

## PARISH OF DREGHORN.

PRESBYTERY OF IRVINE, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

THE REV. JOHN CAMPBELL JAMIESON, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Extent, Boundaries.*—THE parish of Dreghorn, in Cunninghame, extends in a narrow stripe from the Water of Irvine on the south, where it joins Dundonald, to the parish of Fenwick, on the north-east; and is bounded on the east by the Gawreer Burn, which divides it from Kilmaurs, and by the Annock Water on the west, that separates it from the parishes of Irvine and Stewarton. Its extent is nearly 8 miles from south-west to north-east, and from three-quarters of a mile to two miles in breadth. Its surface amounts to 4477 acres, of which, by a calculation made in 1820, there were in tillage, 1490 acres; cultivated grass land, 2774 acres; woods and gardens, 122 acres; and roads, 61 acres.

This parish, which is a dead flat towards the sea, from which it is only two miles distant, and not much in that quarter above its level, rises in gently undulating hills towards the east and north-east; and is throughout of very considerable beauty, particularly the section of it that runs along the Annock Water. It is well enclosed and planted. The soil in the south-eastern district of it is a deep rich loam, yielding remarkably good crops. Towards the north-east, it is nearly of the same character, and also productive. To the south-west, the land varies in nature and quality, running in patches from loam to gravel. The coal formation is exhibited here as in the neighbouring parishes; but there is nothing remarkable in Dreghorn in a geological point of view.

### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The whole of the parish was formerly the property of the De Morvilles, who were constables of Scotland and Lords of Cunninghame, the first of whom seems to have settled in this country as early as the time of Alexander I., and to have had very extensive possessions in it. The property of this family passed by the heiress of William de Morville to Ronald, Lord of Galloway, whose son

Alan, Constable of Scotland, and Lord of Galloway and Cunninghamame, had a daughter, Helen, who, about the year 1233, married Roger de Quincy, Earl of Winchester, who, in her right, became Constable of Scotland, and proprietor of the De Morville estates. He died in 1264, leaving by this marriage three daughters, one of whom, Margaret, was married to William de Ferrars, and another Ela, to Alan de la Zuche, who received by them very extensive and valuable possessions in Cunninghamame, of which the lands of the parish of Dreghorn formed a part, and which they held *pro indiviso*. The present Marquis of Townshend is the lineal descendant of William de Ferrars, and Alan de la Zuche was the ancestor of the Lords Ashby of Ashby de la Zuche, in Leicestershire. The property of William de Ferrars and Alan de la Zuche was forfeited by Robert the Bruce, in consequence of their adherence to the party of John Baliol, their kinsman. The barony of Dreghorn was conferred by him on one of the Bonkill family, Sir Alan Stewart, who fell at the battle of Hallidown Hill in 1333, in the hands of whose descendants, who were afterwards Earls of Darnley and Lennox, it continued till 1520, when it became the property of Hugh, first Earl of Eglinton, in whose family it still continues.

The barony of Peirceton became the property of Sir James Stewart, brother of Alan, and ancestor of the Stewarts of Lorn, Innermeath, Athole, and Grantully. His son having died without male issue, the estate of Peirceton passed by his daughter into the hands of Sir William Douglas, whose youngest daughter married, in 1390, Robert Barclay, member of a family of great power and influence at that time, in the west of Scotland, who became in her right Baron of Peirceton and Warrick-hill. This family, now represented by Sir Robert Barclay of Ivy Cottage Middlesex, lived at Peirceton in considerable splendour for 300 years. They alienated the property in 1720, to Mr M'Credie, whose great-granddaughter, married to Mr P. B. Mure, Advocate, now possesses it.\*

The manner in which the other lands in the parish passed down to the present proprietors is not so easily traced.

*Mansion-Houses.*—Some of the proprietors in this parish have

\* The account of the ancient state of the parish is drawn from the work of the late Mr George Robertson, entitled *Topographical Description of Ayrshire*. In corroboration of his statement, that the parish formerly belonged to the De Morvilles, there is a large mound of earth, apparently artificial, on the north side of the river, near the ford in the water of Irvine, on the line of road from Dreghorn to Dundonald, which is called *Maid Morville's Mount*, and which is said by tradition to be the place where a lady of the house of De Morville, who was drowned in passing the ford, was buried.

mansion-houses built on the banks of the Annock Water, and pleasantly situated. Of these the most delightful residence is that of Annock Lodge, belonging to Mrs Montgomerie, widow of William Montgomerie, Esq. brother of the late Earl of Eglinton. It is truly Arcadian in its character. The house is built on the south side of the Annock, is shut in behind by a high wooded bank, and overlooks a plain of the richest verdure, stretching out in front as far as the eye can reach, and flanked on both sides with gently rising hills partially covered with wood. The other residences in the parish are Peirceton, belonging to Mr Mure M'Creddie; Righthouse, a ferme ornée, the property of Colonel Fullarton of Fullarton; Cunninghamhead, possessed by Mr Snodgrass Buchanan; and Warrickhill by Mr M'Dougal Ralston.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population of the parish, according to the census 1831, amounted to 888 persons, of whom 419 were males and 469 females. All these persons were engaged in agricultural pursuits, with the exception of two individuals employed as manufacturers, 34 as retail traders and handicraftsmen, and 8 proprietors and professional men. It has since been nearly stationary.

Number of illegitimate births during the last three years, 9.

*Character and Habits of the People.*—The people of this parish seem to be of sober and industrious habits. They possess to a limited extent the means of improvement, as the inhabitants of all country parishes must do; since they enjoy none of the advantages of literary societies, libraries, reading-rooms, and close and frequent intercourse with each other, which are so easily obtained in towns. They, however, possess the superior advantages of religious habits and uncontaminated morals, which are so easily destroyed where there is a purely urban population. It has been remarked, that a clannish feeling still exists in this parish, which unites the people in strong bonds of attachment to each other.\*

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

It is estimated that two-thirds of the soil of this parish consist of a deep loam, resting upon a retentive subsoil. The land of this character was originally cold and wet, but has of late years

\* In reference to what is here stated, the following anecdote is told: A good woman of Dreghorn, who had lost her husband, not seeming very disconsolate in her state of bereavement, was remonstrated with by her neighbour on her apparent hardness of heart, and want of sensibility. She pleaded guilty to the charge, but excused herself by saying, "Its true, Janet, am no so muckle o'ercome as I ought to be; but you see John, puir man, was no o' our parish."

been ameliorated by draining, which has been much resorted to by the farmer, who employs for this purpose tiles made at tile-works in the parish.

*Agriculture.*—The rotation of crops upon this species of land, is based on the old system of husbandry: 1st and 2d year, oats; 3d ryegrass, followed by five years pasture. Where this system is pursued, the farmers have large dairies, and make the kind of cheese generally known by the name of Dunlop cheese.

*Husbandry.*—The portion of the land in the parish that is contiguous to the sea is a free light soil resting upon an open gravelly subsoil. The general rotation of crops in this part, is a six-course shift, 1st year, oats; 2d, potatoes or turnips; 3d, wheat or barley; 4th, clover and ryegrass; 5th and 6th, pasture. The turnips raised on the farms here are used for fattening cattle and sheep. The farmers have large dairies. Butter is made by them, and milk disposed of in the neighbouring town of Irvine. The farms vary in extent from 100 to 200 acres, and are laid out in fields enclosed with beech and thorn-hedges. The fields differ in size from 10 to 20 acres. The farm-houses are remarkably good in the south part of the parish; some of them of two stories, and extremely comfortable and commodious. The spirit of agricultural improvement, which is so manifest throughout Scotland, has extended to this parish.

*Rent of Land.*—The land is in value from L. 1, 10s. to L. 3 per acre, and is held on leases of nineteen years.

*Live Stock.*—The cows on the farms are of the Ayrshire breed. The sheep black-faced and Cheviots, with a few Southdowns.

*Mines.*—Coal is supposed to be abundant in this district towards the sea, but has not been extensively wrought. Twelve thousand tons were formerly put out yearly, from mines which were shut up from want of capital in the lessee. A new pit has just been opened under better auspices, and promises well. Freestone of excellent quality is found, and lime is quarried at the north-east extremity of the parish.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Village.*—The village of Dreghorn, which lies on the road from Kilmarnock to Irvine, and two miles distant from the last mentioned town, is pleasantly situate on the first gentle acclivity towards the sea, and the climate is very salubrious, the prevailing winds being from the west and south-west, and no marshes or source of miasmata in the neighbourhood. The houses are old,

and run in irregular lines along the highway, and being interspersed with old trees, and neatly kept and white-washed, have a very rural appearance. The village contains 277 inhabitants,—the male part of whom, with the exception of a few mechanics who find employment among the neighbouring farmers, are occupied in agricultural labour.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—Before the Reformation, this parish ecclesiastically belonged to the Tyronenses monks at Kilwinning, and was united in 1688 to that of Peirceton, regarding which union nothing is known with certainty,—the portion of the parish record which might throw light upon it having been accidentally or surreptitiously removed. The present church, built about fifty years ago, which is situate in the village at the south extremity of the parish, is a very simple and rather beautiful building, of an octagonal form, and can accommodate about 427 persons. The average attendance at church is in summer 200, and in winter 130 persons. The inhabitants who reside in the immediate vicinity appear pretty regularly there, and the distant population frequent the churches which lie more contiguous, and are more accessible to them.

The number of families in the parish attending the Established Church is 110 : of families attending the chapels of Dissenters and Seceders, 31.

The manse is a very good house, built about the same time as the church. The income of the clergyman is 16 chalders of grain. He possesses a glebe of remarkably good land, in extent about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

*Education.*—The parochial school in the village is attended by 100 children, who are carefully instructed in the usual branches of education, at the rate of from 3s. to 5s. per quarter. The salary of the schoolmaster is L. 30, and the whole emoluments of his situation amount to L. 100 per annum.

A school partially endowed is also kept in the centre of the parish, and is attended by 40 children.

*Poor.*—There are few paupers in this parish. Their number is on an average 15, and their monthly allowance from the heritors and kirk-session, 4s. The amount of parish collections for the poor is on an average L. 22, 11s. : of legal assessments, L. 42, 10s.

*Ale-houses.*—There are 5 ale-houses in the parish ; their effect on the morals of the inhabitants does not appear to be more detrimental than in other places.

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