

Stirling Observer
8th February 1872

SUPPER AND PRESENTATION AT PORT OF MONTEITH.

A few weeks ago, Mr Peter Dun stationmaster at Port of Monteith Station, Forth and Clyde Railway, resigned his situation, to start in business for himself. As he had given universal satisfaction by his obliging disposition to all in the district during the sixteen years he has been stationmaster there, it was resolved to present him with a substantial mark of respect and esteem. A committee was formed, and in a surprisingly short time a sufficient amount of money was subscribed. to form a very handsome testimonial. On Tuesday evening a few of the subscribers met in Mr Mitchell's Inn, Port of Monteith, to entertain Mr Dun to supper, and to make the agreed upon presentation. H. Erskine, Esq., Cardross, occupied the chair. He was supported to the right by Mr Dun, and on the left by Lord Ernest Seymour, James Stirling, Esq. of Garden, acted as croupier, and had the support of Peter Blackburn, Esq., Kippen, and Mr Dewar, farmer, Arnprior. Among the company there were the Rev. John McDonald, Bucklyvie; Mr Cordonner, stationmaster, Port of Monteith ; Mr James Hogg, Mr McDonald, and Mr P. Miller, Stirling; Mr Alex. Dun, Mr Andrew Dun, Mr John Dun, Mr Mitchell, Port of Monteith ; Mr Duncan Ferguson, Inches; Mr McLay, Garden ; Mr John Dawson, Parks of Garden; Mr James Keir, Blackhouse ; Mr George McFarlane, stationmaster, Buchlyvie; Mr Andrew Dun, sen., Kepdowrie ; Mr David Morrison, Arngibbon ; Mr Alex. Armstrong, Arnfinlay; Mr Black, Polder ; Mr John McGibbon, Faraway, &c. Apologies for absence were received from Mr Jamieson, Rednock House; Mr Reoch, Oakwood, &c. The good things on the table were of the best description, and did great credit to Mr Mitchell's culinary talents. After supper a bowl of steaming punch was brewed, and the company pledged with all the honours "The Health of Her Majesty the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the other members of the Royal Family."

The CHAIRMAN then gave " The Army, Navy, and Volunteers." In the course of his remarks he said, that to his mind it was very doubtful whether any system of army re-organisation could be effected, as long As we insisted upon having civilians at the head of the executive department of our army and navy. He believed Port of Monteith to be the only port in the world that did not boast of a sailor. (Laughter and applause.)

Lord ERNEST SEYMOUR replied for the Navy, and Lieut. James Hogg for the volunteers.

The CHAIRMAN then proposed "The Health of Mr Dun." In doing so, he said their presence there that night showed him that they would receive this toast with enthusiasm. To some among them, ho believed, Mr Dun had been known for many years, for he was born and brought up in the neighbourhood, and his father, whom he was delighted to see present, was well known by them all, but the most of them began their acquaintance with their guest at a later period. He was sure they would agree with him that the greatest revolution of modern times was the introduction of railway communication, Among other good things which it brought with it this revolution brought Mr Dun. From the time the Forth and Clyde Railway was opened till now, Mr Dun had been its efficient representative at Port

of Monteith station, and during all that period he was sure they could all say that Mr Dun had made many friends, and not a single enemy. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Mr Dun had been in a position to do many kind actions and to render numerous obligations to the people in the district, and he believed there was none there but had at one time or other experienced some act of kindness at his hands. They all knew the difficulty of getting goods from the station in a country district, but if they could be delivered at all, Mr Dun was the man to do it. (Applause.) And when the march of civilisation brought us the electric telegraph and the penny, and even the half-penny post, Mr Dun might be said to have inaugurated both the one and the other into the district. Not only was Mr Dun known to them in his official capacity but he was known to them in an author.

It had been rumoured that several valuable communications to the public prints had been produced by his pen.

Rumour was not to be depended on too far, and he would pass that by; but they knew that Mr Dun had written a book which ought to be in the hands of every tourist who visited that part of the country. In his book he had treated his subject with that veneration for antiquity, and that love for the beautiful which, to his (the chairman's) mind, were the most valuable characteristics of a true Scotsman. (Applause) It must have been a very great gratification to Mr Dun when Her Majesty, on her recent visit to the neighbourhood, was pleased to accept a copy of his work. (Applause.) Mr Dun was also known to some of them as a curler. Their appreciation of Mr Dun as the secretary of their curling club had been shown by the testimonial presented to him some years ago, and if in late years he has so much to do that he was unable to appear as often on the ice as formerly, he hoped that now, when he had more liberty, they would frequently have him with them to lead the Cardross and Kepp Club on to victory, for he was an excellent leader on the ice. As to Mr Dun's domestic qualities, he would not in his presence like to touch upon, but they all fully appreciated them. With all his excellent qualities, it was not wonderful that when they heard he was going to leave the station, they should desire to present him with some token of their regard and esteem before he went away. He was sure the result of the efforts made to get up the presentation must have been very gratifying to Mr Dun. It was now his duty, in the name of the subscribers, to present Mr Dun with this token of their esteem and regard. (The Chairman here handed him a gold watch). In selecting a testimonial, the committee naturally desired to give him something which he could carry along with him to the latest day of his life, and which could be transmitted to his sons after him as an incentive to follow the same straightforward, honest, amiable line of conduct as their father. It was also his duty to present Mr Dun with this purse (handing him a purse.) Mr Dun would not look upon the money value of the purse, it was the sentiments with which it was given that he would appreciate. He hoped it might often be a good deal heavier than it was then—he wished, at least, that it might never be lighter, but that it might be the harbinger and forerunner of a very increased stock, and that happiness might go with it. They were all delighted to think, that though Mr Dun was leaving the station, still they would not lose him as a neighbour.

They sincerely hoped that the line of life he was about to take would prove advantageous to him, and he would start with the best capital any man could have the goodwill and good wishes of his neighbours. He called on them to drink "long life and prosperity to Mr Dun."

The watch is a handsome gold lever, and was purchased from Mr McDonald, watchmaker, Stirling. It bears the following inscription—"Presented to Peter Dun, along with a purse of sovereigns, by his friends, who have received so much kindness and attention from him at the Port of Monteith Station of the Forth and Clyde Railway. January, 1872." The purse was a very beautiful one, and contained thirty one sovereigns.

Mr DUN, in replying, said: Mr Chairman, Croupier, My Lord and Gentlemen—In rising to return you my heart felt gratitude for the very high honour you have conferred and are conferring upon me this night, I assure you it is with feelings of no ordinary kind. When I reflect on the very handsome manner in which this testimonial has been got up; the energetic way the canvassers set to work; and the liberal manner in which the subscribers responded to the call; and when I look around this room and see so many happy faces before me; but specially when I look to the head and foot of this table. and think of the gentlemen who preside over this meeting—the heads of two of the most ancient and honourable families this quarter of the country has ever produced—I can insure you, gentlemen, this is a moment of my life of which I, or any one in my place, might well feel proud. In breaking up my official connection among you I assure you it was not done in a hurry—it was not done without many days, aye, and weeks of very serious reflection. I had a great many things to take into consideration before I could leave the station. I did not know whether I might succeed in my new undertaking; nor did I know whether I might get a residence in this district or require to go to some other town and dwell amid its murky streets. There was within me that inherent love of country which dwells within the breast of every true son of Scotland; and this grand old country of yours, who could but love it with its scattered glories lavished by a bountiful Creator, and adorned as it is by skill and enterprise. You have your mansions— those grand old landmarks of the plain with their gardens and their lawns; you have your rivers rolling onwards with their murmuring song; you have green forests with their dark recesses and their deep solitudes; you have green fields and cultivated farms; you have that lake with its dazzling beauties; yonder islands with its graveyard and sculptured tombstones where rest your early fathers; your fairy glens with their deep pools and foaming waterfalls, and these grand old hills of yours with their base on the plain, and their summit hidden in the mist, in short this

"Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Could ere untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand?"

(Applause.) Then I had much to attract me to that little, spot at the station. It was, there I had received from some of you sound and sober counsel. It was

there I had formed some of the most happy connections it was possible for a man in this world to make. (Applause.) It was on that platform I had spent nigh sixteen years of the very best of my existence; and when the recollection of my experience during that time come rolling back through the dark vista of the past, it makes me feel keenly the breaking up of old and dear associations. Upon a former occasion, not many years ago, I received from your hands a very marked and substantial token of your affection and esteem. (Applause.) At that time I felt not a little proud of the honour conferred upon me. I looked upon it as an honour to myself, to my family, and to my friends, but I little dreamed that in breaking up my official career amongst you that I was to be treated to this kind and triumphant outburst of your affection. Since it is your desire that I should be presented with some token of your respect, I accept of it most cordially and thankfully. While doing so, allow me to say that wherever I go, wherever my lot may be cast—whether I dwell amongst you, or seas with their rolling billows flow between us—when I look upon this watch as it ticks time away, it will call back my memory to the days that are gone past, it will bring up associations of byegone years, and recall the scenes of other days. It will call back my memory to this meeting and the honour conferred on me this evening, which has made an impression on me that will not soon be effaced. (Applause.) But I shall go a little farther. I will venture to hope that when all around this table shall have passed away and disappeared from the theatre of the world, when all your voices have been hushed, this watch will be an heirloom to my children. It will tell them of the respect in which I have been held amongst you, and while it does so, it will be a record of your kindness and of the many warm-hearted people that I have had the privilege to dwell amongst. I assure you I accept this purse of sovereigns gratefully. I thank you for it, but I don't intend to hand it down to posterity—(laughter)—I expect to have use for it nearer home. Will you also allow me to say that anything I did for you whilst I was at the station, was done willingly and heartily. It was a pleasure to me, and I was satisfied with the thought that I could oblige you in any way. (Loud applause.)

The CROUPIER then presented Mrs Dun, through Mr Dun, with a silver plated spirit-stand. He said she must have shared all the trials which Mr Dun had undergone, and it might be owing a good deal to her influence that they had experienced so much kindness and courtesy from her husband. (Applause.)

The spirit-stand was purchased from Mr P. Miller, Stirling, and the bottle-holder bore the following inscription :—" Presented to Mrs Peter Dun, along with a testimonial to her husband, January, 1872.

Mr Dun, in replying, said that although Mrs Dun was not often seen nor her voice heard in that district, he did not think there was anyone who took more interest in the welfare of those who frequented the station. Before he left that afternoon she had placed in his hands a piece of silver plate (a cake basket), and requested him to present it to the Cardross and Kepp and Port of Monteith Curling Clubs. He had, therefore, much,pleasure in presenting it to

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them in her name. It was Mrs Dun's desire that the prize be played for annually by the two clubs, and it was for the present to be taken possession of by the Cardross and Kepp Club. As soon as the ice made its appearance the Port of Monteith club would challenge the other club to play for it, the winner to keep it for the year. It was not the duty of ladies to promote warfare between man and man or between club and club, therefore he hoped it would be played for in friendly contest. (Applause.) Mrs Dun also requested him to say that she wished it to be played for with the whole strength of the club. (Applause.)

The cake basket was a very elegant piece of silver. plate richly chased and engraved, and bore the following inscription :—" From Mrs Peter Dun, to the Cardross and Kepp and Port of Monteith Curling Clubs, 1872."

The CROUPIER proposed "The Clergy," to which Mr McDONALD replied.

The CROUPIER proposed " The Chairman," who replied.

Mr Hogg proposed "The District Curling Clubs," to which Mr FERGUSON replied.

The Rev. Mr McDONALD proposed "The Committee of Management."

Mr JOHN DAWSON, in replying, said it gave him a great deal of pleasure to take an active part in getting up the testimonial. As an instance of the estimation in which Mr Dun was held by the public, he said every person they went to seemed to be more liberal than another, and every one had the same high opinion of their late stationmaster. (Applause.) If Mr Dun had the same pleasure in using the presents as the committee had in preparing them, he would keep them near him all his life. (Applause.)

Among the other toasts were "The Croupier," "Lady Horatio Erskine," " The Buchlyvie and Gartmore Agricultural Association," "The Ladies" "The Strangers," &c. After spending a very pleasant evening, the company separated.