

RIOT AT DUNFERMLINE (Glasgow Herald From the Fife Herald) Friday, Aug. 22, 1845 On the evening of Wednesday last, one of the worst riots that ever disgraced a working community took place here. It seems that for some time past the Messrs. Alexander, one of our most respectable manufacturing firms, had been giving out work at wages under the regular table agreed by all the manufacturers after the riots in 1842, which had caused considerable dissatisfaction among the operatives, and, on the above evening, they proceeded to adjust matters after their own fashion. Having procured a big drum, they marched through the various quarters of the town about nine o'clock at night, and speedily assembled an immense crowd at the foot of the town, the ringleaders of which got armed with sticks and stones, and marched up to the warehouse of the Messrs. Alexander, every window of which was speedily demolished—not a pane of glass being left. After this, they ran down to the dwelling house of Mr. T. Alexander, and began breaking his windows, a great number of which were destroyed. By this time the magistrates were out with the constables, and the rioters fled down the street to the Spittal Burn, where Provost Ronaldson, Bailie Birrell, and Mr. Macdonald, the Procurator Fiscal, endeavoured to persuade them to disperse. While doing this some of the more violent knocked down the Provost and kicked him. Bailie Birrell was also ill-used, and the Provost on being taken home, was found to have received a very severe cut on the back of the head, and to be otherwise bruised. He has since been confined to bed under medical treatment. While this was going on, in the town another party of several hundreds had set off for Balmule, the country seat of Mr. J. Alexander three miles north of Dunfermline. They arrived there about 11 o'clock, and when all the inmates were asleep. Their loud cries and shouts speedily awoke the family, and having broken open the doors, they commenced an indiscriminate work of destruction. Having emptied the water barrels, they set fire to a heap of clothes and curtains in the kitchen, broke all the dishes, tore down shelving, and the clock; and did all the mischief they could devise. Mrs. Alexander and her infant children, together with the servants, took refuge in the attic, but the rascals said they would let them safe out of the house, and having opened a passage, they escorted them to some houses not far off. While doing so one of them kicked the slippers of the lady's feet, and another struck her while carrying her infant. Mr Alexander escaped to the roof of the house. Had he been found, the consequences might have been dreadful. Having set fire to the house, the rioters retired, exclaiming it was past the power of man to put it out. It seems to have been their intention and wish to have burned the house and all that was in it to the ground as they entered none of the rooms, and did not take out the furniture to destroy it. The flames were extinguished by the farm servants of Craigduckie, who had come to assist the family. Early next morning a troop of dragoons came from Edinburgh, and the Magistrates and Sheriff issued a proclamation regarding the riot. The authorities have been busy since, examining a great number persons supposed to have been concerned in the outrage, but as yet have been unable to bring proof of guilt to any one. The inhabitants of the town generally are greatly vexed and incensed at this riot, and at the gross abuse given to the magistrates, all of whom are very popular and highly respected; nor can we expect less now than the permanent residence of the military amongst us. They were withdrawn lately against the remonstrances of the Provost and Bailies.

THE DISTURBANCES IN DUNFERMLINE FARTHER PARTICULARS.

(Glasgow Herald From the Fifeshire Journal.)

The cause of this dreadful riot, the account of which appeared in our paper of Friday, appears to be an alleged breach of faith of the Messrs. Alexander with the other manufacturers in 1843 or 1844. We understand however, that the Messrs. Alexander never signed that agreement with the rest of the manufacturers. However the case may be, it is connected with those combinations amongst tradesmen for raising artificially the price of their wages, and which, to the discredit of our Legislature, are not now held to be illegal. Of the want, misery and idleness—the parent of all mischief—which these combinations have occasioned, and of the dreadful to which, step by step they led many men, who in entering them little thought that ever their hands would be stained with blood, nay, perhaps, believed that they were engaged in an honourable and beneficial union—the page of criminal history is full. Such unions, indeed, are only held together by the black influences of crime and fear. He who has entered them cannot leave them but at the risk of his life; and the ringleader who proposes the most atrocious deeds carries the voices of his comrades along with him, and is looked on as the bravest and the honestest of the whole body—as the truest friend of the interest of his order.

During Thursday a proclamation was issued from the Provost and Magistrates of the bench and the Sheriff, intimating that if the evil-disposed inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood shall again assemble after nightfall, in a lawless and tumultuous manner the civil authorities are prepared to suppress such an attempt, and, if need be, with the aid of the military; requesting all the respectable inhabitants to keep within doors after night-fall, and not to assemble in the street; and intimating, that if they fail to give heed to this warning, they will have themselves to blame for the consequences.

On Thursday evening great numbers of persons were seen on the streets, but they were soon dispersed by the police. It was rumoured that an attack was premeditated on the property of some individuals in the employment of Messrs. Alexander. However, the exertions of the police were such as to prevent any assembling, and the town since the riot has remained perfectly tranquil.

From the details published, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that there in the town of Dunfermline a regular band of conspirators, organised and disciplined, with watchwords and signals, bound together under obligations of secrecy and with hearts to conceive and hands to execute any crimes however atrocious. We need not say that such a fearful state of things must be met by the authorities with the utmost vigilance, and that Dunfermline requires the constant protection of the military. There are other circumstances which will in future make this protection still more indispensably necessary than it is at present. In addition to the unquiet population of the town, and of the disorderly inhabitants of Crossgates, Halbeath, and Hell's Kitchen, and the numerous collieries around Dunfermline, we have now before us the prospect of a new village of two or three thousand inhabitants arising at once at the great iron works about to be opened at Oakley; and between this new population and the strangers whom the demand for rail labourers will bring into Fife, it is to be feared that the

prevalence of peaceful and moral habits, and good order and security to person and property, will not be in proportion to the increase of the census.

Since Thursday morning, Mr. Sheriff Monteith, Mr. Sheriff Shireff, and the other authorities, have been constantly engaged in examinations connected with these outrages. Since Mr. Monteith left, Mr. Sheriff Shireff and Mr. Macdonald, the Fiscal have been indefatigably employed from morning till night in examining the parties brought in by the police, and at the time we write these labours are still continued. We are glad to believe that the result of these laborious investigations will be the conviction of some of the leaders, notwithstanding the secrecy and mystery in which their crimes are involved, and the evident fear of being marked out for vengeance felt by those who may know of circumstances, the revelation of which might promote the ends of justice. We earnestly trust that the arm of the law will fall with its heaviest weight on the convicted ruffians. For the sake of the peace of the country, and in mercy to the great body of the deluded men who have been led to these combinations, we hope that the crimes of the ringleaders will be regarded by the law as the greatest of crimes which it is possible for men to commit, and that their punishment will in a corresponding measure be exemplary and edifying. We do indeed live in an age in which the sympathy and care, and kindness which ought to be extended to the well-behaved and the peaceable is denied to them, and bestowed on the blackguards and ruffians who keep society in fear and disorder. The ancient institution of the gallows—for so many long ages the powerful ally of social order and tranquillity—is now shamefully defrauded of its claims and its proper tenants. To feel sympathy for a peaceful family assailed in their sleep, and at the hour of midnight, by a host of ruffians is not the fashion of this age. In such a case it is the assailants that are looked on as objects deserving of compassion, and with some people the Dunfermline rioters—murderers in intention and housebreakers and fire-raisers in actual deeds—may no doubt come in for their share of respect and esteem. Instead of a system calculated to strike terror into the scourges of society, the country is burdened with heavy assessments to keep up the fopperies of what is called an improved prison discipline. Thieves and robbers now-a-days are plentifully finished with entertaining tracts to pass the time agreeably; and housebreakers are supplied with flower-pots in order to cultivate a taste for the humanising study of botany in their elegant and amiable minds. But till now we have had little to do in Scotland with anything except the isolated crimes of individuals; and the discovery just made of conspiracy and combination will, it is to be hoped, even in this sentimental age, call forth the exercise of unwanted but well-deserved severity of punishment.

RIOT AT DUNFERMLINE.

(From the Fife Herald.)

On the evening of Wednesday last, one of the worst riots that ever disgraced a working community took place here. It seems that for some time past the Messrs. Alexander, one of our most respectable manufacturing firms, had been giving out work at wages under the regular table agreed to by all the manufacturers after the riots in 1842, which has caused considerable dissatisfaction among the operatives, and, on the above evening, they proceeded to adjust matters after their own fashion. Having procured a big drum, they marched through the various quarters of the town about nine o'clock at night, and speedily assembled an immense crowd at the foot of the town, the ringleaders of which were armed with sticks and stones, and marched up to the warehouse of the Messrs. Alexander, every window of which was speedily demolished—not a pane of glass being left. After this, they ran down to the dwelling-house of Mr. T. Alexander, and began breaking his windows, a great number of which were destroyed. By this time the magistrates were out with the constables, and the rioters fled down the street to the Spittal Burn, where Provost Ronaldson, Bailie Birrell, and Mr. Macdonald, the Procurator Fiscal, endeavoured to persuade them to disperse. While doing this some of the more violent knocked down the Provost and kicked him, Bailie Birrell was also ill-used, and the Provost, on being taken home, was found to have received a very severe cut on the back of the head, and to be otherwise bruised. He has since been confined to bed under medical treatment. While this was going on in the town, another party of several hundreds had set off for Balmule, the country seat of Mr. J. Alexander, three miles north of Dunfermline. They arrived there about 11 o'clock, and when all the inmates were asleep. Their loud cries and shouts speedily awoke the family, and having broken open the doors, they commenced an indiscriminate work of destruction. Having emptied the water barrels, they set fire to a heap of clothes and curtains in the kitchen, broke all the dishes, tore down shelving, and the clock; and did all the mischief they could devise. Mrs. Alexander and her infant children, together with the servants, took refuge in the attics, but the rascals said they would let them safe out of the house, and having opened a passage, they escorted them to some houses not far off. While doing so, one of them kicked the slippers from the lady's feet, and another struck her carrying her infant. Mr. Alexander escaped to the roof of the house. Had he been found, the consequences might have been dreadful. Having set fire to the house, the rioters retired, exclaiming it was past the power of man to put it out. It seems to have been their intention and wish to have burned the house and all that was in it to the ground, as they entered none of the rooms, and did not take out the furniture to destroy it. The flames were extinguished by the farm-servants of Craigduckie, who had come down to assist the family. Early next morning a troop of dragoons came from Edinburgh, and the Magistrates and Sheriff issued a proclamation regarding the riot. The authorities have been busy since, examining a great number persons supposed to have been concerned in the outrage, but as yet they have been unable to bring proof of guilt against any one. The inhabitants of the town generally are greatly vexed and incensed at this riot, and at the gross abuse given to the magistrates, all of whom are very popular and highly respected; nor can we expect less now than the permanent residence of the military amongst us. They were withdrawn lately against the remonstrances of the Provost and Bailies.

THE HILLS AND MOORS.

THE DISTURBANCES IN DUNFERMLINE.

FARTHER PARTICULARS.

(From the *Edinburgh Journal*.)

The cause of this dreadful riot, the account of which appeared in our paper of Friday, appears to be an alleged breach of faith of the Messrs. Alexander with the other manufacturers in 1843 or 1844. We understand, however, that the Messrs. Alexander never signed that agreement with the rest of the manufacturers. However the case may be, it is connected with those combinations amongst tradesmen for raising artificially the price of their wages, and which, to the discredit of our Legislature, are not now held to be illegal. Of the want, misery and idleness—the parent of all mischief—which these combinations have occasioned, and of the dreadful crimes to which step by step they have led many men, who in entering them little thought that ever their hands would be stained with blood, nay, perhaps, believed that they were engaged in an honourable and beneficial union—the page of criminal history is full. Such unions, indeed, are only held together by the black influences of crime and fear. He who has once entered them cannot leave them but at the risk of his life; and the ringleader who proposes the most atrocious deeds carries the voices of his comrades along with him, and is looked on as the bravest and the honestest of the whole body—as the truest friend of the interests of his order.

During Thursday a proclamation was issued from the Provost and Magistrates of the burgh, and the Sheriff, intimating that if the evil-disposed inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood shall again assemble after nightfall, in a lawless and tumultuous manner, civil authorities are prepared to suppress such an attempt, and, if need be, with the aid of the military; requesting all the respectable inhabitants to keep within doors after night-fall, and not to assemble in groups in the street; and intimating, that if they fail to give heed to this warning, they will have themselves to blame for the consequences.

On Thursday evening great numbers of persons were seen in the streets, but they were soon dispersed by the police. It was rumoured that an attack was premeditated on the property of some individuals in the employment of the Messrs. Alexander. However, the exertions of the police were such as to prevent any assembling, and the town since the riot has remained perfectly tranquil.

From the details published, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that there is in the town of Dunfermline a regular band of conspirators, organised and disciplined, with watchwords and signals, bound together under obligations of secrecy and wicked hearts to conceive and hands to execute any crimes however atrocious. We need not say that such a fearful state of things must be met by the authorities with the utmost vigilance, and that Dunfermline requires the constant protection of the military. There are other circumstances which will in future make this protection still more indispensably necessary than it is at present. In addition to the unquiet population of the town, and of the disorderly inhabitants of Crossgates, Halbeath, and Hell's Kitchen, and the numerous collieries around Dunfermline, we have now before us the prospect of a new village of two or three thousand inhabitants arising at once at the great iron works about to be opened at Oakley; and between this new population and the strangers whom the demand for railway labourers will bring into Fife, it is to be feared that the prevalence of peaceful and moral habits, and of good order and security to person and property, will not be in proportion to the increase of the census.

Since Thursday morning, Mr. Sheriff Monteith, Mr. Sheriff Shireen, and the other authorities, have been constantly engaged in examinations connected with these outrages. Since Mr. Monteith left, Mr. Sheriff Shireen and Mr. Macdonald, the Fiscal, have been indefatigably employed from morning to night in examining the parties brought in by the police, and at the time we write these labours are still continued. We are glad to believe that the result of these laborious investigations will be the conviction of some of the leaders, notwithstanding the secrecy and mystery in which their crimes are involved, and the evident fear of being marked out for vengeance felt by those who may know of circumstances, the revelation of which might promote the ends of justice. We earnestly trust that the arm of the law will fall with its heaviest weight on the convicted ruffians. For the sake of the peace of the country, and in mercy to the great body of the deluded men who have been led into these combinations, we hope that the crimes of the ringleaders will be regarded by the law as the greatest of crimes which it is possible for men to commit, and that their punishment will in a corresponding measure be exemplary and edifying. We do indeed live in an age in which the sympathy, and care, and kindness which ought to be extended to the well-behaved and the peaceable is denied to them, and bestowed on the blackguards and ruffians who keep society in fear and disorder. The ancient institution of the gallows—for so many long ages the powerful ally of social order and tranquillity—is now shamefully defrauded of its just claims and its proper tenants. To feel sympathy for a peaceful family assailed in their sleep, and at the hour of mid-night, by a host of ruffians is not the fashion of this age. In such a case it is the assailants that are looked on as objects deserving of compassion, and with some people the Dunfermline rioters—murderers in intention, and housebreakers and fire-rulers in actual deeds—may no doubt come in for their share of respect and esteem. Instead of a system calculated to strike terror into the scoundrels of society, the country is burdened with heavy assessments to keep up the fopperies of what is called an improved prison discipline. Thieves and robbers now-a-days are plentifully furnished with entertaining tracts to pass off the time agreeably; and housebreakers are supplied with flower-pots, in order to cultivate a taste for the humanising study of botany in their elegant and amiable minds. But till now we have had little to do in Scotland with anything except the isolated crimes of individuals; and the discovery just made of conspiracy and combination will, it is to be hoped, even in this sentimental age, call forth the exercise of unwonted but well-deserved severity of punishment.