

PARISH OF DUNSCORE.

PRESBYTERY OF DUMFRIES, SYNOD OF DUMFRIES.

THE REV. ROBERT BRYDEN, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Extent and Boundaries.—THE parish is 12 miles in length, but of a very irregular breadth, varying from $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to less than half a mile. It is narrowest near the centre, being straitly confined betwixt the parishes of Glencairn on the north, and Holywood on the south; and has been said, with some propriety, to resemble the shape of a sand-glass. It lies in a direction nearly east and west. The mean breadth is about 2 miles, and consequently the whole surface extends to about 24 square miles, or perhaps $23\frac{1}{2}$. It is bounded, on the west, by the loch and water of Urr and parish of Kirkpatrick Durham; on the south, by the parish of Holywood; on the east, by the river Nith, dividing it from Kirkmahoe; and on the north, by the parishes of Glencairn and Keir.

Topographical Appearances.—The parish of Dunscore consists chiefly of three valleys or glens with their enclosing hills, all diverging from the village of Cottack, in the various directions of west, east, and north. This village itself, which contains the parish church, stands upon elevated ground, and the church is seen at a considerable distance in all directions. The country is more open on the east, being beautified by the river Nith and its fertile *holms*. The most extensive of the glens is that towards the west, called Glen-

eslin, which is 4 miles long, and becomes very rocky and barren in the upper extremity. The hills enclosing this glen rise to a considerable height, and that called "Bogrie-hill," which is the most elevated in the whole neighbourhood, is at least 1200 feet above the level of the Solway Frith, from which it is about fifteen miles distant.

Meteorology—Climate, &c.—There is a considerable difference of temperature betwixt the eastern or lower, and the western or upper district of the parish. In the former, harvest is earlier by a week or ten days, and the cold in winter is not nearly so intense, which may be accounted for by the land being not only less elevated, but better sheltered by intervening hills, from exposure to the prevailing westerly winds. The climate is very variable, from alternations both of heat and moisture; but no register of the state of the atmosphere has been kept in the district. The weather, however, is very seldom foggy. The most prevailing wind is from the west, which is frequently attended with rain. Sea fowl are often seen previous to a severe storm, and are regarded as a sure indication of it. In the winter of 1823, during a heavy fall of snow, a flock of Norwegian swans were seen in this parish, and one of them was caught in a drain on the estate of Allanton.

The most common diseases of this district are affections of the lungs, stomach, and liver. Rheumatism is also a very general complaint among the poor and the aged, but fevers and agues, which prevailed forty years ago, are now very rare. Inflammations, however, are frequent.

Hydrography.—The river Nith passes along the eastern extremity of the parish for two miles. The Cairn, which is tributary to the Nith, crosses the parish near its centre, running in a direction south by west. This is a faster flowing stream than the Nith, and after heavy rains, or the dissolving of upland snows, comes down with great rapidity, affecting its lowest fords in the course of a few hours. Dalgoner Bridge erected over the Cairn is 80 feet in span, which is about the greatest breadth of the river. The Cairn rises among the hills of Balmaclellan or Dalry, * in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright, and runs through the parishes of Glencairn, Dunscore, Holywood, and Irongray, in which last it is joined by another stream called the Clouden, which, although much smaller, communicates its name to the united waters of the Cairn and itself, from the point of junction, till they fall into the Nith, a few miles below.

* The name Cairn is only applied, from the village of Minnyhive downwards, to the river which is formed at that village, by the junction of the three separate streams of Dalquhat, Craigdarroch, and Castlefairn,—Dalquhat having its source in Glencairn, Craigdarroch in Carsephairn, and Castlefairn in Balmaclellan or Dalry.

There is a reason assigned, however, for the name of the larger stream having merged into that of the smaller. For according to tradition, the Cairn once pursued a different course, and did not mix its waters with the Clouden at all. Instead of passing through the parishes of Holywood and Irongray, it is supposed to have passed through Dunscore in an easterly direction down the glen of the Lag, and to have fallen into the Nith several miles higher up than the Clouden. And it is a presumption in favour of this tradition, that the Clouden is still called the "Auld water" of Clouden.

Mineralogy.—The upper district of this parish consists of transition rocks, among which, in the higher grounds towards the western boundary, many large boulders, and occasionally blocks of granite, occur. The secondary strata, composed of red sandstone, commence in the lower division of the parish, about two miles from the eastern boundary, and continue to traverse the county in the direction of Dumfries, passing into Cumberland.

A considerable variety of soil exists. In the lower district, a light gravel or sand prevails; but there is a small extent of what is called holm land, consisting of a rich alluvial soil, along the banks of the Nith, as well as in the centre of the parish, along the banks of the Cairn. In the higher district, the prevailing character is a species of loam on a till bottom, and abounding with small stones. Peat-moss also occurs in different places, and in considerable tracts. There are six or seven mosses in the parish, from which great quantities of fuel are obtained. Those in the upper district are the largest, and afford the hardest and best peat. But of late years a considerable portion of this kind of land has been drained and improved. Generally speaking, the soil is dry, although some parcels of wet spongy land occur, and some good meadows, besides the peat-mosses just mentioned. Except on the holms and more fertile valleys, the soil is by no means deep. On part of the higher grounds, it is extremely thin and poor, and several of the hills are entirely covered with heath.

Zoology.—Foxes are sometimes found in this parish, and otters have been recently hunted in the rivers. * Of domestic animals, all the common kinds are more or less reared. But the prevailing breed of cattle has hitherto been the Galloway or polled kind,—

* About two years ago, a young otter was partially tamed and domesticated by an inhabitant of the parish. It frequently went a fishing with its owner, on which occasions it always retained the first fish for itself, and faithfully delivered up the rest. It was sometimes chained to a kennel, and sometimes went at large. If its master neglected to take it to the river to fish for any length of time, it went of its own accord, and after being satisfied returned to its owner. It has now passed into other hands, and its subsequent history is unknown.

but on several farms the Ayrshire has been recently introduced, and the prevailing breed of sheep is the heath or black-faced variety. Swine are reared in great numbers, chiefly of the smaller breeds, being fed to the weight of about nine to fifteen stones. Many of the farmers also rear their own horses, or breed young horses for sale. Salmon occur in the Nith, and sometimes also, although rarely, in the Cairn. They come up for the purpose of spawning in the month of September, and return to the sea in March. The Cairn abounds in excellent trout.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Antiquities.—On Springfield-hill, which is a very considerable eminence in the lower end of the parish, there are obvious traces of a military station, which seems hitherto to have escaped notice. It is of an oblong form, evidently adapted to the nature of the ground, and covers about two acres of land. It is now concealed by a plantation of larch, enclosed with a dry stone fence, but may be easily traced out. There is a double mound in front, forming two crescents, with a ditch between them. The outer crescent is smaller than the inner, which not only expands into a wider curve, but is considerably more elevated. The interior of the whole, forming the top of the hill, is flat; but the same regularity cannot be traced so distinctly in the rear as in front, although there is a steep descent all round. There is only one entrance apparent, which is on the east side, and just at the point of junction of the outer with the inner mound. This has evidently been a military station, and probably a Roman one;—for it is situated very near the line of an old Roman road which passed through the parish of Kirkmahoe, on the opposite side of the Nith, and it commands a complete view of the country in the direction of Tinwald and of the hill of Burnswark, which is distinctly seen in the distance. It is admirably calculated, therefore, by natural situation, to have answered the purpose of a military station, and to have maintained a communication, by signal, through the Barhill of Tinwald, with the famous Roman camp at Burnswark. It is also reported, that a battle-axe was once found in this hill, but of this we have not been able to ascertain the certainty.

Ancient Families.—The chief families in this parish, in ancient times, were the Griersons of Lag, of Chapel, and of Dalgoner, the Kirks or Kirkhoses of Bogrie and Sundaywell;* and the Kirkpatrick

* There is a very general tradition that some centuries ago, three brothers named Kirk, despatched one Culton, a notorious robber, who infested Gleneslin, which was then surrounded by a forest, and that, as a reward for this action, the reigning monarch granted to each of the brothers, respectively, the properties of Sundaywell, Bogrie, and Chapel. The spot where Culton was slain is still pointed out, and cal-

of Ellisland and Friars' Carse. At the present day, there are no lineal representatives of any of these families in the parish, except James Grierson, Esq. of Dalgoner. Sir Robert Grierson of Rockhall, indeed, still takes the title of Lag; but the lands which anciently formed the barony of Lag have passed out of the family, and now belong to George Whigham, Esq. of Hallidayhill. Several of the smaller properties, however, in the parish still continue in the descendants of the families who possessed them two or three centuries ago. And among these may be mentioned the M'Burnies of Laggan; the Milligans of Dempsterton, whose ancestor was one Fergus Amulligan, who settled here in 1619; the Lachlisons of Burnside; and the M'Kinnels of M'Murdoston, lineally descended by the female side from the family of M'Murdo, from whom the property was named.

Family of Grierson of Lag.—The old tower of Lag, which is now a ruin, is said to have been built in the reign of James III. It stands upon an eminence, and was formerly surrounded by an outer wall and a ditch, having a moat or court hill a little to the east. It is a square building, of no great width, but of considerable height, and of very massive construction. The family of Grierson, who possessed this ancient mansion for many generations, is descended from Gilbert, second son of Malcolm, laird of M'Gregor, who died in 1374. For the name, it is said, was originally Gregorson, which is equivalent to the Gaelic appellation of M'Gregor. But this was a harsh term, and was therefore softened into Grierson, and was often written, by abbreviation, merely Grier. The lands of Lag were originally disposed to this Gilbert M'Gregor or Gregorson by one John M'Wrath so far back as the year 1408, the period at which the family first settled in this part of the country, after having migrated from the Highlands. In the conveyance of the lands of Lag to this Gilbert, he is designed "Armour-bearer to Archibald Earl of Douglas." And he obtained a charter of confirmation from the Duchess of Turrene, of date 9th April 1425. A descendant of the family joined the Maxwells of Nithsdale against the Johnstones of Annandale, and fought at the battle of Dryffe Sands, a famous and most bloody border feud, which happened about the year 1598. And the last who inhabited the tower of Lag took an active part in the persecution against the Covenanters, and in 1685 was created a baronet under the title of Sir Robert Grierson of Lag. He died in Dumfries about the year 1730, and was interred "Culton's nook." It is in the vicinity of the farm of Chapel, but within the borders of Glencairn parish.

ed in the old church-yard of Dunscore, the ancient burying-place of the family.

Friars' Carse.—Friars' Carse, which was anciently dependent on the rich Abbey of Melrose, also demands a brief notice. In Catholic times it was a cell or monkish residence, of which, although there are no remains, there are still a number of antique stone figures, such as adorned Catholic chapels and churches, placed in the avenue leading to the present dwelling-house. There is a small loch on the property, with an artificial island in it; and Grose says, that the loch was the fish-pond of the friary, and that the monks concealed their valuables in the island when the English invaded Stranith. After the Reformation, the estate of Friars' Carse was acquired by the laird of Allisland or Ellisland, an adjoining farm. So far back as 1465, Cardinal Antonius confirmed a charter by the monastery of Melrose to John Kirkpatrick of Allisland of the thirty-six pound land of Dalgoner, including Kil-lilago and Dempsterton. But whether Friars' Carse itself was included in this conveyance, or was so early alienated from the monks, we have not been able to learn. From the Kirkpatricks the whole property afterwards passed to the Maxwells of Tinwald, to whom it belonged in 1634. In the time of the poet Burns, who resided some years in this parish, and was tenant of Ellisland, the estate of Friars' Carse belonged to the Riddels of Glenriddel. Burns was a frequent visitor of the late James Riddel, Esq., and the original copy of his poem of the "Whistle," in the poet's own handwriting, is still at Friars' Carse, where it was composed, and is now in the possession of Mrs Crichton. The husband of this lady, the late Dr Crichton of Friars' Carse, left an immense sum, (about L. 100,000) at the disposal of his widow and other trustees, to be applied to charitable purposes. The trustees at first contemplated the endowment of a College at Dumfries, but various difficulties having presented themselves against the execution of this scheme, the erection of a Lunatic Asylum for the county, with several other minor objects, is now understood to be resolved upon. Such an institution will be of immense benefit to the south of Scotland, and be well worthy the benevolent intentions, while it will be eminently calculated to perpetuate the name, of the donor.

Bogrie and Sundaywell.—There are two old square towers still standing in the upper part of Glenslin, and on opposite sides of the glen, at a point where it contracts to a narrow pass. The names of these towers are Bogrie and Sundaywell, and both

of them anciently belonged to distinct families of the name of Kirk or Kirko, and sometimes also spelt Kirkhoe. That of Sundaywell is still inhabited as a farm-house. There is a stone over the door bearing the initials I. K., and opposite S. W., meaning John Kirk of Sundaywell. Under these initials, and at the bottom of the stone, which is in the shape of a heart, is the date 1651. In the troublous times of persecution, this house was a favourite resort of the Covenanters, to whom the proprietor at that period, the same John Kirk who erected the tower, seems to have been particularly friendly. Mr Blackadder, and others of the ejected ministers, were in the habit of visiting Kirk, and preaching at Sundaywell. And Kirk himself, in all likelihood, was present at the celebrated communion dispensed in the bosom of the hills of the neighbouring parish of Irongray, at which John Welch, who had been driven from the cure of that parish, presided,—of which communion an interesting, though rude, memorial remains to this day, consisting of rows of stones placed in the form of sacramental tables. For Blackadder was residing at the time with Kirk at Sundaywell, and preached the preparation sermon on the preceding Saturday in “Meiklewood moor”—a district partly within this parish, and in which the ruins of an old house, bearing the name of the “Preaching Walls,” still remain.

Eminent Men.—It may here also be noticed, that the famous John Welch, grandfather of the minister of Irongray above-mentioned, and son-in-law to John Knox, was a native of this parish. His father was laird of Collieston, a small property belonging to the family of Welch for several generations, and situated in Gleneslin of Dunscore, and not in the parish of Irongray, as erroneously stated in the “Scots Worthies.” It now belongs to William Copland, Esq.

Church Lands.—A very considerable portion of this parish anciently belonged to the Catholic church. Mr Chalmers, in his *Caledonia*, (Vol. iii. p. 51, note,) has the following statement: “At Dunscore there was formerly a lake where none appears at present. In 1236, Alexander II. granted to the Monks of Melros ‘lacum de Dunscore in valle de Nyth, et quicquid continetur, infra eundem lacum.’” And he refers to the Chartulary of Melrose, 1639, as his authority.

This seems to define the extent of the church lands, and it may also help to determine the site of the quondam lake. For as it included *beneath* it the whole church lands in the parish, it seems

not improbable that it formed the upper boundary of the estate of Dalgoner, which actually lies in a sort of natural basin or low ground, in which there is a peat-moss. And a tradition also obtains, that there was a loch in this very neighbourhood in ancient times. In point of fact, Dalgoner and Killilago form the extreme upper boundary of the church lands of Dunscore—which, according to a decree of valuation of the parish, dated 21st March 1634, are designed “the thirty pound land of the Monkland of Melrose,” and comprehend the following, “Dalgoner, Killilago, Bessiewalla, Laggan, Edgarton, M’Cheynston, M’Cubbington, Milliganton, Kilroy, Fardingwell, Dempsterton, Newton, Poundland, Sweir, Portrack, Friars’ Carse, and Allisland.” These lands, as Chalmers farther informs us, were gifted to the monks of Melrose by Affrica, daughter of Edgar, son of Dunevald, and grandson of Dunegal of Stranith (the strath or valley of Nith.) And, according to the same author, this Edgar possessed the lands of Dunscore under William the Lion, and was succeeded in them by his said daughter, Affrica, who gifted so large a portion of them to the church. It appears, however, that the church itself, or *benefice* of Dunscore, belonged to the monks of Holywood, betwixt whom and the monks of Melrose a dispute arose concerning the right to it. But this controversy was settled in 1257 at Kirkmahoe by William, Bishop of Glasgow, who decided that the Church belonged to the monks of Holywood, but that the Abbot of Melrose had a right to the tithes of their own lands which they had acquired from Affrica. In Catholic times, the cure was served by a vicar, and in Bagimont’s roll the vicarage of Dunscore, in the deanery of Nith, was taxed at L. 4. The vicar enjoyed a manse and glebe.

On 12th August 1566, the church lands of Dunscore were disposed by John Welch, (the last) vicar of Dunscore, with consent of the commendator of the monastery of Holywood, to Cuthbert Grierson of Layth, and this conveyance was confirmed by a charter of James VI., of date 12th November 1574.

Heritors.—There are no fewer than 47 proprietors of land in this parish at present; but many of the properties, of course, are small.

III.—POPULATION.

It is stated in the former Statistical Account, that in 1791 the population of this parish was 1033; and that, by Dr Webster’s report, about forty years prior to that date, it amounted to 651. But in 1730 it amounted to 750, so that if Dr Webster’s report be cor-

rect, the population must have decreased 99 betwixt the years 1730 and 1750. The present number of inhabitants, according to last census, is 1488. Of these the greater part reside in the country, and follow agricultural occupations,—for there is only one village deserving the name, situated at the church, and containing 211 inhabitants, so that the remaining 1277 dwell wholly in the country.

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| Annual average of births for the last seven years, | - | 807 |
| marriages, | - | 127 |
| deaths, | - | 177 |
| Number of persons under 15 years of age, according to last census (1831,) upwards of 70, | - | 553 |
| | | 33 |

There are many substantial families in this parish, and the number of proprietors whose estates yield a rental of upwards of L. 50 a year amounts to no less than 40, of whom 18 are non-resident.

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| Number of families in the parish, | - | 291 |
| chiefly employed in agriculture, | - | 168 |
| in trade, manufactures, and handicraft, | - | 58 |

During the last three years, there have been 5 illegitimate births in the parish.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—The number of acres in the parish, either cultivated or occasionally in tillage, exceeds 5300; the number which have never been cultivated may be about 5900, of which only a small proportion could be added to the cultivated land. But a considerable part might be improved by drainage and levelling, and rendered productive as meadow. The number of acres under wood is about 440, of which 60 are of natural wood, and the rest planted chiefly with larch and Scotch fir. The plantations are well managed, and annually thinned. The greater part of the wood has been planted within the last thirty years.

Rent of Land.—The average rent of arable land in this parish does not exceed L. 1, 4s. per acre. The average rent of grazing is at the rate of L. 3 per bullock or cow, and 4s. per ewe or full-grown sheep.

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

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| Grain of all kinds, | - | L. 7894 | 1 | 8 |
| Potatoes, turnips, and cabbages, | - | 3907 | 10 | 0 |
| Hay, meadow and sown grass, | - | 1612 | 15 | 0 |
| Pasture, | - | 3075 | 9 | 0 |
| Gardens and orchards, (very trifling.) | - | | | |
| Annual thinning of plantations, say | - | 100 | 0 | 0 |

L. 15,989 15 8

Husbandry.—Husbandry has made great advances of late years in reclaiming waste land, draining, fencing, and manuring. The

duration of leases is generally fifteen years, and sometimes nineteen. A gradual improvement has taken place in reference to farm-buildings. The old thatched houses have in a great measure disappeared. All the new houses are either slated or covered with thin flags or slabs of the red freestone peculiar to the county. The dwelling-houses are also enlarged in regard to accommodation, although for the most part confined to one story, and the farm offices are more extensive and commodious. The dry stone dike is the most prevailing enclosure, and the farms in general are well subdivided.

Manufactures.—With the exception of country weaving, there is no manufacture carried on in this parish. About five years ago, a distillery was erected on a pretty extensive scale, and actively carried on for two years, when the proprietor died and the concern was given up, without any prospect of being renewed. It consumed for the time a large quantity of grain, and in so far as it afforded a ready and convenient market, would have proved a benefit to the farmer, had it been continued. But being far removed from fuel, and labouring under other disadvantages, it is doubtful whether it might ultimately have proved a profitable concern.

There was once an agricultural society in the parish, but it broke up some years ago, and no attempt has been made to revive it.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-town, &c.—The nearest market-town to this parish is Dumfries, which is about six miles from the lower end, and nine from the village of Cottack, in the centre of the parish before-mentioned, in which is situated the church. The post-town of Minnyhive indeed, is only seven miles distant from this village, but the usual communication is through Dumfries, as being most convenient.

Means of Communication.—The turnpike betwixt Dumfries and Glasgow passes through the eastern part of Dunscore for three miles, and sends off a branch from the lodge of Friars' Carse, which goes right up through the whole extent of the parish, and nearly bisects it lengthways, passing the church, and leading out on the west through the parish of Balmaclellan to New Galloway. There is also another good road, which passes through four miles of this parish, leading from Dumfries to Ayr by Minnyhive, along which a stage-coach has lately commenced running, going to Ayr the one day, and returning the next to Dumfries. All the roads are kept in a good state of repair, and there are no tolls within the parish of Dunscore, except one side bar as a check to the toll of Newbridge,

in the parish of Holywood. Coaches travel daily along the turnpike road both to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Dalgoner Bridge, with a span of 80 feet, as already mentioned, is the only bridge within the parish of any extent.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church is conveniently situated in the village of Cottack, at nearly equal distances from the two extremes of the parish. It was built in the year 1823, and is in good repair. It accommodates 850, but there are not above 10 free sittings. The manse was built in 1814, and is also in good condition. The glebe consists of about fifty-one acres, and may be worth L. 60 per annum. The stipend is the minimum, with L. 12, 12s. in addition, being a voluntary augmentation given by the heritors in 1793.

The parish church formerly stood at the eastern or lower end of the parish, five miles from Dumfries. But in 1649 it was removed to its present situation, nearly in the centre of the parish, and nine miles from Dumfries; but the original edifice was taken down, and a new one erected in 1823, which is of a Gothic style, with an elegant square tower in the western end. In Popish times, there was a chapel in Gleneslin, at the distance of seven miles from the site which the church then occupied, and there was a church-yard attached to both church and chapel. That which attached to the chapel has now entirely disappeared, and has not been used in the memory of man, but there is a farm in the vicinity which bears the name of Chapel to this day. The burying-ground, however, which surrounded the old church at the lower end of the parish, is still in use. In this burying-ground Grierson of Lag, as already mentioned, and the ancestors of other ancient families, lie interred: so that there are two church-yards in the parish.

There is one Dissenting chapel in the parish, in connection with the Relief synod, the minister of which is paid by the collections and seat rents.

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| The number of families adhering to the Established Church, | 250 |
| belonging to various Dissenting bodies, Relief, Secession, and Reformed Presbytery, including 1 of Roman Catholics, | 41 |
| | 291 |

Divine service is uniformly well attended in the Established Church, and the average number of communicants is about 450.

The average amount of money raised yearly for religious and charitable purposes, both by subscriptions and church collections,

exclusively of the ordinary collections for the parish poor, may be about L. 15.

Education.—There are three parochial schools in this parish, in which all the ordinary branches of instruction, including Latin and Greek, are well taught. Prior to the year 1828, there was no assessed salary paid by the heritors, but the maximum is now given, and is divided into nearly three equal portions. But besides the assessed salary, L. 300 was mortified about a century ago by a Mr Grierson of Edinburgh, of which the interest is equally divided among the three parochial teachers. In 1807, a farther sum of L. 50 was bequeathed to the centre school at the church by Mrs Janet Dobie. And in 1829, Robert M'Kinnel, Esq. of M'Murdoston, left L. 200 for behoof of the school in the lower district of the parish, and L. 50 for that at the church also. The interest of Mr Grierson's L. 300 was all the salary which the teachers enjoyed previous to 1828, except Janet Dobie's legacy after the year 1807. The teachers have no dwelling-houses; but two good school-rooms were lately erected by subscription, and the third was at the same time thoroughly repaired. All the schools, therefore, are at present in good condition. There are few, if any, children above six years of age, who have not been entered at school; and none above fifteen are known to be without the elements of common education, to the value of which the people are fully alive. The school in the upper district is nearly four miles from the western extremity of the parish, at which several families reside. These families, however, are nearer to one of the parish schools of Balmaclellan, in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright.

Literature.—There is no general library in the parish, but juvenile libraries for the children attending the Sabbath schools have existed for some years, and have been productive of benefit among the youth, many of whom have acquired a taste for reading. Nor does the habit of reading prevail among this class only, for the parishioners generally are substantially educated, and fond of books.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is about 25. The sums each receive vary from L. 1 to L. 3 a-year, or from 5s. to 10s. every second month. But, besides these allowances in money, there are always some distributions of meal, fuel, and clothing in the winter season, both from the ordinary funds, and from the benefactions of one or more leading heritors.

The annual receipts for the relief of the poor are from L. 60 to

L. 70; of which about L. 44 are raised by the ordinary church collections, and the remainder chiefly consists of the interest of legacies or mortified money, but partly also of the fees levied for proclamation of the banns of marriage, &c. But out of this fund the salaries of the session-clerk and treasurer, the precentor and church officer are all paid,—besides support to the poor. Of late years, the number of poor has rather been on the increase—yet a disposition to refrain from seeking parochial relief still pervades many among the poorer classes. And the great majority of those who receive aid are the aged, infirm, and sick. Occasionally, however, heavier burdens than usual, such as the support of natural children, fall upon the funds; but there has never been occasion for any kind of assessment.

Inns.—At present there are two inns in this parish, both at the village of Cottack, one of which is necessary for the accommodation of travellers, but one of them might also be well dispensed with; yet, with a few exceptions, sobriety and industry prevail among the peasantry.

The fuel most generally used is peat, which is got within the parish, as already observed. Sea-borne coal is procured at Dumfries, and Scotch coal is driven from Sanquhar, a distance of twenty miles, but it is always to be had at Mr Whigham's depot at Allanton, within the parish. This gentleman rents the Duke of Buccleuch's collieries at Sanquhar; and, to the great convenience of the neighbourhood, keeps a constant supply on hand, by means of his coal waggons, which are constantly plying on the road; and he always distributes a quantity to the poor in winter. The better sort of families use a great deal of coal in addition to peat.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the last Statistical account was drawn up, the population has increased by 575, being more than one-third of the whole number of souls. The inhabited houses have increased by thirty-six, while the greater part of the former houses have also been renewed and much enlarged and otherwise improved. There is also a new manse, a new church, and two new school-houses built. The teachers have received an addition of L. 17 of salary each, and are much superior to their predecessors in respect of qualifications,—at least generally speaking; for it must be allowed, that, under all the disadvantages of the old system, the schools were occasionally filled with able teachers.—The old Scottish plough has been almost universally supplanted by the improved iron one, and the number of

ploughs employed in agriculture has been increased by at least one-third. The annual funds for supporting the poor have advanced from L. 23 to L. 70, although still arising from the same voluntary sources. And the number of poor persons receiving parochial relief is doubled. Both the face of the country, and the intellectual state of the people, have been greatly improved.

October 1835.