

# PARISH OF RUTHWELL.

PRESBYTERY OF ANNAN, SYNOD OF DUMFRIES.

THE REV. HENRY DUNCAN, D. D. MINISTER.

## L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Boundaries, &c.*—“THE parish of Ruthwell,” says Chalmers,\* “derived its name from the Anglo-Saxon *Rith*, a rivulet, and *Weald*, a woody place, as we learn from Somner. The Kirkton,† which was a baronial burgh, stands on a rivulet which falls into the Solway Frith about a mile below. The remains of the ancient woods, whence a part of the name is derived, still exist. In vulgar speech, and even in the chartularies, the name of Rithwald, or Ruthwell, has been abbreviated into *Ryval* or *Rival*.”

Other derivations of the name have been conjectured; but whatever may be thought of the etymology of the first syllable, that of the second seems to be confirmed by the nearly corresponding terminations of the adjoining parishes of Mousewald, Torthorwald, and Tinwald, all extending along the morass of Lochar,—a morass which runs into each of these parishes as well as into Ruthwell, and which the numerous remains of imbedded trees amply prove to have been at some distant period a continuous forest.

The parish is bounded on the south by the Solway Frith, and by the river Lochar, which stream divides it from Caerlaverock both in this direction and on the west; on the north-west by Mousewald; on the north by Dalton; and on the east by Cummertrees. It is about five miles and a-half long, by two miles and a-half broad, containing somewhat less than fourteen square miles.

*Topographical Appearances, &c.*—In its surface the parish is

\* Caledonia, Vol. iii. p. 191.

† There is, properly speaking, no *Kirkton*. The village in question stands half a mile nearer the Solway than the church, but the rivulet passes them both. Chalmers speaks erroneously of the woods as “still existing along the bank of the rivulet.” They are, in fact, a mile distant from it; but they may have been at one time contiguous.

generally flat and uninteresting, the elevations that occur not rising in any instance more than 80 or 90 feet above the level of the sea. The sea-beach is low, and consists of a clayey sand, known in this quarter by the provincial name of *sleetch*. This substance extends for several miles into the Frith, with so slight a declination, that the tide at low water recedes entirely out of sight, and leaves to the eye a barren and cheerless waste.

The climate, on account of its vicinity to the sea and to the Lochar Moss, may be considered as somewhat moist; but certainly it is not unhealthy. There are no prevailing distempers peculiar to the parish. Many of the inhabitants live to an advanced age: and not long ago an old soldier died at the age of 103, if calculated from the statement contained in the certificate of his discharge, or of 110, if we rely on his own constant averment as to the date of his birth. Of the winds, the south-west is the most violent and the most pernicious to vegetation, as is distinctly indicated by the inclination of the trees.

*Springs.*—There is a mineral spring at Brow, near the shore, where the Lochar falls into the Solway Frith. It is chalybeate, and of no great strength; but was formerly a well of some celebrity, and, notwithstanding the miserable accommodation for lodgers, of some resort. Here, is a stone table, at which it is said that Lord Stormont, the father of the celebrated Earl of Mansfield, sat with his son and drank to his health when he took leave of that future ornament of his country, on quitting his native land to push his fortune at the English Bar. On that occasion, the old nobleman is reported to have jocularly told his son, that he did not wish to see his face in Scotland again till it should be surrounded with the chief justice's wig,—a jest to which the event has given almost a prophetic character. Here also is the humble cottage in which the ill-fated poet Burns spent some of the latest days of his life, in the vain hope of restoring a broken constitution, by imbibing the salutary water, and breathing the pure sea air.

*Geology.*—The geological and mineral condition of the parish is marked by no peculiarity worthy of extended notice. The principal rock is a coarse limestone, which about forty or fifty years ago was worked to a considerable extent, but which has of late been entirely disused, having been justly superseded by the far purer lime of Kelhead, lying within four miles.

About the period above-mentioned, some attempt was made to discover a workable vein of coal on the farm of Belridding, in the

parish, but without success, although strong indications appeared of the presence of that useful mineral, at least to a small extent. The existence of such large coal-fields on the opposite coast of Cumberland, where geological indications are in many respects similar, has induced a very sanguine belief that a spirited search would in all probability not be made in vain.

*Soil.*—The soil is various, consisting, however, generally of a strong gravel, intermixed with vegetable mould. Towards the west, on the low ground near the sea, and on the banks of the Lochar, a sluggish stream, there is a considerable tract of clayey soil, mingled with sand, which has in remote ages obviously been under the action of the sea, being originally of the same quality with the *sleetch* at present washed by the tide. On soil of this nature, the extensive morass of the Lochar Moss, already-mentioned, is known generally to rest. In one place, shell marl is to be found, and attempts have been made to convert it to purposes of agriculture, but the expense of obtaining it has been thought to exceed its profit.

*Zoology.*—Of the zoology of the parish little can be said that is not contained in the former Statistical Account. It is there stated with truth, that the woodlark and bullfinch, as well as the other common birds of the district, are to be found in the woods of Comlongon. To this we shall only add, that various kinds of pheasants have within a very few years been introduced to these woods, where they were increasing rapidly so long as they were protected, but during the last year their numbers have been greatly diminished by poachers.

The fish on this coast are salmon, which are caught in small quantities at the confluence of the Lochar with the sea, by means of stake-nets; flounders of a large size and good quality, of which there is an abundant supply; and occasionally herrings, as well as a few cod and skate.

The ordinary kinds of game, such as hares and partridges, are plentiful. Some grouse are to be met with on Lochar Moss; and woodcock and black-cock are in their season by no means uncommon; nor is the fox a stranger to Comlongon woods.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owner is the Earl of Mansfield, who derives his origin from the Murrays of Cockpool, an ancient family, the chief of which was in the reign of James IV.

created Earl of Annandale. This latter branch, however, became extinct, along with the title, in the second generation, when Viscount Stormont, the direct ancestor of the present proprietor, succeeded to the estate in this parish as heir of line. Lord-Justice Mansfield was a younger son of this family; but by his talents and virtues justly earned for himself an earldom along with a large fortune, both of which descended to his nephew, the present earl's father.

*Antiquities—Runic Monument.*—The most remarkable antiquity in the parish is a Runic monument, which stands in the garden belonging to the manse of Ruthwell. This curious relic of former times is accurately represented in the accompanying engraving, which is taken from a drawing made by the writer of this article. It consists of a column inscribed partly with Runic, and partly with Roman characters, which is believed to be almost the only unequivocal vestige of Anglo-Saxon sculpture in Britain.\* It has been noticed by various authors, such as Hickes, Gordon, Pennant, and Chalmers; but all of them have given inaccurate and deficient descriptions of it, and the plates which have been engraved to represent it, are very defective.

Chalmers, without assigning any reason for the conjecture, supposes the pillar to have been probably erected by some of the followers of Halfdan, the Dane, a chief who made predatory incursions into Scotland in the years 875 and 876. It appears, however, from the form of the characters that the Runes on this monument are not Danish, but Anglo-Saxon,—a discovery which seems first to have been made by Wilhelm Carl Grimm, a learned German grammarian, and which necessarily overturns every theory of its Danish origin, and establishes that its date must be sought for during the period of the Heptarchy, or at least before the language or the learning of the Anglo-Saxons had, by foreign conquest and admixture, undergone any violent change.

Of the early history of the column, however, little or nothing is known, but what may be gathered from internal evidence. On inspection, the first thing that strikes an inquirer is the remarkable fact already mentioned, of the union on the same stone of two different alphabets, the Runic and the Roman; and this naturally suggests the question, whether or not any essential change may have

\* Gordon in his *Itinerarium*, calls it a Danish monument, and says, he has heard of another such pillar in Scotland, but he does not say where it is situated; and Chalmers speaks of this as the only genuine one.

taken place in the form and character of the monument since its first erection; but such an investigation can only be superficially made in a work of this kind.\*

On referring to the plate, it will be seen that the pillar has four faces, two of which contain on the margins Runic; and the other two, Roman characters; and that on the sides inscribed with the latter, there are Christian figures and emblems, of which the Runic sides are destitute. This singular combination must strike the antiquarian as affording a *prima facie* evidence that the sculpture has been executed at two different periods. But there are other circumstances which, combined with this, will leave little doubt on the mind of an unprejudiced inquirer, as to the remodelling of the monument at a period subsequent to its first erection. These circumstances are, *1st*, That the monument consists of two separate blocks of sandstone, and that the upper stone containing the cross is of a redder hue than the lower stone, and has evidently been taken from another quarry, which could scarcely have happened, had both been formed at the same time. *2d*, That there is a bar or border at the top of the lower stone, running horizontally round all the four sides, and containing inscriptions, which divides the vine work on the Runic sides into two compartments, and awkwardly interrupts its elegant convolutions,—an intrusion which can only be satisfactorily accounted for on the supposition that, when first erected, the pillar was at this point to terminate. *3d*, That the sculpture on the Runic sides, both in elegance of design and skill of execution, greatly exceeds that on the Roman sides, and indicates a higher state of the art. From all these circumstances, there appears to be satisfactory evidence that the pillar has, since its first erection, undergone a great change; that it consisted at first only of one block, terminating with the bar already mentioned, the upper stone containing the cross, having been added at a later period; and further, that, making allowance for the waste of time and violence, the sculpture on the Runic sides is in its original form, but that the Christian figures, along with the Latin inscriptions on the Roman sides, were probably cut at the time of its change of shape, having perhaps originally contained carved work of a different kind.

The writer was at first inclined to think that the original design

\* The antiquarian reader who wishes for further information than is here given, is referred to the Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for the year 1832, where he will find an article, of which the present is an abridgement, drawn up by the writer of this account.

of the column might not have been of a religious nature, and might even have preceded the establishment of Christianity in this part of the country; and also, that the Runic inscription, which has hitherto baffled all attempts of the learned to interpret it, had probably been mutilated, and rendered illegible by narrowing the sides of the column in the process of alteration. But the very ingenious and apparently successful efforts of Mr Repp,\* which are afterwards noticed, and which reflect so much credit on his learning and antiquarian talent, lead to an opposite conclusion in both these respects.

The later history of this remarkable column is not much more indebted to tradition than that of a more early date. In the former Statistical Account of this parish, mention is made of a report which still prevails, of its having been set up in remote times at a place called Priestwoodside, (now Priestsides,) near the sea, from whence it is said to have been drawn by a team of oxen. Whatever truth there may be in this, it is at least certain, that at a very early period it was erected in the church of Ruthwell, where it remained, and was held in the highest veneration, till the Reformation; and where, even after that period, it was preserved from demolition till the middle of the seventeenth century, probably by the influence of the Murrays of Cockpool, the ancestors of the Earl of Mansfield, who had espoused the cause of the Stuarts and of the Episcopal party, in opposition to that of the Presbyterian. In 1642, however, when the latter were triumphant over the court and its satellites, by whom they had been at once cajoled and oppressed; and when the progress of the dispute between Charles I. and the country party, which was rapidly coming to a crisis in both kingdoms, had greatly inflamed men's minds,—an order was passed by the General Assembly of the church † for the destruction of this ancient monument, as idolatrous. This order must have been but partially and reluctantly obeyed by the local authorities. The column was, indeed, thrown down and broken in several places, probably by its fall, and some of the emblems, which were peculiarly obnoxious, because objects of *Popish* idolatry, such as the crucifixion, were at the same time perhaps nearly obliterated; but, after this act of obedience was performed, it was al-

\* Mr Thorleif Gudmandson Repp, A. M., F. S. A., Scotland, a Danish gentleman, and one of the librarians of the Advocates' Library.

† This order is dated 27th July 1642, at St Andrews, where the General Assembly was then sitting.

lowed to lie on the spot, where it fell, and probably served for more than a century as seats to part of the congregation, who weekly assembled to worship God under more simple forms, and with a purer faith, than those which had rendered it an object of adoration. In 1772, when inspected by Mr Pennant, it was still lying within the church; but soon after this, it was removed to the church-yard,—the increasing population, and the improved taste of the times, having rendered necessary better accommodation to the worshippers. In its new situation, it became more exposed to injury, and when the present incumbent acquired the living, he found it undergoing such rapid demolition, that he resolved to preserve it by transferring it to a place of greater security. This resolution was carried into effect in the summer of 1802, when it was erected in a garden which he had begun to form in the immediate neighbourhood of the church-yard.

Previous to this, however, a discovery had been somewhat singularly made of a part of the column which was amissing, both when visited by Gordon and by Pennant. A poor man and his wife having died within a day or two of each other, it was resolved that they should both be buried in the same grave, which, on that account, required to be made unusually deep. The grave-digger, in the course of his labour, came to a fragment of sandstone of considerable bulk, which was found, on one of its sides, to contain the upper part of the image of the Supreme Being, with the *Agnus Dei* in his bosom; and on the reverse, a representation of the upper part of two human figures in the act of embracing. On comparing this fragment with the monument, it was discovered to coincide with that portion of it which Pennant mistook for the top of a cross, the limbs and flowing robes of the image of the Deity being that which he describes as “the lower part of a human figure in long vestments, with his feet on a pair of small globes.” It had probably been surreptitiously buried along with the body of some Popish votary, from an idolatrous belief in its supernatural virtues.

The only large fragment of the column which seems to be irretrievably lost, is what contained the transverse arms of the cross, which may probably have been much shattered by the fall, when the whole was thrown down, or entirely destroyed by the zeal of the agents of the General Assembly. It was, however, quite evident at what part these arms must have originally projected; and the writer of this article flattered himself that he could restore them in nearly their former shape, which, in the year 1823, by the aid

of a country mason, he attempted to do. In this he was guided by the form of the capital, which is nearly entire, and which, besides, being in all probability a counterpart of the arms, contains on two opposite sides segments of a circle corresponding with similar segments in the stone immediately below,—evidently indicating that the circle was originally completed, and formed the centre of the cross.

The engraving precludes the necessity of a detailed account of the sculpture, but it may be proper to take some notice of its principal features, as well as to give an explanation of the inscriptions as far as they are intelligible.

By referring to the plate it will be observed, that the two faces of the column which contain Runic characters are in many respects very similar to each other. Not only do we find on either side a vine winding up the centre in graceful serpentine undulations, with branches enriched with fruit, starting from it at every turn, in regular and flowing curves; and animals of different kinds curiously and artfully sculptured; in the act of feeding; but what is particularly worthy of remark, because evidently done with some design, the animals on the two sides, though in different attitudes; are of similar kinds, and succeed each other in the same order. First, there is an imaginary animal with the head, body, and wings of a bird, and a long flexible tail like that of a quadruped; then comes a four-footed animal, next a pair of birds, and above these two reptiles, of the lizard species, the latter devouring the stem, while all the rest are feeding on the grapes.

With regard to the Runic inscriptions, a new light, as has already been noticed, has been thrown on the subject, by the learned and ingenious Mr Repp, who has published a Latin letter on the subject in the Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, to which the reader is referred. A very brief outline of that paper must at present suffice.

It appears that only one specimen of Anglo-Saxon Runes has hitherto been generally admitted as authentic. This is the Exeter manuscript, noticed by the learned Hickes in his Thesaurus. Mr Repp has discovered that in the Runic inscription, on the Ruthwell monument, an alphabet is used, differing only in a few minute particulars from that of the Exeter manuscript,—but widely different from the Norse or Islandic Runes employed by the Danes. He has been enabled, by employing this Anglo-Saxon alphabet, to translate parts of sentences, and several detached words, such

as *Cristpason mith seretum, xi. pundu male, i. e.* the vessel of Christ [or baptismal font] of eleven pounds weight, with ornaments. *Radih pedra Therfusa aqrran, i. e.* by authority of the Therfusian Fathers, for the devastation of the fields. *Kua xiii. i. e.* 13 cows. *Ashlafardhal, i. e.* the vale of Ashlafr. *Menboat, the* expiation for an injury.

In confirmation of the interpretation of that part of the inscription rendered by Mr Repp "the vessel of Christ, &c." it may be proper to observe, that there is preserved along with the column an ornamented circular stone, which, according to a probable tradition, was originally used as the pedestal of a baptismal font, or font for holy water. The writer's conjecture is, that this vessel stood before the pillar on the circular stone; and this is the more probable, from the well known fact, that in Roman Catholic countries, a similar arrangement is in the present day exceedingly common.

The Roman side contains inscriptions in Latin, chiefly taken from the vulgate version of the New Testament, and all of them bearing reference to the figures on the compartments which they surround. Turning to the face of the column represented on the right hand of the plate, we find in the lowest compartment a very mutilated representation of the crucifixion, with the margin which contained the inscription, entirely destroyed. Immediately above this, are the figures of the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. Of the legend, nothing remains but two complete words, and a few imperfect letters; yet these seem sufficient to enable us to ascertain the whole which appears to have been a quotation from the vulgate translation of Luke, 1st Chapter, 28th verse. It runs thus,\* "ET INGRESSVS ANGELVIS ad eam dixit, ave, gratia plena! Dominus TECUM: Benedicta tu in mulieribus."

In the next compartment, Christ is represented in the act of curing a blind man. The legend appears to have been partly taken from the vulgate of John, 9th Chapter, 1st verse, and to have stood as follows: "ET PRAETERIENS VIDIT hominem caecum a NATIVITATE (nativitate) ET Sanavit ab INFIRMITATE. The mistake of substituting a B for a v in "nativitate," may perhaps suggest some conjectures as to the language, or at least the dialect spoken when the sculpture was made.

The next representation is that of the woman wiping the feet of Jesus with her hair. The inscription is from the vulgate of Luke, 9th Chapter, 37 and 38 verses, AETVLIT ALABASTRVM VNGVENTI ET

\* In this and the other inscriptions, the legible letters are printed in Roman capitals.

STANS RETRO SECVS PEDES EIVS LACRIMIS COEPIT RIGARE PEDES  
EIVS ET CAPILLIS CAPITIS SVI TERGEBAT.

The rest of the inscriptions on this side are altogether illegible, and the sculpture does not seem to require any particular explanation. The figure with the bow and arrow may, however, be adverted to as particularly remarkable.

Commencing now at the bottom of the other Saxon face, we find both the sculpture and inscription of the first compartment entirely destroyed. The next contains a figure, supposed to be that of the Virgin riding on an ass, and carrying the infant Jesus in her arms, with a shapeless mass in the upper corner on the left, which may have been the representation of an angel or of Joseph. An inscription of which the commencement (MARIA ET IO) only remains, gives credibility to the conjecture that the figures were intended to represent the flight of the holy family into Egypt.

Next come the figures breaking a loaf of bread with the inscription SES PAVLVS ET A † \* \* \* \* \* FREGERUNT PANEM IN DESERTO. It is not easy to conjecture to what scriptural or traditional event this refers. The allusion in the next compartment, however, is sufficiently evident. It contains a figure of our Saviour trampling on the heads of two swine, with the Greek letters IHZXPZ on the transverse border, while on the right hand margin we find IVDIX AEQVITATIS SERTO SALVATOREM MVNDI and on the left, BESTIAE ET DRACONES COGNOVERVNT INDE. If "serto" be a misspelling for *certo*, as is probable, the translation will be "Jesus Christ the Judge of Righteousness. Him assuredly to be the Saviour of the world, beasts and dragons knew from thence," alluding to the miracle of the devils (*dracones*) sent into the herd of swine (*bestiae*.)

Immediately above this on the upper stone, is the image of the *Father*, with the *Agnus Dei* in his bosom, and his feet on two globes, indicating probably his power over the world which now is and that which is to come. The only letters of the legend which can be deciphered, are DORAMVS, doubtless *adoramus*. The inscription round the eagle at the top of the cross is altogether effaced.

Besides the Runic monument, of which so lengthened a description has now been given, there are in the same garden, two

† Pennant read "*et an*," and conjectured it to have been originally *angelorum*, erroneously supposing it to have been a continuation of the inscription on the same side immediately above it.

sculptured stones about the size and shape of common grave-stones, but without any inscriptions, each containing the figure of an ornamented cross, rising in the centre on a pedestal, and on the right side a sword of ancient form; while on the left side, there appears on the one the coulter and sock of a plough, and on the other a bugle-horn attached to a baldrick or belt, by a ring. The figures are very rudely carved.

These remains are said to have been originally placed in a church-yard of a small chapel or preceptory, belonging to the Knights of St John, which we are informed by ancient records was erected at a place still called from that circumstance the Kirkstile, about a mile distant from the parish church, though no traces of it are now to be found. These memorials of the dead were found by the present incumbent lying in the parish burying-ground, whence he removed them, and they now form part of the wall of a summer-house attached to the fruit-wall, which separates the garden from the church-yard.

In the wall of the above-mentioned summer-house are also inserted some very remarkable specimens of a phenomenon which has excited considerable interest and speculation among geologists,—that of distinct tracks of animals of various sizes in sandstone. These specimens are three in number; and one of them, where the foot-marks are particularly distinct, has been pronounced by Dr Buckland to be the track of a large tortoise. They were taken from the quarry of Corncockle Muir, in the parish of Lochmaben, where many other appearances of a similar kind have been discovered in the act of quarrying; some of them so deep below the surface of the quarry as forty-five feet. Most of these have unfortunately been destroyed by the workmen, who were altogether ignorant of their geological importance.\*

Before leaving the head of antiquities, it may be proper to mention the ancient residences of the predecessors of the Earl of Mansfield; and this we shall do in the words of the late John Murray, Esq. of Murraythwaite, himself a cadet of that old family, who drew up the report of this parish for Sir John Sinclair: "The only ancient building in the parish is the castle of Comlongon, the seat of the Viscount of Stormont, † which, although erected some centuries ago, is still entire. It was a considerable place of

\* See account of these impressions, by the writer of the present article, in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh for 1828.

† Now Earl of Mansfield.

strength before the union of the crowns; is 60 feet square, and 90 feet high, with battlements and port-holes in the walls. The walls are of sufficient thickness to admit of small apartments within them, and the hall and larger rooms are still occupied, as the roof is standing.\* The castle of Comlongon was for many ages the residence of the Murrays of Cockpool,—a family of great eminence in Annandale, as some of them were wardens of the western border; and Cuthbert Murray of Cockpool was one of the commanders of the Scottish army that defeated the Duke of Albany and the Earl of Douglas when they invaded Scotland. The remains of an old castle are also to be seen at Cockpool, within half a mile of Comlongon, which was likewise a seat of the family.”

*Parochial Registers.*—In the parish register of births, the first entry was made in the year 1723. This public document does not appear to have been very regularly kept at any time, and the irregularity was increased at one period by the very impolitic tax which was imposed on the registration, and at another, by the irritation among the lower orders consequent on the extension of the militia service to Scotland,—the register having become unpopular by being employed for the purpose of ascertaining the ages of the young men subject to the ballot. The yearly average of the births may be 23 or 24, though the parish register does not exhibit so high an average, it being necessary to make some allowance for the negligence of parents in obtaining registration for their children. 26 births were registered in 1829, and 21 in 1830. No accurate account can be given of deaths and marriages, from the want of parish registers of these events.

### III.—POPULATION.

By return to Dr Webster in the year 1755, the population was	599
By the census of 1801,	996
1811,	1184
1821,	1285
1831,	1216

No cause of a local nature can be assigned for the increase up to 1821; and it must be attributed almost solely to the general improvement of agriculture, which has so materially added to the amount of the common necessaries of life, and at the same time improved their quality. It is true, indeed, that, since Dr Webster's

\* The inside of the castle is now quite ruinous.

census, a small village has arisen, which took its origin in an attempt to work the lime quarry already alluded to, but, at the highest calculation, this has not added more than 100 to the number of the inhabitants.

The following returns are copied from a census of the parish taken by the present incumbent in the years 1824-5, since which period the population has been nearly stationary. It shows a population somewhat under that of the Government census; but as it was taken with great care, and each family was separately enrolled, the writer is inclined to rely on its correctness. A common source of error in the returns to Government arises from the circumstance, that the inhabitants frequently state to the schoolmaster the whole number of children belonging to their respective families, whether residing in the parish at the time or not,—a mistake which must swell the amount, by causing many individuals to be counted more than once. The difference in the present instance probably arises from that source. The minister's census only includes the number actually residing in the parish at the time it was taken.

Number of the population residing in towns,	-	none.
in villages,	-	280
in the country,	-	867
		1147
		Males.      Females.
Number of offspring under 10 years of age,	-	131      135
Ditto of servants            ditto,	-	2        2
Ditto of other inmates,    ditto,	-	14      12
		147      149
Number of population above 10 years, viz.		
Heads of families,	-	163      211
Offspring,	-	144      176
Servants,	-	50       44
Other inmates,	-	25       35
		382      469
Add under 10 as above,	-	147      149
		529      618
Making the whole population in 1824-5,	-	1147

Of the heads of families, there were 143 married couples, 41 widows, 11 widowers, 9 bachelors, and 27 spinsters, being in all 231 families, which latter number differs only by one from the statement in the census of 1831.

The same private census exhibits the trades and occupations of the inhabitants as follow :

Proprietors of land, - - -	1	Weavers, - - -	11
Minister, - - -	1	Tailors, - - -	4
Preacher, - - -	1	Shopkeepers, - - -	2
Tutor in a family, - - -	1	Miller, - - -	1
Schoolmasters, - - -	3	Hinds, or farm-servants, who live with their families, - - -	9
Farmers, - - -	44	Gardeners, - - -	2
Labourers, - - -	58	Cottagers, being day-labourers, &c.	66
Smiths, - - -	4	Carriers, - - -	2
Shoemakers, - - -	5	Slaters, - - -	2
Carpenters, - - -	6	Toll-bar keeper, - - -	1
Innkeepers, - - -	2	Servants residing in the families,	98
Nailer, - - -	1		
Masons, - - -	5		

On comparing the Government census of 1821 with that of 1831, it will appear as if the population of the parish had retrograded during that period. There is reason to believe, however, that there is a mistake here, independent of that already noticed, occasioned in the census 1821 by counting the volunteers first separately and then over again, according to their respective occupations. On rectifying this mistake, it will be found that the number of inhabitants has been, during the last ten years, very nearly stationary.

The following is the average number of persons of different ages.

Under 15 years of age, -	466
Between 15 and 30, -	282
Between 30 and 50, -	242
Between 50 and 70, -	117
Upwards of 70, -	40
	1147

There is but one resident proprietor of land in the parish, and his estate, which he holds in his own possession, may amount to about L. 200 a-year. There are four other heritors, and the property of each exceeds the yearly sum of L. 50.

The number of unmarried men, (bachelors and widowers,) upwards of 50 years of age, amounts to 7; and of unmarried women upwards of 45, to 49.

Estimating by the private census of the writer, there were in 1823-24, 143 married couples in the parish, whose offspring, male and female, amounted to 586, which makes an average of somewhat more than four children residing in married families. If we include the unmarried heads of families, the average number of children will not amount to more than two and a-half. Were we to take into account the children still alive who have left the paternal roof, the average would of course be greater.

*Character of the People, &c.*—The intellectual, moral, and reli-

gious character of the people is such as generally prevails over the agricultural districts of Scotland, and honourably distinguishes the peasantry of this country from the same class of inhabitants in any other country of the world. The day-labourers, especially those who have families; suffer numerous privations with exemplary patience. They are in general sober, active, and industrious; but the want of constant employment prevents them from acquiring many of the comforts and conveniences of life, and not unfrequently reduces them to severe distress.

About half a century ago, when the Isle of Man was a separate principality, many temptations were held out for smuggling, which some of the inhabitants of this parish, as well as of the neighbouring district, had not sufficient virtue to resist; but this irregularity has long ceased. Poaching in game, however, still continues to be a source of animosity between the lower and higher ranks of society.\*

There is no insane person in the parish, nor any who, in the strict sense of the word, can be called fatuous, though there are two or three individuals obviously deficient in their intellectual powers. One of these was till lately exceedingly remarkable for the extent of his memory, and his powers of mental calculation,—faculties which have been much impaired by frequent epileptic attacks, to which he is subject. There is one poor woman blind, and another who was born deaf and dumb, besides whom there is one man who lost his hearing by disease.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

##### *Agriculture and Rural Economy.*

The number of acres standard imperial measure in the parish which are either cultivated or occasionally in tillage, is	5500†
The number of acres of moss which never have been cultivated, and which remain constantly waste, or in pasture, or are used for peats,	1400
The number of acres at present subject to be overflowed by the tide which might be made good arable land by embanking	1000
The number of acres in a state of undivided common,	none
The number of acres under wood,	520‡
Acres in the parish,	8420
Of the above 1400 acres of moss, perhaps one-half might be profitably improved, amounting to 700,	700

\* When the present incumbent was settled in the parish upwards of thirty years ago, cock-fighting was a favourite amusement among the less respectable class of the people. He used every effort to put an end to this demoralizing practice, and happily succeeded.

† 174 of these acres have been brought into cultivation since 1825.

‡ 208 acres of these have been planted since 1812.

The kinds of trees generally planted or indigenous in the parish are oak, \* ash, larch, Scotch fir, birch, alder, &c. The Earl of Mansfield keeps a forester, under whose judicious management he receives from his woods by periodical felling, by thinning, and by preparing bark, an income of from L. 500 to L. 600 a-year.

*Husbandry, &c.*—With regard to the state of husbandry, the common breeds of sheep and cattle, rate of labour, and the price of different articles of raw produce, this parish differs little from the parishes in the vicinity, and, to avoid inconvenient repetition, the reader is referred to the Accounts of these parishes for information on such subjects. The farm-buildings and inclosures are far from being in a satisfactory state, which circumstance certainly operates in various ways as an obstacle to improvement. The duration of the leases, however, which is usually fifteen years, is thought to be equitable at once to the landlord and to the tenant.

The following is an account of the land in lease, the rental, the farm produce, and the live stock of the parish, as contained in the private census already-mentioned, taken by the writer in 1823–24.

Land on lease (exclusive of moss)	- - -	5500 acres.†
Rental,	- - -	L 4527 15 0
White crop (of which 179 acres are in wheat)	- - -	1235 acres.
Green crop,	- - -	269 acres.
Number of horses,	- - -	174
cattle,	- - -	815
sheep,	- - -	378
pigs,	- - -	368

The average gross amount and value of raw produce raised yearly in the parish may be as follows :

Produce of grain of all kinds, &c,	- - -	L. 5500 0 0
of potatoes, turnips, &c,	- - -	2220 0 0
of hay, &c.	- - -	500 0 0
of flax,	- - -	0 0 0
of land in pasture, &c. at L. 2 per cow, and 6s. per ewe,	- - -	1330 0 0
of gardens and orchards,	- - -	50 0 0
of annual thinning of woods, &c.	- - -	500 0 0
The rest nil.	- - -	
Total yearly value, &c.	- - -	L. 10,100 0 0

\* It may not be improper to record here, that some boys transplanted a young oak on the day of the first anniversary of the battle of Waterloo to a spot a few paces in front of the manse door, under the roots of which a bottle was afterwards deposited, containing an inscription, which some antiquary of a future age may delight to find and to decipher. This tree bears the name of the Waterloo Oak.

† This is independent of the minister's glebe, which consists of thirty-six acres, nearly five of which are occupied with a garden, pleasure-ground, and plantation round the manse, the rest being all arable, and subjected to a rotation of five years.

Considerable improvements have been made by various farmers on portions of the moss lands within their respective farms; and it may be proper to mention one tenant in particular, who, by wedge-draining and judicious cultivation, has reclaimed many acres from a state of waste and unproductive morass, and converted them into good arable ground.

Some valuable land has also been reclaimed along the shore of the Solway Frith; but this has hitherto been done on a very small scale, though there can be no doubt that Lord Mansfield might, with much profit to himself, as well as advantage to the parish, gain from the tide by that operation a tract of fertile soil little short of a thousand acres. This extensive improvement was spoken of so far back as the time when Sir John Sinclair's Account was drawn up, and has of late been again under consideration, but without any prospect of being soon carried into effect; and yet it appears to the writer that there could scarcely be a more beneficial investment of capital.\*

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Villages.*—This is entirely a country parish, lying between the towns of Dumfries and Annan, from the former of which the church is distant about ten miles; and from the latter, seven. There are two small villages in the parish. The one, called the village of Ruthwell, containing nearly 180 inhabitants, and the other, called Clarencefield, containing about 100. The village of Ruthwell was made a burgh of barony by charter of James VI. to Sir John Murray of Cockpool in 1509, with the privilege of holding fairs and markets, which has long been disused. It is a place without trade or manufacture.

\* The practice of making salt by filtrating the sea sand or *sleetch*, described with sufficient accuracy in Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Account, and detailed by the writer of this more at large in Dr Singer's Agricultural Survey of Dumfries-shire, has altogether ceased along this coast since the removal of the salt duty, as it has, by this means, become much cheaper to purchase salt than to manufacture it after the method pursued here. The act of the Scottish Parliament, on which the Annandale saltmakers founded this right to exemption from duty, is dated 12th July 1671, and proceeds on a supplication by Adam Newall, "in behalf of some people and tenants in Annandale, who, by their industry and wholesome labour, do, from sand, draw salt, and who, in regard to the painfulness and singularity of the work, have been free of public imposition or exaction; until the year 1656, or thereby that the late usurper, contrary to all reason, equity, or former practice, forced from them an exaction, to their overthrow and ruin, and thereby dispossessed them, so that they are in a starving condition." Several attempts were at different times made, to subject the Annandale salt to the payment of the usual duty, but without success.

*Means of Communication.*—The access to the parish is easy, as it is traversed by one of the great toll roads leading from Dumfries to Annan and Carlisle, which is kept in excellent repair. A heavy coach passes and repasses daily along this road through the towns already-mentioned, which affords a ready means of conveyance to all parts of the kingdom. There is also a runner who resides in the parish, and who goes regularly with letters and parcels to Dumfries and Annan on alternate days, Sabbath excepted, as well as a carrier, who drives his cart to the former town twice, and to the latter once, a-week. Besides these modes of communication by land, there is a creek at the debouche of the Lochar, where small vessels find access, and by means of which the inhabitants are usually supplied with coal from the opposite coast of Cumberland.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is situated within the precincts of the glebe, about a mile and a-half from the eastern extremity of the parish, and between five and six miles from its western extremity. As the two villages, however, lie towards the east, each about half a-mile distant from the church, its situation could not be considered as inconvenient, were it not that on the west the Locharwoods quarter stretches to a considerable distance in a long stripe, bounded on the one side by the stream of the Lochar, and on the other side by the morass of that name, and rendered difficult of intercourse by the badness of the roads. This place of worship was about a century ago a miserable building thatched with heath. When the present incumbent came into possession of the living (in 1799) it was scarcely in a better condition; for, though slated, it still remained without a ceiling, and was of most inconvenient dimensions, being within the walls 96 feet long, and only 14 broad. Soon after this period, it underwent a thorough change, 30 feet having been taken off its length, and ten feet added to its breadth. It was even then, however, finished in a very slovenly manner, and has since undergone, at different times, considerable repairs, which have at last rendered it comparatively comfortable, though still, in point both of accommodation and of architecture, much inferior to some of the neighbouring churches, and to the average state of these public buildings throughout the country. It affords easy accommodation for about 420 sitters. There are only ten or twelve sittings unappropriated; but the accommodation of the villagers and cottagers has

been liberally attended to, so far as the contracted room would admit.

The manse was built a little more than a century ago, and soon after the accession of the present incumbent, received considerable repairs, with the addition of two rooms.

The glebe contains somewhat more than thirty-six acres, but the land is only of moderate quality, though it has been much improved within the last thirty years by enclosing, draining, and cultivation. It might let at present on lease for 30s. or 35s. an acre.

The whole teinds of the parish were granted to the living, by decret of the Court of Session in 1821,—amounting to L. 262, 18s. 10 $\frac{4}{10}$ d.

Except five or six individuals, the whole inhabitants of the parish belong to the Established church, and their attendance is in general constant and exemplary. There are in the parish between 300 and 400 regular communicants.

*Education.*—There are two parochial schools in the parish, besides one or two schools taught occasionally by private individuals, on a very small scale. The chief parochial school is in a very thriving condition, and, when most numerous attended, contains about 200 scholars. The average number may be about 150. Besides the ordinary branches, the classics and French, as well as geography, mensuration, &c. are successfully taught in this academy. The other parochial school, which is established in the more remote and almost detached district of Locharwoods, has for some time been in a languishing condition, owing to the precarious health of the teacher. He has, however, of late procured an assistant, whose instructions between 20 and 30 scholars at present attend.

The salary of the principal schoolmaster was fixed by the heritors and minister (when convened under the statute, after the striking of the average) at the value of two chalders, being L. 34, 4s. 5d. and that of the other schoolmaster, at the value of half a chalders, being L. 8, 11s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.; but, as the legality of this latter decision has been justly disputed, the question as to the power of altering it is at present under consideration.

The school fees were, in the year 1803, settled by the presbytery of Annan, for all the schools within its bounds, as follows, viz. For English reading, per quarter, 2s.; for reading and writing, 2s. 6d.; for reading, writing, and arithmetic, 3s. 6d.; for the classics,

5s. The amount of fees actually received by the parochial schoolmaster may be L. 45 a-year.

The writer believes that there is not a single native parishioner upwards of six or seven years of age who cannot read; nor does he know of any individuals who have settled in the parish from a distance by whom this advantage is not enjoyed. There are several females of the lowest class who cannot write, but, so far as he knows, not a single male above the age of ten or twelve.

Besides the weekly schools, there are three Sabbath schools regularly taught in the parish, one in the manse during winter, and in the church during summer; another in the village of Ruthwell; and a third in the school-house of Locharwoods; at which, collectively, about 120 scholars are instructed in the first principles of religion. These schools have been attended with the happiest effects, forming, as they do, a more intimate and salutary connection between the minister and his youthful parishioners, and serving to impress upon the minds both of parents and children the paramount value of a Christian education. Such institutions have, indeed, been objected to, from a fear lest they should take religious instruction out of the hands of parents, or at least render these natural guardians less alive to the duty of personally inculcating on their offspring the truths and obligations of our holy faith. But the experience of the writer has led him to form a directly contrary opinion; and he can confidently affirm, that since the introduction of Sabbath schools into the parish, his people have been visibly more attentive than formerly to the pious instruction of their children at home,—a fact which he considers of unspeakable importance, and which he believes to be consistent with the experience of all who have heartily adopted the system.

*Literature.*—A parochial library was established in the parish about thirteen or fourteen years ago, when a number of appropriate books were procured by subscription; but there were only a few individuals, beside the minister and principal schoolmaster, who took a warm interest in the scheme; and the subscribers having gradually dropt off, it is at present entirely disused. An attempt, however, is now making to revive this useful institution, which promises to be much more successful. \* Meanwhile, a library connected with the Sabbath schools is in active operation, which furnishes

\* Since writing the above the library has been revived with every prospect of success.

the means of improving reading not only to the children connected with them, but also to their parents, of which they eagerly avail themselves.

*Charitable and other Institutions.*—There are two friendly societies in the parish, the one for males, and the other for females,—the former of which has been in existence about thirty-six years, and the latter upwards of thirty. They are both in a flourishing condition in point of numbers;\* notwithstanding the members have been so imprudent as to make a division of part of their funds on two several occasions during years of scarcity,—a measure which the minister, who has always taken a leading interest in both institutions, did every thing in his power to prevent. Where the necessity of relieving the pressure of immediate want was so strong, it was scarcely to be expected that his remonstrances should have been effectual, especially as the example was set by almost all the neighbouring societies. It is, however, to be hoped that the wise provisions of the Friendly Society Act passed in 1829, will operate as an effectual check on such improvident conduct for the future. How far such institutions serve to promote industry, it may be difficult to say,—but that they are productive of other advantages of great importance, cannot be doubted. In this parish, they have been a powerful means of preserving in the minds of the people a spirit of independence, and of restraining the evils of pauperism, which in other places the circumstances of the times have contributed so largely to extend.

*Savings Bank.*—A *parish* or *savings bank*, has been established in this parish since the year 1810.† The funds of the institution

\* There are about 130 members in the male society, and about 90 in the female.

† The circumstances which led to the formation of this institution are thus detailed in an essay on parish banks, published by the author in 1815: “About the beginning of the year 1810, the founder of that establishment had been anxiously employed in examining the different plans which had from time to time been suggested for ameliorating the condition of the lower orders; and in the course of his inquiries, he happened to meet with a pamphlet giving an account of a scheme called by the inventor, (John Bone, Esq. of London), “Tranquillity,” of a nature perhaps too complicated for general adoption. One of the proposed provisions of this plan, however, was an economical bank for the reception of the small savings of the industrious. The benefit which might result from carrying a plan of this latter kind into effect immediately appeared to the writer in a very strong light, and he determined, as the best means of ultimately introducing it to general notice, to try, in the first place, the effect of its operation in the very contracted sphere of his own parish. In this attempt there were discouragements of a peculiar kind, which it will not be improper to state, that the success of the experiment may appear in its true light. In point of local circumstances, indeed, there are perhaps few parishes in Scotland where the scheme might

have been gradually progressive, and at last settlement in May 1833, amounted to the sum of L. 3143, 2s. 2d. giving an average yearly increase since the commencement of somewhat more than L. 146. The average amount invested yearly is L. 600; withdrawn yearly, L. 400.

Banks for savings have now got so firm a footing in the united kingdom, and have extended themselves so rapidly to other countries, that it seems superfluous in this place to detail their advantages. But it is to be feared that these institutions have in many instances operated to the injury of Friendly societies—kindred establishments which every person acquainted with the circumstances and wants of the lower orders must regard as useful auxiliaries, and not as rivals. The latter are in truth the only protection to individuals belonging to the labouring class of the community, in the event of their being overtaken by sudden illness, or disability, before they could have made any considerable accumulation in a savings bank.

*Associations, &c.*—Two societies for religious purposes, one male and the other female, have, for a number of years, subsisted in the parish; but the unhappy disputes which originated from the misconduct of the managers of the British and Foreign Bible Society have cooled the ardour of many, and reduced both societies to little more than a mere nominal existence. The annual average amount of their joint contributions may perhaps have been from L. 8 to L. 10.

not have been tried to greater advantage than in the parish of Ruthwell. One of these discouragements arose from want of resident heritors, who might countenance the undertaking with their approbation, and support it with their purse and influence. But there was a still more formidable difficulty to encounter. Notwithstanding by far the greater part of the inhabitants are poor villagers, or cottagers, without manufactures, or any other means of subsistence, than such as are usually to be found in a remote country parish, there were a great majority of the adults (no fewer than 300 individuals, out of a population of 1100) already connected with friendly societies, within the bounds of the parish. It was well known that by far the greater part of these individuals were obliged to strain every nerve for a bare subsistence, and, so far from being able to lay up any additional savings, found at times extreme difficulty in fulfilling their engagements to the established societies. As these institutions were under the immediate superintendence of the author, he was not ignorant of the facts stated; but they did not seem to him to constitute an objection sufficiently strong to deter him from making a trial of the projected scheme. He knew from experience that he had to deal with a sober, virtuous, and well-informed population, and, on this single favourable circumstance, he founded the conviction, that his attempt would not prove altogether abortive. He was not disappointed, the scheme was drawn up and put into execution, with the advice and co-operation of some of the most respectable inhabitants of the parish; and in the period of four years and a-half, the funds of the institution have risen to upwards of L. 1160."

The Annandale Society for the Conversion of the Jews also holds its meetings in this parish. Its annual contribution to that object is about L. 10 or L. 12.

To these societies may be added one instituted for the purpose of purchasing school-books for the use of poor scholars. These books are not given, but lent to the children, who are required to return them when no longer needed in the school. Much good has been effected by this association at a trifling expense.

Besides the sums thus raised, about L. 6 or L. 7 may be annually obtained in church by extraordinary collections for religious and charitable objects.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The following tabular view of the state of the poor in this parish drawn up in 1827, for the information of the heritors, will afford a more distinct account of the situation and circumstances of those who receive parochial aid than could easily be done by any other mode of representation. The only alteration made on it worth mentioning, is the substitution of numbers in place of the names of the individuals.

Poor roll of the parish of Ruthwell for the year ending in October 1827 :

No.	Age.	Ground of Claim.	Annual allowance.	Other means of support.
F. * 1	86	Old, feeble, and no children.	L. 1 5 0	Lodges vagrants.
F. 2	85	Ditto, a son who resides at a distance, and gives her very little,	1 2 0	† No other means except the charity of her neighbours.
F. 3	54	Blind,	1 19 0	A married daughter.
M. 4	78	His wife bedrid,	0 15 0	His own labour.
F. 5	74	Old and feeble,	1 9 0	A daughter deaf and dumb.
M. 6	74	Feeble, and in bad health,	1 2 0	His wife works a little.
F. 7	74	Old and feeble,	1 0 0	Works a little.
F. 8	64	Incapable of much exertion,	1 0 0	Works a little.
F. 9	59	In bad health,	1 3 0	Teaches a few children.
F. 10	82	Old and feeble,	1 5 0	A daughter married, but deserted by her husband, and left with children.
F. 11	64	Feeble, and without relations,	1 5 0	Works a little,
M. 12	61	In bad health,	1 1 0	Begs.
F. 13	70	Two feeble old women,	1 5 0	Spin a little.
F. 14	47	In very delicate health, and without relations,	1 4 0	Spins a little.
F. 15	70	Old and feeble,	1 5 0	Her son a labourer, with a large family.
Carry forward,			L. 18 0 0	

\* F. marks the females, and M. the males.

† The sum advanced for this pauper was afterwards recovered, by legal steps, from her son.

			Brought forward, L.	18	0	0	
F. 16	81	Old and feeble, - -		1	5	0	A widowed daughter.
F. 17	71	Old and feeble, - -		1	5	0	A daughter.
F. 18	61	Paralytic and helpless, -		1	9	0	Her children work a little.
M. 19	80	Feeble, but industrious, -		1	8	0	Works a little.
F. 20	78	Old and feeble, - -		1	5	0	A daughter.
F. 21	77	Old and feeble, - -		0	17	0	A daughter.
F. 22	89	Old, feeble, and blind, -		1	5	0	A son with a large family.
		<i>Paupers partially supported</i>					
		<i>by the session,</i> -	L.	26	14	0	
<hr/>							
F. 23	61	Deranged, and requires constant attendance, -	L.	7	16	0	No other means except charity,
F. 24	84	Bedrid for many years, -		5	4	0	Relations and other charity.
F. 25	89	Bedrid, - -		3	18	0	Her son a labourer with a family.
M. 26	81	Blind and paralytic, -		3	18	0	
		<i>Chiefly supported by the session,</i> -	L.	20	16	0	
		<i>Partially supported as above,</i>		26	14	0	
<hr/>							
		Total for enrolled poor,	L.	47	10	0	

Besides the enrolled poor, it is frequently necessary to extend the assistance of the session to indigent individuals, who, from sickness or other causes, fall into temporary want; but the whole sum yearly expended by the session (exclusive of extraordinary demands in years of scarcity) does not amount to more than L. 54 or L. 55 a-year.

To meet this expenditure, the church collections amount to about L. 25 yearly,—a sum by no means small, when the nature of the population is considered, which is entirely agricultural. The heritors supply the remainder on the private application of the minister, by an annual contribution, altogether voluntary, without any stated meetings, or any nice adjustment of their subscriptions, to the relative value of their property in the parish. Indeed, of the five heritors by whom the whole land of the parish is possessed, two contribute very little to the support of the poor; the kirk-session choosing rather to throw themselves on the generosity and good sense of those who are willing to give, than, by calling legal meetings, to bring a permanent and necessarily increasing poor rate on the parish, with all its demoralizing consequences.

A practice used formerly to prevail in this parish, and is still customary in the neighbourhood, of raising a small sum for the relief of a poor family, by means of what is called a *drinking*,—a kind of rustic ball, for which *whisky* and other refreshments were

procured by those intended to be benefited. The custom was, for two individuals, furnished with a certificate by the minister, to go through all the respectable houses in the parish, inviting the inhabitants to this festivity, and, through these agents, such as could not find it convenient to give their personal attendance, were expected to bestow on the family in question a charitable contribution. Meetings of this kind, however, being frequently attended with irregularities, were discouraged by the present incumbent; and the *drinking* having in consequence fallen into disuse, simple contributions raised by persons offering their gratuitous services, or hired for the purpose of collecting them, have been happily substituted in their stead.

*Inns and Alehouses.*—In this parish the writer took much pains, and incurred considerable obloquy, in endeavouring to suppress unnecessary public-houses. Notwithstanding all his efforts, however, there are still three licensed houses of this description within the parish, where one would be quite sufficient.

*Fuel.*—The fuel usually employed by the inhabitants is peat, procured from that branch of the Lochar moss which skirts the parish. It is of tolerable quality, and may probably cost somewhat more than a shilling a cart load, when carried home, and stacked up for use. Coal is also used by the better classes, of which sixty or seventy tons may be yearly consumed in the parish. It is procured, as already mentioned, from the opposite coast of Cumberland, and costs from seven to eight shillings the ton of fourteen cwt.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The funeral rites are now performed in this part of Scotland with a decent solemnity; but till lately, the demoralizing practice of presenting several services, as they are called, of spirituous liquors prevailed very extensively among the middle and lower classes in this district. The custom was the more inveterate, as on such occasions the minds of the relatives of the departed are apt to be unhinged, and less capable, perhaps, of acting with decision than at other times. The present incumbent fell on a simple expedient, by which this practice has been completely abolished. Having engaged the co-operation of some of the leading men in the parish, he drew up a subscription paper, binding the subscribers, among other less important regulations, to give only one service when they had the melancholy duty of presiding at a funeral themselves, and

to partake of only one service when they attended the funeral of a neighbour. This paper was readily subscribed by almost every head of a family in the parish, and whatever was injurious in the practice was abolished at once. It required, indeed, some little attention and perseverance to prevent the revival of so ancient a custom; but the propriety and usefulness of the change was so clearly seen, that it has not only been firmly established in the parish, but has given rise to similar resolutions in all the neighbouring parishes, and, speaking generally, may be said to have effectually rooted out the former practice, throughout the whole surrounding district. If in any other quarter of the country a similar abuse exists, the philanthropist may learn from this example how to apply a remedy.

*March 1834.*