

## PARISH OF GLENCAIRN.

PRESBYTERY OF PENPONT, SYNOD OF DUMFRIES.

THE REV. JOHN BROWN, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Boundaries, &c.*—GLENCAIRN, whose ancient orthography was Glencarne, seems to be compounded of *Glen*, which in the Erse signifies a valley, and *Cairn*, a collection of stones; the name corresponds exactly with the appearance of the parish, and seems to refer to the great hollow along which the river flows. The parish is about 15 miles long, and about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles broad, and consequently extends to  $52\frac{1}{2}$  square miles. It is bounded on the south by the parish of Dunscore; by Balmaclellan and Dalry on the west; by Tynron on the north; and Keir on the east; and is of a rectangular figure.

*Topographical Appearances, &c.*—There are many ranges of hills in the parish, most of which run nearly from west to east. The upper ranges are mostly covered with heath, but the greater proportion afford excellent green pasture. The valleys are in a high state of cultivation, and produce luxuriant crops of all the sorts of grain cultivated in this country. The height of the highest hills varies from 1000 to 1500 feet above the level of the sea. There are three valleys in the upper district of the parish, each extending to about six miles in length, which meet at the village of Minnyhive; and a fourth of greater breadth, which extends seven miles towards the lower end of the parish. The hills are chiefly of the transition class of rocks, and their appearance is characteristic of that series.

The parish, from its proximity to high hills on the west, is frequently visited with such copious rains as sometimes to inundate the low grounds, and occasion considerable damage in the harvest months: and in general the atmosphere is moist. The climate, however, is mild and salubrious, and the people in general healthy.

*Hydrography.*—On the farm of Lochurr, there is a lake which

is the source of the river of that name. Its greatest depth is about 4 or 5 fathoms, and its circumference about 3 miles; it abounds with pike and a large species of trout. The water has a black appearance, as the neighbouring ground abounds with moss. The scenery has a bleak aspect, all the hills around being covered with heath. In this parish, there are the following waters, all taking their rise from the high hills on the west, viz. Castlefairn, Craigdarroch, and Dalwhat, which all meet a little below the village of Minnyhive. When united, they assume the name of Cairn. The Cairn flows in a south-east direction, till it unites with the Nith, about a mile above Dumfries, seven miles distant from the Solway Frith. The length of each of the three waters above-mentioned, till they form the Cairn, may be 6 or 7 miles; and the Cairn runs about 16 miles till it joins the Nith.

#### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—Sir Robert Lawrie, Bart. of Maxwellton; Robert Cutlar Ferguson, Esq. of Craigdarroch, now M. P. for the stewartry of Kirkcudbright; John Walker, Esq. of Crawfordton; and Gilbert Collow, Esq. of Auchenchain, are the chief heritors; and there are upwards of 30 smaller proprietors whose rentals may be stated at from L. 600 to L. 50.

*Parochial Registers.*—The earliest register is one of births and marriages, and commences in 1693; with a variety of deficiencies, it has been continued to the present time.

*Antiquities.*—There is a tumulus commonly called the moat, about half a mile from the church, which, in Grose's Antiquities of Scotland, is called the Bow Butts, and, as is generally supposed, was employed as a place for the exercise of archery. There is a cross in the centre of the village of Minnyhive, made of freestone, about 14 feet high, consisting of a pillar about 9 feet high, rising from a circular pedestal about five feet high,—which, from its date, appears to have been erected in 1638. A charter was granted about the same time, constituting the village of Minnyhive a burgh of barony, with power to hold a weekly market.

*Modern Buildings.*—A monument was erected in 1828 to the memory of the Rev. James Renwick, the last of the martyrs, who was executed at Edinburgh in 1688. This monument is situated within a quarter of a mile of the village of Minnyhive, upon rising ground, about 100 yards from the place where he is supposed to have been born. It is about 25 feet high, and built of hewn stone; it cost nearly L. 100, which were raised by subscription.

*Mansion-Houses.*—The chief seats in the parish are, Maxwellton House, belonging to Sir Robert Lawrie, Bart., and Craigdarroch House, belonging to Robert Cutlar Ferguson, Esq. M. P.

### III.—POPULATION.

In 1755, the population was	1794	In 1811,	1666
1791,	1600	1821,	1881
1801,	1403	1831,	2068

The increase since 1801 may be ascribed to the improvements which have been made upon the land, and the influx of strangers into the villages of Minnyhive and Dunreggan,—who have become feuars.

There are residing in the villages of Minnyhive, Dunreggan, and Kirkland,	951
The number of families in the parish is	441
of independent fortune,	6
chiefly employed in agriculture,	173
in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	113
Yearly average of births for last 7 years,*	40
marriages for same period,	13
Number of bachelors and widowers above 50,	49
of unmarried women upwards of 45,	137
Average number of children in a family,	4½
Number of insane, fatuous, blind, deaf or dumb,	7

During the last three years there have been thirteen illegitimate births in the parish.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

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

Number of acres cultivated or occasionally under tillage,	7000
which have never been cultivated,	26600
improvable,	1000
in undivided common,	1
under wood,	800

*Rent of Land.*—Of the 7000 acres of arable land, 2000 may be estimated at L. 1, 10s. per acre; 2000 acres at L. 1 per acre; and 3000 acres at 15s. per acre: total amount L. 7250. Average rent of grazing per ox, L. 2 per annum; per cow, L. 5; per ewe, 4s.

*Husbandry.*—The mode of husbandry generally pursued is that of the sixth and seventh rotations. The first crop is always oats; second, potatoes or other green crop; third, generally barley; fourth, rye-grass, to be cut for hay, then pastured from one to three years. The improvement of which this appears susceptible, would be—to cultivate fewer potatoes and more turnips, the same to be eaten down with sheep, and also what rye-grass could be spared from the horses,—the ground being generally of a light gravelly soil, and consequently well adapted for that system of management.

The only land in the parish that can be reclaimed with advantage, is generally high and covered with heath, bent, or *breckans*;

\* The registering of births is sometimes neglected by the poorer classes.

and the general course of improvement pursued, is to lime it for one or two years before, at the rate of fifty measures or six carts per acre, or by laying the same quantity upon it when it is ploughed up. If the first plan be followed, a crop is generally taken the year in which it is ploughed; if the second, not till the ensuing year; next, a green crop, when the ground is sufficiently broken to admit of its being taken,—otherwise, a second crop of oats; after the green crop, another crop of oats, and sown out with two bushels of rye-grass seed and six pound of rib-grass per acre, or the same quantity of clover seed.

Draining used formerly to be done in a very insufficient manner; but of late years, there has been a very great improvement in this respect, as the drains both upon the sheep pasture and on the low lands, are now generally made in a more scientific manner.

Irrigation has only been tried on a small scale, but with the usual beneficial results. Embanking the river Cairn has been carried to a very considerable extent, and most judiciously, both on the estates of Maxwellton and Crawfordton. Leases are generally for fifteen years.

Many of the principal heritors have expended large sums, of late, in improving their estates,—particularly Sir Robert Lawrie, who has erected excellent new farm-steadings upon all the farms of his estate; and his whinstone dikes are surpassed by none. He has also been most successful in improving moss, which must have repaid him well by the immense crops of oats, carrots, and hay, which the improvement has yielded.

Robert C. Ferguson, Esq. of Craigdarroch, has planted to a greater extent than any proprietor in the parish; and the plantations are laid out so as to ornament the estate. They are well managed, and are in a very thriving condition.

We may safely state, that improvement has not been obstructed in this parish by the want of capital: during the last fifty years, the arable land has been more than quadrupled.

A large proportion of the land is in the hands of resident proprietors; and where let, the leases are generally on liberal terms. The farms are well enclosed and subdivided with stone dikes, and the steadings are, in general, sufficient.

*Quarries and Mines.*—There is a slate-quarry at Benbuie, which the proprietor, Mr Barber, wrought for some years with considerable spirit, but which he afterwards abandoned, in consequence of the slates proving of an inferior quality.

There are the remains of a mine at Caitloch, which is supposed to have been wrought for lead at a very distant period; but at present, there is nothing which indicates that lead has ever been found, or that it ever existed there.

*Rental.*—The net rental of the parish may amount to L. 11,175.

Of which cattle may produce per annum,	-	-	-	L. 4575
sheep,	-	-	-	2800
crop,	-	-	-	2100
horses,	-	-	-	700
pork and pigs,	-	-	-	400
wood,	-	-	-	200
houses and feus,	-	-	-	400
				L. 11175
	Total,	-	-	L. 11175

We have stated the net rental, as it was found extremely difficult to give an accurate account of the gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-town, &c.*—The nearest market-town is Dumfries, distant from the centre of the parish fifteen miles. There is one daily post to Minnyhive. The length of the turnpike road in this parish amounts to about eighteen miles: and a coach affords a communication three times a-week between Dumfries and Glasgow, passing through the whole length of the parish. There are four bridges upon the turnpike line, all in good order, and six other bridges upon the parish roads.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is well situated for the convenience of the greater part of the population, being distant from the extremities of the parish seven miles and a-half. It is uncertain when it was built. It was repaired about twenty-one years ago, but it is still far from being comfortable. The church affords accommodation for between 500 and 600 sitters: and the heritors have agreed to erect a new church to contain accommodation for 1050 sitters. The manse was built about fifty-eight years ago, and since that time, it has undergone several partial repairs. The offices belonging to it are at present in a very bad state. The glebe extends to 12 acres of good arable ground, whose value may be stated at L. 2 per acre per annum. The stipend amounts to L. 280, 7s., including L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements: the teinds were exhausted at the last augmentation, dated 24th January 1821.

There is one Dissenting meeting-house, belonging to the United Secession church,—the minister of which is paid by his hearers, and his stipend may amount to L. 90 per annum. The number

of families attending the Established Church amounts to 330, and the number of persons of all ages attached to the Established Church may amount to nearly 1500. The number of families connected with the Dissenting meeting-house in this parish, and two other Dissenting meeting-houses in a neighbouring parish, is about 111; and the number of persons of all ages attached to them, nearly 600. The average number of communicants at the Established Church is about 600.

*Education.*—There are five schools in this parish,—of which three are parochial and two unendowed. Latin and Greek are taught at the parochial schools. The joint salaries of the parochial schoolmasters amount to L. 51, 6s. 8d. The first and second may receive each L. 20 a-year of fees; and the third L. 14. This sum is unequally divided amongst the teachers;—the first having L. 25, 13s. 4d.; the second, L. 17, 2s. 2½d., and the third, L. 8, 11s. 1d. As the heritors pay the maximum salary none of the teachers can claim a dwelling-house.

*Libraries.*—There are two subscription libraries in the village of Minnyhive, and a congregational one belonging to the Dissenters.

*Poor.*—The yearly amount of collections at the Established Church is L. 45; but besides this, the heritors have for a number of years past raised a voluntary contribution of L. 50 per annum. These sums, together with the interest of L. 300 of mortified money, are found requisite for the support of the poor, who are very numerous. There are upwards of 30 paupers, who receive from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per week.

*Fairs, &c.*—There are three fairs held yearly at Minnyhive, in the months of March, July, and October, for the purpose of hiring servants for the half year, and for the hay and harvest seasons. A new market for lambs was established this year. From the quantity of stock exhibited, and the concourse of people who attended, it promises to succeed.

*Inns.*—There are five inns in this parish, and several alehouses, but their effects upon the morals of the people have not been considered hurtful.

*Fuel.*—The fuel used in this parish consists mostly of peat and coal. The former is distant about four miles, and the latter sixteen miles; the expense of peat is about 5s. per cart load, and of coal about 10s.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The most striking alterations which have taken place, in this

parish, since the former Statistical Account was written, consist principally in the improvement of the houses belonging to the proprietors,—the superior accommodation afforded to the tenants,—the improved mode of cultivation,—and the excellent state of the roads. The villages of Minnyhive and Dunreggan have also been greatly enlarged, and the houses which have been built are of a superior description. The distance from coal and water carriage will for ever prevent the possibility of this parish becoming a manufacturing district of any importance.

*October 1835.*