

PARISH OF KIRKMAHOE.

PRESBYTERY OF DUMFRIES, SYNOD OF DUMFRIES.

THE REV. JOHN WIGHTMAN, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name and Boundaries.—THE name of the parish is of doubtful origin, but perhaps it may signify the church in the valley, or in the plain, near or by the river. Indeed, the Nith is still not far from the church, and has left evident proofs of its having, at some former period, run close by the church walls, and passed through Lochar Moss in its way to the Solway Frith. The parish is bounded by Dumfries on the S. and S. E.; by Holywood on the W.; by Dunscore on the N. W.; by Closeburn on the N.; and by Kirkmichael and Tinwald on the N. E. and E. It is $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, and, at its greatest breadth, it is $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles broad. It contains between 18 and 19 square miles.

Topographical Appearances.—The hills range from N. to S., with peaks pointing eastward, and the exposure is W. and S. W.,—the land rising gradually till it terminates in heights, some of which are 600, and some 670, feet above the level of the sea. Wardlaw (Guard hill) and Auchengeith hill rise 770 feet above the sea level, and have a declivity southward. Our hill streams have in several places formed “hermit-fancied caves” for their Naiads out of the living rock, in the most curious style; and there is a cave at Crofthead of Dalswinton which deserves to be mentioned. Kirkmahoe is entirely an inland parish, but there is a beautiful view of the sea, from the uplands and hills, especially the Watchman’s hill, where in a clear day the Solway is seen in the distance.

Meteorology.—The medium temperature is about 47° and the prevailing winds are the W. and the S. W. We, as well as others, have our prognostics of changes in the weather. Not to mention the signs afforded by Criffel, a high hill which overlooks the estuary of the Nith, we may notice that if, during the day, the

face of nature be remarkably bland and sweet, and, especially, if in the afternoon, a certain sunny softness seem to sleep on the landscape, or if the hamlet's smoke rise in long straight pillars, a very heavy fall of rain is likely to take place before the close of next day. So also at night, when the galaxy is vivid and strongly defined, and the stars are twinkling with a sickly lustre, a similar sequence may be expected.

The splendid meteor, or *Draco volans* of 1783, was distinctly seen and carefully observed by the writer of this account, while it sailed in superb majesty over the town and neighbourhood of Dumfries, with a tremendous length of train, (*longo tractu, a tergo albescente!*) and while it moved equably in a S. E. direction, sinking at last from view towards the mouth of the river Annan, when a rumbling noise was heard as if some huge mass of red-hot iron had there fallen into the sea.

Hydrography.—The river Nith, though it intersects a small corner of the parish at Isle, may perhaps be said rather to form its west boundary than to be one of its streams. We have several streamlets or burns, however, which are generally very romantic and picturesque in their scenery, and abound in trout. In the Duncow or Newlands burn there are three waterfalls, one of which, (the Whitehall or Glencarrick *leap*,) when the stream is swollen with heavy rains, presents a sight peculiarly striking.

Geology.—On the rocky banks of some of our streams, beds or strata of stone are observable, generally dipping to the west. There is a red freestone quarry (wrought with pick and wedges) at Quarrel (Quarry) wood, having its dip in the same direction; and there is at the same place a variety of sandstone impregnated with that variety of red iron ore used by the natives of Southern Africa in painting their bodies and powdering their hair, which has been noticed by geologists. Some white marl has been found in the southern parts of the parish. Near the middle of the parish, in sinking for water, 60 feet of loose watery gravel were found, and beneath the gravel, 12 or 14 feet of very fine sand of a red colour, and soft as brown sugar. The depth of this bed is not known. On the high grounds are often found mossy strata about six inches thick, then a bed of earthy gravel, after that, red *till*, schist, and decomposed slaty rocks. A gravelly soil, inclining much to sand, intermixed with small round stones, is generally found on the *braes* or sloping grounds, while there is on the low lying or *holm* land an alluvial soil intimately mingled with clay, and apparently

resting on water. The banks of the Nith, at the fords, are covered with heaps of small stones of almost every shape and colour. Some of them are curiously marked with straight, some with curved lines, some with spots of various hues, and some are graced with red circles. Many are of a soft and snowy whiteness, and not a few of a creamy paleness. These two last kinds appear to be peculiar to the valley rivers, and are not to be found in our mountain streams,—at least of such fine grain and quality. The strath and the rising ground, also, from the river to the very tops of the distant eminences, are full of pebbles and rolling-stones, evidently smoothed and rounded by attrition; and here and there specimens of farcillite or pudding-stone may be observed, and small stones embodied with larger ones. The Nith, it would appear, at different periods, and by different tracts respectively, has run through all these undulating grounds before it sunk, in the lapse of centuries, to its now lowly bed, or before they rose to their present various heights. But by what instrumental agency was this depression, or this elevation, effected? The fresh water of our streams, and the briny surges of the Solway, may have been at work “in old dusky time,” with the aid of some electric or elastic auxiliaries, (some subterranean fires, or submarine springs?) forming those high and hollow places which now exhibit the appearance of a swelling sea, converted into grass and corn-fields.

Botany.—Under this head there is nothing peculiar to the parish; but it may be mentioned, that we have many plantations, less or more extensive; and we have, in various places, a great number of beautiful trees, some of which stand in social clumps, and others in solitary state, on the lands of Dalswinton, Carnsalloch, Milnhead, Carzield, Kemyshall, Whitehall, Netherhall, Auchencairn, Glenmaid; and in other parts of the parish there are plantations of various sorts of timber; and new plantations are rising on every hand. The prospect is thus finely diversified, and the grounds exhibit a rich and sheltered appearance. At Dalswinton there are many stately Scots elms, some in graceful ranks, and some in no less agreeable confusion, while others stand majestically alone. There are also here fine beeches, some of which measure above twelve feet in circumference at the height of four feet. A noble ash stands here also, measuring 21 feet in circumference, and containing 300 feet of solid timber. In one of the parks there is a gigantic oak, under the protection of whose knotted arms, it has been said that 1000 armed men might

easily stand without jostling one another. There are also some large and stately trees on the estate of Carnsalloch. Two noble files of beeches, planted by the late Alexander Johnston, Esq. and which were among the first hedge-rows in this part of the country, form, when they are in leaf, a fine berceau-canopy over the head of the traveller on the public road, and afford him a pleasant vista on his way to or from Dumfries. Near the mansion-house of Carnsalloch there is a Spanish or sweet chestnut, very remarkable for its size and beauty. At the head of the huge trunk, it branches out into four large arms nearly equal in size, one of which was broken in February 1827 by a high wind, but the other three are almost entire. In August 1826, this tree contained 528 cubic feet of timber. The trunk now (Jan. 8, 1834,) is 28 feet, each of the three remaining branches 11 feet in circumference, and the average diameter of the ground over-canopied by its grandly spreading boughs is 18 paces! Not far from Carnsalloch gate, on the east side of the road, stands a venerable oak, which contains 282 cubic feet of wood. The trunk itself contains 117 feet of solid timber, and is 9 feet 7 inches high, and 25 paces are the average ground which this gnarled dignitary overhangs with his giant arms. It is not yet twenty years since this tree was seriously believed by some otherwise sensible persons to be haunted by a spirit.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Historical Notices.—Four large estates, which in former times were much more extensive than they are now, constituted the principal part of this parish; and a short notice of these will, in some degree, illustrate this head of its statistics.

1. *Dalswinton*, or the Dale of Swinton. We find this estate first in the possession of the Cumins, and afterwards in that of the Stewarts. "In 1250, Sir John Cumin possessed the manor of Dalswinton, and Duncol, or Duncow, and in that year he gave the monks of Melrose a free passage through the lands of these manors to their granges in Nithsdale," (Dunscore?); but, on the accession of Bruce, Dalswinton was granted to Walter Stewart, third son of Sir John Stewart of Jedworth, and it remained in the possession of the Galloway family till 1680, when, with some specified exceptions, the barony of Dalswinton was disposed to the Duke of Queensberry. This estate became afterwards the property of the Maxwells, and about fifty years ago, it was sold by

them to the late enterprising Patrick Miller, Esq. who made many expensive improvements on it. This fine estate, which contains 5132 imperial acres, and is about a third part of the parish, is now the property of James Macalpine Leny, Esq. whose excellent qualities of character have raised him high in public esteem, and secured him the affection of all who have the honour of being acquainted with him. He has tastefully improved upon some of Mr Miller's arrangements,—rendered the approach to the mansion-house much more convenient,—and adorned its precincts with some exquisitely rich and beautiful decorations.

2. *Duncow* or *Duncol*, so called from the round hill or *doon* at the village, and signifying the same thing with cow or colhill. This barony also belonged once to the Cumins. It was forfeited (as well as Dalswinton) on the accession of Bruce, and was bestowed on Robert Boyd. In August 1550, Robert Lord Maxwell was returned to the 20 pound land of Dunkow, in right of his father, of the same name and title. From that time it remained in the possession of the Nithsdale family till about forty years ago, when it was sold to various purchasers, some of whom bought their own farms. So indulgent to their tenantry were the Maxwells of Nithsdale! It was in this village that King James V. spent the night, and where he left his attendants before he paid his angry visit to Sir John Charteris of Amisfield, as related by Grose. Until about thirty years ago, a large stone marked the site of the cottage where the king slept, near the small *doon* called the Chapel-hill.

3. *Milnhead* or *Millhead*. In May 1700, Bertha, spouse of Robert Brown of Bishopton, and heiress of Homer Maxwell of Kilbean, was returned as possessing certain lands, specified in the document, with the 4s. land of Milnhead. This estate was possessed by the family of Brown till, some twenty years ago, the late Miss Winefred Brown left it to Frederick Maxwell, Esq. and other heirs of entail. It contains 1061 acres, and is now in the possession of Henry Maxwell, Esq. one of these heirs, and third son of the late Marmaduke Constable Maxwell, Esq. of Nithsdale, who was one of the best of landlords, and whose sons, three of whom are extensive proprietors, inherit the liberal views of their father.

4. *Carnsalloch*, the "cairn of the willows," as some have supposed, or rather "the cairn of the shallow." In 1550, as appears from a return, August 5th of that year, it was in the possession of Robert Lord Maxwell. He gave it to Homer Maxwell, a younger son;

with Durrisquhin, (now Dalscone,) and a L. 5 property within the liberties of Dumfries, and the estate was possessed by the Maxwell family till it was sold to the late Alexander Johnston, Esq. about the year 1750. It is now in the possession of his son, the learned and accomplished Peter Johnston, Esq. who, at the very advanced age of about eighty years, enjoys entire the faculties of his vigorous and cultivated mind, and is the delight and the ornament of his social and domestic circle.

The Earl of Galloway had formerly a large property in this parish, and there is still a place distinguished by the name of "Garlies;" but the parish is now possessed by a great number of proprietors, of whose estates and families the limits prescribed to this survey preclude a particular description. The proprietors of Dalswinton, Carnsalloch, and Milnhead, possess nearly the half of the parish, the other part belongs to forty different land-owners.

Eminent Men.—Under this head the late Patrick Miller, Esq. of Dalswinton well deserves to be noticed. His ingenuity and perseverance in applying the wonderful power of steam to the purposes of navigation will transmit his name with honour to posterity. Patrick Miller, Esq. his eldest son, has published an elaborate "Narrative of Facts" on his claim to the invention and practice of steam navigation, to which the reader is referred for ample and satisfactory information upon this interesting subject. The present archdeacon of Calcutta, Daniel Corrie, belongs also to this parish; and received his education at the parochial school. His grandfather was tenant of Duncow mill, and his father was curate at Colsterworth in Lincolnshire. The late Luke Frazer, Esq. of Glenmaid, who was so long an able and zealous instructor of youth in the High School of Edinburgh, was born at Auchenrath. Mr Allan Cunningham, well known for his various literary publications, is a native of this parish. So also, I may add, is Mr Andrew Crichton, author of the *Life of Blackadder*, *History of Arabia*, &c. It may be noticed also, that Sir Andrew Halliday, physician, was in early life a candidate for our parish school at Duncow.

Parochial Register.—The earliest date of our parish register, containing baptisms, marriages, discipline, and division of poors' money, is 1725: it has been always kept with considerable care, except during the last incumbency. For a long time the dissenters declined to give their names to be inserted, though they had the offer of registration free of expense. Even now our registers are not entirely full.

Antiquities.—There are several *motes* in this parish, but they are of a circular and British, not of a square and Roman form. In the appendix of Dr Singer's Survey of the county, No. 18, there is notice taken of a Roman road, which is described as having passed through the northern part of this parish, and the remains of forts, barrows, and tumuli, are still to be recognized in several parts of it.—In a shoemaker's garden at Duncow an urn was lately dug up, with something in it like ashes, but it was broken by the spade.—In digging for a foundation to our new church, the workmen found a human skeleton lying in a different direction from that of other dead bodies in our burying-grounds, with its head towards the south, with an axe, very like a common one, and a lamina, apparently of iron or steel, like a sword-blade, deposited by its left side. The axe handle and the bones when touched crumbled into dust, being entirely rotten, and the axe's head, and the sword-like blade, were almost totally consumed with rust,—“*exesa rubigine scabra!*”

Mr Allan Cunningham, who spent his boyish days near the spot where it stood, remembers to have seen the ruins of Cumin's castle at Dalswinton. He says, in a letter to the writer, “when Comyn was slain in Dumfries” (when Bruce had given him the “perilous gash,” and Kirkpatrick “had makit sicker”) “Bruce, it is said, burnt his castle;” and adds, “that a part of the walls was standing in 1792.” They were, he says, 12, and, in one place, 14, feet thick, and “bits of burnt wood” were still clinging to them. He notices the old cow-house of Dalswinton as a great curiosity, and says, that he had seen it entire, with its “heavy stone vault,” its “outer door of wrought iron,” and “its inner door traced with broad iron bars, fastened with iron rivets.”—“Three distinct lines of entrenchment” were seen and carefully traced by Mr Cunningham and his intelligent father, encompassing “the summit of Moloch hill,” above Dalswinton village, when they were measuring the land with a chain. These lines were “composed of earth and stone, forming room for an army to encamp.” He also says, that below, “on the south side of the same hill,” there had been “defences of the same sort on a much smaller scale.”

“The Nith,” Mr Cunningham remarks, “instead of circling the *Scaur* of Ellisland, and running nigh the Isle, directed its course by Bankfoot, and came close to the castle;” and he remembers “a pool near the old house of Dalswinton called Comyn's pool, which

belonged to the old water course, and connected itself with the back water in the Willow isle, by the way of the Lady's meadow. Here Cumin is alleged to have sunk his treasure-chest before he went to Dumfries, leaving it in charge of the water sprite. A net, it is said, was fixed in this pool, to which a small bell in the castle was attached, which rang when a salmon was in the snare!" "The golden pippins and honey pears" which were produced in the orchard, on or near the place once occupied by the notable pool, must not be entirely overlooked. The pippins grew on six remarkable trees: the pears on the same number of trees were no less remarkable, and the fruit, for flavour and sweetness, could not then be "equalled in any other garden of the district."

III.—POPULATION.

The number of parishioners, as far back as the writer can trace it, has never been less than 1000.

In 1755, it was	-	-	-	-	1098
1821,	-	-	-	-	1608
1831,	-	-	-	-	1601
The number of males by the last census was	-	-	-	-	776
of females,	-	-	-	-	825

Upwards of forty persons, old and young, have emigrated to America within the last ten years. About 500 reside in villages, and about 1100 in the other parts of the parish.

1. Number of families in the parish,	-	-	-	838
of families chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	-	152
chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	-	-	102
2. The average number of births yearly is about	-	-	-	50
of deaths,	-	-	-	30
of marriages,	-	-	-	20
3. The number of persons at present under 15 years of age,	-	-	-	600
upwards of 70,	-	-	-	10

There are 4 families who have comparatively large estates; 10 or 12, of even more, who may be said to be "of independent fortune." Twenty-eight landed proprietors receive each L. 50 and upwards of annual rent.

Character and Habits of the People.—The people are generally disposed to cleanliness, with respect to dwelling, furniture, food, and-clothing. They are neat in their dress, and especially in their Sunday attire. Their clean and comfortable appearance, as well as their devout and becoming deportment in the church on the Sabbath day, has often attracted the notice, and received the applause, of strangers. The ordinary food of the people consists of the different preparations of oatmeal, of potatoes, milk, and flesh

meat. Tradesmen, such as masons, joiners, blacksmiths, and tailors, when well employed, live and dress in a very comfortable way. Weavers of all kinds of home-made clothing, who were once a pretty numerous class here, but whose occupation is now almost gone, owing to the introduction of the power loom, have, at least many of them, been obliged to fall into the ranks of farm-labourers, thus diminishing the comforts of both classes. Our people are in general well-informed, sincerely religious, and morally correct. Few of them are ever guilty of gross offences against justice, charity, or temperance.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture and Rural Economy.—This is properly an agricultural parish, and perhaps produces more food for man, according to its extent, than any other parish in the county. The lower part of it has been called “the *trough* of Nith” (which may be *freely* translated *corn-chest* or *granary*.) That river, as viewed from the heights above Dalswinton village, presents the form of an immense corn sickle, with the back of its crescent, or curve, turned to Cowhill, and with its handle stretching up towards Isle and Ellisland, and may suggest to the imagination of the classical spectator the rich harvests which are yearly reaped on its fertile banks. A thousand acres of arable land lie along the river, and about 10,000 acres of the parish are occasionally under the plough. This was the case, at least, not above five or six years ago; but some reckon that there are not many more than 8000 acres now of that description, the ground in some parts being considered as paying better in pasture than in tillage. About 500, or perhaps near 600, acres are in wood, and 400 of these are on the estate of Dalswinton. There are 4000 acres which have never been cultivated; of these, 200 at least might, by the judicious “application of capital, be added to the cultivated land of the parish.” On the remainder, nature seems to have pronounced her veto, and doomed it to continue under perpetual servitude in her own hand. A considerable portion of ground is occupied by single trees, and by trees standing together, to the number of two or three.

Rent of Land.—The average rent is 19s. per acre; the average rent of grazing is L. 3 per ox, if fed in winter with fodder; L. 5 per cow; 12s. per sheep, if winter fed; but a sheep may be pastured for 5s. per annum. The gross rental of the parish is from L. 9000 to L. 10,000 a year.

Rate of Wages.—A man-servant maintained in the family gets from L. 5 to L. 7 in the half year, and a female from L. 2 to L. 3, 3s. The farm-servant, called a *benefit* man, has a cottage and kitchen garden, a pint of skimmed milk per day, 30 cwt. of potatoes, also his fuel led home, and about L. 20 in money. When he maintains himself and his family, he receives from L. 22 to L. 25. A labourer, per day, receives from 1st March to 1st November, 1s. 6d., and for the remainder of the year, 1s. 8d., without victuals. Mowers, without victuals, receive per day from 2s. to 2s. 6d.; and with victuals, 1s. 6d. Joiners get in summer from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per day, and masons the same. Smiths generally contract with farmers at L. 2, 10s. per annum, to keep a plough and the iron work of a pair of horses in good order, finding the iron, as well as performing the work, but when there is no contract, each piece of work is charged separately.

Breeds of Live Stock.—The common breed of sheep is the Cheviot breed, crossed by Leicester rams. About 70 or 80 scores of lambs are annually raised on the hill grounds; and in most of the farms, the calves are sold to the fleshers of Dumfries when about six weeks old, at from 30s. to 40s. each, according to the quality of the veal. It is becoming a practice here to buy Highland draught ewes, and bring them to the lower grounds,—to take the lambs from the ewes, and send them to Liverpool, and to fatten the ewes for the same market.

Husbandry.—The alternate system of husbandry is prevalent with us; viz. oats from lea; fallows of potatoes and turnips, the latter fed off by sheep; wheat or barley, and sown down with grass seeds; one or more years lying in grass, as the subdivisions of the farm will permit. Some tenants prefer a crop of barley after wheat; but this is generally considered as bad management, and the practice is fast falling into disuse. The following order of husbandry has also been obligingly communicated to the writer, and is approved by very competent judges in our parish. For holm land, first year, oats; second year, part potatoes and part turnips, the turnips fed off by sheep; third year, wheat, sown down with grass seeds; fourth year, grass to be cut for hay. For hard land, the two first years, the same order as for holm land; the third year, barley, sown down with grass seeds; the fourth year, grass, part for cutting, and part for pasture. Irrigation is used only to a small extent, but surface draining is much practised, and is found very useful; but by sending off the water from the pastures, our rivulets are pro-

portionally swelled. The Nith sometimes threatens to break into our fine corn-fields, but they are well defended against "the horned flood" by strong and expensive embankments and fences of various forms and materials, constructed and executed with all the skill which science could furnish, and with every auxiliary of art.

The general duration of leases is fifteen years, but some farms are let for nineteen, and some for only seven years. Our proprietors appear to take delight in seeing the dwelling-houses on their respective properties neat and comfortable, and even elegantly commodious, and all their office-houses suitable and substantial. The principal improvements of a general nature are, the feeding of sheep with turnips, which is more practised now in this parish than it was in the whole county thirty years ago; thrashing-machines, introduced by the late Mr Miller of Dalswinton, (who also made us acquainted with the ruta бага); iron ploughs; and the use of bone manure. The most approved plans of husbandry have been eagerly adopted and ardently prosecuted by our agriculturists, who form a numerous and respectable body of the population. It would be difficult to do any thing like justice to those individuals who have reclaimed waste lands, and made the wilderness a corn or grass field, or a green wood; who have thus graced our hills and moors with indelible memorials of their industry and perseverance. The late Patrick Miller, Esq. of Dalswinton; the late William Allan, Esq. of Newlands; James Dinwiddie, Esq. of Whitehall; Joseph Bell, Esq. of Netherhall; Joseph Mitchell, Esq. of Whitestanes; John Morin, Esq. of Carzield, deserve to be particularly noticed. Under the animating auspices of our landlords, the parks and fields in the lower grounds have of late assumed an improved appearance, and cultivation has ascended our heights as far as she could urge her way. The moor-cock, with his frightened covey, fled at the startling sound of fervent industry, and, from his rocky retreats, crowed defiance to the tyrants that would encroach on his wild domain, or, in moody melody, deplored the abridgement of his ancient bounds!

Produce.—The average gross amount and value of raw produce yearly raised in the parish, as nearly as can be ascertained, is as follows:—

Grain of all kinds,	L. 13,500 0 0
Potatoes, turnips, &c. with the gross produce of green crop, hay pasture, and the stock fed thereon,	6,500 0 0
	<hr/>
	L. 20,000 0 0

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Town.—Dumfries is the nearest market-town, and is scarcely two miles distant from the south part of the parish. We have no post-offices; but a runner, or penny-post, to carry letters to and from the town might be useful. A spacious public road runs, almost six miles, in a longitudinal way through the parish. The bridges and fences are kept in good repair.

Ecclesiastical State.—It appears from ancient records, that “David II. granted to the monks of Arbroath the church of St Quintin of Kirkmaho, in the diocese of Glasgow.” This grant, however, seems never to have been effectual, at least as to the patronage, for that “continued to belong to the Stewarts,” who succeeded the Cumins in the barony “of Dalswinton. In 1429, the rectory of Kirkmaho was constituted one of the prebends of the bishoprick of Glasgow, with the consent, however, of Marion Stewart, the heiress of Dalswinton, and of Sir John Forrester, her second husband, and of William Stewart, her son and heir; she and her heirs continued to be patrons of this rectorial prebend.* At the Reformation, the rectory of Kirkmaho was held by John Stewart, the second son of the patron, Sir Alexander Stewart of Garlies. In the seventeenth century, the patronage of Kirkmaho passed, with the barony of Dalswinton, from the Earl of Galloway to the Earl of Queensberry. It continued in the Queensberry family throughout the eighteenth century, and in 1810 passed to the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.” †

The parish church was built twelve years ago, a little farther to the north than the old church, and stands exactly four miles distant from the cross of Dumfries. It is a comely Gothic structure, and, amidst the trees of the churchyard and vicinity, it makes a very graceful appearance. Its situation, however, is far from being convenient for a part of the population. It has no seats peculiarly appropriated to the poor.

The manse was built in 1799, and has had almost no repair hitherto. The glebe contains about eight acres of good land.

The stipend, by the last augmentation, commencing with crop and year 1825, is 16 chalders, half meal half barley, payable in money, according to the highest fiars prices of the county, yielding, upon an average of the last seven years, about L. 275; besides L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements.

* See the original deed in Crawford's *Lives of the Officers of State*.

† *Caledonia*, Vol. iii. pp. 161, 162.

At Quarrelwood there is a dissenting meeting-house belonging to the Cameronian Presbyterians; but, for some years past, divine service has been seldom performed in it, as the hearers have a new chapel in Dumfries, where attendance is more convenient for them. There are 1600 parishioners in Kirkmahoe; and of these perhaps 20 are Cameronians,—20 or 30 more, perhaps, attend different meeting-houses in Dumfries; all the rest profess to attend the parish church, and are in that respect, on the whole, very exemplary. The writer records this circumstance with much and heartfelt satisfaction. The average number of communicants may be 600; and about 30 communicate for the first time at the celebration of the Lord's Supper every summer, on the first Sunday of July.

Education.—There are three schools in this parish, whose masters receive each a part of the parochial salary,—one at the village of Duncow, the master of which school receives an yearly salary of L. 25, 13s. 3d.; another in Dalwinton village, whose salary is L. 17; and there is a third school in a remote corner of the parish, to which is appropriated the yearly sum of L. 8, 0s. 6½d. Besides these there are two or three private schools. Two well-disposed females teach a few young girls to sew and to read. Latin and Greek, and the practical branches of mathematics, are occasionally taught in our schools. The total amount of school fees received at the three parochial schools is probably about L. 120. The accommodation of none of the public teachers is so comfortable as could be wished.

Library.—A parish library was opened in the school-house of Duncow, under the auspices of the present minister, on the 1st day of January 1800, and for some years the concern flourished; but by degrees it languished, and at last expired. Books were so numerous in private houses, and so easily to be gotten from the public libraries of Dumfries, that we allowed this parish light to go out.

The average number of poor on the session-roll is 28. It was 22 fifty years ago. L. 2, on an average, are given yearly to each pauper from the church collections; and L. 2, 10s. or more, when other sources are taken into the account. No other methods have yet been employed to provide for the poor, besides the collections and the interest of our mortified money, amounting to L. 500. Within these last few years, some poor persons have been heard saying, in a bold tone, that “the rich are obliged to maintain the

poor." If absent heritors do not contribute their parts in aiding the parish funds, and if voluntary contributions are not generally and liberally supported, some legal assessment, it is feared, must soon become more general.

Alehouses.—We have four alehouses, where spirits are sold. The half of the number would be sufficient; but it is right to admit, that the houses are kept in an orderly manner.

Fuel.—The fuel generally used is peat and coals; the latter are brought from the collieries at Sanquhar, Kirkconnel, and Mansfield, and also more frequently from the coal-vessels at Dumfries, which import them in large quantities from the coast of Cumberland.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

A very general change has taken place in the condition and aspect of this parish within these last forty years. Property has been much divided, and the purchasers of the divisions have been emulously diligent in improving them. New and neat villas have arisen on every side; polished farms and thriving plantations adorn the prospect; and the eye is delighted with the most tasteful forms of sylvan decoration, and with all the signs of a highly improved style of rural economy.

A survey was made by Mr Smeaton, as far back as 1754, for a canal to commence at the Frith of Solway, and to terminate at the lower end of this parish; and a railway was projected by an able engineer, to stretch from Sanquhar to the middle, at least, of Kirkmahoe. These and such like plans, if executed, no doubt would be attended with great advantage not only to this, but also to the neighbouring parishes. A distillery on a judicious and moderate scale has lately been erected at Glencarrick in this parish, above Duncow, and near Whitehall, on the banks of the romantic rivulet, already noticed as remarkable for its rocky recesses and tiny Niagaras, and is in full and prosperous operation. It furnishes a convenient market for our farm produce and that of the neighbourhood, and also generates a very nutritive and agreeable kind of food for fattening cattle.

January 1834.