

had died out several generations before. No railway came near the place; no highway led through it. Lying near the sea, it yet could boast of no good harbour within reach to stimulate the coal industry. Even the local demand for coal was too small to admit of any extensive workings; and so the mining population continued the same quaint old ways which it had been used to for a century or two, keeping up, among other things, many of its characteristic superstitions.

Some years ago, on geological errand bent, I had occasion to pass a number of months in that sequestered locality, and to mingle with the colliers themselves, as well as their employers. In this way I was led to glean reminiscences of habits and beliefs, now nearly as extinct as the fossils in the rocks which were the more special objects of research. These gleanings, as illustrating former phases of our rural population, are perhaps not unworthy of record. I propose, therefore, in the present paper to relate an incident, perhaps one of the most striking in the history of coal-mining in this country, which occurred in this little Girvan coal-field, and which furnishes examples of several of the more characteristic features of the old Scottish collier.

In the quiet churchyard of Dailly, within hearing of the gurgle of the Girvan and the sough of the old pines of Dalquharran, lie the unmarked graves of generations of colliers; but among them is one with a tombstone bearing the following inscription:—