

The customary dinner of the Teesdale Farmers' Union held at the Cleveland Arms, Teesdale, there being the presidency of Mr. the Barnard Castle supporting the Chair (Stressholme, Darlington), Mr. W. R. W. Raine, J.P., R. W. Raine, J.P., Johnson, County Secretary, branch secretary, Tarn, branch secretary.

An excellent dinner, hostess, Mrs Ward, with "The King," and duly honoured.

The Chairman returned agriculture in the county Union in bringing the difficult situation Government's reply remedy had been made no." He said delegates England and Wales to the effect that the Act is to be continued 1920 Act should be of the Union towards was that a basic it should receive part of it was to unfair forest guarding could not there should be a proceeds of the policy been placed before the as forcibly as possible and the question arise sit down and accept effort on their own arrived when the industry would have seem selfish to put the National interest of British Agriculture farming—was of the ance, and when the have to make up their do. Each individual for himself, but the placed before them member could not recorded his vote. referred to the previous said that with conce might induce the M which would entitle Therefore he asked a cate with him and order that he might proper quarter.

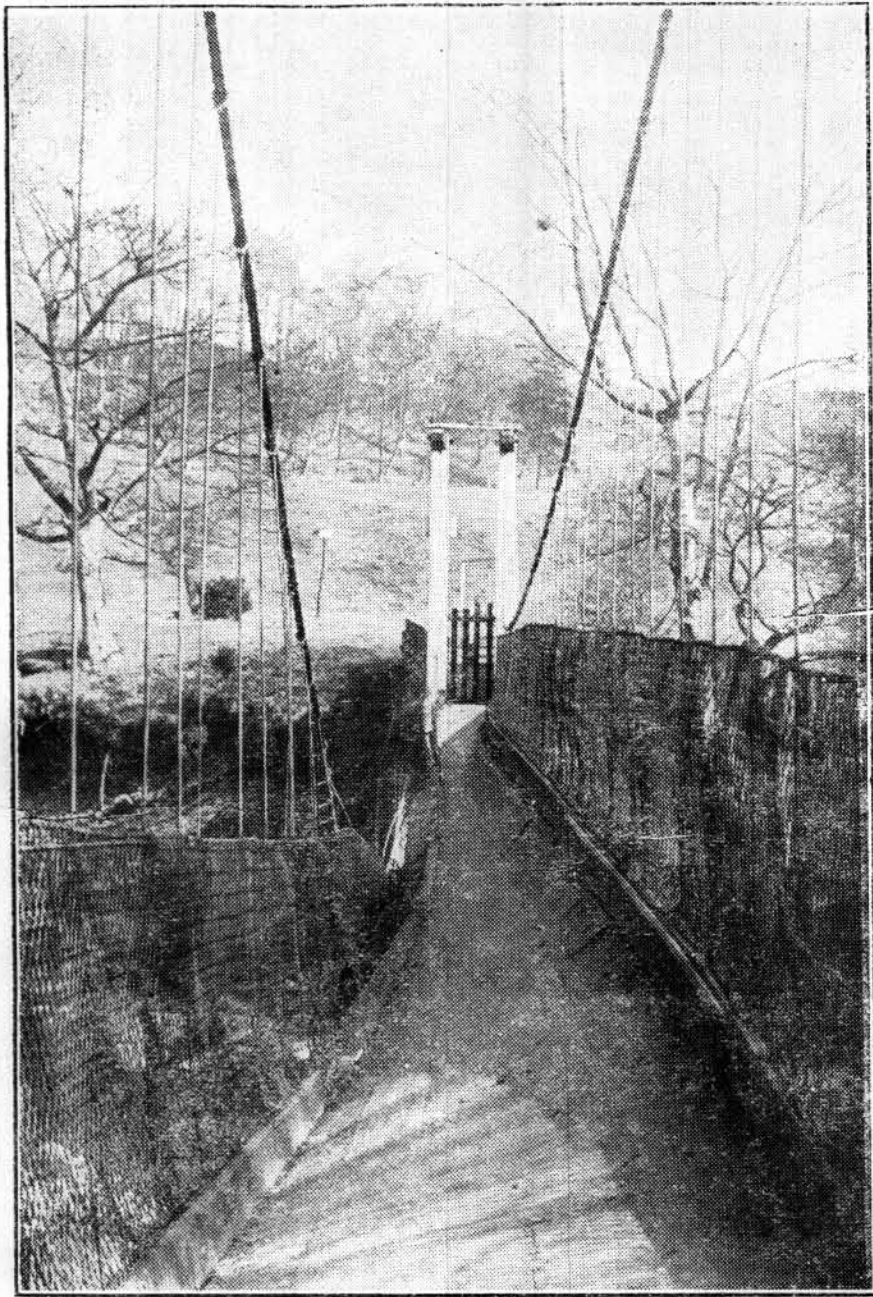
Mr G. Atkinson presided J. W. Fell in a chair it was 32 years since condition of the bar for his own safeguard been for the most part since then with the Barnard Castle Council so many witnesses the (Laughter.) His friend who represented the organisation, once given in his conservatory as they had settled their said the Union had a "How about the poor W. Rees, sitting near union," added Mr At be in it," retorted Addressing the com "Tithes," which he days of Methuselah, they were being colle purpose. Asked by were not collected e said probably some g bought them up. (L Mr J. W. Fell, resp never be a "Swan S if it failed in England where according to lined in Genesis. "W ture?" he asked, and was that the agric waited for committee with too much by po agriculture being in the precipitate and u gold standard. Stock values during the wa returned to the gold felt by agriculture, of the agriculturist be Wages and expenses ingly, and consequ reduced in order to c tural wages were less been if there had nev but without a Wages been many men w wages. The Wages making a dead leve fixed not on ability the men employed, system. The Gover only people not affe the gold standard. fair if the Governme of their employees? need of better ventila lessen the ravages of Mr W. Rees pro County Secretary, humorous speech, accorded to the toast Mr Johnson, who w replied, referring to the Swaledale shi

# SUSPENSION BRIDGE COLLAPSES.

## SENSATIONAL OCCURRENCE AT COTHERSTONE.

### TWENTY PEOPLE THROWN INTO THE RIVER.

**A** N ACCIDENT with which the whole of England was subsequently ringing occurred on Good Friday afternoon on Cotherstone suspension bridge. About forty people were crossing the bridge when one of the wire ropes supporting the end on the Durham shore gave way and the floor of the bridge canting to an acute angle about twenty people, unable to help themselves, were flung into the river, receiving injuries more or less serious, many requiring medical attention. The illustration shows the bridge after the accident.



PHOTO

[E. HOLDSWORTH

#### STORY OF THE ACCIDENT.

Here is the story of the accident as it came through from Cotherstone shortly after its occurrence:

There had been a football match in the field on the Durham side of the river between teams from Cotherstone and Mickleton and in order to catch the motor omnibuses which run up and down the Dale, as soon as the match was over there was a rush of spectators to reach the bridge and gain the Yorkshire shore. There must have been some forty people on the bridge, just about four o'clock, when an ominous creak was heard. The thick wire rope supporting the west side of the Durham end of the bridge had parted from the top of the tall post to which it had been fastened, and had fallen, not only letting down the wire trellis which protected the passengers as they walked, but also causing the floor of the bridge, four feet wide, to cant at an acute angle, with the result that about twenty people who happened to be on that end of the bridge when it tilted, having nothing to hang on to for protection, were thrown into the river bed, which is about twenty-two feet below. It was in a sense fortunate that the stream is shallow on the Durham side just now, the main channel being near the Yorkshire shore, or there might have been cases of drowning to record. As it was, while a number fell into the water, several fell on the heap of cobble stones in the centre, sustaining more or less serious injuries to heads and backs. Of the other people on the bridge, some of those on the left side at the Durham end were able to save themselves by clutching at the trellis fence, while those further toward the Yorkshire shore were able to scramble off. One young man, as soon as he had gained the Yorkshire shore and had realised the fate that he had escaped, fell in a dead faint. Meanwhile there was a confused heap of human beings, men and women, lying

on that heap of cobble stones. They were bleeding and unable to help themselves. Others were floundering in water of varying depths, certainly in a queer predicament, but when they realised it, glad to escape with nothing more than a ducking.

Mr H. Heslop, the Cotherstone Postmaster, and Police-constable William North, the latter an ambulance man, were among those who witnessed the occurrence. There was no time to lose. Doctors were phoned for, rescue parties arranged, and stretchers requisitioned in almost as little time as it takes to write about it. The helpless of the injured were the first to receive attention, the most seriously hurt being Mrs Sally Nattrass, formerly Miss Bainbridge, of Belle Vue, Romaldkirk. She had scalp wounds, and her back was undoubtedly badly injured. Stretchers were improvised and the unfortunate victims brought to the shore, where first-aid was administered pending the arrival of doctors. Very promptly there arrived from Barnard Castle Drs. Alexander and John Leishman and Dr. Robinson, and these were engaged for an hour or so in dealing with injuries, Cotherstone cottagers very kindly throwing their houses open for use as temporary hospitals.

Dr. A. Smith, Cotherstone, happened to be away from home.

Mrs Nattrass was removed to her mother's house at Romaldkirk, where she came under the care of Miss Beal, of Romaldkirk Rectory, a trained nurse, who saw at once that it was a case for a hospital. Accordingly the patient, accompanied by Miss Beal, proceeded to Darlington Greenbank Hospital. There it was found that Mrs Nattrass's spine was seriously injured, if not fractured, as it was feared, and Miss Beal, after remaining with her charge for some time, returned to Romaldkirk a long time after midnight.

#### List of the Victims.

Here is a list of the other victims who were injured:—

- Lawrence Waites, Cotherstone, scalp wounds and injuries to back;
- George Eustace, Cotherstone, scalp wound and injury to hand;

John Tinley, Mickleton, scalp wound and injury to knee;

Henry Thorne, Cotherstone, chest injury; Maurice Allison, Mickleton, fractured ankle; Arthur Watson, Cotherstone, injuries to leg and chin;

George Walton, Mickleton, cut nose and knee;

Alexander Anderson, Mickleton, bruised knee;

Miss Mary Cowell, of Eaglescliffe; Mrs Hepworth, and Mr R. B. Hepworth, wife and eldest son of the Mayor of Doncaster.

Edward Thompson, Cotherstone, and Lawrence Raine, Mickleton, Arthur Thompson, Mickleton, and Harold Stonehouse, Cotherstone, received minor injuries.

Claude Coates, Cotherstone, fell into deep water.

Harry Parkinson, junior, Cotherstone, fell into deep water and escaped with a scratch on his leg.

Thomas Robinson, Cotherstone, fell into water.

Jack Raine (aged 6), Cotherstone, fell into water.

Colin Bainbridge, Cotherstone, fell on his feet.

Among those who were saved by clinging to the wire were John Alderson, Cotherstone; Jack Emerson, Hunderthwaite; Charles Hutchinson, Eggleston; George Dennis, Mickleton; Miss M. Myers, Romaldkirk; and Joseph Watson (14), Cotherstone.

It will be seen that more than twenty people were precipitated into the river.

#### Eye-Witnesses' Stories.

The Postmaster of Cotherstone (Mr H. Heslop), an eye-witness, said that the sensation he experienced when he saw the bridge gradually heeling over and the shrieking people falling one by one into the river was indescribable.

The Mayor of Doncaster (Mr R. B. Hepworth) was within a few feet of the bridge when the cable snapped and he saw his wife, eldest son (Mr R. B. Hepworth), and niece (Miss Cowell) thrown into the water. "It was a terrible sight," he said, "I never saw anything more like a battlefield in my life. I was just approaching the bridge with Mr Cowell, with whom my family and I are spending the holidays. My wife, son, and niece were walking a little ahead and had just got on to the bridge when suddenly there was a loud snip, and in a second I saw my relatives and many others flung into the river below. Mr Cowell and I and others at once rushed forward and, scrambling down to the water's edge, helped to get them out. There were some who managed to catch hold of the wreckage of the bridge and pull themselves up hand-over-hand. Fortunately for them my own people fell into four or five feet of water, and this undoubtedly saved them from more serious injury. Others were less fortunate, and fell either into very shallow water or on to rocks."

Mr Hepworth's relatives were taken at once to Mr Cowell's residence and medically attended. None of them escaped lightly, Mr R. B. Hepworth being the most seriously hurt.

#### MRS NATTRASS'S CONDITION CRITICAL.

On inquiry last evening we were informed that Mrs Nattrass remains in a very critical condition in Darlington Hospital. Her mother, Mrs Bainbridge, went to see her yesterday afternoon.

#### PROMPT ACTION OF THE COUNCILS.

It is scarcely necessary to state that the officials of the two Rural Councils responsible for the maintenance of the bridge lost no time in taking steps to consider the repair of the damage. On Friday night each end of the bridge was barricaded, and red lights have been placed on both sides at night to warn unthinking passengers of the danger. On Saturday Colonel H. C. Watson, Clerk to the Startforth Rural Council, and Mr T. W. Bainbridge, Clerk to the Barnard Castle Rural Council, with the respective highway surveyors, made a very close inspection of the damaged structure, and it is understood that various suggestions were made for its replacement or repair. It is expected that the matter will be considered at the special meeting of the Barnard Castle Rural Council on April 17th, by which time the Surveyors of the two authorities will, it is believed, have decided on a definite scheme.

#### HISTORY OF THE BRIDGE.

The Cotherstone suspension bridge was erected to take the place of a wooden bridge which had spanned the Tees, but was destroyed in the great flood of March, 1881, which carried away the Thorngate foot bridge, Barnard Castle. Mr Amos, farmer, who formerly resided at Shipley, had been chiefly instrumental in securing the erection of this structure, which was described as commodious, and the demolition of which was much regretted. Less than a fortnight afterwards the Cotherstone inhabitants met to consider the re-erection of this bridge, one suggestion being that overtures should be made to the Barnard Castle Local Board of Health for the purchase of the shattered Thorngate bridge. Needless to say this suggestion was not adopted. It was pointed out that the consent of the land owners on both sides of the river would have to be obtained for the new bridge to be erected. Balder Bridge was washed away at the same

## Special Show : GENTS' SUITS.

F. SMITH, 23, Horse Market  
BARNARD CASTLE.

time. It was not until April, 1882, that the Teesdale Mercury was able to announce that negotiations had been entered into for the construction of the suspension bridge. In September, 1882, the Teesdale Mercury was able to announce the erection of the bridge, the height of which from the bed of the river was given as 27 feet. The pillars and flooring of oak were supplied free by the Duke of Cleveland, and the Rev. Thomas Witham of Lartington Hall, kindly allowed the use of his boat while the bridge was being constructed. The cost of the bridge was about £200, which just over £20 was still owing at the time of its erection. Several willing workers gave their assistance free of cost, and the cartage, which was very heavy, was gratuitously undertaken by local farmers. Mr John Harper, of Aberdeen, personally superintended the erection of the bridge, and with four men commenced and completed the work in the short space of time of two weeks. Throughout its progress the bridge was visited daily by Messrs Mills and Lamb, two of the committees with Mr T. Chipchase, treasurer, and Mr Porter, secretary. The formal opening of the bridge took place on Saturday, October 7th, 1882, and in celebration of the occasion rustic games were played in Percymyre Park near by, tea being served in a spacious marquee. Sports completed the day's programme.

#### COTHERSTONE WESLEYANS.

The anniversary services of the Cotherstone Wesleyan Sunday School were held as usual on Good Friday afternoon, when the scholars had their tea in the schoolroom, the report being kindly presided over by Mrs T. Kipling and Miss M. Lowe. In the evening a musical service was given by the choir consisting of hymns, anthems, solos and duets. Mr and Mrs T. Kipling, Mrs Taylor, Miss Bell, Mr Gill and Mr R. Gill gave solos and duets which were much appreciated. Mr G. V. Teasdale, Barnard Castle, presided, and spoke words of encouragement. The Secretary's report showed good work done and mentioned that this was the 99th anniversary and it was hoped next year to celebrate the School Centenary by a re-union of Old Scholars. The Superintendent thanked the Chairman and Chairmen for their valuable help and assistance.

On Easter Sunday two able and impressive sermons were preached by the Rev. R. Teasdale, Barnard Castle, to good companions. In the afternoon a service of praise was given by the choir and scholars, consisting of hymns, anthems, solos and recitations. Mr T. Kipling conducted the singing. Mrs J. Bell presided at the organ. The children's recitations and singing were under the care of Misses Heming, Lowe, and Elsie Cross, and a pleasant service was held. Good collections were taken and the friends are grateful for help given.

#### GOLF.

#### TEESDALE MEMBER'S SUCCESS AT APPLEBY.

The Easter Monday open competition at Appleby was won by Mr Bobby Jackson of the Teesdale Golf Club, with a score of 86 (36 holes). Mr Jackson also took the prize for the best afternoon round with a net score of 70.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### BARNARD CASTLE AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE TEESDALE MERCURY.]  
Sir,—May we through your columns ask the people of Barnard Castle and district for their whole-hearted support to the forthcoming production of "Florodora" which can assure our patrons and friends that we will find this musical comedy to be humorous, tuneful melody and attractive singing. The expenses of production—costumes, scenery, etc.—are necessarily heavy, and during the last five years more than £218 5s. 3d. has been paid to the National Exchequer in the form of Entertainment Duty. Barnard Castle comprises a small community and it is only by the support of the townspeople that we can continue to give our annual show. May we then appeal to everyone not to fail to see "Florodora" can assure our patrons that they will not be disappointed.

Full particulars can be found in the next issue of this column. The programme (reserved) can now be booked at the Teesdale Mercury Book-shop, and tickets for the seats (admitting holders to the box seats without extra charge) can be obtained from members of the Society.—Yours faithfully,  
F. H. CHRISTIE, President.  
R. H. WADE, Hon. Treasurer.  
T. H. HOBSON, Hon. Secretary.  
April 2nd, 1929.