mentioned, or whose names appear in the list appended to this book, who have had the honour of guiding the course of the Society during its fifty years' existence.

The newer men will have their record in the next history that may be written—and it is an honour of no small degree.

The work of a Committee-man is not all pleasant; there are many experiences connected with it that cause pain and anxiety and unrest, but it is the universal testimony of those who have sat on the Board that, notwithstanding these less pleasurable experiences, the associations of the Board have been enjoyable, and that to be connected with such a growing and progressive institution has given unbounded satisfaction.

BRANCH MANAGERS.

The *Branch Managers* of the Society hold very responsible positions, and must be classed amongst the most important of its servants.

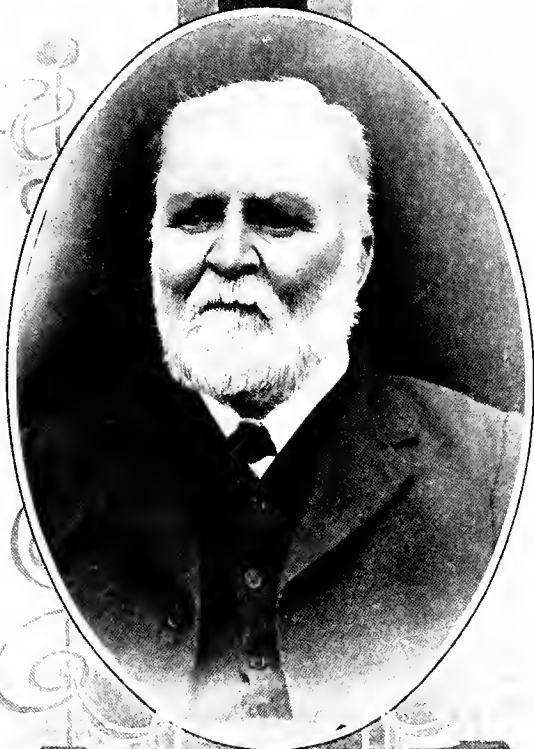
As these Branches are situate at a distance from the Central, and are therefore to some extent cut off from direct touch with, and control from, the central authority, the men who have been put in charge of these shops must possess the power of initiative, and be able to act upon their own responsibility very often. Although they are directly responsible to the General Manager, and receive their orders from him, a considerable amount of discretionary power is necessarily entrusted to them. And it may safely be said that, upon the whole, they have served the Society well.

The Spennymoor Branch has had three Managers :—

Mr. WILLIAM CRAKE, who followed Mr. Kellett, commenced his duties with the Society as a general counter-hand at the Central. Being a man of more than average business ability, he was promoted to the office, where he rose to be Head Clerk, and from that position he was selected to manage the Spennymoor Branch. He held the post of Branch Manager for six years, and then voluntarily resigned and commenced business for himself.



JOHN ROGERSON,
Branch Manager, Spennymoor,
41 years' service.



WILLIAM HILL,
Branch Manager, Shildon,
34 years' service.

Mr. JOHN ROGERSON (the present Manager at Spennymoor) holds the premier position as Branch Manager, and this is so, not so much because he is in charge of the oldest and largest Branch, but more particularly because of his long connection with the Society, and the high personal qualities he brings to his work. Mr. Rogerson commenced under the Society as a young man in the year 1869, and has thus given to it forty-one of the best years of his life, and during these years has rendered it most valuable service. Commencing first of all as a traveller, he gradually rose in position until he reached the office, and, on the death of his father-in-law (Mr. Moore), he was appointed Head Clerk, and in 1882 was called upon to take in charge the Spennymoor Branch. During the twenty-eight years he has stood at the head of this important Branch it has shown remarkable progress, its interests have been well guarded, its business judiciously managed, and its affairs have moved smoothly and satisfactorily.

The Branch covers a wide area, which includes some important industrial districts. Its membership is 3,243, it has ninety-one employés, and there are four small Cash Shops included under its supervision, and, to successfully direct the trading transactions of such a concern, demands abilities of no small order. As Manager of this Branch, Mr. Rogerson has proved himself to be the right man for the place. He brings to his work qualities of a high order. He is faithful, devoted, discreet, and capable. Most gentlemanly in demeanour, kindly in spirit, courteous in manner, with a fine presence, and a power of reserve which may sometimes be mistaken for hauteur, he is able to fill his office with dignity, and deport himself with grace. His employés are kept under good control, and the large membership trading at his Branch and coming into contact with him, always manifest for him the highest respect and esteem.

Though never coveting, but rather shunning public honours, his fellow-townsmen showed their appreciation of his character and ability by electing him for several years to represent them on the Auckland Board of Guardians, a

position he was compelled^d to resign on account of the increasing cares of his Branch. In recognition of his scholastic standing, and interest in educational affairs, he was one of the first co-opted members of the Durham County Council Education Committee, a seat which he also vacated for the same reason.

He has been a student nearly all his life, and is widely read, scholarly and cultured, has a large acquaintance with the masters of English literature, and is well versed in many subjects of general knowledge. He is also a very fine public speaker, possessed of a sweet, mellow, and well-trained voice, with language choice and rare, and a diction chaste and clear. His addresses are always full of information, and appeal more to the cultured than to the popular ear. One is sometimes led to wonder whether or not he has found the niche in life most congenial and suitable, and whether a literary career, or the ministerial profession would not have provided him with a wider field for the exercise of his gifts. At any rate, he has never shown any disposition to quarrel with his lot, and has never neglected his managerial work in order to follow pursuits that might be more congenial, and during late years has given himself almost exclusively to the duties of the sphere in which providence has placed him, and which it is hoped he may be long spared to fill.

Mr. WILLIAM HILL, the venerable Manager of the Shildon Branch, has been in the employment of the Society for thirty-five years. Previous to entering its service he had been engaged in the grocery business, and his first position was that of flour warehouseman in the Spennymoor Shop, but was only there for a few months when he was promoted to the Grocery Department, where he was made Head Counter-man. This post he filled for over six years, when he was transferred to the Central in 1882, and the duties of Head Cashier assigned to him. When the Shildon Branch was formed in 1883 he was selected to manage it, and has had it in charge ever since. Under his guidance the progress of the Branch has been steady and well maintained. The Branch is so situated that it has little chance of expansion, and some of the industries of the district are not flourishing.

The New Shildon Colliery having been closed for some time has caused many of the best trading members of the Branch to remove away, yet, all the same, the interests of the Branch have been well maintained, and it has kept its hold of the community. It has a membership of 2,950, employs eighty-one hands, and has a Cash Shop at New Shildon doing a good trade.

Mr. Hill has proved himself to be a careful and capable Manager. Perhaps the one word which will most fitly describe him is the word "faithful." Fidelity is the watchword of his life and the keynote of his character. He is a slave to duty and lives for his work. As a Manager he is plodding, painstaking, and methodical, careful in any departure which has to be made, and prudent as to ways and means. He naturally belongs to the old school, and follows largely in the old beaten tracks, but, if he deems it necessary, can strike out a way for himself.

Since the commencement of the butchering business he has taken great interest in this department, attends the markets in all weathers, and nothing pleases him more than to see the butchering profits of his Branch at the top, where they usually are. It is quite evident that had he taken up the butchering trade in his youth he would have succeeded in it. The stress of years and the pressure of work are making their impress upon him, but he sticks faithfully to his post, and works with all his wonted zest in the interests of the Society he dearly loves.

The Butterknowle Branch has had two Managers :—

Mr. JAMES A. PARKIN filled the post from 1885, when the Branch was formed, until 1908, when he was transferred to the Grocery Department at the Central.

Considering the sequestered situation of the district covered by this Branch, the long distance many of the places lie from the shop, and the difficulties that have to be met and overcome, the progress made in membership and business during the thirteen years this young man was in charge must be considered very satisfactory. The number of members at the Branch in March, 1908, was 1,274, the

business done equalled £766 per week, and the number of employes was twenty-nine. Mr. Parkin entered the Society's service as a youth, and has been employed under it for thirty-seven years.

The other Branch Managers have all been but recently appointed, and have got their spurs to win.

Mr. JOHN GENT, who succeeded Mr. Parkin at Butterknowle in 1908, has thirty-two years' service under the Society.

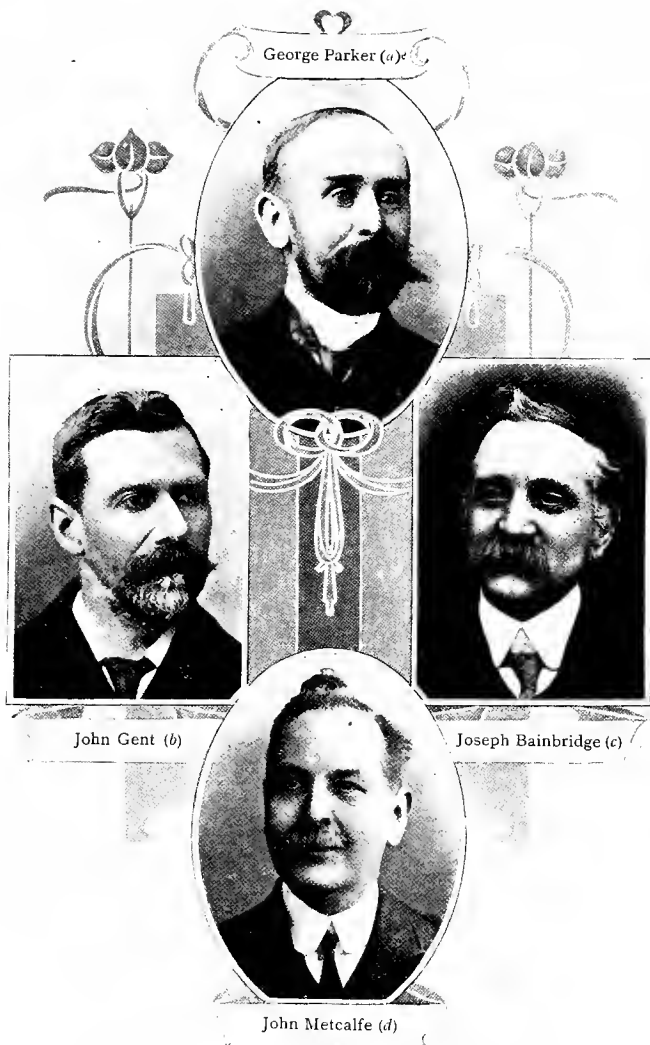
He served for some time as a wagon-man at the Central, and then was appointed traveller. When the Close House Shop was opened he was selected to take charge of it, and remained in that position until appointed to the Butterknowle managership. He has sought to qualify himself for his work as a Manager, having studied in the Co-operative Union Classes, and successfully passed his examination in book-keeping.

Mr. GEORGE PARKER has charge of the Coundon Branch. He hails from Spennymoor, and began his duties as a boy in the Spennymoor Branch in the year 1874. He gradually worked his way up, continuing at Spennymoor until the Shildon Branch was opened, when he was removed to that Branch and appointed head of its Grocery Department. This appointment he held until the formation of the Coundon Branch, when he was selected to be its Manager, and has worked the Branch very judiciously and satisfactorily.

Mr. JOHN METCALFE manages the Evenwood Branch. His years of service total thirty.

He commenced at Spennymoor, and from there was removed to the Central in 1903, where he was first counter-man. He has managed the Evenwood Branch from its commencement with credit.

Mr. JOSEPH BAINBRIDGE is the Manager at Ferryhill Station Branch. He, too, is an old Spennymoor employe, commencing there in 1875. Prior to his appointment to Ferryhill Station he held the post of Head Clerk and Cashier at the Spennymoor Branch.



(a)	Branch Manager, Coundon	- - -	35 Years' Service.
(b)	" " Butterknowle	- 32	" "
(c)	" " Ferryhill Station	34	" "
(d)	" " Evenwood	- - 30	" "

Branch Managers.



GROUP OF EMPLOYEES (17) TAKEN 1872.
Present Number is 519

The Ferryhill Station Branch is steadily growing, and, in his management, Mr. Bainbridge has the advantage of the assistance and supervision of Mr. Rogerson.

The seven Cash Shops that are in operation are not considered Branches, and the men in charge do not hold the status of Managers, but are looked upon as head countermen.

The following are in charge of these shops :—Mount Pleasant, Mr. M. R. Mason ; Byers Green, Mr. W. Duthie ; Close House, Mr. Allan Jackson ; Dean Bank, Mr. G. H. Jackson ; New Shildon, Mr. J. Curry ; West Auckland, Mr. J. R. Mansfield ; Chilton, Mr. T. Stephenson.

EMPLOYEES.

Much has been said and written in late years regarding the position and claims of the Co-operative Employé. Whether or not his position has been correctly ascertained, or his claims acknowledged, may be open to question, but at any rate there is a growing realisation of the important place he fills in the movement, and the part he plays in its operations. One of the satisfactory signs of the times is that the employé is being acknowledged as a factor in Co-operative development, and that increased facilities are being offered for his training and education.

We gladly give in this chapter some mention of the employés of this Society, and acknowledge that they have contributed in no small degree to its progress and success. The relations that have existed through the years, between the management and the employés have been on the whole satisfactory. It could not be expected in a Society so large, with such a variety of operations, and number of workers, that causes of discontent or complaint would never arise. There has occasionally been friction, but it has always been departmental and sectional ; of the general body of employés it may be said that they have been sympathetic with, and responsive to, the spirit of the management. This good relationship is, to some extent, due to the fact that the Management has ever manifested towards the employés a fair, considerate, and generous disposition.

We have referred in a previous chapter to the conditions regarding hours and wages that were established in 1865.* As the Society grew, the progressive spirit with regard to the conditions of labour intensified, and to-day it is very satisfactory to know that the Bishop Auckland Society takes its place amongst the very best in the movement so far as the treatment of its employés is concerned. When the agitation for forty-eight hours per week began, Bishop Auckland was amongst the earliest of the Societies to fall into line, and, in August, 1892, decided to adopt the forty-eight hours week. This arrangement applies to all departments, distributive and productive, except the Bakery just commencing, where the district rate of fifty-four hours has been fixed, but, when fairly established, there is no doubt this department will be placed on an equal footing with the others. A half-day holiday is given each week, and also a full week in each year to all hands, the heads of departments having eight days. In addition to this, in cases of absence through *bona fide* sickness, three weeks' pay is allowed in each half year.

The scale of wages is modelled on the same broad and generous lines. The 6s. per week, fixed in 1865 for the first year of apprenticeship, was raised to 7s., gradually rising until at the age of twenty-one they become journeymen, and received the minimum journeyman's wage, 21s.

This continued until 1900, when the question was raised in the Committee, of having the apprentices' wages revised and the minimum increased. The question was referred to the General Manager to prepare a scale on the lines that had been suggested in the discussion on the matter. The scheme was presented, and, after some modifications, adopted, by which male employés in the general departments might commence at the age of 13, 14, or 15† years at 7s. per week, rising by a proportionate scale until they reach the age of twenty-one, when they became journeymen at the minimum of 24s. per week.

* Chapter VI. † The 15 was afterwards deleted.

Female apprentices commence at fifteen years of age with a wage of 4s. per week, rising until at the age of twenty-one years they would receive 16s. per week.

This arrangement was decided on in June, 1900, and at the Quarterly Meeting of members held in August, 1900, a resolution was passed highly commending the action of the Committee in raising the standard wages of apprentices, and especially in fixing the minimum wage of male servants at 24s. per week.

In the latter part of the same year, a general increase in the wages of the miners and other workmen of the district took place, and at the same time there was a rise in the prices of nearly all the staple commodities of life. The Committee took this matter into consideration, as it affected the employés, and, in view of this general rise in wages and the consequent cost of living caused by the rise of prices, they decided to grant an increase to all datal hands of five per cent. This brought the minimum wage of males up to 25s. 2d., and of females to 16s. 10d., which rate has remained in operation till the present. The wages of all hands over twenty-one years of age are revised each half year by the Committee, and advances granted according to term of service, nature of employment, or as special circumstances may demand.

All other questions affecting the interests or well-being of the employés, are considered and decided in the same broad, liberal spirit as that which has fixed their wages and hours of service. This is something which must be placed to the credit of the management, and gives distinction to the Society.

At the same time it is but due to say, that, as a class, the employés are equally a credit to the Society, and have proved themselves worthy of the treatment they have received. For general efficiency, intelligence, and morality, they need not be afraid to stand in comparison with any other equal number of their class and station.

It is cause for gratification that, considering the large number of hands employed, the peculiar position they occupy, and the numerous insidious temptations that

place themselves in their way; that the number of delinquents is very small, and the cases where the Committee are called upon to deal with transgressors are very rare. Only once in the history of the Society has there been what may be termed a serious breach of trust. The high-toned example and standard of conduct shown by the Managers and those in authority may account for some of this, but, at the same time, the credit of the effects must be placed to the account of the employés. Amongst their ranks are many who, for general excellence, stand high, both as individuals and as workmen. The limitations of space forbid us specially naming all who merit mention, but at the risk of being considered invidious I cannot forbear naming a few.

Mr. JOSEPH HALL, Head Cashier at the Central, is one who, because of his position, his connections with the Society, and his personality, must have a place in these records. He occupies a most important and responsible place, the huge cash transactions of the Society having to pass through his hands, and when it is stated that these exceed over one million pounds per year, some idea of the responsibility involved therein may be gathered.

Mr. Hall has been an employé since 1880, and completes his thirtieth year on June 15th, and it is worthy of notice that he was selected from being a Committee-man to be an employé. He was on two occasions elected to sit on the Committee. His first position was that of clerk in the office, and he gradually rose until he became Head Clerk, and in 1899 was called upon to take up his present position, for which he has shown wonderful aptitude. He stands next to Mr. Kellett at the Central, and, in his absence, officiates in his place.

Mr. Hall has led a somewhat strenuous life. Prior to becoming a Co-operative employé he had been a miner, commencing at the Cassop Colliery when nine years of age, and passing through all the various stages of a miner's life to the position of deputy-overman, which position he left at Eldon Colliery to become a Co-operative employé. His



Thos. Blenkin (a)



J. Hall (b)



N. Butterfield (c)



Thomas High (d)



W. Baines (e)



J. H. Walton (f)



R. W. Lewis (g)



William Stocks (h)



W. Duthie (i)



H. McCrickard (k)

- (a) Chief Clerk—31 years' service.
- (b) Chief Cashier—30 years' service.
- (c) Head of Grocery Dept., Central—41 years' service.
- (d) Head of Drapery Dept., Central—32 years' service.
- (e) Head of Drapery Dept., Spennymoor—32 years' service.
- (f) Head of Grocery Dept., Spennymoor—

- (g) Head of Boot Dept., Central—30 years' service.
- (h) Head of Grocery Dept., Shildon—30 years' service.
- (i) Branch Manager, Byers Green—35 years' service.
- (k) Head of Grocery Dept., Butterknowle—33 years' service.

father and grandfather were both colliery officials, the latter being turned out of his house because of his sympathy with the men's cause in the 1844 strike, and the former was under-manager at the Eldon Colliery for thirty years, and was a true Co-operator.

Receiving but a limited education at school, he has given himself earnestly to self-culture. Realising the requirements of his position as a Co-operative employé, he set himself to the study of arithmetic, then to shorthand, at which he soon became an expert, next book-keeping claimed his attention, and he mastered it and was able to give lessons on the subject. He attended a mathematical class, and progressed to its advanced stages, then he began the study of languages and became proficient in French. All these acquirements have been of great value to him in his work. He is an enthusiastic musician, and has acted as organist in various places of worship. He is deeply interested in the work of the Mechanics' Institute of the town, was for nine years its Treasurer, and is at present President. Above all, he is a convinced Co-operator and strongly attached to his Society, in whose interests and that of the members, he employs all the powers of his somewhat ardent and enthusiastic nature.

Mr. THOMAS HIGH is another valuable servant of the Society. He holds the important position of head of the Drapery Department, and is one of the drapery buyers for the Society. The position is one that requires skill and judgment in no small degree, in order that he may be able to keep his department abreast of the varying demands of fashion, to watch the fluctuations of the markets, and to judiciously keep his stocks right. These qualities Mr. High brings to his work, besides being a careful organiser of his staff, which numbers twenty-four. He entered the service of the Society in 1877, and stepped into the position he now fills, having had expert training for the work previously. He is most assiduous in his duties, is always to be found at his post, and his department has done well under his care.

Mr. NAAMAN BUTTERFIELD is the head of the Grocery Department, and is an employé of long standing and of great worth. His term of employment dates back to 1869.

For a short time he left the Society's service, and, then returning, was engaged at the grocery counter, where he worked himself up from the ranks until he became head of the department at Spennymoor, and was afterwards transferred to the Central to take supervision of the department there. This huge department, which is doing a trade of £100,000 per annum, with its numerous hands and multitudinous sections, demands great organising and directing ability, and increasing care and watchfulness. Mr. Butterfield has proved himself equal to the demands laid upon him, is conversant with every detail of his work, and is able to direct its diversified operations with skill. In fact, he has been due to promotion to higher branches of service, but, in view of his great usefulness in his present position and the help he is able to render the General Manager, he has been retained where he is, but none the less are his worth and claims acknowledged.

Mr. THOMAS BLENKIN is the Head Clerk in the Society, and he ably fills an important post. All the Society's accounts pass through his hands, in fact, he is the Accountant of the Society, and visits the Branches occasionally to supervise their books and check their accounts. He has been with the Society since 1879, commencing as a wagon boy in the Spennymoor Branch, and rising from that position to the office, where he commenced his duties as a clerk. In 1884 he was transferred to the Central, where he became a traveller, but, after fourteen years, was brought into the office at the Central, where an expert clerk was required. In 1899 he was appointed Chief Clerk in the place of Mr. Hall, who had been made Cashier. He has given himself to self-improvement, has studied book-keeping, shorthand, management, and qualified himself in all the branches of knowledge necessary for his work. He is an ideal man for his position, capable, painstaking, and devoted.

Mr. RICHARD W. LEWIS has the boot sales under his charge, and takes his place amongst the list of capable and useful servants. His years of service date back to 1879, when he commenced his labours in the Boot Department

at Spennymoor, and gradually rose until he became head of the department there. In 1902 he was transferred to take charge of this department at the Central, and has superintended its transactions with care and ability. He is an expert and enthusiastic musician, and is leader of the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Choir, which has taken a good place in several Co-operative Choir Contests at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Mr. JOHN H. WALTON is the head of the Grocery Department at Spennymoor, and has been an employé since 1874. He commenced his Co-operative career at the Central, working himself up to the position of first counter-man. In 1903 he was removed to Shildon as head of the Grocery Department, and shortly afterwards was transferred to Spennymoor Branch. He is a very capable servant, and looks well after the interests of his department.

Mr. W. BAINES has charge of the drapery sales at Spennymoor, and is an occasional buyer in that department. He commenced with the Society in 1877 at the Spennymoor Branch, where most of his years of service have been spent. He is a smart, active, and efficient head, and carefully watches the affairs of his department.

Mr. JOSEPH KIDD is in charge of the Boot Department at Spennymoor. He is a somewhat younger servant, and did not commence until 1883. He has proved himself a capable servant, however, and had the boot sales at Shildon under his care before being appointed to Spennymoor.

Mr. MICHAEL WATSON, J.P., holds the position of Cashier and Chief Clerk at the Shildon Branch. He was an employé under the Shildon and Neighbourhood Society previous to it becoming affiliated with the Bishop Auckland Society, and was taken over as an employé when the Society became incorporated in Bishop Auckland.



MR. M. WATSON, J.P.,
Cashier at Shildon Branch

Commencing as a boy at the grocery counter, he worked himself up until he became traveller under this Society, and finally was appointed to his present post. His vigorous and enthusiastic temperament, his good standing, and wide connections, render him a most valuable servant, and enable him to give great assistance to Mr. Hill (Manager of the Branch). He is one of the best-known public men in Shildon, and has interested himself in all its public affairs. He is a past member and ex-Chairman of the Shildon Urban District Council, and also of the Auckland Board of Guardians. For seven years he was Joint Secretary of the local Higher Education Committee, and is at present Chairman of that Committee, a post he has held for the last seven years, and is also a member of the Auckland District Education Committee, and a co-opted member of the Education Committee of the Durham County Council. He is a splendid organiser and leader, and has organised several local efforts with great ability and success. In recognition of his public services, in 1906, the honour was conferred upon him of being made a Justice of the Peace for the county of Durham, a distinction that has not been given to any other employé of the Society. To all his work, and especially to his duties in the Society, he gives all the energy and activity of a most active and yet prudent nature.

Mr. WILLIAM STOCKS is the head of the Shildon Grocery Department, a position he has held since 1903. He has been with the Society since 1880, serving at the Central in the Grocery Department, and at the time of his appointment to Shildon was head counterman at the provision side. He is very diligent in the discharge of the duties of his position.

Mr. WILLIAM WINSHIP has the supervision of the Drapery Department at Shildon. He commenced as a boy at the Central in 1879, and entered the Drapery Department as an apprentice. Before he finished his apprenticeship he was appointed to Butterknowle to take charge of the drapery business in that Branch, and in 1889 was transferred to his present position at Shildon.



J. A. Parkin (a)



E. Robertson (b)



John Hall (c)



Miss Hardacre (d)



Miss Walker (e)



W. Wright (f)



J. Henderson (g)



W. Lister (h)



W. Winship (i)



M. Clarke (j)

- (a) Grocery Dept., Central—37 years' service.
(b) Traveller at Shildon—30 years' service.
(c) 1st Prov. Hand, Central—30 years' service.
(d) Boot Sales Dept., Cen.—30 years' service.
(e) Head Milliner, Sp'moor—30 years' service.
(f) Oldest Employé, Cen.—41 years' service.
(g) Spennymoor Yardman—30 years' service.
(h) 2nd Hand, Grocery Dept., Spennymoor—30 years' service.
(i) Head of Drapery Dept., Shildon—30 years' service.
(j) Warehouseman, Butterknowle—32 years' service.

Mr. HUGH McCRICKARD has the Grocery Department at Butterknowle under his charge. His service commenced in 1877 in the Grocery Department at the Central. He afterwards became a traveller, and from that post was taken to Butterknowle to his present position.

The other departments are in charge of men of a later date, mostly coming men and likely to make their mark in the Society. Their names and departments are :—

Mr. R. THOMPSON	Ready-mades, Central.
„ R. H TROTTER	Ironmongery, Central.
„ J. P. AYDON	Woollens, Central.
„ N. MORGAN.....	Furniture, Central.
„ J. GARNETT.....	Flour, Central.
„ G. SHAW	Stables, Central.
„ C. T. WANLESS.....	Office, Spennymoor.
„ J. JEMISON.....	Flour, Spennymoor.
„ R. WHITE	Ready-mades, Spennymoor.
„ N. WAUGH	Furniture and Ironmongery, Spenny- moor.
„ G. SMITH	Boots, Shildon.
„ M. HENDERSON ...	Flour, Shildon.
„ J. B. ANGUS	Ironmongery, Shildon.
„ J. G. D. PALMER ..	Ready-mades, Shildon.
„ W. JAMESON	Drapery, Butterknowle.
„ G. RACE	Boots & Ironmongery, Butterknowle.
„ M. CLARKE	Flour, Butterknowle.
„ C. KIPLING	Office, Coundon.
„ J. REDPATH	Grocery, Coundon.
„ C. A. DOBSON.....	Drapery, Coundon.
„ J. H. ELLIOTT	Boots and Ironmongery, Coundon.

One of the evidences of the good relationship that exists between the Society and its employés is seen in the long number of years so many of these employés have spent in the service of the Society. It is a very rare thing for an employé to leave the Society, except by death, breakdown in health, or for other unavoidable cause, and, in the case of females, marrying ; and cases of dismissal are not at all numerous. There have been isolated instances of a servant seeking to better his position by entering the service of another firm or Society, but such cases are infinitesimal in number. The Society has given at least three of its employés to the service of the Christian Ministry :—

Mr. MATTHEW HENRY BARRON, who left the Shildon Branch and entered the mission field in Africa, and died at his post of duty there.

Mr. WILLIAM F. TODD, who left the office at the Central and is in the Primitive Methodist Ministry to-day.

Mr. JAMES W. Mc.DONALD, who left Shildon to go to Canada, and is at present in the Theological College at Meadville, Pennsylvania, in training for the Unitarian Ministry.

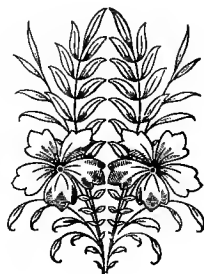
Had the labour conditions prevailing in the Society not been good, and its prospects satisfactory, it would not have retained for so many years such a number of its servants.

We here give the names of twenty-seven who have been in the service of the Society for thirty years and over, a record which we think will be almost unique in the experience of any Society or firm in its fiftieth year, with an equal number of employés:—

Name.	Branch.	Grade or Department.	Years of Service.
Mr. H. N. KELLETT.	—	Gen. Manager ..	44
" W. WRIGHT.	Central.	Drapery	41
" J. ROGERSON.	Spennymoor.	Manager	41
" N. BUTTERFIELD.	Central.	Grocery	41
" J. A. PARKIN.	Central.	Grocery	37
" E. ROBERTSON.	Shildon.	Traveller	37
" J. H. WALTON.	Spennymoor.	Grocery	36
" G. PARKER.	Coundon.	Manager	35
" W. DUTHIE.	Byers Green.	Foreman	35
" W. HILL.	Shildon.	Manager	35
" J. BAINBRIDGE.	Ferryhill Station.	Manager	34
" H. Mc.CRICKARD.	Butterknowle.	Grocery	33
" J. GENT.	Butterknowle.	Manager	32
" F. HIGH.	Central.	Drapery	32
" W. BAINES.	Spennymoor.	Drapery	32
" M. CLARKE.	Butterknowle.	Flour	32
" T. BLENKIN.	Central.	Office	31
" J. METCALFE.	Evenwood.	Manager	30
" JOS. HALL.	Central.	Cashier	30
" R. W. LEWIS.	Central.	Boots	30
" W. STOCKS.	Shildon.	Grocery	30
" JOHN HALL.	Central.	Provisions	30
" J. HENDERSON.	Spennymoor.	Yardman	30
" W. LISTER.	Spennymoor.	Grocery	30
Miss WALKER.	Spennymoor.	Millinery	30
" HARDACRE.	Central.	Boots	30
Mr. W. WINSHIP.	Shildon.	Drapery	30

It must be considered a credit both to the Society and the employés to have these names recorded in such an honourable connection, and we gladly give a place in this book for the photographs of these veterans of service, who may proudly say—

“ In nobler toil than ours
No craftsman bears a part.”



CHAPTER XV.

To-day and To-morrow.

"With simplest skill and toil unwearable,
No moment and no movement unimproved,
Laid line to line, terrace on terrace spread,
To spread the heightening, brightening, gradual mound,
By marvellous structure climbing towards the day—
Each wrought alone, yet all together wrought."
—*"Island Builders."*

Men my brothers, men the workers,
Ever reaping something new :
That which they have done but earnest
Of the things that they shall do.
—*Tennyson.*

SINCE writing the previous chapters the progress of the Society has been in no way checked. Developments and extensions are still in operation.

The Evenwood Branch has proved too small for the demands made upon it, and enlargements are being made for the addition of new departments.

A complete installation of electric power is being fitted up at the Central for the purpose of working its vast machinery, and displacing its present gas engine.

New stables are being built also at the Central, and have been rendered necessary by the demands of the Bakery. The Bakery, which at the time we wrote Chapter IX., was in course of erection, and only a project, is now an accomplished fact, built, equipped, and in full working order, and is a credit both to the Society and to the designer and builder, the Society's own workman, Mr. T. Dent. Two ovens are in operation, with the necessary machinery, and it is fitted up with electricity, both for lighting and power. The fires were first lighted on January 24th last, by the General Manager (Mr. H. N. Kellett), and as he applied the match to the fires he gave this toast, "Success to the Bakery. May its prospects be brighter

than the fires now commenced." Although the formal opening ceremony will not be held until the Jubilee celebrations, a commencement was made in a tentative way on May 2nd, in order to get the department into full working order by that time. The department is under the charge of Mr. Frank Cliff, formerly of Leicester.

In the previous chapters of this book we have perforce been looking backward, for this is a record of the past. It may not be amiss, before we write "finis" to these pages, to take one short glance at the present, and a peep into the future.

We have seen how, at the first meeting held in the Shildon Schoolroom, a small mustard seed was cast into the soil of the district, and how it took root and began to grow. We have beheld the first tiny shoot as it ventured out in the small shop in South Church Lane, with its fortnight's business of £16. We have watched its marvellous growth upward and outward, as first one and then another stem broke out from its growing trunk, and branch after branch was added to its dimensions. And now we can look upon it as a whole—its proportion, its aspect, its fruit, and its promise. It is no stunted shrub, no fruitless cumbrer of the ground that meets our view, but a mighty spreading tree, of large dimensions, of majestic appearance, fruitful and full of promise, its branches spreading out and covering an area of 500 square miles.

Its growth has been wondrous. On an average every year since its commencement—bad and good—has added to its membership 335, to its sales £12,295, and to its capital £7,789. Its total sales since the commencement have been close upon eleven-and-a-half million pounds, and the profits realised nearly two million pounds. Some of the fruit it has yielded is to be seen in the fact that it has paid out to its members no less a sum than £1,684,599—nearly a million and three-quarters—in dividend. We can understand something of the comfort and help which this sum will have carried into the homes of its members in their hours of need, and how the difficulties of many a family in adverse circumstances have been tided over through its aid.

In addition to this, nearly £300,000 has been lent to the members to enable them to purchase the houses in which they live, and there are no inconsiderable number of aged workers spread over the Society's area who are enabled to spend their declining days in ease and comfort through the aid which it has given them.

The Society's position at the present time may be stated as follows:—Members, 16,744; capital, £389,382 in shares; reserve fund, £8,915; total, £398,297; trade, £614,789 per annum, or £11,822 per week.

Some idea of the volume of its trade may be realised when we say that it is retailing out something like the following per annum in the staple articles of food:—

Bacon	243 $\frac{3}{4}$	tons.
Hams	80 $\frac{1}{2}$	„
Butter	365 $\frac{1}{4}$	„
Cheese	68 $\frac{3}{4}$	„
Lard	194 $\frac{1}{2}$	„
Margarine.....	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	„
Tea	79 $\frac{3}{4}$	„
Sugar.....	1,302 $\frac{1}{4}$	„
Coffee and Chicory	19 $\frac{1}{4}$	„
Lemon Peel	10	„
Dry Fruit	162 $\frac{1}{2}$	„
Potatoes	1,192	„
Soap	320 $\frac{1}{2}$	„
Blasting Powder	167 $\frac{3}{4}$	„
Tobacco	28 $\frac{1}{4}$	„
Flour.....	44,708	sacks.
Pollard	10,806	„
Bran	6,643	„
Corn	9,726	„
Meal	2,050	„
Beef.....	143,244	stones.
Veal.....	483	„
Mutton and Lamb	29,199	„
Pork	9,534	„

It possesses buildings used for trade purposes, fixed and rolling stock, whose original cost was £142,069, but whose value has been reduced by depreciation to £60,652.

It has investments in cottage property, £30,493 ; mortgages on members' property, £138,605 ; shares in Co-operative Manufacturing Societies, £10,605 ; other investments, including bank, £149,146. Surely this is an institution of no mean magnitude or importance.

But it is not in material things only that its value and greatness consists. It is a great social factor in the district, and has a moral influence in the community. That it plays some part in the industrial question is seen in the fact that it has become a large employer of labour, with 519 hands employed, and its wage bill amounts to £36,396 per annum. It may safely be argued that it is doing something towards the solution of the industrial problem, for the leaven of its humane and considerate treatment of employes must permeate, to some extent, other industrial communities.

As an institution it has to be reckoned with in the treatment of public questions. While it has never allied itself with any political party or sect, yet on great public questions of true social import it has spoken out with no uncertain voice, and when great measures have been before the country which rise above the shibboleths of party, and which are for the benefit of the public, it has given them its hearty support.

It gave the weight of its influence on behalf of the old age pension scheme, both by contribution and petition ; it interests itself in various ways in the question of the housing of the working classes ; it is a contributor to the International Arbitration League ; and generally supports all movements of a like nature.

There is scarcely a public body in the district where it has not a representative, and, if so minded, could decide any election that takes place.

But it is likewise a centre of moral good, and is yielding some of the fruits of righteousness. The habits of thrift which it inculcates and fosters are moral in their tendency. We take the liberty of quoting from a letter of recent date from the Lord Bishop of Durham to the Secretary of the Society. He says :—

I have the strongest conviction of the great salutary and far-reaching benefits of the Co-operative system. I hold them to be as valuable morally, in the developments of the habits of thrift and self-help, along with the promotion of other people's good, as they are valuable commercially.

The principles of mutual help, of confidence and trust, which it inspires are also moral principles. No man can be a *true* Co-operator without being a better man for it—less selfish and more sympathetic and trustful.

The Society offers many opportunities for the exhibition of the finest traits of manliness, and holds out inducements for the exercise of the best powers of human nature.

The employé, if truly Co-operative, will learn to be industrious, courteous, painstaking, and honest. The Committee-man receives some moral education, as well as business training, and develops strength of character, sympathy, enlightened views, and a broadened outlook. The ordinary member taking part in the members' meeting, or voting for the men he desires to be entrusted with the management of the Society's affairs, receives some impetus towards a fuller confidence in his fellow-men, and an increased faith in humanity.

The mutual principle which operates in the Society, and which lies at its very base, is all in favour of uniting men together and cementing the bonds of human brotherhood.

Thus the Bishop Auckland Co-operative Society stands out to-day, not simply as a great trading and dividend-making institution, but as a great social benefactor. With its various agencies—commercial, industrial, social, and moral—it is helping in the improvement of the conditions of the people, in removing some of the disabilities that belong to the lot of the worker, in assisting some of the social forces that are working to bring in the golden age, and in developing the districts' truest wealth by creating noble manhood.

So much for to-day, but what of to-morrow?

Has the Society a future, and what will it be? Will it be commensurate with its glorious past, and with its commanding present? These are questions that naturally arise at this stage.

We are told by some that it has reached its zenith, and that its course henceforward will be downward. Others tell us that its very greatness is its danger, that it cannot hold together, that it will fall to pieces, and its fall will be great.

We are no prophet, but we think that an institution with the numbers, the dimensions, and the resources which this Society possesses, has in it the potentiality of great things. True, if it is but an aggregation of loose units, its size is a weakness and a menace, but if it be firmly bound together by true Co-operative principles then its largeness is a power and a promise.

That it has not yet reached the boundaries of its possibilities or obligations will be admitted by all who understand what a Co-operative Society stands for. There is yet a large tract of land lying between its present position and the frontiers of its territory.

It is not likely that the expression of a Committee-man will be realised, viz., "That it will never be content until it possesses the whole of the west side of Newgate Street." But there are yet many branches of distributive trade that it has not touched. There is no reason why a Society like this should not sell everything its members need to purchase. Two of these branches of trade, we venture to think, lie within the reach of the immediate future—the greengrocery and the restaurant business—and if anything like the old progressive spirit is maintained these will soon be essayed.

But it is not simply in the direction of distributive extension that it must cast its eye. The great field of productive development lies before it, and to that it must direct its greatest efforts in the future. It is true it has ventured a little way in this direction, but it has scarcely

entered the gateway; the great domain is yet to win. And it must be remembered that production is the land of corn and wine to Co-operation. Distribution creates no wealth, it only exchanges it; it is production that creates the nation's wealth.

But the land of production is in the hands of the huge sons of Anak, and they have got to be driven out and the land conquered. Can this be done?

There are voices saying, "Let us go up and possess the good land, for we are well able." There are others saying, "The land is peopled with giants, and the walls are high."

The future of Co-operation and the destiny of the Bishop Auckland Society depend greatly on whether the counsels of its optimistic Calebs or its pessimistic croakers shall prevail.

The only direction in which a forward policy is desirable, however, is not in mere trade transactions, but there is great need for a fuller expression of a large Co-operative spirit. There is great danger that a mere dividend-making temper should dominate the Society, and this danger must be faced and met. The obligation to place the benefits of the Society within the reach of the very poorest of the community should never be lost sight of.

And how small is the help rendered to philanthropic agencies by the Society. True, it contributes a few pounds annually, but how small the amount in proportion to its resources and obligations. So long as philanthropic efforts are to be maintained by voluntary aid, the obligations of a Society like Bishop Auckland are great.

And what shall be said about Co-operative education? In this particular the Society occupies a very backward position. Very little is being done to disseminate the essential elements of Co-operation amongst the people, to instruct them in its true principles, or present its great ideals before their minds, and yet this is of vital importance. No Society can truly prosper unless it lives up to the

principles of the movement, and except these principles are continuously being brought before the attention of the members, they are in danger of being lost sight of, and lesser ideas prevailing.

A larger proportion of its vast profits and resources might legitimately be devoted to educational purposes.

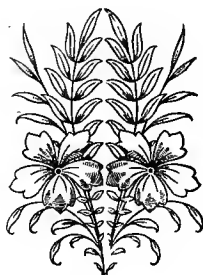
These are a few of the open doors that stand before the Society. Whether the future will be worthy of the past will depend largely upon whether or not it will arise and enter in. If it boldly and courageously does so,

“Going forward, breast and back as either should be,”

then its future is assured, and it may

“Greet the unseen with a cheer.”

THE END.



Officials of the Society from 1860 to 1910.

TRUSTEES.

Mr. JOHN WALTON	1860 to 1862
„ JAMES LITTLE	1860 „ 1861
„ RICHARD MORLEY	1860 „ 1862
„ JOHN HUDSON	1861 „ 1862

PRESIDENTS.

Mr. THOMAS MITCHINSON	1881 to 1886
„ JOHN RAINE	1886 „ 1903
„ WILLIAM HOUSE	1903 „ 1907
„ JOHN MANSFIELD	1907 „ 1910

SECRETARIES.

Mr. JOHN HENDERSON.....	1860 to 1861
„ JOHN TINKLER	1861 „ 1862
„ GEORGE BURRELL	1862 „ 1863
„ WILLIAM MOORE	1863 „ 1867
„ WILLIAM EALES.....	1867 „ 1869
„ JOHN COWEY	1869 „ 1871
„ JACOB CRAWFORD	1871 „ 1880
„ JOHN Mc.CRICKARD (<i>pro tem</i>)	1880 —
„ A. W. MONK	1880 „ 1882
„ JAMES LINDAY	1882 „ 1890
„ STEPHENSON STOBBS.....	1890 „ 1898
„ THOMAS READSHAW	1898 „ 1910

TREASURERS.

Mr. WILLIAM MOORE	1860 to 1862
„ GEORGE BURRELL	1862 —
„ RALPH BROWN	1862 „ 1863
„ JOHN HUDSON	1863 „ 1864
„ JOHN SIMPSON	1864 „ 1868
„ JONATHAN PARKIN	1868 „ 1897
„ JAMES DAVISON	1898 „ 1903
„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.....	1903 „ 1904
„ JAMES DAVISON	1904 „ 1910

COMMITTEES.

1860.

Mr. JOHN SIMPSON.	Mr. WILLIAM COATES.
„ JOHN HUDSON.	„ WILLIAM EARNSHAW.
„ MARTIN SEWELL.	„ HENRY WELCH.
„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.	„ WILLIAM MUSGRAVE.
„ RALPH BROWN.	„ JOHN TINKLER.
Mr. WILLIAM THOMPSON.	

1861.

Mr. MARTIN SEWELL.	Mr. HENRY WELCH.
„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.	„ WILLIAM MUSGRAVE.
„ JOHN SIMPSON.	„ WILLIAM COATES.
„ THOMAS ROBSON.	„ ABSALOM ALDERSON.
„ JOHN HUDSON.	„ ALFRED WITTON.
„ JOHN BELL.	„ C. W. CHRISTOPHER.

1862.

Mr. JOHN SIMPSON.	Mr. ALFRED WITTON.
„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.	„ C. W. CHRISTOPHER.
„ MARTIN SEWELL.	„ ABSALOM ALDERSON.
„ THOMAS ROBSON.	„ JOHN BLENKINSOP.
„ BENJAMIN SURTEES.	„ WILLIAM WOOD.
„ JOHN TINKLER.	„ WILLIAM COATES.
„ WILLIAM EALES.	„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.
„ JOHN BELL.	„ JOHN PESCOD.

1863.

Mr. HENRY MUSGRAVE.	Mr. JOHN BLENKINSOP.
„ MARTIN SEWELL.	„ JOHN TINKLER.
„ BENJAMIN SURTEES.	„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.
„ WILLIAM EALES.	„ ABSALOM ALDERSON.
„ WILLIAM DAVISON.	„ JOHN PESCOD.
„ THOMAS MUSGRAVE.	„ RICHARD MORLEY.
„ JOSEPH GLEGHORN.	„ MICHAEL DOUGLASS.
Mr. JOHN SMITH.	

1864.

Mr. WILLIAM DAVISON.	Mr. RICHARD MORLEY.
„ THOMAS MUSGRAVE.	„ ABSALOM ALDERSON.
„ JOSEPH GLEGHORN.	„ MARTIN SEWELL.
„ MICHAEL DOUGLASS.	„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.
„ JOHN SMITH.	„ JOHN PESCOD.
„ JOHN BLENKINSOP.	„ HUNTER NEVISON.
„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	„ GEORGE ELLIOTT.
„ ROBERT GREY.	„ WILLIAM MUSGRAVE.
Mr. JONATHAN STALEY.	

1865.

Mr. HENRY MUSGRAVE.	Mr. HUNTER NEVISON.
„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	„ RICHARD MORLEY.
„ MICHAEL DOUGLASS.	„ GEORGE ELLIOTT.
„ ROBERT GREY.	„ WILLIAM MUSGRAVE.
„ JONATHAN STALEY.	„ JOHN PESCOD..
„ ANDREW M. BRYSON.	„ ANTHONY HODGSON.
„ JONATHAN PARKIN.	„ JOHN HUDSON.
„ WILLIAM HALL.	„ BENJAMIN SURTEES.

Mr. JAMES ADAMS.

1866.

Mr. JOHN PESCOD.	Mr. A. M. BRYSON.
„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	„ ANTHONY HODGSON.
„ JONATHAN PARKIN.	„ JOHN HUDSON.
„ WILLIAM HALL.	„ BENJAMIN SURTEES.
„ JAMES ADAMS.	„ MICHAEL DOUGLASS.
„ GEORGE ELLIOTT.	„ WILLIAM EALES.
„ ABSALOM ALDERSON.	„ GEORGE OATES.
„ JOHN GREEN.	„ MICHAEL BODDY.

1867.

Mr. GEORGE ELLIOTT.	Mr. WILLIAM EALES.
„ GEORGE OATES.	„ ABSALOM ALDERSON.
„ JOHN GREEN.	„ MICHAEL BODDY.
„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	„ JONATHAN PARKIN.
„ JOHN HUDSON.	„ MICHAEL DOUGLASS.
„ JOHN LUPTON.	„ JOHN BLENKINSOP.
„ ANDREW M. BRYSON.	„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.
„ WILLIAM KIRBY.	„ ANTHONY SIMPSON.

1868.

Mr. JOHN HUDSON.	Mr. CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.
„ MICHAEL DOUGLASS.	„ JOHN LUPTON.
„ JOHN BLENKINSOP.	„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.
„ WILLIAM KIRBY.	„ ANTHONY SIMPSON.
„ GEORGE OATES.	„ WILLIAM RACE.
„ JOHN COWEY.	„ ANTHONY HODGSON.
„ CHARLES COX.	„ BENJAMIN WRIGHT.
„ WILLIAM DAVISON.	„ ABSALOM ALDERSON.

1869.

Mr. JOHN HUDSON.	Mr. CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.
„ GEORGE OATES.	„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.
„ JOHN COWEY.	„ ANTHONY HODGSON.
„ CHARLES COX.	„ BENJAMIN WRIGHT.
„ ABSALOM ALDERSON	„ HENRY DOUGLAS.
„ WILLIAM DAVISON.	„ JACOB CRAWFORD.
„ WILLIAM EALES.	„ JOHN GILL.

1870.

Mr. JOHN HUDSON.	Mr. HENRY MUSGRAVE.
„ JOHN GILL.	„ WILLIAM DAVISON.
„ ABSALOM ANDERSON.	„ ANTHONY HODGSON.
„ JACOB CRAWFORD.	„ HENRY DOUGLAS.
„ WILLIAM EALES.	„ WILLIAM HALL.

1871.

Mr. WILLIAM DAVISON.	Mr. ROWLAND FISHWICK
„ WILLIAM HALL.	„ WILLIAM EALES.
„ JOHN HUDSON	„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.
„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	„ GEORGE OATES.
„ GEORGE ELLIOTT.	„ WILLIAM KIRBY.
„ BENJAMIN WRIGHT	„ GEORGE PARKIN.
Mr. JOHN SIMPSON.	

1872.

Mr. JOHN HUDSON.	Mr. WILLIAM DAVISON.
„ GEORGE OATES.	„ ROWLAND FISHWICK.
„ GEORGE PARKIN.	„ BENJAMIN WRIGHT.
„ WILLIAM EALES.	„ JOHN SIMPSON.
„ JAMES RACE.	„ ABSALOM ALDERSON.
„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	„ R. RUTHERFORD.

1873.

Mr. JOHN HUDSON.	Mr. ROWLAND FISHWICK.
„ GEORGE OATES.	„ JAMES RACE.
„ WILLIAM EALES.	„ WILLIAM DAVISON.
„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	„ ABSALOM ALDERSON.
„ R. RUTHERFORD.	„ R. RAILTON.
„ THOMAS TURNER.	„ FRED RAMSDON.
„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.	„ THOMAS OUSBY.

1874.

Mr. JOHN HUDSON.	Mr. ABSALOM ANDERSON.
„ WILLIAM EALES.	„ FRED RAMSDON.
„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	„ HENRY MUSGRAVE.
„ THOMAS TURNER.	„ THOMAS OUSBY.
„ R. RAILTON.	„ GEORGE OATES.
„ WILLIAM DAVISON.	„ R. WELBURN.
Mr. ROBERT GREY.	

1875.

Mr. JOHN HUDSON.	Mr. HENRY MUSGRAVE.
„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	„ GEORGE OATES.
„ THOMAS TURNER.	„ ROBERT GREY.
„ R. RAILTON.	„ R. WELBURN.
„ WILLIAM DAVISON.	„ THOMAS MITCHINSON.
„ GEORGE ELLIOTT.	„ CHARLES BIRCH.
„ JOHN SIMPSON.	„ JOHN FRANKLAND.

1876.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	Mr. GEORGE OATES.
" WILLIAM DAVISON.	" THOMAS MITHINSON.
" GEORGE ELLIOTT.	" JOHN FRANKLAND.
" JOHN SIMPSON.	" CHARLES BIRCH.
" R. WELBURN.	" JOHN RAINE.
" ROBERT RAILTON.	" MATTHEW HENDERSON.
" JOHN HUDSON.	" SAMUEL AUSTIN.
" JOHN Mc.CRICKARD.	" JOHN CHERRY.

1877.

Mr. JOHN HUDSON.	Mr. CHARLES BIRCH.
" ROBERT RAILTON.	" MATTHEW HENDERSON.
" JOHN RAINE.	" SAMUEL AUSTIN.
" THOMAS MITCHINSON.	" JOHN Mc.CRICKARD.
" JOHN CHERRY.	" CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.
" HENRY MUSGRAVE.	" THOMAS TURNER.
" WILLIAM DAVIDSON.	" JOHN MARSH.

1878.

Mr. ROBERT RAILTON.	Mr. MATTHEW HENDERSON.
" JOHN RAINE.	" THOMAS TURNER.
" THOMAS MITCHINSON.	" WILLIAM DAVIDSON.
" CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	" JOHN MARSH.
" HENRY MUSGRAVE.	" R. WILKINSON.
" GEORGE OATES.	" JOHN Mc.CRICKARD.
" GEORGE RICHMOND.	" JOSEPH HALL.

1879.

Mr. ROBERT RAILTON.	Mr. JOHN Mc.CRICKARD.
" JOHN RAINE.	" GEORGE OATES.
" CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.	" R. WILKINSON.
" GEORGE RICHMOND.	" MATTHEW HENDERSON.
" JOSEPH HALL.	" JOHN MARSH.
" JAMES LINSLEY.	" T. M. COOPER.

1880.

Mr. JOHN RAILTON.	Mr. JOHN Mc.CRICKARD.
" JOHN RAINE.	" GEORGE OATES.
" JOSEPH HALL.	" JOHN MARSH.
" JAMES LINSLEY.	" T. M. COOPER.
" GEORGE RICHMOND.	" WILLIAM STEELE.
" CHARLES BIRCH.	" JOSEPH FOSTER.

Mr. WILLIAM COLE.

1881.

Mr. JOHN RAINE.	Mr. JOHN Mc.CRICKARD.
" GEORGE RICHMOND.	" JOHN MARSH.
" CHARLES BIRCH.	" WILLIAM STEELE.
" WILLIAM COLE.	" JOSEPH FOSTER.
" WILLIAM HARDY.	" GEORGE OATES.
" THOMAS STALEY.	" MARK KELL.

Mr. FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.

1882.

Mr. JOHN RAINE.	Mr. JOSEPH FOSTER.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ MARK KELL.
„ WILLIAM COLE.	„ WILLIAM STEELE.
„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.	„ JOHN MARSH.
„ WILLIAM WILKINSON.	„ JAMES DUNBAR.

1883.

Mr. JOHN RAINE.	Mr. JOSEPH FOSTER.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ WILLIAM STEELE.
„ WILLIAM COLE.	„ JOHN MARSH.
„ WILLIAM WILKINSON.	„ JAMES DUNBAR.
„ MARK KELL.	„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.

1884.

Mr. A. DAVISON.	Mr. JAMES DUNBAR.
„ JOHN RAINE.	„ JOSEPH FOSTER.
„ WILLIAM COLE.	„ THOMAS STALEY.
„ WILLIAM WILKINSON.	„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.
„ JAMES LINSLEY.	„ JOHN MARSH.

Mr. C. COLLINGWOOD.

1885.

Mr. A. DAVISON.	Mr. JOSEPH FOSTER.
„ JOHN RAINE.	„ CHRISTOPHER COLLINGWOOD.
„ JAMES LINSLEY.	„ THOMAS STALEY.
„ JOHN MARSH.	„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.
„ WILLIAM COLE.	„ JAMES DUNBAR.
„ WILLIAM STEELE.	„ JAMES DAVISON.

1886.

Mr. A. DAVISON.	Mr. JOSEPH FOSTER.
„ JOHN RAINE.	„ WILLIAM STEELE.
„ JAMES LINSLEY.	„ THOMAS STALEY.
„ JOHN MARSH.	„ JAMES DAVISON.
„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.	„ RICHARD BROWN.

Mr. JOHN BURNIP.

1887.

Mr. A. DAVISON.	Mr. JOSEPH FOSTER.
„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.	„ WILLIAM STEELE.
„ RICHARD BROWN.	„ JOHN BURNIP.
„ JOHN MARSH.	„ JAMES DAVISON.

Mr. THOMAS STALEY.

1888.

Mr. A. DAVISON.	Mr. JOSEPH FOSTER.
„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.	„ JOHN BURNIP.
„ RICHARD BROWN.	„ JAMES DAVISON.
„ JOHN MARSH.	„ THOMAS STALEY.
„ STEVENSON STOBBS.	„ JAMES LINSLEY.
„ HENRY JEMISON.	„ THOMAS MITCHINSON.

1889.

Mr. JAMES DAVISON.	Mr. JOHN BURNIP.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ STEVENSON STOBBS.
„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.	„ JAMES LINSLEY.
„ THOMAS MITCHINSON.	„ HENRY JEMISON.
„ RICHARD BROWN.	„ WILLIAM STEELE.

1890.

Mr. JAMES DAVISON.	Mr. JOHN BURNIP.
„ JAMES LINSLEY.	„ STEVENSON STOBBS.
„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.	„ HENRY JEMISON.
„ WILLIAM STEELE.	„ RICHARD BROWN.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ GEORGE ROBSON.

1891.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. WILLIAM STEELE.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ JOHN BURNIP.
„ JAMES LINSLEY.	„ JAMES DAVISON.
„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.	„ GEORGE ROBSON.
„ WILLIAM HOUSE.	„ THOMAS MARTINDALE.

1892.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. JAMES DAVISON.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ JOHN BURNIP.
„ JAMES LINSLEY.	„ GEORGE ROBSON.
„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.	„ WILLIAM HOUSE.
„ WILLIAM STEELE.	„ THOMAS MARTINDALE.

Mr. C. N. BARKER.

1893.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. JAMES DAVISON.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ WILLIAM HOUSE.
„ JAMES LINSLEY.	„ THOMAS MARTINDALE.
„ WILLIAM STEELE.	„ C. N. BARKER.

Mr. FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.

1894.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. JAMES DAVISON.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ THOMAS MARTINDALE.
„ JAMES LINSLEY.	„ C. N. BARKER.
„ WILLIAM STEELE.	„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.

Mr. WILLIAM HOUSE.

1895.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. WILLIAM HOUSE.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ THOMAS MARTINDALE.
„ JAMES LINSLEY.	„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.
„ WILLIAM STEELE.	„ JAMES DAVISON.
„ THOMAS MITCHELL.	„ THOMAS WILKINSON.

1896.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ THOMAS MITCHELL.
„ WILLIAM STEELE.	„ THOMAS MARTINDALE.
„ JAMES DAVISON.	„ THOMAS WILKINSON.
„ WILLIAM HOUSE.	„ HENRY BUTCHER.

1897.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. WILLIAM HOUSE.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.
„ WILLIAM STEELE.	„ THOMAS MITCHELL.
„ JAMES DAVISON.	„ THOMAS WILKINSON.
„ HENRY BUTCHER.	„ JOHN PEACOCK.

1898.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. WILLIAM HOUSE.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.
„ THOMAS WILKINSON.	„ HENRY BUTCHER.
„ JAMES DAVISON.	„ JOHN PEACOCK.

Mr. THOMAS MITCHELL.

1899.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. WILLIAM HOUSE.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ FLETCHER FEATHERSTONE.
„ THOMAS WILKINSON.	„ HENRY BUTCHER.
„ THOMAS MITCHELL.	„ JOHN PEACOCK.
„ SAMUEL MAWSON.	„ WILLIAM DIXON.

1900.

Mr. HENRY JEMISON.	Mr. WILLIAM HOUSE.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ HENRY BUTCHER.
„ THOMAS MITCHELL.	„ JOHN PEACOCK.
„ SAMUEL MAWSON.	„ WILLIAM DIXON.
„ JOHN DACK.	„ S. R. CLARKE.

Mr. JOHN MANSFIELD.

1901.

Mr. THOMAS MITCHELL.	Mr. HENRY BUTCHER.
„ SAMUEL MAWSON.	„ JOHN PEACOCK.
„ JOHN DACK.	„ WILLIAM DIXON.
„ JOHN MANSFIELD.	„ S. R. CLARKE.
„ RICHARD BROWN.	„ THOMAS WILKINSON.
„ ROBERT WILLEY.	„ THOMAS TOMLIN.

Mr. LEONARD CLOUGH.

1902.

Mr. THOMAS MITCHELL.	Mr. THOMAS WILKINSON.
„ S. R. CLARKE.	„ ROBERT WILLEY.
„ JOHN MANSFIELD.	„ THOMAS TOMLIN.
„ RICHARD BROWN.	„ LEONARD CLOUGH.
„ JNO. W. ELLIOTT.	„ WILLIAM LIDDLE.
„ J. R. CARRICK.	„ GEORGE ROBINSON.

1903.

Mr. RICHARD BROWN.	Mr. THOMAS WILKINSON.
„ JNO. W. ELLIOTT.	„ THOMAS TOMLIN.
„ WILLIAM LIDDLE.	„ J. R. CARRICK.
„ ROBERT WILLEY.	„ GEORGE ROBINSON.
„ ARTHUR BROWN.	„ CHARLES SCURR.
„ WILLIAM HESLOP.	„ JOHN PEACOCK.
Mr. JOHN MANSFIELD.	

1904.

Mr. JNO. W. ELLIOTT.	Mr. CHARLES SCURR.
„ WILLIAM LIDDLE.	„ WILLIAM HESLOP.
„ GEORGE ROBINSON.	„ JOHN PEACOCK.
„ ARTHUR BROWN.	„ JOHN MANSFIELD.
„ WILLIAM BROWN.	„ S. R. CLARKE.
„ GEORGE PARKIN.	„ JOHN RAINE.
„ THOMAS WEARMOUTH.	„ LEONARD CLOUGH.
„ JOHN HINDMARCH, Sen.	„ THOMAS TOMLIN.
Mr. THOMAS STALEY.	

1905.

Mr. ARTHUR BROWN.	Mr. JOHN RAINE.
„ CHARLES SCURR.	„ THOMAS WEARMOUTH.
„ JOHN MANSFIELD.	„ LEONARD CLOUGH.
„ S. R. CLARKE.	„ JOHN HINDMARCH, Sen.
„ GEORGE PARKIN.	„ THOMAS TOMLIN.
„ THOMAS STALEY.	„ JNO. W. ELLIOTT.
„ JOHN CLOUGH.	„ RICHARD BROWN.
„ JOHN PEACOCK.	„ HENRY BUTCHER.
Mr. JOHN ELGIE.	

1906.

Mr. S. R. CLARKE.	Mr. JOHN CLOUGH.
„ GEORGE PARKIN.	„ RICHARD BROWN.
„ LEONARD CLOUGH.	„ JOHN PEACOCK.
„ JOHN HINDMARCH, Sen.	„ JOHN RAINE.
„ THOMAS TOMLIN.	„ HENRY BUTCHER.
„ JNO. W. ELLIOTT.	„ JOHN ELGIE.
„ THOMAS WILKINSON.	„ WILLIAM LIDDLE.
„ GEORGE SNAITH.	„ J. T. PEACOCK.
„ JOHNSON WELCH.	„ GEORGE ROBINSON.
Mr. THOMAS STALEY.	

1907.

Mr. JNO. W. ELLIOTT.	Mr. WILLIAM LIDDLE.
„ RICHARD BROWN.	„ GEORGE SNAITH.
„ JOHN PEACOCK.	„ JOHNSON WELCH.
„ JOHN RAINE.	„ J. T. PEACOCK.
„ HENRY BUTCHER.	„ GEORGE ROBINSON.

Mr. THOMAS WILKINSON.
 „ REECE GITTENS.
 „ WILLIAM KIDD.
 „ LEONARD CLOUGH.
 „ THOMAS DAVIS.

Mr. THOMAS STALEY.
 „ JOSEPH ELLIOTT.
 „ JOHN ELGIE.
 „ ROBERT WILLEY.
 „ JOHN HINDMARCH, Sen.

1908.

Mr. WILLIAM LIDDLE.
 „ GEORGE ROBINSON.
 „ THOMAS STALEY.
 „ REECE GITTENS.
 „ JOSEPH ELLIOTT.
 „ WILLIAM KIDD.
 „ R. PARKIN.
 „ JOHN RAINE.
 „ WILLIAM PARKIN.

Mr. JOHN ELGIE.
 „ LEONARD CLOUGH.
 „ THOMAS WILKINSON.
 „ ROBERT WILLEY.
 „ THOMAS DAVIS.
 „ JOHN HINDMARCH, Sen.
 „ JOHN W. ELLIOTT.
 „ JOHN PEACOCK.
 „ ARTHUR BROWN.

1909.

Mr. REECE GITTENS.
 „ JOHN RAINE.
 „ JOSEPH ELLIOTT.
 „ JOHN W. ELLIOTT.
 „ WILLIAM KIDD.
 „ JOHN PEACOCK.
 „ THOMAS WILKINSON.
 „ JOHN ELLIOTT.
 „ SAMUEL MAWSON.
 „ THOMAS DAVIS.

Mr. R. PARKIN.
 „ W. PARKIN.
 „ JOHN ELGIE.
 „ ARTHUR BROWN.
 „ JOHN HINDMARCH, Sen.
 „ LEONARD CLOUGH.
 „ WILLIAM FOSTER.
 „ WILLIAM LIDDLE.
 „ JOHN HINDMARCH, Jun.
 „ THOMAS STALEY.

Mr. GEORGE SNAITH.

1910.

Mr. JOHN RAINE.
 „ THOMAS WILKINSON.
 „ JOHN W. ELLIOTT.
 „ WILLIAM FOSTER.
 „ JOHN PEACOCK.
 „ JOHN ELLIOTT.

Mr. WILLIAM PARKIN.
 „ THOMAS DAVIS.
 „ SAMUEL MAWSON.
 „ THOMAS STALEY.
 „ JOHN HINDMARCH, Jun.
 „ GEORGE SNAITH.



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