

# PARISH OF GRAITNEY.

PRESBYTERY OF ANNAN, SYNOD OF DUMFRIES.

THE REV. JAMES RODDICK, MINISTER.

## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Boundaries, &c.*—Some suppose the name of the parish to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon words signifying the *Great Hollow*,—others from *Great Knowe* in the Scottish dialect, having reference to a hill within its bounds of considerable altitude. The parish extends six miles in length, and three in breadth, and contains eighteen square miles; the figure is rectangular, and almost rectilinear. It is bounded on the east by England, on the south by the Solway Frith, on the west by the parish of Dornock, and on the north by Kirkpatrick-Fleming and Half-Morton; towards the west and south its surface is generally level, but towards the east and north it rises into a variety of little hills of gentle acclivity, of which Graitney, the highest, does not exceed 250 feet above the level of the sea. From this, however, the prospect is extremely pleasant and extensive, commanding the rich and beautiful vales of Esk and Eden, the Solway Frith, and the coast of Cumberland as far as the Isle of Man, and St Bees westward, and the mountains of Dumfries-shire and Northumberland.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The whole length of this parish is washed by the Solway, the shore of which is but little elevated, and consists of a mixture of sand and clay. Rockcliff sands, outspread between the rivers on the Scotch and English shores, are extensive. There are no bays of any note on the coast, except, perhaps, that opposite Browhouses, formed by the principal headlands, Redkirk and Tordoff points, which last is rather of a bold character,—and, together with Bowness on the opposite shore, confines the impetuous tide within the narrow space of two miles. Then the channel rapidly expands, is divided, and follows the courses of the two rivers Esk and Eden,—thus presenting the semblance of a fine lake of about 40 miles in circumference. At no great dis-

tance from the junction of the two rivers, and near the extremity of the Frith, a large tract of marsh land of a lively green has been formed, and is daily increasing, from the encroachment of the waters on the opposite shores. The tide of the Solway flows directly east with amazing rapidity. Its colour is whitish, caused by its flowing over an immense expanse of sand. Indeed, from the point of Criffel, where the Nith joins the main channel, a space not less than forty miles in length, and eight, at an average, in breadth, the tides completely recede, and leave their channels bare,—a circumstance which obviously renders navigation difficult, nay, almost impracticable, to strangers.

*Meteorology.*—The atmosphere is dry, the climate peculiarly warm and healthy; rain, though sometimes violent, falls not so frequently as in the more elevated parts of the country around. Like the winds, it proceeds chiefly from the south-west, except in the months of March and April, when cold eastern blasts prevail. When the clouds are driven heavily from the south, when the west appears dark and lowering, or when the western rivers and approaching tide are distinctly heard, rain may be confidently expected. A yellowish sky in the south-east also generally betokens a wet day; and Carlisle being situated in that direction, there is a common proverb, which runs, “The Carle sky keeps not the head dry;” when, on the contrary, there is a small space cloudless in the northern horizon, or when the clouds are moving to the south, the husbandman confides in the expectation of fair weather.

*Hydrography.*—There are several excellent perennial springs in this parish, which rise through sandstone rocks, or beds of sand of a reddish colour abounding in the greater part of the lower district of Annandale. Sark, a small stream, separates Graitney from the parish of Kirkandrews in England; and the Kirtle, another small and romantic river, divides it into two nearly equal portions. They both rise from the hills in the neighbourhood of Langholm, and pursue a rapid southern course of about twenty miles, till they are united to the Esk and Eden. The Kirtle flows over a bed of sandstone nearly horizontal. This rock is also found along the whole shore, sometimes in detached masses, and sometimes in layers, varying from 2 to 12 inches.

*Soil.*—The soil on the sea-coast is of a rich loamy nature, spread upon a deep strong clay above sandstone, and appears in many places to have been deposited by the tides, which have evidently risen much higher at a former period. As the ground recedes

from the shore, and becomes more unequal in its surface, the soil also varies, and partakes more of a gravelly and clayey substance, resting upon hills of sand of great dimensions.

Peat-moss is found in several detached portions, in which the remains of oak trees of considerable growth are deposited. In one or two of them were discovered also several coins of silver, on which can be deciphered Canterbury and London, but no date, though they apparently belonged to the reign of one of the Edwards.

*Fisheries, &c.*—There are excellent salmon fisheries on the coast, and sturgeon, cod, and herrings, are caught occasionally, though none of them, perhaps, in such abundance as formerly. Salmon ascend the rivers for spawning in the beginning of October, and return again early in March.

In this parish there are no woods of large extent, though its eastern division has the appearance of one continued forest, from the circumstance, that the hedge-rows, which are kept in good order, are thickly interspersed with ash, oak, and plane trees; among these the ash is predominant, and seems most congenial to the soil. Laburnum is also common, and thrives well. There are many trees of considerable age and size near the church and manse, and many small plantations in places very tastefully selected, which give the scene a sylvan appearance, and contribute much to the warmth of the climate and the fertility of the soil.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Historical Notices.*—Situated on the frontier of Scotland, this parish was undoubtedly the scene of many battles, and many a border feud and foray. The *debateable lands*, lying between the rivers Sark and Esk, now forming the parish of Kirkandrews, were of course for many ages considered common to England and Scotland, and so long as these remained separate kingdoms, gave birth, as might be expected, to prodigious disorders. These lands extended eight miles in length and four in breadth, and were long possessed by a race who acknowledged the laws of neither country. With a view to remedy these evils, in the year 1552, a partition was agreed upon by the sovereigns of the respective domains, and the Scotch dike, a line of plantation drawn between the two rivers, was thenceforward to be the boundary; the eastern division to belong to Scotland, the western to England, such being the inclinations of the inhabitants. The habits of the people, however, continued nearly the same till the union of the kingdoms under James VI., when

vigorous measures were resorted to, and many of them were dispersed over the country, or transported into Ireland. Since that happy consummation, the inhabitants of the whole surrounding district, laying aside their mutual jealousies and hostility, have gradually advanced to a degree of civilization,—and the lands once desolate, though naturally fertile, to a state of cultivation,—far superior to many of the more central parts of the island. It must be confessed, however, that the progress of the people towards this amelioration was gradual, and, in its early stages, exceedingly slow. About fifty years ago the occupations of rural life were but little attended to. The tales of the exploits of their forefathers, and the scenes of so much rapine and bloodshed, tended to keep alive, and to cherish a restless and wayward spirit, which reluctantly yielded to the restraints of law, and settled down into the condition of the farmer and the artisan. Game was abundant, and the Isle of Man, under a separate jurisdiction, held out strong temptations to illicit traffic. Their hands were devoted to the unprofitable amusements of the field, or to the pernicious practice of smuggling. Their families and farms were matters of but secondary consideration, and, it must be admitted, that, with multitudes in the adjacent parishes, a life of predatory warfare was only exchanged, for a considerable period, for that of vicious idleness, and a sort of lawless independence. Daring bands of smugglers continued to infest the border. Tea, tobacco, brandy, and gin, were the chief articles of their contraband trade, which they landed in every creek along the coast, whence their ready friends conveyed them with horses to places of safety. These were found for the most part deep sunk beneath the kitchen floor, or some of the office-houses, or amid wastes of furze, or sometimes, when the men were hard pressed by officers of excise, even in ditches or morasses. These circumstances are still fresh in the memories of many, and some individuals are yet alive who took part in transactions resembling, in their extent at least, the systematic establishments of regular commerce. During the last forty years, however, the improvement has been great. The land-owners of the parish, Lord Mansfield, Sir Patrick Maxwell, Bart., Colonels Maxwell and Graham, have given great encouragement to the industry of the farmers; and farm-houses have been erected, and the fields inclosed in a manner that reflects much credit upon proprietors and tenants.

*Antiquities.*—The sites of several towers are still discernible in the

parish; they were generally of a square form, and were intended for defence in feudal times. Their walls were of an immense thickness, their doors of massy iron. The interior consisted usually of often a ground floor, which contributed to the safety of their cattle, and of two or more upper apartments, with narrow apertures externally for windows, but rapidly enlarging towards the inside, that the inmates, perhaps, might be the better able to annoy the enemy. The most remarkable stood near Stonehouse, on the banks of the Kirtle, at Old Graitney, at Westhill, and at Hirst; but the names and the deeds of the chieftains whom they sheltered are forgotten and unknown.

From an inscription in the church-yard, it appears that a near relation of Sir William Wallace is buried there; and the ashes of many of the Johnstones of Annandale are said to repose within the precincts of the ancient church. The form of some, and the sculpture on others, of the tombstones, appear to indicate their great antiquity; while many epitaphs, and particularly one, of two brothers, who died at the advanced ages of 110 and 111, point out the longevity of the parishioners.

At Redkirk Point, near the farm of that name, once stood the church of Redpatrick or Redkirk, which, like most others in this vicinity, anciently belonged to the see of Glasgow. Of that church or church-yard not a vestige now remains. The tide and river whirling violently round that headland have swept them entirely away; but some old people yet remember the unwelcome sight of bones and coffins protruding from the banks, or collected from the beach into a trough, which had been used as a font in the days of popery.\* A camp of a round shape is still distinctly visible near Barrasgate. A square camp of large dimensions may also be easily traced on the farm of Raeburnfoot. Camp-house, on the Glasgow road, which is supposed to pursue the track of the old Roman one leading to Middlebie and Birrenswark, in all likelihood indicates the site of one of a strong chain of fortifications erected by that ambitious and enterprising people.

On the farm of Old Graitney, and at no great distance from

\* The two parishes were united in 1609, and there is still a Bible in the old English character in the possession of John Graham, Springfield, which bears on its margin that it was presented to the church of Graitney in 1611, only two years subsequent to the union, by Viscount Stormont, the ancestor of the Earl of Mansfield. The print is beautiful, but the leaves are much mutilated, and many books, both of the Old and New Testaments, have been lost.

the confluence of the Kirtle and the Solway, was seen not many years ago a number of white stones placed upright, and inclosing half an acre of ground, in an oval form. One of them, the largest, is all that now remains, as some suppose, of a Druidical temple, the rest having been removed for the cultivation of the soil. This has obtained the name of the Lochmaben Stone; it measures 8 feet in height and 21 in circumference, and must have been brought from a considerable distance. Its appearance resembles granite, but, with the exception of a very hard incrustation where it is exposed to the external air, it is of a much softer and gravelly composition. Alliances between the two kingdoms are said to have been formed in ancient days within the limits of this temple.

*Eminent Men.*—Mr Galt, who was minister of Graitney for sixty years, seems to have been a man of primitive piety and simplicity of manners, and his memory is still delightfully cherished by the aged inhabitants. He was also a man of superior classical attainments, as certain manuscripts, particularly the book of Job in Latin verse, and a diary, minutely kept, in prose, now in the hands of the Misses Gibson, Edinburgh, amply testify.

*Parochial Registers.*—The *parochial registers* of baptisms, marriages, and transactions of the kirk-session, among which last are interspersed many remarkable occurrences, such as the advance and retreat of a division of the rebels in 1745, stories, and tales of wonder, are extremely accurately written by Mr Galt, and are pretty voluminous. They commence in 1730, and continue for sixty years, after which there is an almost entire deficiency in the minutes of session.

### III.—POPULATION.

Since the year 1755, when Dr Webster made a census, the population has been nearly doubled; and since the period of last Statistical Account it has exactly 99 of an increase. It now amounts to 1909. The increase is chiefly to be attributed to the encouragement given to manufacturers during the late war, and the facility afforded to the building of cottages by landholders, particularly by Sir John Heron Maxwell in the village of Springfield, which, though commenced only in 1791, contains now about 500 inhabitants, almost entirely cotton-weavers.

Number of people in the country,	-	-	-	-	-	1009
villages,	-	-	-	-	-	900
Average of births for the last seven years,	-	-	-	-	-	60

Number of families in the parish,	-	-	-	360
of families chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	-	141
chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	-	-	112
other families,	-	-	-	107

There are no resident nobility in the parish, but several very extensive farmers. Of these one pays L. 1000 per annum, and many about L. 500.

A curious mode of killing salmon once was practised by the inhabitants of this parish. Bands of horsemen, armed with long spears, assailed the finny race. One man in particular, called Graham, arrived at such an amazing degree of dexterity in the sport, as to be able at full gallop to transfix the prey, and call forth the wonder of his associates. Sir Walter Scott in his tale of Redgauntlet has recorded such a scene.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

Land cultivated or occasionally in tillage,	-	-	10,000 imp. acres.
Never cultivated, about	-	-	300
Capable of being cultivated with profit,	-	-	100
Under wood, whether natural or planted with fir, ash, or oak trees,	-	-	60

*Rent of Land.*—Average rent per acre 21s. The real rent of the parish is L. 9000. The usual rate of grazing is L. 3, 10s. per ox or cow, and 15s. per ewe for the year.

*Rate of Wages.*—Men-servants' wages half-yearly, L.6, 6s.; maid do. L. 2, 15s.; day labourers, 1s. 6d.; masons, 3s.; joiners, 2s. 6d.

*Prices.*—Wheat sells at the average rate of 7s. 6d. per imperial bushel; barley, 4s.; oats, 3s.; meal, 1s. 10d. per imperial stone; beef, 5d. per lb.; mutton, 5d.; pork, 4½d.; butter, 10d.; cheese, 5d.

*Husbandry and Produce.*—A rotation of five years, viz. oats, green crop or fallow, wheat or barley, grass and pasture, is the commonly adopted method of husbandry. The general duration of leases is fifteen years,—a term which seems very favourable both for tenants and proprietors.

During the late war very considerable alterations took place in regard to the size of the farms and the state of enclosures. Where 100 farmers occupied land, not more, now, than half the number fill their places; by which means certainly, the general aspect and fertility of the district have been much improved; but the system has had the necessary effects of forcing many families into cottages, to seek employment in manufactures, or to find their usual occupations in a foreign land.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount and value of raw produce, raised yearly in the parish, is nearly as follows:

Wheat,	-	350 acres.	-	-	L. 9600	0	0	
Barley,	-	600	-	-	4200	0	0	
Oats	-	3000	-	-	15000	0	0	
Potatoes and turnips,	-	600	-	-	4000	0	0	
Hay,	-	300	-	-	1800	0	0	
Flax, &c.	-	10	-	-	100	0	0	
Pasture,	-	3000	-	-	9000	0	0	
Gardens, &c.	-	20	-	-	300	0	0	
Plantations,	-	60	-	-	250	0	0	
Fisheries,	-	-	-	-	250	0	0	
	Acres,	7940	-	-	L. 38500	0	0	
Horses,	-	400	-	-	4800	0	0	
Cows,	-	400	-	-	2800	0	0	
Young cattle,	-	600	-	-	1800	0	0	
Sheep,	-	100	-	-	100	0	0	
Swine,	-	1000	-	-	2000	0	0	
					Total,	L. 50000	0	0

*Manufactures.*—The manufacturers in this parish are chiefly cotton weavers employed by Messrs Dickson and Fergusson of Carlisle. The yarn is brought regularly every fortnight, and distributed to about 120 families, or 600 persons, men, women, and children, who all work at the looms, six days a-week and twelve or fourteen hours each day; by which they usually are able to earn 7s. or 8s. per week, instead of their former high wages of L. 1, 10s. By diligent labour and punctual payments, they are thus barely able to support their families by a mode of subsistence which appears to have a tendency to weaken the body, to depress the mental powers, and engender a spirit of improvidence and disaffection.

*Navigation.*—Vessels of 100 tons burden arrive at various places along the coast from the pits in Cumberland, and discharge coals to the yearly amount of 600 tons, together with an equal quantity of slate; and grain and potatoes are exported to a very large amount, chiefly to Liverpool and the other places on the coast of Lancashire.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

In the village of Gretna, which was a burgh of barony, there formerly was a cattle-market, and it is not many years since the market-cross was thrown down. Annan is the nearest of the Scotch towns to this parish. Carlisle, nine miles distant, is an excellent market for grain, and for produce of all kinds, and much resorted to weekly by the inhabitants, especially of the eastern part. There are

four villages in the parish of considerable magnitude, Springfield, Gretna, Rigg and Browhouses.

*Means of Communication.*—The highways between Glasgow and Carlisle, and between the latter place and Portpatrick, run through the parish, the latter intersecting its whole length. The old road to Carlisle, which is still the nearest to Longtown, Brampton, and Newcastle, crosses the Glasgow road at the village of Gretna, where there is a post-office, which, however, is connected only with Carlisle. This renders correspondence from Scotland more expensive and tedious than it ought to be. The roads, both public and parochial, are kept in the best order. There are three bridges, one over the Kirtle, and two over the Sark, which were recently and very substantially built. There are no regular harbours, though vessels of 120 tons arrive occasionally at Sarkfoot, Port-Stormont, Redkirk point, and Browhouses, for the purposes of exporting grain and potatoes to the coast of Lancashire, and of importing slate and coals from the coast of Cumberland.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church having been continued at Graitney when the parish of Red-Kirk was united to it, is thus rather inconveniently situated for the parishioners in the west, who are five miles distant. It was built in 1790, has excellent walls, roof, seats, and galleries, but still requires flooring of wood or stone and an enclosure. It affords accommodation for 1000 sitters, and, as in other country parishes, the accommodation is free. The manse was built 126 years ago, and underwent some repairs when the church was built. It has lately undergone a thorough repair, and been enlarged by an addition of two excellent rooms. The glebe consists of 13 Scotch acres; amounting in value to nearly L. 18 per annum. The stipend is 16 chalders, one-half barley, the other meal, payable at the rate of the county fiars, and varies from L. 200 to L. 300 a-year.

There is one meeting-house erected at Rigg by members of the Associate Synod.

The people are not very remarkable for their regular attendance at church; on an average there are 400 communicants. The church collections amount to L. 30 a-year, and L. 15 more may be received for other religious and charitable objects.

*Education.*—There are two schools with equal salaries of L. 25 attached to them,—both commodiously situated. A new school and dwelling-house for the schoolmaster has been lately erected at Gretna village, and may be regarded as a pledge of the future li-

berality of the heritors. There is much need of the extension of a similar favour to the western district of the parish. There are also three private seminaries, the teachers of which are solely dependent upon the number of their scholars; altogether, 250 children may be taught in these schools. There is also a Sabbath school, attended by about 140 scholars, which is maintained chiefly by donations from the heritors. The Earl of Mansfield, the patron of the parish, contributes L. 5 a-year, and the other heritors an equal sum to this institution, which is generally allowed to have been productive of the happiest effects, in the moral and religious improvement of the rising generation.

*Charitable Institutions, &c.*—There is a friendly society in this parish, the object of which is to provide for the support of those who, by sickness or old age, are rendered incapable of earning a livelihood. It was instituted nearly fifty years ago, and is chiefly composed of labourers and mechanics, though others encourage it by their contributions. Each member contributes a small sum quarterly, which has gradually accumulated to a very large amount.

*Poor.*—The poor are maintained by church collections and the voluntary contributions of the heritors, who meet with the minister every half year to inspect the roll. The average number of those who receive parochial relief is 30. They are of two classes, which contain nearly equal numbers; the occasional poor, who are supplied from the church funds quarterly; and the regular paupers, maintained chiefly by the contributions of the heritors, which are strictly regulated according to the respective valuations of their estates. The average sum of L. 80 per annum is thus conferred, but it varies according to the number and necessities of the applicants for relief. The generality of the people regard such means of support as no degradation, and feel much inclined to force the heritors to a legal assessment, which can only be prevented by the firmness of the kirk-session, the unity of the heritors, and by their regularity in meeting and contributing according to the real wants of the poor. These feelings on the part of the people are mainly to be attributed to the practice of our English neighbours, whose standard of independence has been sadly lowered by the operation, or rather by the abuse, of poor rates.

*Inns.*—Four of the inns in this parish may justly be regarded as useful for the refreshment of travellers passing through the parish; in particular, that of Gretna-hall, which is the largest and most commodious, and where post horses, chaises, and every other

accommodation may be had. But there are twelve or thirteen other houses licensed to sell ale and spirits, which have a manifest tendency to demoralize the people.

*Fuel.*—Peat from the Solway moss, or the borders of Kirkpatrick-Fleming, is commonly used as fuel; though coal is also obtained in considerable abundance from the coast of Cumberland, and from the neighbourhood of Brampton and Canobie. Peat costs 1s. 6d. per cart load; coal, when brought from a distance by sea, costs 8s. per cart load, and when conveyed by land about 2s. less. A railroad between Annan and Brampton, or between the former town and Carlisle, would be of great service to the whole neighbourhood, and a more level tract for that purpose cannot perhaps be found in the kingdom.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The most remarkable variations between the present state of this parish and that which existed at the date of the late Statistical Account are, an increase of population to the number of 99; an immense enlargement of the farms, whose value has been more than doubled; a great increase in manufactures; a diminution of houses in country places, and a rapid extension of villages; a departure from a pretty general spirit of resistance to the revenue laws, and the signs of a growing amelioration in religion and morality. Till within these last four years cock-fights were very common, with all their vile accompaniments, and more particularly at the village of Rigg. Thirty years ago, the contraband trade with the Isle of Man, with all its terrific results, prevailed. But if smuggling now exists at all, it is chiefly to be attributed to the wretched system which establishes an inequality of excise duties betwixt the different parts of the same Kingdom.

Instead of one school with a salary of L. 20, there are two having each a salary of L. 25 a year, besides the usual wages, which may amount to an equal sum, payable by the scholars. Prices of labour and raw produce of every description have undergone a proportionable alteration.

For the improvement of the parish in a commercial and agricultural point of view, the formation of a rail-road to join that between Carlisle and Newcastle, and the award of prizes to the best managers of farms, and to those who pay greatest attention to the breed of cattle, may be suggested. For the general welfare of its inhabitants in a moral and religious state, the diminution of licensed tippling-houses, and the abolition of irregular marriages, may be

strongly urged. The far-famed marriages of Gretna Green are celebrated, it is said, to the number of three or four hundred annually. The parties are chiefly from the sister kingdom, and from the lowest ranks of her population. The existence of the law by which the practice has been generated is certainly a reproach to our country, whether marriage be viewed as a civil or as a sacred contract. It dispenses with that solemnity which is required for the ordinance in Scripture; and it presents opportunities for bigamy and abduction. Parties have been known to betake themselves hither, from the north of Scotland itself, to celebrate a marriage which, a few lines written by a magistrate, a lawyer, a shoemaker, or a sexton, and signed by two witnesses at home, might have effected equally well, according to the present law of Scotland. Scarcely one instance in two years occurs of a couple belonging to the parish being thus unlawfully united; and, when cases of the kind did occur a few years ago, the parties generally went to a neighbouring justice of the peace. Great numbers resort to these altars of Baal, whose priests are numerous in this district and others, more particularly about Annan and Coldstream. Their number, indeed, has sadly injured the trade, for the fees are now only half-a-crown a-pair. One of these functionaries, who breaks stones daily on the verge of England, has the best chance of succeeding, for he accosts every party as they pass, and tries to strike the best bargain. Tippling-houses have each their rival priest, some of whom satisfy the parties by merely giving lines signed by witnesses, and others by jabbering over a portion of the service of the church of England.

Wherever such irregularities are practised, they are calculated to bring *all* law and *all* religion into contempt and ridicule. The evil can only be remedied by an amendment of the law; making proclamation of banns necessary to a valid marriage throughout the united kingdom; and surely, were the General Assembly of our church to send up a petition to Parliament on this subject, such pernicious practices would be prohibited by legislative enactment.

*Revised March 1834.*