

## PARISH OF DALRY.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT, SYNOD OF GALLOWAY.

THE REV. GEORGE PATERSON, MINISTER.

### L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THIS parish and those of Kells, Balmaclellan, and Carsphairn, are supposed to have been anciently united.

*Name.*—The name is derived from Gaelic words signifying a Royal Vale,—the land being hilly on the north and east, and becoming beautifully level on the left bank of the Ken, and terminating in ground called the Holm of Dalry.

*Extent, &c.*—From north to south, the parish is about 15 miles long, and, from east to west, about 7 broad. It is bounded on the west by Carsphairn and Kells; on the south, by Balmaclellan and Kells; on the east, by Glencairn, in the county of Dumfries; on the north, by New Cumnock in Ayrshire. It contains 26,172 Scottish, or 32,902 English acres.

*Plantations, Rivers, &c.*—Along the Ken, which is the boundary between this parish and Kells on the west for six miles or more, there are oak trees of considerable size, besides a variety of other species of trees in belts and ornamental clumps. The principal river is the Ken, which takes its rise near the northern extremity of the parish, and, running south-west eight or nine miles, separates Dalry from Carsphairn, till it is joined by the Deugh. There, taking a new direction, it runs almost south, till it meets with a rivulet in Kells, called Palharrow. Thence it runs nearly south-east through rugged rocks, with many beautiful windings, till it meets with the Garpel, (a rivulet which, for a considerable way, is the boundary between this parish and Balmaclellan.) From Bridge of Ken to Bridge of Allan-Gibbon, its bed is rock, and in some places of great depth from the top of the banks. The Blackwater, and the rivulets of Earlston, Stronfreggan, and Loch-invar burn in the parish, are tributaries to the Ken; they all abound in trout, and salmon is frequently caught in the Ken after speats,

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and opening of the "*Satterdaies Slop*" in the cruives near Kirkcudbright, where the Ken, after its junction with the Dee, falls into the sea. The lakes or lochs in the parish contain excellent trout, and are much resorted to by fishers. Those of Troston, Knocksting, Regland, Ardoch, and Knockman, are small, but that of Lochinvar is of considerable extent, scarce less than three miles in circuit, and containing an area of 50 acres.

*Geology.*—Hard granite or whinstone rock abounds throughout the parish; which is rarely wrought, from the requisite quantity of stone being found in loose and detached blocks on the surface of the moor or heath land, and commonly called heathens. In the Hill of Barlae, near the public road, between St John's of Dalry and Bridge of Ken, a slate-quarry, producing blue slate of durable quality, and large dimensions, has been wrought for some years.

*Zoology.*—Most of the common descriptions of small birds are to be found. Red grouse, blackcock and grey-hen, partridges, snipes, pheasants, and hares are in considerable numbers.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Antiquities, &c.*—In Lochinvar are to be seen the remains of an old building with bridges, said to have been a castle belonging to the Gordons, anciently knights of Lochinvar, and now Viscount of Kenmure and Lord of Lochinvar by restoration in 1824 to the titles forfeited in 1716. Not much above a mile from this loch, there is a large pile of stones covered with a whitish moss, from which it has probably got the name of the White Cairn. At a short distance from this, is another of smaller size, which is supposed to be a monument or trophy of an heroic achievement performed by the first Knight of Lochinvar, who on that very spot had the good fortune to kill a wild boar which infested that part of the country. Near the church of Dalry, and just at the brink of the Ken, there is one of those eminences called moats, which is still almost entire, and appears to great advantage from the Kells side of the river. From this moat a fine view of the river is obtained; and of the landscapes on each side of it. There is another moat in Lochrenny, on the border of the parish, but it is not conspicuous, as it stands on low ground. In the churchyard, which has been recently enclosed by a substantial stone and lime wall, there is an aisle of the old church, now quite detached from the new, which is the burial place of Viscount Kenmure. There is also a square piece of ground inclosed, with a blackish wall

about seven feet high, with a bowl supported by a standard at each corner, which is the burying place of the Newalls of Barskeoch. In the farm of Stronfreggan, there is a large cairn, near to which, in a rivulet that runs by it, are two large stones, somewhat resembling human figures: one of them is about ten feet long and quite entire; the other is a little mutilated. In the farm of Altrye, near the top of a hill, there is a trench which seems to have been dug, capable of containing about 100 people. A person concealed in this trench can see to a considerable distance, without being observed; and the Whigs or Cameronians, as they are usually styled, are said to have frequently made use of it during the time of the persecution in Scotland, both as a place of refuge and of observation. Hence it obtained the name of the Whig Hole, which it bears to this day. At Benbreck and Manquhill, two contiguous farms, are the remains of buildings, which are said to have been the residence of an ancient branch of the noble family of Galloway.

At Earlston there are the remains of a stately residence, in the form of a lofty square tower, which has its compeers in many parts of the country, and bears date over the door 1655, with the initials "W. G. and. M. H.;" supposed to be those of a former proprietor of name Gordon. With some repair and expense it might be made inhabitable, a strong oaken roof being in good repair. It is situated near the river Ken, and surrounded by a lawn and extensive plantation of oak trees. "Earlston Linn" is an object of curiosity, and the water of the Ken falling over the rocks and then boiling up in the deep pools beneath, is heard at a distance. It is a barrier to the ascent of the salmon, large numbers falling an easy prey to fishermen with bag-nets.

*Modern Buildings.*—The church and manse are situated within a mile of the southern boundary, and contiguous is a village, commonly known by the name of the Clachan, though its proper name is St John's Town of Dalry: from its modernized appearance, with its white-washed and slated houses, and neat gardens, it is entitled more to the latter than the former appellation. Here the inhabitants are numerous compared with the rural population. The accommodation afforded to travellers is but limited. There is a post office, and coaches pass through the village daily, between Ayr and Kirkcudbright. The licensed public houses in the village are six in number.

*Proprietors, &c.*—The ancient valuation of the parish is L.7137,

6s. 8d. Scots, and the real rent, L.5682, 18s. Sterling. The proprietors are, William Forbes of Callendar, Esq.; — Oswald, Esq. of Auchencruive; John Eden Spalding, Esq. of Holmo; John Shaw Alexander, Esq. of M'Kilstoun; J. Kennedy, Esq. of Knockknalling; John M'Turk, Esq. Knocksting; the Duke of Buccleuch; Lord Glenlee; and the successor of Mr Watt, Kenbank.

### III.—POPULATION.

Amount of population in 1801,	-	832
1811,	-	1061
1821,	-	1151
1831,	-	1246
1841,	-	1215

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—The crops chiefly grown are barley, oats, turnips, potatoes, and some rye. In proportion to the extent of the parish, which is pastoral, the cultivated land is small, though increasing. Surface drains are made to a considerable extent, and are found to benefit the pasture, and where drains are put in meadows the hay is improved as well as increased. Limeworks are from twenty to thirty miles distant. The roads are now generally improved and much extended throughout the parish. Breeding and rearing sheep and black-cattle are chiefly attended to, but there is little or no feeding to fat. The fences are all made of stone, and dikers and road-makers are numerous. The farm-houses have been generally renewed of late years, and chiefly slated. The climate is salubrious and snow soon disappears from the hills.

*Fuel.*—There are no coal works, nor has coal been discovered in the parish. It is carted from the Dalmellington coal pits, from fifteen to twenty miles distant. Peat is a common article of fuel in the parish, but the mosses of the best quality are nearly exhausted.

### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The stipend is fifteen chalders, meal and barley in equal halves, L.9, 7s. 10d. money out of the teinds of the parish of Carsphairn, and L.8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. Extent of the glebe, 13 acres. The manse was rebuilt in 1828, at the cost of upwards of L. 1000, and in 1831 the church was also rebuilt, at an expense of about L.1400 Sterling. Six hundred of the population are attached to the Established Church, and about 110 to the Dissenters.

The Rev. Alexander M'Gowan was minister of the parish for the period of 43 years, and died at the age of 81 in 1826. He

was succeeded by the Rev. William Anderson, who died 29th December 1835, and his successor is the present incumbent.

*Education.*—The parochial school salary is the maximum, L.51, 6s. 6d., divided between two teachers, one at Smeaton Bridge and another at Corseglass, with school-rooms and other apartments in houses recently built for them. The number of scholars at Smeaton Bridge is 30, and at Corseglass 12. There is another school, viz. the Dalry Free Grammar School, erected in 1658, for educating poor scholars for the university. It is attended by about 120 pupils. The endowment consists of the interest of a mortified sum of L.970, 17s. 6d., ten acres of land, and a dwelling-house and school-room. School fees in certain cases are paid by the pupils at the first two, at the rate of 2s. per quarter, but none at the Free School.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of poor of all classes is 50. Average yearly amount of church collections for their behoof, L.11; of mortcloth dues, &c. L. 1, 3s.; of assessment, L.210.

*September 1844.*