

Reminiscences. Byegone years of the West of Scotland Convalescent Seaside Homes, Dunoon.

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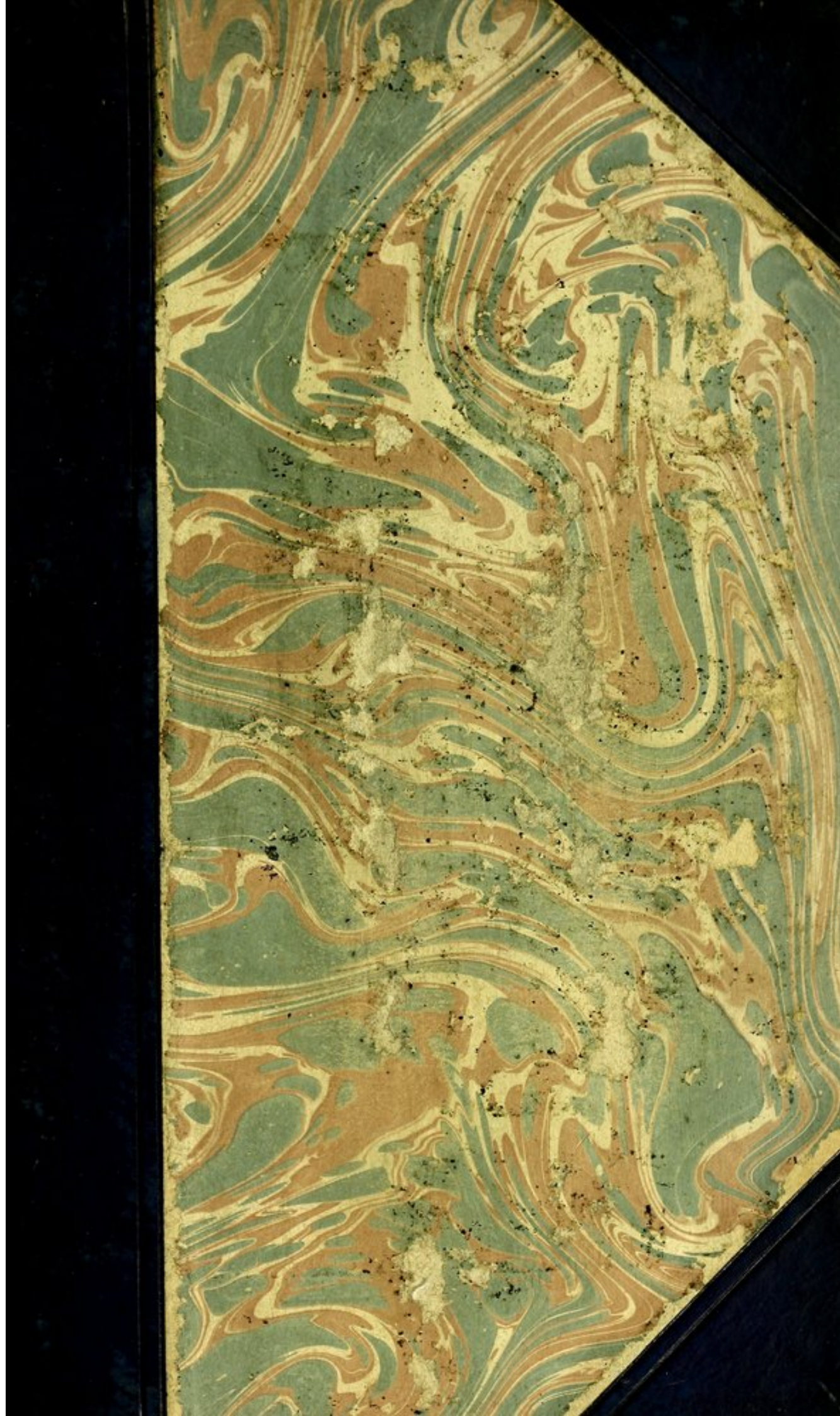
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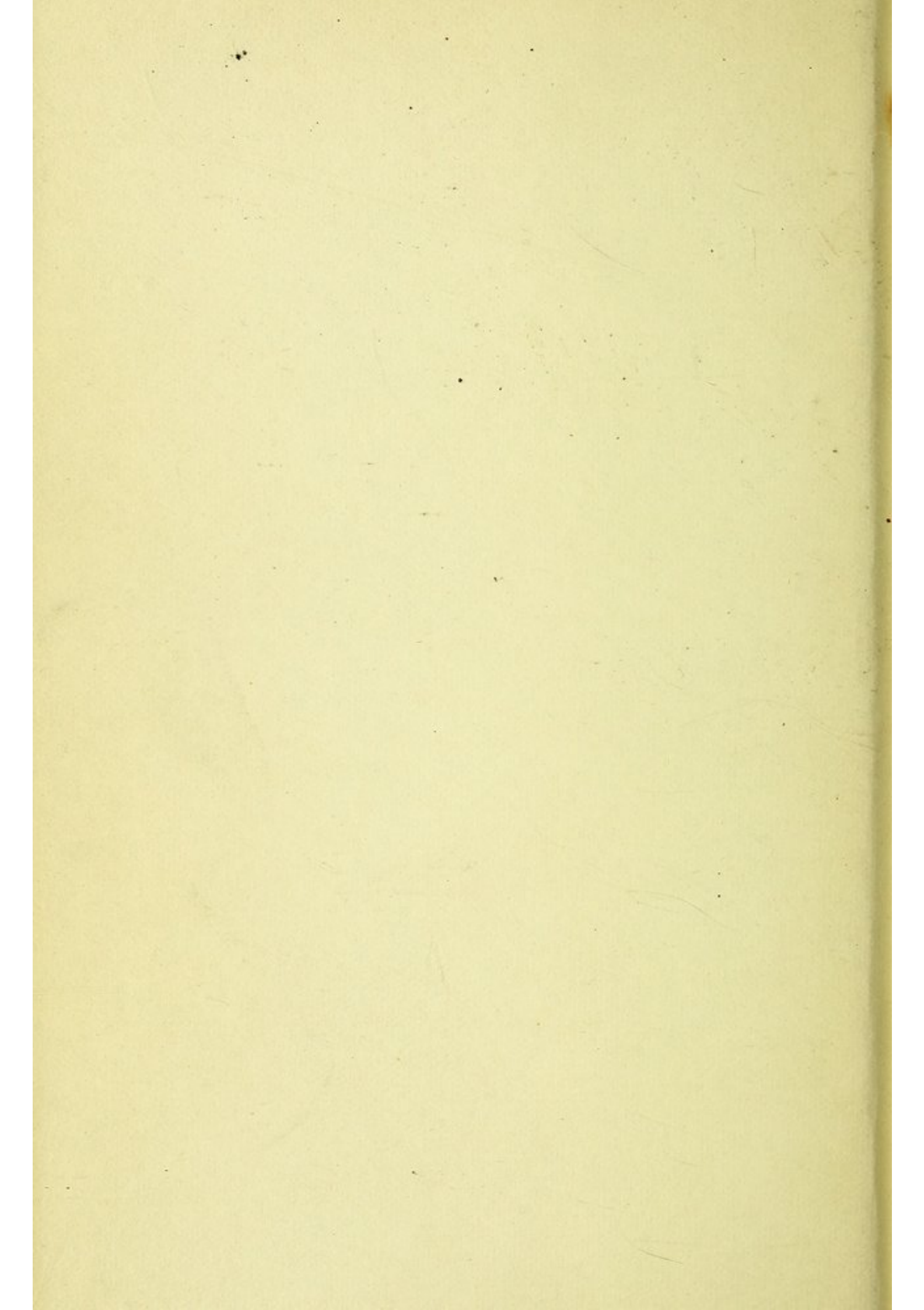
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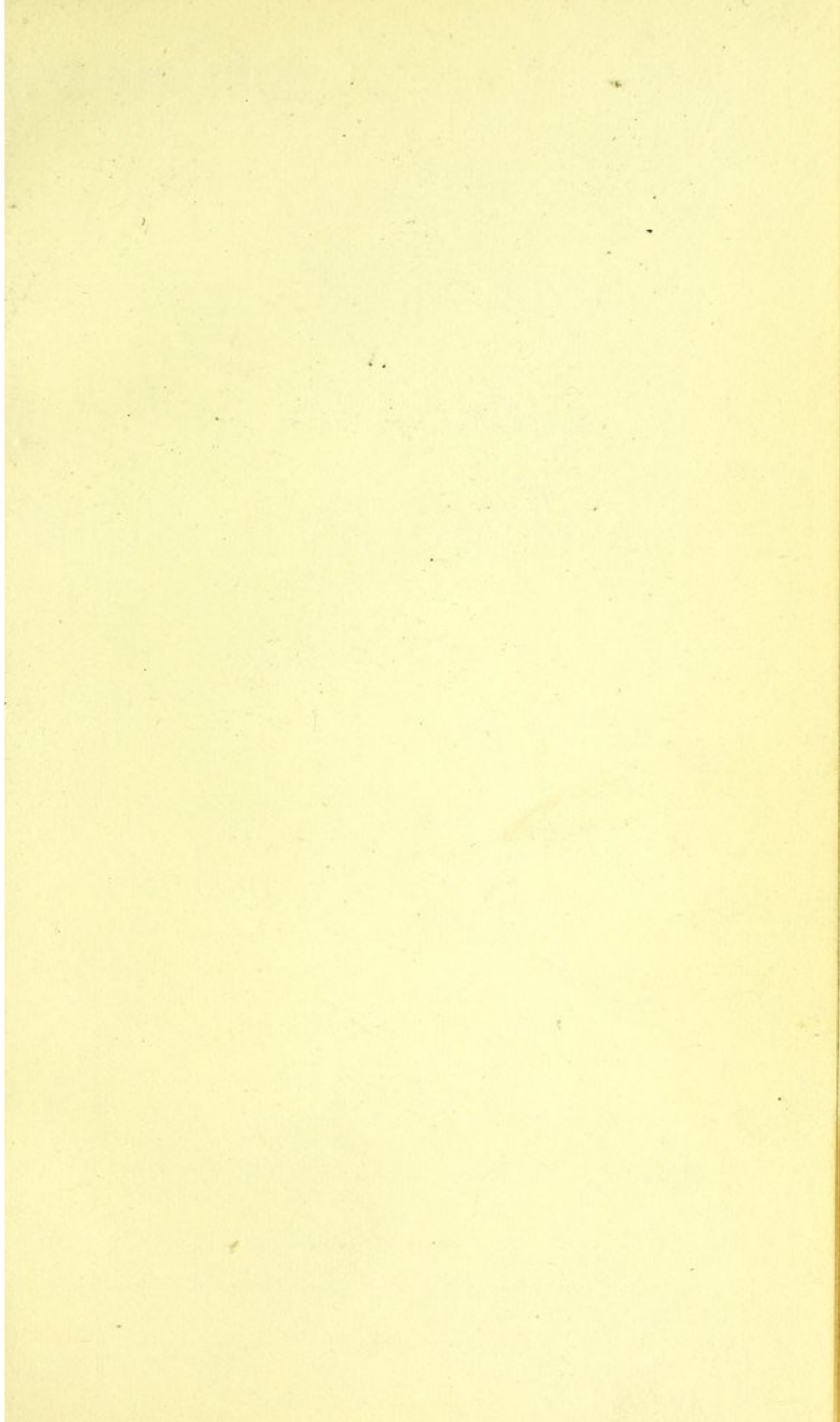


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Reminiscences.

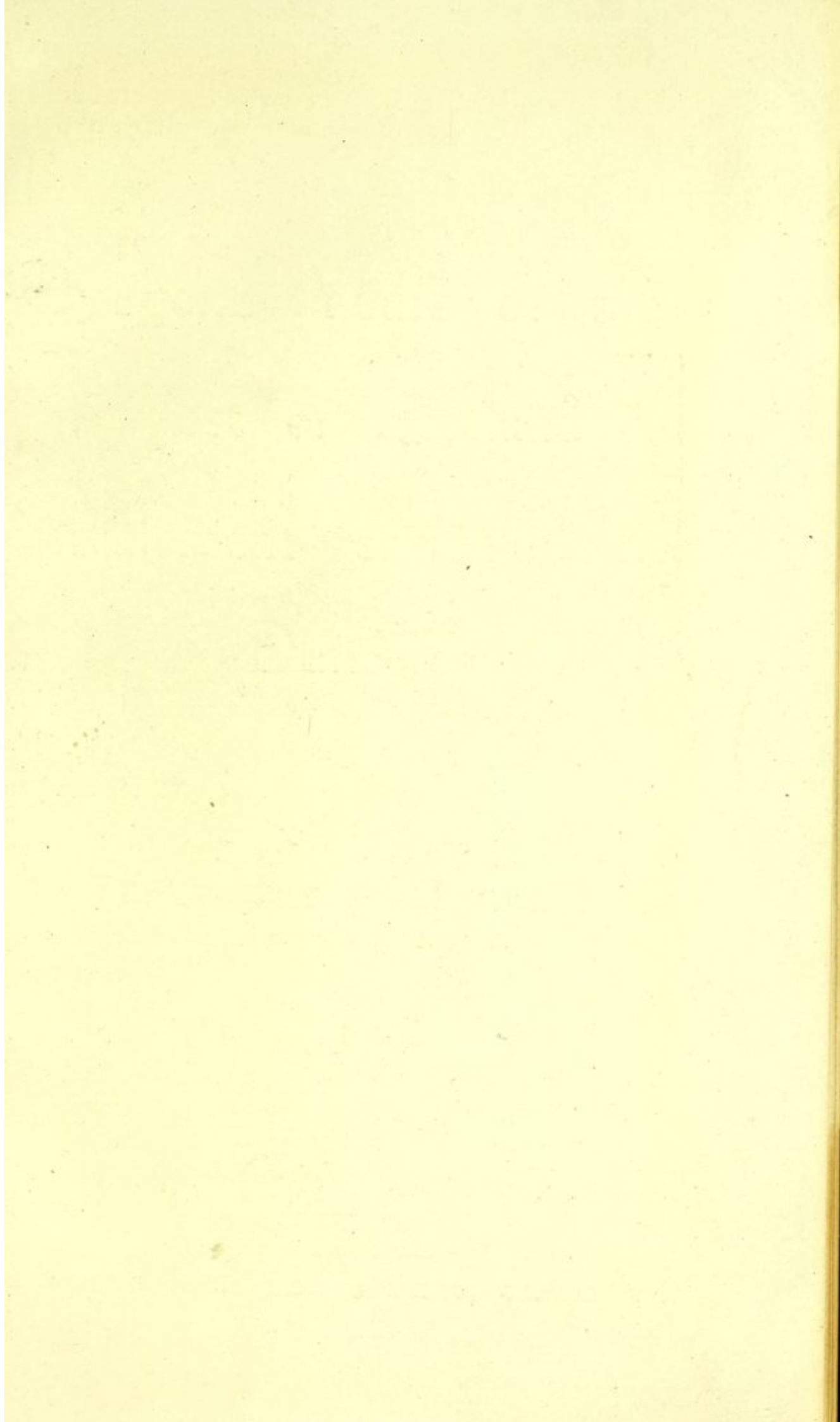
Byegone Years of the West of Scotland Convalescent Seaside Homes, Dunoon.

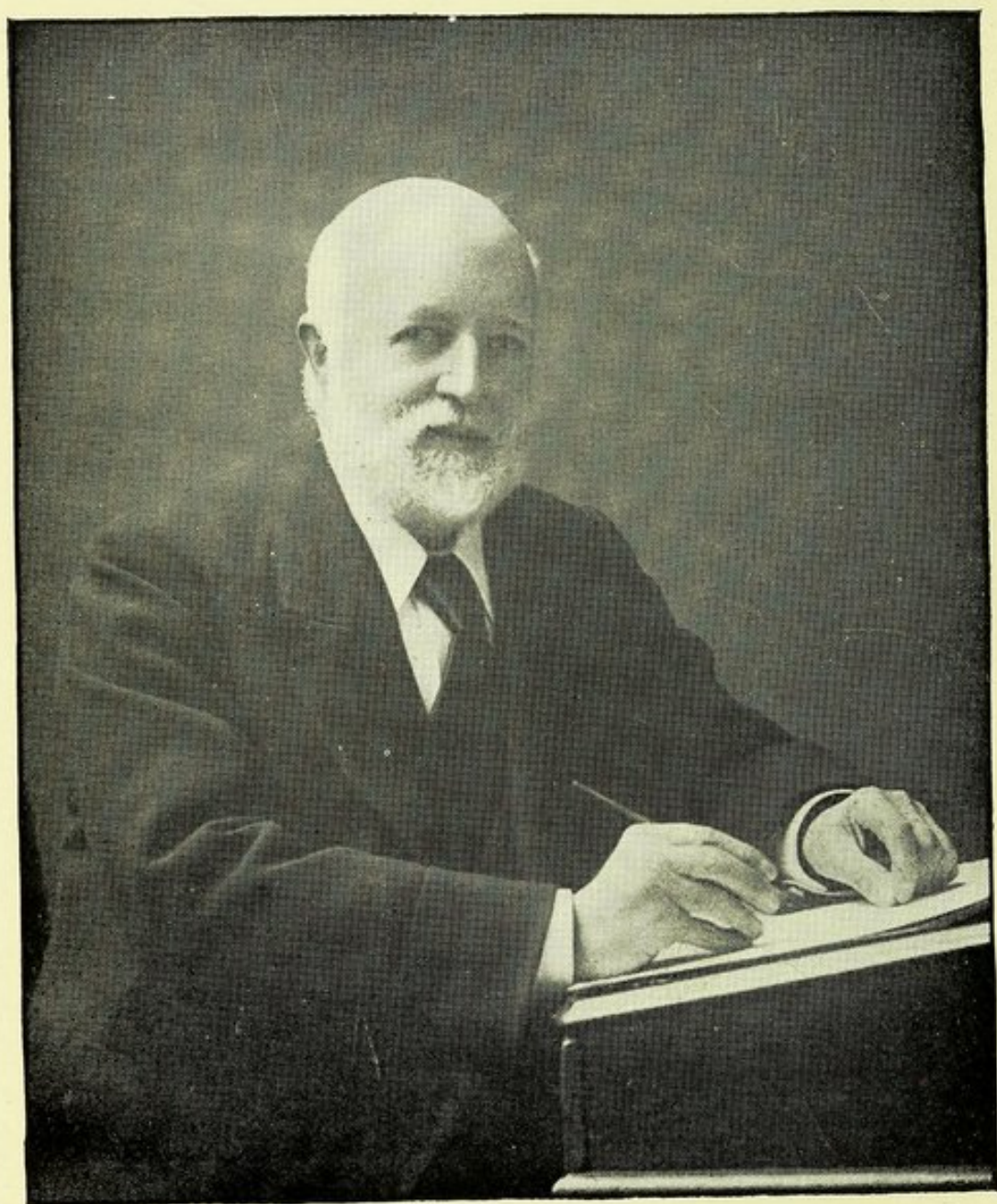
BY ROBERT HILLHOUSE,
The Secretary for over 37 years.

*Acting Secretary and Treasurer—*MR. DANIEL G. KENT.

Office of the Homes—

4 SOUTH HANOVER STREET, GLASGOW.





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Reminiscences.

BYEGONE YEARS OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND CONVALESCENT SEASIDE HOMES, DUNOON.

By ROBERT HILLHOUSE.

MISS BEATRICE CLUGSTON AS THE ORIGINATOR AND PROMOTER.

It is interesting to recall that the late Miss Beatrice Clugston, residing at the time at 41 Lansdowne Crescent, Glasgow, was amongst the first to moot the idea of establishing a Convalescent Home at the Seaside. Her custom was, every Sabbath forenoon, to visit the Royal Infirmary, to see and converse with the patients, and impart counsel and sympathy to them in their illnesses. The outcome of her visits was the formation of the Royal Infirmary Dorcas Society, for the purpose of assisting the more necessitous when leaving the Infirmary to make room for others. Miss Clugston could notice that, no matter how well-equipped an Infirmary might be, it was not adapted, and could not cope with the necessities of those who were technically termed "cured," but were far from being able to resume work. She discovered that many went back to their own humble dwellings to relapse and die.

IMPETUS FROM PUBLIC MEETING.

With a view to further the advancement of the Convalescent Home movement, a public meeting was held on 1st March, 1868, in the City Hall, presided over by Robert Dalglish, M.P. A large audience of interested citizens shewed their appreciation of the scheme, as set forth in a pamphlet by Miss Clugston, to whom a well-deserved meed of praise was given. Various resolutions were spoken to, eloquently and earnestly commending the obtainment of a suitable home, authorising the collecting of subscriptions for that purpose, and appointing a Committee representative of the community to take all needful steps (in conjunction with Miss Clugston) for the end in view.

THE BEGINNING OF THE HOMES.

It is not generally known that the original portion of the stone-work of the front wing, built by the late Robert Wylie, of Wylie & Lochhead, Ltd., 45 Buchanan Street, Glasgow, was intended by him as a Hydropathic establishment. The building and furnishing of the different departments, including the fitting up of Turkish, douche, vapour, spray and ordinary baths, all beautifully upholstered rooms, cost him £11,000. Shortly after their completion, and before he had gained the anticipated joy resulting from his labours, Mr. Wylie died. Necessity was laid upon his trustees to dispose of the place and effects to the best advantage; and although widely adver-

tised, the buildings remained for two years in the market. Hydropathy was Mr. Wylie's hobby; but, forty years ago such establishments as hydros. were comparatively rare. Thus, nobody was found willing to undertake the place as a going concern; while to start it as a hotel, it was deemed too far from the pier.

PURCHASE OF THE HYDRO.

From amongst the Committee appointed at the public meeting, the gentlemen who took the most active part (along with Miss Clugston) in the negotiations for the acquisition of the hydro. at Dunoon, now proposed to be a Convalescent Home, was the Right Hon. the Earl of Glasgow; Sir Peter Coats of Woodside, Paisley; James White of Overtoun; and, as representative working men, Messrs. Duncan Sharp, William Maitland, James Marchbank, and John Watson. While it was shewn by the trustees of the late Mr. Wylie that he had spent £11,000 in building and furnishings, the offer of half that amount was tendered by the Committee named; and after considerable delay and hesitancy, £5,500 was accepted. The gentlemen named became guarantors to the Bank for the amount, and at once preparations were made for the reception of suitable persons recovering from illness. These had been treated to a successful issue, either in the Infirmary or in their own dwellings, and only required a change of air and a plentiful supply of well-cooked nourishing food to fit them to resume work.

AUSPICIOUS OPENING.

By the beginning of the leafy month of June, 1869, convalescents arrived from various parts of Glasgow to fill the Home ; but the formal opening day did not take place till the 14th August. The opening ceremony was performed by the Right Hon. the Earl of Glasgow, who had shewn great interest in the scheme, and gave £500 (£100 for five years) with a view to its consummation. The delay in opening was caused by his Lordship having named the date which would be most suitable for him ; and Miss Clugston, along with the benevolent ladies and gentlemen co-operating with her, gladly concurred. A large assemblage gathered on the occasion, and his Lordship emphasised that the buildings would be found by the visitors very complete ; that, having been built as a hydro-pathic establishment on an extensive scale, even those who had not seen their way to join them that day could readily imagine their entire suitability.

MISS CLUGSTON'S BAZAAR

To free the Homes from debt, Miss Clugston organised a big Bazaar. This was furthered greatly by herself and secretary holding public meetings in the chief towns of the West of

Scotland, and enlisting the sympathy and support of the ladies therein. To give *éclat* to the opening of the Bazaar, which was held on the 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th November, 1871, the Right Hon. Lord Blythswood approached Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise and the Most Noble the Marquis of Lorne, then residing at Roseneath, to perform the opening ceremony. With such distinguished patronage, and the *élite* of Glasgow and the West of Scotland following their example, the Bazaar proved a pronounced success, £8,500 being realised. The Very Rev. Norman MacLeod, D.D., of the Barony Parish Church, commenced the proceedings with a Dedicatory Prayer; the Hon. Lord Provost James Watson briefly introduced the Princess Louise, who spoke a few words of congratulation and encouragement to the lady-stallholders, and declared the Bazaar open. Lord Blythswood, in a neat speech, conveyed the best thanks of Miss Clugston and the benevolent ladies and gentlemen co-operating with her to Her Royal Highness for her presence, along with her noble husband, and for her words of encouragement to all those interested in the Homes. The Marquis returned thanks on behalf of the Princess, expressing his pleasure, as well as that of the Princess, at the magnificent attendance and display of work. The general enthusiasm on the part of the benevolent public was very great, the Bazaar being the resort not only of the highest classes in the city; but, what was particularly noticeable, of hundreds of working men with their wives and families.

AFTER THE BAZAAR WAS OVER.

The 5th August, 1872, was a red-letter day in the history of the Homes and of Dunoon. On that date, in accordance with a promise given at the Bazaar, Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise and the Most Noble the Marquis of Lorne paid a visit to the Homes. They came in their yacht from Roseneath, arriving at Dunoon pier about half-past twelve, and were escorted to a special carriage awaiting them at the landing stage. The day was one of brilliant sunshine, and immense crowds lined Argyll Street and Manse Road to have a peep at Royalty. Arriving at the Homes, they were received by Miss Beatrice Clugston, the originator of the Homes, and Sir Peter Coats, the chairman of the Board of Management, with both of whom they shook hands. The following were thereafter introduced :—Mr. William MacLean, the Hon. Secretary ; Dr. Robert Perry, Medical Examining Officer ; Dr. John Reid, R.N., Consulting Surgeon ; about a dozen of the directors and their ladies, along with the Superintendent and Matron and Acting Secretary. After a brief survey, the distinguished visitors expressed themselves as greatly pleased with the arrangements of the Home, the Marquis admiring the clean beds and airy bedrooms ; while the Princess, charmed with the beauty of the day, commented on the beautiful grounds, in which she took a short walk. The Princess in particular was most gracious in her demeanour, chatting cheerily at dinner with the chairman and those around

her, and merrily enjoying his jocular remark, "Now that your Royal Highness is in the Home, I trust you will make yourself at home." He also gracefully alluded to the very great kindness and sympathy of her illustrious mother, good Queen Victoria, and of her forwarding at the outset £100 towards the Building Fund of the Homes.

SITE OF THE HOMES: A CENTENARIAN.

Right opposite the main gateway of the Homes there is a well-formed street called M'Arthur Street, so named in commemoration of Archibald M'Arthur, who lived there till he was 105 years old. To the left of the street referred to, and on the ground whereon a number of cottages have been erected, was the small croft of this centenarian. In a thatched cottage of four apartments dwelt the old man, along with his daughter and grand-daughter, Mrs. M'Arthur being dead at the time the Homes were instituted. The old man at that time was 104, his daughter 78, and the grand-daughter 53. Sir Peter Coats and the other Directors of the Homes were wont to refer with pride, when visiting officially, to the admirable surroundings of the Homes, and to the fact that there dwelt opposite thereto a centenarian. The family were much respected; and on the croft being required for building

purposes, the local tradesmen united together and built for them, free of all charge, a cottage in M'Arthur Street. He was a good-living old man was Archibald M'Arthur, a Baptist by persuasion. His daughter related to Miss Clugston that the old man was accustomed repeating slowly, morning and evening, and with much solemnity, the closing lines of the 23rd Psalm :—

“ Goodness and mercy all my life
Hath surely followed me,
 And in God's house for evermore
 My dwelling-place shall be.”

GIFTS: SUITABLE AND OTHERWISE.

The most noteworthy donations “in kind” presented to the Homes have been—pianofortes, pianola, harmonium, gramophone, pictures, and books. Numerous gifts of magazines have also come to hand, all tending to entertain the sickly and disabled during their sojourn; while various parcels of provisions and groceries, fruits and preserves, and other miscellaneous gifts, have proved helpful in sweetening the life therein. One well-meaning lady, out Jordanhill way, sent a donkey, that it might find, in its old age, a comfortable home and kind treatment. The gift, however, proved a nuisance, gnawing away at the trees and shrubbery, and striking out with its hind legs at the Convalescents. It was

resolved to transport it to the Home at Kirk-intilloch (it having been found "incurable"). There the inmates were seen to be more decorous in their manners, and sympathetic with the brute creation. Another well-meaning present was that of two rowing-boats, from two bachelor brothers who were giving up their house at Hunter's Quay. With regard to the smaller-sized boat, the Superintendent of the Homes was quietly told to be cautious in hauling it along to Dunoon with the other one, as it was in such a condition that "to go into it, you might as well jump into your coffin." With respect to the larger boat, the convalescents were allowed to use it daily. But, on account of the inexperience on the part of most of the convalescents in handling a boat, and the want of strength to return with the craft in reasonable time, this form of recreation was very soon abandoned. The trouble of looking after the boat was great, while there was no small risk of some of the convalescents going to the bottom.

A "TORMENTED" WOMAN.

While 115,000 persons have benefited, more or less, from residing in the Homes, it is gratifying to record that only 115 have died. When an event of this nature did occur, the custom was for the Superintendent of the Homes to telegraph

to the Secretary, whose duty it was (in accordance with the Standing Orders) to immediately communicate the sad news to the nearest relation. The somewhat sudden death of a man from Storie Street, Paisley, one morning in the Homes, led the Secretary forth to see the newly-made widow, and to break the sad intelligence to her in as kindly and sympathetic a manner as possible. This was done in a quiet circumlocutory fashion. But, instead of it being followed, as was the case usually in others, by a paroxysm of grief, the wringing of hands, and the shedding of tears, it was a surprise that the widow shewed a stolid silence. Secretary, however, sought to impart to her the consolations of the gospel—“The Lord gave, and He hath taken away : blessed be His Holy Name ;” “The Lord is good, and He is gracious ;” “The Lord thy Maker, He will be thy husband, thy up-making portion ;” “He doeth all things wisely and well.” Fixing her eyes on the Secretary, she said—“Hoo can I think that God is good ? I don’t believe a word of it. This is the third man I am ca’ed on to bury. Did you ever ken o’ a wumman sae tormented, as I hae been, wi’ deein’ men ? ” Secretary felt quite nonplussed ; and, after expressing the hope that she would go down to Dunoon at once, view the remains of him who had loved her, and make arrangements for the interment, he took his departure with as much grace as possible. In the end, in sympathy with the woman, the funeral expenses were defrayed.

ANCIENT HISTORY.

Hundreds of Churches and Sabbath Schools have been visited, with a view to advocating the claims of the Homes. The first public utterance, after my appointment as Secretary, was in what was then Wellington Street U.P. Church, the senior minister of which was the Rev. Dr. Robson, his colleague and successor being the Rev. James Black. The Superintendent of the school, at that time, was Mr. M. P. M'Kerrow, a merchant in Queen Street; and there were also present on the occasion Mr. William MacLean of Plantation, and Mr. J. Livingstone of Glasgow Corporation Gas Department. The address was founded on Christ raising the daughter of Jairus, dwelling more particularly on the words of Jesus—"And He commanded that something should be given her to eat." After expounding the miracle, the speaker dwelt on the love and tenderness, and sympathy of the Saviour, who remaineth "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." In the work sought to be accomplished at the Homes, the Great Physician and the divine power were ever acknowledged and prayed for; and that, in giving attention to supplying well-cooked, nourishing food, the 'Directors of the Homes (along with Miss Clugston) were simply obeying the command of Jesus, following in His footsteps and example, and acting in accordance with His will. [The church in which the Sabbath School referred to was wont to meet is now designated "The Waterloo Rooms."]

THE SMALL HOME IN 1869.

Not the least of the pleasures of life is recollection. I recollect that, within the grounds of the Homes, near to where the *small* fountain is placed, there stood an old family mansion. It was set apart as sleeping apartments for about fifteen to twenty male convalescents, the men getting their meals throughout the day in the main building, or Home, proper. This "dear old home," was named Ardvullin, at one time the residence of the Ewing family, and here the future Sir Archibald Orr Ewing, Bart., the member of Parliament for Dumbartonshire, was born. On the occasion of one of her earliest visits to the place, Miss Clugston sat down in the dining room and penned a touching letter to the baronet, who was then engaged at his duties in the House of Commons. She told him that she then sat in what was the home of his childhood, looking out at the same seashore and the same everlasting hills as had endeared to him the place where he abode in his youth. "Now," she stated, "the auld hoose" was in a state of decay; but there had been erected a brand new Home at no great distance therefrom, which was proposed to be devoted to convalescents. Might she be favoured, since God had blessed him with wealth, with a subscription as a token of thankfulness for past mercies, and vivid recollections of "memories dear." With his characteristic sympathy and generosity, Sir Archibald lost no time in forwarding to Miss Clugston a cheque for £100. In the year 1877 this old building,

called "The Small Home," having become dilapidated, besides being found unsuitable on account of being at a distance from the main structure, was demolished.

"EXTENSIONS."

With such blessed results arising from the work of the Homes, leading to monetary support being obtained from "all sorts and conditions of men," it is not surprising that there was a necessity felt from time to time for their extension. The institution can now accommodate upwards of 300 convalescents, adults and juveniles, a bedstead or crib being allowed to each inmate, so that compared with the beginning, the place is now three times the size of what it was originally. The funds for enlargement have come, for the most part, from an accumulation of legacies and special donations, with the exception of a great effort which was made in 1882 by means of a *second bazaar*. This latter was held in St. Andrew's Halls, and was on a more elaborate scale than the first bazaar. It was promoted in like manner by Miss Clugston, with the hearty co-operation—as joint secretaries—of the late William T. MacAuslane, LL.D., and the writer of these notes. The agreement was that the Home for Incurables at Kirkintilloch, and the Convalescent Homes at Dunoon, were to share the profits from the bazaar fairly and equally between them. The total drawings, it is gratifying to recall, were over £12,000, and

after meeting expenses there remained between £5,000 and £6,000 for each of the two institutions already named. In one way and another, it may be said that the monetary support of the Homes has all along kept pace with the increase in the number of inmates. In the matter of extensions, it was a happy idea the building of a housemaids' wing, whereby the staff are provided with apartments *by themselves*. In this way the Directors sought to secure the health and comfort of those who are anxiously and arduously doing their very best for the numerous convalescents who are resident for the time being within the Homes.

SUPERINTENDENTS AND MATRONS.

For the first eighteen years the Homes were presided over (as Superintendent and Matron) by Mr. and Mrs. John Campbell, who faithfully sought to promote the well-being of the convalescents, and to further as far as possible—in the various departments—the work of the Homes. Owing to declining health they tendered their resignations, and sought for rest and quiet at Rothesay, the Directors taking the opportunity of shewing generously their warm appreciation of their faithfulness and service. They have both now gone to their “long Home.” For the last 21 years or thereby, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Wilson have been master and mistress of the household, and manifest their willingness and anxiety to carry out the wishes of the Directors. They

grudge no labour, and are untiring in their efforts to minister to the wants, temporal and spiritual, of the large family of afflicted ones sojourning at the Homes.

MEDICAL OFFICERS.

It is pleasant in looking back to be able to say that all those who have been identified with the management of the Dunoon Convalescent Seaside Homes have worked together most pleasantly and harmoniously. Long before the Institution was opened, Dr. Robert Perry, the Medical Examining Officer in Glasgow, proved a valuable counsellor to Miss Clugston, and even after it was begun he handsomely gave his professional services for a whole year free of charge. His skill and discrimination in the passing of applicants for admission have been conspicuous, and he is worthy of the gratitude and esteem of the Directors. Dr. John Reid, at one time in the Royal Navy, was the first Consulting Surgeon at the Homes. His characteristics were a certain dignified and courtly style in manners, and a disposition to please all who came to him for advice by prescribing liberal doses of homely medicine. When he felt his own health failing he resigned his post, and went to reside at a London suburb, where his son was placed as a minister of the Church of England. Dr. James Denniston was the second to fill the office of Consulting Surgeon. He was a dashing young doctor with a great amount of "go" in him, and was successful in

communicating to the patients the same spirit of hopefulness and cheerfulness as he possessed. Under him the proportion of "recoveries" was unique, and many in Glasgow and other places remember with gratitude the name of Dr. Denniston. His own health became shattered—and, after struggling for recuperation by acting as surgeon on board one of our big ocean-going steamers, he succumbed to the fell disease where-with he had been afflicted. The third to fill the place was Dr. John Ritchie, who is faithful and attentive to the duties entrusted to him. His ability and sympathetic care is not only appreciated by the convalescents in the Homes, but the popularity he enjoys there is also manifested by the community of Dunoon. For a considerable number of years he has been chairman of their School Board. In that capacity he has done yeoman service, by urging the importance of the rising generation obtaining lessons on the laws of health, the doctor being a thorough believer in the truth of that trite saying: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

THE MANAGEMENT.

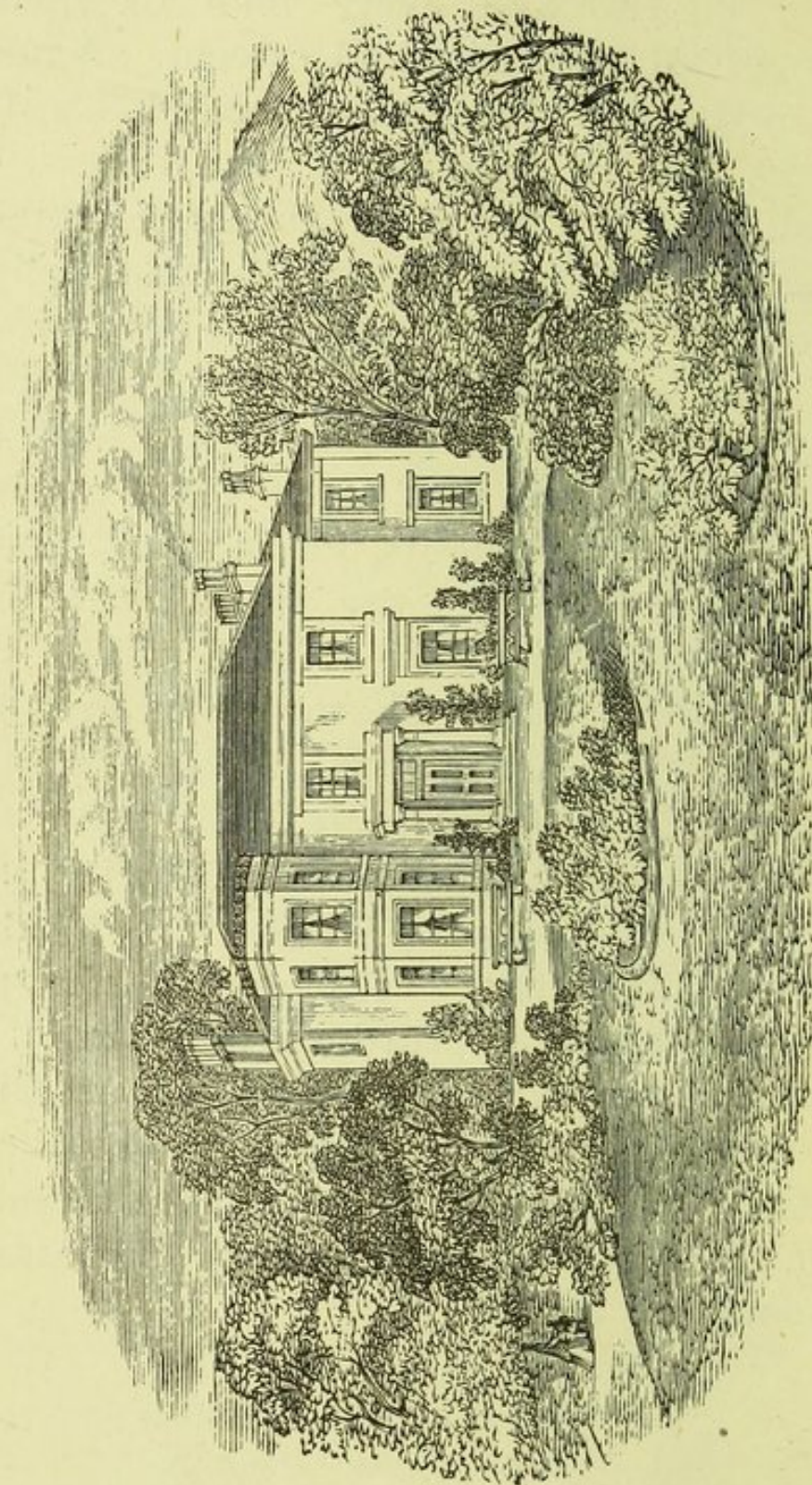
In accordance with the Constitution, the Homes are managed by 24 Directors, elected and selected from the donors and subscribers. There has never been any difficulty in getting that number of first-class business gentlemen, and leaders of various public works and factories throughout the city, to take a practical interest

in the Homes. Indeed, the success of the Institution is very largely due to their well-directed efforts, and every man of them is worthy of all reverence and esteem. Amongst them, in the past, there have been M.P.'s, Lord Provosts, Bailies, Councillors, and others, who have all been animated by the high and holy purpose of making the Homes a blessing (physically and otherwise) to all who have been brought within the circle of their influence. Happily, during the well-nigh forty years, there have been only two Presidents and three Vice-Presidents. The first of the Presidents, for 20 years, was the late Sir Peter Coats; the second, Sir James King, Bart., LL.D., who it is hoped, will for years to come adorn the chair. The three Vice-Presidents have been—the late Messrs. William Maitland and Thomas Jenkins, while Mr. William Anderson, with his well-known ability and geniality, is the third to fill the office. Those who filled the position of Honorary Treasurer in the past, were :—Messrs. Lowe, Murdoch, and Gray. The present Honorary Treasurer is Mr. Robert Blyth. The position of Honorary Secretary was filled by the late Mr. William MacLean, of Plantation, for 32 years. The present Honorary Secretary is Mr. George B. Hoggan.

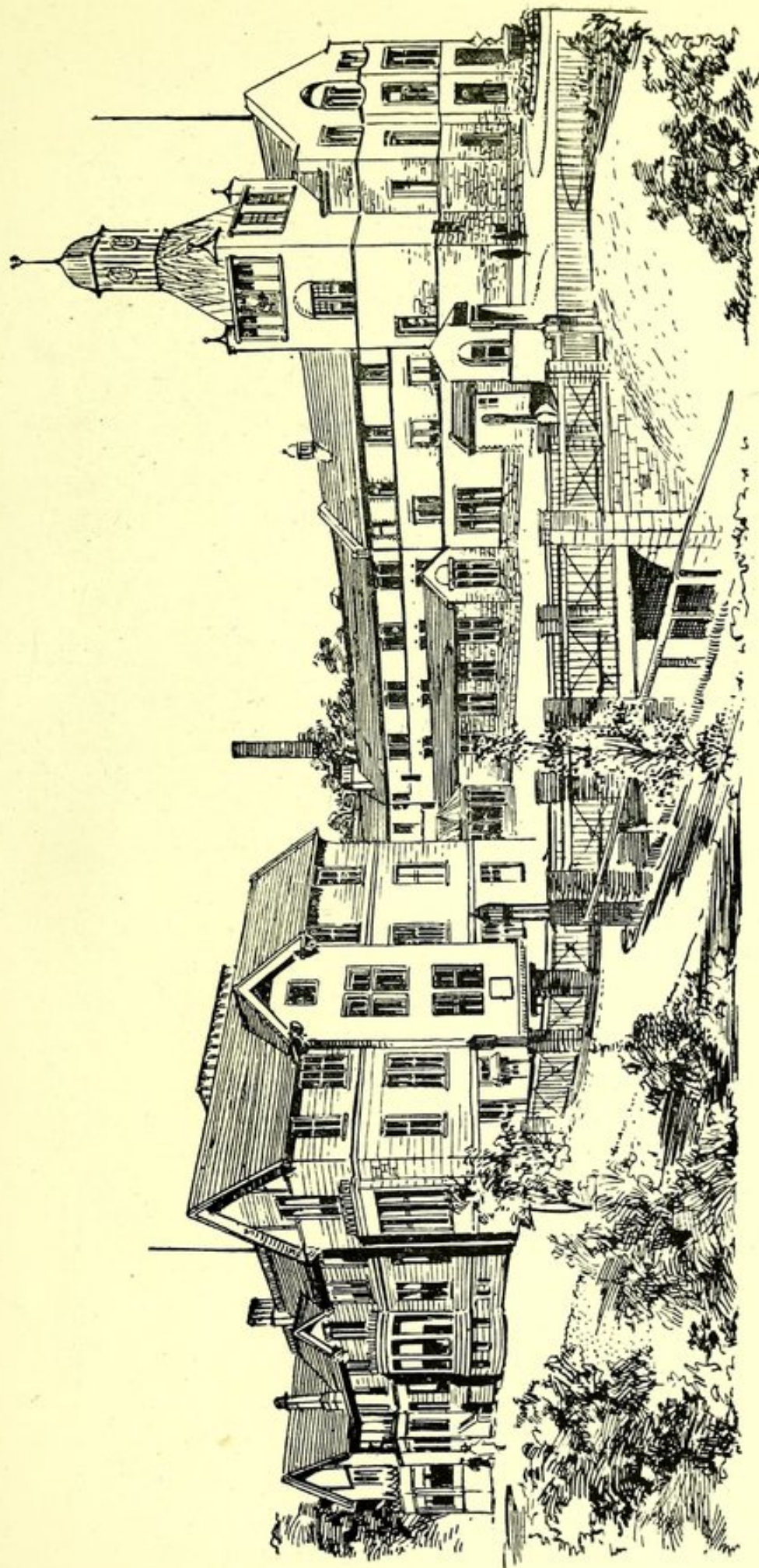
“Lives of *good* men all remind us
 We can make our lives sublime;
 And, departing, leave behind us
 Footprints on the sands of time.”

Acting Secretary and Treasurer—MR. DANIEL G. KENT.

Office of the Homes—4 HANOVER STREET, GLASGOW.



THE SMALL HOME IN 1869.



THE HOMES AS AT PRESENT.

