

PARISH OF OLD CUMNOCK.

PRESBYTERY OF AYR, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE name Cumnock seems to be compounded of the Celtic words *cōm*, a bosom, and *conoc*, a hill; thus signifying the bosom of the hill; which is strikingly descriptive of the locality, in which the town and church of Cumnock stand. It is now commonly called Old Cumnock, to distinguish it from the parish of New Cumnock, which was disjoined from it upwards of a century ago.

Boundaries, Extent.—The parish is in the middle district of Ayrshire, called Kyle, and is bounded on the west by Ochiltree; on the north and east by Auchinleck; and on the south by New Cumnock. It is of an oblong figure; its length from east to west being 10 miles, and its average breadth from north to south 2 miles.

Topographical Appearances, Soil, and Climate.—The parish is partly flat and partly hilly, so as to present to the eye a very pleasing undulating surface, finely varied and adorned by numerous belts of wood, intersecting it in all directions, and giving a peculiarly rich and cultivated appearance to the entire landscape. The land is lowest on the north side of the parish, and rises gradually towards the west and south sides. There are no hills of any note in the parish; the highest is called Knockdon, and stands on the south-west boundary. There are several very fine patches of holm land, lying along the banks of the river Lugar, some of which are of a light sandy soil, and others of a fine deep loam;—on which wheat of excellent quality is raised. The soil, for the most part, is clayey, having a subsoil of strong till; and on the higher lands, it is mossy. The parish stands at an elevation of several hundred feet above the level of the sea, from which it is sixteen miles distant; while, at the same time, it may be said to be embosomed among the higher lands of the surrounding parishes.

The climate has its full share of the moisture of the western coast; though, perhaps, not so wet on the whole as that of some parishes in the vicinity. It is, however, far from being unhealthy, which is proved by the very rare occurrence of epidemics, and likewise by the number of aged persons in the parish.

Hydrography.—The water of Lugar rises on the east side of the parish, and is formed by the junction of the Glenmore and Bella waters, about two miles above the town of Cumnock. It forms the boundary between Cumnock and Auchinleck, passing the town of Cumnock on the north side, and taking a westerly direction until it flows into the Ayr water at Barskimming: thus running a course of about ten miles. The scenery on the banks of the Lugar is of the most romantic and picturesque description; sometimes bold projecting naked crags overhang its course—at other places, is seen a perpendicular wall of rock, more than a hundred feet in height, rising out of the water,—while again, you are called to admire the deep ravines through which it flows, wooded on both sides from top to bottom; the trees now waving their foliage in the pure stream below, and again intertwining their branches on the heights above. A little above the town, it almost forms a circle, by winding its course nearly round a small hill, called the Moat, which is finely wooded from the top to the bottom on all sides. The high and finely wooded banks, together with the beautiful meanderings of the stream, as seen from this peninsular hill, present an extremely picturesque appearance. There is also another rivulet called the Glasnock water, that intersects the town of Cumnock, and flows into the Lugar, at the lower end of the town. This stream has its source in a lake that lies on the south boundary of the parish. It is worthy of notice, that this lake flows out at both ends. At its southern extremity, it sends its waters into two other small lakes in New Cumnock parish, that flows into the river Nith; and at its northern extremity, it forms the Glasnock water, which, as we have already said, empties itself into the Lugar at Cumnock. From these facts, it is evident that this lake stands on the summit level between Ayrshire and Dumfries-shire; while it also forms an inland link of communication between the friths of Clyde and Solway. And, indeed, from the presence of marine deposits, it seems not absurd to hazard a conjecture, that an arm of the sea, at some remote period, may have occupied the line of water from the Clyde at Ayr to the mouth of the Nith in Solway Frith. For, even as matters at present stand, we can sup-

pose a trout to enter the Ayr water at the town of Ayr, pass from it into the Lugar at Barskimming, then again into the Glasnock at Cumnock, repose itself for a while, after its upward journey in the lake above-mentioned, and afterwards pursue its easy way down the course of the Nith, until it reaches the Solway.

The late Earl of Dumfries at one time proposed making a cut from the river Nith in New Cumnock to the lake above mentioned, in order to have a large supply of water for a factory that he intended to erect on the Glasnock water, and thus to make the Nith send part of its waters into the Clyde, instead of the Solway; but it was never attempted to be executed. The cuts, however, I am told, could easily be made, and at very little expense; but how the people of Dumfries-shire would relish this new order of things, in regard to the direction of their majestic river, I cannot say,—I am afraid they would forbid the bans between the Nith and the Clyde.

Mineralogy.—The parish abounds in limestone, coal, and freestone; and it is also conjectured that ironstone may be found were it sought for. The limestone is of the first quality as a cement, making the best possible binding lime. It is known by the name of Benston lime, and hardens under water into the consistence of stone. Hence, it is highly valuable, and, consequently, much used in the erection of bridges and other buildings that stand under water. It is carried, I believe, to a considerable distance for subaqueous buildings. The direction of the dip is to the south-west. The cover consists of 28 feet of clay and 8 feet of bastard limestone. The strata of limestone are about 7 feet in thickness. The workmen earn about 2s. a day; and the lime is sold at the quarry for 6d. per boll, Winchester measure.

A freestone of a very superior kind is found on the banks of the Lugar of a light blue colour, and which takes a very fine polish in the hands of the mason. There is also a beautiful white freestone, which is held in high repute, as making the very best millstones for grinding barley. It has been sent, I am told, even to America for this purpose.

The whole parish may be said to rest on coal; though, in many places, the seams are troubled and unworkable. It is wrought, at present, on the high lands towards the south-west side of the parish. Two beds of trap or whinstone intervene in sinking for the coal; the one is $11\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick, and the other $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet; the former is 8, and the latter 16 fathoms from the surface. There is a seam

of coal, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick, immediately under the lower bed of whinstone. The direction of the dip is to the north-west, and the average thickness of the seam is about 4 feet. The quality of the coal is good, though sometimes a little sulphurous. A man will put out two tons of coal in the day, and will earn from 3s. to 4s. The lordship is a sixth of the gross out-put; and a fifth part of the coal is left for supports. There are few cross dikes. Some years ago, in sinking for coal, near the banks of the Lugar, a bed of marine shells was found, 14 fathoms from the surface, sunk in strong blue blaize. The shells were of the size of muscles, and were of a bluish-gray colour. A petrified shrub was also found in a bed of freestone, about 26 fathoms from the surface.

Blind coal is also wrought in the same quarter of the parish, though higher up. The field is troubled and irregular, and not very extensive. It is sometimes intersected by cross dikes of free and whinstone. The dip is 8 fathoms, and its direction is to the north-west. The quality is good, and the thickness of the seam is 4 feet. It is used by millers for drying grain on the kiln, and likewise in hot-houses, because it emits no smoke when ignited.

Zoology.—In addition to the common species of the feathered tribe, which we have in great abundance,—grouse, partridges, pheasants, snipes, and wild ducks are also plentiful. Woodcocks likewise visit us annually in considerable numbers. The black-cock has very much increased within these ten years, and is now plentiful, though very shy in coming within the range of the sportsman's fowling-piece. We have also the common horned owl, the screech owl with its gray plumage, and the white owl. The starling has begun to visit us lately, but is as yet a rare bird in this quarter.

The lake already noticed abounds in pike, perches, and eels. There is also plenty of trout in the Lugar; and in former years, salmon used to come up in the end of the season, to spawn, in considerable numbers; but now, few or none are seen, owing, I believe, to a dam that has been made in the river at Ayr.

The caterpillar does not seem to be so abundant, or so destructive in its ravages, here, as in many other parts of the country.

Wood—Plantations.—The parish is well wooded, and the following is a list of some of the trees that are found in it; oak, ash, elm, beech, plane, Scotch fir, spruce, silver fir, Weymouth pine, Balm of Gilead, saugh of many kinds, poplar, mountain ash, yew-tree holly, birch, sweet chestnut, horse chestnut, lime-free, larch, thorn-tree, evergreen oak, crab-tree, Lombardy poplar, scarlet beech,

scarlet maple, scarlet chestnut, Italian maple, scarlet oak, white acacia, Norway maple, snake maple, cedar tree, &c. &c.

Some of these trees measure nearly 300 feet solid, while many of them are above 200 solid feet.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The following account of the ancient history of the parish is taken from Chalmers' Caledonia. Cumnock was of old a rectory, the patronage whereof belonged to the proprietors of the barony of Cumnock. In the reign of David II. the barony of Cumnock, with the patronage of the church, belonged to Patrick Dunbar, the Earl of March, who resigned them in 1368 to his eldest son and heir, George, to whom, at the same time, he resigned the Earldom of March. George, Earl of March, resigned the barony of Cumnock, with the patronage of the church, to David Dunbar, who obtained a charter thereupon from the King in March 1374-5. In the fifteenth century, the rectory of Cumnock was converted into a prebend of the cathedral church of Glasgow, with the consent of the patron, who continued to hold the patronage of the rectory and prebend. After that event, the church of Cumnock was served by a vicar, who had a fixed stipend, and the remainder of the revenues of the church went to the rector, who was a canon or prebendary of Glasgow. There belonged to the church of Cumnock, lands extending to two merk lands of old extent, upon which stands the village of Cumnock. In September 1509, James Dunbar of Cumnock, the proprietor of the barony, and patron of the parish, obtained a charter from James IV. creating the church lands of Cumnock into a free burgh of barony, and granting license to Sir Thomas Campbell, the prebendary of Cumnock, and his successors, to let the lands of his glebe in borough roods for building. In Bagimont's Roll, as it stood in the reign of James V., the rectory of Cumnock, a prebend of Glasgow, was taxed L. 16, being a tenth of its estimated value:

Before the Reformation, there was a chapel on the lands of Borland in this parish, the vestiges whereof are still extant, and the farm on which it stood bears the name of Chapel-house. About the year 1612, the barony of Cumnock, with the patronage of the church, was sold by John Dunbar of Cumnock and Westfield, and, after passing through several hands, it came, in the reign of Charles II., into the possession of the Earl of Dumfries. The barony and the patronage have continued since in that family, and belong to the Marquis of Bute, who, as Earl of Dumfries, is patron

of both the parishes of Old and New Cumnock. In 1650, the extensive parish of Cumnock was divided, and the southern division was formed into a distinct parish called *New Cumnock*, for which a new parish church was built. The northern division, containing the burgh of barony of Cumnock, formed the parish of *Old Cumnock*. The old church remained till 1754, when a new church was built.

Historical Notices.—It is related in the Life of John Welsh, minister of Ayr, that about the year 1600, two travelling merchants, each with a pack of cloth upon a horse, who had been denied an entrance into Ayr, because Mr Welsh assured the magistrates that the plague was in their packs, had, on their being dismissed from Ayr, gone to Cumnock, and there sold their goods. There followed upon this such a plague in the town of Cumnock, that the living, it is said, were hardly able to bury the dead. There are still traditions of this melancholy event to be found among the people; and the place is pointed out where those who died of the plague are reported to have been buried, at a short distance from what was then the churchyard. But I have not heard of any remains of human bodies having been found there.

Eminent Men.—The application of steam to the purposes of navigation, which is brought to such a high degree of perfection among us, owes its original invention to the late Mr James Taylor, who, for many years, superintended the mines on the Dumfries estate in this parish.

Mr Taylor was living in the family of Mr Millar of Dalswinton, in the year 1787, when the latter gentleman made trial, in the Frith of Forth, of a vessel he had constructed with intermediate paddles, driven by a capstan. Mr Millar's experiment was very successful, in so far as the utility of the paddles was concerned; but on seeing the men very much exhausted, by the labour of turning the capstan, Mr Taylor became convinced, that, in order to render the experiment really useful, some other power must be applied. He suggested the steam-engine to Mr Millar, as a power that might probably be employed with advantage. An engine was accordingly constructed, and on the 14th October 1788, the experiment was made on the lake of Dalswinton, with a double boat, having an engine, with a four inch cylinder, placed on the deck. The boat was propelled by the engine, at the rate of five miles an hour. This was the first specimen of steam navigation in the world. For it was not until the year 1807, nineteen years after-

wards, that Mr Fulton introduced it into the rivers of America, nor until the year 1812, that Mr Henry Bell brought it into use on the Clyde. *

As too often happens, in similar cases, the name of the original inventor, has, in a great measure, been left in obscurity; while the invention itself has benefited, in the highest possible degree, not our country only, but the whole civilized world.

It was thus, in a small obscure lake, in the south of Scotland, that that giant power was first applied to navigation, by an individual, now almost unknown,—which seems destined, at no distant period, to constitute the grand moving power in the navigation of the globe.

Hugh Logan, Esq. of Logan, the famous Ayrshire wit, resided during the greater part of his life, on his estate in this parish; and there is a stone, near to the house of Logan, which goes by the name of Logan's pillar, where, it is said, he was much in the habit of sitting, and cracking his jokes with those around him. His numberless witticisms and sarcasms, which were oftentimes pregnant, not only with the most genuine humour, but likewise marked by an eagle-eyed discrimination, as well as an unsparing dissection of character, and conduct, are generally current among the people of this district, and form an unfailing source of amusement at their jovial meetings. But, from the frequent mixture of coarseness and profanity that interlard them, they have by no means contributed to promote the interests, either of religion or morality, in the neighbourhood.

The dust of the celebrated Alexander Peden slumbers within the precincts of Cumnock church-yard, and sheds a solemn sacredness around that abode of death, which enshrines it in the hallowed recollections of every Scottish Christian. For many have come far and near, to see the place where Peden lies, to read the time-worn inscription on his tombstone, and to view the two thorns which mark his last resting-place. Mr Peden was a native of the neighbouring parish of Sorn. A little before the Restoration, he was settled minister at New Luce in Galloway, where he continued about three years, and was then ejected by the violent tyranny of these times, because of his faithful and unbending allegiance to Christ's crown and covenant. He was first buried in the Laird of Auchinleck's aisle; but after he had been forty days in the grave, a troop of dragoons came and disinterred his body. They brought it in its decaying putrid state to Cumnock, intending to have it

* Any who wish to be fully satisfied of the truth of the above statements, may consult a narrative drawn up by Mr Robert Chambers of Edinburgh, published in 1684.

hung up in chains on the gallows ; but, at the earnest intercession of the Countess of Dumfries, and the Lady Affleck, the Earl of Dumfries interfered, and told Murray that he had erected the gibbet for murderers and malefactors, and not for such men as Peden. The body was therefore reinterred at Cumnock gallows' foot, beside other martyrs.

Antiquities.—The ruins of Terringzean Castle stand on a small rising ground, near to the banks of the Lugar, and within the pleasure grounds of Dumfries House. This castle once belonged to the family of Loudoun, and the present Countess is still styled Baroness of Terringzean. There are no traditions connected with it. Some traces of an ancient ruin, called Boreland Castle, are also to be seen on the south side of the parish, and not very far from this castle, the vestiges of a small Popish chapel, are still extant. The small farm on which it stands is called Chapel House; and has been occupied by the same family as tenants, in regular succession, for several hundred of years.

There are several resting-places of the martyred dead in the parish. Some lie around Peden's grave, and mingle their dust with his. One of the name of MacGeahan, lies in the farm of Stonepark, on the estate of Logan; and there are three others whose dust reposes out in the moor, that forms the south-west boundary of the parish. New monuments have lately been erected over both of these; as the former ones had become very much dilapidated.

Land-Owners.—There are six heritors in the parish, namely, the Marquis of Bute; James Allason, Esq. of Glasnock; W. A. Cunninghame, Esq. of Logan; Mrs Boswell of Garallan; Robert Campbell, Esq. of Skerrington; and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell of Avisyard. Two of these reside permanently on their estates, two are occasionally resident, and the other two non-resident.

Mansion-Houses.—Dumfries House, the seat of the Marquis of Bute, is finely situated on the banks of the Lugar, over which a very elegant bridge is thrown, near to the house, in order to connect the beautiful pleasure grounds that stretch to a considerable extent along both sides of the river. The house is built with the fine blue freestone already spoken of, and is about eighty years old. The walls of the drawing-room are hung with very fine old tapestry, in a state of beautiful preservation, and said to have been presented by Louis the Fourteenth to one of the Earls of Dumfries. The other mansion-houses are, Logan, Garrallan, and Glasnock. The last of these is a very elegant house, lately built, on the banks

of the Glasnock. It is built of a beautiful white freestone, from a quarry on the banks of the Lugar.

Parochial Registers.—The register of baptisms begins in 1704. There are blanks in it from 1706 to 1724, from 1739 to 1740, from 1746 to 1751, and from 1752 to 1753.

The baptisms only are recorded up to the year 1768. After this period, the births also are, for the most part, entered along with them. A few only of the Dissenters register their children. The register of proclamations for marriage begins in 1758; but, up to the year 1782, no notice is taken of the marriages. Subsequent to this period, the date of the marriage is also entered. No register of deaths is kept.

III.—POPULATION.

The population of the parish has been doubled since the year 1765; while that of the town has increased threefold in the same period. The following is a view of it at five different periods:

The population of the whole parish in 1755 was 1336 persons.

1765,	1305
1792,	1632
1821,	2343
1831,	2763

The population of the village in 1765, amounted to 580 persons.

1831,	1600
landward in 1765,	725
1831,	1163

From the above statement it appears, that, in a period of sixty-six years, the town has increased its population nearly threefold; while the landward part of the parish has only added to its population, during the same period, little more than a half. The reason of this great disparity in the rate of increase between the town and country, is owing to the introduction, into the town, within the above period, of the manufacture of snuff-boxes, and also of weaving.

The number of marriages in the parish averages 23 annually; and the births range from 90 to 100.

The people are, in general, above the middle size; and are well formed and proportioned, in consonance with the old adage, "Kyle for a man." The plaid is universally worn, both by men and women, in summer as well as in winter. When tastefully put on, it contributes very much to give elegance of form and appearance, more especially to the female figure; which, perhaps, is one reason why the Ayrshire women are so much noted for their fine forms.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—The parish contains about 13,000 Scotch acres; 500 of these are under plantation, and about 2000 are moorland. The moorland, however, is now rapidly being brought into a state of culture. The rest of the parish is arable.

Wedge draining with turf has been a good deal employed in reclaiming the moorlands, and with great success. The Marquess of Bute has lately erected a tile-work on his estate here; and has bound his tenants to drain a certain number of acres each year, in proportion to the extent of their farms. The system enjoined on them is furrow draining,—the drains are to be made twenty-one inches deep, and, where the bottom is soft, the tiles are to be placed on soles. Lord Bute furnishes the tiles, free of expense, at the tile-work. The tenants are required to cart them away, to cut the drains, lay the tiles, and cover them at their own expense. This imperative obligation, laid on the farmers to improve their farms, accompanied as it is with such liberal encouragement on the part of the proprietor, affords the certain prospect of a speedy and most beneficial change on the agricultural aspect of the parish. It will go to secure a general and uniform improvement over the whole of Dumfries estate, which forms the greater part of the parish, instead of its being confined, as heretofore, to detached farms, occupied by wealthy and enterprising farmers.

Rent of Land, &c.—The rent of land varies very considerably throughout the parish. It ranges from L. 4, for the land near the town, to 15s. or even 10s. per acre, for the high moorlands. The average rent of farms is about L. 1 per acre. The grazing of a cow in the vicinity of the town costs from L. 3 to L. 4; and it takes from one to two and a half acres of pasture for this purpose, according to the quality of the soil. The average pasture required for a cow is nearly two acres. The cows are all of the Ayrshire breed; and much attention has been paid of late by the farmers to the improvement of their stock. There is a local Farmer's Association, patronised by the Marquis of Bute, which awards annual premiums for the best specimens of milk cows in point of colour, form, beauty, and symmetry of proportions. There are some, indeed, who go so far as to say that there is a dash of blood in some cows.

The farmers depend chiefly on the produce of the dairy for the payment of their rents; and a farm is considered high rented, if the dairy does not provide for a considerable part of the rent.

The cheese made in the parish will bear a comparison in point of quality with any in the district.

The duration of the leases is from fourteen to nineteen years. In many cases, there is a break in the middle of the lease, that may be taken advantage of by either party. The rents are in general paid by a stipulated sum of money, though in some instances, they are paid one-third money, and two-thirds cheese and meal, according to the fiars prices.

The farm-steadings, in general, are after the form of a continuous line of building, which is not the most convenient for dairy operations. Many of them are in good repair, while there are others that stand very much in need of being rebuilt. The new steadings are for the most part in the form of a square. The greater part of the parish is enclosed with hedgerows.

The wages of ploughmen are from L. 10 to L. 14 a year, and of dairy maids from L. 3 to L. 4 a half year. Labourers get from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 8d. a day.

There are three corn-mills, and a wheat-mill in the parish, also a carding-mill and dye-work.

The valued rent of the parish is L. 3864, 2s. 8d. The real rent is about L. 8000 Sterling.

The total number of milk cows in the parish is about 1000; and the average yearly produce of each cow is 11 or 12 stones tron of cheese. The number of sheep in the parish is from 1000 to 1200.

Average gross amount of raw produce :

Cheese,	L. 9672
Rye-grass,	1599
Meadow hay,	538
Oats,	10,000
Wheat,	250
Barley,	674
Bear,	674
Potatoes,	1400
Peas and beans,	900
Turnips,	500

Total yearly value of raw produce, L. 20,207

Manufactures.—Cumnock has long been famed for the ingenious and beautiful manufacture of wooden snuff-boxes, which has been carried on in it, for the last thirty years. It rose from a very small and rude beginning to its present state of perfection. An ingenious artist of the name of Crawford caught the first idea of them from a box made at Lawrencekirk, which had been sent to him to repair. The distinguishing excellence of the Cumnock snuff-boxes

lies in the hinge, which is extremely ingenious in point of contrivance, as well as exquisitely delicate in point of execution; so that it is with much propriety styled "the invisible wooden hinge." The principle on which the hinge is formed, as well as the instruments employed in making it, were for many years kept a secret; but are now no longer so. The wood used in the manufacture is plane tree, it being preferable to all others by reason of its close texture. The tree is first of all cut from the centre towards the circumference into triangular pieces. These are then put to dry, and season, for at least five months, under cover. One set of artists make the boxes, another paint those beautiful designs that embellish the lids, while women and children are employed in varnishing and polishing them. The process of varnishing a single box takes from three to six weeks. Spirit varnish takes three weeks, and requires about thirty coats; while copal varnish, which is now mostly used, takes six weeks, and requires about fifteen coats to complete the process. When the process of varnishing is finished, the surface is polished with ground flint; and then the box is ready for the market.

These ingenious and elegant specimens of art have been brought by successive improvement to an astonishing degree of perfection; and the skill of the artists, sharpened and stimulated by keen rivalry, is continually advancing this curious and beautiful manufacture to a higher pitch of improvement. At one time a single box, without either painting or varnishing, but just as it came from the hands of the maker, sold for 30s., whereas at present, seven such boxes can be had for 12s. A few years ago, a solid foot of wood that cost only 3s., could be manufactured into boxes worth L. 100 Sterling. And then the workmanship increased the original value of the wood nearly 700 times. But at present, a solid foot of wood will only yield in finished boxes about L. 9 Sterling. The workmanship thus only brings at present one-eleventh part of its former price.

In consequence of this great decline in the price of the boxes, the wages of the artists have also been much lowered. A few years ago, the box-maker made L. 1, 1s. a week, the painter L. 2, 2s., the varnisher 12s.; whereas now the box-maker only makes 10s. to 12s., the painter 15s., and the varnisher 5s. to 6s. a week.

A system of chequering has now almost superseded the painting of the boxes. It is done by very ingenious and nicely adjusted machines, that are worked by boys, and is much less expensive

than painting. Ingenuity creates endless and ever increasing varieties of cheques; and many of them are most beautiful in point of pattern and figure, as well as of the most exquisite delicacy in point of colouring.

The yearly value of the boxes made in Cumnock may average about L. 1600 Sterling; while fifteen years ago, the same number of boxes would have brought L. 6000 Sterling. The total number of persons employed in this manufacture is about 50. The period of work is eleven hours a day.

There is a pottery in the town, in which brown ware of a very superior quality is made. Clay of the best kind is to be had in the parish.

There is likewise a manufactory of thrashing-machines, cheese presses, &c., in the town. The thrashing-mills made in it are of the very best construction, and are held in high repute throughout the west of Scotland. A considerable number are sent to Ireland.

Weaving in its various branches forms the chief manufacture in the town. When trade is brisk, there are more than 120 looms at work.

Hand-sewing is also a common employment among women and girls, and they are very dexterous and tasteful in the execution of their work.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Town of Cumnock.—Cumnock was erected in the year 1509 into a free burgh of barony, by a charter from James IV., and liberty was given to the prebendary of Cumnock, and his successors, to let his glebe in borough roods for building.

Fairs.—There are several annual fairs held in the town. It has a baron bailie, who is appointed by the Marquis of Bute.

The town of Cumnock is snugly and finely situated in a hollow, at the confluence of the Glasnock and Lugar waters. The principal part of the town is a quadrangular space, called the Square, formerly the burying-ground, but now the market place, which is surrounded by houses most of them of recent erection. In the centre of the square, stands the parish church. There are besides the square, three pretty long streets, in which there are some very good houses. The rest of the town consists of very narrow lanes, irregularly built. The town in general is pretty clean and healthy. The beauty of its situation, combined with the picturesque banks of the Lugar, and the fine woodlands in the vicinity, to-

gether with the striking effect produced by some fine old trees, rearing their heads among the houses, call forth the admiration of travellers.

There are excellent shops of all kinds in the town. The Ayrshire Banking Company has a branch established in it, and there is also a private agent of Hunters and Company. A gas work has been recently erected for supplying the town with light, which promises to be of great public utility.

From its central position in regard to the neighbouring parishes, a great deal of business is transacted in the town, much more than its size would lead a stranger to expect. It is a curious fact, that the four principal entrances to the town, on the east, west, north, and south side, are all down hill; so that there is no descent from the town but the channel of the Lugar.

Means of Communication.—There is a post-office in the town, and we have two arrivals of the mail daily, one from London, and the other from Glasgow. There are fourteen miles of turnpike roads in the parish. There are also cross-roads in all directions, which are kept in very good repair. A stage-coach from Glasgow, and another from Carlisle, pass through the town daily. Cumnock is distant from Edinburgh 60 miles, from Glasgow 37 miles, from Dumfries 46 miles, from Ayr 16 miles, and from Kilmarnock 16 miles. There are 5 weekly carriers to Glasgow, 1 to Edinburgh, 6 to Ayr, 2 to Kilmarnock, and 3 to Dumfries. The road to Glasgow passes through Kilmarnock. There is a coach to Ayr twice a week. Post-horses, chaises, and cars, can be had in the town.

There are 16 bridges in the parish, of which three are in the town. They are in general too narrow; and the one over the Lugar has its arch at by far too great an elevation above the level of the road.

A plan has long been in agitation for improving the road from Cumnock to Ayr, which is now being carried into effect; also the road from Kilmarnock to Sanquhar, passing through Cumnock, which stands in great need of an improved line. A survey has lately been made of the line from Carlisle to Glasgow, through Dumfries, Cumnock, Kilmarnock, &c., and it has been found one of the most level lines for a rail-road to be met with.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church was built in 1754, and stands in the centre of the town. The distance from the remotest parts of the parish is from five to six miles. It is in a state of pret-

ty good repair, though too small for the accommodation of the parish. It contains from 600 to 700 sittings. The heritors seem quite willing to enlarge the present church; but there are difficulties in regard to the best mode of getting it accomplished. Several plans have been laid before them with this view, but none of these has as yet been adopted. The parish church is in general well attended; though there are not a few in the parish who are very negligent in attending on the means of grace. The most remote in point of distance are in general the most regular in their attendance.

The manse was built about the year 1750, though several additions have subsequently been made to it. It is very prettily situated on the banks of the Lugar, on the north side of the town; and for an old house, it is in a tolerable state of repair. The extent of the glebe may be from 11 to 12 acres, but a part of it is not arable. The yearly value will be about L.20. The stipend is L.218 in money.

There is a Dissenting church in the town, in connection with the United Secession, which may contain about 900 sittings. The number of communicants belonging to the Established Church is about 500. The collections made in the parish church, in behalf of religious and benevolent objects, amounted last year to the sum of L.29, 18s. 1½d.

Nearly two-thirds of the population of the parish belong to the Established Church, and rather more than one-third are Dissenters.

Education.—There is one parochial school in the parish. The average number of scholars in it will be about 100. Besides the ordinary branches, Latin and mathematics are also taught. The school fees are—3s. for English reading, 3s. 6d. for writing, 4s. for arithmetic, and 6s. for Latin per quarter of twelve weeks. There are also five private schools in the parish, and sometimes one or two additional during winter. There are very few above the age of fourteen who are not able to read and write, as parents evince a laudable anxiety to give their children the common branches of education; and the Marquis of Bute pays for the education of twenty poor children, which is a great boon to the parish. The parish schoolmaster, in addition to the maximum salary, receives L.25 a year from a mortified fund left by a Mr Duncan, for the purpose of educating and providing with school-books, &c. twelve poor children, natives of the parish. He is

also provided with the legal accommodation. The probable yearly amount of school fees is about L. 20.

There are four Sabbath schools in the parish in connexion with the parish church; three of which are in the country, and one in the town, consisting of nearly 300 scholars in all. There is a small library of religious books for the use of the scholars.

Literature.—There are two public libraries in the town.

Charitable Institutions—Friendly Societies.—There are three friendly societies in the parish, which seem to have done great good, not only in affording relief to the needy, but in cherishing a spirit of independence among the working-classes.

The following table will give a view of their nature and operation.

<i>Name.</i>	<i>When formed.</i>	<i>No. of Members.</i>	<i>Funds.</i>	<i>Weekly Allowance.</i>
Community,	1814	113	L. 95	8s. when confined. 4s. when on foot.
Centenary,	1825	100	45	Do. do.
Weavers,	1809	70	35	5s. when confined 2s. 6d. when on foot.

Each member pays 1d. a week for each person claiming relief, besides 3d. a quarter. From L. 1 to L. 5 is allowed for funeral expenses, on the death of a member, besides a small allowance per quarter to his widow.

Savings Bank.—There is a savings bank in the town, patronized by the Marquis of Bute; and which is under the direction of the heritors and minister of Old Cumnock, the ministers of New Cumnock and Auchinleck; and of which the parish schoolmaster of Old Cumnock is treasurer. It was instituted in 1831, and receives deposits from the parishioners of New Cumnock and Auchinleck, as well as of Old Cumnock. It owed its prosperity chiefly to the devoted attention of Mr Campbell, the treasurer.

The stock on first January 1836 amounted to L. 810; deposits from that date till 2d January 1837, were L. 421, 9s. 4½d.; the sums drawn out during that period, L. 251, 9s. 4½d.; accumulated stock on the 2d January 1837, L. 980.

The number of depositors during the year was 223; and they consist, for the most part, of male and female servants, though there is also a number of trades people among them. This institution is likely to prove of incalculable advantage to the working classes.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number on the poor's roll is about 80, being about one pauper for every ninety-two individuals in the parish. The sum allowed to each per month

varies from 3s. to 10s., according to the urgency of the case. The average sum is 5s. or 6s. each per month. The total sum distributed by the kirk-session last year was L. 105, 13s. 2½d. The sources from which this sum was obtained were, church collections, L. 66, 12s. 6¼d.; voluntary assessment on the heritors, L. 30; rent of some seats in church, L. 7, 16s.

There is a mortification of L. 25 annually, under the management of the heritors and minister, which is given to needy persons who are not on the poor's roll. A large quantity of meal is distributed annually by the Marquis of Bute, to poor persons in this parish, in regular allowance, once a fortnight.

Either to ask or to obtain relief from the poor's funds is by no means regarded in so degrading a light as it was wont to be. There is a sad decline of late years in the spirit of independence that used to exist; and relief from the kirk-session is now received more as a matter of legal right than as a gratuity.

Fairs.—There are four annual fairs held in the town, in February, May, July, and October, O. S.

Inns, &c.—There are two inns in the town, and thirteen houses where ardent spirits are sold. These latter have considerably decreased within these four or five years; but there are still by far too many of them, and their effects on the morals of the people are most injurious.

It was very much the custom sometime ago to give half a dozen rounds, or more, of spirits, wine, &c. at funerals; but there has been a decided improvement in this respect, of late years; and, in many cases, the giving of spirits is now wholly discontinued on such occasions.

Fuel.—Abundance of coal is to be had in the parish and neighbourhood. The price is about 5s. per ton at the pit; and laid down in the town, about 8s. per ton.

November 1837