PARISH OF KEIR.

PRESBYTERY OF PENPONT, SYNOD OF DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY.

THE REV. WILLIAM MENZIES, MINISTER.

I.—Topography and Natural History.

Name, Boundaries, &c.—This parish forms the south-west side of the central basin of the Nith, which comprehends great part of the parishes of Closeburn, Morton, Durisdeer, Penpont, and Tynron. It derives its name either from some fortress, of the existence and history of which all traces have now disappeared, *Caer*, an old British word, signifying a fort;* or, according to the somewhat fanciful conjecture of Mr Rae in his History of the parish, from the colour of its grounds,—the word Keir signifying black or brown. This colour, however, which seems formerly to have been in a certain degree distinctive of the parish, is gradually yielding to plantation and extended culture. The extreme length of the parish, from north-west to south-east, is about 7½ miles, and its extreme breadth 2½; but in much of its length it is so narrow that the surface does not exceed 11 square miles.

The ridge of Keir hill separates the parish from Glencairn on the south-west; and everywhere else streams form its boundaries. Indeed, it may be said to consist of the slopes from that hill down to some stream. From Tynron, on the west, it is separated by the waters of a small burn and the Shinnel; from Penpont on the north, by the Scar after its junction with the Shinnel; from Closeburn on the north-east by the Scar and Nith; and from Dunscore on the south by the Allanton burn.

The high land of the parish consists of the long ridge called the Keir hill, and some small branches at both ends of it. This ridge is about four miles long. Its highest point bears the name of the Waugh hill. Connected with it at its northern extremity is Capenoch hill; and to the east of its southern extremity lie the short parallel ridges of Kilbride and Blackwood. From all these heights there are most beautiful and extensive views,—so many as

* Close by a farm house, now called Nether Keir, a tower once stood.

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eight or ten parish churches being seen from some points. Blackwood hill, in particular, is noted for commanding all the windings of the Nith, through the rich holms of its central and lower basins, from Drumlanrig to the Solway, the view being terminated to the north by the central chain of the lowlands, and to the south by the mountains of Cumberland.

Adjacent to the Shinnel, Scar, and Nith, are about 300 acres of rich holm land. This is separated by a steep wooded bank from the table-land of the parish, which stretches to the foot of the hills, and becomes gradually narrower and more elevated towards the south-east, till it merges into the slope of the hill of Kilbride. Blackwood hill dips at once into the Nith. The height of the hills has not been ascertained by actual measurement. Aldgirth Bridge is about 50 feet above the level of high water at Dumfries; and the table-land may be from 100 to 150 more.

Prognostics of Weather, &c.—Springs are observed after long-continued drought to rise before rains. Sea gulls appear in unusual numbers before a storm. In clear weather, when the Lowthers to the north, and Queensberry to the north-east, assume a very indistinct outline, resembling a piece of printing on which the types have been shifted, rain may be expected, and in frost thaw. In cloudy weather, a reddish or brassy glare in the morning in that part of the horizon which appears in the south-east, between Blackwood and the heights of Closeburn, when it decreases, portends rain; when it increases, fair weather.

The temperature of the atmosphere is extremely mild. But the air is generally loaded with moisture, as is proved by the rapidity with which the surface of the earth, or fine gravel, becomes covered over with mosses. The noxious effects of this dampness are in a considerable degree counteracted by the porousness of the soil, and by very extensive draining for the improvement of the numerous bogs or small patches of meadow land, with which the whole surface of the parish is studded. It is probably owing to the latter circumstance that the slow nervous fevers, rheumatisms, and asthmatic disorders, which are stated by Mr Wallace in the former Statistical Account to have been very prevalent, are by no means so at present. Consumption is the most frequent and deadly disease; and stomach complaints, originating in poor diet, are common.

Hydrography.—The whole parish abounds in springs: but none of them are known to possess any remarkable property, though in some the presence of mineral substances is indicated both by taste

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and smell. The only loch of any consequence lies on the border of the parish, between Blackwood and Halliday hills. It is fast filling up. A part of it now yields an abundant crop of meadow hay, and it might all be drained, and the land highly improved, were it not for a servitude held over it by Allanton mill for supplying it with water: the burn which drives the mill flowing through it. Another to the north-west, now nearly filled up, seems to be the loch alluded to in the Macfarlane MSS. "Here is a deep loch, called the Loch of Kilbread, in a place pertaining to the Laird of Lag, but the water is not reputed medicinal." Keir hill gives birth to a great number of burns which intersect the table land of the parish. None of them have formed any deep ravine, except the Barndennoch burn below Barjarg. This ravine is covered with fine trees: pleasure walks have been cut through it; and it possesses a great attraction in a singularly beautiful waterfall. The hill of Blackwood is the great barrier which seems at some remote period to have pent up the waters of the Nith, so as to form a lake of great dimensions in the basin above. A considerable extent of alluvial land, nearly at the same level, about thirty feet above the present holms in the parishes of Keir, Penpont, and Closeburn, bear testimony to its existence.

Geology, &c.—The parish of Keir, as is the case with most of the upper part of Dumfries-shire, is chiefly composed of greywacke, which exhibits considerable variety in its characters, the component parts being in many cases very large, while in others they are so minute that the mass has a very homogeneous aspect, and bears a considerable resemblance to a trap rock.

In some parts, however, newer rocks occur, and those are principally limestone and sandstone.

The limestone is generally of a reddish colour, owing to a considerable admixture of iron, and contains numerous small cavities filled with crystals of calcareous spar. A few petrifactions are occasionally met with.

The principal localities of the limestone are at Barjarg and Porterstown, and in both of these places it is regularly quarried. The Barjarg limestone has been found by analysis to contain about fifty-four per cent. of carbonate of lime, and thirty-six per cent. of carbonate of magnesia. The limestone of Porterstown has not as yet been regularly analyzed, but appears to be much the same as the other, though it probably contains a larger portion of foreign matters.

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According to Mr Menteath (Edin. New Phil. Journal, Vol. v. p. 45,) the Barjarg limestone appears to be a continuation of the great bed of limestone at Closeburn on the opposite side of the Nith, although their connection cannot be distinctly traced, owing to a dislocation of the strata. Their chemical composition is, however, almost precisely the same; but at Closeburn there is a lower stratum of limestone which contains no magnesia, and is nearly pure carbonate of lime. This stratum has not as yet been found at Barjarg, which is probably owing to the quarry not having been worked to a sufficient depth.

The strata at Barjarg dip towards the north-east under a small angle, while at Porterstown the dip is more towards the east.

Sandstone occurs, lying above the limestone, and conformably with it, in both these quarries. At Barjarg there is a bed of hard red sandstone, 12 feet thick, under the limestone. At Porterstown the sandstone at the upper part is of a fine texture and whitish colour. This, as it approaches the limestone, becomes much mixed with mica, and acquires a slaty structure. At Waterside, sandstone occurs, accompanied with a variety of slate clay; and the appearances were such as to induce the proprietor to bore for coal some years since, but the attempt proved unsuccessful.

From the imperfect developement of the limestone and sandstone, it is difficult to determine precisely the formation to which they belong. But it appears probable that they may be referred to the older part of the secondary series, and possibly to the lower part of the coal formation. Judging, however, from the general geological phenomena exhibited in this parish, we should be inclined to give it as our opinion that there is but little probability of coal being discovered, or at least, of its being found in such quantity as to repay the expense of working it.

The sandstone formation is entirely covered with alluvial matter to the depth of from 10 to 50 feet, consisting of gravel, sand, clay, &c. with masses, large and small, of all the different rocks, but principally greywacke. Occasionally pieces of coal and granite are found. Peat occupies some hollows containing oak and fir of large dimensions. The soil of the hills which rests on the greywacke is generally a rich loam, but full of stones. Much of the rock is entirely uncovered. In other places large loose masses of it impede the cultivation of a deep soil. In some cases these have been broken up and removed at very great expense; and so rich is the virgin soil, that above 100 Winchester bushels of oats have

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been reaped on a single acre. The soil of the table-land is gravelly or sandy; in some rare instances, approaching to clayey, and very stony. From the nature and depth of the alluvium on which it rests, it is much drier than the soil of the hills, and more to be depended on for a crop. It is so well adapted for barley, that that grain often attains the weight of 55 and sometimes of 58 lbs. per imperial bushel.

Two lime-works are in active operation—one on the estate of Barjarg, the other on Porterstown. The lime is of a scorching quality, but for building and for manuring some kinds of land, it is frequently preferred to the milder lime of Closeburn.

Zoology.—In a small loch, a quarter of a mile north-west of the church, leeches are found. They are used in the neighbourhood, and sometimes sold. The kingfisher is often seen on the banks of the Scar. Foumarts are extremely abundant. Salmon begin to run up the rivers to spawn in the middle of November.

*Botany.**—According to Mr Rae, in the manse garden there was "a fine stock of *Bryonia alba*. But I know not if it be there now; for the late Homer Grierson, chirurgeon-apothecary in Dumfries, told me that he got of the roots of it several times for making that drug called *Fæcula bryoniæ*." The juice of *Veronica beccabunga*, called *wallink*, is much used for the diseases of infants.

Much natural wood, consisting of oak, ash, birch, and alder, intersects and adorns the lower grounds; and very extensive plantations have been formed of larch, fir, oak, and ash, all of which thrive well and promise to become very valuable. The sycamore grows with great rapidity. The most remarkable tree is the oak at Barjarg, in old title-deeds called the royal, the stag, or the blind oak. Mr Rae says it was called the deaf oak, "because if a person near it called to one on the other side he could not hear him." By a joiner's measurement it contains 520 feet of useful wood in the stem, and about 150 more in the branches. Others have calculated it, after a very careful measurement, when all the wood was taken into account, at above 800. Its stem is 68 feet high, and since some decayed branches were lopped off, it is growing with great luxuriance.

A silver fir, at the back of Barjarg House, brought upon carriages from Tinwald when of considerable size, is now 91 feet

* No very rare plants, except the *Rhamnus frangula*, have been found in the parish; but in the MS. of this Account will be found a list of those which are the least common.

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high. In 1810 it measured, at 4½ feet from the ground, 9 feet 2 inches. It now measures 9 feet 8. The lower branches drooping to the ground form a large tent. Of the six beautiful larches planted by Lord Tinwald, the largest now measures, at 4½ feet high, 8 feet 10 inches. In 1796, when sixty-five years old, it contained 74 feet of timber—it now contains 190.

II.—Civil History.

An account of the parish will be found in Macfarlane's MS., preserved in the Advocates' Library. There are also in the library of Barjarg, Notes for the History of the county of Dumfries, collected by the late F. H. Arundell, Esq. containing some notices of its history.

"This paroch was anciently a pendicle of the Abbacy of Holywood, or (as some say) a viccaradge belonging to the paroch of Carlavrock, which was a parsonage belonging to the said abbacy, and so had at least a mediate dependence upon it. After the Reformation from Popery, the fews which us'd to be paid to the church, were gifted to the Earl of Morton; but he having disoblig'd the Soveraign, they were afterwards disponed to the Earl of Nithsdale."—*Rae's History, MS.*

"Kire of old, a pendicle of the abbacy and part of the parish of Holywood, and since the Reformation served by a substitute who supplied both places in the absence of the minister, but lately divided from it and erected into a parish by itself, and afterwards annexed to the presbytery of Penpont."—*Macfarlane MS.*

"It is not taxed in Bagimont's Roll, and therefore must have belonged to some monastery."

"The estate and baillery of Porterstoun was a separate jurisdiction till their final abolition, which the Douglases of Drumlanrig had acquired in this parish."

"Barndennoch is conjectured by Hornby to have been the Carbantorizum of Ptolemy."—*Pennant's Tour.*

Land-owners.—The heritors of the parish are the patron, the Duke of Buccleuch; Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick, Bart. of Closeburn; James Hoggan, Esq. of Waterside; Godolphin Hunter Arundell, Esq. of Barjarg, now a minor; and William Copland, Esq. of Blackwood.

"The chief heritor of the parish was the Earl of Nithsdale till 1702, when James Duke of Queensberry purchased the barony of Keir from William Earl of Nithsdale."

Family of Kirkpatrick of Closeburn.—Various purchases have

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since that time increased the property which the Duke of Buccleuch now holds in three large divisions, separating the possessions of the four other heritors, and forming nearly half the surface of the parish. Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick, Bart. of Closeburn, possesses the estate of Capenoch. It came into his family by the marriage of his grandfather with Susanna, daughter and heiress of James Grierson. This most ancient and distinguished family once possessed not only the estate of Closeburn, but a most extensive property in other parts of Nithsdale and in Annandale. Robert-Muir, now containing the Wanlockhead mines, belonged to them, and also the barony of Ross. Their earliest charter was granted by Alexander, King of Scots, in the eighteenth year of his reign, to Ivon Kirkpatrick, at which time they were a family of note. The part which Roger Kirkpatrick took in the death of the Red Comyn at Dumfries, February 10, 1306, is well known. "I'll mak sicker," the expression he used on that occasion, is still the family legend. From this time they held many of the highest offices of trust and honour, and added greatly to their possessions. In 1438, Thomas Kirkpatrick of Closeburn was one of the conservators of the truce with England. Sir James, the father of the present representative of the family, before he sold the estate of Closeburn, had opened the lime-works both on Closeburn and Keir, and was thus the originator of those improvements in agriculture which have since advanced so rapidly in this neighbourhood.

The grandfather of the present proprietor of Waterside purchased the property from a family of the name of Orr, one of whom, Alexander Orr, minister of Hoddam, had in 1725 married Agnes Dalrymple of Waterside, one of the family who had long possessed it.

Barjarg was in 1587 given by the Earl of Morton to Thomas Grierson, along with Penfillan and Penmurtie, which now belong to the Duke of Buccleuch. Mr C. Areskine, advocate, afterwards Lord Advocate and Lord Tinwald, married the heiress of this family and acquired the estate. Dr Hunter, Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, purchased it and left it to his son, W. F. Hunter, who assumed the name of Arundell. This gentleman, when he died in 1827, had made great progress in his preparations for a work on the history of the county.

Blackwood was purchased from the Lady Indergellie by William Copland, Esq. of Colliston, an ancestor of the present pro-

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prietor. The Griersons, to whom a great part of the parish at one time belonged, were of the family of Lag.

Parochial Registers.—The parochial register of baptisms, commences in April 1722, and has been kept to the present time with considerable regularity; that of marriages and deaths from 1721 till 1791, and since 1826; session records, collections, and disbursements of poors' money, since 1692.

Antiquities.—A chapel is reported to have stood on Kilbride hill; and a cottage still remains, with walls about three feet thick, which is said to have been *the manse.* The position of the chapel is assigned to a spot on which the present farmer declares that he has often laid bare with the plough a piece of pavement composed of small stones, all of a size. A neighbouring patch of ground, on which the crops are always too luxuriant, is pointed out as the churchyard. A person lately dead used to tell that he had assisted in removing some of the grave-stones, and in collecting and burying scattered human bones.

Close to where the parish church now is, on the south-east side, stood an upright stone, six feet high, surrounded by three or four flat ones. It had no inscription, and bore the name of "The Grey stane." At the head of the ravine, formed by the Glen Lacht, Cleugh House, or Barndennoch burn, lies a large stone, called "The Siller stane," near which were found several stone axes. Some persons once attempted to split it with gunpowder, but at the first *blast* so dreadful a storm came on that they fled in terror! It is a boulder stone, of a highly crystalline texture, and principally composed of quartz and felspar. The piece which was blown off emits a strong ringing sound when struck or trod on. At a mill which once existed near it, the laird of Glen Lacht paid no multure, because the water came from his property. A stone, with the initials of James Renwick, on the ridge of Keir hill, above Staigholes, commemorates the place where he used to preach during the times of persecution. A small mound on the glebe is pointed out as the spot where the plague was buried. On the "Court Know" the neighbouring magistrates held a court.

Modern Buildings.—These are Capenoch, Barjarg, and Blackwood Houses. There is a mill for grain. The common materials for building are the whinstone of the hills, and the red sandstone from Gateloch Bridge, four to six miles off. This latter stone is so extremely pervious to water, that it requires to be painted or tarred. Many of the cottages are roofed with it. The rest are thatched.

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The sandstone of the parish having generally a deep cover is little used, except what is quarried along with the lime. The church was built from a quarry on Capenoch.

III.—Population.

According to the Macfarlane MSS. there were in 1728, 500 examinable persons in the parish, which by the usual rules would give a population of 666. Dr Webster's report gives 495. In 1778, Mr Wallace found it to be only about 300. At the date of the last Statistical Account, it had risen to 520. In 1811, it was 993; in 1821, it was 987; in 1831, 1804. The lime-works and the great improvements in agriculture, especially in fencing, draining, and bringing waste land under tillage, have been the principal causes of the increase of population. 206 persons reside in villages; 878 in the country.

For the last seven years the average of births has been 28
marriages, ... 7
funerals, ... 17

Of individuals or families of independent fortune there reside in the parish in summer 5, in winter 3. The proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards are the five heritors.

Of unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers, upwards of 50 years of age, there are 23
women upwards of 45, ... 43
The number of families is 212. The average number of children to a marriage is 4

There are of fatuous persons, 2; insane, 1; deaf and dumb, 2.

IV.—Industry.

Agriculture and Rural Economy.—The arable land of the parish amounts to 2700 acres Scotch statute measure; meadow land about 600; pasture, 2096. Very little more is capable of being cultivated with profit. There are 538 acres of wood. The indigenous trees are oak, ash, birch, and alder, and more sparingly elm, gean, holly, willow, and crab. The planted trees are larch, Scotch, spruce, and silver firs, ash, sycamore, oak, beech, elm, and more sparingly horse-chestnut, poplars of various kinds, laburnum, (*Cytisus laburnum*, and *Cytisus alpinus*,) and birch. The greater part of the woods are well managed, but many of the plantations have not yet reached the productive state.

Rent of Land.—The average rent of arable land per Scotch statute acre is L. 1, 5s.; rent of grazing on hill-pasture, ox, L. 1; sheep, 4s; low ground, milch cow, L.4; bullock, L. 2, 10s.; sheep, 10s.

Rate of Labour, &c.—Ploughman, with bed and board, L. 12 per annum; woman servant, with ditto, L. 5. Day labourers, 1s. 6d. per day; women, 10d; joiner and mason, 2s. 6d.; tailor with food,

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1s. 3d. Price of articles of raw produce, potatoes per cwt. 1s.; butter per stone imperial, 9s. 4d.; skim milk cheese, ditto, 3s. 6d.

Live-Stock, &c.—There is nothing remarkable in the stock reared. The sheep on the hills are the black-faced, on the low ground *mugs*. The cattle are generally the Galloway breed. A few Ayrshire cows have been introduced. The mode of husbandry is a six years' rotation; 1*st* year, white crop, oats; 2*d*, potatoes, or turnip fed by sheep or raised for home feeding; 3*d*, barley or rarely wheat; 4*th*, hay; 5*th* and 6*th*, pasture. The practice of leaving some of the fallow naked is fast falling into disuse since the introduction of bone manure. It was common very lately to have two white crops, wheat and barley, after fallow. Landlords are now restricting their tenants to one. Improvements might be made in a more thorough cleaning of the land, a more careful selection of seed, in sheltering some farms by plantations, and in buying up the remaining multures.

A great extent of waste land has been reclaimed, so that double the quantity is now under cultivation since Mr Wallace's Account in 1778, and the sheep walks are now confined to the wild and rocky summits of the hills. The great difficulties which lay in the way of these improvements, were the draining of boggy land, and the removal of great quantities of large stones. No irrigation of importance has been attempted. The embankments along the rivers are kept in the best state, and the bed of the Scar has lately been altered so as to confine its waters to one channel, instead of allowing them to wind through the adjacent holms of Closeburn, and injure much valuable land.

The ordinary duration of leases is fifteen or nineteen years. From the circumstance of the year's crop belonging to the tenant who leaves a farm, and the new tenant having frequently to pay a whole year's rent before he reaps a crop, a large capital is required. But the leases are favourable to the tenant. Farm-buildings and enclosures are generally in a good state. On the Duke's farms they are almost all new, handsome, and commodious.

Quarries.—In the two lime quarries, the cover is very great, and the superincumbent strata so little tenacious, that it requires all to be removed. The rock is consequently worked at very great expense. The burning of it also is very costly, as all the fuel is brought from Sanquhar, a distance of fifteen miles. One bushel of coal is required for two and a-half of lime. The latter is sold at 6d. per Winchester bushel.

Fisheries.—In former periods salmon were so abundant in those

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parts of the Nith and of the Scar which bound the parish, that it was no unusual circumstance with a net to fill a common cart twice in a few hours after a flood. But so destructive have been the effects of poaching in close time, that a tenant of the fishery where this used to happen, found himself a loser, while paying a rent of L. 1, 10s., and lately gave up his tack.

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

Grain with straw,	L. 5450
Green crop,	1827
Hay,	1760
Pasture,	2225
Gardens and orchards, including honey,	150
Woods and plantations,	320
Lime,	3350
Pork,	600
	L. 15682

V.—Parochial Economy.

Market-Towns, &c.—The nearest is Dumfries, eight miles distant from the foot and fifteen from the head of the parish. The villages in the parish are Keir Mill, and Barjarg. There is no post-office; letters being brought by a runner from Thornhill, two miles from the head of the parish. There are eight and a-half miles of turnpike road; seven on the road from Dumfries to Penpont; one on that from Penpont to Glencairn; and a-half on that from Dumfries to Thornhill, from the foot of the parish to Aldgirth bridge, on which the Edinburgh and Glasgow coaches travel.

Five bridges connect the parish with the adjoining ones. They are all in good repair. A suspension bridge of a new construction has lately been erected by the Duke of Buccleuch over the Scar, at the manse, on the parish road to Thornhill. Its span is 110 feet.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church is situated too near the upper end of the parish, being only a mile and a quarter from Penpont, and six miles from the lower extremity. It was built in 1814, and is in good repair. It accommodates 440 persons. There are no free sittings; the heritors assigning to their tenantry the space falling to their share over and above their own family seats. The manse was built in 1777, but received great additions and repairs in 1828. It contains three sitting-rooms and six bed-rooms, besides a large sunk story;—offering a singular contrast to that described by Mr Rae in 1721. "It is a very handsome house, consisting of four fire-rooms, with cellar and closets, and offices conform." The glebe consists of ten acres, worth about L. 18 per annum. The stipend is fifteen chalders, half meal and half

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barley. Converted into money on an average of the last eight years, the grain stipend paid by the Duke of Buccleuch, of about twelve chalders, amounts to L. 166, 14s. The money stipend by the four other heritors, who have surrendered their teinds, including the usual sum for communion elements, is L. 62, 14s. 4d.; total, L. 229, 8s. 4d. In 1728 the stipend was 650 merks, and three chalders of victual, two-thirds meal, one-third bear, besides thirty merks for communion elements.

The heads of 6 families are attached to the Relief; of 8 to the Secession; of 8 to the Reformed Presbytery; of 3 to the Romish church. All the remaining families, amounting to about 187, belong to the Established church, and as many members of the other families have joined it, that part of the population connected with it may be stated at 1000. Divine worship is remarkably well attended. The average number of communicants is about 600. Those belonging to the parish are about 445. The sacrament, as in many of the neighbouring parishes, takes place in the open air. In consequence of its being the latest in the district, and celebrated in a spot of singular beauty and adaptation for the purpose, it is attended by a very great number of people. The most perfect decorum, however, is observed, and, were the weather more generally favourable, few would desire to exchange this "temple built by God" for one "made with hands." The average amount of contributions for religious purposes by subscriptions and collections in church, besides the usual collections for the poor, has for the last six years been L. 16. For the last nine years the average of church collections for the poor has been L. 29, 2s.

Education.—There are two parochial schools, in which are taught Greek and Latin, mensuration and mathematics. The schoolmasters' salaries are L. 25, 13s. 4d. each, and the school fees amount to about L. 30 more. Both school-houses and the house of one of the masters, were built by subscription, the other master's house by the master himself. The heritors have, however, granted a considerable additional and repairs for the upper school-house and school. The expense of education is, for English, 2s. per quarter; do. and writing, 2s. 6d.; do. do. and arithmetic, 3s.; these and all other branches, 5s. The Kildare Street Society's Juvenile Library was lately gifted to the upper school by Mr John M'Millan, now Rector of the Dumfries Academy, and a Sabbath school library has been procured by a collection in church and donations.

Poor.—The average number of persons receiving aid from the

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poors' fund is 10, at an average of 10s. per quarter. Occasional distress is also relieved. At present there are four orphan children belonging to the parish, boarded at L. 3, 10s. per annum. In addition to the quarterly distributions, coals and clothes are given in cases of urgent necessity. The church collections for these purposes amount to L. 29, 2s. on an average of the last nine years; during which time also a legacy of L. 25, left in 1827, by Mr Hunter Arundell of Barjarg, has been expended, and the heritors have twice of late given a voluntary contribution. At an annual *spiel* on the ice, as much is frequently collected from the players and spectators, as to purchase six or eight carts of coals, and twice that quantity when they are driven gratuitously. The good old Scottish love of independence and aversion to come on the poors' roll still exist in considerable force. Great efforts are often made by individuals to prevent themselves and relatives from becoming a burden on the parish. The kirk-session are extremely careful also to discourage all but the most necessitous applicants.

Inns.—There are a small inn, an alehouse, and a dram-shop in the parish.

Fuel.—Coal is brought from Sanquhar, fifteen miles, at 8s. per ten measures, or thirteen cwt. There is not much peat, and the wood is too expensive to burn. The decayed branches of the trees, however, (and the loppings form a considerable item,) are the fuel of some of the cottagers.

Miscellaneous Observations.

Since the date of the last Statistical Account, vast improvements have taken place. The roads have been made, and are now kept in excellent order. All the small lochs and marshes have been drained,—the meadows and arable land doubled,—the rivers embanked,—the sheep are now only half as numerous; but all other farm stock have greatly increased. The people in general, both farmers and cottagers, are much better lodged, their diet is improved, and greater attention is paid to cleanliness and comfort.

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