

PARISH OF BIGGAR.

PRESBYTERY OF BIGGAR, SYNOD OF LOTHIAN AND TWEEDDALE.

THE REV. JOHN CHRISTISON, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name and Boundaries.—IN ancient charters, the name is generally written Biger and sometimes Bigre. Its origin is very doubtful, but probably, as Chalmers thinks, from the Scoto-Irish words *big, thir*, pronounced *big'er*, and signifying soft land. This description does not apply to the parish generally, nor even to the land immediately around the town; but the old castle of the family of Biggar stood in the middle of a morass, and this circumstance, which has evidently given rise to its own name *Boghall*, may be thought to justify the derivation now given of the name of the parish.

Biggar is a border parish of Lanarkshire, on the south-east, where it marches with the county of Peebles. It is bounded on the south by Culter and Kilbucho; on the east by Skirling; on the north by Dolphinton and Walston; and on the west by Libberton. Its length from the south-west, where it is washed for about 300 yards by the Clyde, to its north-eastern extremity, is $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles. It approaches the form of a triangle, and contains $11\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, or 5852 Scots acres.

Topographical Appearances.—There is a good deal of level land in the parish, but generally speaking it is hilly. The hills are of moderate elevation, sometimes half forming themselves into ridges, but in general pretty much detached. Their near equality in point of height, their gentle acclivities, *roynd backs*, and surfaces unbroken by natural wood, rock, or torrent, preclude all picturesque effect, but they present nevertheless a very pleasing aspect. Towards the south, they subside into a plain of considerable extent. This plain, which is the lowest land in the parish, is about 628 feet above the level of the sea. The town, which stands on a gentle elevation between it and the hills, is 695 feet, the ridge of heights north-west of the town, 1260, and Bizzyberry, on the north-east, 1150.

Climate.—From the elevated situation of the parish, we have necessarily a keen atmosphere and severe winters, yet from the dryness of the soil, and from our being equally out of range of the eastern *haars* and western rains, the climate of this parish is neither so damp nor cold as that of many lower situations. Cold easterly winds blow in spring, but the prevailing wind during the remainder of the year is the south-west, which acquires great force as it passes through the vale of Clyde, sometimes sweeping this parish with untempered violence. The parish of Biggar used to suffer so much from autumnal frosts that the grain produced on some of the low-lying farms could not be used as seed above once in four or five years. Since 1817, these frosts have almost entirely disappeared. One undoubted cause of this is the extensive draining of the low lands, which has taken place since that time.

The following tables have been constructed from a book of daily observations on the weather kept by Mr Alexander Watt, late tenant in Biggar mill. The hour of observation was nine o'clock in the evening, the place 685 feet above the level of the sea, Longitude $3^{\circ} 26' W.$, Latitude $55^{\circ} 37' N.$

Monthly Mean Temperature.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1802.	33°.42	33°.59	37°.32	41°.80	45°.96	50°.46	51°.06	55°.67	50°.46	46°.70	38°.23	36°.25
1803.	32.16	34.03	38.16	42.46	45.00	51.33	57.77	59.70	46.43	43.10	35.96	35.83
1804.	37.93	32.65	36.09	38.20	50.35	54.03	54.67	53.83	51.56	45.54	38.36	32.06
1805.	34.80	34.71	38.90	41.00	43.80	50.50	55.51	54.13	51.60	41.77	41.00	34.74
1806.	33.45	35.82	37.38	40.93	47.64	52.26	54.19	54.70	51.33	46.96	41.76	39.45
1807.	35.48	33.50	38.06	41.53	46.93	50.00	56.51	56.58	43.11	39.61	29.54	33.67

Monthly Mean Height of the Barometer.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1802.	29.70	29.57	29.95	30.07	30.25	29.97	29.91	30.09	29.16	29.84	29.93	29.88
1803.	29.97	29.89	30.20	29.97	30.07	30.17	31.27	30.11	30.23	30.20	29.70	29.76
1804.	29.70	30.22	29.84	29.93	30.00	30.20	30.03	30.02	30.22	29.81	30.08	29.95
1805.	29.54	29.63	29.86	29.87	29.86	30.21	29.98	29.99	30.16	30.00	29.87	29.90
1806.	29.60	29.72	29.78	29.59	29.91	30.30	29.99	30.06	30.12	30.02	29.92	29.80

Hydrography.—Biggar water rises on the north side of the parish, and when about two miles on its course passes the town of Biggar, or rather divides it; for though the bulk of the town lies at a little distance from the left bank, a large suburb has within the last forty years sprung up on the right. To the traveller who enters Biggar by the Carnwath road, this suburb presents a scene decidedly picturesque,—houses perched on the brow of the steep bank, others standing lower down on the declivity,—sloping gardens below, the opposite bank crowned with lofty old trees, and Biggar

water winding most circuitously along the bosom of the little valley. On issuing from the town, Biggar water enters a fine open vale, which includes the southern frontier of the parish, and extends to the Clyde on the one hand, and the Tweed on the other. It enters this vale about a mile and a-half from the Clyde, and after receiving a small tributary which connects it with that river, pursues its way to the Tweed. As the Clyde in high floods sends a portion of its waters by this channel to the Tweed, Biggar water may be said to unite these two great rivers. Indeed, the waters of the one might all be conveyed without any great difficulty to the other. The length of the vale which extends between them is 7 miles, and its descent 25 feet. Biggar water, from its rise to its junction with the Tweed a little below Drummelzier, runs a course of 9 miles. The only other stream worth mentioning is Candyburn, which rises in the north-east corner of the parish, divides it for the space of 3 miles from Peebles-shire, and then falls into Biggar water. The parish is well supplied with springs, but none of them deserve particular notice.

Mineralogy.—There are neither coal, limestone, nor freestone in the parish, the predominating rocks being varieties of the secondary trap and porphyry series of Jameson, (whinstone of the peasantry.) Of these Plutonian masses the following may be mentioned: greenstone, amygdaloid, and porphyry. They are very untractable in the hands of the mason, but when once built form an excellent wall. Some fine pebbles and moss-agates are occasionally found in the amygdaloid rock, but are confined to the south-west quarter of the parish.

Soils.—There are probably about 1000 acres of clayey soil, which are very open, and rest on an open substratum of clay or gravel. That of which there is the greatest quantity in the parish, and which prevails particularly on the higher grounds, is a light blackish soil, incumbent on rotten whin. The epithet *deaf* is often applied in the district to this kind of soil, and it seems much improved by the stimulus of lime. - There are probably about 2000 acres of this; after which, there are pretty equal proportions of sand, gravel, sandy loam, blackish loam, inclined to moss, and peat moss. The whole arable land of the parish is well adapted to turnip husbandry, and capable of being very easily drained where required.

Botany.—There is little interesting under this head. We have no natural woods, deep ravines, or any of those localities so much prized by the botanist, who will here feel but little tempted to

———"Steal along the lonely dale,
In silent search, or climb the mountain rock,
Fir'd by the nodding verdure of its brow."

The following are the only plants not common everywhere, which have been observed in the parish:—*Anchusa sempervirens*, *Epilobium angustifolium*, *Ononis arvensis*, *Sambucus Ebulus*, *Ranunculus Ficaria*, *Saxifraga granulata*, *Genista anglica*, *Scrophularia vernalis*, and *Veronica scutellatu*.

Some names of places, such as *Carwood* and *Bizzyberry* or *Bushy-berry* (hill) would seem to indicate that woods had formerly existed which have long since disappeared. Considerable remains of alder, oak, and birch, have also been dug out of the mosses, and in many places hazel-nuts have been discovered several feet below the surface. But whatever may have been the case formerly, the soil seems but little congenial now to the growth of natural wood. The lover of Scottish scenery will look in vain for the hazel copse, or sloe-thorn thicket, or even for a patch of the trailing bramble: The only underwood is furze, broom, and in one or two places the wild rasp. This want of natural wood is in some measure compensated by plantations, of which there are about 750 acres. An erroneous notion once prevailed that the soil was best adapted to the Scotch fir, and the consequence is, that by far too great a proportion of the parish bristles with plantations of that unlovely tree. A glance at the large and thriving hard wood trees at every farm steading ought to have corrected this prejudice long ago; but it is now happily on the wane. In all the recent plantations, there is a due mixture of hard wood, which seems to make the same progress, in comparison with the resinous trees, as in other parts of the country. The ash and elm are the decided favourites of the soil, and next to these the beech and plane. The larch in gravelly soils and exposed situations becomes corky in the heart, and falls into premature decay.

A method of pruning trees has originated in this parish, which well deserves public attention. Mr Gavin Cree, nursery-man in Biggar, the author of this improvement, has explained it at length in the third volume of the Quarterly Journal of Agriculture. His plan is to apply the pruning-knife the third or fourth year after a tree has been planted; but all that is done for some years is shortening the lateral branches, and carefully suppressing all rivalry with the main stem. When the tree has attained the height of fifteen feet, it is subjected for the first time to *close* pruning. The lowest tier of branches is cut off the first year, another tier the se-

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cond, and so on, care being taken that not more than a single tier, and that always the lowest, be removed in any one season. This annual pruning goes on till about three-fifths of the whole height of the tree are cleared of branches, when the process is complete. It has been found that this method of pruning has the following advantages over that in common use : It brings the tree to a greater height in a given time, enabling it, the author avers, to keep pace with the fastest-growing resinous trees. It causes it to make more timber in the trunk, instead of dissipating its strength among useless branches. It is so gradual a process that it does not enfeeble the growth of the tree, but enables it to cicatrize its wounds, and thus make finer wood. And finally, it enables it to afford more shelter, from the numerous branchlets and leaves thrown out by the lateral pruning. *

Zoology.—Of quadrupeds, the hedgehog, rabbit, polecat, squirrel, and weasel are common. The ermine is rather scarce. The badger and otter are seen, but very rarely. The following *birds* are common :—the sparrow-hawk, merlin, long-eared, brown, and barn owl, wild and teal duck, woodlark, fieldfare, goldfinch, bullfinch, gray, green, and rose linnet, redpole, common titmouse, gold-crested wren, lapwing, curlew, heron, common bunting, stonechat, stank hen, black and red grouse, pheasant, woodcock. The black-cock has become abundant of late years. The water-crow is in small numbers. The starling used to be scarce, but has built for the last two years on the tower of the church. The kingfisher, redstart, goat-sucker, snow-flight, long-tailed titmouse, and coot are scarce. The quail has been seen, but not for many years. A bittern was shot five years ago on Biggar moss, but none have appeared since. The raven is occasionally seen passing to his haunts on Tinto. The *moss-cheeper*, *muftin*, and *whitewing* are three birds so called in this parish, which cannot be identified with any of acknowledged names.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Historical Notices.—The battle of Biggar is celebrated by Blind Harry, but not mentioned by any other historian. It is said to have taken place between the English under Edward I. and the Scots under Wallace, and to have ended in a great victory over the invaders. Appearances still exist, and traditions float among

* For notices and commendations of Mr Cree's system of pruning, see *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, Vol. iii. p. 308; Sir Henry Stewart's *Planters' Guide*, second edition; and particularly Professor Low's *Elements of Agriculture* p. 386.

the people of the district, which leave little doubt of the engagement. Blind Harry says it was fought on marshy ground, and tradition points to a low-lying field south-east from Biggar, where pieces of broken armour have often been gathered. The remains of a camp are also to be seen at no great distance. The English are said to have approached the field by Cors-Cryne, and the Scots from their encampment on Tinto. Wallace, it is told, some time before the battle, gained admission to the enemy's camp, disguised as a *cadger* offering to sell provisions. By this means, he ascertained their strength and position, but had no sooner departed than suspicion rose, and he was instantly pursued. On reaching a bridge over Biggar water, at the west end of the town, he turned on his pursuers, and putting the foremost to death made good his escape. There is still a foot bridge over the stream to the west of Biggar, which has been called from time immemorial "the *cadger's* brig." On the north side of Bizzyberry, are a hollow rock and a spring called Wallace's seat and Wallace's well.

Biggar was probably the rendezvous of the Scots army, which under Sir Simon Frazer achieved the victory at Roslin in 1302. It is at least certain that the army marched from Biggar to Roslin during the night previous to the battle.

When Edward II. invaded Scotland in 1310, penetrating through Selkirk to Renfrew, he spent the first six days of October in Biggar.

When the Scots army, after Cromwell's victory in Fife in 1651, marched to England by Biggar, Leslie, according to Whitelock, "summoned Biggar, and the governour returned a resolute answer, that he kept it for the commonwealth of England." The place thus summoned must have been Boghall Castle, which was in 1651 garrisoned by the English. As Cromwell followed the tract of the Scots army, he would probably halt some time at Biggar.

In 1715, Lockhart, younger of Carnwath, raised a troop in this neighbourhood for the service of the Pretender, which after rendezvousing some time at Biggar, went to Dumfries, and joined Lord Kenmure.

Family of Fleming.—The manor of Biggar was given by David I. to Baldwin, a Flemish leader, whose descendants, though locally designed of Biggar, retain to this day the original surname of Fleming. Baldwin was Sheriff of Lanark in the reign of Malcolm IV. and it has been supposed that this office became for some time hereditary in his family. The Flemings of Biggar appear to have

obtained an earlier footing in this county than ever the more celebrated race of Douglas; for between 1147 and 1160, Baldwin de Biger witnessed the charter granting the lands on Douglas water to Theobald the Fleming, the founder of the Douglas family. In 1341, David II. formed the whole county of Wigton into an earldom, and bestowed it on Sir Malcolm Fleming, a cadet of the family of Biggar, but it afterwards fell by inheritance into the main branch. This family also acquired in 1357, certain lands within the barony of Lenzie, and in 1382, that whole barony, including the parishes of Cumbernauld and Kirkintilloch. In 1606, the earldom of Wigton was erected anew, and conferred on them by James VI. The title being limited to heirs-male became extinct on the death of Charles the eleventh earl in 1747. The estates of Biggar and Cumbernauld went to his daughter, Lady Clementina Fleming, the wife of the Honourable Charles Elphinstone, who succeeded his father as Lord Elphinstone in 1757. In consequence of an entail made in 1741, those estates went to her second grandson, the Honourable Charles Elphinstone Fleming, the present possessor of the estate of Cumbernauld, and of a small portion of that of Biggar. The rest of the latter property was sold a few years ago,—the entail of 1741 having been set aside by act of Parliament; but the patronage of the church and superiority of the lands were retained.

Ecclesiastical History.—The first event of any interest under this head was the foundation of a chaplainry in the parish church of Biggar, under the following unhappy circumstances: John Lord Fleming, Chamberlain of Scotland, went a hawking on the 1st of November 1524, when he was attacked and murdered by John Tweedie of Drummelzier, James Tweedie, his son, and several accomplices. After a delay of some years, this affair was submitted to arbiters, who decreed that a certain assythment in lands should be given to Malcolm Lord Fleming, the son of the murdered Lord. In obedience to another part of the decret, Tweedie, the principal assassin, on the 10th August 1531, granted in mortmain L.10 yearly from the lands and barony of Drummelzier, for the support of a chaplain “who shall pray and sing mass for the salvation of the soul of the deceased John Lord Fleming in the parochin church of Biggar.”

Biggar was one of the five collegiate churches in Lanarkshire. According to the writ of foundation, dated 16th January 1545, “Malcolm Lord Fleming, to the glory and honour of the High and Un-

divided Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the Immaculat Virgin Mary, mother of our Lord, for the safety of the soul of King James V. late King of Scotland, of most worthy memory, and for the safety of the Cardinall Legat's soul, and for the safety of his own soul, and Joan Stewart, his wife, sister to the said seren King, and for the souls of his parents, benefactors, friends, and kinsmen, predecessors and successors, and of all faithful deceast, and principally for the souls of those from whom he had taken goods unjustly or don injury unto, and had not satisfied and compensated either by wakes, prayers, or pryce, did found, date, and effectually erect a colledge or collegiate church, with the collegial honor, dignity, and pre-eminency, for one provost, eight canons, and prebends, and four boys having children's voyces, and six poor men—bestowing upon the provost the rents, fruits, and emoluments of the parochin and parish church of Thankertoun, with the manse and glebe thereof, he always supplying the charge there by another." It appears that the church of Thankertoun, which was thus annexed to the collegiate church of Biggar by Lord Fleming, was given up to him by the abbots of Kelso for that purpose. They had received the right of patronage of Thankertoun from his predecessors; but having learned his intention of building a collegiate church at Biggar, and "considering that all of them in these evil times, in the encreas of Lutheranism, were obliged to contribute to so good a work, again transferred to Malcolm Lord Fleming, in name of the colledge to be founded and built by him, the right of patronage of the church of Thankertoun."

The abbot of Holyrood also granted to the collegiate church of Biggar, the right of patronage of the perpetual vicarage of the parish church of Dunrod, in the stewartry of Kirkeudbright, on the 5th May 1555.

The church of Biggar, built in 1545, served both as the collegiate and parochial church. It still serves as the parish church, and is in very good repair. It was built in form of a cross. The body of it is complete, but the spire was left unfinished, owing probably to the breaking out of the Reformation, when it was in progress. Though time has scarcely touched this venerable structure, it has otherwise suffered some cruel mutilations. The vestry, a fine flag-roofed building, communicating with the chancel, the large porch at the western door, the buttresses on the north wall of the nave, the arched gateway at the entrance to the church-

yard—all these were coeval with the church, and in equally good preservation, but were taken down about forty years ago, and the materials sold for seven pounds to assist in paying some parochial expenses. About the same time, the organ gallery was removed, and the richly carved and gilt oaken ceiling of the chancel taken down, and replaced with another of lath and plaster. It seems the ceilings of the other aisles were of this description, and a taste for uniformity proved fatal to one of the chief ornaments of this ancient building. In Bagimont's roll, the rectory of Biggar in the deanery of Lanark was taxed L. 6, 13s. 4d. At the Reformation the benefice of the parsonage and vicarage of Biggar was reported at L. 100 yearly. In the scarcity of ministers after the Reformation, Walter Haldane, the minister of Biggar, also served in 1586 the three neighbouring parishes of Culter, Symington, and Lamington.

Parochial Registers.—There is a register of births from 1730 to the present date. There is no register either of marriages or deaths. Parents are remiss in registering the births of their children. There are minutes of the kirk-session from 1730 to 1735, and from 1757 to 1759. From the last date to the present, there is no record whatever of their proceedings, if we except the minutes of annual meetings held to examine the state of the poors' funds.

Antiquities.—There is a large *moat* at the west end of the town, 120 paces round at the base, 54 at top, and 36 feet high. The laws may have been administered from this artificial hill, but it seems also to have served as a beacon-tower, and to have been one of a chain extending between the vales of Clyde and Tweed, and intended to give warning of any hostile incursion. On Dreva, Craig-end, Burnetland, and Castlehill in Symington, there are remains of works which were probably used for the same purpose; and these, with the *moats* at Bomphlet, Biggar, Woolfe-Clyde, and Roberton, complete the communication. About half a mile southwest from Biggar are the remains of a camp, 60 paces in diameter, with a deep ditch and double rampart. The ditch is 3 paces wide, and the rampart in some places from 6 to 8 feet high. There is also a camp on a height near Candybank, with double ditches and ramparts. It is of an oval form, 42 paces by 30 within the inner rampart, the distance between this and the outer being 9 paces. A camp of a similar form, 54 paces long, and 42 broad, is still visible on Bizzyberry. Fortifications of some sort may also be

traced on the west side of that hill. Similar remains appear on the hill above Lindsaylands. Some of these smaller supposed camps were probably nothing more than fortified cattle-folds, into which the flocks were driven on the approach of the southern *reivers*. Four large stones, which seem from their position to be the remains of a Druidical circle, stand on the top of a round hill on the lands of Oldshields, now added to Biggarshields. Several arrow-heads of flint were lately found near these stones. Two vessels of Roman bronze, and evidently of Roman manufacture, were found in a moss on the lands of Carwood. One of them, which holds about 2 quarts, and has a handle and three legs, is in the possession of Mr Brown of Edmonston. The other is of a squatter form, and holds about 8 quarts. When Biggar *Cross-know*, a small eminence in the middle of the town, was removed a few years ago, a gold coin of the Emperor Vespasian was found in excellent preservation. But by far the finest object of antiquity of which this parish could boast was the remains of the old castle of Boghall. These fine ruins, standing near the middle of a beautiful vale, lent a most interesting feature to the landscape; but they now serve a very different purpose, having been recently demolished to furnish materials for farm buildings, dikes, and the like. A small corner tower or two still mark the place where they stood.

Eminent Men.—There are not a few names of note connected by birth or otherwise with the parish. The late Dr A. Brown, Professor of Rhetoric in the University of Edinburgh, and one of the ministers of that city, was a native of Biggar. So also is Robert Forsyth, Esq. the eminent counsel.—The superior and patron of the parish is the Honourable Admiral Fleming, well known for his patriotic character, and for the many important commands he has held in the service of his country. The Admiral is at present Commander-in-Chief at the Nore.—Another of our proprietors is the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, a name dear to the cause of civilization in the east. He is well known to the world by his interesting account of the Kingdom of Caubul; and his enlightened and benevolent policy when Governor of Bombay, and subsequently of Madras, will ever form one of the fairest pages in the somewhat chequered history of British India. It may be added, that John A. Murray, Esq. the present Lord Advocate of Scotland, and the Rev. Dr Dickson of St Cuthberts, are connected, by the holding of property, with this parish.

Land-Owners.

	Scots acres.	Valued rent.	Real rent.
Lawrence Brown of Edmonston, -	1140	L.363 6 8	L.603 0 0
Heirs of the late Joseph Stainton of Biggarshields, 1132		400 0 0	612 0 0
George Gillespie of Biggar Park, -	288	397 18 7	491 0 0
Robert Gray of Carwood, -	936	204 13 9 ⁶	254 0 0
Heirs of the late Samuel Paterson of Lindsaylands, 299		250 0 0	218 0 0
----- Thomas Edmonston of Cambus-			
Wallace, -	263	140 10 0	249 0 0
John A Murray of Langlees, -	214	238 0 3 ⁶	216 0 0
Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone of Foreknows, 106		232 17 4	208 0 0
Rev. David Dickson of Persilands, -	180	107 0 0	200 0 0
Thomas Murray of Heavyside, -	258	186 17 6	192 0 0
Robert Craig of Little Well, -	44	53 17 10	160 0 0
William Murray of Spittal, -	212	115 2 0	150 0 0
Heirs of John Liddel of Easter Toftcombs, 130		86 15 7 ⁵	123 0 0
John Wyld of Springfield, -	152	31 4 7	120 0 0
William Watson of W. Toftcombs, -	86	56 13 4	115 0 0
David Maclagan of Stane, -	62	109 13 4	100 0 0
John Forest of E. Toftcombs, -	58	34 15 1	83 0 0
Thirty-eight other proprietors of land under L. 50 of yearly rental each, -	292	324 10 0 ⁹	517 0 0
	5852	L.3323 7 0	L.4671 0 0

Modern Buildings.—Edmonston, a castellated house of imposing appearance, after a design by Mr Gillespie Graham, is beautifully situate in a secluded valley near the east end of the parish. Biggar Park, and Cambus-Wallace, are both pleasant residences in the immediate neighbourhood of Biggar. A large mansion-house was built on Carwood in 1832, and when the young wood around it is farther advanced will be an ornament to the country.

III.—POPULATION.

Amount of the population in 1755, -	1098
1791, -	962
1801, -	1216
1811, -	1376
1821, -	1727
1831, -	1915

The number of families in the parish is	-	404
chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	58
in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	222	
not engaged in any of these employments,	-	124

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—The parish contains 5852 Scots acres. The town occupies about 30 of these; 750 are planted, and 400 of hilly ground are too steep to be cultivated with advantage. There are about 100 acres of moss, all in the course of improvement, with the exception of about 35 acres belonging to the town. The remainder of the parish is either all arable, or may easily be made so.

Rent of land.—The average rent of arable land may be stated at L. 1 per acre. Grass for a milch cow on the best land will cost L. 4; a one-year-old may be grazed for L. 1, or on rather superior land for L. 1, 5s; a two-year-old for L. 1, 10s.

Breeds of Live-Stock.—The cattle in this parish are a cross between the Ayrshire and the native breed of the district. The Ayrshire blood, however, predominates, and is becoming purer every year by the constant introduction of new stock from the west, and by the favourable effect of the annual cattle shew at Biggar. The Teeswater breed has also been introduced to a small extent. A good many sheep are scattered throughout the parish, but there is only one flock of eleven score regularly kept up. They are of the old Tweeddale breed.

Husbandry.—On the very best croft land the usual rotation is 1. oats; 2. green crop; 3. barley; and 4. hay. But by far the most general rotation is two crops of oats in succession; 3. green crop; 4. barley or oats; 5. hay; and then three, four, and sometimes five years pasture. The dairy has become a great object of attention of late years. Irrigation begins to be practised. Inclosing has made great progress, and is still proceeding rapidly by stone dikes on the higher grounds, and thorn hedges on the lower; but the latter are in general ill kept. The implements of husbandry are of the most approved description. There are two mills for grinding oats and barley. There are twenty-five thrashing machines, ten of which are water-driven. One of these, constructed by Mr James Watt, an ingenious mill-wright in Biggar, deserves particular mention. The water-wheel is 50 feet below the level of the barn or machinery, and 120 feet distant from it, the two being connected by shafts along an inclined plane; a very useful contrivance where water cannot be commanded except at a low level. This machine performs remarkably well.—There is a bone-mill in the parish, at which there is an extensive sale. There is besides this a portable hand-mill for grinding bones kept by the inventor Mr Bell, brewer in Biggar. It is worked by three persons who can grind 25 bushels a-day. There are ground with it on an average 375 bushels a-year, the bones being all collected in Biggar and the immediate neighbourhood. Such an instrument might be useful in every small town. One may be made for L. 3. A model of it is to be seen in the Museum of the Highland Society, who awarded a premium to the inventor.—The farm buildings in the parish are in general good. On a farm belonging to Mr Gillespie of Biggar Park, of 195 Scots acres, and L. 300 of rent, a new steading was built in 1831, which cost the proprietor L. 1500, and the tenant L. 300 in carriages. This is probably the most complete farm-steading in the county.

A great deal of the land of this parish is in the hands of

the proprietors, by whom it is either cultivated or let annually as grass parks. There are only twenty-two farms of considerable size in the hands of tenants, any others being small possessions let to persons who have some other employment besides farming. The size of farms is an important feature in the agriculture of a district. The following table will shew their extent in this parish, as well as the average rent of land.

Farms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Scots acres,	200	170	300	40	76	60	142	140	166	47	90	62	178	57	130	180	82	279	175	37	125	195
Rent, ster. L	140	135	80	60	80	30	140	40	60	60	90	100	150	33	123	200	120	218	155	60	65	30

Produce.—The following is the gross amount of raw produce raised every year as nearly as it can be ascertained :

Acres.

1018 oats, at 5½ bolls per acre, equal 5599 bolls at 16s. per boll,	L. 4479	0	0
147 barley, at 9 bolls per acre, equal 1323 bolls at 21s. per boll,	-	1389	0
203 rye-grass hay, at 125 stoncs per acre, equal 25375 stoncs at 6d. per stone,	-	-	1268
52 meadow-hay, at 180 stoncs per acre, equal 9360 stoncs at 3d.	-	-	117
38 pease, at 3½ bolls per acre, equal 126 bolls at 15s. per boll,	-	-	94
16 wheat, at 9 bolls per acre, equal 135 bolls, at 24s. per boll,	-	-	102
18 naked fallow.	-	-	-
184 turnip, at L. 4, 10s. per acre,	-	-	828
150 potatoes, at 30 bolls per acre, equal 4500 bolls at 5s. per boll,	-	-	1125
16 tares, at L. 4, 10s. per acre,	-	-	72
750 wood, the annual thinnings of which may amount to	-	-	30
3232 pasture, the gross produce of which may amount to 15s. per acre,	-	-	2424
Produce of gardens,	-	-	40

Total yearly value of raw produce raised, - L. 12,028 0 0

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Town.—In 1451 James II. erected Biggar into a free burgh of barony “with all privileges, and particularly a weekly market on Thursday.” New erections of it were made in 1526, 1588, 1634, and 1662. Biggar is the seat of a Presbytery, and of the Court of Justices, who meet four times a-year. It consists of one very wide street, stands on rising ground, enjoys a fine southern exposure, and *might* be a pretty little town if common sewers were provided to drain away the nuisance which at present stagnates on the street. In 1831 it contained 1454 inhabitants. It contains at present among others 210 weavers, 28 shoemakers, 26 masons, 20 tailors, 14 joiners, 4 mill-wrights, 2 wheel-wrights, 2 coopers, 8 blacksmiths, 8 nailors, 2 tinsmiths, 4 watchmakers, 20 carters, 6 sawyers, 1 umbrella-maker, 1 painter, 1 plasterer, 2 slaters, 5 saddlers, 7 pedlars, 1 veterinary surgeon, 1 nurseryman, 1 brewer, 16 spirit-dealers, 5 of whom are innkeepers and the rest grocers, 9 bakers, 3 butchers, 8 cloth-merchants. There are four surgeons. Some idea may be formed of the retail trade of Biggar by the following quantities of excisable articles sold during the year ending 5th July

1835 : 2608 gallons British spirits, 80 gallons brandy, 136 gallons ginger wine and other shrubs, 88 dozen foreign wine, 2528 lbs. tea, 1876 lbs. tobacco and snuff. Biggar has increased in population, and improved very much in appearance of late years. Four very handsome houses have been built in it this summer, and only one of them on the site of an old one. There are 95 proprietors of houses, and the rental of the whole houses, as estimated for the laying on of the poors' rate, is L. 1350.

Means of Communication.—There is a post-office in Biggar. The revenue arising from letters delivered has averaged L. 231, 10s. 3d. for the last four years, while for the four preceding years it only averaged L. 163, 3s. 8d. A coach from Edinburgh to Dumfries passes through the town every alternate day, and one from Glasgow to Peebles daily during summer and autumn. The Edinburgh and Dumfries mail also passes daily within four miles of the town. There are three weekly carriers to Edinburgh, and one to Glasgow. Carriers from Hawick to Glasgow, and from Dumfries and Sanquhar to Edinburgh, pass through Biggar once a-week, as also one from Wigton to Edinburgh once a fortnight. The turnpike road from Dumfries to Edinburgh by Thornhill, Linton, and Morningside, intersects this parish nearly at its greatest length, while another turnpike branches off from it about the middle of the parish, and joins the Dumfries road to Edinburgh by Moffat, Noblehouse, and Libberton. The whole length of turnpike within the parish is seven miles. During last year L.1500 have been spent in rendering it more level.—There are fourteen miles of parish roads, which are kept in excellent repair. The expense of keeping them up has averaged for the last three years L. 39, 13s. 3d. a year. A new road from Biggar to Broughton is very much needed. This would not only be a great convenience to the district, but were it continued round Dreva, Craig-end, and close by the Tweed, to the Crown ford, as has often been projected, the Glasgow and Peebles road might then abandon the rugged hilly tract by Ellsrigghill, and Corsincon, and travelling down the banks of Biggar water and the Tweed reach Peebles by a route as short and infinitely more level and agreeable than the present.—The road from Biggar to Carnwath stands much in need of improvement. It ought to be diverted so as to avoid the long ascents on both sides of Carwood burn,—an object which might be accomplished by embanking it over the hollow of the burn above the present ford, where two steep banks approaching each other, and narrowing the intervening space, invite the operation.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church, though now 290 years old, is in very good repair. In 1834 it received an addition to the accommodation of 120 sittings, by the erection of a gallery, and was at the same time new-seated. A division of the area also took place last year, under direction of the Sheriff, when it was apportioned among the landward heritors according to their valued rent. The communion table affords 44 sittings, which are free. In a certain sense, indeed, all the seats are free, none of them being let for money, though in a few instances some small services, such as shearing in harvest, &c. may be rendered by the occupants to the proprietors. The church is conveniently situate, as there are not more than four or five families who are above three miles from it. Divine service is well attended. The average number of communicants is 400.

The manse, which was built in 1805, and received an addition in 1827, is a very good house. The glebe contains 10 acres, which may be worth L. 30. The stipend is 17 chalders, half oatmeal and half barley, with L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. The average amount of stipend for the last three years is L. 239, 7s. 4½d.

A congregation of Burghers was formed in this parish in 1760, and still exists. Their chapel contains 450 sittings, 360 of which are let. They give their minister L. 130 per annum. There is also a Relief congregation, which was formed in 1780. Their chapel contains 700 sittings, 320 of which are let. They pay their minister L. 110 per annum. The members of these congregations are collected from fifteen different parishes. Of the 404 families which this parish contained in 1831, 118 belonged to the Relief congregation, 48 to the Burghers, and 236 to the Church. Of the two remaining families one was Roman Catholic and the other Cameronian.

Religious Societies.—A Bible Society was formed here in 1810, since which time it has paid away L. 950. It used to be auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society, but withdrew from that body five years ago, and is now auxiliary to the Edinburgh Bible Society. It consists indiscriminately of Churchmen and Dissenters; but there is also a Bible and Missionary Society, consisting exclusively of Dissenters.

Education.—There is only one parochial school, which is very ably conducted by Mr John Gray. The branches taught are, English, writing, arithmetic, geography, Latin, Greek, French, and mathematics. The average number of children attending the school is 170. The number at present is 180, of whom 12 are learning La-

tin, 6 Greek, and 8 French. The fees are, for English, 2s. 6d. per quarter: English and writing, 3s., English, writing, and arithmetic, 3s. 6d., Latin, Greek, or French, 6s., for any two of these languages, 8s., and for all the three, 10s. The probable amount of school fees is L. 80 per annum. The salary is the maximum. The house affords more than the legal accommodation, but there is a deficiency of garden ground, for which an allowance is given of L. 1, 14s. 3d. Mr Gray keeps an assistant at his own expense, to whom he pays L. 24 per annum. In 1767, William Law, skinner, Biggar, mortified L. 41 Sterling, and in 1817, William Nisbet, saltman, Biggar, mortified L. 40 Sterling, the interest of both sums to be applied in educating poor children. In 1828, L. 20 were raised by subscription, and expended in founding a library for the use of the parish schools. An annual sermon has since been preached in behalf of its funds, and a small contribution is occasionally made to them by the scholars. The library now contains 250 volumes. Some children who live near the east end of the parish are too remote from Biggar to be able to attend the school, but they are within easy distance of Skirling, or of a side school at Ellsrigill, in the parish of Walston. There is an unendowed school in Biggar, attended by about 50 scholars, and at which the ordinary branches are taught.

Literature.—A public library was instituted here in 1797, another in 1800, and a third in 1807. The first contains 735 volumes, the second 503, and the third, which consists exclusively of religious works, 680 volumes. Their aggregate number of subscribers is 148, and their yearly income L. 20, 6s. A public reading-room was attempted in 1828, but failed after languishing a year. Newspapers are extensively read. Forty-five numbers of different English and Scotch papers circulate through the parish weekly.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The poor of this parish were supported from 1730 to 1746 by church collections, and mortcloth dues, by the rent of a house and small piece of land belonging to the kirk-session, by the interest of L. 250 Sterling, which had accumulated in their hands, and by a legal assessment of L. 100 Scots, on the whole valued rent of the parish. From 1746 to 1760, there is no record of transactions regarding the poor. From 1760 to 1802, they were supported as during the former period, only there was no assessment; and the house and land were sold in 1774, and the proceeds gradually expended in aid of the other funds. In 1802, the assessment was resumed, and has continued ever since. In 1802, also, the principal sum of L. 250, already mention-

ed, was encroached on, and by 1815 exhausted. Previous to 1828, the assessment was laid upon land only, according to the valued rent, but since that time, houses as well as land have been assessed, the *real* rent of both being taken as the rule, and a deduction of one-fourth being allowed, in estimating the rent of houses, for the expense of repairs. Pauperism has certainly increased here of late years. This has arisen in some measure from the depressed state of the weaving trade, but still more, it is to be feared, from the decay of the old independent spirit. During the year ending in February 1835 there have been raised for the maintenance of the poor,

By assessment at the rate of 6½d. on the rent of the whole lands and houses within the parish,	L. 153 11 14
Kirk collections,	12 18 119
Bell and mortcloth dues,	6 8 98
Sale of the effects of deceased paupers,	2 19 10
Total receipt for the year ending in February 1835,	L. 175 18 87
<i>Expenditure,</i>	
35 Enrolled poor,*	L. 145 11 0
Occasional do.	12 11 8
Vagrant ditto, belonging to other parishes.	1 1 4
Fees to collector and treasurer of assessment, Synod and Presbytery clerks, and presbytery and church officers,	9 2 6
New registration book and incidental expenses,	0 17 3
Total disbursements for year ending in February 1835,	L. 169 3 9

* It may be worth while to subjoin the following tabular view of the state of the enrolled poor of the parish, for the year ending as above. It may furnish the means of comparison with the scale of parochial relief in other parishes. The relations bound to support are all grown up, unless where otherwise mentioned.

Age	<i>Ground of claim, other means of support, & relations bound in law to support.</i>	<i>Monthly allowance in Money.</i>	<i>Rent and Coals.</i>	<i>Total for Year.</i>
<i>Males.</i>				
79.	Infirm, wife so too, lodges vagrants, 3 sons and 2 daughters,	L. 0 5 0	L. 1 0 0	L. 4 0 0
85.	Infirm, cannot work any, a son, 2 daughters, and a grandson,	0 6 0	1 17 0	5 9 0
86.	Bed-rid, lodges vagrants, 1 daughter,	0 6 0	1 1 0	4 13 0
66.	Disabled by accident, can work none, 1 son and 2 daughters,	0 4 0	1 1 0	3 9 0
55.	Wants a leg, works a little, 1 son and 2 daughters,	0 5 0	1 0 0	4 0 0
78.	Infirm, can work none, 1 son & daughter,	0 5 0	2 0 0	5 0 0
35.	Disabled by accident, unable to work,	0 10 0	0 0 0	6 0 0
40.	An idiot,	1 6 8	0 0 0	16 0 0
42.	Diseased, has 2s. 6d. a week from a society, 5 children, all young,	0 0 0	2 0 0	2 0 0
<i>Females.</i>				
50.	Infirm, has an annuity of L. 1,	0 2 0	0 0 0	1 4 0
85.	Infirm, can work none.	0 5 0	2 6 0	5 6 0
35.	Weak in mind, works a little,	0 5 0	1 0 0	2 10 0
65.	Infirm, works a little, 1 son & 2 daughters,	0 4 8	1 16 0	4 10 0
63.	Do. lodges vagrants,	0 5 0	1 1 0	4 1 0
67.	Do. works a little, 3 sons,	0 5 0	1 1 0	4 1 0
57.	Diseased & bed-rid, cannot work, 4 sons,	0 6 0	1 12 0	5 4 0
70.	Infirm, works very little, 1 daughter,	0 5 0	1 1 0	4 1 0

Friendly Societies.—There are four of these in the parish.

1st. institut. 1786,	prea. stock L. 660,	memb. 220,	1st weekly allowance 5s.;	2d. do 3s. 6d.
2d. 1787,	250,	114,	for 12 weeks, 4s.,	for rest of year, 3s.
3d. 1806,	1074,	288,	6s.,	3s.
4th. 1806,	176,	111,	4s.,	3s.

Of the 793 members of these societies, only 323 belong to this parish.

Inns and Alehouses.—There are five inns in the parish, and ten grocers who are licensed to sell spirits. The effect of such a number of public houses is in every respect pernicious.*

Banks.—A branch of the Commercial Bank was established here in 1833, and is understood to be flourishing. A handsome building is at present in course of erection for its accommodation. A savings bank was instituted in July 1832. The depositors consist chiefly of farm-servants. Their number at this date (August 1835) is 200, and the amount of deposits L. 1168.

Fairs.—There are three fairs held in Biggar, the Candlemas fair, the Midsummer fair, and the old Biggar fair, held on the last Thursday of October, old style. The first is a hiring market, and very well attended. At the second, a little business is done in wool. The third is for horses and black cattle.

85. Infirm, can work none, 2 sons & 4 daughters,	0	5	0	0	12	0	3	12	0
92. Do. do. 1 daughter & 1 son,	0	9	0	1	12	0	7	0	0
62. In bad health, works stockings a little,	0	4	0	1	16	0	4	4	0
55. A widow with 3 young children,	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
55. Occasionally deranged,	0	5	0	1	7	0	4	7	0
55. Do. works a little,	0	5	0	1	1	0	4	1	0
55. Infirm, works a little, 1 son & 5 daughters,	0	3	6	0	0	0	2	2	0
68. Do. - - - - -	0	4	0	1	16	0	4	4	0
57. Do. sews a little, - - -	0	2	6	0	0	0	1	10	0
52. Rather infirm, - - -	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0
60. A lunatic, - - - - -	0	17	0	0	0	0	10	4	0
55. Infirm, lives with a daughter, 1 son,	0	2	6	0	0	0	1	10	0
52. Do. works a little, - - -	0	3	0	1	1	0	2	17	0
60. Do. sells brooms, 1 daughter, -	0	3	0	0	15	0	2	11	0

Families.

A brother and sister, the brother of weak intellect, the sister an idiot, -	0	10	0	2	0	0	8	0	0
An orphan boy and girl under 14, -	0	8	4	0	0	0	5	0	0

L. 145 11 0

* It would be quite enough for the public convenience here, and in most places of the same size, if the license were granted only to persons who keep stables and other accommodations for travellers. At any rate, the grocers should be restricted from allowing the spirits they sell to be consumed on their premises. As it is at present, their shops are often infested with loiterers in all stages of drunkenness,—an exhibition of the worst influence on young persons, and others who may have occasion to go there. Another bad practice is the licensing of toll-keepers. Often shifting about, they are less interested in maintaining a good character than the more stationary inhabitants; and in order to make the most of their short leases, and to eke out a high rent, perhaps they are often tempted to encourage excess. In many places, however, ten per cent. of additional rent is given for a toll-bar that is licensed, and while this is the case, it will be very difficult to get the practice abolished. Candidates for ale and spirit licenses are generally required to produce a certificate of character from the minister of the parish in which they reside, but in one instance in this district, where the ministerial certificate was withheld from a toll-keeper on account of bad character, no explanation of the circumstance was ever required from the minister, and yet the toll-keeper found no difficulty in getting his license.

Fuel.— Almost the only fuel used is coal from Ponfeigh, in the parish of Douglas, which is about 14 miles distant from Biggar, and sometimes, though more rarely, from Wilsonton, in the parish of Carnwath. A cart-load of 15 cwt. is delivered in Biggar for 9s., that is 3s. 3d. for the coals at the mouth of the pit, 10d. for tolls, and the remainder for driving. Peats, or rather turfs, called *rough-heads*, are dug from a moss belonging to the town, and used as fuel to the extent of about 400 carts yearly, but they are not reckoned profitable.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Few parishes have been more improved than this since the date of the last Statistical Account; but there are two periods in the history of its improvement which ought particularly to be noted. In 1806 the late Mr Stainton bought Biggarshields, containing 1132 Scots acres, and then all let as a sheep-walk for L. 150. This lease expired in 1817, and during the years 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820, he reclaimed 600 acres, drained extensively, erected 18 miles of stone dikes, planted 15 miles of thorn hedges, and forest trees to the extent of 265 acres. The rental of the property is now above L. 600, but two of the farms, consisting wholly of land not formerly reclaimed, are let on improving leases for trifling rents, and in the course of ten years, when these leases shall have expired, the whole of the estate, with the exception of 100 acres too steep for cultivation, will be under the plough, and the rental not less probably than L. 900.

In 1830 Mr Gray bought Carwood, containing 947 Scots acres, since which time he has reclaimed 400, formed fifty inclosures by stone dikes, thorn hedges, and turf fences, and planted in stripes and clumps 210 acres. He has, besides this, built an excellent mansion-house, and is engaged in improvements which will soon treble the rental of his property.

The greatest improvement which can now be effected in this parish is the deepening of Biggar water. Were it deepened two feet for the space of four miles, that is, from Broughton Bridge to Boghall, 500 acres of land on its banks, but not all in this parish, would be improved L. 1 per acre. And as the operation would not, in the opinion of competent judges, cost more than L. 500, the expense would be repaid in the course of one year. There are ten proprietors concerned, and it can only be ascribed to the difficulty of acting in concert that such an improvement is delayed for a day. The advantage which would result to the climate from the draining of such a tract of marshy ground would be very great.

August 1835.