

PARISH OF TWYNHOLM.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT, SYNOD OF GALLOWAY.

THE REV. JOHN GORDON, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name, &c.—THE present parish of Twynholm was formed by the union of the two parishes of Twynholm and Kirkchrist. The origin of the name of the latter of these parishes is obvious. The meaning of the former name is not so certain. According to Chalmers, the name Twynholm, as now spelled, is a corruption of Twynham, or Twynhame, and this name is derived from the British word Twyn, a *bank* or *hillock*, to which the Saxon

ham, a *dwelling*, has been added. If this etymology can be relied on, the name is sufficiently descriptive of the situation of the church of Twynholm.

The time when the parishes of Kirkchrist and Twynholm were united, is uncertain. It is known, however, that the union took place in the course of the seventeenth century. Kirkchrist was a separate parish in 1605. In Blaeu's Atlas, published in 1654, Kirkchrist has the symbol of a church put to it, as if it had still been the church of a separate parish. But, in 1684, when Symson wrote his account of Galloway, the church of Kirkchrist had been long in ruins. From these circumstances, it is probable that the union of the parishes took place soon after 1654,—the time when Blaeu's Atlas was published.

Extent.—The parish of Twynholm, as now constituted, is about ten miles long, by nearly three broad, where the length and breadth are the greatest. Its figure is a sort of oblong, widest at the centre, and tapering towards the northern and southern extremities, till it ends almost in a point. It is understood to contain about 16.7 square miles.

Boundaries.—It is bounded on the north by the parishes of Girthon and Balmaghie; on the east, by Tongland and the river Dee, which separates it from the parish of Kirkcudbright; and on the south and west, by Borgue.

Topographical Appearances.—In the northern part of Twynholm the hills rise to a considerable height, and consequently some of the lands in that part of the parish are incapable of cultivation, and used solely for the pasture of sheep and black-cattle; but in the southern part, where it approaches the Dee, there is to be found excellent land, both for cropping and pasturage. Like most of the land in this part of the kingdom, the surface is very irregular, and even in the richest cropping districts, knolls rise up in the middle of the corn fields, and the rocks protrude to the very surface of the ground. The whole parish appears to rest upon a bed of whinstone. We have no sandstone, and granite occurs only in the shape of large boulders; which, however, are to be found in great abundance in many places.

Rivers.—The only rivers worth mentioning are the Dee, and its tributary, the Tarff, forming part of the eastern boundary of the parish; but the account of these rivers will more naturally belong to some of the neighbouring parishes. There is, however, abundance of water throughout the whole of Twynholm, supplied by a number of small streams that fall into these two rivers.

We have also several sheets of water of considerable extent. The largest of these, Loch Whinyoon, lies at the head of Twynholm, on the borders of Girthon. The waters of this loch formerly found a vent by Glengap burn, which carried them into the Tarff; but a tunnel has lately been driven for a considerable way through a hill, which has diverted them into another course, for the purpose of driving the cotton-mills at Gatehouse.

In the former Statistical Account it is said, that, with the exception of some old trees about Compston, there were very few in the parish. It is mentioned, at the same place, that plantations of considerable extent had been made by Lord Daer on the lands belonging to the Earl of Selkirk. These plantations have thriven well, and add greatly to the beauty of that part of the parish in which they are found. Mr M'Millan has also done much to beautify the lands of Barwhinnock, by small plantations tastefully laid down, so as to give both ornament and shelter to a portion of the parish which was formerly bare and exposed.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Eminent Men.—The only man of eminence in literature known to have been connected with Twynholm is Alexander Montgomery, the *Homerus Scoticus* of Dempster, who lived at Compston Castle; and Symson mentions the tradition, that the poem of the "Cherry and the Slae" was written by him at this place, during the reign of James VI.

Historical Events.—The only well authenticated historical event connected with the parish which is worthy of note, is the residence of Edward I. of England for some time within its bounds. On the 17th July 1300, Edward entered Galloway. On the 19th he came to Kirkcudbright, and remained there for about ten days. He then crossed the Dee, and continued for about ten days more at Twynholm, waiting for provisions, which were brought to him by sea. On the 9th of August, he advanced to the Flete. During the time he remained at Twynholm, he made three several offerings at the altar of the chapel there, of 7s. each.*

Antiquities.—There are a number of British forts in the parish of Twynholm. A tumulus was opened near one of these, and there was found a stone-coffin, containing human bones. There was also discovered in it an instrument resembling a hammer, with some coins.

* In preparing a field in the glebe for green crop in the summer of 1842, the labourers found a number of small silver coins of the reign of Edward I., of about the size of a sixpence. Three of these are in the possession of the writer of this account.

It is stated that there was at one time a nunnery in the parish of Kirkchrist; and it is probable that the site must have been in the southern part of that parish, though the exact spot cannot be ascertained. There are still two farms there, bearing the name of High and Low Nunton, and the Nunmill adjoins to them. In the last Statistical Account it is mentioned, that there were the ruins of a castle upon the Nunton. Nothing now remains of these ruins, except some mounds covered with grass; but there are persons still living who remember the old tower, and the stairs by which, when children, they were in the practice of ascending it.

The only ancient building now remaining in the parish is the Castle of Compston, which is in a very ruinous condition, only three sides of the tower being left, and even these threatening to fall.

Land-owners.—There are sixteen proprietors in the parish. The chief of these are, the Earl of Selkirk, patron of the parish, who possesses nearly one-half of the land in value, though not in extent; Mr Maitland of Dundrennan, who resides at Compston, in this parish; and Mr M'Millan of Barwhinnock, who also resides upon his property here.

Mansion Houses.—The houses of Compston and Barwhinnock have been built by the present proprietors. They are substantial and convenient.

Modern Buildings.—The church was built in 1818. It is a neat and plain building, well suited to the parish, and furnishing accommodation for rather more than 400 sitters. The old church was built in 1730, at which time the situation of the church and churchyard were changed,—the former church having stood nearly a quarter of a mile south from the present site.

Parochial Registers.—The parochial records and registers have been by no means regularly kept, and part of them were consumed by fire. The oldest volume in existence contains the records of the kirk-session mixed up with a register of births and marriages from 1693 till 27th October 1703.

In this volume of records there are many entries that are interesting and valuable, as showing the state of the people at that time. From 27th October 1703 till 14th June 1730, there is a blank in the records. From this last date, there are occasional entries till May 21st 1741. There is then another blank, with the exception of a few loose leaves that appear to have been the scrolls of the session-clerk till 4th April 1762, and the entries are continued at intervals till 29th April 1804. The register of

births and marriages commences in 1763, but does not appear to have been very regularly kept.

For four years back, the session records and the register of births, deaths, and marriages have been regularly and correctly kept.

III.—POPULATION.

The population in 1755, was	519
1763,	510
1791,	611
1794,	620
1801,	683
1811,	740
1821,	783
1831,	871
1841,	777
In the winter of 1838-9,	797
Of whom there were males, 378, and females, 419.	

The partial decrease that has taken place since the census of 1831, is to be principally attributed to the circumstance, that, in 1831, extensive improvements were carried on, on the estate of Barwhinnock, and as these are now completed the labourers who were engaged in them have removed with their families.

About 250 of the above-mentioned inhabitants reside in the village of Twynholm, the rest in the country.

Yearly average of births for the last four years,	27	
of deaths,	11	
of marriages,	51	
Of the population there are under 15,		299
upwards of 70,		29

Two families of independent fortune reside within the parish.

There are thirteen proprietors of land of the yearly value of L.50 and upwards. Of these four reside within the parish.

Number of unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers upwards of 50 years of age,	18
unmarried women upwards of 45,	32
families in parish,	157
inhabited houses,	127

There are five fatuous persons, of these, four are paupers, and two of them nearly blind.

Poaching in game, it is to be feared, prevails to a considerable extent, more particularly since steam navigation has been introduced into this quarter, and a ready market is thus found for any game that may be taken.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Of the families in the parish there are about ninety-seven directly dependent on agriculture for their support; fifteen are the families of tradesmen employed chiefly by the agriculturists; and

the remainder, with a few exceptions, are engaged in occupations, in which they owe their employment either to the two families of independent fortune that live in the parish, or to the farmers.

Agriculture.—The parish contains about 8502 acres Scots; of these there are in pasture, about 2600; under wood, about 260; arable, about 5500. The remainder may be supposed to be occupied with roads, water, &c.

Rental.—The total rental of the parish is about L. 6250, allowing a fair value for the land in the possession of the respective proprietors.

The parish is chiefly agricultural, or rather, like most of the land in the district, agricultural and pastoral combined. There is one farm in the northern part of the parish principally stocked with black-faced sheep. The rest of the farms are stocked with black-cattle and white-faced sheep, and in most of them the different fields are brought under tillage in rotation. Besides the land incapable of cultivation, there are two farms containing above 500 acres of rich old pasture kept in perpetual grass, and in many of the farms a field or two is never ploughed for the sake of the old grass.

In the tillage farms, the most usual rotation of crops at present followed is, 1st, oats; 2d, oats; 3d, green crop; 4th, barley or oats; and in some cases, but rarely, wheat with grass seeds; 5th, rye-grass hay mown, and then the land is allowed to lie in pasture for four, five, or six years, according to the number of divisions on the farms. It is now becoming more common than it once was, to omit the second crop of oats after breaking up the field, and to follow the ley crop immediately by a green crop. Turnips are now the favourite green crop, and in a great proportion are eaten off by sheep. On one farm in which this system is pursued, and where the land is mostly sown out with wheat, the rye-grass crop is chiefly eaten by sheep instead of being mown. Lime is much used for improving land, and is generally applied to the green crop land in spring, before the turnips are sown. It is also laid upon old pasture lands to improve the grass.

Live-Stock.—The most common breed of cattle is the Galloway, which is much esteemed for the ease with which it is fattened, and for the quality of the beef. On one extensive farm the short-horned breed has been introduced. It grows to a greater weight than the native breed, and is fit for the shambles at an earlier age. The sheep are chiefly a cross between the Cheviot and the Lei-

chester. It is a common practice for the farmers to buy a large stock of sheep in autumn to eat off their turnip crop, and then to send them to Liverpool by steam, when fat. But besides this, more lambs are bred on the farms, than there were some years ago.

A great deal has been done of late years, both by proprietors and tenants, in draining wet lands; and in many of the farms, much still remains to be done in that way. It is scarcely to be expected, however, that this work will be extensively engaged in, or substantially executed, unless the proprietors come forward to bear a considerable proportion of the expense; and though some of them are ready to render every assistance, others leave the whole work to the tenant, to be executed or not as he may choose.

The duration of leases is very different, varying from three to nineteen years, but whether the leases be long or short, both the proprietors and tenants find it to be for their own interest that the occupants of the farms should be changed as seldom as possible, and hence the removal of an old tenant, if steady and industrious, is of rare occurrence.

The state of the farm buildings is generally good. The inclosures might in many cases be improved. It is only within these few years, that thorn hedges have been introduced, and kept in a proper state of repair by annual dressing. Proprietors are now beginning to see the superiority of such fences to the old stone dikes, are introducing them upon their estates, and, in many instances, undertaking the care of keeping them in repair.

The woods are generally well managed. They are mostly planted with about one-fourth of the plants oak; while larches, spruces, Scotch firs, &c. are put in for nurses. As the plantations grow, the soft woods are carefully thinned out, and the oaks at last remain alone. The woods on the property of Compston show the advantage to be derived from careful management, both in regard to beauty and profit.

Manufacture.—The only manufacture in the parish which is worth mentioning, is a mill for carding and spinning wool in the village of Twynholm. There is also, under the same roof, and belonging to the same owner, a mill for dressing flax; but both these mills are used solely for country purposes. The farmers and others in the neighbourhood bring the wool they have retained for family use, or the flax they may have grown for the same purpose, and have it prepared here for working up at their own houses.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Town.—There is no market-town within the parish. The nearest market is Kirkcudbright, which is about three miles distant from the church; and Gatehouse, distant about six miles in an opposite direction. The principal cattle-market is Castle-douglas, distant nine miles.

The village of Twynholm has increased considerably within these few years. The population is now about 250. As there is no manufacture to give employment to any considerable portion of the inhabitants, it is rather to be regretted that the population should increase. In country villages, where the people depend almost solely on agricultural labour, they are often at a loss for employment whenever their numbers exceed the demand of the immediate neighbourhood.

Means of Communication.—The great road from Carlisle to Portpatrick lies through the centre of the parish, and consequently the mail passes daily to and from Dumfries. The post-town is Kirkcudbright, but it would be a great convenience for the parish if a post-office were established in the village. The turnpike roads are kept in excellent order, and the state of the parish roads is now very respectable. They have been much improved within these few years, principally by the exertions and contributions of the gentlemen connected with the parish.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church is placed in the very centre of the population, and almost in the centre of the parish, with easy access from all parts. The original site of the church was nearly a quarter of a mile distant from the place where the church now stands. The site was changed in 1730. The present church was built in 1818, and is in a good state of repair. The size is sufficient for the accommodation of all the parishioners. The only drawback is, that in the division of the church, portions of the area are assigned in proportion to the valuations of the different heritors, not in proportion to the accommodation they require. Hence, while more room than is needed is allotted to one property, there are other properties left with very insufficient accommodation, and there is almost no provision made for the village population. The church affords accommodation for about 410 sitters. All the sittings are allocated.

The manse was built in 1835-6, and is a large and convenient house. The glebe is large, containing about 28 acres Scots. It was obtained by an excambion with Lord Selkirk, the patron and

principal heritor for the two glebes of Twynholm and Kirkchrist, about seventy years ago.

The stipend consists of 97 bolls, 2 firlots, 2 pecks, 3½ lippies of oatmeal, and the same quantity of barley, with L. 55, 8s. 4d. in money, derived from lands where the teinds are exhausted, and including L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. The average amount of the stipend for the last five years has been about L. 226, 0s. 11d. besides the above L. 8, 6s. 8d.

There is no other place of worship of any description within the parish besides the parish church.

Number of families attending the Established Church, 145; Roman Catholics, 7; other denominations, 5; total, 157. Individuals belonging to the Established Church, 734; Roman Catholics, 34; other denominations, 29; total, 797. The Roman Catholics are mostly of Irish descent. They and the Seceders attend their respective places of worship in Kirkcudbright.

Divine service is well attended by the greater number of the parishioners. There are, however, some who are careless of divine ordinances, and who neglect to train their children in church-going habits. This is partly to be ascribed to the unfortunate circumstance, that they have no sittings in church which they can call their own; but there is also a disinclination to attend. The average number of communicants for some years past has been 300.

Education.—There are at present three schools in the parish. The parochial school is situated close by the church, and in it all the ordinary branches are taught, besides mathematics, Latin, and French to those who choose. The higher branches of learning are, however, seldom in demand. There is a female school at the Doon, in the south end of the parish. The school-house at the Doon was built, and a salary is allowed to the teacher by the Noble family of St Mary's Isle, who also take a deep interest in the prosperity of the school, and pay it frequent visits. The parochial schoolmaster has the maximum salary, and his fees may amount to from L. 12 to L. 15 a-year. A Sabbath school has been in operation for four years, and much benefit has been derived from it. The average attendance at present is about 50. Several of the children of Roman Catholic families attend, and seem to take as much interest in the religious instruction, as the children of Protestants.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid for some years back has been about 20.

besides 3 fatuous individuals who receive aid from a voluntary assessment of L.24 made by the heritors. To meet the demands thus occasioned, there are collections in church averaging L.35; regular donations from non-resident heritors, L.6, 1s.; interest of L.60 in bank, about L.1, 10s.; Do. of L.40 in private hands L.1, 8s.; total, L.43, 19s. There are, besides these, occasional donations from heritors and others connected with the parish, and donations made to the kirk-session on the occasion of proclamations. It is much to be feared, that, unless the burden be diminished by some means, the funds in the hands of the kirk-session will be exhausted, and then recourse must be had to a legal assessment. A voluntary assessment of L.20 was made by the heritors in the spring of 1839, to make up a deficiency which had accumulated in the course of the four preceding years, and thus to prevent the funds in the hands of the kirk-session being touched in the meantime.*

Inns.—There are only two inns in the parish; one in the village, on the great road between Carlisle and Portpatrick, and the other at the ferry opposite to Kirkcudbright. Both are necessary; but the number should not be increased.†

Fuel.—The fuel used is almost solely coal from Cumberland, which is brought to Tongland harbour, within two miles of the centre of the parish. For some time back, individuals have sent or gone to Dalmellington for Scotch coal.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The system of agriculture has been much improved since the time when the last Statistical Account was written, and improvements are still in progress. The rental has consequently been greatly increased. In 1794, the rental was L.2960. It now amounts to about L.6250, being more than double the former amount.

At that time there were only a few old trees about Compston, and the plantations along the Dee had been newly made. These plantations have now grown to be both profitable and ornamental, and a good deal has been planted in other parts of the parish. It would be of advantage, and would add greatly to the beauty of the scenery, were the plantations to be extended still farther. In many

* For some years back, the heritors have found it necessary to raise a voluntary assessment annually to meet the deficiencies occasioned by increased demands.

† Since the above was written another public-house has been established in the village, and though the person who keeps it is of a respectable character, still the evils anticipated have arisen from its establishment.

parts of the parish, still farther improvements might be made by draining, &c., which would increase the value of the land, and give occupation to the poor for a time. The introduction of steam navigation into the Dee has been of advantage to Twynholm, by opening up the Liverpool market for sheep and fat cattle. In consequence of this, the turnip husbandry has been greatly extended, and it might be extended still farther with advantage to the tenant and to the land.

It is desirable in a parish situated like Twynholm, that proprietors should not grant feus, as when houses are built they will be occupied, and thus there is introduced a population for which there is no employment. The evils arising from the introduction of such a population are obvious.

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