

ches taught are more varied. It is only in the religious and moral habits of the people that I fear there has been no corresponding advancement.

November 1839.

PARISH OF IRVINE.

PRESBYTERY OF IRVINE, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND Ayr.

THE REV. JOHN WILSON, A. M. MINISTER.*

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Extent, &c.—THE parish is upwards of four miles in length, and where its width is greatest, it is nearly two miles broad. On the east and south-east, it is divided from the parish of Dregburn by the river Annick. It is divided from Kilwinning, on the west, by the Garnock; and on the north-west, by a small stream called the Redburn. On the south, the river Irvine separates it from the parish of Dundonald; and on the north, it is bounded by the parish of Stewarton.

The parish abounds in seams of coal. Good building stone is found in various districts; more especially, there is an extensive quarry near the town, which has long been famed for the supply which it affords of very superior oven soles.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Town.—Irvine, formerly written Irwyn and Irwine, is beautifully situated on the north bank of the river Irvine, and not far from the confluence of the Irvine and the Garnock. By the river from which it takes its name, it is separated, as already stated, from the parish of Dundonald. But although the ancient burgh is so separated, the extended or parliamentary burgh embraces a portion of the parish of Dundonald. In this portion, are the mouth and the harbour of the river Irvine. Before the harbour of Port-Glasgow was erected, Irvine was the place to which were brought the goods imported by the merchants of Glasgow. In a work published in 1620, and entitled "Timothy Pont's Cunningham Topogra-

* Compiled by the incumbent, the Rev. John Wilson, from communications made by J. W. Mackenzie, Esq.; Robert Montgomerie, Esq.; James Johnston, Esq.; J. Dobie, Esq.; and David Gray, Esq.

phized," this harbour is called "the chieff porte of ye country of Cunningham. The porte and harbry being now much decayed from qwhat it was anciently, being stopt with shelves of Sand which hinder the neir approach of shipping."

As appears from the map which accompanies Pont's work, the confluence of the rivers Irvine and Garnock had not taken place at the time to which it refers, for he describes the Garnock as emptying itself into the sea, about two miles from the mouth of the river Irvine. Indeed, long subsequent to Pont's time, the sea came up close to the town, and vessels were loaded and discharged at what was then and is now termed the Seagate. Within the memory of persons now alive, the sea has receded considerably on this coast; and very considerably since 1620, for the lower part of the Seagate is now nearly half a mile from the sea. Some time subsequent to the period at which Pont wrote, Thomas Tucker published a report in 1656 upon the settlement of the revenues and customs in Scotland. He had been sent by the government of England, for the purpose of introducing order into the collection of the revenues of the excise and customs, and was appointed one of the commissioners of the Scottish board. The district concerning which he was to report, consisted of "Glasgow, Newarke, Greenocke, Fairly, Culburgh, Saltcoates, Bute, and lastly, Irwyn." "Irwyn," says he, "a small burgh towne lying at the mouth of a river of the same name, which hath some time been a pretty small port, but at present clogged and almost choaked up with sand, which the western sea beats into it, soe as it wrestles for life to maintaine a small trade to France, Norway, and Ireland, with herring and other goods, brought on horseback from Glasgow, for the purchasing timber, wine, and other commodities to supply their occasions with. The vessels belonging to this district are, viz. To Glasgowe, 12, viz. 3 of 150 tons; 1 of 140; 2 of 100; 1 of 50; 3 of 30; 1 of 15; 1 of 12.—Renfrew, 3 or 4 boates of five or six tonnes a piece. Irwin, 3 or 4, the biggest not exceeding sixteen tonnes."

This report by Tucker exhibits the state of trade as very small and confined, in 1656; but about the beginning of the last century, it appears to have increased very considerably—as there were 1616 barrels of herrings exported in the year 1715, the bounty allowed on which amounted to L.843, and in the year 1720 there were 107,000 pounds of tobacco exported, the drawback of duty on which amounted to L.2550. About this period, and for a good

many years afterwards, smuggling appears to have been carried on very extensively and in a very daring manner. It appears by the custom-house books at Irvine, that the custom-house there was repeatedly broken into and robbed of large quantities of seized goods by bands of armed men, and that several people in the better ranks of life were concerned in these lawless proceedings. Latterly smuggling was chiefly confined to whisky from Arran; but of late years, this illicit traffic has almost entirely ceased. According to the official returns published by Chalmers⁴ in his *Caledonia*, Irvine was the third port in Scotland in the year 1760. Port-Glasgow, including, as it then did, Greenock and Glasgow, was first, and Leith second, in the importance arising from the number and tonnage of vessels. In Leith at that period, there were 79; whilst in Irvine, there were 77 vessels. The subsequent increase of trade has been very considerable. At the present day, all vessels belonging to the coast of Ayrshire, from Troon point to Largs, inclusive of Salcoats and Ardrossan, and all vessels belonging to Arran, are comprehended within the port of Irvine. Of these vessels, by far the greatest number belong to ship-owners resident in Irvine, who employ them in carrying coals chiefly coastwise and to Ireland, but not unfrequently to France, Malta, Gibraltar, and other places in foreign countries. The imports consist of timber chiefly, but occasionally of grain from America, and of grain and butter from Ireland in great quantities. The timber from America yields the greatest part of the revenue of the customs, and the average amount may be stated at L. 2700 annually. The coals exported from the port and district exceed 276,000 tons annually. The number of vessels belonging to the Port is 118; their tonnage amounts to 15,756; and they are navigated by 958 men.

Irvine ranks amongst the most ancient of the royal burghs of Scotland. In a charter granted by King Robert in 1306, it is mentioned as a place of great antiquity. In a subsequent charter granted 1323, there is reference to a charter in favour of this burgh, granted in the reign of Alexander III, early in the thirteenth century. The antiquity of the burgh and its importance in ancient times, are also evident from a charter by King Robert II, dated 8th April 1372. This charter bears to have proceeded on an inquest at the King's command, concerning a dispute between Ayre and Irvine, anent their boundaries and liberties; and by which it was clearly found, that, time immemorial, Irvine had been

in possession of the whole barony of Cunningham and of the barony of Largys, annexed to the liberties of the said burgh, *pro suis tam mercandis et mercimoniis in eisdem libere exercendis*,—as was clearly established by charters of his Majesty's predecessors shown in inquest, &c." From these and other documents, it also appears that the jurisdiction of the magistrates of this burgh extended formerly over a wide territory; and embraced even crimes of a capital nature. The burgh records contain accounts of numerous justiciary courts held in the burgh, for trial of capital crimes. Among others, may be mentioned a justiciary court, of which there is a full detail, held at Irvine, 20th October 1625, "per Allanum Dunlop urbis præfectum dicti burghi," for "trial of Alexander Banks, sone of Robert Banks, flesher, for the slaughter of Gilbert M'Alister, heiland man, slain in Stevenston yesterday, and brought in by the Earl of Eglinton, as baillie of Cunningham, and repledge it from his court to the jurisdiction of this burgh as ane of yair inhabitants."

Generally speaking, the peculiar and distinctive power of local magistrates was restricted almost insensibly, as the laws of the country were consolidated, and administered on more comprehensive principles. Of this fact, there is a striking exemplification in a case reported by Fountainhall, as to the trial of certain merchants in Irvine in the year 1712.

It had been the practice of the Irvine merchants to smuggle Irish corn, stealing it in by night, "at many secret creeks on the shore." Thomas Gray, merchant in Irvine, and others, were dilated before the justices as criminals for this offence, and for their contumacy in not appearing, were fined in L. 100 Sterling each, under the penal statutes against the importing of Irish meal. Gray suspended, and stated various important pleas: 1st, That the burghesses of Irvine were not subject to the jurisdiction of the county justices, and that the magistrates had the power of repledging them. This plea was repelled, and the right of repledging found to be in disuetude. 2d, That it was not competent to refer the fact on which the charge rested, to the oath of party. This was also repelled, and the court found it provable by oath, as well as usury and the like. 3d, That the fine was most exorbitant. The court found that the offenders should not be all classed alike, for one who had only brought in a boll or two was not to be so deeply fined, as he who had brought in an hundred, and had reiterated his transgression, and a poor man's fine was not by Magna

Charta to be so great as a rich and wealthy transgressor's,—therefore the Lords reposed them to their oaths, and prorogated the diet, and allowed the ordinary to consider the quality and frequency of the transgression, with the circumstance, condition, and the ability of the party, and accordingly to modify and adjust the fine as he saw fit. Says Fountainhall in the conclusion of his report, “This importation of meal is good for the poor, plenty making it cheap, but it sinks the gentlemen’s rents in these western shires; which of the two is the greater prejudice to the bulk of the nation, *problema esto?* Where we must likewise balance the loss and damage we suffer by the exporting so much of our money in specie to a foreign country to buy it, which diminishes our own, *pro tanto*. But if the victual was purchased in Ireland by exchange of our goods given for it, that takes away that objection, founded on the exporting our money.” Boswell v. Gray, 29th January 1712, Mor. Dict. p. 9398.

The revenue of the burgh is derived chiefly from landed property. In the year 1697, it amounted to L. 1557, 2s. 7d. Scots, and the expenditure to L. 1431, 6s. 7d. Scots. In the year 1840, the revenue amounted to L. 1675, 6s. 11d. Sterling, and the expenditure to L. 1567, 15s. 4d. Sterling. The sources in which the revenue of the burgh originated are distinctly pointed out in several charters. In some measure, these sources have been dried up; but to what extent or by what means, it is not easy to determine. There is a charter in favour of the burgh, dated 8th June 1572, by King James VI., in which he grants to the said burgh, all revenues belonging to churchmen within the territory of the burgh, for the purpose of erecting a school in Irvine. In this charter, he refers to annual-rents levied from certain farms, also to tenements, orchards, gardens, crofts, fruits, and duties; but of the value of these grants, no definite estimate can be formed. These, all and sundry, were united and incorporated, as ordained by James in terms of this charter, “henceforth and hereafter to be called Our foundation of the school of Irvine.” Such was the destination of the revenues belonging to churchmen, and more especially to the Carmelite friars, within the territory of the burgh. What was formerly done in fulfilment of this design does not appear from any known documents; but in part payment of an academy built by subscription in Irvine, at the expense of L. 2100 Sterling, and having a royal charter, money has lately been expended by the burgh to the amount of L. 1633, 4s. 6d. Salaries for the encouragement of teachers in this academy are

also paid, annually, out of the same funds. Besides, this yearly expenditure is increased by the burden imposed on the town, of defraying the charges for occasional repairs of the building. Apart altogether from what remains of the possessions belonging in the olden time to the Carmelite friars,—the town has other property and other sources of income, to which references are made in the charters, and more especially in the charter granted by James VI., dated 1st May 1601.

The situation of the town is not only beautiful but very salubrious, and presents in every respect a most desirable place of residence. With the exception of an assessment of a very limited amount, for the support of the poor, there is not a local burden. The main street is wide, well-causewayed, clean, and handsome. Throughout the town, the houses, generally speaking, are excellent and commodious: in the suburbs, there are several well-built villas; and in the immediate vicinity, there are sites eligible in the highest degree for building. Now that communication by steam-carriages, with Paisley and Greenock and Port-Glasgow and Glasgow, is both frequent and rapid, parents may easily avail themselves of the advantages afforded here for the satisfactory and indeed complete instruction of their children in every branch of classical, commercial, and ornamental education. Doubtless, the communication so happily opened up will bring these advantages under the consideration of many, so as to induce them either to settle with their families in Irvine, or board their children under the care of one or other of our accomplished and efficient teachers.

Among the principal buildings, the Academy deservedly claims the first notice. This large and elegant edifice was built in the year 1816. It contains seven very commodious apartments, and stands in a fine open and well-aired situation. The teachers are three in number, and all the chief branches of education are taught. There are, besides, various private educational establishments in the burgh. The present parish church may next be noticed: a large and well-proportioned building, erected in the year 1774, with an elegant spire attached. The church is estimated to contain 1800 sitters. The patronage is vested in the Earl of Eglinton. There are also congregations in Irvine in connection with the Relief, the Associated Synod, and the Baptists.

The Town-house was built in 1745. Besides court hall and council chambers, it contains two rooms formerly used for civil debtors, and three apartments for criminals, with police-office;

shop, and public library. The debtor's prison has this year (1840,) been discontinued in consequence of the New Prison Act; and the only jail in the county for civil debtors is now at Ayr. Criminals are seldom confined in this jail beyond a few days; when longer imprisonment is found necessary, they are usually transmitted to Ayr.

A Saving's Bank was instituted in Irvine in the year 1815, and such has been the rapid progress of this excellent institution, that, in the year 1839, the sums deposited amounted to no less than L. 1050 Sterling. The depositors consist mostly of industrious mechanics and servants.

In ancient times, there was a magnificent market-cross in the centre of the town, but it was taken down in the year 1694. The principal stones of that edifice were applied in the erection of the present meal-market in 1694 and 1695.

There were also two ports or great entrance gates into the town, the one extending across High Street from the west end of the Glasgow Vennel; and the other across the street called Eglinton Street, near to the house now belonging to James Allan, weaver.

Irvine appears to have been visited by a severe plague in 1546, in which year a commission was granted by Queen Mary, with consent of the Earl of Arran, her tutor and protector, and governor of the kingdom, to the magistrates of this burgh, granting to them very extensive powers for enforcing the necessary regulations as fully as could be done by the Lord Justice-General.

The present bridge of Irvine, across Irvine water, was built in 1745-6, by Thomas Brown, at the contract price of L. 350 Sterling; it was materially widened and improved in the year 1827, under authority of an act of Parliament.

The town is well lighted with gas, from a work erected by public subscription in 1827.

"The Seagate Castle," says Robertson in his Topographical Account of Cunningham, "is a ruinous fabric of considerable antiquity. It belongs to the Earl of Eglinton, and is supposed to have been intended as the jointure-house of the Dowager Ladies of that family. There is no date upon it; but, from the circumstance of the united arms of Montgomery and Eglinton being engraved upon a central stone, in a vaulted chamber in the lower story, it must have been built since the union of these two families by marriage in 1361; and that it could not be much later

than that period, may be inferred from its structure as a house of defence, in which are many arrow-slits for bows, but no gun-ports for cannon or other fire-arms, which were introduced into Scotland about nearly the same era, and were never omitted in fortified places erected after that time. In this old castle there remains still quite entire, one of the most perfect specimens of the Saxon or Norman round arch, that is perhaps now to be met with in Britain. It is erected over the principal gateway into the house. A square tower, in one of the corners, is evidently much more ancient, as may be concluded not only from the style of the building, but from the stone being greatly more decayed from the action of the weather."

The present Parliamentary constituency of the burgh is 258; and the municipal constituency of that part of the burgh within the royalty is 182.

The municipal government of the burgh is vested in a Provost, two Bailies, Dean of Guild, Treasurer, and twelve Councillors. There are six incorporations of trades, holding under charters or seals of cause from the magistrates and council, viz. squaremen, hammermen, coopers, tailors, shoemakers, and weavers. At present the numbers of the different trades may be computed as follows:—Squaremen, about 94; hammermen, 32; shoemakers, 37; tailors, 30; coopers, 4; weavers, 300.

The principal inns are the Eglinton Arm's Inn and the Queen's Arm's Inn. There are three annual fairs in Irvine,—first Wednesday of January for horses; first Tuesday of May for cows; third Monday and third Wednesday of August for horses.

The number of hand-loom weavers in the town and parish of Irvine is about 400. Their earnings vary according to their respective abilities and steadiness; but the following statement may be viewed as a fair calculation:—

100 employed, earn weekly	L. 0 5 0 each.
70	0 8 0
70	0 8 0
60	0 10 0
50	0 12 0
50	0 14 0
<hr/> 400	<hr/> 62 15 0
	<hr/> Average wage, L. 0 9 2

There may be about 200 females employed in winding weft or preparing it for the weaver, and the earnings of this class may average 6d. per day, or 3s. per week. The number of females

engaged in ornamental needle-work, may amount to nearly 2000. While learning their art, these persons make very little, but when they become expert workers, they will earn from 10d. to 1s. 4d. per day; and the length of their day, in general, is from seven in the morning to eleven or twelve at night.

Eminent Men.—The celebrated Mr Dickson, to be after mentioned as minister of Irvine, was a poet; and, among other poems, he published the hymn, well known under the title of “O Mother dear Jerusalem.” But, a poet of higher genius and greater name, is also claimed by Irvine as one of her sons,—James Montgomerie of Sheffield. At the period of his birth in “the Half-way,” the street so called was part of the suburbs of the royal burgh of Irvine, and was held as part of the parish *quoad sacra*; and although the district referred to is now a distinct parish in these respects, it lies within the parliamentary burgh as now constituted. Late-ly, when on a visit to his native place, Mr Montgomerie was publicly received, and entertained with every possible demonstration of respect by the magistrates and inhabitants. At the time of his birth, his father held the pastorate over a small section of the Moravian Church, assembling in a chapel within the Half-way of Irvine.

Over this burgh the celebrated Robert Barclay presided as provost; and in the reign of Charles L, he was one of the Commissioners to the English parliament.

In Irvine were also born the late John Galt, Esq. well known as an author of considerable popularity; and the Right Honourable David Boyle, at present the distinguished head of the Court of Session.

III.—POPULATION.

The population of the town and parish of Irvine in 1681,	5200
Males,	2390
Females,	2870
Population of the country part of the parish,	682
Males in the country,	333
Males within the royalty	1961
Females within the burgh,	2636
Population of Irvine, 7th June 1841 :	
Males, in burgh,	1965
Females, do.	2687
Total,	4672
Landward district, Irvine parish,	620
Halfway district, (gross),	3085
Parliamentary burgh and parish total,	8377

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Lands in the parish of Irvine.—

Earl of Eglinton.		Arable.	Wood.
Policy,	68	2 18	34 0 0
Seagate Yard,	1	0 19	
Stone Castle,	56	1 29	4 0 0
Little Stane,	90	0 0	2 3 0
Stanemuir,	48	0 5	2 3 8
Lawthorn,	116	1 8	14 1 0
Armsheough,	120	0 0	36 0 0
Snodgrass,	86	2 3	
Bogside,	129	1 0	
Nether Broomlands,	80	3 32	
East Do.	45	3 9	
Bourtrechill,	81	0 5	11 3 0
Fencedyke,	61	3 9	1 2 0
Seven acres,	16	3 11	
Cherryland,	51	3 35	
Rodding hill,	71	1 21	
Holehouse,	49	1 31	
Annicklodge,	20	2 5	11 0 17
Burgh of Irvine,	462	0 25	
Colonel Fullarton,	60	0 0	
Towerlands,	80	0 0	
Stewart's heirs,	65	0 0	
Kidsneuk,	37	0 0	
Lochlands,	35	1 0	
Balgrays,	280	0 0	7 0 0
Chamber houses,	29	0 37	
Lochwards,	17	3 39	
			125 0 25
Howmill,	26	0 0	
Divot park,	8	0 0	
Dalrymplewards,	8	0 0	
Gullil and, &c.	12	0 0	
Major Todd,	4	3 5	
Adam Paterson,	3	2 4	
Glebe, &c.	14	0 0	
Small feus,	12	0 0	
Unfit for crop,	315	0 0	397 0 0
Under wood,	125	0 0	157 0 0
Roads, waters, dikes, &c.	125	0 0	157 0 0
			3673 0 0
	2914	9 0 acres.	3673 0 0 acres.

The rental of arable lands in the parish amounts to L. 5273, which gives per imperial acre L. 1, 15s. 7½d.

There are some inclosures let as high as L. 6, 6s. per imperial acre. The general rate of small inclosures near the burgh is from L. 4 to L. 5 per imperial acre. The rate at which farms are let per acre, varies from L. 2 to L. 3, 15s. according to quality of soil.

The lands are all let for a fixed sum per annum, and all on leases for nineteen years.

The tenant, in most cases, pays all public burdens, excepting cess and minister's stipend.

There is but a very small portion of land in the parish let ex-

clusively for pasture, and what is let is generally let about L. 4 per acre. The land described as unfit for crop consists mostly of drifting sand, and affords a very scanty pasture for a few cows. All the other land in the parish is arable, and has been under crop. The soil in the most part of the parish is light sand; towards the middle, it is of a sandy loam, and towards the higher or north-east, it is a heavy clay; on the whole, it is fit for any kind of crop.

Produce.—The annual amount of produce may average about (3550 quarters of grain,) 25,900 stones of hay, and 3440 bolls of potatoes, besides turnips, &c. There are from 40 to 50 men and as many women employed in agriculture, with about 60 horses. The number of dairy cows in the parish is about 370.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church of Irvine is an oblong square of 80 feet in length, and 60 in breadth. There is an elegant steeple attached to it; and the interior was fitted up for the accommodation of 1800 sitters. It was built in 1774; and it underwent a great repair in 1830. Around it, there is a large burying-ground; and a field, between it and the river, is in the possession of the heritors, which they intend to annex to the churchyard, when it becomes necessary to do so. No part of the burying-ground is held as the property of private individuals. The tombstones of several eminent persons distinguish this burying-ground: and of these may be mentioned the tombstones of Mr Alexander Nisbet, Mr William M'Knight, and Dr Richmond; and that also of James Blackwood and John M'Coull, who were hanged in 1666, by sentence of the Commission which tried those who were engaged in the affair at Pentland.

Among these tombstones there is one erected to John Peebles of Broomlands, Provost of Irvine, who died in 1596; and there are several others nearly as early.

Originally, the church of Irvine belonged to the monastery of Kilwinning; and at the time of the Reformation, the vicarage was held by Thomas Andrew, by whom its value was stated at 200 merks yearly. The first Presbyterian minister of Irvine, Mr Thomas Young, was inducted in 1570. He was succeeded by Mr Alexander Scrimseour in 1598; and in 1610 he and several of his brethren were charged by the Lords of Secret Council with the crime of harbouring "John Campell *alias* Fadder Christostome, ane known trafficquing priest." Mr Scrimseour in 1618 was succeeded by Mr Dickson, who was deprived of his office by the

Court of High Commission; but was afterwards restored through the influence of Alexander the Sixth Earl of Eglinton. Mr Dickson was translated, and became Professor of Divinity, first at Glasgow, and subsequently at Edinburgh, where he died in 1662. His place as minister of Irvine was filled by Mr Alexander Nisbet, whose character is well stated in his epitaph, as written by one of his brethren in these words:—"Grande aliquid vultu nituit, gressuque docoro; grandius in magni dotibus ingenii."—After Mr Nisbet, Mr George Hutchison became minister of Irvine. Not giving obedience to his bishop, he was first silenced by the Parliament in 1662, and subsequently, in the same year, he was banished from Edinburgh; but, upon their passing the act of indulgence, he was authorized by the Privy-Council, in 1669, to exercise the ministry at Irvine, where he died. Contemporaneously with Messrs Dickson, Nisbet, and Hutchison, Mr James Ferguson was minister of the adjoining parish of Kilwinning, and in conjunction with these eminent individuals, he formed the design of publishing brief expositions of the Scriptures. In part, this plan was carried into effect. Mr Dickson, *inter alia*, published his "Expositio Analytica omnium Apostolicarum Epistolarum." Mr Nisbet published an exposition of the two epistles of Peter, and also an Exposition of Ecclesiastes. From the pen of Mr Hutchison, the public received an exposition of the Book of Job, of the Minor Prophets, and of the Gospel according to the Evangelist John. "By all this, it appears," says Mr Patrick Warner, "that the people of Irvine had a long and clear day of the Gospel among them,"—"and," adds he, "I beg prayer in their behalf, lest, because of their barrenness, the kingdom of God should be taken from them."

At the time when he wrote the sentences now quoted, Mr Patrick Warner was minister of Irvine, having succeeded Mr Hutchison in 1688. The tone of these sentences seems to indicate the existence of an unfavourable impression on his mind, as to the misimprovement of their privileges on the part of his people. At all events, we know that Mr Warner met with great discouragements from them in the prosecution of his ministry. Greatly oppressed by these discouragements, he submitted the reasons of demission to the presbytery of Irvine in 1702.*

* The reasons of demission were the following:

"It is not unknown to many in this presbyterie how heavie the charge of this congregation hath been to me for a long tyme, and what reasons I have to give in a de-

Imperfect when compared with the result to be desired, and even with the result of Christianity in our day, was the state of

mission thereof, which also I have some tyme offered, but hitherto have not bein taken off my hand;—and now I am therefore constrained more earnestlie to presse the same for these reasons following:—

1st, I never was legallie settled minister of Irving, having entered amongst them before our legall settlement, to preach only in a meeting-house to so many as then called me, which I then looked upon to be only for ane interim, and did not expect the libertie wee then had would have continued above a year or two; and if I had thought it would have been of longer continowance, would never have undertaken so heavie a charge.

2d, My acceptance even of that call was upon condition and assurance given me that I should have a helper (for which I refer to the records of the presbyterie, ane extract whereof is herewith produced.) But that condition not having been fulfilled during the whole space of fourteen years (though they have now the legale stipend of which they had no prospect when that promise was made) I am no more bound by my acceptance of that call, which was but for ane interim, and upon that condition.

3d, Having latelie perused the call given, I find more than the one-half of these who subscribed it either dead or removed out of the place, and near the one half the whole families removed, so as neither they nor any of their posterity to be found in the place.

4th, Others are come or brought into their roume, the outcasts of all the parishes about, and some from very remote places, either altogether without testimonials, or bringing very lame ones, and though I have bein for many years complaining of this to the magistrates, yet hitherto have had little or no redresse at all. But, on the contrary, they have received such as burgesses, whom the session unanimously voted should not be received as members of the congregation, so that a relation of pastor and people is made up between me and a great many of the present inhabitants of Irving by meer force and compulsion, without allowing me the libertie of giving my consent thereto, which yet I conceive is necessary to make up that relation.

5th, My hands are not strengthened in the suppressing of sin and wickedness; but these too much encouraged by connivance and other wayes.

6th, I am now aged above 60, my strength decayed, and my voice too weak for so numerous a congregatiōne.

7th, I am not willing to mention other grievances; some of them are known to this presbyterie. But, in short, animosities are come to so great a height (though I hope I can vindicate myself as having given no just provocation thereto), that neither can I expect that the Gospel will be received kindly off my hand by some, nor have I the freedom to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper amongst them while these remain; yes my hands are much weakened in preaching of the Gospel.

To these reasons I crave libertie to add more, if need be. And, in the meantime, do not presse this presbyterie to any in orderly procedure in the affair, but allow them to intimate to the congregation, that I have here given in such reasons for the presbyterie's acceptance of my demission, and require them to give in their answers thereto, if they have any, against the next presbyterie day. But withall, earnestlie obtest the presbyterie to do me justice, when they have considered how weighty and relevant my reasons are. 28th July 1702."

Accordingly, in February 1703, as we learn from the manuscript sermons of Mr Reid, minister of Stevenston, he declared the church vacant by appointment of presbyterie. The following passage from the discourse which he preached in the church of Irvine, on the occasion to which reference is now made, may be quoted as giving a view of the actual state of religion in this country at that time.

"How few now-a-days esteem ministers in love for their work's sake! how many lie at the catch, and wait for their halting! what unjust reproaches and aspersions are they many times loaded with; and, how readily are the enemies of a minister believed, even by the bulk of professors! Talk of him what you will, how are his proceedings and conduct misconstrued? What discouragements of this sort does your present minister labour under, owing partly, from the unaccountable ignorance and weakness of some; partly, from the enmity and malice of others; but chiefly from that decay in religion and love to it that the most part of professors are lying under. And here, sirs, I cannot but take notice of the little love and esteem some of you, at least, in this

religious knowledge and practice in the days to which we have now referred. Both among the laity and the clergy, superstition was prevalent to an extraordinary and lamentable extent. Their loudest and most plaintive wailings were raised against the sin of witchcraft, so that about the period of which we have been writing, persons suspected of it were prosecuted with persevering industry by the people; and, at the instigation of the clergy, they were punished by the executive, with unrelenting severity. The leading cause of the fast which the General Assembly appointed in 1649, was the supposed prevalence of witchcraft. Confession on the part of the accused was the only attainable evidence of a definite kind, and its validity was never questioned by the judges. Of proceedings in such cases, several instances are stated in the records of the presbytery of Irvine.* The only effort made in dealing with the accused was to bring them to a fuller acknowledgement of their guilt. This being done, the day of execution was appointed. Of the 22d April 1650, the record of the presbytery of Irvine bears, that, "the presbyterie, finding that the sin of witchcraft was growing daillie, and that in the several paroches meikle of the hidden works of darkness was discovered and brought to light in the mercie of God, and that severalls were apprehendit and in firmance for that sin, did meet occasionallie this day to heir and receive the confessions of some, of the said sin of witchcraft,

place have shown for your humble and godly pastor, which grievances he has these several years been labouring under in this place, how little his heart has been encouraged and his hands strengthened in his work. The unkind treatment he has met with from some is too well known in this neighbourhood. I especially instance those base, scurrilous, and calumnatory papers that some in this place dropped against him. Those papers contained reflections so shameful and unjust that the authors durst not avow them. It is probable there were but a few at penning of them, and possibly some of those few may be present; and I wish there had been as few at pains to spread them. But it is not the first time that sinners have been at pains to glory in, and spread abroad their own shame: however, it was your minister's good fortune to be as generally known as the papers were; so that the memory of them lies to day, not as a blot upon him, but upon this place. It was the wish of many at this time, who had a regard to their reputation, that more had been done by the magistracy of the place, to testify their abhorrence at such a base practice. How was it possible to keep the ministers of synod and presbytery, who had occasion to see these papers and to hear of them, and the concern the people of Irvine had in their ministers. I say was it possible to keep them from these reflections upon it? Oh! but the people of Irvine must be sadly degenerated! Would your forefathers have treated an honest minister of the gospel at such a rate? I have heard them, here, you will observe, I shall not speak of your aspersions publicly, and by some amongst you, upon the ministers of these bounds, &c."—Manuscript sermons in the possession of Thomas Whyte, Esq. 134, Princes Street, Edinburgh.

* The records of the presbytery of Irvine are incomplete. The first volume extant is from 2d of June 1646 to 2d July 1650. The succeeding volume is not extant. The next of those preserved is from 17th August 1687 to 18th April 1699. The volume next in succession is wanting, and the one that follows is from 26th September 1710 to 16th June 1750.

that they might recommend the same to the Lords of Privie Counsell for the issuing furth of a commission of assyse to sit upon the said persons, and after hearing, the presbyterie does judge the confessions of the persons following, relevant to be recommended." Then follow the cases of Margaret Cooper, Janet Robison, and Catherine Montgomerie; all of whom confessed "the renunciation of their baptism, carnal copulation with the devil, and the taking of a new name from him." Other cases of similar import might be extracted from the record of the presbytery of Irvine; but we pass on to another source of information, as to the prevalence and treatment of witchcraft in Irvine, about the period under consideration. This source is found in the Memorials of Mr Robert Law, page 219. During February 1682, silver plate was stolen from the house of Major-General Montgomerie. A female servant was suspected, but while she repelled the suspicion with indignation, she proffered her services for the discovery of the stolen goods. On a certain day, according to our author, she "goes down to a laich cellar, takes the Bible with her, and draws a circle about her, and turns a riddle on end twice from north to south, or from the right to the left hand, having in her hand nine feathers, which she pulled out of the tail of a black cock, and having read the 51st psalm forward, she reads backward chap. 9, ver. 19 of the book of Revelation, he appears in a seaman's cloathing with a blew cape, and asks what she would; she puts one question to him and he answers it, and she casts three feathers at him, charging him to his place again, then he disappears at this time." Two successive times, there is a similar appearance of the devil, who is twice met in a similar manner, when she found herself prepared to disclose the place where the stolen goods were secreted, and in the place mentioned they were accordingly found. For this service, the Major-General committed her to prison, where she confessed the charge of witchcraft, and told them she had learned the art from Doctor Colvin, who used to practise it in Ireland.

Upon the retirement of Mr Warner in 1702, Mr William M^cKnight became minister of Irvine, and remained in this situation till 1750, when he died. His successor, Mr Charles Bannatyne, was translated from Kilmorie in Arran, and died soon after he laid the foundation of the New Church in 1774. During the preceding year a church was formed in Irvine, in connection with the Synod of Relief. The first stated pastor of this new church, viz. Mr James Jack, was not ordained till 1777. The vacancy

occasioned in the Established Church by the death of Mr Banatyne was filled up by the appointment of Dr James Richmond, who closed his ministry in 1801. During his incumbency, and in the year 1782, Mr White, the second minister of the Relief church, was ordained to that office, and in 1783 he was deposed for error in doctrine and for contumacy.

His errors were adopted under the influence of a Mrs Buchan. It appears from the autograph letters of this woman, and from the correspondence of some of her followers which we have seen, that, by herself and by them, she was considered as being the spirit of God dwelling in flesh,—as being, in short, the incarnation of the Holy Spirit. From the terms of the libel against Mr White, we learn that by him, and as we infer by her, it was held *first*, that sin does not adhere to the believer; *secondly*, that Christ tasted death for all men; and *thirdly*, that, whilst the bodies of Saints under the New Testament are the temples of the Holy Ghost, the Saints under the Old Testament were not favoured with this distinction.

To the honour of the inhabitants generally, and more especially of the Relief congregation, her doctrines and pretensions excited feelings of abhorrence. Petitions were presented to the Magistrates, in which, by Dissenters as well as Churchmen, the magistrates were called upon to apprehend her, and proceed against her as a blasphemer. They did not do this: but they proceeded to dismiss her from Irvine. "To protect the woman from insult," as we learn from the Statistical Account, by Dr Richmond, "the magistrates accompanied her about a mile out of town; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, she was grossly insulted by the mob, thrown into ditches, and otherwise ill-used by the way. She took up her residence, that night, with some of her followers, in the neighbourhood of Kilmaurs; and, being joined by Mr White and others in the morning, the whole company, about forty in number, proceeded on their way to Mauchline, and from thence to Cumnock and to Closeburn, in Dumfries-shire, singing as they went, and saying that they were going to the New Jerusalem." Mrs Buchan, by one of her adherents, is stated to be "The very woman prophesied of in the 12th Revelations as the great wonder in Heaven." It appears the delusion was not confined to Irvine, as in one of the letters mention is made of the Rev. Francis Kelly at Northampton having "confessed her" (Mrs Buchan) "in the fullest manner to be of God."

This was done in May 1784; but the woman soon died, and the establishment being broken up, the imbecile fanatics, who had followed her, returned to their former places of abode. Mr White was deposed in 1783, and Mr Peter Robertson was ordained as pastor of the Relief church in 1784. During his ministry, the building was enlarged; and Mr Robertson died on the 30th January 1819. He was succeeded by Mr Archibald M'Laren, who was ordained on the 23d March 1820, and died on Saturday, 11th September 1841.

Dr James Richmond, author of the former Statistical Account of Irvine, died in 1804, and was succeeded by Mr James Henderson, who died in 1820. The present incumbent was admitted to his charge on the 22d June of that year. Up to 1785, the stipend of this parish was seven chalders of victual, chiefly meal, and near L. 100 Scots. The augmentation granted at that time was L. 400 Scots. The last augmentation was granted on the 19th June 1816, and commenced with crop 1816. As then granted, the stipend consists of 18 chalders of victual, with L. 10 Sterling for communion elements. Originally, the glebe was about one and a-half acres, but subsequently an addition was made to it of six and a-half acres. The manse, which is commodious and handsome, was built in 1820.

The Secession congregation in this place was formed in the year 1800; and in 1808, they called the Rev. Alexander Campbell, and he was then ordained among them as their first minister. The place where they assembled for public worship at that time was found inconvenient, and the building of their present place of worship was commenced in 1809, and was opened in January 1810. It is a neat and commodious chapel, and seated for 800.

A small place of worship was opened by the Baptists in the year 1803, under the direction of the Rev. George Barclay, their first minister. He died in 1838, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, the Rev. John Leechman, A.M. Having sold their former chapel, Mr Leechman and his friends erected another more commodious and more conveniently situated. It is fitted up to hold 600 persons.

Hamil's hill chapel, built in 1836. The Rev. Robert Smith, minister. Seated for 350 persons. In government, the church is congregational—and in opinion, it is distinguished by holding the universality of the atonement, the pre-millennial advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his personal reign.

The population of the parliamentary burgh and parish, as already stated, is 8377 ; and for this population, church accommodation is provided in the following ratio : Sittings in the Established Church of Irvine, 1800 ; in the Secession Church, 800 ; in the Relief Church, 915 ; in the Baptist Church, 600 ; Mr Smith's chapel, 350. In addition to this accommodation for one-half of the whole population, the community is partly indebted to the liberality of the Church Extension Committee in providing additional accommodation in the parish church of Fullarton, to the extent of 850.

Education.—In the Academy which has been already noticed, there are three teachers, and accommodation for pupils to the amount of 500 ; in the commercial Academy, for 150 ; accommodation in Mr Smith's school, 150 ; do. in Mr Clark's, 120 ; do. in free school, 120 ; do. in smaller private schools, 100 ; total, 1140. Superadded, with the aid of L. 500 from Bell's Fund, accommodation, in Fullarton school, for 150 ; total, 1290.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—According to a suggestion made by Robert Montgomerie, Esq. of Craighouse, banker in Irvine, each congregation in Irvine has, for many years, supported its own poor,—whilst the poor, not in connection with any congregation, are supported from a fund obtained by assessment, and from rents of property belonging to the kirk-session, from the fees arising from proclamations of marriages, mortcloth dues, and other parish funds. Of this fund, one-half is levied from the landward heritors, and the other half from proprietors and occupants of houses in town. Of paupers not connected with any denomination of Christians, the average number is about 75 ; and the average expenditure for their relief, inclusive of temporary and extraordinary cases, is about L. 396 per annum. The disbursement of this sum is superintended by a committee, composed of three heritors, the provost, and two magistrates, with the clergymen and two elders from each of the Established and Dissenting congregations,—and a committee annually appointed by those householders who are assessed. These appoint a sub-committee, and an overseer, who is allowed a salary of L.10 per annum. The co-operation of these public bodies is harmonious in the highest degree, and in every respect satisfactory to the community.

November 1841.