

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*The St. Kilda General Market—Agitation for Market in 1867—The Site Question—Stormy Meeting of Ratepayers—The Inkerman Street Site — Meetings of Protest—Inkerman Street Site a Swamp—Council Market Committee Buys Site—Bellman Engaged, "Oyez! Oyez! The Market's Here!"—Market Sheds Erected, 1868—Market Opened—Not a Success—A Privately Owned Market—The Trade. Stream in St. Kilda—Council and Primary Producers—City's Corporation Tips—Search for Destructor Sites—Residents' Hostility to Sites—The Elsternwick Park Lost to St. Kilda—South St. Kilda Residents' Good Citizenship—St. Kilda Council Erects Refuse Destructor in Inkerman Street.*

**O**N April 10, 1867, a meeting of residents was held in the St. Kilda Town Hall to give public expression to the wish throughout the borough for the establishment of a general market. Councillor Henry Tullett was chairman, and the Town Clerk of St. Kilda, Mr. Bradshaw, read the notice convening the meeting. Speakers in favor of the proposal, commented upon the absurdity of market gardeners passing through St. Kilda to Paddy's Market, Melbourne, with their loads of vegetables, when a portion of the vegetables had to be brought back to St. Kilda for sale, being enhanced in price, owing to toll gate dues on the St. Kilda Road.

Dr. F. T. Van Hemert, public vaccinator, and Registrar of Births and Deaths for St. Kilda, said that householders were "compelled to diet their servants on bread or potatoes, and that if there was a market in their midst, where cabbages could be got, it would be a great boon to all concerned."

One speaker, R. Whitelock, said he was against the proposal because "St. Kilda was an aristocratic suburb, and that few working men, who eat the most, lived in it." A resolution in favor of the market, and that the Borough Council be "forthwith solicited to co-operate for the selection of a site for the market," was carried.

Difficulties quickly followed the meeting. Contending parties arose to fight with considerable spirit, and some personal bitterness over which site was the most suitable one. Residents in High Street wanted the market placed there. Others sup-

ported a site in Inkerman Street. Among the members of the deputation, sent by the meeting, to wait on the council, were well-known early St. Kilda men, including Messrs. Tullett, Van Hemert, Wilson, Gemmell, Nimnis, H. S. Smith, P. Matthews, H. S. Wheeler, J. Mattheson, W. G. Murray, F. J. Sargood, Hon. George Home, H. Palmer, and R. Elworthy.

A newspaper critic said the meeting in the Town Hall was a "mere burlesque," because the Town Clerk, after reading the requisition, asking the Mayor to convene the meeting, and when proceeding to read some few names, was peremptorily told by the Chairman to "sit down." Ratepayers, attending the meeting, had been snubbed by Councillor Tullett, and treated as "plebeian burgesses," because they did not reside in Grey Street, where Messrs. Tullett & Co. wished to place the market, without consulting the ratepayers' wishes. Councillor Tullett had described himself as the "meekest man in the world," and then *he* had asked if the sixty-three ratepayers, in High Street, thought that they could take the remaining ratepayers by the throat, and dictate to them, what should be done? "Uproar" followed this bellicose question.

As the fight for the site advanced, the High Street site advocates clamored for a ballot. Assertions were made, that the burgesses of East St. Kilda, had been "sold for a mess of pottage, and that the whole market business was a regular dodge." When advocates of the High Street site saw that they would probably fail, they criticised the Council in severe terms, and decided to hold a public meeting of protest. This meeting was held in the Orderly Room, Chapel Street. Resolutions against the proposed site in Inkerman Street were carried. The meeting also affirmed, that a ballot of the burgesses should be taken, as the "only true way of ascertaining the wishes of the ratepayers."

The land suggested, as suitable for a market site, in High Street was near the Pembroke Hotel. It had a frontage of 110 feet by varying depths of 169 feet and 200 feet. Upon it were three wooden shops, which were let at a rental of 10/- each per week. The owner was Joseph Taylor, and he asked £750 for the land. When the resolutions, in favor of the High Street site, were received by the Council, Councillor Bunny said the ballot would lead to no satisfaction, as the ratepayers con-

cerned were not agreed among themselves as to the most suitable site. Inkerman Street site was in a swamp, and the one the resolutionists desired was no improvement on. Inkerman Street site, because the drainage from High Street, and from the surrounding properties, flowed into it. Councillor. Tullett described the meeting as one held by the residents of High Street, and not by ratepayers living in East St. Kilda, though the promoters of the meeting pretended it was. He hoped that the market sheds would be erected before Christmas. He thought that the letter, with the resolutions, should be merely "received," and he moved an amendment to that effect, against a motion to refer the letter to the Public Works Committee. Councillor Tullett's amendment was carried. A market committee was appointed consisting of the Mayor, Councillor W. Ford, and Councillors Tullett, Lord, and Oldham.

The Council waited on the Commissioner of Crown Lands, for the purpose of asking for permission to dispose of the market reserve, and to be allowed to apply the purchase money towards buying the proposed Inkerman site. The Commissioner decided to consult his colleagues. Three months afterwards, the Council was still waiting for the Commissioner's reply. Councillor Fowler said in Council, that the councillors knew "perfectly well that the request was not entertained."

On Monday, September 16, 1867, the Market Committee reported to the Council that it had agreed with Messrs. Nicholson, and Purvis to buy 220 feet of their land, west of the proposed continuation of Greeves Street, by a depth of their entire block, and to pay for the land £200. This agreement to purchase, was made, on the condition, that Nicholson and Purvis gave, without cost, 60 feet of land, for the continuation of Greeves Street, and 40 feet, for the continuation of Blanche Street, to Barkly Street, and also, 30 feet, for a street, west of the proposed market, called, in Mr. Jackson's plan, Clarke Street, the Council agreeing to form, and metal Greeves and Blanche Streets, within twelve months, from the date of the conveyance. It was asserted that the ratepayers had, by a large majority, consented to the site, and to the whole scheme. Councillor Fowler said the Committee had exceeded its powers, and that the basis of the agreement was not tenable. The council had not obtained the sanction of the Government for the sale of the ground,

reserved for market purposes, nor had the Committee taken steps to secure the best, or even a suitable site. The site proposed was dear at any price, for it was the lowest part of St. Kilda, and the main drain would be a perfect nuisance to a population settling in that locality. In reply to Councillor Fowler it was asserted that the Council had the power to purchase the site, without the proceeds of the sale of the market reserve being obtained from the Government. After a long discussion, the report was received, and the Market Committee's actions ratified.

Before purchasing the land in Inkerman Street, or going any further towards creating a permanent market by erecting sheds, it was decided to give a market, to be held in Inkerman Street, a three months' trial. To overcome any mud the street was well blinded with sand. This street market was held on Wednesdays, and Saturdays. Its first opening was notified, throughout St. Kilda, by a lusty-throated bellman calling, "Oyez! Oyez! *The market's here!*" From 15 to 20 market gardeners, with their carts, attended on the first market day. At the end of three months' time over 100 market gardeners, and their carts, crowded into Inkerman Street. Contrary to their expectations, the High Street shopkeepers found that the market benefited them, because the market gardeners spent with them about £250 every Saturday market day.

George Walstab, Mr. J. H. Jackson's agent, wrote to the Council, stating he had received a communication requesting him to put under offer, to the Council, two or three hundred feet of Mr. Jackson's land to be used as a public market. He drew their attention to the fact that the land was already used as a public market, without his consent, and he wanted to know why? before he consulted Mr. Jackson's solicitor, about the trespass. The Council informed him that it had given no authority to trespass on the land in question, and that the market was held in Inkerman Street. Walstab replied saying he would himself deal with those who trespassed upon Jackson's land on market days.

Jackson was in England, and the Market Committee found that his representative had no power to sell the whole of the land for the market. The Committee recommended that the land be taken compulsorily under powers which the Council possessed

but eventually the land was acquired by arbitration. Jackson wanted £1,800 for the land, the Council estimated that £650 was a fair market value. It was calculated, by the Council, that the building of the markets would cost £2,500, and that sum might be obtained by debentures, and a special rate levied.

On November 18, the Council accepted the tender of John Morris, for the erection of market sheds, the price was £1,520. Morris had rivals, if not enemy critics. D. McNaughton, on February 29, 1868, wrote to a newspaper, saying that 28 gauge iron, instead of 24 gauge iron, as specified in the contract for building the market, was being used by Morris. This lighter weight iron, McNaughton alleged, made a difference in price in Morris's favor of £59/11/41. McNaughton said: "The broken-backed appearance of the market is highly picturesque." The work went on notwithstanding Mr. McNaughton. A press comment *says*: "It will not be long before the St. Kilda people have a market place worthy of their borough. Porters have been appointed for the market, so that purchasers can have their goods carried to any part of the district, at a small charge." The "porters" engaged by the Council were "six boys of good character."

The St. Kilda market was opened, in the presence of many ratepayers, and others, on Saturday, April 4, 1868. The buildings faced Inkerman Street, and the central avenue was 380 feet *long* by 20 feet wide, with smaller divisions on either side, 14 feet wide, for market gardeners' carts. The occasion was one of a municipal ceremony at which the Mayor, Dr. Patterson, reviewed the commencement, progress, and completion of the markets. He stated that opposition to the markets had ceased. The Municipal party then adjourned to the Town Hall and partook of luncheon. John Morris gave a hogshead of beer, to those present, wherewith to drink success to the market. Stalls to the number of 29 were let for the current quarter, and the amount realised on the first day by the collection of dues, Wednesday, April 9, was £46/13/-.

The first market inspector was Mr. Wilson, the librarian of the Town Hall Library. Officially, it was stated in Council that the principal reason for appointing the literary Mr. Wilson was "to save expense, as by advertising for a market inspector the Council would have been put to great expense, and the

Council might have had to pay to such a man, a salary of £150, per annum," whereas, if Mr. Wilson, the librarian, at certain hours and days, was turned into Mr. Wilson, the market inspector, that shuffle would only cost the Council £50 as an addition to the librarian's salary. The appointment of Mr. Wilson to be the market inspector was severely criticised in the street, and in the newspapers. In the criticisms that were published in the newspapers, "the expense of advertising" was called "all moonshine, because anyone knew that the plain facts were that the Council had a pet lamb." Wilson was the "pet lamb," who grazed on the somewhat starved fields of literature, in the St. Kilda Public Library, and his lamb-like nature was hungry and human enough to enjoy his occasional freedom among succulent Brighton cabbages, in the St. Kilda market, when for doing so he received £50 per annum. A strong feeling existed that William Brotherton, who was one of the active forces in bringing about the markets, should have received the position of the first market inspector.

The success of the markets minimised the profits of the St. Kilda abattoirs, and the lessees, Edington Brothers, complained to the Council that a number of butchers, from other districts, wherein cattle were slaughtered, sent meat for sale to the St. Kilda markets. On those grounds they asked for a reduction of the rent they paid for the slaughter house, and yards. Market stall holders complained that market gardeners forestalled the markets, and hawked vegetables through St. Kilda, to avoid paying market dues, which were for a cart 6d., for a waggon, 9d. The Council checked that practice by passing a punitive by-law. In September the Council decided to fence in a portion of the market grounds with corrugated iron, and to use the enclosed space as a municipal store yard.

Hugh A. Hunt, one of a line of market lessees, complained to the Council in September, 1874, that he had made grave losses, owing to the hot weather. The supply of vegetables usually brought to the market had ceased. The new weighbridge installed in Dandenong Road was more convenient for many market gardeners and others. The custom that once was his at the St. Kilda weighbridge was then *going* to the lessee of the Dandenong Road weighbridge. The charges posted up on the board in the St. Kilda market were not legal, and he had,

turning this way, and that, for a living, to take, in the way of fees, what the market gardeners would give to him. Possibly Mr. Hunt survived his troubles.

The remarkable thing, about the old market was, that up to 1919, the Council's board, that proclaimed the market dues, was still attached to the old market building. Since then it has been removed, to the City Hall's store room, where it is housed, as a minor historical relic. The writing on the board reads:-

**BOROUGH OF ST. KILDA.**

**PUBLIC MARKET.**

**Dues Chargeable at this Market.**

For each stall (butchers excepted), £1/1/- a quarter.

For each standing do., ditto.

Articles with basket, or barrow, 6d. per day.

Cart, or Waggon, 1/-.

Butcher's stall, 4/-.

Butcher's stall, Wednesday, and Saturday mornings, 7/-.

Wood cart with two wheels, 6d. a day.

Wood cart with four wheels, 1/-.

Space for each stall, or standing, 8 feet.

Passed by special order of Council, 3rd March, 1868, and confirmed on the 6th day of April, 1868.

JAMES PATTERSON, Mayor.

E. BRADSHAW, Town Clerk.

The reason why the market board of fees remained in its place for so long a period, was a curious one. It was left since 1868, because it served a legal purpose, and that purpose ceased to exist on January 1st, 1919. The St. Kilda Council, and the St. Kilda Market Committee in their excitement, when bringing the market into existence, forgot to have the place gazetted as a market. Through some legal difficulty the neglect could not be remedied. The market board floated as a raft in the sea of trouble, and saved the rights of the Council. So long as the board was exhibited the Council could prosecute any hawker, who sold his wares without a license, within the municipal boundaries of St. Kilda. The board has, in years past, been photographed, and the photograph produced, and sworn to in Court as a photograph of the market board of St. Kilda, still exhibited in the market place, in order to prove a case against

a hawker who had not paid his St. Kilda fees. The St. Kilda Council's inspector, before he could succeed in a market prosecution had to show that a market in St. Kilda was in existence, at least in official existence, if not in fact, and this was proved by the board, though the Borough of St. Kilda had never been gazetted as a place, wherein a market was held. The Hawkers' Act, 1919, obviated the necessity of retaining the old market board of 1868.

The hopes of the men of 1867, were not completely realised. The market, after its preliminary success, gradually wilted away. The market gardeners preferred to cart their produce to Melbourne. They could sell their vegetables there with more profit. The trade in St. Kilda was too poor to keep them. The market was in its dying phases, waiting for an undertaker, in 1882. The town clerk, Mr. Fred W. Chamberlin, remembers seeing for sale, cooked meats in the market in 1882. Possibly the meat pies he saw were the cooked meats of the funeral feast. Evidences of a demand by thirsty market men and women survives in the Newmarket Hotel. At the time of writing, the iron sheds remain. Some of the market land is now used as a site for the St. Kilda rubbish destructor.

A deputation, from the St. Kilda Branch of the Australian Labor Party, waited on the Council on March 19, 1923, to urge the re-establishment of a general market in St. Kilda. The deputation was introduced by Councillor G. B. Renfrey. The members of the deputation based their application on the following resolution, passed by the local Labor branch :—"That this Branch wait upon the St. Kilda City Council, and urge the consideration of the establishment of a market in St. Kilda." The deputationists desired a municipally-governed market, not a privately controlled one. A market, in their opinion, would increase the trade done by shopkeepers. Reference was made to the passage through St. Kilda of market gardeners, with their carts, laden with fruit, and vegetables, on their way to the markets of Melbourne. Not anything the spokesmen urged was new to the councillors. The Mayor assured the deputation that, its request would receive every consideration.

The members of the deputation were not the only persons who thought it an anomaly that market gardeners with vegetables, should pass through St. Kilda to sell their produce

in Melbourne. The reason is, that the vegetables on the carts are, in most cases, already sold to middlemen market buyers in Melbourne. In some cases, acres of growing cabbages, are sold in advance of their maturity. The market gardener's task is, when the harvest is ready, to deliver the cabbages, which have been already counted, to the wholesale middleman in Melbourne, before he can receive his final payment for his vegetables. Relatively, the conditions now for direct trading are more difficult than they were in the days when the St. Kilda Council had a market bellman.

A company established a privately-owned market on the site of the old tramway sheds in Acland Street in 1928. The market was declared open on June 15, by the Mayor of St. Kilda, Councillor Dawkins. The market is laid out under one roof, with several passage ways 16 feet in width. Shops, or stalls, 12 x 12, extend on each side of the passage ways. On either side of the main entrance, is a parking ground for motor cars. The cost of erecting the market is stated to have been £20,000, and that 10,000 visitors inspected the market on the opening day.

In 1879, St. Kilda shopkeepers decided to start a Tradesmen's Club. In 1879, the business hours of shopkeepers were from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., and there was no general half holiday. The first president of the Club was T. E. Pittitt, a draper in High Street, and he held the office for two years. The members of the executive committee were W. E. F. Nichols, James Euson, R. J. Punshon, A. W. Clapham, J. O. Prescott; secretary, William Christian; and treasurer, George Hooper. The second president of the club was G. D. Carter, M.L.A. for St. Kilda, and after him commenced the line of presidents from the Mayors of St. Kilda, starting in 1885, with W. H. Ellerker. This line of Mayors has been broken on one occasion. An election to the Mayorship of St. Kilda at one time was tantamount to an election to the presidentship of the St. Kilda Tradesmen's Club. Each year the club extended its influence, and its past progress was due in some measure to the services of the club's secretary, the late H. M. Knox. The club owns in its own right a club room in Inkerman Street. The club, we are assured, tries to live up to its motto

"Life is the river, and man is the boat,  
That over its surface is destined to float.  
Joy is a cargo so easily stored,  
That he is a fool that takes sorrow on board."

High Street, St. Kilda, was a section of Brighton Road, along which a flowing stream of trade ran. The road was the main arterial highway to the southern districts of Brighton and its neighbours. High Street hill was an obstacle over which the trading stream passing through St. Kilda had to flow. When the traffic came from Brighton, along High Street, shops were built to attract the passing immigrants, and other market garden settlers, from Dendy's Special Reserve. Some of those shops are still standing, and they have the appearance of old shops in an English town. Some years passed before the builders of such places, or the architects, discarded the style of house, and shop building, that was brought from England, where the heat of the summer's sun did not suggest the necessity for verandahs, and blinds. Unadorned windows set in uncompromising plain brick walls suggest the English spirit. High Street, before some of the old buildings were pulled down, to be replaced by modern buildings, was a street that might have been lifted out of an English town, and set down in St. Kilda. The street, as a duplication, was quite true to its English forebears. This impression was further strengthened by the Bay View Hotel, and by its position, which was that of an hotel set back from the street's alignment, sufficiently far back to allow of two, or three, market gardeners' waggons, and their pairs of horses, to stand within the line of the street's alignment, in front of the wooden water trough of the hotel, and such standings regularly took place.

High Street was, at one time, a good trading highway, and property in the street was valuable for that reason. In the ordinary way, when the railway came to St. Kilda from Melbourne, and the train stopped at a dead end terminus in Fitzroy Street, the trade stream might have been disturbed, and gone to Grey Street, and Fitzroy Street, had not the foreign trade, as opposed to domestic trade, passed along High Street, that thoroughfare being for the market gardeners (who constituted the "foreign trade,") the nearest way home. Another obstacle to trade in Fitzroy Street was the Government reserves, and the

fact too, that to the west of the railway station was the swampy ground. Grey and Fitzroy Streets were already residential areas, and there was no room for any shop expansion, even supposing that the railway traffic carried with it a stream of trade. The George Hotel, Wise's boot shop, Hennessy's, the baker, and perhaps, one or two other tradesmen had a footing in the immediate vicinity of the railway, but they were the exception. The one outstanding building that served a public want was the Assembly Hall, in Grey Street. This Assembly Hall is continually referred to in newspaper reports of the day of social affairs taking place in St. Kilda. We have a note, from a Council report (1882), which reads :—"The Assembly Hall in Grey Street was converted into a coffee palace." In the heyday of its prosperity the hall was used for holding concerts in, for electioneering meetings, for fancy fairs, and for charitable entertainments. Master John Kruse made one of his first public appearances, as a violinist, in this hall, when he played for the charity of the Sick Children's Hospital.

Public offices sometimes act as a magnet to group shops about them. In St. Kilda the placing of a small brick court house, at the apex of the angle, formed by the junction of Grey and Barkly Streets, had no such effect. The Hare and Hounds Hotel, changed its name, some said "the hare was jugged," and it became the Court House Hotel. At another corner of the cross roads, was a grocery store, Melbourne House, and in the vicinity a butcher's shop, and a few small shops. The St. Kilda Town Hall did not affect, in any great measure, the place as a trading centre. Grey, and Barkly Streets were streets of private houses, and there was no vacant land in them for the erection of shops, in such numbers, as to make a shopping centre. Inkerman Street had more vacant land, and the street led into High Street, an advantage, where shops were concerned, since a shopkeeper in Inkerman Street might chance to divert to his shop the trade flowing down Inkerman Street, on its way to High Street. A portion of Inkerman Street was occupied by the St. Kilda market, and a municipal storage yard, and that land was not available for shop building. The electric tramcars, from Brighton to the St. Kilda railway station in their *passage* along Barkly Street, and down Grey Street, were but cars of passage, that left no trade in their wake.

A trading question that involved a brick wall in High Street, close to Carlisle Street, was before the St. Kilda Council in October, 1914. The promoters of the Wholesale Meat Market and Distributing Depot, bought a piece of vacant land, in High Street, upon which they purposed to build a storage house, and cool chambers, and a wholesale market for the sale of meat, destined to be distributed, from that place, to the surrounding district. The building was designed so as to have a dead wall, 150 feet in length, along High Street, with one opening in the wall, for an entrance to the meat store. Property owners in the vicinity, protested, on the ground, that the presence of the meat store would divert business. The probable unsightliness of the wall was also referred to, and its effect on breaking the line of shops. Considerable discussion took place on the subject. A deputation of ratepayers, presented a petition to the Council, protesting against the store, and Councillor Renfrey made out a strong case for the petitioners. When, in November, the question of store, or no store, was put to the vote the voting was equal. The Mayor gave his casting vote in favor of the erection of the store.

Carlisle Street has become a very busy shopping thoroughfare. When the City Hall was built, in Carlisle Street, the conditions were in favor of a street of successful shops. Land values in Carlisle Street increased amazingly. Land in Carlisle Street sold at the rate of £80 per foot. A property, adjoining the Balaclava railway station, consisting of five shops, with dwelling, and also land, 30 x 110, sold for £5,750 to George Pleasance, the chemist. Tester's estate, which had been bought for £7,000, sold for £12,000. One of the agencies for the advancing prosperity of Carlisle Street, in its shopping area, was the coming of the electric tramway. The cars stopped at the Balaclava railway station. In consequence too of the population lying south from Carlisle Street, the street was filled with housewives. This steady volume of trade is reflected in the modern shops of Carlisle Street ; in the excellent goods offered for sale. Further, South Elwood has an isolated trade stream of its own. The numerous housewives of Elwood are well catered for by the shopkeepers of Elwood. A picture theatre, a dance palais, and a post office, are to be found on places where once in swamp land the hollow-sounding note of the bittern boomed.

In later days, even with the Council holding out a hand to primary producers of fruit, and vegetables, there was no cordial acceptance of the help that would have been possibly afforded them by establishing a market. At least that conclusion must be drawn from a trial made in the month of November, 1920. Councillor Burnett Gray urged upon the Council, and he was supported in his efforts by Councillor Cummings, the desirability of establishing a local fruit market or markets. He referred to the activities of the Commonwealth and State Parliaments in settling people on the land, but he regretted that provision for the sale of the settlers' produce was not given equal attention. The friendly attitude of the St. Kilda Council, towards the welfare of primary producers in offering to provide them with profitable street stands for the sale of their fruit, was of such a nature that one would have supposed that the Council would have found a grateful response, but such was not the case. When the town clerk wrote to the Melbourne and District Fruitgrowers' Association, he received an indifferent reply, stating "the Association was considering an extension of the system to other suburbs," a reply that was wide of the mark, so far as St. Kilda's activities on behalf of the fruit-growers were concerned. A letter was sent to the Association, stating the Council was disappointed that the Association did not avail itself of the facilities so promptly afforded by the St. Kilda Council at the request of the Treasurer of the State. Later the Fruit Growers' Association called a conference of municipal representatives. Councillor Burnett Gray attended the conference, and reported that markets had been established at Richmond (2), Collingwood (2), Hawthorn, and Coburg, at which places 60,000 cases of fruit had been sold. The Association suggested that out of 1/6 charged per day, by the municipalities, as rental for the market sites, 1/- should be handed to the Association to defray the cost of organisation. The St. Kilda Council agreed to do so when a local fruit market was established. The Council had no desire to derive revenue from the project, but only to help the fruit growers.

Before the days of burning in powerful up-to-date destructors, a city's daily refuse, from thousands of homes, such rubbish had to be buried in tips more or less suitable, for the purpose. At the best the practice was not in accordance with

accepted hygienic rules. Usually, the refuse was used for filling in low-lying lands, and so the work of disposing of the rubbish was co-ordinated with the task of the reclamation of inhospitable lands. In Prahran large clay holes of worked out and abandoned brick kilns were utilised for tipping the city's rubbish into. In St. Kilda, swampy ground was filled in. In the year 1921, the St. Kilda Council had still in use what was known as the corporation tip in Albert Park. The rubbish was placed in trenches, and as each trench was filled, it was closed up with a covering of earth. Rubbish that would burn was set fire to, and consumed in the trenches. The invention of an incinerator, capable of dealing daily with tons of a city's garbage, and so contrived that the garbage itself fed the fires of the furnaces, revolutionised the method of destroying city garbage, by dealing with it in a sanitary, and scientific manner, there being no greater purifier than fire. In the year 1912, the St. Kilda Council received notice from the Public Health Department, that the disposal of refuse, by burial in tips, must be discontinued after the date of September, 1914. Evidently the notice was not confined to the St. Kilda Council. The Brighton, and Caulfield Councils were also notified. The installation of a destructor was an expensive undertaking, and the Councils thought the cost might be shared between them, and that by the installation of a destructor, with sufficient furnace capacity to deal with the rubbish from the three cities, the difficulties of expense they were faced with might be minimised. The first trouble the Councils had to surmount was to find a site agreeable to three Councils whereon to place the destructor. Scarcely anything arouses property-holding ratepayers so quickly, as a proposal, by a Council, to place a rubbish destructor, in the neighbourhood of their properties. They cannot be convinced that no nuisance comes from the destructor itself, even though some of the latest ones consume their own smoke smuts the usual subject of complaint. The passage of the covered-in rubbish carts, through the streets is another source of protest, and one of the reasons why the destructor should be placed anywhere, but within the zone of their residence.

After due consideration, between the three Councils, a site for the destructor was agreed upon, on a piece of Crown land,

## PROPOSED SITE FOR MUNICIPAL DESTRUCTOR. 97

abutting on to the Elster Creek, between New Street, and Brick-wood Street, at South Elsternwick. The Minister of Lands agreed to the Department making the land available to the Councils, and the Board of Health approved of the site. Apparently everything was well in train for the success of the proposed joint municipal destructor to be placed upon this piece of ground. The site was within a stone's throw, the breadth of the creek, of the Garden Vale State School. This school, though a small one, had a very active parents' committee, the members of which, when they learnt that it was proposed to build a refuse destructor, in the neighbourhood of the school, at once made a local call to arms of every householder, within a quarter of a mile of the school. The call was responded to, in such a way, that almost all the property-holders joined their forces to those of the School Committee. The opposition to the Council's proposals thus started, betook upon itself something of the nature of a rolling snowball. It gathered bulk in the shape of recruits, as the movement spread. Strange to say, the force, and vigor of the opposition, actually infused enthusiasm in the corporate heart of the Education Department. Whether it was the joy of fighting, that is said to be inherent in the Anglo-Saxon-cum-Austral race, the fight by the School Committee, the residents, and the Education Department against the opposing forces of the St. Kilda, Caulfield, and Brighton Councils, was a very lively one, and of a nature in which the interest did not flag—for the issue was in doubt on both sides up to the time of the actual decision. We tell the whole story because it illustrates how an active faction of a determined school committee, can wage a fight, and continue to wage a fight in a way that almost seemed to compel victory, and that too against three allied powerful Councils, and also against the great influence which they undoubtedly wielded.

Inspections were made of the site, and much measuring from the school to the site proposed, took place. The parties agreed—it was the only thing that they did agree upon—that the school was eleven chains away from the site. In vain, the Councils tried to combat the tide of the local opposition. In September, 1914, the School Committee was gratified to learn that the Premier declined to receive a deputation from the councils, concerning the site, on the ground that no purpose

would be served by such a deputation. The Cabinet, he intimated, would not re-open the question!

That intimation was a surprising one to the Councils, but a more surprising piece of information to the Councils was the startling news that the whole of the paddock from Brick-wood Street to New Street, within which lay the proposed site, had been granted to the Education Department, for school purposes! Such an act was conclusive, and looked uncommonly like victory for the valiant, and chuckling school committee. The Councils were chagrined. They expressed the opinion, and they were justified in doing so, that the Government had not kept faith with them, and that the councillors had "received the greatest discouragement, instead of assistance, in effecting this necessary sanitary reform." The Councils had been misled, so far that, believing they had won the day, they sent a cheque in payment for the land for the site of the destructor! This cheque was returned, with the intimation that "the Government is not disposed to agree to the proposals of the Councils for the sale of the land desired."

The opinion of the St. Kilda Council regarding this sudden surprising negation, was expressed by the Mayor, in somewhat sarcastic phrasing, when he said that "the Government had now discovered an area eleven chains from a school, and abutting on an open drain, was required for school purposes." Comment was also made on the extraordinary rapidity with which the transfer of the land had been made to the Education Department. The St. Kilda Council, for its part, leaving the allied Councils to do theirs, passed the following resolution :—"That the Council protests against the rapidity of the transfer to the Education Department of the land required by the municipalities of Brighton, Caulfield, and St. Kilda, as a destructor site, in view of the long delay in dealing with the Councils' application." And the protest remains there, in the St. Kilda Council minute book, in black and white, to what good beyond the assertion of a protest, no man knows, and yet, what other gesture could the defeated Councils make, but to protest, as they withdrew, beaten in their bloodless fight with the Garden Vale State School Committee?

On February 24, 1915, the Councils waited as a deputation on the Minister of Lands, to ask for a certain site in the Elstern-

wick Park for the purposes of a destructor. The special Advisory Committee of the Councils was not sanguine of success, but it thought that the refusal to grant a site in the Elsternwick Park would, at least, give the Councils the opportunity to inform the Government that they were justified in looking to the Government for some assistance, to enable them to comply with the order of the Public Health Department, calling upon them to close their municipal tips, within a certain time.

What may be called the moral rights of fair allotment should have governed the control and disposal of the Crown lands that now are known as Elsternwick Park. Its area is excised from St. Kilda. Had a line been drawn south from Hotham Street, as far as Head Street, which becomes Park Street at its west end, the Elsternwick Park would have rested within the boundary lines of the St. Kilda municipality, and the park should have done so. In the years of the fifties, the land, in question, was an extensive swamp, consisting of three, or four, reed-covered stretches of water, their undefined bank lands being waterlogged. These swampy conditions extended across New Street, to as far as the Garden Vale railway station, causing a boggy creek crossing at New, and Cochrane Streets, and one also across St. Kilda Street. The early Councils avoided, so far as they were able, having anything to do with swamps, lest they should be put to the expense of reclaiming them. Neither St. Kilda, nor the Brighton Council, wanted the swamp lands, and they remained Crown lands, and only remained Crown lands because, as swampy land, the Government could not sell them. Remarkable, as it may appear to be to-day, the beautiful stretch of golf links and playgrounds, known as Elsternwick Park, is the result of the accident of swamps in its area, rather than any intention of any Government to reserve the lands in the beginning for the people. The Brighton Council had more interest in the swampy moorland, than St. Kilda, because its percolating overflow, caused the Council expense in keeping its then main arterial road, New Street, open to traffic. Market gardeners' carts, on occasions, were bogged in the creek crossing in Cochrane Street, but in New Street, where the creek crossed it, was a bridge. Due to this interest, the Crown lands, forming Elsternwick Park, drifted more towards a possibility of control by the Brighton Council than by the St. Kilda Council.

The St. Kilda Council having its resources heavily taxed, in other directions, was not perturbed, because the Brighton Council, under the overlordship of the Board of Land and Works, assumed an ill-defined control over the bleak moor, with its swamps, and marsh lands.

Residents of South St. Kilda, and the hamlet of Elsternwick, formed themselves into a planting committee, for the purpose of fencing the Crown land, and of planting it with trees. One of the best known of the group was Henry Figsby Young, the publican, who owned the Elsternwick Hotel. It was then— we speak of the years of the sixties—a wooden wayside inn, that had, as its principal customers, the market gardeners of Brighton, and of the outlying districts. Young's interest lay in having the Crown lands made as attractive as possible as a future sports ground. He, living to a great age, saw his hopes realised, while still retaining the ownership of the hotel, which had been rebuilt in brick. Along the Glenhuntly Road, inside a three-railed fence, facing the boundary line of St. Kilda, pine trees were planted. They established themselves, and grew to be large trees, but most of them were cut down, by unauthorised persons, and taken away for their own purposes. Two or three of the large pine trees till recently remained in the vicinity of the Elsternwick municipal golf house. Along New Street, on its west side, inside the fence, was planted a row of tamarisk trees to serve as a hedge. Other trees were planted in various parts of the park's area, but the swampy soil was too salty for the trees to live in. The brackish water, from the swamps, prevented anything growing, except the hardy desert tamarisk trees, inured by centuries of suffering until trees of their order seem to be able to withstand almost anything.

This praiseworthy display of citizenship by publican and sinners, shows that the residents of South St. Kilda, in the sixties, took a great interest in the park, since they put their hands in their pockets to find the money to fence, and to plant it. When the Melbourne Gas Company desired to place gas retorts, and a gasometer on the ground, about where now is the cricket and football ground, the residents fought the Ministerial intention to sell the land to the company, and, in the end, they prevented the gas works being established. Later,

a Government desired to sell the land by auction, and the plans, showing allotments of land, having frontages to Glenhantly Itoad, were drawn, and the arrangements, for the contemplated sale, well advanced, when the residents of South St. Kilda made such a vigorous protest, that the Government abandoned its intention. Then a man, by some chance, obtained a miner's right over the land. He intended to quarry for stone, the red ironstone which outcrops in the Brighton Road, at the corner of Brighton Road, and Cochrane Street. The saddle of red stone runs west to the sea, and one of the ridge's terminations there formed the Red Bluff of St. Kilda. Before the man could start his quarry, the residents of South St. Kilda once more sent their protests to Ministerial offices, and the miner's right was withdrawn. Later again, the land was leased to the Elsternwick Racing Club, and the club made the first efforts to drain the land. Some years afterwards, when the club's lease was not renewed, and the racing club, at Elsternwick, ceased to exist, the committee surrendered its tenancy to the Lands Department. The land then was in a much better condition, due to reclamations, than when the committee first took possession of it. The mounds of earth, thirty or forty feet in height, to be seen to-day in the golf links are the remains of the hill earthworks which abutted on the grandstand.

At the extreme south of Elsternwick Park, in Head Street, the most famous of the early cricket clubs around Melbourne had its playing grounds. The Coast Cricket Club, was at one time of more importance than the Melbourne Cricket Club. Its committee was the first in Victoria to employ a professional bowler. One of the club's bowlers, who was not a professional cricketer, but a market gardener, was named Thomas Bent, the man who afterwards became the Premier of the colony.

Governments have a strong policy of caution, when they are approached by local residents, with a request to have any particular piece of land permanently reserved. "Temporarily Reserved Lands" are not difficult to obtain, but "Permanently Reserved Lands" are. In the first case, the Government may revoke its conditional reservation, and put the land up for sale. South St. Kilda residents, and the Brighton Council, only succeeded in having the Elsternwick Park permanently reserved in odd patches. This patchwork condition left certain pieces of

land "temporarily reserved," with the Ministerial power of sale still hanging over it. Thus it was possible for the Melbourne Gas Company to obtain in the Elsternwick Park, a piece of land, and to place an enclosing fence upon it, but that was as far as the company got with its scheme. Public opinion in St. Kilda, Elwood, and Elsternwick (not Brighton), created an opposition which was too strong to permit such a piece of vandalism, and so the Elsternwick Park lands were saved from having a gas works, or a gasometer, placed upon them.

We have outlined how, in the first instance, the Crown lands, which are now the Elsternwick Park, inclined more to the control of the Brighton Council than to the St. Kilda Council. When a body entitled the Elsternwick Park Committee of Management was appointed, the Brighton Council's interest dominated the situation, and the St. Kilda Council had no representation upon the committee, and yet, were the equities of the position to be judged by the claims of the St. Kilda municipality, whose South St. Kilda ratepayers first took such an interest as to expend their own moneys on the park lands, then the St. Kilda Council had the first claim to the control of the Elsternwick Park. In February, 1922, the Public Works Committee of the St. Kilda Council recommended "that the Elsternwick Park Committee of Management be approached with a view to the inclusion of representation of this Council, having regard to the fact that in the territory under its control, there is the area of this municipality, formerly the rifle butts." In May, the Council received a letter from the town clerk of Brighton, stating that his Council did not see its way clear to accept the suggestion for the reception of the St. Kilda Council, on the Elsternwick Park (proper) Committee of Management, but so far as the management of the area, known as the "Old Rifle Butts" was concerned, the Brighton Council had no objection to the St. Kilda Council being represented on the Committee appointed by the Government to control that reservation. The St. Kilda Council referred the reply to the Public Works Committee for consideration. The reply showed with what tenacity the Brighton Council clung to a control that it had, in a way, usurped from the St. Kilda Council at a time when the St. Kilda Council had more pressing things to do than to secure the control of a swamp at the Cinderella end of its municipality. At the

St. Kilda Council meeting of May 29, a letter was received from the Secretary of Lands, stating that action was being taken to remove the area, formerly used as a rifle butts, from the control of the Elsternwick Park Committee of Management, and again to place it under the control of the St. Kilda Council. In July, the Council was gazetted a Committee of Management of the Recreation Reserve at Elwood (the Old Rifle Butts), excepting the portion permissively occupied by the Elwood Life Saving Club.

The powers of the Government, exercised in the alienation of Crown lands, were in force, when the St. Kilda, the Brighton, and the Caulfield Municipal Councils, sought for a site on which to build a destructor for their cities' garbage. "Japhet in search of a Father," or "Doctor Syntax in search of the Picturesque," were not more zealous in their personal quests than was the trinity of southern Councils to find a site whereon to build a destructor, before the wrath of the Health Department descended upon them, because of the continued use of municipal rubbish tips.

Howsoever it may have been with the Brighton and Caulfield Councils, the search, so far as the St. Kilda Council was concerned, was but a resumption of an old one. On June 16, 1890, the St. Kilda Council waited on the Acting Minister of Lands, and asked to be granted a site, to be excised from Crown lands at Elwood, whereon to place a desiccator. Obviously that quest failed. Many years afterwards the problem of the disposal of the city's rubbish had become so acute that the proposal was revived.

The Destructor Advisory Committee was well enough, and not without wisdom in its reports to the Councils. Since legal obligations, on the part of the Government did not exist, it became necessary to put forward the intangible, yet potent phrase of "moral responsibility," which re-echoed in the Minister of Land's mind, with sufficient force, that he said "he recognised there was some moral responsibility, on his shoulders to assist the Councils, in arriving at a reasonable solution of the difficulty. Direction should be given to his officers to make an independent investigation, as to the feasibility of any site, for a garbage destructor on the Elsternwick Park. His officers' report when received would be referred to the Cabinet." At

the meeting of the St. Kilda Council, held on March 15, 1915, a letter was read from the town clerk of Brighton, Mr. J. H. Taylor, in reference to the "House Refuse Destructor Site." The Brighton town clerk enclosed a communication from Mr. William Snowball, M.L.A. for Brighton, stating that the Cabinet's decision was that the allocation of a site for a destructor in the Elsternwick Park "could not be' entertained."

The Councils were in a quandary. Every effort had been made by them to secure private land for the purpose of the site, and every effort had failed. One site considered, and rejected was situated a mile away from the municipal boundary of St. Kilda. That site, if agreed to, was calculated as likely to cost the St. Kilda Council the sum of £500 per year for cartage. With the reality of the Health Department behind them, the wrath of which might become active any day, the Councils, anxious to obey the orders already given, made another attempt to secure a site in the Elsternwick Park, on the advice of the Destructor Conference Advisory Committee. A deputation from the Councils waited on the Minister of Lands, on September 29, and once more explained how worried the three Councils felt, and told him how he could relieve their troubles by the granting of a site for a municipal destructor in the Park. The Minister referred the deputation to the Cabinet's decision on the occasion of the last application for a site. He, however, promised that he would approach the question from a different angle, by calling for a report from the Park Committee of Management. The Park Committee of Management were constituted to protect and to control Elsternwick Park. The secretary was the town clerk of Brighton, who was also the secretary of the Advisory Committee. This duplex position created a race between two desires, one of which was the salvation of a portion of the people's park, and the other was to end the trouble that a search for a destructor site was causing the three Councils.

The Minister of Lands informed the Councils that if the proposal was approved, the Cabinet would have to bring in a bill to allow of the alienation of the park land, but he said it was not probable that the Cabinet would do that, nor would it be a party to taking park lands to be used for the purpose of a destructor. A report was current, in December, that the

majority of the members of the Elsternwick Park Management Committee was in favor of granting a site the Councils had indicated would suit their purposes, to the east of the electric power house, which already occupied the south-west corner of the park. The finality, so far as the park site was concerned came on February 14, 1916, when the town clerk of Brighton forwarded a copy of a letter, received from the Lands Department, stating that the Council's joint application, for a piece of the park lands, upon which to erect a garbage destructor, was refused.

In March, 1916, the West St. Kilda Progress Association alleged to the St. Kilda Council that the corporation tip, in Albert Park was a nuisance, when the easterly winds blew smoke, laden with unpleasant odours, and that smoke enveloped the dwellings of members of the Association. The Association's assertions were minimised by the Committee of Management of the Park saying it felt "pleasure at the good order in which the tip was maintained." A deputation of the West St. Kilda Progress Association waited on the Council. The Council also received a letter signed by 160 ratepayers who desired that the deposit of rubbish in the park should cease. On June 19, the St. Kilda Progress Association forwarded the following resolution to the Council:—"That it having appeared in the press, that a suggestion was made to erect a destructor in the Albert Park, this Association enters its emphatic protest."

In the end the St. Kilda Council made up its corporate mind to send the surveyor of St. Kilda, Mr. R. T. Kelly, C.E., to Sydney to inspect the municipal destructors in use there. On September 8, the Public Works Committee of the Council, recommended the adoption of the surveyor's report which contained the fruits of his investigations in Sydney, upon the treatment of household refuse. He was directed to forthwith prepare specifications and plans, on which to invite tenders for the installation of an incinerator. This was one of the concluding steps in the problem of ways and means to deal with the garbage of the city of St. Kilda. Pendant to the work was the abolition of the old rubbish tips, such as the old corporation tip in Albert Park in September, 1921, levelled off at a cost of £200.

In October, 1919, the Council decided to instal a refuse destructor at the Council depot, Inkerman Street, on its own

land held under Crown grant. In February, 1921, the Council entered into a contract with Messrs. Arthur Leplastrier & Co. for the erection of an incinerator, capable of destroying not less than 20 tons per day of 9 hours, under average working conditions, or 50 tons per day of 24 hours, divided into three shifts of 8 hours each. The total grate area was specified at 75 square feet. The contract price was £13,925.

The schedule to the contract provided for the supply and erection of one front feed three grate Meldrum Patent Regenerative "Simplex" type refuse destructor; one boiler water tube type having 1426 square feet of heating surface with feed pump and settings, injector and fittings complete, working steam pressure 160 lb. per square inch; steam jet system in conjunction with Meldrum's patent regenerator, and all necessary settings; external coal fired furnace with necessary front grate fittings, bonds, ashpits, etc., complete; combustion chamber, firebrick linings, carcass door and fittings complete; steam pipings between boiler and steam jet blowers ; air conduits ; buildings, including roadway, chimney stack 140 feet from the ground line, and plant per building specification and plan annexed thereto; accessories and spares detailed in the specification.

The completed destructor was taken over by the Council in October, 1923, at an actual cost of £15,857. At the time of installation, refuse at the rate of 5616 tons per annum was being treated. To-day (June, 1930) 8670 tons are being treated, showing an increase approximately of 52 per cent. in the nine and a half years.