

myself have tried it, and it is of no avail."

14. Then one more of them who reckoned himself also a wise man, rose and spake, saying, "My lord, I have, methinks considered this subject deeply, and I have the solution better at heart than any of my brethren."

15. "I would recommend, my lord, that the money paid to the men who make the light, and who are called stokers, be greatly reduced; for be it known to you, brethren, that they have of late been giving themselves airs, and have even dared to organise themselves one with another for protection.

16. "Moreover, they have made our office exceedingly hot for us, and have even got the influence of the king of the Council of Trade and his people to bear against us."

17. Verily, he also maintained that it was disgusting of these poor men to ask an increase of their recompense, forgetting if it was an offence to ask two or three pieces of silver, how great must be the crime of asking and granting many pieces to one who had already plenty and to spare?

18. Now did many of the rulers nod approval of this solution to the mystery, for they were cunning enough to see that this would leave more money in the public purse,

19. To spend in journeying hither and thither, to and fro, upon the earth, viewing soap-

works, and visiting the fount, where water was kept in store for the supply of the common herd.

20. But one of the rulers who toiled, was very wroth and stood up boldly before the rulers and said, "I pray you brethren to consider well the course which this fellow would have you to adopt;

21. "For my lord, if this be wisdom, then indeed are we scant of it, in this, the Council of the City,

22. "But I would rather brethren, for your own sakes, and also for the sakes of these poor men, who toileth making you light, that ye increase the recompense which they receive.

23. "And I would also urge you to consider if forty pence daily is sufficient for these men, for they do more ere they break their fast, than many doeth here from sunrise to sunset.

24. "Moreover, brethren, they also toil on the Sabbath which was set aside from the first, for a day of rest both to man and beast."

25. Then did Wallace also raise his voice in favour of these men, saying that he had visited the city of St. Mungo, which lieth in the west, and had found that the stokers there were nearly doubly rewarded for their day's toil.

26. But strange and marvellous as it may seem, many of the rulers would not listen to this ruler, notwithstanding that many of them had glibly