

## PARISH OF BALFRON.

PRESBYTERY OF DUMBARTON, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name of this parish may, from its etymology, mean the *Town on the Burns*, or the *Town of Mourning*. In the former case, the name is descriptive of its locality;—the original *clachan* or town being situate at the confluence of two inconsiderable streams. In the latter case, the parish may be supposed to take its name from an event of rather an interesting character, and which forms a part of its traditional history. On one occasion, it is said, when the aborigines had gone to a little distance to attend on their religious rites, they left their children in their tents. On their return, they discovered, to their horror, that they had been all destroyed by the wolves which infested this part of the country, in common with other districts in Scotland at this period; and hence, ever after, the place was called the town of "*weeping or mourning*." Which of the two derivations is the more correct one, we leave to the curious to determine;—*non nostrum est tantas componere lites*.

*Extent, Boundaries, &c.*—The parish runs very nearly east and west; is about 11 miles in length; and 3 in breadth; bounded on the east and south-east, by Gargunnock and Fintray; on the south and north-west, by Killearn and Drymen; and on the north and north-east, by Drymen and Kippen. The *clachan*, once the chief point in the parish, is about fifteen miles due west of Stirling, the county town, though by the circuitous road it is considerably farther distant. It is almost equally distant from Dumbarton, the seat of the presbytery, and Glasgow, the access to which towns is by well-made and well-kept roads, though the original lines are far from being those which engineers of the present school would adopt. The *clachan*, at one time, was, as has been already said, the chief, if not the only point of attraction. It still deserves pre-

eminence; for here, the parish church still stands, surrounded by the burial-yard, always an object of deep interest to the population. Here, also, is the *smithy*,—and the old oak tree, of fourteen feet in circumference, in the very heart of the clachan, in which were fixed the *jougs* of the parish. But, alas! the glory of the clachan has past away. It is now shorn of its importance by its immediate neighbour, the new village of Balfron, which sprung into existence with the introduction of manufactures, about sixty years ago. This is now the principal village in the western district of Stirlingshire, is built on a gentle declivity, with a southern exposure, sloping gradually to the river Endrick. The situation is commanding, and extremely beautiful. In the immediate foreground, you have the rich valley of the Endrick, with the river meandering through the well-grown and richly diversified plantations of Ballikinrain and others; bounded by a well-defined ridge of hills, known by the name of the Lennox Fells, and which here rise to an elevation of 1500 feet above the level of the sea. In the greater distance are the Grampians bounding the view; amongst which, Benledi, Benvoirlich, Benvenue, Benmore, and Benlomond, with the more distant mountains of Cowal, in Argyleshire, form grand and conspicuous objects. The village is neatly built, and being kept clean and white, is at all times an object of interest to the traveller or visitor.

*Hydrography.*—Our only river is the water of Endrick, which rises in the parish of St Ninians, and after fertilizing and beautifying the parishes of Fintray, Balfron, Killearn, Drymen, and Kilmarnock, at length is lost in the waters of Lochlomond, the Queen of British lakes. It is a clear running and beautifully winding stream, and, though well-wooded on its margin in general, there is nothing to prevent the angler from following his sport; and richly is he rewarded by full creels of those deliciously flavoured trout in which it abounds.

*Geology.*—Abundance of limestone there is in the parish, but from want of coal it has never been turned to any profitable account. It is said, however, that coal formations do exist in the parish, and, perhaps, the appearance of newest floetz-trap and basalt may render the statement not improbable; but certain it is, that any experiments upon what have been supposed to be the likeliest situation for coal deposits, have proved hitherto unsuccessful.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Balfron originally belonged to the once powerful family of Drum-  
STIRLING.

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mond, who, along with it, held in their own right the lands of the barony of Drummond proper, known now by the name of Drymen. They also were the proprietors of Roseneath, Auchendown, and Cardross in Monteith. Balfron was given to the youngest brother of the chief "Malcolm Big." How or when it passed from their hands, we have not been able to discover. The lands of the parish are now parcelled out amongst many proprietors or heritors, all of whom are, with one or two exceptions, unfortunately for the best interests of the parish, non-resident.

*Historical Notices.*—In connection with this parish there are, doubtless, many occurrences worthy of being noticed here. For brevity, however, we select only the two following; the first affords the last instance that we are aware of, of *abduction* being punished capitally in Scotland; and the second is a tradition in opposition to what is generally supposed to have been the case by the historians of the time. *First*, it was from Edinbelly, in this parish, that Rob Roy, Junior, abducted Jean Kay or Wright; and for which he suffered the last penalty of the law at Edinburgh. Jean Kay, whom Rob abducted, was the heiress of Edinbelly, and, though not quite fifteen years of age, was the widow of Mr Wright of Wright's Park. She is described as being interesting enough in her appearance, and rather of a comely countenance. One evening, a very few weeks after Mr Wright's death, Rob, with a party of fifteen Highlanders, landed unexpectedly at Edinbelly, and carried the young widow off to his retreat in the Highlands. In process of time he was pursued, taken, convicted, and executed for the crime. *Second*, it was at Clockburn, in this parish, according to a very common tradition, that the assassins of Archbishop Sharp first drew bridle, after the murder of that prelate in Magus Moor, in Fifeshire, on 3d May 1679. The distance travelled could not have been less than seventy or eighty miles. A solitary tree now marks the spot where, at the time referred to, the house and offices of a small farm stood, and which afforded the accommodation which men and horses required. Without pretending to say how much credit should be attached to this tradition, we may be allowed to state, that there is some presumption of its truth, from the fact, that one of the conspirators, Balfour of Burly, died at Roseneath, under the protection of his kinsman Argyll; and that the spot where the halt was made in this parish is in the direct route, or what may have been supposed to have been so, from Magus Moor to that place.

*Eminent Men.*—The first to be noticed is Alexander, fifth Earl of Glencairn. "There is hardly," says Chambers, "any patriotic name in Scottish history entitled to more of the credit of a firm and zealous pursuit of liberty, than Alexander, fifth Earl of Glencairn." The friend, the associate, and the protector of Knox, he has well earned this character. In all the struggles by which Scotland was distinguished for civil and for religious liberty, from 1554 till 1574, when Glencairn died, he took an active and prominent part, and of this every reader of Scottish history is aware.

The next distinguished person connected with this parish, is the Inventor of Logarithms, Napier of Edinbelly and of Merchiston; to whom, in the opinion of Hume the historian, the title of a great man is more justly due than to any other which his country ever produced. He was born in the year 1550, and in the year 1617 he died, at Merchiston Castle, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. Of this latter fact there is, we believe, little doubt; but as to the place of his birth, this is involved in some obscurity, there being little else to guide us on this point than the tradition of the country; and upon this Balfron, in common with some other parishes, lays claim to having been the birth-place of this great man. It is quite certain that Edinbelly, in this parish, did belong to the Napiers, for many years; that the same family became the proprietors of Culcreuch; and that Sir William Napier of Milliken, as the representative of the Napiers of Culcreuch, was, in Edinburgh, in 1818, served heir and lineal representative of John Napier, the Inventor of the Logarithms. Thus the two families are identified, namely, the Culcreuch Napiers, and the Edinbelly Napiers. Now, we believe that John Napier was born in Edinbelly, and not at Drumbeg, as is occasionally alleged; because, though the Napiers had property in Drymen parish, still there was no house on the property which could be supposed a mansion suitable to the consequence of the family. Drumbeg, the spot which local tradition assigns, is mentioned by authors as "*an obscure spot.*" In point of fact, it is a very common thatched farmhouse, whereas the remains of the mansion-house of Edinbelly, in Balfron parish, are still in existence; and the arms of the family are yet to be seen on the wall of what was part of the original house. This of itself is a circumstance which marks the character of the mansion, and assigns the *status* of the owner. But there is another circumstance in connection with this matter, that ought not to be forgotten. In the year 1593, we find Napier

publishing his Exposition on the Revelations; and in his preface addressed to the King, he shows very strongly his adherence to the strict Presbyterian principles of the time, his preference to which may be traced very naturally to his intimacy with the fifth Earl of Glencairn, whose seat, Ballindalloch, was within a mile and a-half of Edinbelly, the residence of his boyhood, if not his birth-place. Otherwise, it is difficult to account for Napier's predilection for these principles, seeing that the bias of his mind might naturally have been to the other side, when it is remembered that his father was Master of the Mint, to one who had no great partiality to the Presbyterian party. When it is stated besides, that, upon the Edinbelly property, not many years ago, there was a monument standing, raised to the memory of this great man in accordance with the tradition, which assigned this property as his birth-place, we are inclined to believe that, though at Gartness and Drumbeg he may have resided, yet at Edinbelly the Inventor of the Logarithms first saw the light. Edinbelly, the place in question, is, at present, the property of the much respected and deservedly esteemed Robert Dunmore Napier, Esq. of Ballikinrain.

*Parochial Registers.*—The first date of the parochial register is 1691, when the first proclamation of banns in order to marriage is inserted. The first registration of baptisms is in 1687. From that time till the present, the register of baptisms has been very irregularly kept. From the year 1825 downwards, to the present year, with a few exceptions, the records of session have been regularly kept.

*Manufactures.*—Previous to the year 1780, this parish was, strictly speaking, rural. - Agricultural pursuits occupied the population, if a population could be really said to be occupied, who were of necessity compelled, from the low state of agricultural pursuits, to pass fully the half of their time in idleness. But in the year 1780 a very material change took place in the parish, by the establishment of an agency for manufacturing calicoes, under the influence and patronage of a very enterprising and intelligent man,—the late Mr Dunmore of Ballindalloch and Ballikinrain, in whom were united the activity of the country gentleman and the liberality of the merchant; and to whom this part of the country is indebted for many valuable improvements, of which certainly not the least are its high-roads. The calico establishment, however, did not turn out very satisfactorily; Mr Dunmore, therefore,

formed a connection with the Buchanans of Carstone in Killearn parish, who had just then built the Deanston Cotton Works, near Doune, in Perthshire; and with these gentlemen, in the year 1789, he built the cotton-mill in this parish, known in trade by the Ballindalloch Cotton Works. Mr Archibald Buchanan, the younger of the two enterprising and ingenious brothers, the partners of Mr Dunmore, had been taught the practical parts of cotton-spinning at Cromford in Derby, under the well known Arkwright, the original inventor of cotton-spinning by means of machinery. In the year 1789, cotton-spinning was, under this company, introduced into this parish, and from that time, down to the year 1793, was successfully carried on by them. But in the year 1783, Messrs James and Archibald Buchanan transferred the property to Messrs James Finlay and Company, merchants, Glasgow, who still continue to be proprietors, and who, at their several works at Deanston, Catrine, and Balfron, give constant employment to 2500 hands. The works at Balfron are driven by a stream from the Endrick, which, in dry seasons, is kept nearly uniform by water from a reservoir of 33 Scotch acres, constructed about thirty years ago, in Dundaff Moor, one of the oldest estates of the Montrose family, and contiguous to the ruins of the castle of Sir John De Graham, the friend of Wallace. This stream falls on a water-wheel of almost 30 horse power, which drives 12,000 mule spindles with their preparations. Two hundred and fifty-eight hands or thereby, and these chiefly females, are now employed at the works. It is understood to be the first cotton work in Scotland at least, in which female spinners were exclusively employed.

*Wages.*—The company pay weekly, and generally on a Thursday, the wages due to their workers. These vary for spinners, from 10s. to 13s. per week; and for piecers from 2s. to 4s. according to the work done. These wages are apparently low, and are certainly much lower than are paid for the same quantity of work done in Glasgow, where a spinner is paid from 23s. to 30s. per week. Perhaps the difference is not easily accounted for. Provisions of all sorts are much the same here as in town; dress much the same. The hours for working are just as long. The only thing which certainly is lower, is house rent; but we are far from being sure that this will make up for the difference in wages. Originally, there were employed at this mill, 400 persons, young and old. The difference in point of numbers can be readily accounted for, by the improvements introduced into machinery. For ex-

ample, in 1792, there were in what is termed a "*pass*," four men, each having two piecers, that is to say, twelve persons in all. Now, one woman spins in one pass with the assistance of three piecers, that is four persons in all what the twelve originally did. In point of numbers, the reduction will be still greater, if the self-acting *jennies* are as successful as they promise in the meantime to be. One woman by herself, with one of these, is able to spin as much as four with the *jennies* in common use; and for this invention is the cotton trade indebted, if we are not misinformed, to James Smith, Esq. of Deanston, so well known as the ingenious author of many important discoveries in various branches of science. It ought to be stated, that the workers here are in general healthy; they are clean and "tidy" in their appearance, which, may no doubt, contribute to this. In point of morality, the mill population may bear comparison with any of the same rank in any of the parishes adjoining; and to several of the mill girls, is the writer of this indebted for kind and efficient assistance in teaching a Sabbath school.

In the year 1792, Messrs John Monteith and Company, of Glasgow, established and carried on for several years an extensive printing-work; but it was found to be too distant from coal to be conducted with advantage. It was therefore abandoned. The site and property were purchased by the proprietors of the cotton works, Messrs James Finlay and Company, and have not been again turned by them to any manufacturing purpose. The great proportion of our village population are occupied with, and dependent upon, hand-loom weaving; there being in Balfron village between 300 and 400 looms. The character of the work done here is what is known by light *jaconets* and *lawns*, in numbers varying from 900 to 1600, and *harnesses*, by which are meant fancy dresses and shawl patterns of all sorts. Our hand-loom weavers are, like the others throughout the kingdom, a sadly depressed class of artisans. There may be no doubt amongst them, here as elsewhere, the idle and the worthless; but, taking them as a body, they are an industrious hard-working class. They toil at what is termed *long hours*, and long enough these are, being from 6 A. M., or even earlier, to 8 P. M., and even later; and yet they are only able to earn a miserable pittance; the average of their wages, after deducting expense of carriage, light, shop rent, and agency, not being 6s. per week. What becomes of the family in times of sickness? and to what a state of misery it may frequently be reduced, may be conceived.

As to the poor hand-loom weaver giving an education to his children, even in the most common way, the thing is impossible,—thankful is he, if he can provide their daily food and give them clothing. Why, it is asked, do parents bring up their children to such misery, by encouraging them to follow a trade which is so very much overdone, and which entails upon them a certain unavoidable suffering? The answer is obvious. The very effect of this misery now operates as a cause, under which the unhappy parent is compelled to have recourse to the dire expedient of getting assistance from his child. No sooner are its hands ready for the shuttle, it matters not what may be the sex,—the poor child is placed upon the loom, there to “eik” out, by its 1s. 6d. or 2s. per week, the pittance of the half-starved parent. He would prefer, no doubt, to send his child to the school, there to learn those acquirements which may adapt both body and mind to after toil. But the temptation is too much to be withstood. He grasps at the little help which the child can give; and even with a heavy heart puts him to the trade which he teaches himself. No apprentice fee is required; and all that is made, however little, goes to the assistance of the family. Any one who attends to these circumstances will be at no loss to see how, from year to year, and from generation to generation, misery is handed down and perpetuated.

Nor can any one who knows the circumstances of the weavers, be astonished that there should be discontent at times among them. Our wonder is, that there is so little, more especially when they have so little opportunity for moral and religious training. It is no easy matter, we are aware, to say what the Legislature should do. But, the subject is well worthy the attention of philanthropists; and, in the name of thousands of our suffering countrymen, we cannot help wishing, that some remedy were speedily introduced to alleviate sufferings and privations, which, we are satisfied, have no parallel in our Christian land.

### III.—POPULATION.

The number of the present population of the whole parish is 2057; and there has been no increase for several years. Of these about 1700 are in the village. The number of proprietors having land of the yearly value of L.50 and upwards is 16. Scarcely any of these can be properly said to be resident in the parish, and of all the evils which can be inflicted upon a parish, none can be more ruinous than a non-residing proprietary.

*Land-owners.*—The names of the present proprietors are,

Mr Spiers of Elderslie ; Mr Campbell of Boquhan ; Mr Kay of Wright's Park ; Mr Spiers, present proprietor of Culcreuch ; Mr Galbraith of Balgair ; Mr Napier of Ballikinrain ; Commissary-General Dunmore of Kilfasset ; Mr James Campbell, merchant, Glasgow ; Mr Samuel Cooper of Smithston and Ballindalloch ; Mr Patrick Neilson of Camoquhill, merchant, Glasgow ; Mr Alexander Neilson, part of Camoquhill, writer, Port-Glasgow ; Mr Pollock of Camoquhill ; Rev. Dr Graham of Balfuning and Indians ; Dr Blair of Ibut ; and the Trustees of the late James Morrison, with other smaller portioners.

*Habits, &c.*—It must be confessed that killing game without a license is very prevalent. The general habits of the population may be stated to be cleanly. It is quite impossible to view a weaving population, such as ours, notwithstanding all their disadvantages, and not be struck with their intelligence. The knowledge which they exhibit, and their acquaintance with certain subjects, is indeed astonishing.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—There are in the parish above 14,080 acres ; of these 3320 are in a state of culture ; 105 are planted ; the rest is in pasture or in waste. 500 acres might very easily, and with a proper application of capital, be added to the cultivated land, the average rent of which is about L.1 per acre ; and great additions might likewise be made to the plantations within the parish, and which, if judiciously done, would certainly improve both the climate and the shelter.

*Leases.*—With the exception of two estates, namely, Balgair and a part of Gartmore, which are managed by judicial factors, who reside in Edinburgh, the leases generally run for nineteen years. On these two estates, the leases are only five or seven years. This certainly cannot be to the advantage either of tenant or landlord.

The farms in the parish are generally small,—the rents of one or two being L.150 per annum ; but in general, they run from L.30 to L.100. The farmers are as industrious as need be ; but, from the general size of the farms, and, above all, from the want of residing proprietors, it must be regretted that there is not that encouragement given to men of capital, skill, and enterprise, which we notice in other districts of the country.

*Rent.*—The rent for grazing a milk cow varies from L.2 to L.5, according to the pasture.

*Wages.*—The rate of wages is from L.6 to L.12 and L.14 per annum, according to age and other circumstances, the farm-servants having, besides, the common allowance of milk and meal, if not resident in the house. Good dairy-maids have L.5 in the half-year. A day-labourer's wages is 1s. 6d. a day in summer, less in winter; a mason and carpenter's are 2s. 6d. per day.

*Live-Stock.*—The breed of sheep and cattle has been greatly improved, particularly the latter, under the patronage of the Strath-Endrick Agricultural Club, one of the oldest, and one of the best district Associations with which we happen to be acquainted, formed originally at the suggestion of His Grace the late Duke of Montrose, who, as long as he lived, from the date of its formation, took an active interest in its success. It is still warmly patronized by the present Duke, and its members are landlords and tenants connected with the western district of Stirlingshire and Dumbarton; by whose liberal subscriptions, premiums to a very great amount are annually distributed. Under their influence, stock of all kinds, more particularly the dairy stock, is wonderfully improved. For the dairy, the Ayrshire breed of cattle is generally preferred. In this class, many of the farmers in this district have been enabled successfully to compete with the most distinguished breeders of the south.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

In our village there is every convenience which bankers, bakers, butchers, grocers, and haberdashers can supply, with a proportional number of tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and carpenters; most of the shops are lighted with gas, an abundant supply of which there is from the cotton-works. Our chief intercourse is with Glasgow; and daily is the communication by carriers, and by a light and comfortable four-horse coach. The post arrives and departs also every day. The length of the turnpike roads within the parish does not exceed four miles.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—In 1832, it was found necessary to rebuild the parish church. In 1833, it was opened for public worship, and is seated for 700. None of the seats are let. It is commodious enough, and is in all respects built according to the intention of the resolution, "that no ornamental work be permitted, and that every possible expense, consistent with the security of the sitters, should be avoided." The expense of building and finishing this fabric, including plans and specifications, was, in all, L.930. The Earl of Kinnoul is patron of the living, as proprietor of an

old abbey in Perthshire. Connected with the establishment, there is a female Society for the advancement of religious purposes, which was founded in the year 1834. In order to enable the children to attend the Sabbath school under the superintendence of this society, and the house of God, many of the children, indeed the greater part of them, receive clothing from this Society, who at the same time very liberally meet in this respect the wants of the aged and destitute. In connection with the Society, there is a library of above 150 volumes, which have been in extensive circulation, and which, under the divine blessing, we trust, have proved beneficial to many in the parish. For the encouragement of all who may be engaged in Sabbath school teaching, or who may take an interest in their working, it will be gratifying to be told, that the effects of Sabbath school teaching in Balfron have been delightfully apparent; and that these teachers, both male and female, are either weavers or cotton-spinners. They are of the same rank with those children amongst whom they labour so cheerfully and so effectively; and have been bred up to teaching by their attendance upon a week-day class for religious instruction, taught by the present minister of the parish, and which has been in operation from 1826, and from which many delightful young people have, from time to time, gone forth.

The parish church is situated very nearly at one extremity of the parish, convenient enough for the great bulk of the population residing in the village, but too far removed from the eastern part to allow the population of that quarter the full benefit of public ordinances. In some degree to make up for this, the minister of the parish preaches once every six weeks in summer at the school-house of Lernock, about five miles to the east of the present parish church. In winter, he does this once a quarter. He goes to this place in summer, after having had regular service in the church. In winter, he is reluctantly obliged to leave his church vacant. Public worship is well attended in the summer half year. In the cold months of winter, neither weavers nor cotton-spinners are able to stand the cold of the church; and hence, during these months, the attendance is not so numerous.

The number of communicants in connection with the Establishment, is upwards of 400, and they are gradually increasing. The manse was built about forty years ago, at a cost of something under L. 300; originally a poorly built and ill-finished house. The heritors have in consequence been frequently called upon to repair

it at considerable expense. There are 17 acres of glebe, and the living is one of the small ones, a considerable portion of the stipend being made up from the Exchequer.

There are in the parish three dissenting places of worship, namely, Relief, United Secession, and Burgher. The latter have had no fixed minister for many years. The congregations of the former pay their ministers' stipends, which are said to be about L.80 per annum.

*Education.*—We have in the parish in all four schools; *first*, the parish school, the master of which has the minimum salary, and, we fear, the fees or wages are ill paid even by the few who are attending; *second*, a school, the master of which receives L. 10 per annum, as a subscription from the heritors. It is for the convenience of the eastern part of the parish. There is a school-room and master's house, both built by subscription. The *third* is a school in the village of Balfron, the master of which is entirely dependent upon the school wages, paying a rent for the school-room; and the *fourth* is a school belonging to, and in connection with, the cotton-works. The master of this receives a salary and accommodation from the mill company. Ostensibly, at least, in all these schools, the usual branches are taught. The people, in general, are perfectly alive to the benefits of education, and all are anxious that their children be taught; but, with every anxiety, the parents, in too many cases, cannot indulge it, from being unable, in the first place, to pay the usual school wages, which are from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per quarter, and provide clothes, in which their children might appear decently and comfortably; in the second place, as before observed, from being obliged to send their children to be draw-boys or mill-boys, or even weavers, at an age when they should be more properly employed at school. Often have we thought that, if anywhere infant tuition were of advantage, it might be introduced with the greatest possible benefit to this population. We have done our utmost to call the attention of those who might be supposed to be interested in the young of this place, to this highly important subject,—but hitherto, we lament to say, without effect.

*Literature.*—There is a library in the parish, belonging to the subscribers; the collection, of nearly 400 volumes, is chiefly made up of novels, biography, and a few travels.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—Previous to the year 1832, the poor and parochial funds were managed by the kirk-session. The

heritors met twice a-year with the session to docquet accounts, and to receive their report of the state of the poor; but the whole of the active management devolved upon the session. Nor did they discharge their duties in a perfunctory manner. Besides exercising a minute and daily care over all the paupers on the roll, on the first Monday of every month, the minister and kirk-session met, when all the paupers who could attend were expected to make their appearance, and personally to receive their monthly allowance. Those who could not appear from ill health, were waited upon by some member of the session, and their condition reported. Thus was the case of every individual brought monthly under the view of the whole session. Sometimes, there was in consequence an increase; sometimes, there was a diminution of their allowance, according to circumstances. The effects of this system of watchfulness were abundantly apparent. None were admitted on the roll, who were not proper objects of charity. None were continued upon it, who did not require relief. No case was overlooked. The poor were well attended to and contented, and the funds by which they were supported, exclusive of the church collections, amounted to a mere trifle. In looking over the books, and taking the four years immediately previous to 1832, we find that there were expended L. 227, 5s. 6d. for the maintenance of the poor during that time, and at this period there were upon the roll two fatuous persons, and two fatherless children. In the course of these four years, as appears by the books, the collections amounted to L. 119, 0s. 8d. The remainder of the L. 227, 5s. 6d., namely, L. 108, 4s. 10d. was made up by what is termed voluntary assessment. In other words, it was a subscription among the whole landward heritors of the parish, and was paid according to their respective valuations. This sum of L. 108, 4s. 10d., be it remembered, was for the maintenance of the poor for four years. The annual average was L. 27, 1s. 2½d., or about 3d. and a fraction on L. 2099 Scots, the nominal valuation of the parish, or about 1½d. Sterling and a fraction upon L. 4925, the real rental of the parish, being very little more than one-half per cent. thereon. This sum of one-half per cent., then, with the collections at the church, kept the poor of the parish. No assistance was given to this fund by any of the Dissenting congregations, though frequently applied to, and though the poor connected with the Dissenters were admitted to equal privileges with those of the Establishment. The kirk-session of the parish made no distinction.

Strange to say, however, there were those who looked upon the small sum which they were called upon to pay in aid of the collections, as a grievance. Murmurings were first heard, and they were unheeded. Complaints of the expense of the poor were patiently listened to by the session. At last, however, one heritor actually refused to give his quota, till compelled by law, and this was intimated to the session only when they had, as usual, met to pay the monthly allowances. The paupers were assembled; the session had no funds to meet their demands, and they had no alternative but to resign their charge into the hands of the heritors. They intimated to them accordingly, in the most respectful way possible, their resolution to do so, expressing, at the same time, their great reluctance and regret at being compelled, from circumstances, to take the step.

The heritors accepted the resignation of the kirk-session, and the result is what any one might have anticipated. From 1832, when the kirk-session resigned their charge, up to the present time, the expenses relative to the poor have been gradually going on increasing. There are forty on the roll, and L.200 per annum does not now defray all charges. This sum is at present raised by an assessment on the whole inhabitants,—one-half being upon the heritors according to their real rental, and the other half upon householders and other inhabitants, according to their supposed means and substance. Every individual within the parish, whose earnings are supposed to amount to 10s. per week, is now taxed for the support of the poor. The springs of charity are dried up, in consequence—the collections at the church door, are, we may say, almost nothing, say 1s. per day,—there is a general displeasure among the inhabitants; and there is a feeling among the poor and destitute, that they are neglected, and, perhaps, with too much justice. In short, all the evil effects of a compulsory assessment are experienced, and in this parish we have another proof, if that was needful, of the truth of a remark, which cannot be too frequently repeated, “that, of all the public funds in Europe, none is managed with so little expense to the fund itself, none so frugally, none so impartially, and none is laid out more to the purpose for which they were raised, than the poor’s funds under the care of the kirk-sessions of Scotland. And never, perhaps, will Scotland find a more proper jury to determine the objects of public charity, nor the quantum necessary for the supply.”

## MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

In 1755, the population of the parish seems to have been 755 souls. In 1792, 1381 souls; of this number there was in the village 981. In 1793, the population was 1581; of those in the village there were 1181. By the returns of 1831, the population seems to have been in the whole parish, 2057; of these there were in the village, about 1700. By census of 1841, the population is 1968. Since the publication of the last Statistical Account, 1793, our roads have been certainly improved, though much in this way remains to be done. Since then, too, our means of intercourse with other towns, particularly with Glasgow, have increased. In those days, there was no post; the nearest office was Glasgow. There were no regular carriers for the conveyance of goods. When the first caravan for the conveyance of goods and passengers, many years after this, was established on the road, it constituted quite an era in the history of the village. Now, the post arrives and departs daily, and we have our London letters on the third day. Now, we have daily carriers for goods, and a neat light daily coach in summer for the accommodation of travellers. And now, too, for the accommodation of all, there is a branch of the British Linen Company's Bank amongst us, under the active agency of the Messrs Robertson. All these are, no doubt, changes to the better; but, with all these, we cannot say that the village is in a state of thriving prosperity, but the reverse. The Endrick does not, at all seasons, even with the reservoir in Dundaff, afford constant and steady supply of water for the mill; and as we have at present to drive all our coals from Kirkintulloch, a distance of seventeen or eighteen miles, steam power is out of the question. The situation with all its beauty, therefore, is ill adapted for a manufacturing village. The population has increased since 1792, but not so, we fear, in comfort nor in happiness, in an equal ratio. On the contrary, there is in it very much misery arising from poverty and destitution; and if some new impetus be not given, by some means or other, in a few more years,

“Far away, our children will have left the land.”

*June 1841.*