LIFE AND LABOUR IN DUNDEE

From the Reformation to the Civil War

by

S. G. E. LYTHE, M.A.

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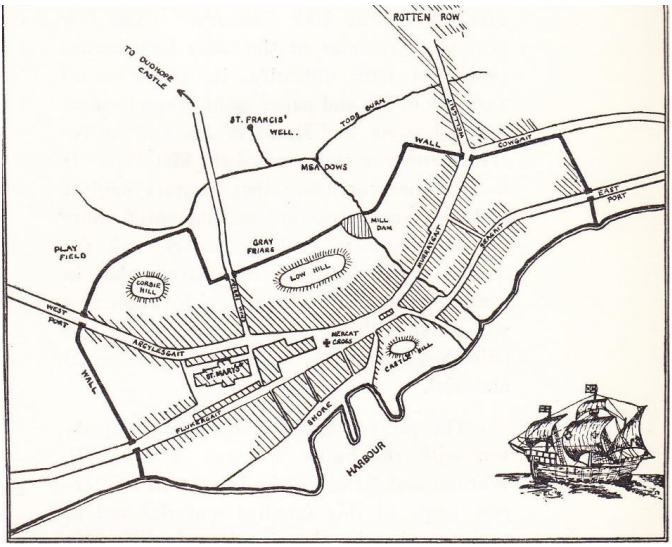
Foreword

In the eye of the beholder Dundee is a creation of the 19th Century. The few crumbling remains of the older Dundee are preserved with difficulty, its main record survives in ink and paper rather than in mortar and stone, and its form can now be recreated only in the mind of the historian. It is therefore fortunate that, despite neglect and wanton destruction, a substantial mass of documentary evidence exists, and the modern writer is doubly fortunate in that, in a more leisured age when lavish production was possible, local enthusiasts collected and published much of this basic historical material.

The present essay, slender by comparison with the bulky volumes of Maxwell, Warden and Lamb, seeks in part to reinterpret some of this familiar material and in part to break the bonds of narrowly parochial history by using fresh data from national and foreign sources. The ninety years it covers constitute a well-defined phase in the history of the town during which it rode high on a wave of prosperity only to crash into the trough of disaster in 1645-51. As such it is modestly offered as the basis for a chapter in the new History of Dundee which must one day be written.

Plan of Dundee in the Sixteenth Century.



Notes on the Plan

The approximate extent of the built up area is shown by diagonal shading. It was broken up by numerous narrow wynds and closes.

The overall distance from the East to the West Port was about half a mile.

The line of the walls (built mainly in the later years of the 16th Century) is approximate.

Part of the area marked "Gray Friars" was given to the town in 1564 and subsequently known as The Howff.

The hills within the walls were almost entirely removed in the course of the 19th Century replanning.

The street then known as "Argylesgait" is now the Overgate, and "Flukergate" is now the Nethergate. The site of the Mercat Cross is marked on the road in the present High Street.

LIFE AND LABOUR IN DUNDEE

From the Reformation to the Civil War

Divine NATURE, says Bacon, gave the countryside: the skill of man built the towns. The Dundee of 1560 had been created over the previous four centuries on a God-given site, and in the further ninety years covered by this essay the site and its immediate periphery experienced a further phase of vigorous human development. Yet in both the geographic and the demographic senses Dundee remained —by modern standards.—a small town. As ther sketch plan opposite shows, its closely built-up area lay packed along a short east-west axis, and its civic life revolved narrowly around the Mercat Cross and the buildings immediately adjacent in the Mercat Gait which constituted a central precinct. Commercial life moved out into the country or edged its way through the narrow congested wynds leading from the Mercat Gait to the harbour, there to cast itself on the mercies of God and the troubled waters of the North Sea.

Within these narrow physical confines — which any healthy man could cross on foot in. ten minutes—there dwelt a population which, by the outbreak of the Civil War, probably numbered rather more than 10,000. There is no possible method of establishing a figure much more precise: Chambers, employing narrow statistical sources, made it 11,200 for 1645, and allowing for the known heavy mortality in the ensuing six years, Small's independent calculation of 8,000 to 10,000 for 1651 tallies reasonably well and confirms the general impression of the number of inhabitants.[1] Comparatively, therefore, the Dundee of our period was probably fractionally larger than Aberdeen, one-third the size of Edinburgh and—. to introduce English standards—half the size of Norwich and one - thirtieth of that of Dunbar's " flower of cities all," London.[2]

By the test of its share of Scottish burgh taxation, Dundee stood second only to Edinburgh; taking one year with another its share of overseas trade was second only to that of Leith; its participation in the ecclesiastical and political life of the nation has never been so great as in the century before the Civil War. Through its merchants,

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[1] R. Chambers: *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, Vol II, p.163; and *Statistical Account of Scotland*, Vol. VIII, p.209.

[2] A.L. Rowse: *The England of Elizabeth* (1953), p.188

theologians, soldiers and craftsmen, the name and repute of the town were familiar throughout western Europe. Richard Wedderburne lived at Elsinore, whence he maintained a correspondence with his home town[1]; a succession of Dundonians—Butcharts, Gellatlys, Hardys and Blairs—became burgesses of Danzig[2]; when James Wedderburne was declared a heretic at home, he fled to Dieppe and settled there; when " Lorentz Gren," a barefoot pauper, turned up at Breslau, he gave his home address as " Edenburgh, thirty miles off Dondy."[3]

The relationships between the town and the surrounding countryside ranged from jealous aloofness to mutually beneficial intimacy. As a Royal Burgh, Dundee constituted an enclave of administrative and economic privilege, vigorously upheld by its own merchant-dominated Council and by the Convention of the Royal Burghs on which it was always represented. Within the burgh bounds, the Council, Bailies, Merchant Gild and Craft Gilds ruled every aspect of daily life. Down the whole scale of human activity from rebuilding a church or erecting fortifications to fixing the price of ale, regulating the public display of onions, or banishing "pandorers and guysers," there was a body within the town competent and anxious to take action. Attempted infringement of the burgh's privileges by outsiders—whether by "landwart men" or by natives of other towns—was met by firm collective resistance. Thus the Weavers' Gild frequently invoked the aid of the Town Council against rivals in "the suburbis and frie townis end,"[4] notably those of Rotten Row, then a hamlet to the north-east of the town and later to be absorbed as the Hilltown district. Similarly in 1581 the Council[5] stigmatized the inhabitants of South Ferry (now Newport) as "great enemies of this common weal" because their shippers refused to bring their coal cargoes to Dundee, and a dispute with Perth about rights over Tay shipping dragged on for almost fifty years.

In the strictly economic sense, however, the modern distinction between town and country had less validity, for the economic wellbeing of any town such as Dundee depended greatly on regular connections

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[1] *The Correspondence of Sir Patrick Waus* (Ed. R.V. Agnew, 1887), Vol. II, p.404
[2] T.A. Fischer: *The Scots in Prussia* (1903) pp. 193 ff.
[3] Ibid.: *The Scots in Germany* (1902) p.241.
[4] *Abstract of the Charters etc. belonging to the Weavers* (1881), pp 30-31.
[5] The references to Council proceedings are drawn from the Council Register, mainly via A. Maxwell: *The History of Old Dundee narrated out of the Town Council Register* (1884).

with its rural hinterland. From the urban centre, where cows were driven to pasture via the Cowgait and where a property might include "ane yaird full of caill and ingeons," the burgesses' farming interests stretched out into Angus and Eastern Perthshire: so Wedderburne, in his Compt Buik,[1] records transactions about ploughing and "muk " side by side with payments for lint and iron, and the Clayhills and Durhams were by no means unique in their ownership of extensive rural properties. By these personal activities, supplemented greatly by normal trading, Dundee drew on the Carse of Gowrie and Strathmore, both famous farming tracts, for its normal supplies of staple foods, and it is significant that except in years of domestic crop failure grain imports from further afield were rarely necessary.

Neither was the town capable of sustaining its own commercial life. The exotic foods and drinks imported by its merchants were distributed—often by the same merchants— over a wide expanse of north-east Scotland. Thus William Rollok, who appears in the Shipping Lists[2] as an importer of French wares, appears also in the Breadalbane Household Book[3] as a supplier of wines, spices and "sweet meats" to the Highland nobility. The immense numbers of skins, hides and woolfells sent out from the harbour reveal another aspect of Dundee's landward connections. Similarly the Dundee merchants' sale of flax, yarn and dyestuffs were by no means bounded by the town walls: Wedderburne, for example, often had dealings in flax and yarn with the guidwives of Angus, and a dispute about the passing of spurious foreign coins in 1611 showed that the cloth-buying tours of Dundee traders carried them to northern markets as far afield as Turriff.[4]

Social and Administrative Affairs.

The period with which we deal was, on the whole, one of solid prosperity for Dundee and its immediate neighbourhood. In a measure this is simply to say that Dundee participated in the material progress of Western Europe in general and—at least after the 1590's—of Scotland in particular.

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[1] *The Compt Buik of David Wedderburne*, 1587-1630 (Scot. Hist. Soc. 1898).
[2] The Shipping Lists from 1580 to 1588 and from 1612 to 1618 are printed in the above. After 1618 they survive in MS.
[3] *Breadalbane Household Book* (Bannatyne Club Publication, 1855).
[4] *Exchequer Rolls, Vol. IX, p.259*

In a sense the period saw the final and richest blossoming of Scotland's mediaeval economy, its strength in the towns of the East coast and its traditional links across the North Sea. The proximate local explanation, however, is the unwonted freedom from assault which the town enjoyed between the withdrawal of the English garrison from the district in 1550 and the attack by Montrose, in 1645.

From their base at Broughty Ferry the English had so damaged Dundee from 1547 to 1550 that when a relieving force arrived it " had the mortification to find nobody but some poor women and a few men who were labouring hard to extinguish the flames which the English had kindled," and thirty years later the town still sought remission of taxation because of the "wrack" suffered when the "burgh, kirk, tolbuith, steeple, almous house and uther common houses thereoff" were brint and cassin down be England."[1] Though some irreparable damage had been done—the ancient archives were in great part burnt and the mediaeval structure of St. Mary's sadly defaced—Dundee in 1550 was presented with a challenge and an opportunity comparable to those confronting Coventry or Rotterdam in 1945. As confidence returned, a great deal of building was undertaken. Thus despite squabbles about land (a recurrent theme in Dundee history) the Grammar School moved into fresh permanent premises in 1590; the centre of civic activity was transferred in 1562 from the old damaged tolbooth to a new one, a building forty feet high with a row of shops along its ground floor; in 1564 the Council ordained that its Kirkmaster proceed " with all diligence " to " put up ane ruif upon the steeple " (the tower of St. Mary's); in the 1580's and early '90's there was great Council activity in rebuilding the ports and walls of the town; the Mercat Cross—fragments of which survive—was erected in 1586, almost certainly by John Mylne whose family skill in stonecraft persisted through the centuries; and outside the town proper the zeal in building could be seen at Claypots and Mains Castles.

While the town was marshalling its resources for this material rebirth, its spiritual life experienced the shock of the Reformation. In view of its intimate commercial contacts with the Low Countries it is scarcely surprising that Dundee was among the first Scottish towns to receive the germinal ideas of Protestantism and to hear the first creakings of the ties with Rome. In 1540 James Wedderburne, having been "reasonably well instructed" in the

[1] *Register of the Privy Council, Vol.III, p.520*

University of St. Andrews, found it prudent to flee to Dieppe because of his satirical plays "wherein he carped roughly the abuses and corruptions of the papists." John, his next brother, fleeing to Germany, heard Luther and Melanchthon and translated some of Luther's works into Scottish metre. The same John, with the youngest brother Robert, wrote the *Golden and Godlie Ballates, "*changed out of prophaine sangis for avoyding of sinne and harlotrie," which, popularly known as the "Dundee Psalms," quickened and refreshed the spirits of the early Scottish Reformers.[1]

The Reformation in Dundee was a popular movement, stimulated and directed by George Wishart, the Wedderburne brothers, and Paul Methven, and protected by the sympathetic attitude of the Provost and Council. James Haliburton, "that notable provost of Dundee" as James Melville called him, directed the civic authority in the establishment and preservation of the Reformed Kirk. To this end he protected Methven from arrest in 1558, lead the burgesses to the side of the Lords of the Congregation in their conflict with Mary of Guise, and drafted Council regulations for the suppression of "papis-trie and its detestable reasonings" within the burgh.

Although the town was thereafter exempt from any major military or religious upheaval until 1645, its day to day life was neither wholly placid nor wholly moral. As a leading seaport it shared in the disputes over piracy, an activity endemic in northern waters and encouraged by the prevalence of war or diplomatic tension bordering on war. Dundee suffered especially on the English Channel routes where her ships were exposed to the attentions of the "auld enemy." Agnes Cowty, a Dundee woman shipowner, had two of her vessels raided by English privateers in 1582, involving loss of life and cargo on a scale great enough to warrant an approach to Walsingham by the Scottish diplomatic representative in England.[2] In the light of this and similar experiences Dundee petitioned the Convention of the Royal Burghs for relief from dues for any vessel "furch of France or Flanders. . . pilleit by piratis."[3]

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[1] A.F. Mitchell: *The Wedderburnes and their Work* (1867).
[2] F.E. Dyer: A Woman Shipowner, in *The Mariner's Mirror,* Vol. 36 (1950)
[3] *Records of the Convention of the Royal Burghs,* Vol. I, p.117.

Not that Dundonians were by any means guiltless. At dead of night a group of them—led by one of the Bailies— raided the *Sampsoun,* a vessel of Kirkwall "of the birth of three score tons" lying for the night off Broughty Ferry, alleging that she was a pirate ship. The owner, Henry Nauchtie, despite his unfortunate name, argued his case with commendable vigour and ultimately vindicated himself before the Privy Council. Somewhat later—in the early 1590's—the same body was confronted by serious charges against Thomas Ogilvy, merchant of Dundee, who, according to the testimony of Thomas Stalker of Danzig, had pillaged the *Grite Jonas* and stolen goods destined for the Duke of Florence. It subsequently transpired that part of the cargo consisted of "ry meill full of myttis and destroyit thairby," but the incident was of a scale great enough to involve diplomatic exchanges and reference to the Court of Session for settlement.[1]

At home the maintenance of godly discipline occupied much of the attention of the town authorities. The difficulty of enforcing the Presbyterian Sabbath—a novelty in our period—is illustrated by the Town Council's frequent reiteration of "the haill actes maid anent the profaining of the Saboth day be holding and keeping mercats . . . and anent the persones who ryses and depairtes further of the kirk before the end of the sermon"; "bairns," who played in the Kirkyard and broke the "glassin windowes" of the kirk were as much of a problem then as their counterparts are today; "women flyters," guilty of slandering, cursing or making "horrible Impratione or fearfull Blasphemies" were doomed to fine and public repentance or to three hours in the cuck-stool. Punishment for moral offence was, as a rue, a form of public spectacle, though as Maxwell observed, " there is no evidence that the public punishment of these offences . . . raised the tone of public virtue," and certainly in 1589 the Council had to provide additional prison accommodation for fornicators and adulterers "above the volt of St. Andrews aisle in the east end of the Kirk." Nevertheless there must have been a fearful warning in the fate of Patrick Ramsay burgess of Dundee, who was executed for importing false money in 1567 and whose "heid, armis and leggis" were carried from Edinburgh by a boy—who got 24/- for the job—for public display in Dundee and elsewhere;[2] and the spectacle in 1609 of John Lyon being forced to dig his way back into the tolbooth

[1] *Register of the Privy Council,* Vol. I, p.517, Vol. IV, pp. 615 and 627, and Vol. V. pp. 214 and 291.
[2] *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer,* Vol. I, p.85.

from which he had dug his way out must have been a deterrent to other would-be prison breakers.

Similarly though the town enjoyed freedom from armed onslaught it was periodically assaulted by silent invaders no Less deadly: hunger and pestilence, those "twoo buddes of the same tre" as James Harryson called them. Notwithstanding the natural fertility of the agricultural hinterland, the town's food supply was so nicely poised that unfavourable weather and consequent crop shortage could threaten immediate hardship which could be relieved only by rigid food control and urgent recourse to foreign suppliers. Thus in the mid-1590's —a time of acute national food scarcity—the Council, being deeply moved by the "greit skaith sustenit be poor inhabitants of this burgh," ruled that none might buy in Dundee "any greiter quantity of victuall . . . nor that whilk may serve for furnishing of his own house," and in such times food prices were carefully watched.

There was at least some warning of famine and, as we shall see below, emergency supplies could generally be procured in the ports of the Eastern Baltic. The plague appeared unexpectedly and its movement was unpredictable. In June 1585 it was so severe in Edinburgh that the Privy Council ordered the removal of the "cunyiehous" (the Mint) to Dundee and £551 was expended in putting the "Coyne Hous" in Dundee into working order, but by October Dundee itself was so heavily infected that the staff and equipment had to be shifted on to Perth.[1] The return of the plague to Scotland shortly after 1600 evoked a series of sanitary measures both by the Privy Council and by the Dundee Council. Both merchandise and travellers were suspect as carriers of the plague, but though parcels of flax from St. Andrews were hastily returned and ships from Danzig were held in quarantine in the Tay, the precautions were in vain. Peter Goldman, a Dundonian qualified in medicine via St. Andrews and Leyden, recorded in Latin verse his diagnosis of the condition of his brother John who died in 1607, and the symptoms all point to typhus rather than bubonic plague.[2] At all events the physicians admitted defeat: even

[1] R.W. Cochran-Patrick: *Records of the Coinage of Scotland* (1876), Vol. I, pp. xliii and 165.
[2] R.C. Buist: Peter Goldman's Description of the Desolation of Dundee in *British Medical Journal* (1927).

"Apollo-taught Kinloch" could only "sit and pray the Fates to bring the better times." The Council was less passive. A night watch was appointed, money raised for the defence of Calvinist Geneva was diverted to local relief, infected properties were isolated and the stricken removed to the "Sickmen's Yards" outside the town. There was to be yet a third visitation in 1646-8 when the wave of illness and sudden death aggravated the burden already laid on the town by the persistence of the Civil War. In deep distress the Council summoned the aid of John Dickson of Edinburgh who instituted in 1648 a regular system of isolation, the survivors being readmitted to their homes only after adequate testing and when the moon was in a propitious phase. He seems to have earned the "sylver maser" which the town gave him as testimony of its gratitude.

Dickson's observance of the moon's phases is characteristic of the way in which the townsman's daily life was shaped by belief in occult influences. A highly literate family, such as the Wedderburnes, had for its guidance an assortment of startlingly titled books: *Of Ghosts and Spirites Walking by Night, and of Strange Noyses, Crackes and Sundrie Forewarnynges* and *A Discoursive Problem concerning Prophecies . . . Devised especially in abatement of the terrible threatenings and menaces;* and Robert Wedderburne and his nephew David independently noted down the "evill days" on which no wise man would start great enterprises. To minds so predisposed any unusual natural phenomenon caused alarm and despondency. So David Wedderburne, in his account of the total eclipse of the sun in 1598, says that the people in the town "with gryt fair fled aff the calsayis to houseis mourning and lamenting," and the crows and ravens — who were equally without forewarning— took refuge in the steeple and tolbooth and on the masts of ships a sight "maist terreble and fairful to all people young and auld."[1]

But the daily life of the more enlightened was not wholly occupied either by the humdrum business of making a living or by thoughts of death and disaster. The "common library in the west end of the East Kirk," which survived until the fire of 1841, contained about eighteen hundred volumes, some of them as old as printing itself.[2] Households like that of David Wedderburne drew intellectual stimulus from private libraries and from daily conversation with

[1] *Compt Buik*, p.32 The book titles are also mentioned in the *Compt Buik*.
[2] Maxwell: op cit, p.397

men who knew the world beyond the Tay. At times the demand for education was such that private academies flourished, but in 1594 the Council demoted these to the rank of preparatory schools so as to concentrate all advanced education in its own Sang Schule, which it had revived from the ruins of the Reformation, and in the Grammar School. The tussles over appointments to the Grammar School reveal local educational administration in its worst light, and it was more by chance than design that Dundee children had the benefit of teaching by scholars such as David Lindsay (later Bishop of Edinburgh and the target for Jenny Geddes' stool in 1637) and James Gleg who left a Regentship in St. Andrews to serve the school for over forty years.

In this alert intellectual environment a burgess might try his hand at Latin verse or send his son across the Tay to the University of St. Andrews. In 1577 the Baker Gild honoured Thomas Ramsay, "mayster of the schole," and Patrick Galloway, a local minister, both of them sons of master bakers.[1] David Kinloch entered St. Andrews in 1576, was M.D. in 1596 (probably of Paris) and was entered as a burgess of Dundee by right of birth in 1602. He practised medicine on the Continent, narrowly escaping death at the hands of the Inquisition, he was Court Physician to James VI, and his work *De Hominis Procreatione* makes him the first Scottish writer on obstetrics.[2] His tomb in the Howff and his portrait in Queen's College are two of Dundee's most precious historic relics. Hercules Rollock, an outstanding Latinist and Master of Edinburgh Grammar School came of a similar Dundee background, and no brief summary could begin to do justice to the manifold achievements of the Wedderburnes.

The diversions of the common people had been gravely restricted by the zeal of the early Reformers. Gone were the days when plays were acted in the Play Field outside the West Port, and the Council in 1568 accurately reflected the spirit of the time when it classed dancing and playing as "vain exercise." Apart from church attendance and public punishments, the principal authorized diversions for the masses were the regular fairs and the periodic state occasions. Fairs, an important supplement to the normal trading facilities, were held thrice yearly—Stobs Fair in early July, Lady Mary Fair in late August, and the Latter Fair

[1] *Burgh Laws of Dundee* (Ed. A.J. Warden, 1872), p.341
[2] R.C. Buist: Dr David Kinloch, in *British Medical Journal* (1926)

on 19th September. Great national gatherings and royal visits provided a free spectacle, a "talking point," and an occasion for a generally overdue civic spring-cleaning. In 1597 the town was particularly busy in accommodating both the General Assembly and the Scottish Parliament. The Assembly's deliberations were much enlivened by the noisy disputations between King James and Andrew Melville; the Parliament of 1597 was distinguished especially for its law instituting general import duties and for its attention to economic affairs at large. It is probable that the royal residence (roughly at the top of the modern Whitehall Street) had been reconstructed in 1589 for James' occupation, and certainly royal visits were almost a commonplace in the next eight years. But after 1597 James did not again reside in Dundee until his long-awaited return to Scotland in 1617. In anticipation of this event the town began embellishing and revising its heraldic devices, and as the day drew near undertook such a frenzy of preparation—at a cost of 3,000 merks—that "John Blak, wricht" was working on the royal stall in the East Church from five in the morning to seven at night.

In some important respects the town presented a model of social cohesion. There were no well denned "better class" residential areas in which the wealthy might have lived apart from the mob. Craftsmen, mariners, merchants, prisoners, paupers, ministers, visiting nobility and visiting royalty, all ate and slept in the jumble of buildings which lay alongside and between the main thoroughfares. There were the common bonds of the new Protestant religion and the Lowland Scots tongue, and a common liking for ale and French wine. But beneath this superficial cohesion there lay deep social and economic cleavages. In social life, as in administration, the real centre of influence lay in a compact group of families: the Wedderburnes, the Goodmans, the Haliburtons, the Clay-hills and half a dozen others, families united by bonds of marriage and economic interest. Millar's *Roll of Emment Burgesses* and the old tombstones in the Howff alike testify to their influence and affluence. Their group consciousness is illustrated by their insistence on appropriate standards of behaviour and dress, hence the ruling that "na honest merchand mannes wyff . . . pretend to weare plaidis" and that no merchant might publicly display "eggs, kaill, onyons . . . and

uthers ye lyk hockstrie forme of traide" on peril of a fine or having his "buith dore" closed for good.[1]

The dominance of this group over civic affairs was, however, challenged on two sides. Centuries earlier Alexander Scrymgeour had been rewarded for his services to Wallace by appointment to the office of Constable of the Castle of Dundee, and from their stronghold at Dudhope—a site overlooking the old town—the Scrymgeours of the 16th and 17th Centuries still intervened in vital matters of town government and periodically held civic office. It was in the years about 1600, during the Provostship of a Scrymgeour, that the second challenge to the entrenched group seriously imperilled the peace of the townspeople. This arose from the natural anxiety of the craftsmen to exercise a more decisive voice in local affairs, a claim which became more vocative as the crafts drew together into the closer union that was ultimately to produce the "Nine in One." In spite of their numerical strength and their increasing wealth, the crafts had only two representatives on the Council, indeed in Queen Mary's reign Dundee had claimed that it was more "civillie governed" than Perth because half the Perth Council consisted of craftsmen. A council so overwhelmingly mercantile in composition, and, in effect, self-perpetuating, was unlikely to initiate reform without strong outside pressure. The crisis came in 1603-4 when, led by Robert Flesher and stirred up by the preaching of the Rev. Robert Howie and the piping of Anthony Court, the craftsmen's demands became inflamed into open insubordination. From the ensuing welter of slander and verbal abuse, of appeals to the Privy Council and of accusations of riot and sedition, two concrete results emerged: the Constable, James Scrymgeour, withdrew from the Provostship (though as a final shot he kept the keys of the "common kist"), and the crafts got a third place on the Council.

These happenings reveal divisions between reasonably affluent groups: between men whose backs were well clad in warm wool clothing and whose bellies were furnished with oatmeal, flesh and wine. There was a second sort of division, based not on status and influence but rather on material well-being. When the plague was at its peak in the winter of 1606-7 the Council was informed that the poor exceeded "twelve hundred persons," and though this was certainly exceptional in its magnitude, the basic

[1] Burgh Laws, pp. 41 and 129

problem of pauperism was never absent. One of the conspicuous merits of the merchant and craft organizations was their readiness and ability to take care of their own "decayed members." Thus the Holy Blood Silver, a local levy on merchandise employed before the Reformation to maintain a chaplain and altar in the parish church, was diverted in the 1570's to the support of needy members of the Merchant Gildry. Faced, as they argued, by the "dailie persecutions of our bailyies" who refused to raise the price of bread, the Baker Gild in 1573 instituted a levy on production to form a poor's fund, named St. Cuthbert's Pence after the patron saint of their craft.[1]

There was always a native substratum with no claim on these sectional relief funds, and Dundee, in common with most sizeable towns, also attracted vagrants seeking the shelter of town walls and the scraps left over from the burgesses' tables. That this problem did not arise exclusively from the destruction of the old religious establishments is proved by Council regulations in the 1550's "anent vagabonds " who were to be punished and expelled; and "anent Beggars," who similarly were to be burnt on the cheek and banished, saving those who were "auld, cruckit, laim or debilitatit" and who might be licensed to beg. After the Reformation the close alliance of town and church and the insistence of Knox on the care of the needy forced the Council to take more positive action, especially for the relief of the aged and infirm who could neither beg nor work. So in 1567 it was decreed that two shillings out of every fine "be disponit to the poor," and in exceptional times the Council authorised a special rate for the purpose. Nevertheless in normal circumstances the Council relied mainly on church offerings, indeed in 1610 a substantial balance had been accumulated from this source which the Council took on loan. But in less than a generation these voluntary and *ad hoc* sources of revenue were proving insufficient, and in 1636-7 the Council reluctantly appointed "stenters" to assess a poor rate which, along with church-door collections, was henceforth to constitute the principal basis of the town's poor relief fund.

[1] Ibid, pp. 23, 120 and 339.

The Town's Economic Life.

The conflicts between merchants and craftsmen over town government reflect the duality of the town's economic life. This was evidently plain to Bishop Lesley when in the 1570's he wrote of Dundonians that no one could easily discern "quither they be richer in outlandis geir [foreign wares] and merchandise, or in thair awne labour and Industrie." Though, as we have seen, the merchants handled the textile products of a wide geographical hinterland where no formal industrial organizations existed, the densest concentration of industrial activity was in the town itself where it was conducted within the framework of the craft gild system.[1]

By the opening of our period the Dundee gilds were already well established and thoroughly organized. Some of the "lockit books "—the membership rolls—go back to the 1550's and 60's, and the Weavers have a Letter of Cause from the Provost and Council dated 1512. By ancient custom the crafts had a fixed order of precedence: the bakers came first, presumably because their craft was essential to the inner man, the cordiners (shoemakers) came second, perhaps because their products supported the whole man, and so on through the nine leading trades which, in turn, were followed by a group of "pendicles" or craft gilds of somewhat inferior status. Ignoring, however, these nicities of precedence, we can conveniently group the crafts by the nature of their wares: firstly those concerned with textiles and clothing; secondly those concerned with leather; thirdly those concerned with food; fourthly those concerned with wood and metal, and fifthly, and in some respects overlapping the fourth group, those engaged in building.

In his translation from the Latin into 16th Century Scots, Bellenden makes Hector Boece speak of his native Dundee as a place "quhair mony virtews and lauborius pepill ar in, makyng of claith." In Scotland, as in contemporary England, cloth was the very fabric of industrial life, and the national authorities reinforced the local in their endeavours to ensure adequate supplies of essential materials and to maintain the proper standards of craftsmanship. Thus, to frustrate the tricks of people who dealt in "mirk [dark] houses and quiet lofts" the Dundee Council

[1] I have drawn most of my material on the crafts from *Burgh Laws* and from Warden's historical accounts.

appointed a time and a place for the open marketing of the wool which came in from the countryside. Though the cloth industry had certainly arisen by the use of native raw materials, by our period these had to be considerably supplemented from abroad, and Dundee's imports regularly included Baltic flax and hemp and a range of woad, madder, alum and the like for use by the local dyers. But by comparison with East Anglia or with Bruges the technical standards of the Dundee textile workers were low, so well-to-do burgesses imported finer cloths from abroad and when David Wedderburne's womenfolk wanted a good bright scarlet for their petticoats David sent the material to Rouen to be dyed there. But the 25 pieces of fustian, the 34 pounds of silk and lace, the "100 score and 18 hattis lynnit with taffetie" and the odds and ends of velvet and buckram imported to Dundee in 1598 must be set against the 372 dozen ells of wool cloth exported in the same year[1] and against the evident vigour of the local Weaver, Dyer, Tailor and Bonnetmaker Gilds.

In an age when there was no substitute for leather its workers, the skinners and cordiners, occupied a prominent position in any urban community. The Dundee Cordiner Gild seems to have had forty to fifty masters, and between 1561 and 1650 its Lockit Book records the admission of 326 apprentices. The rarity of references to imported leather goods and the periodic export of a few leather gloves suggest that these crafts at least met local requirements. From this point of view the two leading food providers—the bakers and fleshers —were in the strongest position of all. The Baker Gild was numerically strong with a minimum membership in the late 16th Century of fifty masters, but its ability to exploit its monopoly in the supply of bread was seriously limited by the price-fixing policy of the local bailies. For a variety of reasons prices in general tended to rise—often sharply—in the Scotland of Queen Mary and James VI, and periodic harvest failures aggravated the upward pressure on the price of the loaf. It is abundantly clear that, in the public interest but at the expense of the bakers, the Dundee bailies employed their power of price regulation to restrain this upward trend. In 1556 the restraint was so severe that the Baker Gild raised an action in the Court of Session to compel the bailies to adjust bread prices in the light of recent fluctuations in those of wheat, and again in 1588

[1] Exchequer Rolls, Vol. XXIII

the bakers threatened that unless price adjustments were made "they suld be movit thereby to abstene fra using of their craft."

The metal and wood users, specifically the Hammermen, the Coopers and the Wrights, fulfilled a multiplicity of functions. The Hammermen themselves originally comprised almost every kind of metal worker: locksmiths, goldsmiths, gunmakers, swordslippers, pewterers, cutlers and so on down to plain blacksmiths. The individual skills, however, were sharply demarcated, and it was regarded as an abuse of trade usage if "a brassier sail midle to mend pewter . . . or if a peuterer sail midle with bras or copper." Differentiation went even further in 1596 when, after a dispute in which Thomas Lindsay, goldsmith, featured prominently, the Council ruled that the goldsmiths should completely withdraw from the Hammermen Gild, but apparently the withdrawal was only temporary for Thomas Lindsay's son signed, along with other goldsmiths, as a member of the Hammermen Gild in 1633.

Notwithstanding the value and aesthetic merit of gold, silver and pewter ware, the real significance of the metal and wood workers lay in their more utilitarian products. The scale of this kind of production can be judged from the regular and often heavy imports of timber, iron and "smiddy collis" and from the universal employment of barrels (which involved both wood and iron) as containers for everything from fish and wine to salt and dry goods. The few surviving tradesmen's accounts illustrate the demand for ironwork set up by current rebuilding: thus in 1587 Thomas Davidson was paid £62 2s 3d (plus 6/8d "drinksilver" for his man) for ironwork for the "beisse" (base, or ground-floor) windows of the tolbooth, and ten years later iron and lead accounted for a good deal of the £191 3s 7d spent in repairing the "bell house" on the north-east part of the same building.

Wide as this range of crafts appears, there were in fact considerable gaps in. the town's industrial equipment. The staple day to day requirements of the poorer classes—their bread, clothing, footwear and houses—were satisfied locally, and in a narrow range of more sophisticated wares, notably gold and silver, local craftsmen could satisfy the needs of the most fastidious. But, in common with their fellows throughout Scotland, the Dundee crafts were not yet technically competent to manufacture the more delicate, intricate or highly finished goods demanded by the wealthier households in the town and by the rural aristocracy which looked to Dundee as its principal

market. The Shipping Lists from 1588 and the Import Customs Accounts from 1598 provide between them an overall list of such manufactures, and the Wedderburne *Compt Bulk* reveals, in a more personal way, the kind of odds and ends which a well-to-do household bought outside the town. Thus—to give one example—the cargo-list of the *Grace*, arriving at Dundee from Rouen in 1615, comprised, in addition to vinegar and woad, a mixed lot of such harberdashery as silk and thread buttons, hats and hat strings, men's belts and "bairnis" belts; such stationery as cards, paper, pens and inkhorns; and an assortment of -hardware from pots to corks. Small parcels of silk and other high-priced textiles came fairly often, the range of small metal goods stretched from buckles to copper kettles, and there were occasional lots of "racket balls" for the players of court tennis. Wedderburne in 1598 devoted two pages of his *Compt Bulk* to his "Flanderis waring" (Flanders purchases) which included textiles, plates, pestles and mortars, waterpots and candlesticks, and when his hour glass had been broken (he had an eighteen month old daughter at the time) he had to send it to Flanders to have a new sand-glass inserted.

Perhaps even more surprising is the quantity of beer imports, for Dundee had its Maltmen Gild and from the 1550's the Council had periodically fixed the price of locally brewed ale. That the quality was at least suspect is indicated by the vigorous language used by the Council in 1614 in denouncing maltmen who adulterated their malt with oats "by the quhilk fraud the simplicity of the poor lies been very far abused," but the real local shortcoming seems to have turned on the technical distinction between ale and beer. Sixteenth Century Scotland was rapidly learning how to distil whisky, but though small quantities of hops were imported by about 1600 the brewing of beer developed slowly, and Scotsmen who preferred beer to the home-made ale had generally to procure it from England or the Continent. Hence—again to give only one example from many—the arrival at Dundee in 1613 of the *Andro* from Lynn with sixteen tuns of "Inglis drinking beir."

It would, however, be highly misleading to imply that the commerce of Dundee was concerned primarily with making good such deficiencies in local industrial production. With two notable exceptions—the coal exports of the Forth and the traffic between Leith and London—the trade of East Scotland as a whole was faithfully mirrored in the activities of the harbour of Dundee. The economic strength of Scotland still lay on her eastern seaboard and her foreign commercial links were almost wholly

with the ports of continental Europe from the Baltic and Scandinavia in the north to the Bay of Biscay in the south. Even within these restricted waters there were grave hazards: piracy and war, storm and tempest, unlit headlands and uncharted sandbanks, and the lack of all save the most elementary navigational instruments.. To minimize these risks skippers liked to move in groups—hence the frequent instances in the Dundee Shipping Lists of the simultaneous arrival of two or three vessels—and bitter experience, confirmed by both local and statutory bans, led to a general avoidance of winter sailing in northern waters. Any Dundee skipper would have been in full sympathy with Sir Patrick Spens in his alarm at the prospect of a mid-winter voyage to Norway.

Though coastal trading and voyages southwards continued through the year, the port activities therefore assumed a strongly seasonal character. The following table, derived from the Shipping Lists for the early 1600's, shows average monthly arrivals from northern waters (notably Orkney, the Baltic and Scandinavia) and from the southern parts of the North Sea and the English Channel (notably Flanders, England and France).

Month	Northern	Southern
January …….	0	1
February ……	0	1
March ……	0	3
April ……..	1	2
May ……	5	5
June ……	3	2
July …….	4	2
August ……..	4	3
September ……	4	1
October ……	2	3
November ……	3	2
December …….	0	2

An energetic skipper like Robert Haliburton would work on the Baltic route in summer and on the Biscay route in winter, but quite evidently shipping generally was laid up in winter and the busy time in the port—the "time of Thrang" —extended from late Spring to late Autumn. In a harbour which measured

only some hundred and fifty yards wide and which was served only by narrow wynds this meant extreme seasonal congestion, hence the regulation of 1560' that "na ship in tyme of Thrang lay hir braid syde to load or liver . . . but hir forship or hir starne" and the imposition of penalties on owners who left timber lying on the shore for more than eight days or who stacked it such a way as to hamper access and egress.

The geographical pattern of Dundee's seaborne trade was relatively simple and, except for a decline in the French share towards the end of our period, relatively static. As coastal trade was not generally subject to any dues, few records of it were kept and even fewer survive, but one can reasonably postulate that in an age when overland transport was ill-developed and notoriously risky coastal shipping must have been a vital element in national economic life. There is evidence that fish came to Dundee coastwise from the sea lochs and coastal waters of the north-west and, sometimes at least, from Inverness[1]; the importance of the coal trade from the Forth and South-east Fife is reflected in the appointment of a "deacon" of the Dundee " coalmen " and in regulations of the Hammermen Gild for the orderly distribution of supplies; and there are ample indications of goods being passed coastwise from one port to another until a cargo was made up for export overseas.

Measured by the tonnage of shioping engaged, the Baltic-Scandinavian branch predominated in the genuinely overseas trade of Dundee. Of 483 arrivals counted from the surviving Shipping Lists between 1580 and 1618, 259 were from Scandinavian or Baltic ports. In the Baltic trade proper, that is the trade passing through the Sound, Dundee often provided one-quarter of all the Scottish shipping engaged, and, in exceptional years such as 1560, nearer one-half, but by the 1630's the proportion was generally lower and after the sack of the town in 1651 there were three years in which Dundee had no part at all in Baltic trading. A surprisingly large part of the total Dundee - Baltic trade was handled by Dundee's own vessels, and the participation of Hanse, Scandinavians or Dutchmen was exceptional. In an almost continuous run from 1562 to 1653 the Sound Toll Registers[2] record the passage there of only twenty-three non-Scottish ships from Dundee to ports within the Baltic Sea, so the arrival in

[1] *Records of Inverness* (New Spalding Club, 1911) p.219.

[2] I have discussed the value of these to Scottish historians in Scottish Trade with the Baltic in *Dundee Economic Essays* (Ed. J.K. Eastham, 1953)

1615 of John Cradindik in "ane schip of Traillsound" (Stralsund) with a cargo of mixed grain from the Baltic must have aroused lively interest at the Dundee harbour.

Within the Baltic, Dundee traded mainly with Danzig, Konigsberg ("Queinsbrig" to the Dundee harbour clerks), and, increasingly as the years passed, with Stockholm. The undertaking of so long a voyage (it is 850 miles from Dundee to Danzig) with the threat of pirates, the queueing and tolls at Elsinore, and the knowledge that excessive delay might mean a winter in the ice, testifies to the high esteem in which Dundee merchants and skippers held these Baltic markets. Their staple purchases there consisted primarily of industrial raw materials: flax and hemp, iron and copper, potash, pitch and tar, timber and a few minor items such as saltpetre, glass, tow and powder. Especially after about 1600 they sought their metals in Sweden and whole cargoes of high-quality iron from Stockholm were not exceptional in the second half of our period. When Scotland's harvest was poor and famine threatened. Dundonians participated to the utmost of their shipping capacity in the rush to procure the rye, wheat and peas which were normally available in the East Baltic ports from the great agricultural hinterlands of East Prussia and Poland. Thus in exceptional periods, notably the mid 1570's, the later 1590's and the early 1620's, anything from fifteen to twenty Dundee ships entered the Baltic annually, many of them in ballast, to return home with the much needed grain.[1] Wedderburne's entry in his *Compt Bulk* for 20th June, 1597, symbolizes both Scotland's need and the mechanism of these emergency purchases: " Send with Patrick Gardyn in William Fyffis schip to Dansken [Danzig] XXV lib peces Twa auld rosnoblis Ane new rosnoble and twa duble ducattis to be warit [spent] on rye."

The heavy and regular imports of timber reflect both the activity of local wood-using craftsmen and the relative tree-lessness of Eastern Scotland. The wood from the South-east Baltic was mainly wainscot or similar high grades: the bulk supplies came always from Norway whence, in a busy year like 1620, anything up to twenty timber-laden ships might arrive in the port. The distance was comparatively small— we know from the correspondence of Sir Patrick Waus that the trip could be done in four or five days in good weather —so that in spite of the tiresome delays at the Dundee harbour a skipper could get in two

[1] These figures are all from the Sound Toll Registers.

sailings to Norway during the summer season. Thus in 1617 Alexander Preston in the *Fleing halrt* arrived from "Norroway" on 23rd May and again on 15th July. Alternatively a skipper could follow the example of Andrew Ross with the *Elspet* who, also in 1617, made a round trip to Bordeaux in May-June and another to Norway in August.

Both in bulk and in regularity the trade with France clearly came second. It embraced three main elements. The ports of North-west France, notably Dieppe and Rouen, ranked high among the markets in which Dundee merchants could buy part of the miscellaneous small hardware and haberdashery and the finer textiles and clothing which, as we have seen, were brought to Dundee for the more well-to-do families of Eastern and Central Scotland. Important as these no doubt were in the eyes of class-conscious merchant's wives, they were quantitatively slight when compared with the cargoes of salt, wine, vinegar, woad and fruit which came from the coastal regions of the Bay of Biscay.

Over a sample period, 1612-18, thirty-six vessels laden wholly or mainly with wine arrived at Dundee harbour. A very few came from Spain and occasionally the place of lading is unspecified, but the great majority were from Bordeaux with claret or other Gascony wine. As a typical cargo was of the order of 40 or 45 tuns it is fair to estimate that in this period Dundee was importing wine at the rate of something like; 50,000 gallons a year; and there were some skippers, notably the brothers Kyneris in their flyboat the *Hope for Grace,* whose participation was so regular that they almost qualify as specialist wine importers. This was a trade with its own distinctive risks, for not only were wine ships singularly attractive to pirates but the crews themselves might well succumb to temptation. Thus in 1553 it was "notarlie knowen yat ye merchandis are heavilie hurt . . . in drinking and drawing of thaire wines coming furth of buordeous . . . not only at ye losing and laidining but also upon ye sea principally,"[1] and in a case raised before the Dean of Gild's Court in 1620 evidence was led to prove a loss from "leakage" of 17½% of the entire cargo.

Salt imports, comparable in volume to those of wine, constituted the third main branch of the inward trade from France. In the period under review the beaches and shallow inlets of the Biscay coast, where crude salt could be produced from sea water by solar evaporation, attracted hundreds of ships annually

[1] *Burgh Laws,* p. 16.

from almost every European trading nation, and in spite of the expanding salt industry of the Fife and Forth coastlands Dundee continued to draw heavily on the "marais salants" of France. But though whole cargoes of wine or salt were common, Dundee ships returning home from the Bay of Biscay often brought vinegar and olive oil— Wedderburrie had a contract with Ninian Coppin for the supply of " a knag of vinacre and can oyle doly howsone he passis to Burdeaux "—as well as woad for the cloth dyers and " plumdames " (presumably prunes) for the cooks.

Notwithstanding the variety of goods available in France, the Netherlands were the great trading emporium of Western Europe, and the traditional links between the Dutch and the Scots were cemented afresh in the 16th Century by common adherence to Calvinism and by common love of freedom. At the beginning of our period Dundee came a rather poor second to Leith in the Scots-Dutch trade—over the years 1561-71, for example, only 79 Dundee ships are recorded in the anchorage lists of the Walcheren ports against 225 of Leith—but Dundee's participation was nevertheless highly and mutually valued.[1] Thus in 1551 John Fothringham of Dundee ("Jan Fodregem" in the Dutch records), feted as the first Scotsman to arrive at Campvere after the conclusion of peace, took a cargo of representative Scottish exports: sheepskins, hides, "northlands cloth" and salmon. The return cargoes from the Low Countries fell into two groups: firstly the miscellaneous and often small wares which the port clerks sometimes simply lumped together as "geir" or "dry wair" and which might range from dyestuffs and candlesticks to soap and "sucher candae, and secondly great quantities of onions, apples and figs. Once again Wedderburne's *Compt Bulk* brings the dull statistics to life: " Last Sept. 1621, Sent to Flanderis to James my sone [actually his son-in-law] thre hundreth markis in gold xl ellis pledding at x s the eln . . . to by unzeonis 8 xx barrele." It was nothing unusual for three vessels to arrive at Dundee in the early winter months each with 200 or 300 barrels of onions. "Tua barrell" came in Nov. 1617 for the "boy Jon Halyburtone," and in Dec. 1580 the onions were accompanied by a packet of onion seed for Robert Smith.

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[1] These Dutch figures are extracted from *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis van den handel met Engeland, Schtland en Ierland* (Ed. H.J. Smit, The Hague, 1942 and 1950).

As the years passed Scotland's contribution to this Low Countries trade came to consist more and more of coal and salt from the Forth ports so that, though Dundee's participation remained fairly constant both in volume and in composition, its relative importance certainly fell and it became less representative.

After their first-hand experience of English soldiers in the late 1540's it is highly improbable that Dame Scotia's denunciation of "familiaritie betuix Inglis men and Scottish men" would be challenged by Dundonians.[1] The first set of Dundee Shipping Lists, extending from 1580 to 1588, record the arrival of only three ships from England, and references to Dundee ships are almost equally rare in the contemporary English Port Books. Closer political relationships after 1603, the growing number of Scottish migrants to England, and some easing of the conditions on which trade might be conducted, tended naturally to break down the old antipathy and to create new commercial contacts. In 1610, for example, two Dundee tailors, Alexander Brown and Patrick Cook, travelled to London bearing cloth, some of it for sale, some to be dyed violet and returned to Scotland.[2] Dundonians, as we have seen, were acquiring a taste for English beer and cider; England was an alternative source of small manufactured wares; and the arrival in 1637 of the *Catherine* of London with a small cargo of tobacco shows that Dundee was beginning to enjoy some of the fruits of England's colonial empire. Here, in fact, we have another indication that the traditional austerity of early Presbyterianism was not so harsh as to deny to its adherents the pleasures of good food, good drink, and a pipe of tobacco.

After the 1620's the French trade with Dundee began to decline: otherwise the pattern of trade to the port remained substantially constant throughout the ninety years covered by this essay and there is little evidence of any radical change in organization or methods. For its own use and for distribution inland Dundee imported timber, salt, iron, textile raw materials, alcoholic drink, exotic foods, miscellaneous manufactured goods and occasionally pieces of capital .equipment, notably ships and rigging. Sometimes money moved one way or the other to buy goods or as the proceeds of sales, but oh the whole the buying capacity of a community was limited by the goods it had for sale.

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[1] It is arguable that the author of *The Complaynt of Scotland* was the Robert Wedderburne of the "Dundee Psalms."

[2] *Compt Buik,* p.34

The range of goods exported from Dundee can be traced in the returns of the royal customs officers which, in summary form, were preserved in the Exchequer Rolls, though because of occasional gaps resulting either from a temporary administrative breakdown or from the "farming" of customs collection it is impossible to present a year to year picture. What is abundantly clear is that the staple exports through Dundee were the products of the rural hinterland. Thus from 1574 to 1580 an annual average of about 12,000 lambskins were shipped out, 7,300 woolfells, 4,100 "schorlings," a thousand or so "futefells," about the same number of goatskins, and the catalogue of land animal products is rounded off by appreciable quantities of hides, hart skins, whiteleather, and occasional small lots of butter. The second group of exports consisted of fish, mainly salmon and herring, and the indications are that those of herring in particular were increasing rapidly by the end of the 16th Century. Wool cloth was the only domestic manufactured product exported in any significant amount—thus for 1574-1580 the annual average was 500 dozen pieces, supplemented by very minor items such as linen cloth and yarn and gloves. The list is completed by a few goods—the £3 worth of books exported in 1575 being" an example—which must almost certainly be classified as re-exports.

Catastrophe—1645-51

Against this background of solid economic endeavour the events of 1645 to 1651 can only be described as tragic., From 1639 onwards the impact of war can be traced in the Town Council's transactions: the collection of gold and silver in 1640, the raising of money for the campaign in Ireland in 1642-3, the muster of "fencible persons" in 1643 and the strengthening of the town fortifications in 1644, but war itself did not reach the town until 1645. Its first arrival was brief and violent.[1] In the Autumn of the previous year Montrose with his triumphant Irishmen and Highlanders had swept down from their encampment at Dunsinane to the outskirts of Dundee but had hesitated in the face of the town's resolute attitude. On 4th April, 1645, after a characteristically brisk ride from Dunkeld, Montrose was again at the gates, determined to reduce the chief Covenant stronghold in Angus and, by the same stroke, to revictual and reclothe his troops.

[1] J. Buchan: Montrose (1928) Chapts. IX and X passim.

To the North-west of the town, behind the present Overgate, the fortifications were unfinished, and when the town ignored his summons to surrender Montrose attacked at this weak point, capturing the guns on Corbie Hill and turning them inwards on the town. A hectic afternoon of looting and drinking ended abruptly when scouts brought the startling news that a relief force of 3,000 foot and 800 horse was within a mile of the town. By a feat of leadership which Gardiner believed to be " beyond the power of any other commander in Europe" Montrose rallied his drunken troops and as Baillie's relief force entered the West Port Montrose's rearguard was passing eastwards through the Seagait.

The material damage had been considerable—an Act of Parliament of December 1645 speaks of the town as "fearfully defaced and disabled"—and no sooner had the work of re-construction begun than the town was striken by the plague. From August to November 1648 "the merchants' booths were closed up, and no mercats were keiped," and though trade continued to pass through the harbour the impact of plague is reflected in the quite unusual variety of handwriting in the Shipping Lists.

Then came the third and fatal blow. The pattern of loyalties in the Civil War underwent a sharp change when the extreme measures of the English Parliamentary party culminated in the execution of Charles I, and Scotsmen who had rebelled against royal tyranny found in their hearts a renewed sympathy for the house of Stewart. The promises of Prince Charles and his return to Scotland accelerated the swing of opinion in Dundee, especially as in the course of his procession in the early summer of 1650 Charles lodged temporarily in the town and tactfully knighted the Provost. The Council responded to the best of its ability by mustering men and funds for his cause, and though the enthusiasm of the inhabitants was not so warm as it might have been, the change in the town's official loyalties was enough to mark it down as a special target for Cromwellian retribution.

Such was the success of the Parliamentary forces in their drive through Scotland that by the middle of 1651 Dundee was the only town of any consequence holding out for Charles II, so that, besides its native population, it now housed a host of refugees who had retreated with their valuables before the advancing armies.

As Monk and his Parliamentary forces drew nearer the Council went into a frenzy of activity. It enlisted women to wheel barrow-loads of turfs to strengthen the fortifications, demolished outlying buildings that might serve the invaders as sniping posts, and appointed " General Major Robert Lumsden of Montquhanie" as its garrison commander., On the whole the defence was in good heart.

By mid August Monk had virtually isolated Dundee both by land and water, and, after the conventional summons to surrender had been rejected with bold defiance, the bombardment of the town began. The end came on the first day of September when, while the defenders were "well drenched" in their "morning draughts" of ale, Monk delivered a fierce assault by horse and foot, forcing Lumsden back to a last stand in St. Mary's tower whence he was smoked out and barbarously slain.

Though contemporary accounts of what followed are either so conflicting as to make precise assessment impossible, or so consistent as to cast doubt on their individual validity, the grim truth emerges that what Monk did to Dundee bore many resemblances to what his master had done to Drogheda. Lamont says that five or six hundred were slain; Balfour says eight hundred defenders and two hundred women and children; Baker says the booty included "sixty sail of ships in the harbour"; Lamont that "they gatte many ships in the harbery, nire by 200 vessels, great and small."[1] Whatever the statistical truth may have been, it is plain that the toll in blood and wealth was formidable, and it was little consolation to the shattered town that much of the booty and shipping was lost at sea. "Ill got," wrote Monk's own biographer," soon lost."[2]

Sooner or later Dundee would have lost its high standing in the commercial life of Scotland, for the rise of Glasgow, already considerable by 1650, was a forewarning of the westward shift of Scotland's economic centre of gravity. The long-term significance of the events of 1645-51 is that they precipitated Dundee's relative decline, plunging the town into a slough of

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[1] *Diary of Mr John Lamont* (Maitland Club, 1830), pp. 34-5; Sir J. Balfour: *Historical Works* (1828), Vol. IV, p.315; Sir R. Baker: *Chronicles of the Kings of England* (1658), p.542.

[2] This was his chaplain, Dr Gumble, whose *Life of Monk* was published in 1671.

despond from which it did not fully escape until the 18th Century and the great .expansion then of the linen industries.

"Give me leave," wrote Richard Franck in 1658, "to call it deplorable Dundee . . . storm'd and spoil'd by the rash precipitancy of mercenaries, whose rapionous hands put a fatal period to her stately imbellishments . . ., poor Dundee, torn up by the roots . . . disconsolate Dundee."[1] Whilst Franck's adjectives were no doubt selected in the interest of alliteration, the sense of the passage is confirmed by other less euphuistic contemporaries. The town's low condition touched the heart even of the Aberdonian Dr William Guild (admittedly his father was a Dundonian) who prayed in 1656 that, in the fulness of time, the Lord might "give it beautie for ashes, and the oyle of joy for mourning."[2] Simultaneously Thomas Tucker, investigating the revenues of Scotland on behalf of Cromwell, analysed the position with the sober judgment appropriate to a civil servant: "The towne of Dundee," he wrote, " was sometime a towne of riches and trade, but the many rencontres it hath meet with in the time of dom.estick comotions, and her obstinacy and pride of late yeares rendring her a prey to the soldier, have much shaken and abated her former grandeur; and notwithstanding all, shee remaynes yet, though not glorious, yett not contemptible."[3] Hope was not lost.

[1] Quoted in P. Hume Brown: Early Travellers in Scotland (1891), pp. 208-10.
[2] An Answer to a Pamphlet called the Touch-stone of the Reformed Gospel (1656).
[3] Report by Thos. Tucker upon the Revenues, etc. (Bannatyne Club, 1825), p.32

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