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# The History of Old Cumnock









THE  
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HISTORY OF OLD CUMNOCK

By the  
Rev. JOHN WARRICK, M.A.  
FREE CHURCH, OLD CUMNOCK

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With a Map and Sixteen Illustrations

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ALEXANDER GARDNER  
Publisher to Her Majesty the Queen  
PAISLEY; and PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON  
1899



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TO

JAMES M. MACKINLAY, ESQ.,

M.A., F.S.A. (LOND. AND SCOT.).



## P R E F A C E .

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AN attempt is made in the following pages to set down in order a number of facts, ancient and modern, regarding the Parish of Old Cumnock. The story has many sides, and the material to illustrate it is abundant. At every point it is full of interest.

Many books have been searched for information. My obligation to them is duly acknowledged in the text. I likewise express my indebtedness to all who have allowed me to examine records in their possession. Valuable help has also been given to me by several of my fellow-townsmen.

It is hoped that this account of the doings and experiences of the Parish will appeal to many connected with it by birth or residence. At the same time, it may not prove unattractive to others beyond the limits of the locality, who delight in historic and antiquarian lore.

JOHN WARRICK.

CUMNOCK, *April, 1899.*





## CONTENTS.

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CHAPTER		PAGE
	I.—OLD CUMNOCK—ITS FEATURES AND ANTIQUITIES,	1
,,	II.—THE BARONS OF CUMNOCK, - - -	25
,,	III.—CUMNOCK AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN SCOTLAND, - - - - -	55
,,	IV.—BEFORE THE REFORMATION, - - -	63
,,	V.—ST. CONVALL, OUR PATRON SAINT, - -	71
,,	VI.—THE MINISTERS OF CUMNOCK FROM 1560,	81
,,	VII.—THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN AND OTHER CHURCHES, - - - - -	136
,,	VIII.—CUMNOCK AND THE COVENANT, - -	160
,,	IX.—THE STORY OF THE KIRK-SESSION, - -	198
,,	X.—THE HERITORS' MINUTE BOOK, - -	221
,,	XI.—ROBERT BURNS AND CUMNOCK, - -	231
,,	XII.—PAST INDUSTRIES, - - - - -	240
,,	XIII.—EDUCATION IN OLDEN TIME, - - -	263
,,	XIV.—NOTABLE MEN, - - - - -	274
,,	XV.—PARISH CHIPS, - - - - -	301
,,	XVI.—CUMNOCK OF TO-DAY, - - - - -	348



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

MAP OF THE PARISH, - - - - -	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
VIEW OF CUMNOCK, - - - - -	Page 3
BANK VIADUCT, - - - - -	9
CUBS' GLEN, - - - - -	13
DUMFRIES HOUSE, - - - - -	21
GLAISNOCK HOUSE, - - - - -	70
OLD ESTABLISHED CHURCH, - - - - -	111
OLD FREE CHURCH, - - - - -	132
DESIGN OF NEW FREE CHURCH, - - - - -	134
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, - - - - -	139
PEDEN'S MONUMENT AND THORN TREES, - - - - -	173
COVENANTING FLAG AND OTHER RELICS, - - - - -	196
ESTABLISHED CHURCH, - - - - -	223
THE CROSS, - - - - -	302
THE BELL TREE,- - - - -	345
GLAISNOCK STREET FIFTY YEARS AGO, - - - - -	348
GLAISNOCK STREET, - - - - -	349



A LIST OF SOME OF THE AUTHORITIES  
CONSULTED.

---

- Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland.*  
*Acts of Parliament (Scots).*  
*Aiton's Agriculture in Ayrshire.*  
*Ayr and Wigton Archæological Publications.*  
*Baillie's Letters and Journals.*  
*Barbour's Bruce.*  
*Blaeu's Le Grand Atlas.*  
*Blind Harry's Wallace.*  
*Bremner's Industries of Scotland.*  
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*Campbell's Tour in Ayrshire.*  
*Chalmers' Caledonia.*  
*Chambers' Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen.*  
*Chambers' Domestic Annals.*  
*Chambers' Picture of Scotland.*  
*Cloud of Witnesses.*  
*Cochran-Patrick's Records of Mining in Scotland.*  
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- Erskine's *Institutes*.  
*Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*.  
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Forsyth's *Beauties of Scotland*.  
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Ker of Kersland's *Memoirs*.  
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Moll's *Maps of Scotland*.  
Monipennie's *Briefe Description of Scotland*.  
Napier's *Folk Lore*.  
*Ordnance Gazeteer of Scotland*.  
Paterson's *Contemporaries of Burns*.  
Paterson's *History of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton*.  
Paterson's *Life of Wallace*.  
*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*.  
*Regality Club (Glasgow) Papers*.  
*Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*.  
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- Robertson's *Account of the Principal Families in Ayrshire*.  
 Rogers' *Book of Wallace*.  
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 Scott's (Hew) *Fasti Ecclesie Scoticanæ*.  
 Scott's (Sir Walter) *Tales of a Grandfather*.  
 Simpson's *Gleanings among the Mountains*.  
*Statistical Account of Scotland*, Vol. VI.  
 " " " (*New*), Vol. V.  
 Stubbs and Hadden's *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*.  
 Swift's *Memoirs of Captain John Creichton*.  
 Taylor's *Pictorial Scotland*.  
 Thomson's *History of the Scottish People*.  
 Todd's *Homes, Haunts, and Battlefields of the Covenanters*.  
 Turner's (Sir James) *Memoirs*.  
 Wallace's (Col.) *Narrative of the Rising at Pentland*.  
 Wodrow's *Analecta*.  
 Wodrow's *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*.  
 Wyntoun's *Chronykil of Scotland*.

The following MS. books have also been carefully examined:—

- “The Records of the Presbytery of Ayr.”
- “The Kirk-Session Records of Old Cumnock.”
- “The Heritors' Minute Book.”
- “The Records of the Burgh of Cumnock and Holmhead.”





CORRIGENDA.

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Page 71, line 5, for *Wish*- read *Wishing*.

Page 74, last line, for *fast* read *feast*.



# HISTORY OF OLD CUMNOCK.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *Old Cumnock—Its Features and Antiquities.*

“Relate what Latium was,  
Declare the past and present state of things.”  
—*Dryden's Virgil.*

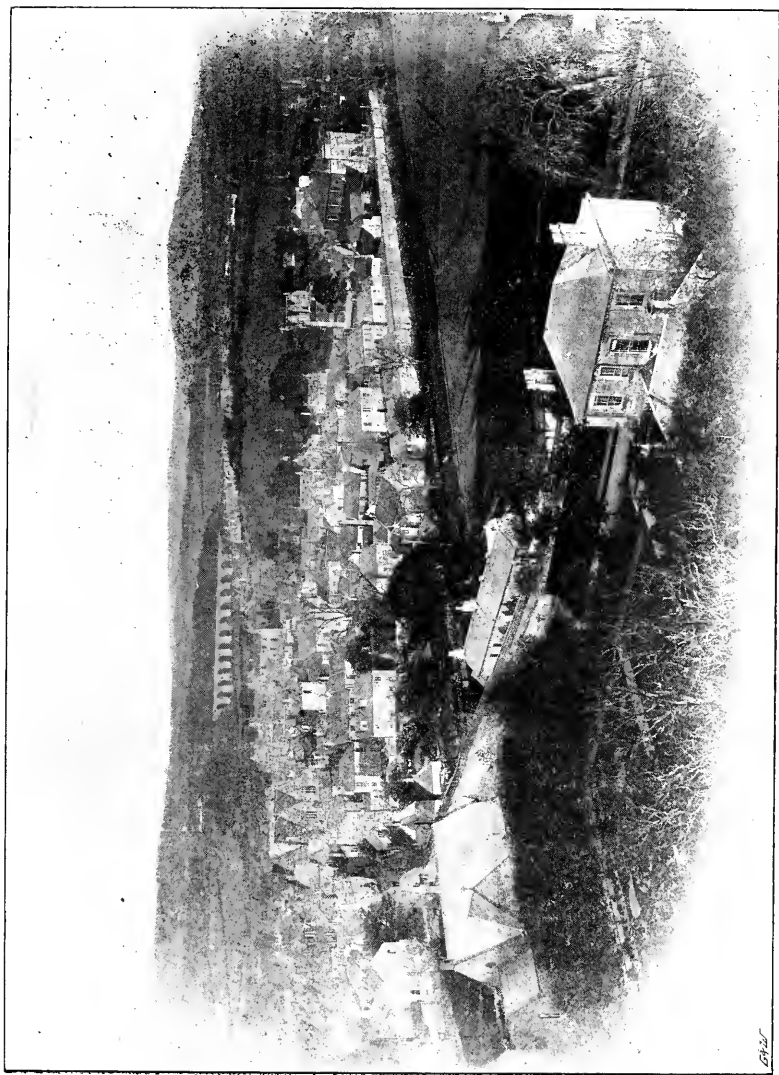
THE parish of Old Cumnock in the uplands of Ayrshire lies in the middle division of the county known by the familiar name of Kyle. Up to the year 1650, it was of much greater extent than it is at present. At that date, the larger portion of the parish lying toward the south was disjoined from it, and erected by the Commissioners for the plantation of kirks into the separate parish of New Cumnock. The wisdom of this procedure seems to have been called in question very soon, for in 1667 New Cumnock was deprived of its separate parochial existence and reunited to Old Cumnock.

This step, which involved the closing of the church at New Cumnock, was taken at the instance of the patron, the Earl of

Dumfries, who desired only to have one minister and one church in the district. Evidently the reason was a pecuniary one. The Earl gained his point before the ecclesiastical authorities, thereby securing the reduction of the New Cumnock Church, in which all religious services were given up. It was not, however, till 1681 that Parliament formally ratified the deed. The Act of that year dealing with the matter contains a clause which shows how the people of the new parish were affected by the change. Orders came to "the inhabitants of the said lands, to resort and repair to the old kirk of Cumnock for hearing of the word, receiving of the sacraments, and uther publict acts of divine worship, as formerly." This new union lasted only for twenty-four years. In 1691, immediately after the Revolution, New Cumnock regained its parochial status, and has maintained it ever since.

The reason of the division of the parish is easily understood. It was extremely large, covering 62,567 acres. Many parts of it were more than ten miles from the town of Cumnock, which was the chief centre of population, and the seat of the church. But it is not so easy to discover the principle on which the division was made. For in the division, 48,357½ acres, or more than three-fourths of the whole parish, fell to New Cumnock, while only 14,209½ acres, or less than one-fourth, remained in the possession of Cumnock. Doubtless the dwellers in the old parish consoled themselves with the fact that, though they had lost quantity, they had kept quality; for a very large portion of New Cumnock then, as now, was moss and hill, while only a small part of the land reserved for Cumnock was unfit for cultivation.





VIEW OF CUMNOCK.

GHZ

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Very likely the necessity of providing a suitable stipend for the minister of the disjoined district gives us the true reason which led to the unequal division of the parish. Ministerial stipends formed a burden upon land. If the value of the land was small, the burden required to be spread over a correspondingly big area. Hence the acreage of New Cumnock, being of less agricultural value than that of our portion of the parish, required to be more extensive, in order to furnish a stipend sufficient to maintain a separate ministry.

In consequence of the erection of New Cumnock into a distinct parish, our district came to be known as Old Cumnock. Up to that time the name of the undivided parish was Cumnock. As some confusion sometimes occurs now in the use of the two names, it is well to bear in mind that Old Cumnock is the name of our parish, while Cumnock is the proper designation of our town.

The extent of the parish remained unaltered from 1691 till 1895, when a small section of the parish of Auchinleck, lying across the Lugar, was added to it. This part of Auchinleck, extending to  $22\frac{1}{2}$  acres, had been built upon by the people of Cumnock, and, under the name of Holmhead, already formed part of the burgh of Cumnock and Holmhead. Its union with our parish, though objected to by the people of Auchinleck, was perfectly natural in the circumstances. It was too near the town, and its interests were too similar to those of Cumnock, to remain with advantage under separate parochial control.

The boundaries of Cumnock are easily defined. On the west it is bounded by Ochiltree, on the north and north-east by the

long parish of Auchinleck, and on the south and south-east by New Cumnock. In length it is nine and a quarter miles, from the farm of Bowton on the borders of Ochiltree on the west, to the farm of Guelt on the east. Its breadth from north to south varies from nine furlongs to four and a quarter miles. The parish is broadest at its western extremity, and gradually becomes narrower as it stretches eastward, tapering into a thin finger of land four miles long, and little more than one mile broad.

The town of Cumnock, which is situated at the confluence of the Lugar and the Glaisnock, is 362 feet above the level of the sea. The surface of the parish is lowest on the north side, close to the banks of the Lugar. It rises steadily toward the south. At Pennyfadzeoch, where the Lugar quits the parish, the land is 300 feet above the level of the sea; at Skares it is 693; at Changue, 537; at Over Glaisnock, 700; at High Mount, on the south-western boundary, 1198; at Longmore, 576; at Darralloch, 705; at Aird's Hill, 1034; and at Craigdollyeart, in the extreme south-east, the highest point in the parish is reached, 1352 feet. At its western limit the parish is twelve miles from the sea. The town of Cumnock is sixteen miles from the sea, and is distant one mile from the village of Auchinleck, four and a half miles from the village of Ochiltree, and five and a half miles from the village of New Cumnock. By road it is sixteen miles from Kilmarnock, thirty-seven from Glasgow, sixty from Edinburgh, and forty-three from Dumfries.

Sixty-nine and a half acres in the parish are covered by running water. There are no lochs. A small one used to exist on



Avisyard hill, but it was drained more than fifty years ago. It was named Cairnscadden, and was a favourite resort of curlers.

The name Cumnock has received three different interpretations—

(1) The oldest and most familiar interpretation traces the name to the Cymric *com*, a bosom or a hollow, and the Gaelic *cnoc*, a hill. This interpretation suits the locality in the neighbourhood of the town extremely well; for Cumnock nestles in the bosom of the surrounding hills. All the roads leading out of the town ascend, with the exception of the Ayr Road, which follows the course of the Lugar. Two objections, however, militate against the acceptance of this etymology. In the first place, it makes the name a compound of Cymric and Gaelic, which is far from usual; and, in the second place, it breaks the rule, which is now regarded as cardinal in the interpretation of place names, that “in compound names, the stress always falls on the qualitative syllable” (Maxwell, *Scottish Land Names*, p. 10). In this case the qualitative syllable, according to the etymology suggested, is the second. The accent, therefore, would require to rest there, and the name be pronounced Cunnóck. At no time do we find this pronunciation in use.

(2) The second suggested derivation sets aside all reference to the situation of the town in relation to the surrounding hills, and connects it with the streams that flow so closely to it. Thus, *The Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland*, edited by F. H. Groome, traces it to the Gaelic *cumar*, meeting, and *oich*, water, making it mean “The meeting of the waters.” Of course we cannot tell whether the name Cumnock was given first to the town or to the

parish. But if the name belonged first to the town, this interpretation accurately describes its situation. For it lies at the meeting place of the Lugar and Glaisnock. According to this etymology, Cumnock has exactly the same signification as the town of Coblentz in Germany, which gained its name (Lat., *Confluentes*) from its situation at the junction of the Rhine and the Moselle.

This interpretation, however, like the other, contravenes the rule regarding the qualitative syllable. Besides, the component parts, *cumar* and *oich*, require a good deal of fitting together before the name of our town, as we know it, is obtained, while the presence of the letter *n* in the middle can hardly be explained on the ground of euphony.

(3) The name has been derived from the Gaelic *cam*, bent, and *cnoc*, a hill. It would therefore mean the bent hill, as Sir Herbert Maxwell suggests (*ut supra*, p. 140), or the crooked or sloping hill, as Johnston indicates in his *Place Names of Scotland* (p. 81). This interpretation has the advantage of being thoroughly scientific. It suits admirably, too, the general appearance of the parish. One has only to take his stand on the higher ground outside the town, for instance near Clocklownie, in order to be convinced of this. The land slopes downward with more or less steadiness towards the level of the Lugar. Behind it stretches upwards towards New Cumnock, but in front it grows more and more depressed. The contour of the parish is unmistakably like an inclined plane, whose downward trend is from south to north.

It is not possible to do otherwise than to give the preference

to this etymology. It wins our favour by its adherence to the rules of interpretation, and it describes correctly the leading physical feature of the parish. It may be regarded, therefore, as certain that Cumnock means the bent or sloping hill. The angle of inclination varies. Some idea of the gradient may be gained from the following measurements. In each case, the place mentioned second lies almost due north of that with which it is coupled. Lines joining them would be parallel.

In the extreme west of the parish, between the farm of Muir and Pennyfadzeoch, a distance of two miles, the ground descends 400 feet. In the centre of the parish, between Over Glaisnock and the town, a distance of two miles, there is a fall of 338 feet; while at the eastern boundary, between High Garleffan and the Glenmuir water, a distance of only one mile, the drop is 300 feet. The inclination, accordingly, is a little more in the west than in the middle portion of the parish. It is greatest in the eastern section. The figures work out approximately in this way. In the west there is a gradient of 1 in 26, in the middle of 1 in 30, and in the east of 1 in 18. Clearly Old Cumnock has truth stamped on its face when it calls itself the sloping hill.

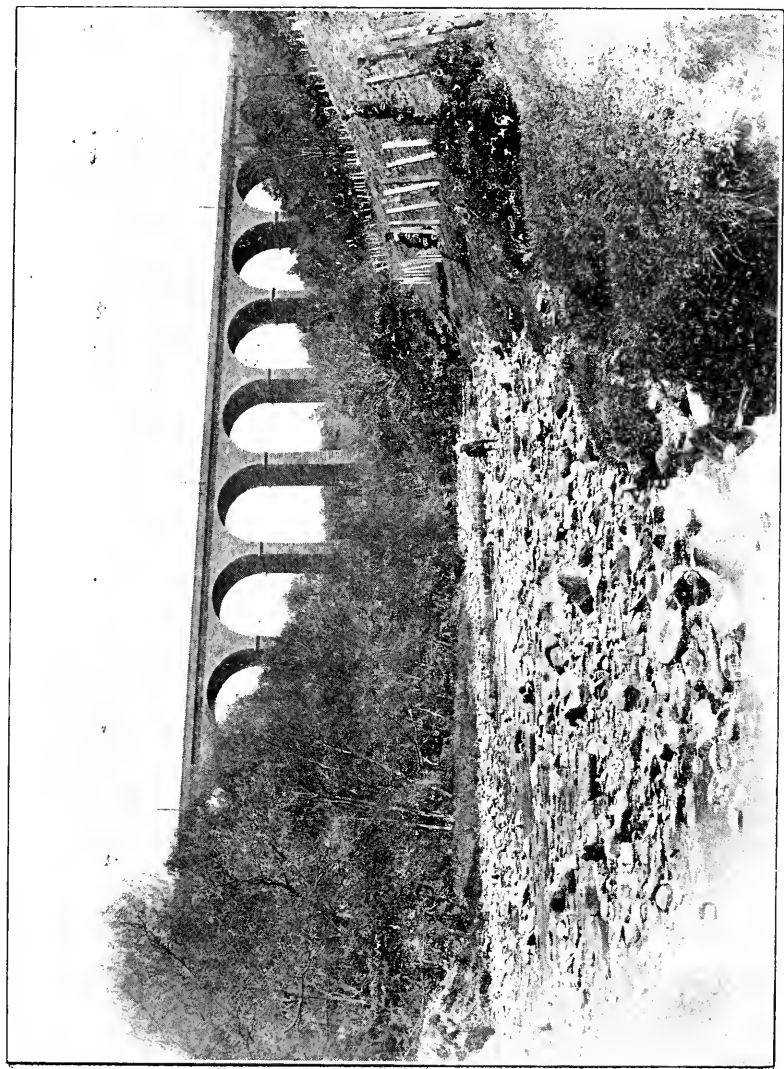
The name of our parish appears elsewhere in Scotland. In Carsphairn there are the Cumnock Knowes. In Minnigaff, the order of the syllables is reversed in the name Knockcom (Maxwell's *Galloway Topography*, pp. 147 and 220). Uvyrcumnok, near Inverkip, is mentioned by Wyntoun in his *Chronykil of Scotland* (Bk. viii., cap. 28).

Many variations in the spelling of the name are to be met with. The following appear in documents of different dates—

Cumnok, Comenocke, Comnocke, Canknok, Cumnoke, Cumnock, Cumnok, Cumnoc, Cumno, Comenogh, Comenok, Cunnok, Cumnoch. In books, like the *Cloud of Witnesses*, it takes the form of Cumluck or Cumlock, which is still used by old people. Cumloik is the way in which Patrick Dunbar spells it, in a letter from the prison of Blackness to Sir Patrick Waus of Barnbarroch, in 1585. Sometimes it is spelled with a K—Kumnok. In the *Geographica Scotiæ* of 1749, it appears as Cumnack.

The mention of our parish in the *Geographica Scotiæ*, which dates from the middle of the eighteenth century, is not the earliest notice of Cumnock to be found in maps. In the Bodleian library at Oxford there is a map, the author of which is unknown, but whose date is probably the thirteenth century. In it the draughtsman has carefully inserted Cumnok, attaching to it the usual sign to indicate a castle. In another map of 1595, taken from Mercator's *Atlas*, there is marked not only Connok ca(stle), but also Cunnok kirk. As the distance between the two places corresponds to the distance between Cumnock and New Cumnock, the castle referred to can only be the fortress of the Dunbars, which figures so frequently in the course of this history. Blaeu's map of Kyle, in his *Atlas Major*, published in 1652, is interesting for the information it gives. Its inscription is noteworthy. It is dedicated "nobilissimo et ornatissimo juveni Jacobo, Frenderetti vicecomiti, Crichtonii Domino." It makes no mention of Cumnock town nor of Terringzean Castle. But in addition to Kumnock Castle, it mentions Boirland Castle, and the Castle of Lefno (Lefnoreis). Outside our parish it takes note of Uchiltree





BANK VIADUCT.

Castle, and Castel Keyil (Kyle). While no castle is marked at Auchinleck, there appears the name of Keithstoun, which is said to have been the name in former times of a portion of the village of Auchinleck. Monipennie, in his *Briefe Description of Scotland*, in 1597, speaks of "the towne and castle of Cumnok," and also of the "castles of Lochnoreis and Terringean."

Besides numerous burns everywhere to be met with, there are two streams of larger size, which flow partly through the parish and drain it. These are the Lugar and the Glaisnock.

The Lugar is formed by the junction of the Glenmuir and the Bello waters, two miles to the east of the town, and close to the busy mining village of Lugar. It is the boundary of the parish on the north, dividing it from Auchinleck, except at the point where Holmhead forms part of Cumnock. After running through the policies of the Marquis of Bute to Ochiltree, it flows into the water of Ayr at Barskimming, ten miles from the junction of the Glenmuir and the Bello. The Lugar is not a large river, but the scenery at different points of its winding course is full of beauty.

Everyone in the neighbourhood knows the picturesqueness of the perpendicular crags rising more than two hundred feet in height at the Bank, clad in summer with the tender green of the graceful birch, the waving poplar, and the sweet scented lime, side by side with the darker hues of the pine, the beech, and the oak. Few scenes are so full of quiet loveliness. At the same point, just a little below the stately railway viaduct, the Lugar takes one of its great bends, and forms almost a circle by flowing round the Mote Hill. From the wooded top of this knoll, as

well as from the winding path at its base, some of the finest views are to be obtained of the grandeur and beauty of the banks and braes of bonnie Lugar water.

The Glaisnock is much smaller than the Lugar. Rising in the Black Loch, within the borders of New Cumnock, it follows a tortuous course, growing in size as it flows, until it merges its waters in the Lugar at the lower end of the town, which it divides into two almost equal portions.

The lake in which the Glaisnock takes its rise has a striking peculiarity. It flows out at both ends. At its southern extremity it sends its waters, through two other small lakes in New Cumnock parish, into the channel of the Nith, and thence into the Solway Firth. At its north end the Glaisnock issues, and flowing first into the Lugar, by and by joins the water of Ayr, and so finds its way to the Firth of Clyde. This feature of the Black Loch indicates its position on the watershed of that part of Scotland covered by the counties of Ayr and Dumfries. The Rev. Ninian Bannatyne, who wrote, in 1837, the brief story of our parish for the *New Statistical Account*, facetiously refers to the connection thus existing between the Solway and the Firth of Clyde. He pictures a trout possessed with a desire to travel entering the water of Ayr at the county town, passing into the Lugar at Barskimming, and making its way up the stream to Cumnock, where it strikes into the Glaisnock, with whose help it speedily reaches the Black Loch. Having enjoyed its roomy quarters there for a little, it continues its way down the Nith and finally passing Dumfries, arrives at the Solway Firth, and so brings to an end its adventurous voyage of nearly seventy miles.



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Mr. Bannatyne adds the following interesting fact. “The late Earl of Dumfries (the grandfather of the present Marquis of Bute), at one time proposed making a cut from the river Nith in New Cumnock to the lake above mentioned, in order to have a large supply of water for a factory that he intended to erect on the Glaisnock water, and thus to make the Nith send part of its waters into the Clyde instead of the Solway; but it was never attempted to be executed. The cuts, however . . . could easily be made, and at very little expense; but how the people of Dumfriesshire would relish this new order of things with regard to their majestic river, I cannot say—I am afraid they would forbid the bans between the Nith and the Clyde.” Very likely they would, but all Cumnock would agree in thinking that an unspeakable advantage would follow, especially in the dry days of July and August, if an increased volume of water rolled through the town in the channel of the Glaisnock.

There are two other physical features of the parish which may be noticed at present.

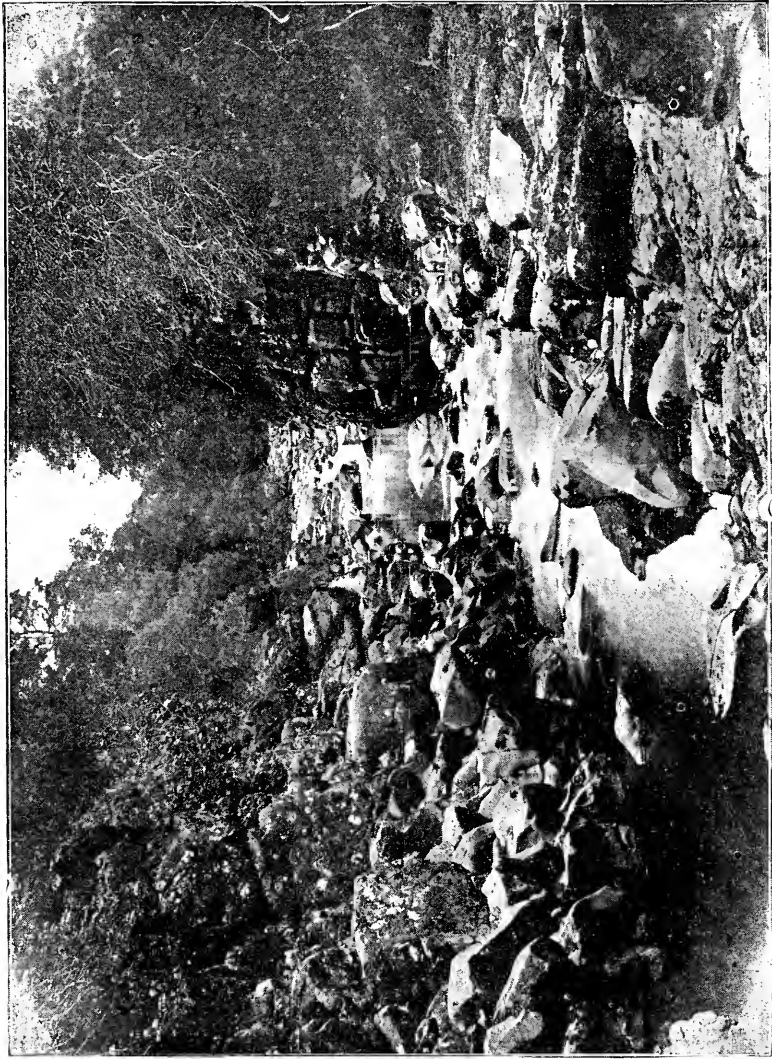
The one is its well-wooded character. This is everywhere apparent. In the policies of the Marquis of Bute large plantations of trees form a conspicuous ornament, lending beauty to the landscape. The same may be said of the smaller grounds of Glaisnock and Garrallan, Logan and Skerrington, while scattered through the parish are to be seen belts of pine, spruce, and beech, which make a pleasing background to the green fields in summer and the golden corn in autumn.

A circular plantation of beech trees on a knoll, about three-quarters of a mile on the west of the town, just in the angle

formed by the junction of the Garrallan road with the Ayr road, has an interesting historical association. It goes by the name of the Dettingen wood, and was planted in memory of the part taken by William, the fourth Earl of Dumfries, at the battle of Dettingen in Bavaria, in 1743, when George II. accompanied the allied troops. This battle, thus commemorated in our neighbourhood, is remarkable for being the last occasion on which a king of Britain appeared in person on the field. It is likewise stated that this clump of trees, along with the smaller plantation on Stair Hill, on the higher ground near Garrallan, indicates the position of the British troops before the battle commenced. A similar reminiscence of the engagement existed for nearly a century in the grounds of Stair House. Doubtless our Earl copied the example of his uncle, the Earl of Stair, who led the British army until the king nominally assumed command. Stair Hill takes its name in all probability from this Earl, who, besides being a skilful general, had a great reputation as an agricultural reformer. He was "the first Scotsman to plant turnips and cabbages in fields upon a large scale" (Thomson's *History*, III., p. 410).

Of individual trees of large growth in the parish, there are a good many. Mention must be first made of the magnificent specimen of the maple or sycamore in the garden of the Marquis of Bute. It is said to be at least 300 years old; and certainly its widespreading unbrageous head, and its thick stem, which measures 14 feet 10 inches in circumference three feet above the ground, make it easy to believe that it has stood the blasts of even three centuries, and is by far the oldest living thing in the





CUBS' GLEN.

parish of Old Cumnock. Not far from Dumfries House, also, there is, close to the bank of the Lugar, a very fine specimen of the silver fir, measuring 14 feet 9 inches three feet above the ground. Then, everyone is acquainted with the majestic proportions of the larch, not far beyond the nearest gate-house, which has gained for itself the name of *The Fair Maid of Cumnock*. And, not to speak of others, on the Ayr Road are to be seen some remarkably good beech trees, calculated to be more than 200 years old.

On the whole, it may very safely be said that few parishes are so richly wooded as our own.

The other feature which may be mentioned now, as contributing to the beauty of Old Cumnock, is its glens. These are not numerous, but in addition to the Lugar glen at the Bank, there are two others worthy of notice. They are the Glaisnock glen and the Cubs' glen. No more charming walk can be taken than up Glaisnock glen, when the water dashes playfully down the rocks and sparkles in the sunlight, amid a luxuriance of ferns and wild flowers, while tall trees spread their network of green overhead, and the air is merry with the song of the lark and the blackbird. Cubs' glen is more difficult of access. It lies in the eastern portion of the parish, on the farm of Knocknaib. The water that runs through it is the Glenmuir. The grandeur of this glen, when traversed in the brilliant sunshine of a peaceful summer day, imprints on the memory a picture of exceeding beauty never to be forgotten.

The antiquity of our parish is undoubted. Its name is a guarantee of that; yet little remains to connect it with the far

distant past. Some memorials, however, exist which throw at least a dim light on Cumnock in the earliest period of Scottish history.

A few relics of the Stone Age have been turned up by the plough, some of which are in the Grierson Museum at Thornhill. One is a small, light-coloured axe-head, about 5 inches long, with an oblique cutting edge. In the same museum there are also two fine ornamented claystone whorls, as well as some urn fragments. These were found on Boreland Smithy, or the immediate neighbourhood, and presented to the museum by the late Mr. Hugh Arthur. Other implements of a similar kind are sure to be lying buried in our fields, or may, when exposed, be thoughtlessly thrown aside, in ignorance of the fact that our ancestors, 2000 years ago, fashioned them as instruments of war or as articles for domestic use. Quite recently, in the spring of 1898, two sepulchral urns were found in a sandhill close to Boreland Mill. The larger of the two was, unfortunately, broken before it was observed. The smaller, which is almost entire, is of yellow clay, and stands about five inches high. Both have been turned on the wheel, and are rudely ornamented. They were half-filled with calcined bones. In all probability a careful examination of the sandhill would reveal other relics of the same character. The urns are in the possession of Lord Bute. Pieces of charred wood were found beside them.

The most interesting memorial, however, of pre-historic times in our district is very different in appearance and meaning from those just mentioned. It is not indeed within the limits of Old Cumnock, but just outside in the parish of Auchinleck. Still,

as in those old days parish boundaries were unknown, a memorial of the customs of the people before the beginning of the Christian era, found anywhere in our immediate neighbourhood, may well be regarded as having some bearing on the almost forgotten past of Cumnock.

It is a monument of stone situated on the farm of Wallace-town, a few yards from the left bank of the Bello, and about a hundred yards from the junction of that stream with the Glenmuir. A glimpse of it can be obtained from the public road. It consists of two thick upright stones four feet high. Across these lies a massive block, unhewn like the others, measuring 6 feet in length, 5 feet 3 inches in height, and 3 feet in breadth. The recumbent stone long ago was popularly known as "the rocking stone," because it swayed to and fro when pressed by the hand. About 1807, however, the balance was lost (*New Stat. Account of Auchinleck*). Most likely its tendency to rock was quite accidental. The real purpose of the structure was very different, for on the west side of the upright pillars there is a semi-circular group of large stones, six in number, and measuring from two to three feet square. The presence of this semi-circle of stones guarding the space behind the pillars favours the conclusion that it is a place of burial. In the language of antiquarians it is a dolmen or cromlech.

Popularly, these dolmens in our country have come to be associated with the Druids, and are looked upon as vestiges of their worship. In the Scottish histories with which we were familiar at school, it was customary to draw a picture of our forefathers in the days of Druidism. We were taught to believe that

the Druid priests moved about our hills and valleys, clothed in white robes, and regarded with reverent awe by the people over whom they held sway. With interest we listened to the story of the cutting of the mistletoe from the oak branch with the golden knife, and, with deeper feeling still, to the story of the darker doings of the Druids as they presented to their deities the sacrifice of human life. Imagination was allowed to exercise itself most freely on such a theme, and practically to run wild. Cæsar's account of Druid worship in Gaul was transferred to Scotland, and deemed a fitting foundation on which to build the whole edifice of Druid rites and ceremonies in our northern land.

Historical research, however, has proved that such a conclusion is entirely unwarranted. Druidism was never an organised cult in Scotland, and the monstrous system described by Cæsar and other classical writers never held any place in the life of our ancestors.

Skene, in his *Celtic Scotland*, may be taken as an authority on this matter. He tells us that in olden time in our country there was a class of persons termed Magi and Druadh, but that, though the names have some similarity, there was no connection at all between the religious beliefs and practices of the Druadh and those of the Druids. The Druadh of Scotland, he says, fostered a kind of "fetichism, which peopled all the objects of nature with malignant beings, to whose agency its phenomena were attributed," while they themselves were regarded as being in league with those beings, and able, through their aid, "to practise a species of magic, which might either be used to benefit those who sought their assistance, or to injure those to whom



they were opposed.” According to this view, therefore, which must be accepted as correct, it is a mistake to connect the stone monuments of our land with the Druidism of Gaul, and “to assume that the stone circles and cromlechs, which are undoubtedly sepulchral monuments, represent temples and altars” (II., p. 118). And so it follows that the Wallacetown cromlech by the banks of the Bello has no association with the Druids. It is simply a place of burial, marking the spot where some old Caledonian hero was laid to rest, amid the regrets of the people whom he ruled, and whom he had often led out to battle. As such it is of the greatest interest, and ought to be more widely known than it seems to be. The cromlech does not appear ever to have been opened.

While recent investigation has freed our forefathers from the imputation of engaging in the revolting practices of Druidism as performed in Gaul, it has also helped to throw fresh light on the relation of Ayrshire to the Romans, of whose presence in Scotland many traces are to be found. It was long usual for writers on the history of the south-west of Scotland, to dwell on the Roman occupation of our county. Thus Paterson, in his *History of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton*, has a section entitled “The Roman Period,” while Chalmers, in his monumental work, *Caledonia*, enters with minuteness into this subject, and describes in his third volume the so-called Roman road from Ayr to Kirkcudbright. The compilers, too, of the various articles in the *New Statistical Account* bearing upon Ayrshire, frequently allude to Roman remains in their parishes, as for example, baths at Largs, armour, swords and lances in the neighbourhood of Ayr,

a camp at Galston, etc., all showing, as Paterson remarks, (p. xxviii.), that Ayrshire was fully opened up to the Romans.

It would not be needful to refer to this question, if it had not been alleged that Roman remains were to be found in Old Cumnock. But that is just what Paterson maintains; for on page xxvii. of his first volume he says, "Another (Roman camp) exists not far from Avisyard in New Cumnock." He makes a mistake to begin with, by placing Avisyard in New Cumnock. It is in our parish.

How this story about a Roman camp on Avisyard arose, it is not easy to say. On Coila hill, Avisyard, there used to be a mound of stones called Cairnscadden, but it is no longer to be seen. Half a mile south of it on the moor, there is a mound 20 paces in diameter and 6 feet high. It is possible that one or other of these mounds was magnified in Paterson's eyes, until it became a Roman camp. But there is not the slightest ground for such an assumption. The fact is that it is very far from being proved that the Romans were ever in Ayrshire at all. A great deal has been taken for granted in the matter and accepted without investigation. Fifty or sixty years ago, every old road that was discovered was traced to the Romans, and put down at once as their handiwork. The so-called Roman road, leading out of Ayr by Dalmellington southward, has been carefully examined and is now regarded by all competent judges as of comparatively recent origin. Roman soldiers may have passed through Ayrshire. That is quite probable, but it is certain that they did not occupy it as they occupied other parts of our island by means of camps and roads.

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Dr. James Macdonald, formerly rector of Ayr Academy and Rhind Lecturer on this subject in 1897, sums up the whole case in this way:—"We have no reason for believing that Ayrshire was ever occupied by the Romans. It is even doubtful if they entered it at all. That Roman armies or Roman traders passed from Galloway to the Ayrshire coast, or even that Ayr existed as a town in Roman times, are both mere assumptions." (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1893-4*, p. 423). To that deliberate finding, arrived at by one so conversant with the subject as Dr. Macdonald, no exception can be taken. It must simply be received as the only verdict possible on the case. It may be that some of our ancestors in the parish saw the Roman eagles, and even fought against Agricola and Severus in defence of their native land; but Avisyard has no title to regard itself as the site of a Roman camp, and Cumnock may take pride in the fact that it was never conquered by the mistress of the world.

In more recent days three castles stood within the limits of the parish.

The chief of these was Lefnoreis, situated close to the Lugar about 100 yards to the west of Dumfries House. In old charters it is spoken of as the Ward or Tower of Lefnoreis. No part of it now remains above ground. In 1897, Lord Bute made extensive excavations on the site, and exposed a portion of the old walls as well as some capital causeway work made of water worn stones. The ruins indicate a fortress of considerable strength. Its early owners, and in all probability its builders, were the Craufurds, who appear to have been a branch of the Loudoun

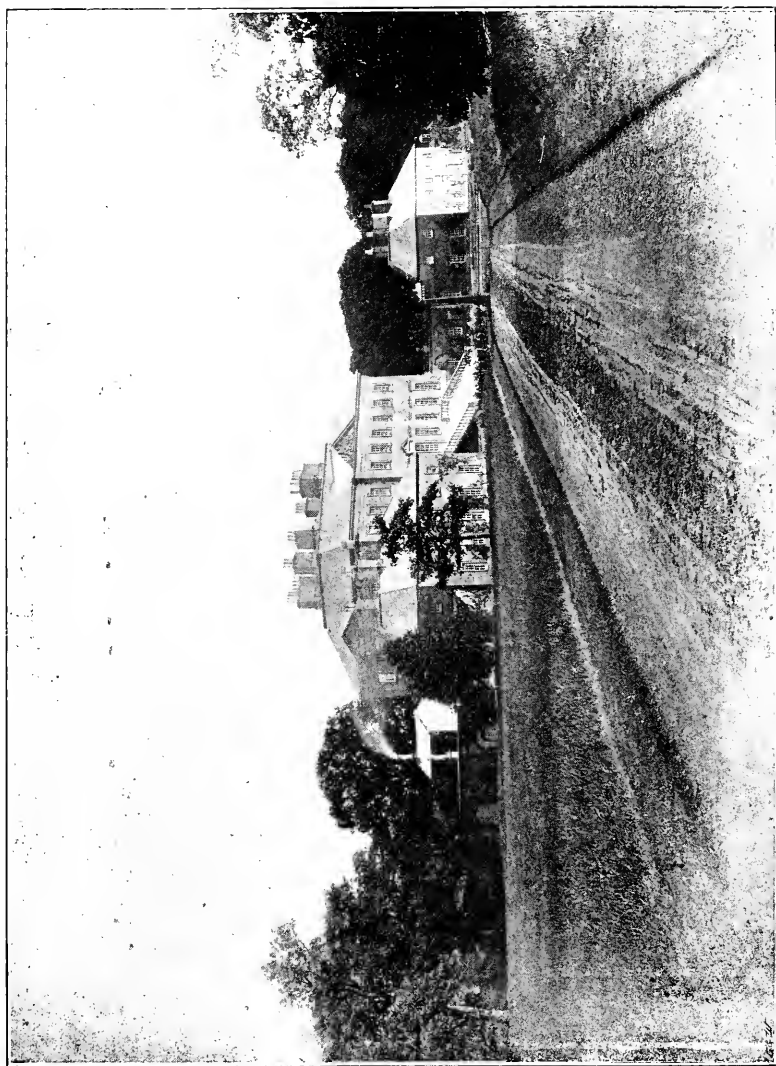
family. Their name occurs frequently in the *Register of the Privy Council*. The first notice we have of them is in 1440.

A considerable part of the neighbouring land was in their possession. Besides Lefnoreis, they held property in Ochiltree and Dalmellington. In the beginning of the seventeenth century their estates began to be broken up, after which their name gradually disappeared from the district. The whole of their property in the parish eventually passed into the hands of the Earls of Dumfries, whose arrival in Cumnock was practically simultaneous with the departure of the Craufurds. Though the popular spelling of the name of the castle is Lochnorris, it is well to note that in the old documents it usually appears as Lefnoreis. Sometimes it is Leifnoreis.

The following incident, taken from the *Privy Council Register* of 1578, gives us a glimpse of the occupants of the old keep. A famous border robber, named James Elliot, had been committed to the custody of George Craufurd of Lefnoreis, who, however, allowed him to escape and pass home; “quhairthrow the Bordouraris and trew subjectis of this realme ar sensyne greitlie trublit and inquietit.” Accordingly, Craufurd was ordered to appear before the Privy Council, to show cause why he should not pay a penalty of £2000 for permitting Elliot to escape. On his failing to appear, the Treasurer was empowered to uplift the penalty, as an “exemplis of utheris.”

The Craufurds took part too in the public affairs of the country. In 1560, George Craufurd of Lefnoreis was in Parliament. He sat again in 1572. In 1589, William Craufurd was made a Commissioner for carrying out the law, by which all





JUMBERT'S HOUSE

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Jesuits were to leave the country in a month. Still later, in 1609, just when the influence of the family was passing away, George Craufurd, the heir apparent of Lefnoreis, was committed to Blackness Castle, for bearing arms and resetting fugitives. In his *History of the Reformation*, Knox gives us a good account of the attitude towards Protestantism of George Craufurd in 1544, and contrasts him with his successor. His words are :—"Mr. George Wishart preached in Ayr till the Bishop of Glasgow, Dunbar, came with his gatherings to the town of Air, to make resistance to the said Mr. George, and did first take the church ; the Earl of Glencairn being thereof advertised, repaired with his friends to the town, and so did diverse gentlemen (amongst whom was the laird of Lefnoreise, a man far different from him that now liveth in the year of our Lord 1566, in manners and religion)." Doubtless Knox spoke from personal knowledge.

When the old castle became a ruin we cannot tell. It is hardly probable that it remained in habitable condition till the building of Dumfries House about the year 1757. Its disappearance broke a great link with the past history of Cumnock.

A mile nearer the town on a knoll covered with hawthorn trees, which look down upon the Lugar, stand the hoary remains of Terringzean Castle. The name appears in various forms. Trarizeane, Trarinyean, Terrinzeane, Terringane, Trarynyane, Terryenyene and Torrinzean, all occur. An earlier name which it bore, Craufurdstone or Craufurdstoun, suggests that this fortress, as well as Lefnoreis, belonged to a portion of the Loudon family. An old document, of date 1647, speaks of "Craufuirdstone, alias Terringzeane" (Paterson, II., p. 358).

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A concise history of the fortress is given in the *Statistical Account*. "The castle of Terrinzean," it says, "was probably the mansion which belonged to the barony of Terrinzean, which successively passed from a branch of the Craufurds to the Boyds. Upon their forfeiture it fell to the crown, who having successively made grants of it to different proprietors, it came at last into the family of Loudon, from whom it was purchased by the Earl of Dumfries, whose property it now is. From this barony the Countess of Loudon is Baroness Terrinzean."

Old records amplify this statement. In the *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, we read that on the 26th April, 1467, a charter was granted to Thomas Boyd, Earl of Arran, and Mary his wife, sister of the King, of the lands of Trarinyean. Arran, however, was deprived of them when he lost the favour of the King. They came at length into the possession of the Craufurds of Lefnoeis, who in 1563 resigned "the lordship of Terrynyene to Matthew Campbell of Lowdoun, Knycht" (*Reg. Privy Council*). Four years earlier, this Campbell, who calls himself "of Teringean," signed the Protestant bond of union.

Tradition has no tale to tell of this venerable ruin. Lord Bute unearthed the foundation some years ago, but no discovery was made. A portion of it seems to be of older date than the rest. A reference in the *Exchequer Rolls* to its farm lands, though it makes no mention of the castle, connects it with our early national history. It is stated that in 1438 a sum of £14 Scots was payable by the "farm lands of Trarynyane in the barony of Cumnok." This tax was to help to furnish the means of supporting the royal household.



The other castle in the parish was Boreland, nearly two miles south of Cumnock. No trace of it is to be seen, but the site it occupied is well known. Occasionally the plough strikes the foundation, a few inches below the surface of the ground. Part of the moat, which surrounded it, and which could be easily filled by the burn flowing close by, is quite visible. It lay on slightly elevated ground between Boreland Smithy and Boreland Mill.

The lands of Boreland formed originally a separate estate, and about the year 1400 came into the possession of a branch of the Hamilton family. Afterwards they passed by marriage to the Montgomeries of Prestwickshaws. In 1790 they were purchased by the Earl of Dumfries, and now, of course, belong to Lord Bute.

Little is known of the early lairds of Boreland. They came, however, under the notice of the King's Council, for we are told that George Hamilton of Boreland and John Hamilton, his son, had a remission under the Privy Seal, for "syding with the Earl of Lennox" in the battle of the Butts, fought near Glasgow in 1543. The deed of remission is dated 1551 (Anderson, *House of Hamilton*, p. 462). Another reference informs us that William Hamilton of Boreland was returned heir to Patrick Hamilton, his father, in 1611, "in the lands of Boreland and Towlach, the lands of Garlaffen and the lands of Sandochhill, in the barony of Cumnock" (*Ib.*, p. 239). John Hamilton of Boreland is mentioned in the Presbytery records of 1650.

An interesting relic of the castle is to be found in the kitchen of Boreland Smithy. Over the fireplace there has been inserted

a stone, about 3 feet long and 6 inches high, bearing in the centre the date 1677. On the left side are the initials H. M., and on the right M. H. These initials can only refer to Hugh Montgomerie of Prestwickshaws and his wife Margaret Hamilton, whom he married in 1670. Perhaps Hugh, having rebuilt or repaired the castle about that time, commemorated the date in this lasting way. Margaret Hamilton, who was sole heiress to her grandfather, Hugh Hamilton, brought as her dowry "the lands of Boreland, Sannochhill, Smidieland, Rhyderstoun, Netherton, Midton, Watston, Stay, Boreland Head, Roddinghead, Boreland Muir, and Calloch Hill" (Paterson, II., 314).

Various spellings of the name appear. Brodland, Borlandis, Boirdland, Boirlandis and Burland are all found. It has been suggested that the name may mean "mensal land," *i.e.*, land held on the rental of a food-supply.

Two interesting, if somewhat unintelligible, references to Cumnock are to be found in the *Collection of Ancient Scottish Prophecies*, published by the Bannatyne Club (pp. 31, 32). In the one, the following advice is given:—

" Beare thee well to Bothwell and build it up all;  
Then Craufurd and Cumnok with cleene men of armes,  
Let not lightlie the lois leap out of towne."

The other tells us that

" The Castel of Carrik that on a Craige standes  
Shall cry upon Cumnok for a true nest."

The *Prophecies*, from which these lines are taken, probably belong to the sixteenth century, and represent political undercurrents of the time.

## CHAPTER II.

*The Barons of Cumnock.*

“I would rather be first in my own village, than second in Rome.”

—*Caesar.*

THE earliest references to Cumnock as a civil parish carry us back to feudal times, when the people owed allegiance to a local governor set over them by the king. This governor was known as the baron, while the district under his control was called the barony of Cumnock. No trace of the name lingers within our limits, but the Barony Road, close to the village of Auchinleck, is a memorial in that parish of the old order of things, which prevailed there as well as among ourselves. The exact date of the creation of Cumnock into a barony cannot be ascertained. Many baronies were called into existence about the middle of the twelfth century. In a deed dated 1360, allusion is made to the baron of Cumnock. At that time, therefore, the baronial system of government was in full force in our neighbourhood. It continued until the middle of the eighteenth century, when heritable jurisdictions of this kind were done away by Act of Parliament.

Baronies were of two classes. There were royalty baronies and regality baronies. The royalty baronies were subject directly to the authority of the king and his judges; the regality baronies were placed under the control of nobles or ecclesiastics, who

received the right of jurisdiction from the king. Cumnock was a regality barony, the baron of which was appointed by the crown. Succession to the barony with its various rights was hereditary. When the baron wished to demit his office with its privileges, he parted with it to another by gift or by sale. But each baron, as he succeeded to the title, required to receive a charter from the king investing him with all the rights of his position.

Naturally, in districts erected into baronies, the local governor was chosen from among the great landowners. The duties he had to perform could only be discharged by one who possessed a certain amount of wealth and military power. As a rule the lands he owned were granted to him by the king for services rendered in peace or in war.

The first barons of Cumnock of whom we have notice were the Earls of March, who, in the opening years of the fourteenth century, owned the greater portion of the parish. The family name of the Earls was Dunbar. Their chief possessions were in the south-east of Scotland. The castle of Dunbar, in Haddingtonshire, was their hereditary fortress. How these east country lords became connected with our district, it is not easy to say. Their lineage was high. One of them, Patrick, the eighth Earl, was a competitor for the Scottish crown in 1291, when Baliol was chosen king. He based his claim on his descent from Ilda or Ada, daughter of William the Lion. Before Edward I. gave his decision Patrick withdrew his claim. It is quite possible that even at that time Earl Patrick was baron of Cumnock. If he did not enjoy the title of baron, he was at least the proprietor of

the castle of Cumnock, and of a certain portion of the adjoining lands.

It is melancholy, however, to relate that this great noble, who held the chief fortress in our vicinity, was not in favour of Scotland's struggle for freedom, and had actually taken service in the army of England. Indeed, he had so little of the patriotic spirit that in 1296 he accepted certain lands, of the annual value of £100, as a gift from Edward I., who thereby gained more thoroughly his allegiance. It would be a curious thing if Cumnock came into his hands as part of the price of his disloyalty. He repaid the gift in a manner disastrous to the heroic Wallace, for two years later, along with the Earl of Angus, he betrayed the Scottish army to Edward, whom he informed of the situation and intended action of his countrymen. The terrible defeat of Falkirk was the result. Immediately afterwards the English king appointed him captain of his forces and castles south of the Forth. In 1307 he still proved himself the vassal of Edward by proceeding into Galloway with the Earl of Richmond against Edward Bruce, and crowned his disloyalty by placing at the disposal of his country's foes his "castle at Comenogh." In the following year (10th October, 1308) he died.

There seems every reason, therefore, to believe that this unpatriotic Earl of March was proprietor of the lands and the castle of Cumnock in the beginning of the fourteenth century, and possibly baron as well. If so, the baronial history of our parish opens in a way so untoward, that we have no reason to be proud of the name of him who first claimed authority to rule in our district. We cannot, however, believe that our ancestors

sympathised with their feudal lord, who was not Ayrshire born. The spirit of the men of Kyle, as the history of the time reveals, was far different, and down in Cumnock village and its neighbourhood, five miles from the castle of the Earl, that love for Bruce and his great forerunner was sure to show itself, which would lead the people to do and die for Scotland and for liberty. Certainly, Earl Patrick had a noble opportunity of writing his name in honourable letters on one of the grandest pages of his country's history. Had he only used the opportunity aright, we in Cumnock would have been able to recall with pleasure the fact that our earliest known ruler was a bold and fearless worker for the independence of our land. As it is, we can only brand him with the name of traitor.

Patrick's successor in the Earldom of March at first followed in the steps of his father, and allied himself with England. He, too, was named Patrick. In the line of Earls he was the ninth. His political sympathies were clearly shown by the assistance he gave to Edward II. after the battle of Bannockburn, for he received the conquered king into his castle at Dunbar, and helped him to escape by sea to his own country. Soon after, however, a change came over his views, and he, with his forces, joined the army of Robert Bruce, taking part in the siege of Berwick in 1318. Later on, he adhered to the cause of David II., the son and successor of Bruce, but in 1332 he was not unjustly suspected of favouring the claim of Edward Baliol to the Scottish crown. Fourteen years afterwards he took part in the disastrous expedition to England, which culminated in the defeat at Neville's Cross, but was able to lead back to Scotland a portion of the

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army. Without doubt this Earl of March and owner of Cumnock achieved more for his country than his father, but he was not regarded by his contemporaries as altogether loyal, even after he broke with Edward.

Yet, if his name is not quite stainless, no blot attaches to that of his wife. It may even be that his political conversion was the result of the energy and devotion of his Countess in the cause of liberty. For she was no other than the daughter of Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, and grandniece of Bruce himself. In history she is known as Black Agnes of Dunbar—a name she received partly from the darkness of her complexion, and partly from the spirited and successful defence she offered, in her castle at Dunbar, to the English besiegers in 1338. The story of her heroism is best told in the words of Sir Walter Scott:—

“The castle of Dunbar was very strong, being built upon a chain of rocks stretching into the sea, and having only one passage to the mainland, which was well fortified. It was besieged by Montague, Earl of Salisbury, who employed to destroy its walls great military engines, constructed to throw huge stones, with which machines fortifications were attacked before the use of cannon.

“Black Agnes set all his attempts at defiance, and showed herself with her maids on the walls of the castle, wiping the places where the huge stones fell with a clean towel, as if they could do no ill to her castle, save raising a little dust, which a napkin could wipe away.

“The Earl of Salisbury then commanded the engineers to bring forward to the assault an engine of another kind, being a

sort of wooden shed or house, rolled forward on wheels, with a roof of peculiar strength, which, from resembling the ridge of a hog's back, occasioned the machine to be called a sow. This, according to the old mode of warfare, was thrust close up to the walls of a besieged castle or city, and served to protect, from the arrows and stones of the besieged, a party of soldiers placed within the sow, who being thus defended, were in the meanwhile employed in undermining the wall, or breaking an entrance through it with pickaxes and mining tools. When the Countess of March saw this engine advanced to the walls of the castle, she called out to the Earl of Salisbury in derision and making a kind of rhyme—

‘ Beware, Montagow,  
For farrow shall thy sow.’

“At the same time she made a signal, and a huge fragment of rock, which hung prepared for the purpose, was dropped down from the wall upon the sow, whose roof was thus dashed to pieces. As the English soldiers, who had been within it, were running as fast as they could to get out of the way of the arrows and stones which were discharged upon them from the wall, Black Agnes called out, ‘Behold the litter of English pigs.’

“The Earl of Salisbury could jest also on such serious occasions. One day he rode near the walls with a knight dressed in armour of proof, having three folds of mail over an acton or leathern jacket; notwithstanding which, one William Spens shot an arrow from the battlements of the castle with such force that it penetrated all these defences, and reached the heart of the wearer. ‘That is one of my lady’s love-tokens,’ said the earl, as



he saw the knight fall dead from his horse. ‘Black Agnes’s love-shafts pierce to the heart.’ . . .

“At length the castle of Dunbar was relieved by Alexander Ramsay of Dalwolsy, who brought the Countess supplies by sea both of men and provisions. The Earl of Salisbury, learning this, despaired of success, and raised the siege, which had lasted nineteen weeks. The minstrels made songs in praise of the perseverance and courage of Black Agnes. The following lines are nearly the sense of what is preserved :—

“She kept a stir in tower and trench,  
That brawling, boisterous Scottish wench ;  
Came I early, came I late,  
I found Agnes at the gate.”

—(*Tales of a Grandfather*, cap. xiv.)

Thus did the noble Agnes prove herself a worthy kinswoman of Robert the Bruce, and atone in some measure for the guilt of her husband in opening the gates of the castle, in 1314, to Edward II. Doubtless she visited the family possessions in Ayrshire, and none would be prouder of the martial exploits of the Countess than the people of our parish, who, thirty years before, bemoaned the surrender of the “castle of Comenogh” into the hands of the southern foe.

Patrick, the husband of Agnes, resigned the Earldom of March and the barony of Cumnock in 1363, six years before his death. In 1369 the countess also died. The titles passed to their nephew, George, the son of Agnes’ sister Geilis, who had married John, the brother of Patrick. Five years later a charter was granted, under the Great Seal, by David II. to George, con-

firming him in the barony of Cumnock and also in the earldom of March. This earl, the tenth of the line, was one of the most powerful and ambitious nobles of the time. His daughter, Elizabeth, was betrothed to the unfortunate Duke of Rothesay, son and heir of Robert III., whose dissipated life and sad death are told by Sir Walter Scott in *The Fair Maid of Perth*. Fortunately for Elizabeth, the betrothal was broken off. In his anger at the breach of contract, her father deserted to the English. But upon his story it is not needful to enter, for twelve years after he became baron of Cumnock, George followed the example of his uncle, and transferred his title to the barony to David Dunbar of Enterkin, who was confirmed in it by royal charter in the same year. This David was a kinsman of the earl. As he did not succeed to the lordship of March, he could not have been the heir to the earldom. In all probability he bought the barony. At any rate, his entrance upon the office of baron severed the connection between Cumnock and the titled house of March. From 1375 the possessors of our barony are no longer Earls of March, but are simply known as the Dunbars of Cumnock. Yet, if they ceased to be nobles, they enjoyed a certain social distinction; they were entitled to use before their names the honourable epithet of "Sir."

The Dunbars continued to hold the barony of Cumnock till about 1612, when John Dunbar of Cumnock and Westfield, hereditary Sheriff of Moray, as several of his predecessors had been before him, sold the barony, with all its rights and privileges, and from that date Cumnock ceased to be one of the titles of the family of Dunbar.

The mention of John Dunbar of Cumnock and Westfield lets us see that our local barons were also at one period proprietors and civil officials in another part of the country. There were Dunbars in Morayshire at a very early stage in Scottish history. They were of the same stock as our Dunbars, but the two families were not closely united till a little before 1474. At that time we find Euphemia, eldest daughter of Sir Patrick Dunbar of Cumnock, married to Sir James Dunbar of Westfield, in the parish of Spynie in Morayshire. Patrick had no male heir. Accordingly, Euphemia and her husband obtained the barony of Cumnock, and their heirs continued to be spoken of as the Dunbars of Cumnock and Westfield. At an earlier period the estate of Mochrum, in Wigtonshire, was owned also by a branch of the family. It is only a few years ago since it passed out of the hands of the Dunbars into those of the Marquis of Bute. The Cumnock Dunbars were likewise proprietors of Blantyre, in Lanarkshire, till 1598.

One or two personal notes about these barons and their kinsmen may be interesting. They will show us what kind of men they were who ruled within our borders, and what kind of life was lived by our people four or five centuries ago.

The earliest circumstance worthy of mention is connected with Sir Patrick Dunbar, who was created baron about 1400. He was a man of mark, for he was sent by the Government of Scotland in 1423 to England as a hostage. In that year James I. came back, after his compulsory stay in the south, to reign over his own dominions. A treaty was formed between the two nations, by which Scotland undertook to pay to its neighbour

across the border, the sum of £40,000 in twenty annual instalments, nominally to defray the expense of the education of James. As security for the payment of this money, twenty-eight hostages were demanded from among the noblest families of Scotland. One of them was our baron, Sir Patrick. After the name of each hostage an entry appears giving a statement of his annual income. Sir Patrick's is put down at 500 merks stg., a fairly large sum as things went in those days. He remained for at least three years in England, for in 1426, his wife was granted a safe conduct to visit him in his confinement. In 1428, by which time he had been set at liberty, he was appointed one of the ambassadors extraordinary to the court of England. Altogether, Sir Patrick seems to have been a man of substance and power.

The next personal note, regarding the baronial family of Cumnock, carries us to the beginning of the sixteenth century. It gives an insight into the unsettled state of matters at the time. The baron was not always able to keep order within his jurisdiction. Neighbouring proprietors resisted his authority and carried on those feuds among themselves, and even with him, which were so characteristic of our country long ago. We read that in 1512, Patrick Dunbar of Corsintoune (Corsincon?) when attending mass in Cumnock church one Sabbath, was murdered. Evidently this Patrick was a kinsman of the baron. At the time of his death the people were gathered together for divine service. But they were powerless to prevent the foul crime. For we are told that "remission of blame" was given in the matter to "William Craufurd of Lefnoryis, Alexander Campbell of Skelling-

towne, parochinaris of the said kirk, and generally to all the remanent of the parochinaris tharof and utheris our lieges being thair assemblit, the tyme of the committing of the said slauchter.” One of the actual murderers, Andro Campbell, was taken and hanged, doubtless at the Gallows Knowe, while Duncan Campbell and John Stillie were put to the horn. Robert Campbell of Schankistoune, George and John, his brothers, James Campbell of Clewis and others were also denounced as rebels (*Paterson*, I., p. lxviii.). The murder of this Dunbar in the sanctuary of God when the worshippers were assembled—a murder deliberately planned and carried out—opens a page in our local history, which we would willingly obliterate if we could.

In 1513 the baron, Sir James, sent one of his kinsmen, David, to Flodden, where he fell on the field of battle along with many other lairds and noblemen from Ayrshire. A Colville of Ochiltree and a Boswell of Auchinleck were also among the slain. Many of the baron’s retainers are certain to have followed his standard to Flodden, and to have perished fighting around their king.

Thirty-eight years later, the action of Sir Alexander Dunbar of Cumnock and Westfield gives us some indication of the way in which men’s minds were being influenced by the truths, which were shortly to bring about the establishment of the Protestant religion in Scotland. On 18th August, 1551, this baron, then residing on his Morayshire estates, was “denounced rebel, and all his moveables ordained to be escheated . . . for his not underlying the law this day for treasonably intercommuning, resetting and supplying Norman Leslie, formerly master of Leslie, the queen’s convicted traitor and rebel . . . publicly furnishing

him with meat, drink, and lodging in the months of December and January last." This Norman Leslie was one of the chief leaders in the murder of Cardinal Beaton. That our baron should harbour him in Morayshire is proof of a certain interest displayed by him in the work of reformation, nine years before Knox succeeded in making the Reformation an accomplished fact.

We must not argue, however, from such a circumstance, that men like Sir Alexander Dunbar, in their opposition to the Romish Church, were always actuated by a sincere desire to see the corruptions of that Church removed. Some of them, at least, had a keen eye to the destination of the property of the church, when it should pass from the hands of the Roman Catholics. And at the same time, along with much apparent zeal for the cause of reformation, which led them to destroy altars and carry away communion cups, they were not slow to take the opportunity of promoting private feuds and settling old quarrels with their neighbours. This baron, Alexander, who was called "The Bold," from the fearlessness of his spirit, was no exception. In 1554 he was put to the horn, along with his son Patrick, for "the slaughter of James Cummyng in Dollacebrachty," son of Alexander Cummyng of Altyre, near Forres. In the same year, "Patrick Dunbar, young laird of Cumnok," along with others, was denounced rebel and put to the horn, for the slaughter of Thomas Russel, "committed in the house of Balnageiche." One of his securities on that occasion was "George Dunbar of Cumnok," probably a relative, who is called the parson of that parish. It thus appears that some at least of our barons

and their kinsmen were very much inclined to take the law into their own hands, and to attempt to put in practice the crude idea that might is right.

Another matter of interest may be noted. In 1547 an order was sent by the Privy Council doubtless to the baron, calling upon Cumnock to provide its share of a hundred men for the suppression of crime in the district of Moffat. It is difficult to say why so many men at arms should have been required in Annandale to keep the peace. Perhaps their presence was rendered necessary by the repeated incursions of the Border raiders, who were particularly active at that time in plundering their own countrymen. Cumnock, we may be sure, sent the quota of men required.

No data have come down to us from which we may learn how far the Dunbars attended personally to the affairs of the barony, and how far they entrusted them to the care of subordinates. When united through marriage with the Dunbars of Morayshire, they seem to have remained for the most part in their northern home. Doubtless they visited their Ayrshire possessions occasionally, and while they were away from Cumnock, frequent communications would pass between them and the agents whom they left in their place. But at length it began to be felt, both by them and by the people, that such absenteeism was hardly compatible with the fulfilment of their official duty as barons. Matters were put in a new form about 1612, when John Dunbar, preferring to live altogether at Westfield, sold the barony of Cumnock, with all its civil and ecclesiastical rights, and the name of Dunbar, which had been the great name in the parish

for at least three hundred years, passed away completely from its history.

The residence of the Dunbars was the Castle of Cumnock. All trace of it has gone. The stones of the old stronghold were long ago removed by thoughtless hands for building purposes. Part of the moat round it, however, may still be seen. The site is now occupied by the Free Church of New Cumnock, which is locally known as the "Castle" church. According to the minute book of the heritors of New Cumnock, it appears that the proprietors of the parish met at the old castle, in September, 1784, in order to define the march between the glebe and the farm land of Little Mains or Castle. Mention is made, in the statement of the proceedings, of the "castle byre." Towards the end of the 18th century, therefore, there must have been a considerable ruin standing.

But perhaps the following extract from the *Registrum Magni Sigilli* points to two castles, an earlier and a later, on the same site. We read that at Edinburgh, 26th August, 1580, the king granted to William Cunynghame of Caprintoun and his heirs, the castle and fortalice of Cumnock, "then in ruins." The reference is mainly of interest because it tells us that the ancestral stronghold of the Dunbars was destroyed some time before 1580. At a later period the castle was rebuilt, for in the Acts of Parliament dealing with the erection of the parish church of New Cumnock in 1650, it is stated that the "new kirk at Cumnock was erected at the new castle of Cumnock."

It is sometimes asserted, as, for example, by Keith in his *Catalogue of Scottish Bishops*, that Gavin Dunbar, the popular



bishop of Aberdeen from 1518 to 1532, sprang from the Dunbars of Cumnock. But there can be no doubt that he was the son of Sir Alexander Dunbar of Westfield, and was born before the Dunbars of Ayrshire intermarried with their namesakes in Morayshire. Keith also makes a mistake in connecting Archbishop Gavin Dunbar of Glasgow with Cumnock. This scholarly prelate, who was entrusted with the education of James V., and who is roughly handled by Knox in his *History of the Reformation*, was a cadet of the house of Mochrum. Neither of these ecclesiastics, therefore, can be claimed as belonging to our parish.

When the Dunbars resigned the barony of Cumnock, it passed in quick succession through several hands. We find, for instance, that Cunynghame of Caprintoun was in possession of it some time before 1623, for in that year the Privy Council sent down a case to be adjudicated by him as baron. He surrendered it, however, in 1630, and was succeeded by William Crichton, Viscount of Ayr, afterwards Earl of Dumfries, who retained it only till December, 1637. In the following month the Earl of Queensberry was appointed baron. Five years later it passed from him and came into the possession of James Crichton of Abercrombie (St. Monance), a kinsman of the Dumfries family, whose estates were in Fife, and who, in his capacity of baron, presented two ministers, John Halkeid and John Cunynghame, to the parish. Eventually, in the reign of Charles II., the Earl of Dumfries was invested with the baronial office, and he and his heirs kept it until it was abolished by Act of Parliament in 1747.

It is not possible to explain why the barony changed hands so often during the seventeenth century, or why two barons,

Cunynghame of Caprintoun and the Earl of Queensberry, who apparently were not intimately connected with the parish, should have received the appointment. The clue to these doings of the Privy Council is difficult to discover.

It would not serve any purpose in relation to this history to refer particularly to all these barons, but as the last holders of the title are still represented in the district, some account of them will not be out of place.

For a lengthened period the Crichtons had possessed estates of great extent in the county of Dumfries. Their ancestral stronghold was the famous Crichton Peel at Sanquhar, built in the twelfth century. As time went on the wealth of the family diminished, so that they deemed it expedient to part with their lands and go elsewhere.

The traditional story of the loss of their wealth is interesting.

Lord Crichton had certain money transactions with James I. of England, who was indebted to him for a very large amount. The royal borrower, on his visit to Scotland in 1617, determined to accept the hospitality of Crichton Peel. He reached the castle with a splendid retinue of courtiers, headed by the handsome Duke of Buckingham. The entertainment was of the most costly description. No expense was spared in order to show goodwill to the king, and gain the continuance of the royal favour. To crown the festivities, Crichton took the bond he held from the king, and, rolling it into a taper, used it as a light to lead his guest to his sleeping chamber. In a few moments his claim on James had passed away in smoke. The king was naturally delighted with the loyalty and munificence of his Dum-

friesshire noble, and in highest spirit set off on his journey to England. Lord Crichton, however, found he had most seriously exhausted his resources. His coffers were sadly emptied. He had made the king merry, but had brought himself to the verge of ruin. A few years later, he sold his estate and purchased in place of it, property in the parish of Cumnock.

In tardy acknowledgment of the lavish generosity he displayed at Crichton Peel, the king created him Viscount of Ayr in 1622. Eleven years later, Charles I. raised him to the dignity of Earl of Dumfries and Baron Crichton of Cumnock. In 1635, he became proprietor of the castle or ward of Lefnoreis with certain lands round about it, which for generations had been in the possession of the old family of the Craufurds. When the jurisdiction of barons was annulled, compensation was given for the loss of baronial rights. The Earl of Dumfries accordingly received £400 for the regality of Cumnock and Glenmuir. He claimed, however, a much larger sum. The patronage of the church of Cumnock was also in the gift of the Dumfries family until it was abolished in 1874.

In 1760, William, the fourth Earl of Dumfries, succeeded to the title and property of his brother James, Earl of Stair, and was thenceforward styled Earl of Dumfries and Stair. On his death eight years afterwards, the titles and properties again became separate. As he had no lineal descendant, he was succeeded in the Earldom of Dumfries by his nephew, Patrick Macdowall of Freugh, whose eldest daughter, Elizabeth Penelope Crichton, married in 1792 John, eldest son of the Earl, afterwards the Marquis, of Bute. Both she and her husband died during the

lifetime of her father, so that Patrick Macdowall, on his death in 1803, was succeeded by his daughter's elder son, John, the sixth Earl of Dumfries, then ten years old. In 1805, he obtained the king's permission to assume the surname of Crichton, in addition to and before that of Stuart, his paternal name, and also to bear the arms of Crichton quarterly with the arms of Stuart. On the death of his paternal grandfather, on the 16th November, 1814, he became Marquis of Bute as well as Earl of Dumfries. He was twice married. His first wife was Lady Maria, eldest daughter of the Earl of Guildford, and his second, Lady Sophia Hastings, second daughter of the Earl of Moira. He died on the 18th March, 1848, leaving by his second wife one son, John Patrick, the present Marquis, who was born in 1847.

One public office held by the late Lord Bute is worthy of mention. He was the Queen's Commissioner to the General Assembly of 1842, and again in 1843, the year of the Disruption of the Church of Scotland. Of the manner in which he fulfilled his commission, Dr. Buchanan says in his *Ten Years' Conflict* :—“ His position entitled, and his great wealth enabled him to appear with all those external attributes of official dignity and splendour which dazzle the multitude. The representative of royalty had never, on any former occasion, approached the supreme court of Scotland's simple and unpretending presbyterian church in such a blaze of grandeur.” (II. p. 485.) It fell to the Marquis also, to transmit to Her Majesty a copy of the Claim of Rights adopted by the Church at the General Assembly of 1842. This he did with the well-known result ; the Claim was set aside by the Government of the day.

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From this digression, however, made in order to follow the history of our old baronial rulers down to recent times, we must turn and say something of the powers possessed by the barons, and the manner in which they exercised them.

During the four centuries and a half almost for which they held jurisdiction in our parish, many changes must have taken place both in the power they wielded and the methods they pursued. Erskine in his *Principles of Scottish Law*, thus states the rights conferred on a regality baron like ours. "To constitute a baron in the strict law-sense of the word, one must have his lands either erected or at least confirmed by the king *in liberam baroniam*. A baron in this sense enjoyed a fixed jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, which in the general case he might exercise either by himself or by his deputy called a *bailie*. In civil matters he might have judged in questions of debt within the barony or in most of the possessory actions ; and though by a known rule, no person ought to judge in his own cause, a baron may judge in all such actions between himself or his vassals and tenants, as are necessary for making his rents and feu-duties effectual. . . . Thus, he may ascertain the price of corns due by a tenant, and pronounce sentence against him for arrears of rent ; he may in consequence of his own decree, compel his tenants to perform to him all the services either contained in their rights or fixed by usage, and to carry their corns to the mill of the barony ; . . . but in all the cases where he himself was a party, he could not judge in person. He had also a power of police by which he might fix reasonable prices upon work done in the barony.

“The criminal jurisdiction of a baron reached to all crimes except treason and the four pleas of the crown (robbery, murder, rape, and fire-raising), and even by our late law he might have judged not only in reckless fire-raising, in processes for breaking of orchards and dovecots, destroying of greenwood and of planting, etc., provided the offenders were taken in the fact, and in riots and bloodwits, the fines of which he might have appropriated to himself, but in the capital crime of theft, though he should not have the clause *cum fossa et furca* in his charter; yet he could judge in no other capital crime, if he had not been specially infest with that privilege.” (pp. 85, 86).

As the baron therefore had the power to try many civil and criminal causes, it was needful to have one or more courts of justice in the barony. These courts met in the open air, and the place, where they were convened, consisted usually of a small eminence called a mote hill or a judgment hill. Many of these are to be found all over the country. There is one in New Cumnock, and in Cumnock itself there is the well-known mote hill on the banks of the Lugar, which surrounds it on three sides. It is fifty or sixty feet high, and from fifty to a hundred feet broad. The summit is crowned by a ridge four or five feet wide. In length the hill is six hundred feet.

This, then, was the tribunal, on which the barons, in person or by deputy, listened to cases under their jurisdiction, and pronounced sentence upon them. Near at hand were the means for carrying their judgment into execution in the case of those condemned to death. For it is only a little distance from the mote hill to the gallows hill. That hill is rendered sacred now by the

dust of Peden and of the martyrs who fell in defence of the covenants. It has been a part of the ordinary burying ground for several generations. But it must have presented a very different appearance in bygone centuries, when the only object to be seen on the rising ground was the gibbet, on which men paid, justly or unjustly, the penalty of death. For, from the fact that the gallows was standing when the dragoons brought to it the body of Peden, we must suppose that it was never taken down, but was ready at any moment to bear its awful charge. Death by hanging was no infrequent thing in those old days.

The gallows, however, was only for men. Another mode of capital punishment was reserved for women against whom an adverse decree had been issued. The baron had not only the power of the gallows, but of the pit as well (*fossa et furca*). This pit was a large hole, natural or artificial, filled with water. The poor woman, who incurred the penalty, was put into a sack, and then, after the mouth of the sack had been tied, thrown into the pit to be drowned. There does not seem to be any tradition in our parish of a pit, used for this purpose, in close proximity to the gallows hill. But one of the numerous pools in the Lugar, at the foot of the mote hill, would serve well the ends of justice. On the other side of the Lugar, near the road leading to Templand Mains, there are some rocky boulders known as "The Hangman's Stairs." How this name was given to the natural stone steps, which stretch from the bank of the stream down to the water, we cannot tell. The name doubtless indicates some connection with the official executioner. But the steps are not in our parish. They are in Auchinleck, and consequently.

outside the bounds within which the writ of the baron of Cumnock ran.

It is evident that the power of the barons was very great. Yet it was limited in certain directions by the Crown, with the result that matters, which could not be disposed of locally, were submitted to the Privy Council for judgment. Hence the *Register of the Privy Council* contains a large number of cases sent up for settlement from Cumnock to Edinburgh. Many of these are of extreme interest from the light they throw on the social life of the parish. They bring before us also the names of residents in Cumnock of all ranks, who figure as the chief parties concerned in the proceedings, or as witnesses.

A very early reference bears upon the baron himself, who at the time was staying at his Morayshire home and taking part in the feuds of that district. In 1553, it is said that "Alexander Dunbar of Cumnock is ordered to deliver up his eldest son, to keep the peace with Alexander Cummyng of Forres, to the Lord of Huntly, Lieutenant of the north part of this realme."

The next instance is more intimately connected with our locality. In 1575, the Council had before them a case of rather sharp dealing, the aggrieved person being a farmer in Auchinleck parish. The case was this. Robert Barbour, tenant of Barglachane, was in need of money. William Cunynghame of the Burne offered to give him the loan of £100, and arranged to go with him to the "clachan of Cumnock," to a "notar, Johnne Gemmell by name," in order to have the necessary deed drawn up and subscribed. This was duly done. Cunynghame, however, managed to get hold of the document to which Barbour's



signature was attached, and went off with it without handing over the £100 to Barbour. The defrauded farmer of Barglachane brought the matter before the King's Council in Edinburgh. Without hesitation they adjudged William Cunynghame to be "our soverane lordis rebel and put him to the horn."

Another interesting case occurs under date 1595. In it the laird of Logan becomes security for a large amount, that the tenant of Garlaff shall do no personal injury to a neighbour. The document runs in this way:—"Registration by Mr. Robert Irving as procurator of band (bond) by George Logan of that Ilk for George Murdoch in Garloff £500, not to harme Johnne Broune there, as by letters, dated Edinburgh, 15th November, subscribed at Cunnock, 3rd December, before James Gibsoun, notary, Stephen Tennant in Burnoksyde, and James Wallace servitor to Johnne Gemmel, notary in Cunnok, writer hereof, Gemmel signing for Logan." Many such entries occur in the old Register, testifying to the great amount of business of this kind done by the Privy Council, in the interests of law and order. The Councillors could not have been idle men, when they had to attend to cases of this nature submitted to them in countless number from every parish in the land. It will be noticed that two of the witnesses to this document, at the close of the sixteenth century, were notaries, both of whom lived in Cunnock. Disputes, involving the intervention of men skilled in law, must have been frequent in a sparsely populated parish such as Cunnock was then, in order to support at least two notaries. We can only hope that in this case, Logan was not called upon to

pay his bond, and that Johnne Broune lived to the end of his days unharmed by George Murdoch of Garloff.

An extract from the proceedings of 1605 shows that a species of boycotting was fostered by the Privy Council. In that year they decreed that "Hew Campbell of Bogturoch (now Boig), son of Hew Campbell of Garrallane, shall not reset or intercommune with Patrick Hervie at the Kirk of Cumnok, while he lies at the horn to which he had been put for not flitting and removing from certain houses at the Kirk of Cumnok."

The next two references reveal the kind of scene which must sometimes have been enacted within the precincts of the church on the Sabbath day. We know how one of the Dunbar family was slain while attending public worship in 1512. Apparently that case does not stand by itself. Though we cannot say that murder was actually committed again in such circumstances, it was frequently the habit of hostile families to meet at the church on the Lord's day, even after the Reformation had taken place. Here is a remit sent down by the Privy Council in 1607. It is entitled, "Charge to Cunynghame of Caprintoun and others not to make convocation at the Kirk of Cumnok."

"Understanding that—Cunynghame, younger of Caprintoun, Daniel Cunynghame of Dalkeith, etc., on the one part, and — Crawfurd of Auchincors on the other part, intend to make convocation of their friends in arms, and to meet at the Kirk of Cumnock in heat, strife and contention, the Lords ordain both parties to be charged to hold no meeting at the said kirk, and to make no convocation hereafter within the barony of Cumnock,

till order be taken between them, and also to appear on 13th August next to answer in the premisses under pain of rebellion."

That was sharp procedure on the part of the Council, and certainly it seems to have been fully warranted by what we know of one of the parties concerned. For in the following year, the Cunynghames purposed to act in the same manner towards the family of Lefnoreis. More stringent measures still were taken to keep the peace, as the document itself shows. There being, it tells us, "*verie grite contraversie*" between William Cunynghame of Caprintoun and his son on the one part, and — Crawfurd of Lefnoreis and his son on the other, so that it is likely that at their first repairing to their "parish kirk of Cumnok, some grite inconvenience sall fall out," both parties are ordered not to repair to the kirk, till their quarrel be settled, under pain of 10,000 merks, and also to subscribe assurances to one another to endure till 1st April, 1609, and to find caution in 10,000 merks for keeping the same inviolate.

How the parties concerned observed this charge, the records do not state. But we have sufficient evidence to prove that the Privy Council of Scotland took a decided interest in the doings of our remote Ayrshire parish, and did all in their power to make rival tenants and landlords live in peace. Yet it is painful to observe how frequently the house of God was made the meeting-place for settling disputes with arms and blood.

The chief feature of the following case is its reference to a market held in Cumnock so far back as the year 1606, though the story is principally taken up with the account of a personal quarrel. The residence of one of the parties concerned gives us

the old spelling of Skerrington. George and Andrew M'Cubene, servitors to George Crawford in Lefnoreis, complain that while they were attending the market in the town of Cumnock on—— October last, Johnne Hervie, of Skellingtoun Mill, and his eldest son George, pursued them for their lives. George Hervie struck the first complainer on the head with his sword-guard, and therewith "dang in his harn pane and fellit him deid" to the ground, while Johnne Hervie "strak the said Andro in at the bak with ane mylne pick," to the effusion of blood. Of course, the defenders have something to say in their own behalf. They plead that they were first attacked. The Council evidently take this view of the case, and ordain the Hervies to pursue the M'Cubenes for assault before the judge ordinary by 15th February next.

Another instance of dealing with criminals is given under date 24th June, 1623. The Council did not decide the case themselves, but deputed Sir William Cunynghame of Caprintoun, who was the baron at the time, and his bailies, to investigate the matter. In the commission they received under the royal signet, they were authorised to try Gilbert Brown of Garclach within the barony of Cumnock, who, having been long suspected of being a common thief, was lately apprehended "with the fang of a stolen schein" by the said Sir William's bailies, and having "ryppit the same, they fand the remains of uther two schein, quhilk he confest he staw fra James Tailfeir in Cumnok."

Up till the beginning of the sixteenth century, the baron exercised complete control under the Crown over the whole district. In 1509, however, a change took place, by which

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limited governing powers were given to the inhabitants of the village of Cumnock. In that year a charter was granted by the King, James IV., to the baron, Sir James Dunbar, in virtue of which the church lands of Cumnock were erected into a Burgh of Barony, and the people living within the defined area invested with certain rights and privileges connected with trade, with markets, and with the appointment of magistrates. As this charter is referred to from time to time in the course of this history, it will be well to give it in full. It is taken from *The Register of the Great Seal*. The document is in Latin, but the following translation sufficiently sets forth its terms.

#### CHARTER OF JAMES DUNBAR OF CUMNOCK.

“James, by the grace of God, King of the Scots, to all honourable persons throughout his realm, both among the clergy and laity, greeting. Know that for the special favour which we bear towards our beloved James Dunbar of Cumnock, for the growth and good government of the barony of Cumnock, especially in the neighbourhood of the parish church of Cumnock, and also for the well-being and civil freedom of our lieges gathered there, we have made and created, and by this our present charter do make and create, the ecclesiastical lands and glebe of the said church of Cumnock, extending to two merk lands of old extent, with the adjoining grounds in the said barony of Cumnock within the county of Ayr, a free burgh in barony to be called the Burgh of Cumnock in perpetuity.

“We have likewise granted to the inhabitants of the said burgh, present and future, full power and absolute right to buy

and sell in the same burgh wine, wax, pitch and bitumen, woollen and linen cloth, both broad and narrow, wool, skins, oxhides, salt, butter, cheese, and all other kinds of merchandise, together with power and liberty to possess and keep in the said burgh bakers, braziers, tanners, butchers, sellers of flesh and fish, and all other tradesmen belonging to the liberty of a burgh in barony.

“ We have also granted that in the said burgh there shall be free burgesses, and that the same shall have power in all future time to elect annually bailies and all other officers, needful for the government of the said burgh, and that the said bailies and officers shall be elected with the consent of the baron of Cumnock for the time being, and that no officers shall be elected without the approval of the baron, and that the persons chosen as bailies of the said burgh shall reside within the same ; with power to the burgesses and inhabitants within the said burgh to have and maintain within the same, perpetually, a market cross and a market on the Saturday of each week, as well as an annual public fair on the day of St. Matthew the apostle and evangelist, and for eight days thereafter, with right to uplift dues, along with all other privileges which belong to public fairs or may justly be regarded as belonging to them at any time hereafter.

“ And with power and liberty to our beloved clergyman, Master Thomas Campbell, canon of Glasgow and prebendary of the said church of Cumnock, and to his successors, to feu the aforesaid glebe lands, in whole or in part, in burgh roods for building purposes, in such a way as shall be for the profit of the said church and its prebendaries, or at least without loss to the

church, provided the consent of the said baron for the time being be obtained.

“The lands of the said church to be held and possessed, as is here set forth, for ever, with all the privileges, liberties, and advantages written above, together with all other benefits, titles, and rights which pertain to a free burgh in barony or may justly be regarded as pertaining thereto in the future, and that as freely as any burgh in barony is given in fief within our kingdom by ourselves or our predecessors without any impediment or revocation whatever.

“Saving, however, and reserving to the said James and his heirs, the barons of Cumnock, their own liberty and their right to hold a court within their barony of Cumnock, together with the privilege of blood and bloodwite in the same court over the inhabitants of the said glebe, to be enjoyed, used, and exercised by them and their bailies in the future according to the tenor of their infeofment, ancient usage, and general custom.

“In testimony whereof we have ordered to be affixed to our present charter our great seal in the presence of the following witnesses . . . at Edinburgh, the 27th September, 1509, and the twenty-second year of our reign.”

The erection of Cumnock into a burgh of barony in terms of this charter was certainly a boon to the community. The people became in a measure self-governing, though the baron's authority over them continued to be very real. The permission to build on the church lands, as distinct from the glebe, was evidently taken advantage of. The limits of these lands cannot now be

determined. One thing only is clear. Whoever possesses them, it is not the church that holds them.

It will be noticed that there is no reference in the charter to St. Convall's day, though it was a usual arrangement to make the annual fair of a district fall on the day of the patron saint of the parish in which it was held. The Cumnock fair, however, was to last for eight days, so that, while it began on the day of St. Matthew, it closed on the day of St. Convall. St. Matthew's day was the 21st September, and St. Convall's the 28th of the same month.



## CHAPTER III.

*Cumnock and the Struggle for Freedom in Scotland.*

“ We’ll sing auld Coila’s plains and fells,  
Her moors red-brown wi’ heather-bells,  
Her banks an’ braes, her dens an’ dells,  
Where glorious Wallace  
Aft bure the gree, as story tells,  
Frae southron billies.”—*Burns.*

THOUGH Ayrshire is intimately connected with the early achievements of Sir William Wallace, the Governor and Guardian of Scotland, Cumnock does not figure largely in the history of his exploits. It was more in the vicinity of the county town that he played havoc with his English foes. Our parish in all probability furnished him with some valiant fighting men, who served him well in his encounters with the oppressor. From the neighbouring parish of Auchinleck came a zealous comrade in the person of Nicol de Achethlec (Auchinleck), who, according to Blind Harry, was related to Wallace. It can hardly be supposed that our parish fell behind Auchinleck, and failed to contribute its contingent of men to swell the patriotic army of Wallace. One reference to Cumnock Blind Harry makes in narrating the deeds of his hero. He is speaking of the meeting between Wallace and Edward Bruce, brother of Scotland’s future king, and of the arrangement entered into with Edward, by which he was to assume the crown if Robert did not claim it. Blind Harry is not

an accurate historian, but there is no reason to doubt him when he says that Wallace really visited our district. Here are his words :—

“ But a short time to bide Robert the King,  
If he came not into this region to reign,  
That Edward should receive the crown but fall ;  
Thus heght Wallace and all the barnage hail.  
In Lochmaben Prince Edward lived still,  
And Wallace past in Cumnock with blyth will  
At the Black Rock, where he was wont to be.  
Upon that stead a royal house held he.”

Black Rock, where he was in the habit of staying, is clearly the castle of Black Craig in New Cumnock, the local name of the fortress, which in all the old records is called the castle of Cumnock. As long as this place continued to be his headquarters, Wallace would move about in different directions to make himself acquainted with the country and the people. Cumnock, therefore, would have frequent opportunities of seeing the brave assertor of Scotland's liberty.

Tradition gives the name of Wallace's Cave to a small rock-shelter in Cubs' Glen. Six centuries ago this spot must have been very secluded and may easily have afforded a place of safe retreat. But it is impossible to say at what time the name was given to it, or how much truth lies in its association with Wallace.

The *Itinerary* of Edward I., under the year 1298, gives us another reference to Cumnock in the days of Wallace. It states that the English king departed from Ayr on the 1st September, and passed through Cumnock and Sanquhar on his way to Carlisle. By that time, however, the power of Wallace had been

broken. Six weeks earlier there had been fought the disastrous battle of Falkirk, which left Edward the master of the situation. After his victory he visited Ayrshire and the south-west of Scotland, in order to reduce to his authority all the important strongholds which still opposed him. It was in connection with this expedition that the English King marched with his army through our parish.

With Robert Bruce Cumnock has a much closer connection than it has with Wallace. As Earl of Carrick, Bruce held estates in the county of Ayr, within the mountain fastnesses of which he often found a sure retreat. His early days were spent in Carrick, to the Earldom of which he succeeded at the age of sixteen, on the death of his mother. Naturally the men of Carrick rallied round their chief, but the ardour with which they espoused his cause was equalled by that of the men of Kyle and Cunningham. It was Ayrshire which Bruce freed first from the power of the southern foe, by his victory over the Earl of Pembroke at Loudon Hill in 1307.

A little while before this battle, which paved the way for the deliverance of the whole of Scotland, Bruce was at Cumnock, where he was joined by the good Lord James of Douglas, who hurried from Lanarkshire to his help. Barbour, the Archdeacon of Aberdeen, who doubtless got his information from men who had served with Bruce, thus describes the circumstances in which the king and his trusty follower met :—

“ When Thirwall upon this manner  
Had issued, as I tell you here,  
James of Dowglas and als his men  
Busked them altogether then,

And went their way toward the king  
In great hy, for they heard tiding  
That of Vallance Sir Amery,  
With a very great chevalry,  
Both of Scots and als Englishmen,  
With great fel'ny, were ready then  
Assembled for to seek the king,  
That was at that time with his gath'ring  
In Cumnock, where it straitest was.  
Thither then went James of Dowglas,  
And was right welcome to the king." (p. 125).

We are not able to point to "Cumnock, where it straitest was," but very possibly it is to be found in the higher part of New Cumnock, either up the Afton or in the valley of the Nith.

Immediately after Douglas joined Bruce, there took place that well-known incident in which the king was in great peril and nearly lost his life through the bloodhound which had formerly been his pet. A similar incident occurred in Galloway, near Loch Ryan, but Barbour locates this scene too accurately to allow us to doubt that it happened in our neighbourhood. John of Lorn, with 800 Highlanders, was in pursuit of Bruce, who in order to escape divided his men into three companies. Thereupon Lorn let loose the bloodhound which he had brought with him. With unerring instinct it tracked the steps of its former master. At once Robert bade his followers disperse, while he, accompanied only by his foster-brother, endeavoured to elude pursuit. Still the too faithful hound came on, when Bruce, exhausted by the flight, yet ever full of resource, said to his comrade, "I have heard that whosoever will wade the length of a bowshot down a running stream will make a sleuthhound lose the scent. Let us try if it will do so now." The attempt

was made, and was rewarded with success. Lorn gave up the chase.

In another account of the escape of Bruce on this occasion, the details are differently given. Barbour also is the narrator. An archer, who had kept near the king in his flight, perceiving they would finally be taken, stole into a thicket and despatched the hound with an arrow. "But," says the archdeacon, "in which way his escape happened, I am uncertain; but at that brook the king escaped from his pursuers." We cannot identify the stream at which the scent was lost. It is only certain that Cumnock was the scene of the incident.

Bruce, however, was by no means out of danger, for Barbour thus goes on to make a final reference to him in our neighbourhood:—

"The Warder then Sir Aymery,  
With this John in his company  
And others of good renown also,  
Thomas Randal was one of thae,  
Came to Cumnock to seek the king,  
That was well ware of their coming  
And was up in the strengthis then,  
And with him four hundred men.  
His brother that time with him was,  
And also Sir James of Dowglas." (p. 126).

The "strengthis" means the "hills." John who is mentioned is John of Lorn, and Thomas Randal is Randolph, the future Earl of Moray, who, though the nephew of Bruce and afterwards one of his most courageous supporters, was at this time in the ranks of his enemies.

Another allusion to our parish is to be met with ere the war, waged by Bruce for the independence of Scotland, was brought

to a close by the great victory of Bannockburn. Edward I., "The Hammer of the Scottish Nation," as the inscription runs on his tomb in Westminster Abbey, was succeeded in 1307 by his son, Edward II., a weak prince, whose magnificent army, composed of the flower of the English chivalry, Bruce was to hammer to pieces seven years later. The new king, utterly unlike his father in capacity and energy, signalled his accession to the throne by a leisurely march with his army into the south of Scotland. He advanced as far as the Castle of Cumnock, where he remained from the 6th to the 28th August, 1307. Having appointed the Earl of Pembroke governor of Scotland, he retraced his steps without having accomplished any act of importance. We can easily imagine how the heart of Bruce swelled with hope as he watched the English king and saw his matchless inactivity. It may be that the first time he felt himself thoroughly able to achieve his mighty task, was when from some vantage ground on one or other of the surrounding hills, he looked down upon the doings of Edward II., and thanked God that the stern grit of the father had not passed into the son.

Certain old English documents bearing on the invasion of Scotland by the second Edward contain a few references of local interest. Thus under date 15th May, 1307, we find that "W. Bishop of Coventry, treasurer (to the king), commands Sir James de Dalileye to pay the wages of the garrison of the Castle of Cumnok." Three days later we read that "a tonel of wine and ten qrs. of wheat and flour are ordered to store the Castle of Cumnok." On the 20th of the same month it is stated that "John de Drokensford, guardian of the wardrobe, commands

James de Dalileye or his lieutenant at Dumfries, to give such victuals as they require to Sir William de Feltone and the others who are about to go to the Castle of Cumnok" (*Cal. of Documents relating to Scotland*, vol. II.). And three days afterwards an anonymous writer reports the return of the Bishop of Chester to Carlisle from Ayr and other fortresses in that quarter, which he had been sent to furnish with provisions. He adds that the king was so greatly pleased with the Bishop's account that he kissed him, "especially for his borrowing the Castle of Comenogh, lying between Lanark and Ayr, from its owner, Earl Patrick for a term, and garrisoning it with thirty men at arms."

Cumnock accordingly had a fairly close connection with Bruce, quite sufficient to keep the people in sympathetic touch with him as he sought to carry out his great purpose.

An incident which took place in the year 1353, in the reign of Bruce's son, David II., has a general historical interest. Its local colouring makes it specially interesting to us. Major, in his *History of Greater Britain* tells the story thus:—"After the departure of the English King (Edward III.), the Lord William Douglas gathered together all who owed allegiance to him, and marched into Galloway where, in part by the sword and in part by persuasion, he gained over all the men of that part to the side of David Bruce. Then Donald MacDowel swore fealty to the King in Cumnock church, and Roger Kirkpatrick brought the whole land of Nithsdale to do the like." (p. 299.) Wyntoun in his *Cronykill of Scotland* gives us a poetical version of the same scene, though he calls Donald MacDowel by the name of Dugald.

Willame, the Lord than of Douglas,  
 That willfull and all besy was  
 Till bring till [the] Scottis fay  
 Landis that lang had been away,  
 Gaddryd him a gret menyhé ;  
 And in till Galloway with thai past he.  
 And with Schyr Dowgald Makdowle  
 Swa tretim [he] that in a qwhyll  
 He browcht the landis off Gallway  
 All hale till Scottis [mennys] fay.  
 And till Cumnoky's Kirk browcht he  
 This Schyr Dowgald to mak fewté  
 To the Wardane : and Galloway  
 Fra thinefurth held the Scottis fay.

(*Book viii., Cap. 42.*)

When this incident took place, David II. was a prisoner in England. Seven years before, he had been defeated and captured at the battle of Neville's Cross. His supporters, ably led by Lord William Douglas, maintained his right to the crown. The Warden at the time was David's nephew, Robert, who afterwards ascended the throne. The story is told by Major and Wyntoun in too circumstantial a way to make us doubt that the Warden was present in person to receive the allegiance of MacDowel. But no other details have reached us regarding the visit of the Scottish Regent to our church and town.



## CHAPTER IV.

*Before the Reformation.*

“ No Italian priest  
Shall tithe or toll in our dominion.”  
—*Shakespere.*

THE early ecclesiastical history of Cumnock is meagre. Few facts regarding it are to be extracted from the old records. Those, however, which are to be found are not without interest.

We cannot tell when the first church was built in the parish, but it is certain that a properly organized church existed before 1275, for in that year mention is made of a tax of £16 being laid upon the Rectory of Cumnock. (*Reg. Epis. Glasg.*). This tax was a payment to Bagimond's Roll. Bagimond played an important part in the affairs of Scotland at the close of the thirteenth century in the interests of the Pope. A brief statement about him and the Roll, which goes by his name, will help us to understand the tax which the rector of Cumnock had to pay out of his stipend.

For the purpose of carrying on the crusade against the Saracens on which he had entered, Pope Innocent IV. required the aid of the powerful princes of the time. In 1254 Henry III. of England joined the crusade, on condition of receiving a twentieth part of the ecclesiastical revenues of Scotland. In 1268 Pope Clement IV. renewed the grant and increased it to a tenth. The

clergy and people of Scotland objected to pay tribute of this kind to their English foe, and strenuously resisted the attempt of Henry to levy the tax. They appealed to Rome without obtaining redress. The English army was already on its way to Palestine, and the money fell to be paid to the coffers of the English king. Accordingly, the Pope sent a deputy to Scotland to collect the tithes. This deputy was an Italian, Baiamund de Vicci by name, better known among us as Bagimond or Bagimund.

The clergy protested and sent the emissary back to Rome. Clement would not move from his position. Bull after Bull was despatched to bring the clergy and people to obedience. Naturally the Pope won in the struggle, and Henry got the tenth part of the revenues of the Scottish Church.

Now, it will be easily seen that this temporary claim to a portion of the ecclesiastical income of Scotland was calculated to give rise to a settled belief in the minds of the English kings, that they possessed a certain sovereignty over Scotland in other matters as well as ecclesiastical. In accordance with this belief they began to act. So much was this the case, that it may be safely said that the unjust levy made upon our country at this time, and the attitude taken up by the kings of England with regard to it, were the initial means of rousing the Scottish nation to fight for its liberties, until Bruce at Bannockburn, half a century later, emancipated Scotland from the yoke of the southern oppressor. That, at any rate, is the story of Bagimond's Roll. The visit of the Italian legate to Scotland resulted, as far as our parish is concerned, in the payment by the rector of Cumnock of

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the annual sum of £16 Scots, one tenth part of the whole ecclesiastical revenue of the parish. That money helped to furnish Henry's contingent of troops, which joined the crusade of Pope Innocent IV. in 1254.

The first payment seems to have been made in 1275. Doubtless it was hard for the rector of Cumnock to give up such a large portion of his income, in order to let Henry have the glory of taking part in the crusade, yet we are glad to have a reference even of this kind to the church of Cumnock as far back as the closing quarter of the thirteenth century. It makes it perfectly clear that, more than 600 years ago, there was a church here with revenues attached to it, and that it was served by a rector, whose duty it was either personally or by deputy to celebrate the rites of religion in Cumnock parish. Though we cannot definitely say that the building, in which the services of the church were performed at that distant time, stood on the site of the present Established Church, it is practically certain that the earliest parish church was erected on that spot. Nor must it be imagined that no church existed in Cumnock previous to 1275. That is only the earliest date at which we have documentary evidence on the point.

Even in those far off times patronage asserted itself. The right to present the successive rectors to the church of Cumnock was held by the proprietors of the barony of Cumnock, whose story is told in its proper place. The first patrons of whom we read were the Earls of March. It is enough, however, to say just now that in the fifteenth century, the rectory of Cumnock was converted into a prebend of the cathedral of Glasgow with the

consent of the patron, who continued to hold the patronage of the rectory and prebend. After this conversion, the rector in his capacity of prebendary or canon of Glasgow, lived for the most part away from Cumnock, putting a vicar in his place, to whom he gave a fixed stipend, while he drew the remainder of the church revenues for himself. These revenues came in part from the church lands. The contributions of the people furnished a certain proportion as well. An early document tells us that there belonged to the church of Cumnock "lands, extending to two merk lands of old extent." On this ground part of the town must now stand.

In illustration of the arrangement just mentioned, we find that Sir Arthur Care (Kerr ?) is entered in 1510 as vicar of Cumnock (*Protocol. Dioces. Glas.*, Vol. II., p. 367). At that time, therefore, the rector was residing in Glasgow, as canon of the cathedral. Sometimes, however, when duty, or perhaps inclination, did not lead him to live in Glasgow, he resided here and discharged the parochial services in person. This was the case in 1501. In a record entitled *The Visitation of the Chapter of Glasgow*, occurs the following entry:—Cumnoch non facit residentiam (*Reg. Episcop. Glas.*, Vol. II., p. 611). Evidently this implies that the rector of Cumnock, as canon of Glasgow, did not make his ordinary residence at the time indicated in the cathedral city. He may have been inclined to stay here from the fact that he had no manse devoted to his use in Glasgow. There were 32 prebendaries in connection with the cathedral. Twenty-seven had manses. Of the 5 who had no manse, the prebendary of Cumnock was one (*Regality Club, 3rd Series, Pt. II.*, p. 50).

At times, too, the canons of Glasgow seem to have preferred to remain in their country parishes rather than fulfil their term of office in the cathedral. Distance and the difficulties and dangers of travelling might be their excuse. In order to meet such an emergency, Bishop John de Cheyam made an ordinance in 1266 directing the canons of Glasgow to appoint substitutes to take their places when they were not in residence at the cathedral. These substitutes were called Vicars of the Choir or Stallers (*Ib.* p. 68).

Of the Pre-Reformation clergy in Cumnock the names of only a very few can be given. Mention has been made already of Sir Andrew Care. In the charter given to the burgh in 1509 by James IV., Sir Thomas Campbell is spoken of as rector of Cumnock. In all probability Sir Andrew Care was his vicar. The names of other two at a still earlier period occur in *The Calendar of Papal Registers*, under date 1416. The extract is as follows:—“David Hamilton, deacon of the diocese of St. Andrews. M.A. He had collation of the Ch. of Cannok, value £30 old sterling, of lay patronage in the diocese of Glasgow, when a deacon, on the voidance by the death of George Dunbar, and held it for four years before being ordained priest, and now prays for rehabilitation and provision anew” (I., p. 605). This petition was granted by the Anti-Pope of the time, Benedict XIII.

In 1554 George Dunbar appears as “persoune” of Cumnock, and John Dunbar, the first Protestant minister of the parish, we have with good reason conjectured to have been the last Roman Catholic priest as well.

From its connection with Glasgow Cathedral, the church at

Cumnock was naturally called upon to furnish a portion of the means by which the services of the cathedral were carried on. Hence we find our parish appearing in a list, along with many other churches in the diocese, as contributing to the funds of the cathedral. The extract itself may be given. The date is 1432, in the reign of James I.

“Statuta de cultu Divino in choro Glasguensi.

Sanquhair ad tres libras,  
Cumnok ad tres libras.”

From this decree it would appear that Sanquhar and Cumnock were both expected to furnish the sum of £3 for the cathedral worship. The revenues of the parish were also taxed for the support of the Bishop of Glasgow. In 1275 we read of a payment of £16 for that purpose. In the 16th century the tax appears as £14 12s. In all probability this was an annual charge (*Reg. Epis. Glas.*).

Another reference to the connection between Cumnock and the episcopal seat occurs in the reign of James II. William Turnbull, Bishop of Glasgow, and founder of the University, died in 1554. His successor ordained masses to be said “for the soul of William Turnbull, our predecessor.” Masses, however, required money, and Cumnock was called upon to pay its share, as may be seen from the following clause:—“10 merks from the prebend of Cumnock, given originally for the maintenance of boys ministering in our said church, to go towards masses for the soul of William Turnbull.” Doubtless these boys were choristers in the cathedral, but it was rather hard to take the money destined for

their use to say masses for the soul of the late bishop. It appears, however, that the ten merks were only to be devoted to this purpose for four years, by which time we may suppose Turnbull's soul was at rest.

About two miles south of Cumnock there lies the little farm of Chapel or Chapel-house. The name suggests the presence in former times of an ecclesiastical building of some kind. Vestiges of such a building existed until recently. Both Dr. Miller and Mr. Bannatyne, in their notes of the parish, refer to the ruins of this chapel, and speak of them as quite visible. All trace of them has now practically disappeared. A sculptured stone belonging to the old building is to be seen in the present house of Chapel. Doubtless others have been built into its walls.

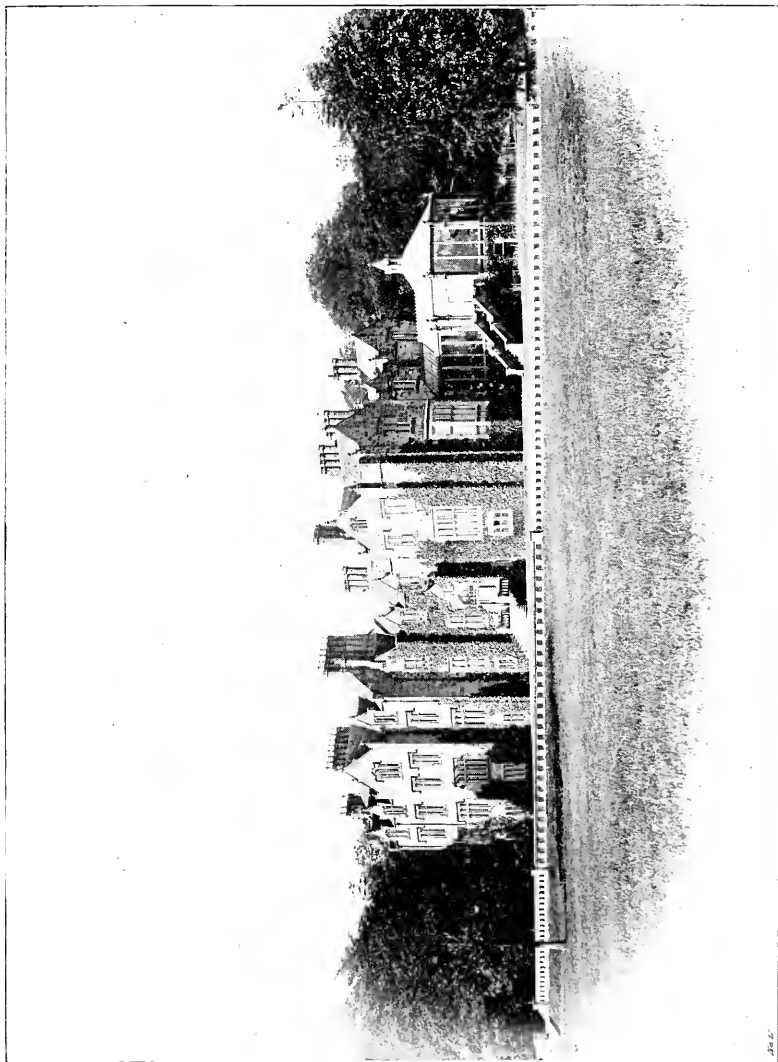
Very likely the chapel was erected by the laird of Boreland, on whose ground it stood, for his own use and that of his retainers. Permission was frequently given for the erection of private chapels under certain conditions. Care was always taken that the parish church should not suffer by services carried on in private chapels. In such cases it was usually arranged that divine worship was to be conducted by the clergyman of the parish, and that the celebration of mass was not to take place "on the five festivals of Christmas, The Purification, Pasch, Pentecost, and the feast of the dedication of the church, that the oblations might not be withdrawn from the parish church" (Innes, *Early Scottish Hist.*, pp. 14, 15). It is very probable, however, that a private chaplain, under the control of the rector, served in Boreland Chapel, for certain lands appear to have been devoted by the laird for the maintenance of his chaplain. These

lands, in all likelihood at the Reformation, were alienated from their religious purpose and let as common ground. For in 1612 we read that John Campbell of Schankiston died, having made his will immediately before his death. One clause in his will runs in this way:—"Item, to John Muir, zounger of Hallow-chapell, my oy (grandson), ane hundreth mks. money to be payit at mertimes nixt to cum." This entry implies that the lands of the old chapel had by that time been put to another use, and been let by the proprietor to John Muir, grandson of Campbell of Schankiston (Paterson, II., p. 349).

The reference is likewise interesting on account of the full name that is given to the old religious house. It is called Hallow Chapel—a name which shows that it was dedicated to "all who had been hallowed," *i.e.*, to "all saints." The 1st of November is All Saints' day, and accordingly that day would be kept as a high festival in the little chapel.

The memory and names of the various chaplains who served in it have quite disappeared. Tradition states that a small burial-place was formed round the chapel. Indications of it have been revealed by the plough and the spade. An old blasted tree, which still stands without bark or branch, goes by the name of the bell-tree. But, of course, it could not have been in existence three centuries ago, when the bell of the chapel called the faithful to pray. The small Episcopal chapel on Glaisnock estate preserves the name by which this pre-Reformation chapel was known. It is called "All Saints."





GLAISNOCK HOUSE.



## CHAPTER V.

*St. Convall, our Patron Saint.*

“He learned with patience, and with meekness taught.”—*Harte.*

LIKE other parishes in our country, Cumnock had a patron saint, to whom its church was dedicated. This saint was Convall or Conwall by name, the son of an Irish prince, and a brilliant ornament of the primitive Church in Scotland. He was a disciple of St. Kentigern, who is popularly known as St. Mungo. Wish- to leave the island of his birth and come to Scotland, Convall, it is said, stood by the seashore upon a stone, which immediately became a skiff, in which he was wafted to the river Clyde, where he landed near Renfrew, on the banks of the Cart. From its connection with the saint, miraculous powers were supposed to be attached to it, and in the case both of men and cattle, sickness was deemed to be cured by touching it.

Convall seems to have settled in Inchinnan, in Renfrewshire, about seven miles below Glasgow on the Clyde. After his death he was looked upon as the patron saint of that parish, where his relics were treasured as a most precious possession. The old historian, Boece, thus speaks of him in his *Chroniklis of Scotland* :—“Connall was a discipill of Sanct Mungo, and is buryit in Inchinnane, nocht far from Glasquew, quhair he is haldin in

gret veneratioun of pepill ” (Bellenden’s *Translation*, IX., 17). Boece adds a personal note. He says that at Inchinnan

“ I myself hes been  
In pilgrimage and his relicques hes sene.”  
(Stewart’s *Version*, II., 294).

Camerarius, who incorrectly calls him an abbot, represents Convall as being honoured by Aidan, King of the Scots, whose funeral sermon he was chosen to preach in 605. He is also erroneously reported to have been the first archdeacon of Glasgow. Such ecclesiastical dignitaries were not to be found in the Scottish Church of the time. Leslie, in his *De Origine Scotorum*, says that Convall took occasion on the coronation of Kenneth I., “diligently to impress upon the ears and minds of all, the religion of Christ and uprightness of conduct,” (p. 152)—a reference which perhaps indicates that he held some high official position. It shows at least that he was a most distinguished churchman. Bishop Dalrymple’s translation into Scottish of Leslie’s Latin may be transcribed in full :—

“ S. Conual, S. Mongowe his disciple, lyveng the same maner of lyfe, obteyned the same name in halynes and prayse, with the same fructe, quha quhen he was present at the burial of King Aidan, quhen he was buriet in the Ile of Ion, and being at Parleament in Argyle haldne, quhair Kenneth Keir was crowned King, conforme to the old maner, he nevir left aff, but evir, without entermissione, did publishe the Chrystne and rycht Religione with honest and gude maneris, inculcating and dinging it in the eiris and myndes of all ” (I., p. 233).

To this Irish prince, accordingly, who flourished as one of Scotland's early saints during the closing portion of the sixth century and the first quarter of the seventh, the church of Cumnock was dedicated. No information has reached us to tell why the religious authorities of the parish selected Convall to be their patron saint. Nor can we say if Convall was ever in our neighbourhood. We know that he travelled a great deal through the south-west of Scotland, and it is possible he may have visited this part of Ayrshire. The fact, however, only remains that he was chosen to be the patron saint of Cumnock. In proof of this, let one clause from an old will, dating from before the Reformation, and preserved in the *Register of Testaments* in the Commissariat of Glasgow (Vol. I.), be quoted:—"Lego corpus meum sepeliendum in pulveribus S. Convalli de Cumnok," *i.e.*, "I leave my body to be buried in the dust of St. Convall of Cumnock" (Forbes' *Kalendars of Scot. Saints*).

Whether Convall, after being adopted by Cumnock as its guardian saint, proved specially helpful to the community, we have no means of ascertaining. But evidently he was very popular in that capacity, for the people of Ochiltree hearing of his fame dedicated their church to him. Pollokshaws, Eastwood, and Ferrenese, near Paisley, also looked upon him as their patron. Near the burial ground at Eastwood, there used to be a ruin known as *The Auld House*, which, with its enclosure, was called St. Convall's Dowry. (Moran, *Irish Saints*, p. 158). In addition he had a chapel dedicated to him in Renfrew Church, his name being associated in it with those of SS. Andrew and Ninian. From *The Muniments of the Royal Burgh of Irvine*

(I., p. 151), we learn that in 1477, William Stoupishill, a burges of Irvine, founded an altar to Convall in the church of his native town. Rutherglen likewise had a close connection with our patron saint, for in *The Exchequer Rolls* of date 1327-1330, we are told that David II. of Scotland gave from time to time six and eightpence Scots, "to light the church of St. Convall." We do not know what special interest Bruce's son had in Convall, but it is recorded that King David, in the year 1330, doubled his ordinary contribution, and "out of his pity" gave thirteen and fourpence. It is interesting also to know, as Ure tells us in his *History of Rutherglen* (p. 124), that in 1773 two brass or copper vessels, "having cut on them the name Congallus or Convallus," were discovered while a tumulus of earth was being excavated, about half a mile east of the town. Unfortunately no importance was attached to the discovery and the vessels were irrecoverably lost.

Close, however, though the connection was for long between this Irish saint, who loved the Scottish people, and the Church of Cumnock—a connection maintained till the Reformation—all trace of it has quite disappeared. There is no well known by his name, and no spot of any kind, house or hill or stone, whose present name can be regarded as connected with that of our old patron saint. Connel Park and Connel Burn in New Cumnock, like Connel Bush in Kirkconnel, are doubtless derived, not from Convall, but from Connel, the patron saint of Kirkconnel. Let us not forget, however, that his name was familiar to the people of Cumnock in centuries past, and that when they gathered on Sabbaths and fast days to celebrate their religious rites, they met

in the church of St. Convall, and when they died were buried "in the dust of St. Convall."

The day specially set apart in his honour was the 28th September. That day accordingly in autumn, usually after the harvest had been reaped, would be held as a high festival by young and old, who gathered together from the remotest portions of the parish for religious worship and social merrymaking. Though September 28th is generally regarded as St. Convall's day, it may be noted that Camerarius makes it the 17th May. By others it is put on May 18th. His festival at Pollokshaws was held on that day.

The stone, on which according to the legend he came across from the Green Isle, is still pointed out close to the banks of the Cart, within the policies of Lord Blythswood and just a few yards from the main road leading out of Renfrew to Inchinnan. Originally it stood in the immediate neighbourhood of Inchinnan Church, and in the records of the Burgh of Paisley, of date 13th June, 1620, it is spoken of as "a grey stane callit St. Conval's stane." As it is only 3 ft. high and 4 ft. long, with a breadth of 18 inches, it must have formed a very small boat in which to bring the saint across the Irish Channel, especially as he seems to have had some companions with him. Yet it is remarkable that the boulder associated with his name is of grey granite, and is the only stone of the kind in the district.

Streaks of red run along its smooth upper surface. Formerly these streaks were accounted for in a peculiar way. The Marquis of Argyll on the 18th June, 1685, when fleeing wounded from the skirmish at Moordykes, rested on this stone. The blood,

which flowed from his wounds, was alleged to have caused the red veins which now appear on it ! From the connection it thus had with the Marquis, it has frequently been called Argyll's stone. In his *Journal* (Sept. 8, 1827), Sir Walter Scott has an interesting reference to it, which brings out the old Highland attachment between the men of Argyll and the martyred head of their clan. His words are :—"Blythswood says the Highland drovers break down his fences in order to pay a visit to the place."

Quite close to the boat or currus of St. Convall as it is called, lies a large block of sandstone with a cavity on the top, which has been regarded as the base of a cross erected in memory of Convall. No proof for this is forthcoming. There was, however, a cross erected in his honour in Renfrew Church. The papers in the charter chest of Mr. John Hall Maxwell tell of such a cross. The words are :—"Sub solio crucifixi in boreali parte ecclesiae parochialis de Renfrew." It is therefore just possible that the block of yellow sandstone, lying beside Convall's currus, formed the base of the cross which went by his name in Renfrew Church.

Very probably some of the people of Cumnock went from time to time to Inchinnan, for the purpose of visiting the tomb of Convall. We know that it was a favourite religious resort up till the Reformation. Boece's reference makes that certain. Devout pilgrims went to secure for themselves, their friends or their cattle, the virtues of Convall's stone. For the saint was so good as not to require a personal visit from those who needed his help. If water was poured over the stone and then gathered and carried to distant parts, the same effects were supposed to follow as from a journey direct to his resting-place. Believers in the



saint in Cumnock would not be slow, especially in cases of distress, to show their faith by a pilgrimage to Inchinnan.

In pre-Reformation days Convall was often invoked in the ordinary services of the Church. The liturgy, which was used in the old monastery of Dunkeld, contains the following clauses, and perhaps the words themselves were chanted in Cumnock on the day of the annual festival held in his honour.

Sancte Victor, Papa Romane,	}	Ora pro nobis.
S. Ninia,		
S. Palladie,		
S. Kentigern, vere Deo (dicte) Mungo,		
S. Convall,		
S. Baldred,		

The fullest reference to the life and work of Convall is to be found in *The Legends of St. Kentigern and his Friends*, translated from the *Aberdeen Breviary* and the *Arbuthnott Missal*, by Rev. Professor William Stevenson. As it not only gives us a very complete picture of the old saint, but also lets us see the honour in which he was held generally in the Scottish Church, it may be quoted in full. The alternative form of the name—Conwall—is used.

“OF ST. CONWALL,  
CONFESSOR.

*Prayer.* Enlighten, O Lord, we beseech thee, our hearts and our bodies by the benignant intercession of the blessed Conwall, thy Confessor, that with sincere minds we may be able to love thee, the true God. Through our Lord.

*Lectio I.* St. Cornwall, eminent in the primitive Church of the Scotch for marvellous signs and virtues, was a disciple of St. Kentigern. For his father was a king of the Irish and his mother was sister to a certain prince there. But, although as the future heir of a kingdom he had been born to a higher prospect, yet preferring the free service of Christ, and admonished by an angelical oracle, he abandoned his paternal hearth, and by a wonderful kind of navigation came as far as Scotland.

*Lectio II.* For as he stood on the shore, he saw behind him an unstable world from which he had escaped, and before him a boisterous ocean. Turning to the Lord he prayed, saying, “O God, whose right hand lifted up the apostle Peter, that when walking on the billows he was not drowned, command me to be borne by whatsoever means, to the regions beyond the sea.” A marvellous thing ;—the stone on which the saint was standing, as if it had been a light little boat, conveyed the saint safe to the bank of the river Clyde, and there staying its course is called the carriage of St. Cornwall.

*Lectio III.* Therefore, by the touch of this same stone or by washing with its water, as is daily seen even now, many sick men are cured and cattle besides, with whatever troubles they may have been afflicted. Then the saint went round the monasteries and cloisters, seeking out a suitable man to whom he might submit himself, for the purpose of being instructed in the discipline of a regular life. For he heard that St. Kentigern, the bishop, excelled the rest in sanctity, whereupon going to him he became his disciple.

*Lectio IV.* But, lest the distinguished virtues of this blessed man should have too slight a hold on the hearts of the faithful, we will endeavour on this day's solemnity to notice some particulars. For a certain man who was deprived of the use of his feet, and whose feet were so curved as to adhere to his hips, eagerly set out from Ireland, whence this blessed man had derived his origin, and before an image of him, the poor man persisted through three days' vigils, but in the course of the last vigil, the blessed Conwall seemed to appear to him in a dream, and touching the crooked limbs with his hand, made them sound. But do thou.

*Lectio V.* A certain woman also, who was suffering the intolerable torture of calculus, was cured by the intercession of the blessed man. A dropsical, moreover, as well as one who was almost consumed by worms, who could be cured by no medical treatment, were both restored to health by the merits of the blessed Conwall. But do thou.

*Lectio VI.* He relieved besides, from their afflictions, persons variously diseased, the infirm of all sorts and the blind, who came one after another from every quarter on this side and that, seeking the blessed man devoutly. All likewise who were ill or sick, by whatsoever malady they might be distressed, were by no means defrauded of their just wishes. And this Conwall is worshipped as chief patron at Inchinnan."

It only remains to be noted that certain traditions speak of him as an author. Even the titles of his books are given. They are three in number :—(1) *A Life of St. Kentigern*; (2) *Contra*

*Ritus Ethnicorum*; (3) *Ad Clerum Scoticorum super Ecclesiae Statutis*. None of these treatises have come down to us. We cannot say positively that they proceeded from his pen. The tradition may be without foundation.

Such then is the story of Convall. Much has gathered round his name which is legendary, and has no foundation in fact. We put no faith in the miracles he is said to have wrought, or in the marvellous powers attributed to his relics and his tomb. They are the growth of an ignorant and superstitious age, to which we now look back with mingled feelings of astonishment and pity. Yet, when the record of his life is stripped of all its meaningless and worthless trappings, there is enough left to let us see, that our fathers chose no mean man to whom to dedicate their church and parish, when they made Convall the patron saint of Cumnock.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The Ministers of Cumnock from 1560.*

When your Scottish clergy give up their homely manner, religion will soon decay in that country.

—*Johnson to Boswell.*

THE Reformation was an accomplished fact in Cumnock, as in the rest of Scotland, by the year 1560. The Protestant Church at once took the place of the old Romish Church. The priest attached himself to the Reformed faith and became the first Protestant minister of the parish. His name was

(1.) JOHN DUNBAR. In all probability he was a connection of those Dunbars who held the office of baron and acted as patrons of the church for more than three centuries. By a strange omission Scott, in his elaborate *Fasti*, makes no mention of him as our first Protestant pastor, but there can be little doubt from the existing evidence, that John Dunbar was the last incumbent of Cumnock before the Reformation, and that he adhered to the cause of Knox and the Protestant party. The facts on which this conclusion rests are quite convincing.

“About the year 1562,” we are told in a MS. Rental Book quoted by Chalmers in his *Caledonia* (Vol. iii., p. 522), “Mr. John Dunbar, parson of Cumnock, made a return to the reformed rulers, that the parsonage and vicarage of Cumnock, which was

held by him, was by common estimation worth 500 marks yearly, but that the whole was let on lease by him to Patrick Dunbar, fiar of Cumnock, for the payment of £40 yearly, which was less than an eighth part of the real value, and even of this small rent he could get no payment, for the two half-years past then remained unpaid. This official return he subscribed thus—Mr. John Dunbar, parson of Cumnock, with small profit.”

From this statement one thing is perfectly clear. John Dunbar had a year's rent due to him by the time he wrote in 1562. He had therefore been acting as minister in 1561, which brings us within sight of the actual date of the Reformation. Now we can hardly believe that an ordained preacher would be found in Cumnock within a few months after the Reformation, unless the priest of the parish had embraced the Protestant faith. Various reasons combined at the time to keep hundreds of parishes without a minister. Many of the priests for instance continued to hold the old doctrines. Others, who inclined to the reformed system of truth, did not care to become “preachers.” They had not been accustomed to preach and they disliked the work. Candidates, too, for the office of the ministry were comparatively few in number, and those who presented themselves could not be prepared quickly for their work. Even as late as 1596, four hundred parishes in Scotland were without Protestant ministers. When therefore we come upon a fully qualified preacher in Cumnock in 1561, we are entitled to believe that he had acted previously in the parish as Romish priest. On the same ground, too, we conclude that there was no delay in beginning the work of building up the Protestant Church in our midst. Roman

Catholic doctrines ceased to be proclaimed. Protestant services were at once commenced. The priest of the time became a convert to the Reformed faith, and introduced the rites of Presbyterianism.

How long Dunbar served as priest before 1560, there are no means of knowing. It could not, however, have been long, for the name of George Dunbar appears as "parson of the parish" in 1554 (Paterson's *History*, II., p. 319). Nor are we able to tell how long he continued to act as Protestant pastor after 1560. We only know that he ceased to have spiritual charge of Cumnock a good while before 1572. Apparently, however, he was not dead by that time, for a reference in the *Registrum Magni Sigilli* tells us that a John Dunbar, "vicar and life-long pensioner of the parish church of Cumnock," was alive in 1581, and received a royal charter at that date confirming him in the possession of "four acres of arable land, with a house and small wood (between the lands of the laird of Bromehill, the water of Lugar, and the church lands of Cumnock), with pasture for two cows and one horse." This Dunbar, described as a vicar and pensioner, can only be our first parish minister. Why he ceased to serve in the ministry we cannot say. Ill health may have laid him aside. Nothing would have been more interesting than a brief record of the man and his doings, but no such record exists. We can only deplore our lack of knowledge, and hold in honour the name of John Dunbar on whom, as its human foundation, the Protestant church of Cumnock is built.

On the retirement of Dunbar, a vacancy of some length occurred. No settled pastor was appointed till 1572. Cumnock,

accordingly, was put under the charge of John Inglis, minister of Ochiltree. This arrangement clearly proves that the vacancy was of fairly long duration, for Mr. Inglis would not have been appointed to the work unless there had been the likelihood of Cumnock being without a pastor of its own for a considerable period. The hands of the minister of Ochiltree were extremely full at the time, for he had the supervision of Auchinleck as well. He must, however, have been a very capable man in some respects, for he was nominated constant Moderator of Presbytery by the Assembly in 1606. Doubtless he tried to the utmost of his power, from his manse at Ochiltree, to supply in Cumnock the want of a resident minister. But on many Sabbaths there would be no regular service here, to the great weakening of the reformed cause, for it was quite impossible for Mr. Inglis to serve three parishes every Lord's day. Still, it may have been the case that the very want of a pastor of their own set the people to talk more earnestly among themselves about the great change which had come over their views, and made them more able to give to others a reason for the faith that was now in them.

At length this interregnum came to an end by the appointment of

(2.) JOHN RYND (1572-1576), the second Protestant minister of Cumnock. Rynd had already seen service elsewhere, for his name appears as exhorter at Kinglassie, in Fife, in 1569. His work in that capacity was to give simple addresses to the people on the leading truths of the Bible. A good many exhorters were employed at that time in the work of the Church, either to take charge of a parish temporarily or to assist the ordained minister.



From the register of ministers and their stipends, drawn up in 1567, it appears that there were then about 1080 churches under the charge of 257 ministers, 151 exhorters, and 455 readers. From the ranks of these exhorters the ministry was largely recruited. It was so in Rynd's case; for, from being exhorter in Kinglassie, he came to be minister of Cumnock in November, 1572. That year was very memorable in the annals of the Reformation, for it was the year in which John Knox died. Indeed, the news of his death, which took place on the 24th November, would still be the great topic of conversation in the church of Cumnock for some time after Rynd was ordained.

The new minister's period of office lasted for about three years. It remains a blank page in the history of the parish. No reference of any kind to his work exists. For some reason, perhaps the smallness of the local revenues of the church, Rynd received an addition to his stipend. For we read that he "had for stipend the haille personage and vicarage of Cumnock extending to xl li., and the haille chaplainrie of St. Blais in Perth xx li." The chapel of St. Blais in Perth was in all probability a private chapel, which ceased at the Reformation, and the endowment of which was used for supplementing the incomes of poor ministers. Perhaps Rynd had some connection with Perth. However, he did not long enjoy the provision made for him, for he died some time before the 22nd May, 1576, on which day his successor,

(3.) GEORGE CAMPBELL (1576-1578), the third minister of Cumnock, was inducted to the charge of the parish. For four years before he came here, Campbell had been minister of Dundonald. Of him, too, we know absolutely nothing. This only

we can say about him. He was presented to the parish by King James VI. Now, as the patronage of the church was held by the Dunbars, some hitch must have occurred by which the representative of the family at the time, Sir Patrick, was prevented from exercising his right. This Sir Patrick was the very gentleman who defrauded the first minister of Cumnock by withholding his dues. If he continued to withhold them, we may see perhaps the reason why the King took charge of the presentation on this occasion. James, however, was only ten years old at the time. The appointment made in his name must have been really effected by the Regent Morton. And as Morton did not favour Presbyterianism, but supported Episcopacy, Campbell may have held views which commended him to the adviser of James. In less than two years, however, the church was again vacant, this time to be filled by one who continued to labour for a much longer period than any of his predecessors.

(4.) WILLIAM HAMMILTOUN (1578-1595), the successor of Campbell, was minister in Cumnock for seventeen years. He was ordained in 1578. In 1595 he left for the parish of Dalry, in Galloway, where he died between 1633 and 1635. He was returned five times as a member of Assembly. His son James studied for the ministry, and was presented to Bathgate in 1617, but he returned home the same year at the request of his father. The reason of the request is not stated. The only outstanding incident in the ministry of Hammiltoun in Cumnock, of which we know, shows his staunch Presbyterianism. In the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* for the year 1582, it is reported that the right of appointing the Bishop of Glasgow had devolved

into the hands of the king, "because of the neglect in the persons representing the Dean and Chapter of Glasgow to elect Mr. Robert Montgomery," the king's nominee. "Maister William Hammiltoun, persoun of Cumnok," is mentioned as being called upon with others to fulfil the royal wishes and refusing to do so. To oppose the King's commands was no small matter in those days.

In connection with Hammiltoun and all his reformed predecessors in our parish, we must remember that the great work they had to do was to impress the people with the truths on which the Protestant Church was built, and to uproot the errors of Roman Catholicism. All the ministers who laboured here, from 1560 on towards the close of the 16th century, were men who had been brought up in the Roman Catholic Church. Hammiltoun, indeed, would be a mere child at the date of the Reformation, yet even of him it is true that his early days were spent in the old unreformed Church. The people, too, who attended their ministry had been born and baptized in that Church. They were acquainted with its ceremonies and its teaching. The doctrines of Protestantism were new to them. Bibles were few in number. Perhaps there were not half-a-dozen in the whole parish. It fell, therefore, to the ministers of the Reformed faith to expound and commend the gospel of Jesus. The difficulty of this task in the circumstances we can hardly imagine. Nor is it possible for us to award too high a measure of praise to the men who set themselves to this work with such earnestness and devotion. That they succeeded so well in eradicating the errors of Popery from the minds of the people is a testimony at once to

their own grasp of the doctrines of the grace of God in Christ and to the preparedness of the people of Cumnock, as of Scotland generally, to turn from the formalism and corruption of the Roman Catholic Church to the two fundamental facts of the Protestant Church—the sole Mediatorship of the Lord Jesus between God and man, and the priesthood of all believers in the Son, who was sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world. Hammiltoun and those who went before him are to be remembered with honour for their work's sake.

(5.) GEORGE DUNBAR (1599-1608). The successor of Hammiltoun in the parish is the first of the Reformation ministers of whom we have any detailed account. His name, George Dunbar, makes it probable that he too was a member of the Dunbar family in whom the patronage of the church was vested. As he began his ministry only in 1599, there seems to have been a vacancy in the pastorate for four years. Dunbar was a member of Assembly in 1602, and again in 1605. In 1608 he was translated to the first charge in Ayr, where he succeeded John Welsh, the son-in-law of Knox, who had been banished from the king's dominions. The call to take the place of Welsh marks Dunbar as a man of ability. He had the courage of his convictions as well, for he boldly prayed in church for his banished predecessor and others in a similar predicament. For this he was removed by the Privy Council in October, 1611, and confined to Dumbarton. Being allowed to return to Ayr, he was appointed minister of the second charge in 1613, and two years later was one of 55 ministers who signed a *Protestation for the Liberties of the Kirk*. In 1619 he was transferred once more to the first

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church in Ayr. His conduct, however, did not please the authorities, for in 1622 he was deprived of his charge for not conforming to the articles of the Perth Assembly, and ordered to be confined in Dumfries. On the intimation of this sentence being made to him, he is said to have turned to his wife and quietly remarked, "Margaret, prepare the creels again." On the occasion of his first compulsory removal from Ayr, some of his children were young and required to be taken in creels or panniers fastened across a horse's back. Another account tells us that he disobeyed the injunction, whereupon he was declared a rebel, put to the horn, and sentenced in 1624 to be sent to Ireland. Before the Privy Council on 22nd September, he intimated that "he wald acquies to his majesties will and pleasure." At that time he was described as "ane discrepit, poore aged man," yet he went to Ireland and was minister of Inver near Larne for about 12 years, after which he was permitted to return to Scotland, and was appointed to the parish of Calder (Midcalder) in 1638. While in Ireland, he was closely associated with several of his Presbyterian countrymen who, like himself, were exiled. John Livingston, under whom the revival at Shotts took place in 1630, was one of them. Robert Blair of St. Andrews was another. An interesting incident is told of them. In 1632 they were inhibited from preaching, and were deposed for refusing to conform to Episcopacy. They determined to find the freedom denied to them at home, by crossing the sea to America. With this end in view, Dunbar and his friends built a ship of 115 tons, to which the name of *Eagle-wings* was given, and in which they all set sail for New England. When more than half way across the

Atlantic, they were blown back to the coast of Ireland. Looking upon this as an indication from God that they should continue in their own country, they made no attempt to cross the sea again. Almost immediately afterwards, the sentence of deposition was removed by a letter from the Lord Deputy Strafford. In 1636 Dunbar returned to Scotland, and after a ministry of three years in Calder died in 1641.

His son Samuel succeeded him in the lands of Pollesche (Pollosh) in New Cumnock. Another son, George, died in 1651.

(6.) JAMES CUNNINGHAM (1608-1644). On the removal of Dunbar to Ayr, the pastorate was filled by James Cunningham, M.A., who was translated from Dunlop, where he had officiated for two years. Before that he was minister of Inchcalzeoch. His interest in the University of Glasgow, from which he doubtless obtained his degree, is shown in a gift of 40 merks, which he made in 1632 towards erecting the University Library.

Cunningham was evidently a man of great ability, for we find him appointed along with Thomas Ramsay of Dumfries, to represent the church on the sub-committee of the Tables, formed for the purpose of attending to the interests of Presbyterianism in all matters bearing on the Reformation from Episcopacy. As residence in Edinburgh was necessary for the performance of the work to which he was called, he was away from Cumnock for a time. His people, however, would be greatly pleased at the honour conferred upon their pastor, for on that important committee there were just 12 members, and of the 12 Cunningham and Ramsay were the only ministers. In the business thus entrusted to him, Mr. Cunningham fulfilled his part with the

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utmost credit. At a meeting of the 12 commissioners with the King's Council at Dalkeith on the 21st December, 1637, he made a wise and powerful speech, in which he called the Council to reflect on the danger of opposing the work of God in Scotland, if they did not impress upon the King the duty of agreeing to the wishes of the Reformers. He concluded his speech in this way:— "We have to do with a good and just King, who, we are persuaded, accounts it his honour and happiness to kiss the Son, to serve him in fear, and to rejoice with trembling; and we will rest assured that from the influence of his bounty and fatherly respect to this his ancient kingdom, especially in a matter of this importance, we shall receive a comfortable answer, by which our hearts shall have matter of praise to God's holy name, and encouragement more and more to have our hearty prayers to God that his majesty may have many happy days to reign over us; and for your lordships, as the blessings of the land under whose shadow we may live peaceable and quiet lives." Stevenson, from whose history this extract has been taken (p. 197), adds the interesting information that Cunningham's speech drew tears from several of the councillors, and "was the breaking of the snare to the Lord of Lorn." If this was really so, and the speech of the minister of Cumnock the means of converting the Lord of Lorn to the Presbyterian side, it was memorable in the extreme; for the Lord of Lorn became known afterwards as Archibald, Earl of Argyll, who so nobly supported the Reformed cause in Scotland, signed the National Covenant at Edinburgh, and was present at the Glasgow Assembly of 1638. At the conclusion of the conference, the same historian tells us, "the Council exhorted

them (the ministers) to instruct the people to be loyal to the King, and to think well of him in the matter of religion. To this Mr. Cunningham replied, 'Our consciences and our hearers are our witnesses, that we endeavour to carry ourselves well in this respect, neither have we ever a thought to the contrary; but his majesty is wronged after the manner that Ahasuerus was wronged by Haman, and we are looking to see the Lord's righteousness in his appointed way.' This unpremeditated reply was deemed extremely clever, and almost prophetic when men remembered afterwards the fate which some of the councillors shortly met with."

This was the last meeting with the King's Council for the time being. On the following day, Cunningham left Edinburgh on his way back to Cumnock.

Though no record exists of it in our parish, Cunningham would, early in 1638, sign the copy of the National Covenant which came to the district for the purpose, and the people, fired with the enthusiasm of their minister for their beloved Church, would follow his example in great numbers. "Before the end of April," historians tell us, "there were few parishes in Scotland, in which the Covenant had not been signed by nearly all of competent age and character." In Greyfriars' Churchyard in Edinburgh some wrote their names in blood drawn from the opened vein. Though ordinary ink would be used in Cumnock, the devout earnestness and resolution with which the people signed it, would augur well for their loyalty and the loyalty of their children, when the darker days of persecution drew near.

Before the great Assembly of 1638; which was to meet in



Glasgow for business of the gravest importance, it was universally felt in the Church that no more fitting occupant of the chair could be found than Alexander Henderson. There were a good many, however, who feared that Henderson's position as moderator would, by the rules of the Assembly, prevent him from entering the lists in debate against certain powerful supporters of Episcopacy. The names of some others, able to take the chair if necessary, were freely mentioned. Among those thus spoken of was Cunningham, who in this way was nearer the highest honour the Church is able to confer, than any other minister of Cumnock before or since. The fact that he should have been mentioned as a likely moderator on that memorable occasion is another proof of the eminent position he had reached, and of his outstanding abilities.

Towards the end of the Assembly Cunningham introduced a personal matter, which would hardly be allowed to be brought now under the notice of the Supreme Court. As Baillie tells the story too, it brings him before us in a slightly different aspect from that in which he has already appeared. Let the story be told in Baillie's words:—"Mr. James Cunningham, wearying of his patron my Lord Dumfries, his injuries, and not able to undergo his wonted labours in his spacious parochie, required liberty to transport when he might have occasion; this was granted; but to his small profit. It was thought he was furthered to make this motion, by his hopes to obtain the more large parochie, but more profitable, of Paisley or Hamilton, and readily he might have been made welcome to either, but his too ardent desire to be at them and from his own people, has made

his own to disgust him and these to have no great feast of him" (Baillie's *Letters*, vol. I., p. 166). What moved Baillie to write in these terms of Cunningham, it is not easy to say. "My Lord Dumfries" may have been acting somewhat harshly towards the incumbent, who had occupied the charge for 30 years; but if the statement be correct, Cunningham, who seemingly alienated the affections of his own people, and failed to ingratiate himself with congregations elsewhere, stands forth as a warning to all ministers who, eager to be translated to other charges, lose the good-will of their people at home.

Four years later, however, he secured the call to Hamilton, and was loosed from the pastorate at Cumnock, but for some reason he never went to his new charge. The Presbytery records are quite clear on that point. They tell us that the Presbytery met at Cumnock on May 19th, 1642, when "the kirk was found vacand and wanting a minister by reasoun of the transportatioun of Mr. James Cunningham, last minister there, to the kirk of Hamiltoun, where he is presentlie minister." Yet Cunningham continued to reside in Cumnock, and did not go to Hamilton. At this very meeting of Presbytery which declared the church vacant, he was present and gave information regarding the state of the church, the manse and the glebe; and whenever the minutes mention his name, they speak of him as the "last minister of Cumnock." Why he did not go to Hamilton we are not told. All that can be further gathered about him is that he remained here, and is supposed to have died in 1644, at the age of sixty-three, and in the 41st year of his ministry.

At this meeting of Presbytery, which declared the church

vacant in May 1642, a remarkable petition signed by a number of ladies was presented. It shows the interest the subscribers took in obtaining a suitable successor to Mr. Cunningham. The official record referring to the document runs in this way:—

“This day a supplication was presented before the presbiterie by a number of honest women of the parochen of Cumnok, subscribit by twentie four hands, q<sup>b</sup>y they earnestlie desyred the presbiterie for sundrie grave reasons thairin contained, to be cairfull for the speedie plantation of the kirk of Cumnok with a sufficient ministerie, not onlie qualified with learning for publick preaching, but also with gravitie, authoritie and holiness, for curbing of the Insolencies of the ruder sort, and for going before them in a good exemple of holie lyfe and godlie conversation, and that his calling to that charge sud be with the assent of parocheners, q<sup>k</sup> supplication was read and considered by the presbiterie.”

Whether the 24 “honest women” got the desire of their heart we cannot say, but the seventh minister of Cumnock,

(7.) JOHN HALKEID (1644-1646), was duly ordained on the 6th August, 1644, having graduated M.A. at St. Andrews in 1638. He was presented to the parish by James Crichton of Abercrombie, the Baron of Cumnock at the time. The only thing we know about his ministry is its shortness. In less than two years he died, at the age of 28. Perhaps the work of “curbing the insolencies of the ruder sort” proved too much for his strength.

(8.) JOHN CUNYNGHAME OF CUNNINGHAM (1647-1668). The vacancy caused by the early death of Halkeid was filled in 1647

by the appointment of John Cunynghame. The patron was the same as in the previous case, though it is added in the documents that James Crichton of Abercrombie presented John Cunynghame to the parish, with the advice of William, Earl of Dumfries. The new minister was ordained on the 8th September, 1647. In 1662 he refused to conform to Episcopacy, and was confined to the parish. In October, 1668, he died, after a ministry of 21 years. He was the proprietor of the little estate of Blook or Bloak in the parish of Stewarton. His wife, who survived him for nine years, was Elizabeth Cunynghame. They had one son and one daughter. The daughter married George Logan, a member of the Logan family. Alexander, the son, became famous in after days as a critic and scholar, and also as the first Professor of Civil Law in the University of Edinburgh. His career is sketched in its proper place among the eminent men our parish has produced.

(9.) SAMUEL NIMMO (1673-1686). The exact date of the admission of Samuel Nimmo to the church of Cumnock cannot be ascertained. All that can be said is that he was already minister on the 25th April, 1673. Apparently there was a considerable interval between the death of Cunynghame and Nimmo's appointment. The struggle between Episcopacy and Presbyterianism was becoming very critical, and the people of Scotland showed great opposition to the intrusion among them by the patrons of any minister of Episcopal tendencies. Nimmo was inclined towards Episcopacy even at the beginning of his career. The unwillingness of the parishioners to have him settled over them is sufficient to explain the vacancy of four or five years. The

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patron came off victorious, however, and Nimmo was ordained minister.

Some of the people, nevertheless, objected so strenuously to his ordination, that they refused to have their children baptized by him. Wodrow tells the story in his *History* (III., p. 387). "This same year (1682)," he says, "the Earl of Dumfries charged all persons in the parishes of Auchinleck and Cumnock to appear before him, and fined all who had baptized children with any other than the incumbent in fifty pounds each, poinding and driving their cattle and goods till they paid it. My information bears that Andrew Pathen, in the parish of Auchinleck, was forced to pay his fifty pounds because he kept his child unbaptized six weeks, though afterwards he carried it to the incumbent. Another in the same parish, Henry Stopton, was fined sixty pounds because he refused to tell who baptized his child." Though Wodrow gives no particulars of Cumnock, his words show that similar fines were inflicted here.

After having been settled in Cumnock for fifteen years, Nimmo was translated to Colinton in Midlothian. There his love for Episcopacy attracted the notice of the Presbyterian leaders. He was accused of not having read from the pulpit the Proclamation of the Estates, of refusing to pray for King William and Queen Mary, and of praying for the late King James. He was acquitted, however, by the Privy Council on the 22nd August, 1689. Soon after he was "hindered to preach by some of the Earl of Argyle's Regiment," and finally deposed by the Commission of the General Assembly in January, 1691, for declining to submit to their authority. He died in June, 1717, aged about

seventy-four. His wife was Isobel, the daughter of Thomas Halyburton, cordiner, Edinburgh. They had one son, William, who died in 1692.

Reference is made to Mr. Nimmo in the session records of 1713, twenty-seven years after he left Cumnock. During his ministry a sum of 700 merks, belonging to the poor, had been given on loan to Lord Charles Crichton. The Session now wished the sum repaid. The bond, however, had been drawn up in the name of Mr. Nimmo, with whom it was therefore necessary to communicate. At once he fell in with the proposal of the Session that he should assign the bond to them. The assignation was duly completed and registered in the books of the Regality Court of Cumnock. But the interesting thing is that the Session never speak of Mr. Nimmo as formerly minister of the parish, but as late Episcopal minister at Coldingtoun (Colinton). Perhaps their statement implies that when he ceased to have connection with the Presbyterian Church at Colinton, he conducted services after the Episcopal form.

(10.) FRANCIS FORDYCE (1686(?)-1688). On the removal of Samuel Nimmo to Midlothian, the pulpit was filled by the appointment of Francis Fordyce, M.A., of the University of Aberdeen. Whether he was settled in the year Nimmo left, or not till 1687, is not known. In any case, his ministry did not last more than two years. He was even more pronounced in his Episcopal tendencies than his predecessor. On that account he proved himself most obnoxious to the people. The year of the Revolution, however, put a stop to his doings. The method adopted was not of the gentlest kind. A band of ninety armed

men forced him into the churchyard, forbade him to preach, and tore his gown. If this was not done during public worship, it must have taken place immediately before or after church service.

The indignity to which he was thus subjected was made in later years, by the supporters of Episcopacy, the occasion of bringing the charge of persecution against the Presbyterians. To us it seems strange that persons, who shot our forefathers in cold blood and even while they knelt in prayer, should find fault with those who, somewhat roughly it may be, ejected from office one who was put into the ministry against their wish, and who conducted the services of God's house in a way that they believed to be opposed to the will of God. Fordyce's treatment was held up to opprobrium in a little Episcopalian pamphlet published at the time, and entitled, *The Case of the Afflicted Clergy of Scotland*. Principal Rule of Edinburgh University answered this charge in 1691, in his *Second Vindication of the Church of Scotland*. He tells us, for instance, that it was not the parishioners of Cumnock who ejected Fordyce. The men who really forced him out of the church were Cameronians, who came from other districts, and were in arms at the time against the Government.

It is not needful for us, of course, to defend every act that was done in those eventful years preceding the Revolution by men who were struggling for liberty of conscience and for their God-given rights against a powerful oppressor. We can only say that if the position had been reversed, and Fordyce been a Covenanter, while the armed men were dragoons under Douglas or Claverhouse, the minister of Cumnock would have had short shrift.

The gown, which the Cameronians only tore, would have been his winding-sheet.

Rule's authority for making this statement was a paper drawn up and attested by George Logan of Logan, John Campbell of Horsecleugh, George Campbell of Glaisnock, and others. After this Fordyce's name disappears from the annals of the church. No record remains to tell what became of him.

(11.) HUGH KILPATRICK (1692-1694). Four years elapsed before Cumnock obtained another minister. The Presbytery minutes state that on the 5th June, 1688, "the parish of Old Cumnock desired supply." A month later a call was presented to Thomas Miller, but he preferred to accept an invitation to Stranraer. Thereafter the Presbytery arranged to give pulpit supply, as far as they were able, from among their own number. Probationers, also, were employed to preach. At length an unanimous call was presented, on the 1st December, 1691, to Hugh Kilpatrick, who, by his acceptance of it, became the first minister of the parish after the killing times were over. Kilpatrick was a native of Ireland. His first charge was at Lurgan in the Green Isle, where he was ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church about 1686. Three years later he accepted the presentation to Dalry in Ayrshire, whence he removed to Cumnock on the 13th January, 1692, the congregation undertaking to "accommodate him and transport his family."

Kilpatrick's ministry was not of long duration. His eyes turned towards Ireland again. Within three years of his settlement he bade farewell to Cumnock, and in October, 1694, was admitted minister of Ballymoney in County Antrim. Seemingly



he quitted Cumnock in a somewhat extraordinary fashion. He went over on a visit to Ireland, and never came back to his parish. On the 15th August, 1694, a petition was handed in to the Presbytery by a number of "gentlemen and others in Cumnock desiring to know how to act" in relation to Kilpatrick. They asked whether a deputation of parishioners should go over to Ireland to interview the minister. The Presbytery decided that such a step was of no use. And so after the needful formal proceedings, Kilpatrick's connection with Cumnock ceased. He died at Ballymoney in 1712. His son James became a minister in Belfast.

(12.) JOHN STEEL (1701-1746). After a vacancy of seven years, Cumnock again had a settled minister. The reason of the long vacancy is not known. A call had been addressed in 1697 to Archibald Hamilton, who did not see his way to accept it. At length, on the 26th March, 1701, Mr. John Steel was ordained to the pastorate. Two years before, he had received license at the hands of the Presbytery of Linlithgow. For 45 years he continued to act as minister, closing his career on the 4th March, 1746, when he had reached the age of 73. He was survived by his wife, Elizabeth Drummond. A good deal of information has come down to us about his work. Several points of interest may be noted.

Soon after he was settled, Cumnock, like the rest of Scotland, was engaged in discussing the proposals for union between our country and England. What view of the matter Cumnock took is not quite certain, but the following extract from the session records lets us see that the question was eagerly debated by the

people of the parish. It is of date 20th April, 1706. "The minister made intimation to the session of an appointment of the Synod, enjoining the several Presbyteries within their bounds to order the minister and elders of every paroch within their respective districts, to set apart and keep a day with all convenient haste of meeting, for prayer to Almighty God, that He would graciously be pleased to pardon the abounding sins of the land, to avert His judgments thereby deserved, to disappoint the designs of His Church's enemies, and to overrule this important matter of the union betwixt the two nations now in agitation, to such happy conclusions as may be for His great name's glory and the good of His people." For this purpose the Session appoint "Saturday next, the 26th," as a day for prayer.

Steel seems to have been a man of earnest spirit, who trembled lest the youth of the Church who were looking forward to the ministry, should depart from the old paths. He was much grieved at the influence which Professor Simson of Glasgow wielded over his students. As is well known, Simson held defective views on the doctrine of the Trinity. His "case" occupied the Church courts for a lengthened period, and produced a good deal of feeling. The following quotation from Wodrow's *Analecta* (III., p. 337) shows us the position taken up by Mr. Steel in the matter. Wodrow, who is writing in 1726, is deploring the heresy of Professor Simson. Especially does he deplore it, he says, because "Mr. Steel of Cumnock tells me that about him there is a society of young students in severall places in the shire of Air, that meet in one another's houses once a fortnight, and there declare against all Confessions of Faith and subscription,

and confirm one another in their opposition to them and loosen in other points. That he has this account from one of them who remains firm as yet, how long he knows not. *Ah, quorsum ruimus!* These things look like some terrible cloud coming upon us in this Church, when matters are at this pass in the shire of Air and the West of Scotland, and it looks as if it flowed from Mr. Simson's libertys that he gives and teaches his students."

Mr. Steel was a strict upholder of the law and order of the Church. On one occasion he entered into a semi-public debate with Mr. John Adamson, a "disorderly preacher," an account of which was published under Steel's auspices in 1714. The pamphlet bears the following title—*An account of a late Conference on the 25th October, 1714, betwixt Mr. John Steel, Minister of the Gospel at Old Cumnock, and Mr. John Adamson, a disorderly preacher, anent the pretended grounds of his disorderly course. Attested by Mr. Steel himself and five elders, who were eye and ear witnesses. Whereby Mr. Adamson will be found to have discovered his disingenuity even to a surprize, and the utter groundlessness of his separation.* Mr. Adamson was not satisfied with the account given by Mr. Steel. He therefore published a rejoinder in 1715 under the title—*Contendings for the Kingdom of Light against the Kingdom of Darkness, being a copy of a true dispute betwixt Mr. John Steel at Comnock, and Mr. John Adamson, preacher of the Gospel, about the grounds of separation, etc.* Little good seems to have come out of the conference, which by arrangement took place in the house of an elder in the parish of Ochiltree, where Mr. Adamson was residing and holding services at the time. He continued to believe that "the

ministers of the Church of Scotland were so unfaithful that he could not join with them.”

One of the main objections of Mr. Adamson was connected with the attitude of the Church towards the Oath of Abjuration. Perhaps there was no subject which caused more heart-burning among the ministers and people of the Scottish Church, during the first half of the 18th century than the question of this oath. Had Mr. Steel experienced no more difficulty about it than that which arose from the action of Mr. Adamson, reference to it would hardly have been required. But the matter was debated in his session, and discussed by the congregation in their homes, till feeling was roused and the peace of the church broken.

The story of the Oath of Abjuration is easily told. It was made obligatory by the Parliament of Queen Anne in 1712 upon all ministers of the Church of Scotland. Practically they were required to swear that the occupant of the throne of the newly united countries of England and Scotland should belong to the communion of the Church of England. This restriction naturally carried with it the inference that the crown could not be worn by one who adopted the principles of the Presbyterian Church. To ensure, if possible, its general acceptance by the Scottish ministers, penalties of a heavy nature were threatened to be inflicted upon all who should refuse to take the oath. Ruinous fines were to be exacted in the first instance. Those who persistently declined were to be forcibly ejected from their pastoral charges. To the position implied in the oath, the Church of Scotland could not of course agree. The whole country was agitated over the matter. Some ministers weakly

took the oath. The majority declined at all hazards to conform, and among these was Mr. Steel. Resolutely he refused to bind himself with the restriction imposed by Parliament. In this he had the sympathy and the support of his people.

How then did the difficulty arise? In this way. Mr. Steel, though he had not taken the oath himself, had ministerial friends in the neighbourhood and elsewhere, who had obeyed the injunction of the crown. At a certain communion season one of these friends was invited by him to assist in Cumnock. Some of the members of session and a number of the congregation, despising those who had taken the bond, would not have him among them. Matters came to a crisis when Mr. Steel went from home to help at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the parish of a minister, who had subscribed the oath. His action was at once followed by the withdrawal of ten or twelve families from the church. Others expressed great dissatisfaction, though they did not go the length of separating themselves from his ministry. As far as he could, Mr. Steel tried to allay feeling on the point. He read from the pulpit the recommendation both of the Synod and the Assembly, that congregations should make no difference between ministers who took the oath, and ministers who refused to take it. He consulted with his elders frequently about it, but some of them he could not convince. No method of settling the difficulty could be discovered. The result was that, for four or five years, the Lord's Supper was not celebrated in the parish. At length, in 1716, it was agreed to ask the advice of the Presbytery, for which purpose an elder, William M'Cowan, was appointed to go to Ayr with the minister and bring the answer

back "in write." What happened after that does not appear from the session records. Feeling gradually died down, for under date 17th August, 1718, we read "the Lord's Supper was celebrated to-day."

Before the difficulty connected with the Oath of Abjuration began to disturb the peace of the congregation, Mr. Steel had made acquaintance with schism on a small scale in the parish. The record of it is interesting, because of the way in which it introduces us to the name of the well-known Hepburn of Urr. This minister, who was most earnest in his work, and thoroughly evangelical in his doctrine, had been deposed by the General Assembly of 1705, "for his troublesome zeal in the cause of Reformation." He even suffered a long imprisonment because he would not cease to preach and to expound his views. It is not certain, though it is very likely, that Hepburn, as he went about Dumfriesshire and Ayrshire, preached in Cumnock. At any rate, the session minutes make it plain that he had a few followers here about the year 1710. These people had gone to him for baptism for their children. The fact that he baptized children belonging to our town is a sufficient indication of the presence of Hepburn in the neighbourhood at least. These Separatists, however, were taken back at their own wish a little later into the communion of the church, though only after having been rebuked for their defection.

Mr. Steel's son, John, was minister of Stair from 1735 till 1804. He died the Father of the Church, in the ninety-fourth year of his age, and the sixty-ninth of his ministry. An incident connected with him is not without interest in the light which it

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throws upon his character and upon the social and ecclesiastical life of the time. He was present, after his ordination at Stair, when Home's *Tragedy of Douglas* was acted in the theatre at Edinburgh. Thereupon the Presbytery of Edinburgh directed a letter to be written to the Presbytery of Ayr informing them of the fact, on which he was called before them and acknowledged he was present. He pleaded, however, that "the playhouse being a great distance from his parish, he had no reason to apprehend that he would be known, or that his presence would have given offence." He added that as he was now sensible that he had been mistaken, and that his conduct was calculated to give offence to his brethren and to others, he was extremely sorry, and would offend in the same way no more. The Presbytery accepted this apology as sufficient, and the case ended.

Mr. Steel of Stair married the heiress of Gadgirth estate in the neighbouring parish of Coylton. His descendants possessed it until quite recently. It passed out of their hands by sale after the death of General Burnett, a descendant of Mr. Steel in direct line.

(13.) ADAM THOMSON (1748-1751). The long ministry of Mr. Steel was followed by the brief ministry of Mr. Adam Thomson, who, belonging to the parish of Saline, was licensed by the Presbytery of Dunfermline on the 4th March, 1747. In December of the same year he was called to Cumnock and ordained on the 28th April, 1748, "by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," as the session records tell us, "on which occasion Mr. Samuel Walker, minister in Dalrymple, preached from these words in Hosea xiv. 9, 'Whoso is wise and he shall understand

these things.' ” Little is known of the ministry of Mr. Thomson. He was evidently a great sufferer from ill health, for several minutes of the year 1750 run in this way :—“ Mr. Reid of Ochiltree preached and presided to-day, Mr. Thomson being necessarily absent on account of his indisposition,” “ Mr. Coats of Dalmelington preached and presided to-day, Mr. Thomson being absent through indisposition.” In the second year of his ministry an entry was made in the records, which may well have grieved him and the whole congregation. For we read on August 29th, 1749, that Mary Pearson, a member of the church, had been executed at Ayr for the murder of her child. His fight with feeble health was not of long duration. Mr. Thomson died on the 1st February, 1751.

(14.) GEORGE MUIR (1752-1766). The successor of Thomson in the parish was Mr. George Muir, who was born at Spott, near Dunbar, in 1723. In early life he served as a clerk to a writer in Edinburgh, with the view of entering the legal profession, but being led to visit Cambuslang in the summer of 1742, when the well-known revival was taking place, Muir came under deep religious impression and determined to devote himself to the work of the ministry. While a student in Edinburgh he threw himself heartily into various forms of religious work, and was a useful member of certain societies which met for prayer and the study of the Bible. In a MS. book kept by young Muir at this period, and which is still extant, a good deal of information regarding the movement at Cambuslang is given. The book contains copies of private letters written to him by friends in the West of Scotland, who continued in touch with the revival after



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Muir went back to Edinburgh. And certainly it says much for the spiritual life of his correspondents, as well as for his own goodness, that such letters should have passed between them. For they abound in expressions of ardent aspiration for the glory of Christ and of personal consecration to his cause, reminding one in some measure of the way in which Samuel Rutherford speaks of the Saviour in his letters. The book could only have been more interesting than it is, if it had contained copies of Muir's own letters in reply to those of his friends. As he does not give the full names of his correspondents, but contents himself with mentioning their initials, it is not possible to say who they were.

One of the most noteworthy facts to be gleaned from the book is Muir's connection with Whitefield, the great English evangelist, who visited Cambuslang on the occasion of the revival more than once. It is quite clear that Muir heard him preach, and very probably was at one of the communions in which Whitefield took part. It is even possible that it was the preaching of Whitefield, which turned the thoughts of the future minister of Cumnock to the things of the kingdom of God. At any rate, through Muir, our parish has a close link with that honoured servant of Christ, whose name for a century and a half has been a household word in our land. The first letter which the book contains has the following reference to Whitefield's work. The date is 7th July, 1742. The correspondent is A. K. :—"Dear Sir,—I hope by this time you are more and more convinced of the dear Mr. Wh——d's labours in the Master's vineyard, and shall be glad to hear of any of the fruits of his labours with you."

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Muir replied to this letter in due course, and A. K. writes again on 22nd September, in these terms:—"I am fond to have your sentiments about worthy Mr. Wh——d." One can only regret that no record now remains of the "sentiments" of Mr. Muir about Whitefield. His impressions would have been both interesting and valuable. In their absence, let another extract from the letters of his friends be given. It is taken from one written by J. A. on 2nd August, 1743, on hearing from Mr. Muir that he purposed to enter the ministry:—"I have perused yours enclosed to me, and some worthy, old, brave Christians here with me have perused it. And after mature deliberation, we do heartily and cheerfully approve of your laudable purpose, and earnestly entreat you to make such prudent despatches that way, as you may in providence find. . . . I am glad to hear you counting the cost both of professing and preaching a dear, loving, and yet a despised Jesus. What a wonderful mercy it is, Sir, that there is no duty we are called upon to perform which does not come under the influence of a promise. I am likewise glad to hear you sensible of the plagues of your own heart, and to find you groaning under spiritual pride, that monstrous, unreasonable, and abominable bosom enemy. . . . Two of our valuable ministers here, Mr. Stirling, and particularly Mr. M'Laurin, want much to see and converse with you when you come west this week, and I have promised to introduce you, which I hope you will not decline." The writer of this letter was a layman. The words and tone of it bear abundant testimony to his spiritual character. Friends, such as he, must have exercised a most beneficial influence over young Muir. Addi-





OLD ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

tional letters by him and other correspondents give detailed accounts of the various meetings held at Cambuslang, and are valuable as giving the impressions of an eye-witness, who was not a minister, of what took place at the time of the memorable awakening in 1742 and 1743. But as that subject in its general aspect is foreign to the purpose in hand, there is no occasion to refer to it now. The book itself, from which these extracts are taken, is in the possession of Mr. Macrae, late teacher at Dalleagles, New Cumnock.

After completing his theological course, Mr. Muir taught for some time in the parish school of Carnock, where he enjoyed the friendship and attended the ministry of Thomas Gillespie, and sometimes was able to hear Ralph Erskine, who by that time had seceded from the Church of Scotland. In 1750 he was licensed by the Presbytery of Dunfermline, and two years later, on the 30th November, 1752, he was ordained minister of Cumnock. Though separated from his ministerial friends in the east of Scotland, he continued to correspond with them, and was helped at communion times by such men as Mr. Noble of Liberton, and Dr. Webster and Mr. Plenderleith, both of the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh.

A year or two after he was settled here, Mr. Muir published a little volume, the first of several which he passed through the press, entitled *Christ's Cross and Crown*. This work, like all the others which came from his pen, bears the stamp of the Cambuslang revival. This is seen from the motto taken from Dr. Young, which he prefixed to it—

“ In His blest life  
I see the path, and in His death the price,  
And in His grand ascent the proof supreme  
Of immortality.”

In 1760 he published a sermon which he preached on the accession of George III. to the throne, and in 1762 an ordination sermon with addresses bearing on a subject which pressed heavily on his heart—the laxity of discipline in the Church. Four years later he showed his missionary spirit by agreeing to preach the annual sermon in Edinburgh, in behalf of the society for propagating Christian knowledge. This sermon he published under the title *The Conversion of the Gentiles*. In the same year, 1766, after a ministry of fourteen years in Cumnock, he was called to the High Church, Paisley, where he laboured for five years till his death in 1771. While in Paisley, he published an *Exposition of the Parable of the Sower*, and after his death there appeared a similar work on the *Parable of the Tares* in twenty-one sermons—all of which doubtless he had delivered in Cumnock. Besides one or two other special sermons which he printed, some communion table addresses published by him may be noted.

The cause of his death was very striking. I give the following account of his illness and death, in the words of one who attended his ministry in Paisley. It is taken from *The Christian Instructor* of 1838, and gives us a glimpse of the bravery he showed in carrying on his work when disabled by disease. “A slight accident to his foot produced a cancerous affection, which soon assumed a threatening aspect. He bore his sufferings with Christian calmness and fortitude. When unable to walk to church, he was carried in a sedan chair, and spoke from a

specially elevated seat in the pulpit in a sitting posture. His assiduity was such that occasionally on week days he was carried to the court hall near his house, for the purpose of catechizing his people. At length his medical attendant deemed amputation necessary. The operation seemed successful, and hopes were entertained by his friends of years of usefulness before him. During the night following that on which the operation took place, an artery burst while he slept, and soon, from the loss of blood, he passed away on the 20th July, 1771. His death caused a deep sensation in Paisley." The same writer gives the following information regarding his family. "On the 12th September, 1753, Mr. Muir married Isabella, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Wardlaw of Dunfermline, by whom he had several children. His son James became pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, State of Virginia, U.S.A. He there published a volume of sermons. Mrs. Muir did not long survive her husband. Both are interred in the burying ground of the old Low Church, Paisley, under a tablet bearing a suitable inscription to their memory."

Another extract from the same sympathetic biography reveals to us the way in which he sought to reach the ideal of the Christian ministry. "As a Christian pastor he was most assiduous in the instruction of his people in the leading doctrines of the gospel. Possessing an ample fund of divine knowledge, and having the power of uttering himself in strong and appropriate language, accompanied with a full toned voice, he appeared to great advantage, and was esteemed in his day a powerful and impressive preacher. In administering instruction and consola-

tion to the afflicted, much kindness and Christian affection were displayed, and much of that wisdom which cometh from above, accompanied with the meekness and gentleness of Christ. . . . In leading the prayers of the congregation he poured out his whole soul; and a peculiar unction and enlargement, with a fulness of rich and suitable expression, particularly distinguished his public devotional exercises."

The glimpses, which are thus afforded by these references to the worth of Mr. Muir, clearly show what a precious gift Cumnock possessed from God during his ministry. His memory remains with us to the present day. One of the old residents in the town heard of the circumstances of his death from those who had listened to his preaching. It brings his ministry very near us, when we can say that one still living with us often conversed with those who enjoyed the ministry of Mr. Muir in the middle of the eighteenth century.

If Mr. Muir connects our parish with the work of Whitefield, he connects it also with a movement of another kind, which in his early days was at its height. This was the rebellion of Prince Charlie, which ended with the defeat at Culloden in 1746. Muir of course was a young man at the time, living in his father's house at Spott. The English troops under "Johnnie Cope" landed at Dunbar from the North, meaning to proceed to Edinburgh. Curiosity led Muir to visit the English camp. Let him tell his experience in his own words. The story is found in the manuscript book to which reference has been made. It is not in his own handwriting, but apparently in the handwriting of his son, who filled up the volume with incidents, religious and secular,



which took place in the neighbourhood, and chiefly in New Cumnock where he resided. The authenticity of the story is guaranteed by the title which the paragraph bears—*Some remarkable Providences that happened Dr. George Muir, Minister of the Gospel in Paisley.* The story runs in this way:—"In the year '45, going to see General Cope's regiment, I took out my pocket book with my kilavin pen without any evil intentions, to mark down the enemy's number, upon which an officer coming up to me asked me what I meant, and at the same time cursing me, said I was his prisoner. One, Mr. Lorimer, an acquaintance of my parents, hearing of my dismal situation, sent his servant post haste to give an account of my case to some of the principal officers on the British side, upon which I was relieved. When I consider the strictness of the martial law, and that I was among officers belching out the most horrid oaths and imprecations against me, I have reason to bless God for the singular Providence. Bless the Lord, oh my soul."

That the sympathy of the future minister of Cumnock, in some degree at least, was given to Prince Charlie, is evident from the manner in which he speaks of the British troops as "the enemy."

Four other remarkable occurrences in which Mr. Muir saw the hand of God are given. As everything about him is of interest, another of his experiences may be mentioned. "At another time," he says, "my comrade and I went out in a boat from the pier of Dunbar for the sake of pleasure; in coming in again, I fell upon the water upon my back where I lay a considerable time, until providentially a sailor from a top mast espied me and

came to my aid and delivered me from my distressful situation. Bless the Lord, oh my soul.”

Of the work of Mr. Muir in Cumnock and the spirit he showed in carrying it on, we happen to know more than of the work and spirit of any other minister down to recent times. The session records testify that after his settlement, new life came into the Church and new methods were adopted for the progress of Christ's cause in the parish. The sin of drunkenness begins now to be frequently referred to, and the ordinary discipline of the Church, apparently long in desuetude for this sin, revived. But the sessional discipline was only part of the effort of the Church to redeem guilty persons from insobriety. The private dealing of the minister, of which we can read between the lines of the formal minutes, would go far to win offenders back, and would be a work into which Mr. Muir would throw himself with all the earnestness of his faithful spirit.

Two days of special humiliation were set apart at different times by the session at his instigation. The minutes appointing them let us see the objects on which the minister's heart was set, and his passionate desire to promote spiritual life. They are as follows:—“January 23, 1763, the session appoint next Friday to be a day of solemn humiliation, fasting and prayer, because of the prevalence of irreligion and ungodliness in the parish,” and “March 31, 1765, the session taking into their serious consideration the alarming appearance of the weather, by which the labour and the sowing of the ground are so much hindered and scarcity of bread thereby threatened, considering that our national, parochial, family and personal sins are a just cause why God may

plead his controversy against us by breaking the staff of bread, and that the threatening of such calamity calls for special humiliation and prayer, they unanimously agreed to set apart Wednesday next, as a day of solemn humiliation, fasting and prayer.”

One can easily see that when these edicts were read from the pulpit, and when the day of humiliation came, Mr. Muir, with all sorrow for the presence of smallpox and all sympathy with those affected by the severity of the weather, had chiefly in view the lack of real religious life in the parish, and was consumed with the desire to bring his people into holier ways. That this was no spasmodic desire on his part is evident from a letter which he wrote on 2nd January, 1756, to his friend, the Rev. Mr. MacCulloch of Cambuslang, under whose ministry the revival had taken place in 1742. It shows us, too, how eager he was to foster the beginnings of a better state of things. For after speaking of the indifference to spiritual matters he found on every side, he says :—“ In the midst of all such discouraging circumstances, ’tis no small mercy if any children of promise are on the growing hand and in the exercise of grace waiting for our Lord’s coming. This appears to be the case even among us. A few in this town (four or five) have some time ago of their own accord associated together on the Lord’s evening for prayer and conference, a thing not known in this village in the memory of man. They met on the Sabbath evening to make it less observable, but as they have not been able to conceal themselves, they have the courage now to meet on a week night. It is pretty remarkable that a Seceder was the means of it. He came into this parish at

Whitsunday, and though continuing a Seceder in other things, has always allowed himself to attend ordinances here. Dear Sir, pray for us that the Lord may show us greater things than these." He adds a family item, "My son is just now in a fever, but rather in the way of mending."

The reference in this letter to the Seceder, who doubtless became one of the founders of what is now the United Presbyterian Church, and who remained in such friendly relations with the minister of the parish, reveals to us a side of Mr. Muir's nature which is worthy of notice. He was extremely catholic in his sympathies, and lived on terms of intimacy with ministers of other denominations, among whom were Mr. Belfrage of the Secession Church, Falkirk, and Mr. Hervey, the rector of Weston Favell in Northamptonshire, whose *Meditations among the Tombs* are well-known. In one of Mr. Hervey's letters, that clergyman says, "I beg Mr. Muir's pardon for not paying honour to his last letter. It is my affliction and misfortune, that I cannot cultivate a correspondence with several valuable persons at whose fire I might light my torch."

In his work Mr. Muir was most methodical. There is still extant his *Visiting and Examining Roll of the town and parish of Old Cumnock*, begun on 11th January, 1757, and ended on 25th October of the same year. It was inserted by him in the book into which he had copied the letters received by him in 1742, in connection with the Cambuslang revival. The roll is kept with great care. Every name in the parish is entered in it. Certain interesting facts are brought out by it. For instance in the town then, there were 147 families and 547 persons, of whom 120 were

children. In the country there were 132 "farm towns," with 231 families and 647 persons, of whom 176 were children. The total population of the parish accordingly was 1194, of whom 296 were children.

On the communion roll there were 410 names. The number of separate farms is seen to have been much greater a century and a half ago, than it is now. Many farms, whose names are given in Mr. Muir's list, are now obliterated, being joined to others. It will be noticed, too, that the population of the country part of the parish was greater then than in the town.

In another section of the same book we find a register of deaths begun in the year 1757 "for my own private use and satisfaction." We get a view of the family life of Mr. Muir from the two following entries. "Ann Muir, my own daughter, died of a teething fever on the 21st January, being 9 months and a week old," and "8th January, 1759, George Muir, my own son, died of a nervous distemper, being 8 days old."

Before this sketch of Muir's life is closed, a specimen of his ordinary preaching may be welcome. It is taken from his *Exposition of the Parable of the Tares* (Sermon vii.). "Oh, pray for the ungodly amongst whom you dwell, and by whom you are now tried; for who knoweth but as to some of them at least, they may after all be won over to Jesus Christ and become fellow-heirs with you of the same inheritance. It is a common—a laudable practice for the friends of distressed persons to recommend them to the prayers of the churches. Accordingly, we frequently hear from this place a catalogue of the diseased; one grappling with acute pain or violent sickness; another swimming

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for life in the rage of some epidemical distemper, a third groaning under the infirmities of age, and sometimes all of them wrestling to outward appearance with the King of Terrors. We would humbly recommend a very different list of diseases, and loudly call for your prayers in behalf of those labouring under them. We would call you to remember in prayer one who is for ordinary a prayerless person, and who has ventured to come here without bowing the knee to God; another who holds the Scriptures so cheap, that he scarce looks upon the Bible from one Sabbath to another, and who treats ordinances with such contempt that he is as sparing of his attendance upon them as possible; a third who lately staggered under the influence of midnight riot and drunkenness; a fourth who in a certain place and with a particular party profaned the name of God and made merry with sacred things; a fifth who in his dealings with such a one was guilty of known fraud and injustice, who cheated and over-reached him to his face under very opposite pretences; a sixth who is so lost in frolic and pastime that he hath hitherto found no leisure, no convenient season for serious reflection and concern about eternity; a seventh who dreams of his state being good while in fact he is yet in the jaws of bitterness and bond of iniquity. . . . These, and such as these, labour under the most malignant distempers, and they are threatened with eternal death, and any means formerly used towards their recovery have proved ineffectual. Let me therefore insist with you to pray for them, since who knoweth but the Lord may be gracious."

This extract from one of Mr. Muir's sermons shows us how faithful a minister he was, and how blessed Cumnock was with

the presence of such a devoted servant of God. Though his discourses belong to a bygone age, they are characterized by remarkable freshness, as well as by their practical bearing on every-day life. They abound in passages full of descriptive power, of pathos, and of affectionate appeal. When delivered with his deep sounding voice, they must have produced a great impression. Altogether, by the spirituality of his character, the earnestness of his work, the eloquence which he displayed in the pulpit, as well as by his achievements in religious literature, George Muir may lay claim to be the most memorable and the most outstanding of all the ministers of Cumnock.

It only remains to be added regarding him that, after his removal to Paisley, he received in the year 1768 the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Princeton College, New Jersey. The president of that college at the time was the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, who, until his departure for America, was closely associated with Mr. Muir as one of the ministers of Paisley. One of his first acts as head of Princeton, was to send to his friend the academic title of which he was so worthy. It is somewhat singular that Witherspoon, during the rebellion of 1745-6, should have been seized and made a prisoner as Muir was at Dunbar. Hearing that a battle was about to be fought at Falkirk, the future president of Princeton, then minister of Beith, was eager to witness it. He went, and after the defeat of the forces of the Crown, was captured by the troops of Prince Charlie. He did not, however, gain his freedom so easily as Mr. Muir, for it was only after great danger that he made his escape from the castle of Doune in which he was confined. How the two friends thrown

together in the Providence of God, would talk of the peril they ran unknown to each other in days long gone by! And both with all their wonted fervour would cry, "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

(15.) THOMAS MILLER (1767-1819). Just a year after the translation of Mr. Muir to Paisley, the vacancy was filled by the ordination of the Rev. Thomas Miller, son of Mr. William Miller, bookseller, Edinburgh. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Dalkeith on 12th June, 1764, received the presentation to the parish from William, Earl of Dumfries and Stair, in April, 1767, and was settled on 24th September of the same year.

His ministry in Cumnock is unique in several respects. He has been the only minister in the parish entitled to write after his name the words "Doctor of Divinity," for though Mr. Muir was honoured with the same degree, he did not obtain it while he was here. This degree of D.D. Mr. Miller received from the University of Edinburgh in 1788. His ministry also stands by itself, inasmuch as he is the only incumbent of Cumnock who has reached his jubilee. For he died on 1st June, 1819, in the eightieth year of his age, and the fifty-second of his service in the church. In one other respect as well, he is different from all his predecessors and all his successors down to the present time. He is the only minister who has enjoyed the help of a colleague. It is true he only survived the admission of his colleague a little more than a fortnight, but that is the only period since the Reformation at which, in any of the churches in Cumnock, there have been two ordained ministers in charge at the same time.

In 1780 Mr. Miller married Janet, the daughter of the Rev.



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Dr. Matthew Stewart of Catrine House, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh, and the sister of the better known Dugald Stewart, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the same university. It is interesting for us to remember that the distinguished occupant of the Moral Philosophy Chair in the metropolitan seat of learning, whose fame was world-wide, had a close connection with Cumnock, and was frequently seen at the manse. The same aged townsman, to whom reference has already been made, speaks of having seen Dugald Stewart in our streets.

On one occasion Professor Dugald Stewart, when about to proceed to the Continent, left his only child Matthew, afterwards Colonel Stewart of Catrine House, under the charge of his brother-in-law Mr. Miller, whose wife had just died. In writing to a friend he thus refers to him :—“Paris, 30th May, 1789 . . . I received your letter to-day, and along with it a letter from Mr. Miller, which makes my mind perfectly easy about Matthew and the children at Cumnock.” Dugald Stewart had in his possession a snuff box which he treasured very much, and which possibly was of Cumnock manufacture. In 1793 he writes in this way to his friend, Rev. Archibald Alison, afterwards of Edinburgh, but then of Kenley in Shropshire :—“I rejoice at the birth of your son (the late Sir Archibald Alison, the historian of Europe). I don't know what duties your Church imposes on a godfather, but I promise to do all I can to make him a philosopher and an economist, and I engage as soon as he begins to snuff (which I suppose he will begin to do a dozen years hence), to make him the present of a very handsome box, which I received lately with the ‘Rights of Man’ inscribed on the lid.”

The oral accounts which have come down to us of Dr. Miller as a preacher are not flattering. He evidently was a slave to his manuscript, and people then, at least in Cumnock, could not bear "reading." His voice, too, was not suited like Mr. Muir's for effective eloquence. At any rate he is said to have done a good deal of *greeting* in the pulpit. One day the humorous Laird of Logan was asked by a friend, "What gars the minister greet sae muckle?" Logan's reply was ready. "If ye were up there in the pulpit and had as little to say, ye would greet too."

But whatever may be the truth regarding the preaching powers of Dr. Miller according to the stories that have reached our day, and doubtless there is some truth in them, it is well to remember that the session and the people were of a very different opinion, when they asked the Presbytery to ordain him over them as their minister in 1767. They were very cautious men. They wished to test the presentee's gifts first. Accordingly they appointed, on May 3rd, Mr. Robert Patterson to petition the "reverend Presbytery in their name for the hearing of Mr. Miller." This was granted, with the following result under date June 7th:—"The Session had laid before them a petition signed by the Earl of Dumfries and Stair and the other residing heritors, to be given to the Presbytery's next meeting on Wednesday first, for moderating in a call to Mr. Thomas Miller to be the minister of this vacant charge, who preached lately two days *to the satisfaction of all.*" This petition the session concurred in and signed. Accordingly when he came, Dr. Miller was extremely acceptable to the people, to the elders and to the heritors.

For twenty years before his colleague was appointed, Dr.

Miller seems to have been very little in the pulpit. The reason of this is not evident, unless his unpopularity as a preacher led him to get the help of unordained assistants. One of these was named Anderson. On inquiry being made as to Anderson's settlement anywhere in the Church, an old man, who remembered him, said with a twinkle in his eye, "Na, na, I never heerd of him being settled anywhere, Mr. Miller got him chape."

A suspicion was prevalent, too, that Dr. Miller was inclined to hold unsound views on the divinity of Christ. On one occasion Mr. Robertson of the Secession Church, Kilmarnock, was preaching in the dissenting church at Rigg in Auchinleck. In the course of his sermon he vigorously denounced the moderation of the Church of Scotland. "There are even Socinians in it," he said, and pointing towards Cumnock, he continued, "there's one of them down there."

The only literary production of Dr. Miller is the short but interesting description of the parish, which he wrote for the *Statistical Account of Scotland* in 1793. It is the most reliable record we have of the condition of the parish, at the end of the eighteenth century. A genuine vein of humour ran through his nature. A story, which has survived till the present day, serves to illustrate this. His widowed daughter, who kept house for him, was extremely anxious to remove to Edinburgh. Dr. Miller, deeply attached to Cumnock, would not consent. At length, very reluctantly on the appointment of his colleague, he agreed to go. But it was altogether owing to the persistent appeals of his daughter that he took the step. Of this he made no secret, for he went about the town saying, "Some men are

henpecked, but I'm chicken dabbit." The fine relish of the phrase "chicken dabbit" savours of genuine Scottish humour.

He died with the love of Cumnock in his heart. The week after he reached Edinburgh, he was visited by Mr. Robert Latta, the well-known carrier in those old days between our town and the capital. He was not very well and said, "I can't talk to you to-day, Robert, come back next week and tell me about Cumnock." Next week Dr. Miller was dead. A little while before his death, the blind of his room was drawn up and he looked out. All he said was, "Ah, this isn't Cumnock." So passed away the oldest minister who ever laboured in our parish. He was buried in Greyfriars' Churchyard, Edinburgh, in the burying ground of Provost Neilson. No stone marks the spot.

The following appreciative notice of him taken from the *Fasti* will be read with interest. "Few blended more happily in their character the clergyman, the gentleman and the man of letters. A high sense of honour, inflexible integrity, social sympathy, benevolence and good humour were united with perfect politeness, knowledge of the world and of books. None was more indefatigable in the performance of clerical duty. His devotion was ardent and tender, and he was assiduous in endeavouring to extend by precept and example that religion, the history and doctrine of which were his favourite study, and the joy and consolation of his heart. His bibliographical knowledge was accurate and exclusive; and his house the abode of hospitality, elegance and piety. Few have been more venerated in old age.

— redit os placidum, moresque benigni  
Et venit ante oculos, et pectore vivit imago."

Dr. Miller had three sons and one daughter. In *The Scots Magazine* for 1815 appears this intimation in the list of marriages:—"April 10. At Cumnock, Major James Miller of His Majesty's 74th regiment of foot to Miss Margaret Miller, only daughter of the Rev. Dr. Miller, minister of Cumnock." Her married life was very brief; for in the same magazine, under date June 4th of the same year, we read:—"Died at the manse of Cumnock, Brevet Major James Miller of the 74th regiment, and late Lieutenant Colonel of the 23rd Portuguese regiment." Major Miller had seen a good deal of active service abroad, especially in the Peninsular War in the army of the King of Portugal. In the battle of Toulouse he was severely wounded in the head. It was from the effects of that wound, that he died with tragic suddenness so soon after his marriage.

Of his three sons, William the eldest was a Colonel in the army, Matthew a merchant in Liverpool, and Patrick a physician in Exeter. The last named, Patrick, was frequently in the habit of visiting Cumnock. A grandson of Dr. Miller entered the navy and in due time attained the rank of Rear-Admiral. His name drops out of the Navy List in 1879. That at least is the latest year in which we read of Rear-Admiral Thomas Miller.

(16) JOHN FRAZER (1819-1829). There are a good many people still in the parish, who have a distinct recollection of the Rev. John Frazer. Before he was admitted to the pastorate as colleague to Dr. Miller on 13th May, 1819, he had been for three years minister of the Presbyterian congregation of Monkwearmouth, a suburb of Sunderland, to the charge of which he was ordained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh on 31st May, 1816.

His early days were spent in Rothesay, of which he was a native. His connection with Bute brought him under the notice of the Marquis of Bute, who did well for Cumnock when he brought Mr. Frazer from the south, and entrusted him with the charge of the parish.

In his preaching Mr. Frazer was decidedly evangelical. On that account, his ministry must have been a great contrast to that of his old colleague. Even while a probationer, he was not ashamed to let his views be clearly known. It is told of him on one occasion, that he arrived on Saturday evening at the manse of a Moderate minister, in order to preach next day as a candidate for the assistantship in the church. At breakfast on Sabbath morning the post came in, bringing a newspaper for Mr. Frazer and letters for the household. He laid the newspaper aside, reserving it for the following day. At once he was put down as a "High Flying Evangelical" and lost all chance of becoming the helper of that Moderate minister.

His kindly interest in children is perhaps the most conspicuous feature of his ministry which is remembered to-day. One old resident, who speaks of Mr. Frazer as if it were only yesterday since she saw him, describes him as a man of fine appearance and tall stature, greatly beloved by all, even by the dissenters, who by this time were becoming quite numerous. She tells how he used to stop in the street and pat the little children on the head, the boys touching their caps to him and the girls curtsying. Mr. Frazer held also catechetical classes in the vestry, which the young people attended. A member of one of these classes of

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instruction, still alive, recollects repeating to him the thirty-seventh Paraphrase, and being commended by him.

Every reminiscence of Mr. Frazer that floats about the parish bears testimony to his goodness and his piety. A story in connection with his ordinary visitation illustrates the suggestiveness of his method of giving spiritual instruction. The diet of visitation was at Meadow farm. The neighbours had gathered there for the purpose of being addressed by the minister. The young people, if not the older people as well, were expected to repeat the answers to certain questions in the *Shorter Catechism*. The question with which Mr. Frazer was dealing was "What is Prayer?" The answer had been correctly given by a farm lad, to whom Mr. Frazer put the further question, "How often should we pray?" After a pause the boy said, "Morning and evening." On this reply Mr. Frazer's only comment was, "At least."

It was in Mr. Frazer's time that the habit of "pirlecuing" was given up in Cumnock. At communion seasons at the close of the Monday service, it was the practice of the minister to refer to the various sermons which had been preached, giving a short account of each. To this custom the name of "pirlecuing" was given, the word being derived by Jamieson from the French *pour le queue*. On one occasion Dr. Balfour of Sorn was officiating on the Monday. When Mr. Frazer came at the close of the service to speak of the sermon that had just been delivered and which the people had all heard, he found great difficulty in repeating what had been said, for Dr. Balfour had the reputation of being a very "confused" preacher. Mr. Frazer got through it as best

he could, showing no little nervousness in the matter. When the service was over, Dr. Balfour demanded of Mr. Frazer what he meant by putting words into his mouth which he never used, and making him say things he had never said ! The experience was so disconcerting to Mr. Frazer that he resolved to "pirlecue" no more. He gave up the practice and never recurred to it.

A very close friendship existed between Mr. Frazer and Mr. Boyd of Auchinleck. They read the same newspaper together. The boy who called at Cumnock manse two or three times a week in order to take it to Auchinleck, still lives, an old man with many reminiscences of church life in bygone days.

In 1829 an epidemic of fever raged in Cumnock. Mr. Frazer was seized by it, and after a short illness succumbed to it in the fourteenth year of his ministry. His last sermon was preached at Monkwearmouth, where his illness began to show itself. He was able, however, to return home. Mr. Frazer was unmarried. The following inscription, taken from his tombstone in the old churchyard where he lies buried, will fitly close this sketch of his career. It has a special interest from the fact that he is the first minister of the parish, whose resting-place in God's acre is marked by a memorial stone. It was erected in 1874, and took the place of an older stone, which was removed in that year, in order to allow room for the twin monuments now standing side by side—the one marking the burial place of Mr. Frazer, and the other that of Mr. Bannatyne, his successor.



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IN MEMORY  
OF  
THE REV. JOHN FRAZER,  
WHO WAS ADMITTED  
TO THE PASTORAL CHARGE OF THIS PARISH,  
ON THE 13 MAY, 1819,  
AND  
DIED ON 20 NOV. 1829,  
AGED 52 YEARS.  
ERECTED  
BY  
THE PARISHIONERS OF CUMNOCK  
IN TOKEN OF THEIR RESPECT FOR HIS WORK AS  
A MAN,  
AND OF GRATITUDE FOR HIS LABOURS  
AS A MINISTER.

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*The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance.*

(17.) NINIAN BANNATYNE, M.A., was presented to the parish by the Marquis of Bute on 10th February, 1830, and ordained to the pastorate on 16th September of the same year. His father was a shipowner in Rothesay, where the future minister was born in 1802. After serving for a time in a mercantile office in Greenock, he passed through the University of Glasgow, where he took the regular course of study in Arts and Divinity. Many in Cumnock still remember Mr. Bannatyne's courtly appearance and kindly manner. Under a very quiet demeanour he possessed great strength of character, so that when the con-

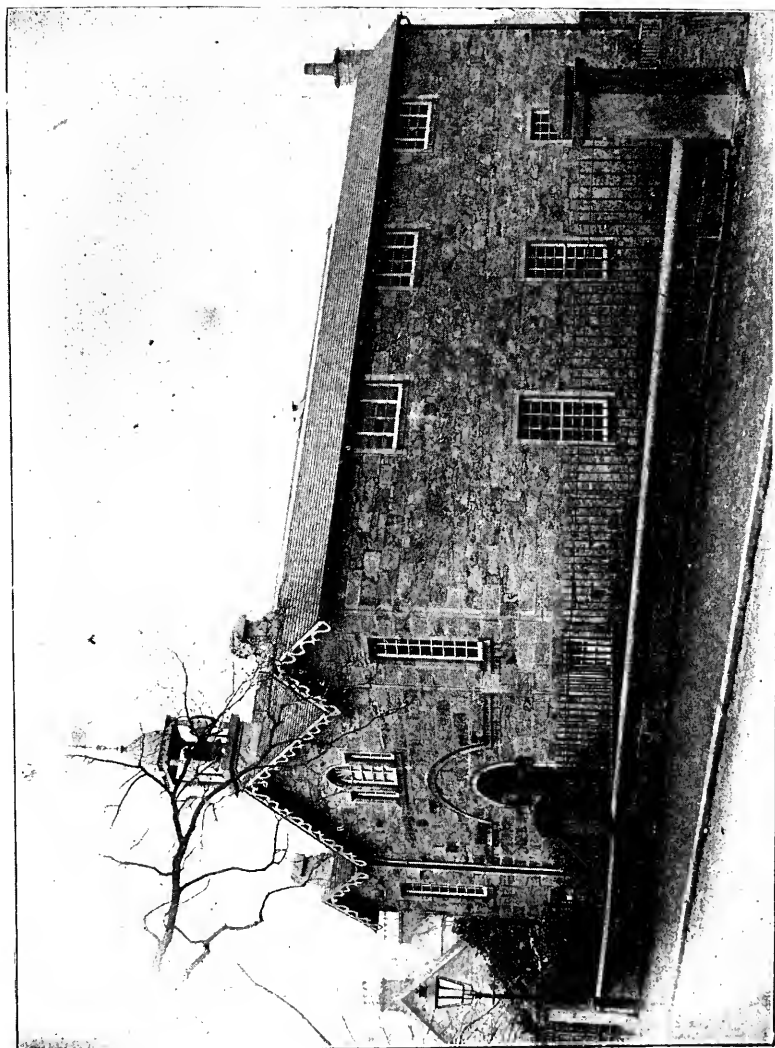
flict with the State for the freedom of the Church culminated in the Disruption of 1843, Mr. Bannatyne stood firm to the principles he avowed. At the call of conscience, he willingly resigned his position and emoluments as a minister of the Church established and endowed by law, in order to be minister of the Free Church of Scotland in Old Cumnock. Those who adhered to him learned all the more to admire him as a man, and to love him as a pastor.

The following extracts from the obituary notice, which appeared of him soon after his death in 1874, in the *Free Church Record* from the pen of his nephew, the Rev. Alexander M. Bannatyne, describe the salient features of his devoted ministry:—

“His close attention to his pastoral charge threatened not long after his entrance on the ministry to send him to an early grave; but after a little relaxation and a visit to St. Kilda, his health was restored, and he was able till the end of his earthly career, to give unremitting attention to the service of the Chief Shepherd.

“During the Ten Years’ Conflict, at the Disruption itself and ever afterwards till his death, he unflinchingly testified to the Headship of Christ over the Church and his Headship over the nations. It is believed that he was the very first to make a public sacrifice for these principles; for in view of the coming Disruption, he resigned the office he held as chaplain to the late Marquis of Bute, the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly.

“There was almost apostolical fervour and freshness in his prayers, particularly at communion seasons and at the bedside of



OLD FREE CHURCH.



the sick and aged and dying. In the welfare of the young he took a deep and practical interest—an interest which was responded to by the respect entertained for him by the youngest. His preaching was clear, apt and unostentatiously earnest. His communion addresses were so full of an unction from the Holy One, that they can never be forgotten. All classes felt the influence of a modest and office-magnifying Christian life.”

Though possessed of an easy literary style, Mr. Bannatyne never travelled far in the paths of literature. Two small publications only were prepared by him for the press. The one is the valuable description of the parish written in 1837 for the *New Statistical Account of Scotland*. The other is a sermon published in 1844, and entitled *Election no Excuse for Man's Sloth or Sin, but rather a Motive to Holiness*.

The tombstone of “guid godly Ninian Bannatyne” bears this inscription:—

IN MEMORY  
OF  
REV. NINIAN BANNATYNE,  
WHO WAS PARISH MINISTER FOR 13 AND  
FREE CHURCH MINISTER FOR 30 YEARS  
AT CUMNOCK.  
HE WAS BORN AT ROTHESAY, 27TH OCTOBER, 1802,  
EARLY BROUGHT TO CHRIST,  
AND ORDAINED 16TH SEPTEMBER, 1830.  
TESTIFYING TO CHRIST'S HEADSHIP HE CAME  
OUT AT THE DISRUPTION OF 1843,  
AND DIED 20TH FEBRUARY, 1874.

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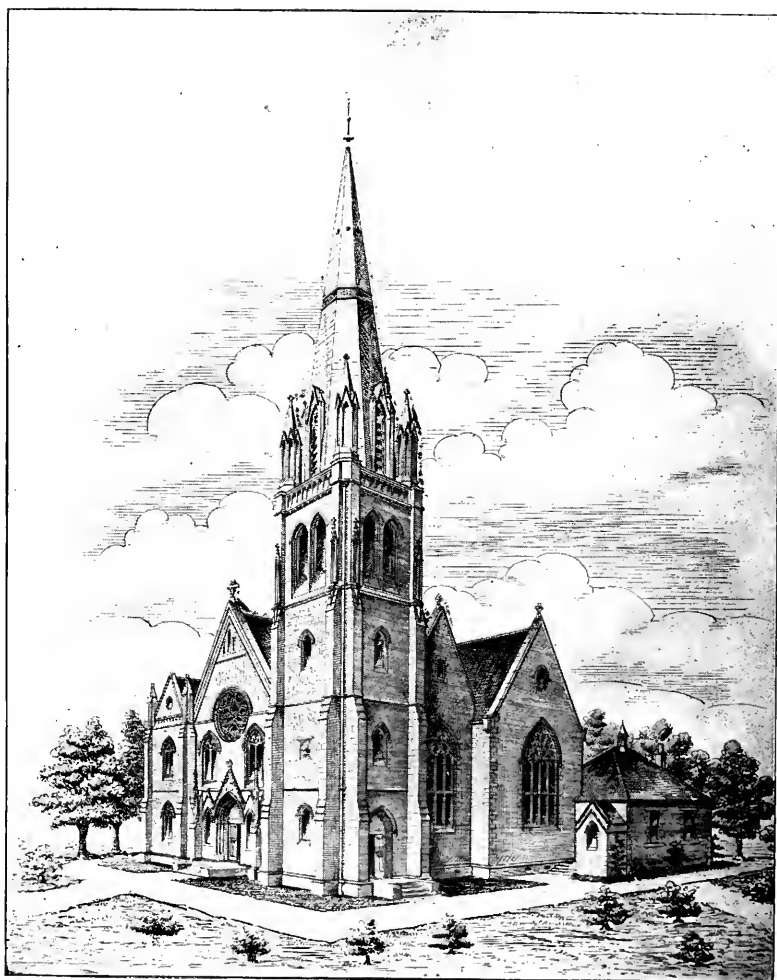
ERECTED  
 BY HIS CONGREGATION AND A FEW OTHER  
 FRIENDS  
 IN REMEMBRANCE OF  
 HIS PERSONAL GODLINESS, HIS PERVADING CHARITY,  
 HIS SELF-SACRIFICING SPIRIT, HIS CHRISTIAN  
 FAITHFULNESS, HIS SYMPATHETIC FORBEARANCE,  
 HIS UNASSUMING COURAGE, HIS  
 PRAYERFUL TENDERNESS,  
 HIS MINISTERIAL ASSIDUITY AND  
 HIS LARGE SHARE OF THE MEEKNESS AND  
 GENTLENESS OF CHRIST.

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HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.

On severing their connection with the Established Church, Mr. Bannatyne and his people built a place of worship in the Ayr Road. It was opened on the last Sabbath of October, 1843, by the Rev. Archibald Bannatyne of Oban. The congregation continued to meet in it till the summer of 1896, when it was taken down in order to make room for the handsome building now being erected for their use. They owe the beauty of their new church to the generosity of Miss Crichton of Hillside, who, by her gift, desired at once to help the congregation and to perpetuate the memory of her father, the late Mr. Hew Crichton, and of her brother, the late Sheriff Crichton. The church promises to be the most beautiful building in the neighbourhood.

After a vacancy of seven months, the Free Church congregation called the Rev. ALEXANDER ADAMSON, B.D., to be their



DESIGN OF NEW FREE CHURCH.





pastor. On the 23rd September, 1873, he was ordained to office, and continued to act as minister until his translation to Chapelshade Free Church, Dundee, on the 8th June, 1882. Mr. Adamson is the author of a small pamphlet entitled, *Is Christianity possible without Miracles?* The present minister of the Free Church is the Rev. JOHN WARRICK, M.A., who was ordained on the 22nd February, 1883.

On the withdrawal of Mr. Bannatyne in 1843 from the Established Church, the pulpit was filled by the Rev. JAMES MURRAY, a native of Eddleston in Peebleshire. Having studied at Edinburgh University, Mr. Murray acted as assistant for a few months at Kirkconnel. Soon after the Disruption, he was appointed to Cumnock by the Marquis of Bute. He continued his ministry until his death in 1875, at the age of sixty-four. He died at Mentone, whither he had gone in the autumn of the preceding year for the sake of his health. Mr. Murray published a volume of sermons entitled *The Prophet's Mantle: Being Scenes from the Life of Elisha*. He is known also as the author of *Songs of the Covenant Times*, which appeared anonymously in 1861. His tombstone in the churchyard bears the following inscription:—

IN MEMORY OF  
THE REV. JAMES MURRAY,  
THIRTY-ONE YEARS MINISTER  
OF THIS PARISH,  
WHO DIED AT MENTONE, FRANCE,  
30TH JANUARY, 1875, AND IS BURIED HERE.

The present minister of the Established Church is the Rev. JOHN S. ROBERTSON, who was ordained on the 22nd July, 1875.

## CHAPTER VII.

*The United Presbyterian and other Churches.*

The connection of our Church with the State we take to be rather accidental, than any way necessary to her ecclesiastical constitution.

—REV. GEORGE MUIR.

THE United Presbyterian Church in Cumnock has played a most important part in developing and maintaining the religious life of the community. Its history has been long and honourable. Its ministers have been true exponents of the gospel of Christ, and its members have shown themselves steadfast supporters of the liberty of the Church of God, and genuine believers in the doctrines of grace.

The beginnings of the congregation are difficult to trace, for we come upon the existence of Seceders in the parish a considerable time before a minister was settled over them. Mr. Muir's parish roll of 1757 sets down their number at 51, most of whom lived in the country. Only four are represented as living in the town.

It is extremely likely that these Seceders attended the means of grace at Wallacetown, a little way on the other side of Lugar village in the parish of Auchinleck, where one of the old praying Societies, founded in the days of the Covenant, existed. The place of meeting would be the barn of the farm or some big room

in the house itself, laid at the disposal of the worshippers by the sympathetic farmer. Along with many others in the south and west of Scotland, this Society had been under the superintendence of the Rev. John Hepburn of Urr, whose visits to this district have been alluded to in the account of the ministry of Mr. Steel.

In 1738, the Society at Wallacetown declared its adherence to the Associate Presbytery, and on the last Sabbath of June, the Rev. Messrs. Nairn and Mair preached at Wallacetown, for the purpose of recognising officially the union which had taken place. But Secession ministers were few in number at the time, and it was not possible to supply ordinances every Sabbath to the Wallacetown gathering. The only arrangement that could be made, was to put the congregation under the charge of Mr. Smyton of Kilmaurs, who when ordained in 1740, was instructed to visit Wallacetown and preach there four times a year. Of this we have corroboration in the baptismal register of Kilmaurs United Presbyterian Church, which shows that in 1745 children in Old Cumnock received baptism at the hands of Mr. Smyton. The good people who assembled at Wallacetown were, however, advised by the Presbytery to seek a minister in due time for themselves, "if it shall please the Lord to increase their number." At length they were formed into a separate congregation, independent of Mr. Smyton's help. The station at Wallacetown was then abandoned, and a little church built in 1756 at the Rigg, close to the line of road between Cumnock and Auchinleck. To this new church we must suppose the Seceders in our parish made their way. The first minister, Rev. ROBERT SMITH, was ordained over them in 1763. After a ministry of forty-six years he

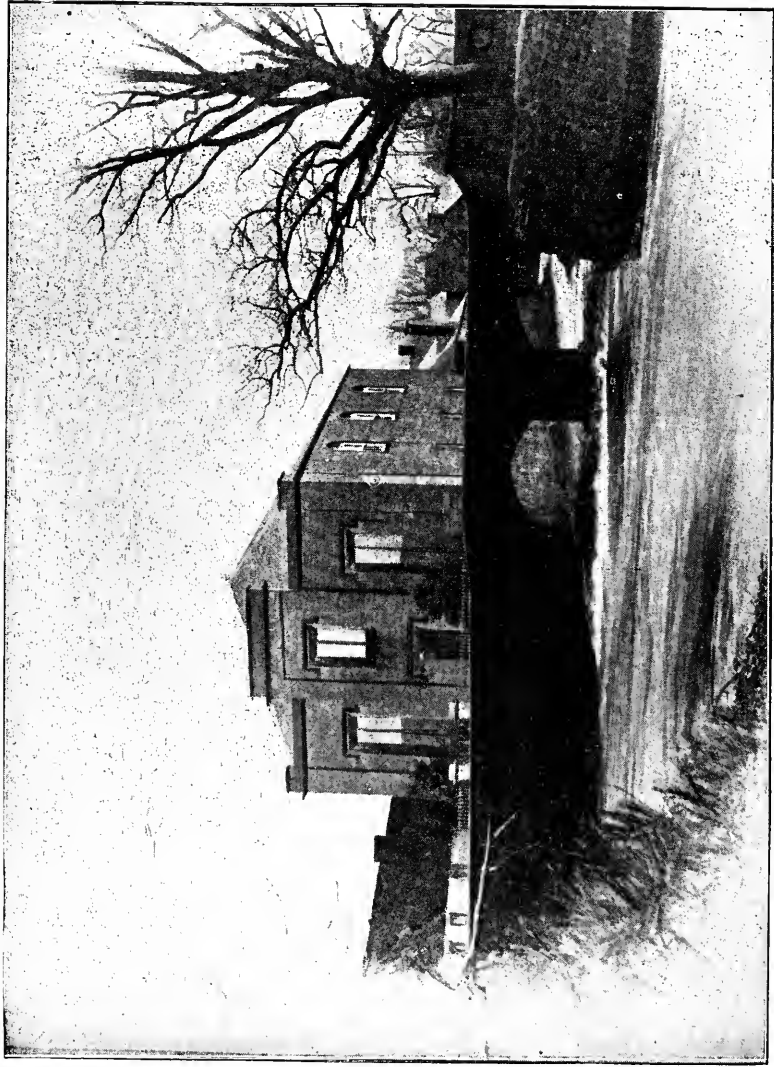
resigned in 1809. The fortunes of that church, however, now represented by the Original Secession congregation in Auchinleck, do not need to be treated here. They lie outside the story of our parish and form part of the story of Auchinleck. (Mackelvie's *United Presbyterian Church*, p. 404.)

In the meantime (1747), a great controversy had arisen regarding the burgher oath, and Seceders were divided into Burghers and Antiburghers, according to the view they took of the lawfulness of the oath. The church at the Rigg declared itself Antiburgher. A division among its members could not fail to take place. Some at least clave to the rightfulness of taking the oath, and these could not remain in fellowship with their Antiburgher brethren.

What happened next is difficult to say in the absence of documents, nor is it possible to be certain about dates. But about this time a man of pronounced views and vigorous action appeared in Cumnock, and was quickly regarded as the leader of the Burghers. He came from Glasgow, where he had been nurtured on true Burgher doctrine under the ministry of the Rev. James Fisher, of Shuttle Street (now Greyfriars), the last surviving of the four brethren who acted as founders of the Secession Church. Business, evidently, brought this Seceder from Glasgow. At any rate he opened a watchmaker's shop, and some of the clocks he made a hundred years ago are ticking still and keeping good time in Cumnock. His name must always be mentioned with respect, for JOHN RANKINE stands out as the founder of the United Presbyterian Church in our town.

Rankine soon gathered round him those who were like-minded





UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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with himself, and appears even to have persuaded certain members of the Established Church to join him. For by this time good Mr. Muir was away in Paisley, and the preaching of his successor, Dr. Miller, did not satisfy many who had enjoyed the evangelical sermons of Cumnock's most distinguished pastor. It would be strange if the Seceder, to whom Mr. Muir refers as having come to the town about 1755 and connected himself with his ministry, while he still maintained his Secession principles and started a prayer-meeting, should be this same John Rankine. But no light can be thrown on that point. We may be certain, however, that Rankine would not rest until he had his old pastor, Mr. Fisher, to preach and give the new cause the help of his influence. The result was that he and his friends found themselves able to apply to the Burgher Presbytery of Glasgow for a regular supply of preachers. This application was granted in 1773, and preachers were sent for two Sabbaths in each month.

At first they met in the open air, but in 1775 they built a church on the site occupied by their present place of worship, and so became a visible and permanent factor in the religious life of the community. The existence of this house of prayer, the earliest Nonconformist Church in the town, is still remembered by some old people. For it was not till 1831 that the present commodious church was erected, and the old building disappeared.

An interesting tradition regarding the building of the church in 1775 lingers in our midst. The Earl of Dumfries, through his factor, refused to give sand for the erection of the church.

To bring it from a distance was expensive. Just when it was needed a great flood arose in the Lugar, which overflowed its banks, and deposited on the site of the church a sufficient quantity of sand to enable the builder to finish his work.

Having now a congregation of some size, and a church in which to meet, Rankine and his friends in council proceeded to secure a minister. And here, perhaps, we see the hand of Mr. Fisher, for who should be chosen to be their first minister but

(1.) JAMES HALL, a member of Mr. Fisher's congregation in Glasgow. Mr. Fisher indeed had died a little while before, but we need not wonder if he and Rankine had talked over the names of likely men, and agreed together that Hall would be the best to strengthen the young cause in Cumnock, if the people saw their way to call him. This they did, and on the 16th April, 1777, at the age of twenty-one, he was ordained over them as their minister in the Lord. Mr. Hall's father was tenant of Cathcart Mill, near Glasgow. A younger brother, Robert, became minister of Kelso.

The stipend offered by the congregation to their pastor was not large. It was only £65 a year without a manse. Evidently this was all they could give, but they felt it was hardly enough. Whether it was with a view to increase Mr. Hall's income or not we are not told, but in 1781 the session "agreed that the parents pay 8d. for the registration of each child in the session register, and also that their minister charge 2s. 6d. for each marriage performed by him, not in his own house or in the church." Some of the other articles drawn up at the same time for the guidance and government of their people are interesting. Thus,



“persons refusing to take office were to be fined 5s. and be disqualified for holding any office in the congregation for two years.” And article 17 provided “that anyone absenting himself without excuse should pay 6d. for each time, and if continued would be required to pay such a fine as the managers thought fit to impose.” We can only hope that from one or other of these sources, the worthy Seceders were able to give their minister more than 25s. a week.

Mr. Hall “was not long settled in Cumnock when he was called to Well Street, London, but the Synod continued him in Cumnock. In the year 1786, being twice called, he was settled in Rose Street, Edinburgh. Very great dissatisfaction arose in all the other congregations in Ayrshire, as well as in Cumnock, from the Synod sanctioning the translation. Not only did the Cumnock, but also the Gallowsknowe (Kilmarnock), Tarbolton, and Fenwick congregations threaten to leave the denomination, because Mr. Hall was allowed to leave Cumnock.” This certainly was a strong step to take, but it helps to show the wisdom of the Seceders in choosing such an able man to be their first minister. For nine years they had enjoyed his pulpit and pastoral services. Under his preaching they had grown in numbers. His eloquence, for he possessed the gift of commanding oratory, attracted great audiences whenever he went away from home to officiate. It was only to be expected, therefore, that efforts would be made to remove him.

And perhaps when we remember that his congregation was not drawn simply from our own parish, but that Auchinleck, Ochiltree, New Cumnock, Muirkirk, Dalmellington, and Sorn,

all sent their quota to his church at Cumnock, we shall not be surprised that Mr. Hall thought it right to accept the call to Edinburgh, where the distances to be traversed in visiting the people were more moderate than he found them to be here. For until Mauchline congregation was founded in 1793, and Catrine in 1833, the church in Cumnock was the only representative of the Burgher faith in this part of Ayrshire. It drew its members accordingly from a very wide area.

Mr. Hall was inducted to Rose Street, Edinburgh, on the 15th June, 1786. The stipend offered to him was only £130 with house rent. His popularity was so great, that the accommodation was found in 1807 to be inadequate for the numbers who flocked to his ministry. It was resolved to build a new church, but a suitable site was not obtained till 1820. In the following year Mr. Hall, who by this time had received the degree of D.D. from Queen's College, New York, moved with his congregation to their new church, now familiarly known to all Scotland by the name of Broughton Place. Here Dr. Hall continued till his death, which took place on the 28th November, 1826, in the 71st year of his age and the 50th of his ministry.

(2.) The church in Cumnock was vacant for more than two years after the translation of Mr. Hall. In 1787, a call was addressed to the Rev. WILLIAM WATSON of Largs, but as a large minority in the congregation opposed his settlement and threatened to leave if the call were accepted, Mr. Watson very wisely solved the problem by staying where he was. Next year the people unanimously asked the Presbytery to settle over them the Rev. DAVID WILSON, who had just received license at the

close of his theological career. On the 30th October, 1788, he was ordained to the oversight of the congregation.

Mr. Wilson was born in the parish of Cambusnethan in 1754. His father, a cooper by trade, was beadle of the Secession Church at Davies Dykes, or Bonkle, as it is now called. On Sabbath morning as the hour for worship drew near, the father was accustomed to go to the top of a rising ground near the church, and ring a handbell in order to warn the people who were making their way over the moor, that service was about to begin. Young David acted for some time as a herd boy, and then helped his father in the humble cooper's shop. During his early days spent on the hillside, he committed to memory Ralph Erskine's *Gospel Sonnets*, and frequently during his ministry he made use of the stores of truth he thus hid in his heart. His struggle to gain a ministerial education was long and severe; but his indomitable spirit enabled him to triumph over every difficulty. Having completed his studies at Edinburgh University, he proceeded to the Divinity Hall, then under the sole charge of Professor John Brown of Haddington, on whose death he continued his theological training under Dr. Lawson of Selkirk.

Mr. Wilson soon made his mark in Cumnock, and became known as a vigorous evangelical preacher. "From the first," we are told, "his fervent manner and address attracted large audiences. A communion season in which Mr. Wilson was expected to take part, especially in out-of-door tent preaching throughout Ayrshire, brought large audiences. Even the broad school at that time who sometimes derided him, could not fail

unwittingly to proclaim his praise, saying, ‘There goes Wilson of Cumnock with great lumps of the gospel.’

“His pastoral duties were unremitting. He visited and examined his congregation once a year. In summer according to arrangement, he would sometimes visit families about five o’clock in the morning, at once to improve his time for his all day work afterwards, and secure the people’s attendance before they went to their several employments.

“Mr. Wilson was in the habit of catechising children whom he met on the highway sometimes. One day meeting a boy on the road, he asked him if he could say any questions. ‘I’m no ane o’ your folk,’ was the boy’s quick reply. ‘No matter,’ said Mr. Wilson, ‘if you tell me what is the chief end of man, I’ll give you a penny.’ The boy immediately answered the question, got his reward, and thanking Mr. Wilson he added, ‘I’ll maybe be ane o’ your folk some day.’

“Mr. Wilson could gently and sometimes successfully rebuke sin. One day at ice playing, one man had pronounced an awful curse upon another who had missed the mark at the game. Mr. Wilson who was present could not let this pass unreprieved, and gently touching the man’s shoulder he said, ‘Surely you were not in earnest when you said that.’ It took effect, as the man was never heard to swear again.” (*Report of Centenary Celebration in Ardrossan Herald, 8th May, 1875.*)

Eight years after Mr. Wilson began his ministerial labours, his congregation received a considerable accession from the parish of New Cumnock. There had just been settled there a clergyman, Mr. Reid, whom the people did not like—one parishioner

attesting that "on a good day in spring, there were only twenty-four persons in church." Many families at once severed their connection with the Established Church and joined the Secession congregation in Cumnock, to which they remained loyal, even after a more acceptable minister had succeeded Mr. Reid.

After having been in Cumnock for about twelve years, Mr. Wilson was called to Ayr, but he preferred to continue in his first and only charge, though his stipend of £95 was only half the sum offered by the county town. By this time, however, a manse had been provided for him on the banks of the Lugar, on the same plot of ground on which the present residence of the United Presbyterian minister is situated. The house, which seems to have cost only £70, was purchased by the people, "each of the 800 members giving one shilling" towards defraying the expense. Evidently the congregation had grown in a remarkable degree, though doubtless the number 800 includes adherents.

The very prosperity which the church enjoyed was made the ground, in 1791, of a petition to the Presbytery from those members who lived at Catrine, asking that they might be formed into a congregation of their own. Though the size of the Cumnock congregation was admitted, the prayer of the petition was set aside, for this reason among others, that the agricultural condition of the district was greatly distressed, "there being nearly 50 farms lying in grass, and destitute either of stock or inhabitant."

By and by, the end of Mr. Wilson's ministry drew near. He felt himself in failing health and knew that his work was almost

done. His eagerness to preach continued to the last. On the 17th December, 1822, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and the thirty-fourth of his ministry, "well-loved Wilson" went home.

"His funeral was attended by a very large concourse of people from the village and neighbouring country. Never was witnessed," says his biographer, "a more solemn spectacle. Every one seemed so affected in their mournful task, that it looked as if they were conveying to the grave one upon whom all their hopes in life depended. A neat monument with a suitable inscription, marks the spot where his body reposes in the hope of a glorious resurrection." It tells that it was

ERECTED  
BY THE CONGREGATION  
IN TESTIMONY  
OF THEIR GRATITUDE  
FOR HIS  
UNWEARIED EXERTIONS  
IN THE PROMOTION OF  
THEIR BEST INTERESTS.

Mr. Wilson was survived by his wife, who was a member of his own congregation, and to whom he had been married for over twenty years.

Two memoirs of him have appeared. The one, a small pamphlet published in 1825 by the Rev. Mr. Walker of Mauchline, gives an outline of his life. The other, entitled *The Devoted Minister*, was written by the Rev. Peter Mearns, of Coldstream, in 1858.

(3.) Nearly a year elapsed before a successor to Mr. Wilson was appointed. The choice of the congregation fell upon a young probationer of the church, named ROBERT BROWN. Born at Whinpark, near Kilmarnock, on 12th May, 1795, he had studied at Selkirk Hall under Dr. Lawson, and at Glasgow University under Professor M'Gill. In 1822 he was licensed by the Presbytery of Glasgow, and on 18th November in the following year, ordained to the pastorate of Cumnock.

Mr. Brown never enjoyed robust health, yet he was able during a period of twenty-three years, to prosecute faithfully the work of the ministry. His appearance and character have thus been briefly sketched by his grandson:—"Those who remember him, and who were children when he died, picture him as a tall, dignified, kindly man, who rode on a black pony, and who never passed them without a genial smile or kindly word. . . . He took a prominent part in doctrinal controversies, but he seems to have adhered pretty strictly to the somewhat rigid Calvinism which characterized the Scottish theology of his time. There are not wanting indications, however, of more liberal views, for it was he who allayed the suspicions of the Presbytery, when they had assembled to hear, and were not unprepared to condemn, Robertson of Irvine's trials for ordination, by the whispered remark, 'That young man is perfectly orthodox.'" (*Life of Rev. James Brown, D.D.*, p. 2.)

About six months before his death, Mr. Brown was totally laid aside from work. On the first Sabbath of February, 1847, he preached what proved to be his last sermon to his own congregation. Next Sabbath he tried to conduct the service, but

broke down. We are told that “ he went to church and engaged in praise and prayer. He also attempted to read a portion of the book of God, but becoming faint, he was under the necessity of stopping short and sitting down. He rose shortly afterwards and gave out the three last verses of the 63rd Paraphrase, which having been sung, he pronounced the benediction. This was his last appearance among his own people ” (*U. P. Magazine*, 1847).

On the following Sabbath he went, against the advice of his friends, to assist at a communion in Greenock, where he overtaxed his strength by preaching several times. He reached home in a state of great prostration. After lingering for five months, he passed away. His wife, Margaret Anderson, and several children survived him. The stone which marks his place of burial in the old churchyard, bears the following appreciative inscription :—

ERECTED  
BY  
THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN  
CONGREGATION,  
CUMNOCK,  
IN MEMORY OF  
THE LATE  
REV. ROBERT BROWN,  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 18TH  
JULY, 1847, IN THE 52ND YEAR OF HIS  
AGE AND THE 24TH OF HIS MINISTRY.  
DURING THIS LONG PERIOD  
HE LABOURED DILIGENTLY AND DEVOTEDLY  
AMONG A NUMEROUS AND  
ATTACHED PEOPLE.



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HE DIED RELYING ON CHRIST'S  
FINISHED WORK ALONE FOR SALVATION,  
AND BEARING TESTIMONY  
TO THE TRUTH OF THOSE DOCTRINES  
WHICH HE HAD SO FAITHFULLY  
PREACHED.

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD  
WHO DIE IN THE  
LORD.

(4.) Mr. Brown was succeeded in the pastorate by the Rev. MATTHEW DICKIE, who was born on the farm of Raws in the parish of Kilmarnock, on 18th May, 1815. When he was only eight years of age, his parents, both of whom were noted for their Christian worth, removed to the farm of Ploughland, near Dundonald, where Matthew attended school, and gave what help he could to his father in the work of the farm. By and by, the family removed to the parish of Stewarton, and there, at the age of twenty, Matthew left the Established Church, to which his parents belonged, and joined the Relief Church in the neighbouring town of Irvine. After resolving to devote his life to the public service of Christ, he offered himself to the London Missionary Society, but the directors of that Society had so many applicants for the foreign field at the time upon their lists, that they were compelled to decline his request.

Amid many difficulties against which he struggled nobly, Mr. Dickie completed his studies at the University of Glasgow, after which he attended the divinity classes of the Relief Church under Professors Lindsay and M'Michael. During his theological

career he acted as a city missionary in Glasgow. The benefit he gained in that capacity was of great value to him in later life. He himself says of it:—"A month or two of experience among the closes of the Gallowgate, is the best commentary which I have met with on the deep depravity of human nature."

After the Disruption of 1843, he frequently preached in pulpits of the Free Church, whose probationers were not able to overtake all the work required of them. On one occasion he preached at Dundonald, where he had been brought up. The interest of the people in his sermons was so great, that they offered to call him as their minister. He felt it to be his duty, however, to keep by the church of his choice. In 1847 he was licensed to preach the gospel by the Relief Presbytery of Glasgow, just on the eve of the union of that denomination with the Secession Church. Having declined a call to Walker, near Newcastle, he was ordained minister of the Cumnock Congregation on the 5th July, 1848. At once he threw himself heartily into his work.

Mr. Dickie believed in the power of the pulpit. Accordingly he prepared thoroughly for the services of the Sabbath. Nothing was allowed to interfere with his studies. He regarded the pulpit as the minister's throne. Pastoral duty was also carefully attended to. He gave his aid freely to the cause of temperance, and was president of the local Temperance Society, which flourished greatly under his guidance. His first attempts at authorship were in connection with the Scottish Temperance League, for which he wrote five small tracts. He likewise supplied the *Scottish Review* of October, 1856, with an article on the legal aspects of the temperance question.

The solid, earnest preaching of Mr. Dickie brought him two calls. The first to Canal Street, Paisley, came only two years after his ordination. Wisely he set it aside. Seven years later, in April, 1857, he accepted an invitation to St. James' Parade, Bristol, and thus severed his connection with Cumnock after a ministry of nine years. In Bristol he quickly made a name for himself as a preacher and pastor. Ill health, however, began to attend him. In 1869 he was completely laid aside from active work. On 30th May, 1871, he died at the age of 56.

A *Memoir* of Mr. Dickie was published by the Rev. Dr. W. M. Taylor of New York, an old co-presbyter in Ayrshire days. The volume includes five sermons and a number of poems, chiefly religious, which he penned at various periods of his life. Mr. Dickie was also the author of *Shadowings of Immortality*, and of *Work, or the Curse changed into a Blessing*. He is buried in Arno's Vale Cemetery, Bristol. His wife, to whom he was married shortly after his ordination, was Miss Stevenson from Kilmarnock.

(5.) The fifth minister of the church, the Rev. WILLIAM HUTTON, was born in Glasgow on 12th August, 1835. Having completed his studies at the University of his native city and at the Divinity Hall of his Church, he was called to Cumnock at the early age of twenty-two. His ordination took place on 3rd November, 1857. After a ministry of twelve years characterized by much faithful labour, Mr. Hutton accepted a call to Moffat, where he was duly inducted on 19th October, 1869. Eleven years afterwards, the Grange Road congregation in Birkenhead invited him to be colleague and successor to the Rev. James Towers. Having accepted

this invitation, he entered upon the duties of his new sphere on 22nd April, 1880. Mr. Hutton, who still ministers to a large congregation in Birkenhead, received a deserved honour in 1898, when he was chosen to fill the Moderator's chair of the Presbyterian Church of England.

(6.) The present minister of the United Presbyterian Church is the Rev. ALEXANDER M'DONALD, who was ordained on 10th January, 1871.

#### THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

The Congregational Church owes its origin to the personal convictions and efforts of the Rev. George Drummond, whose career as a missionary in Samoa is elsewhere sketched. About the year 1836, a few persons holding the same views, began to gather along with him on the Lord's Day for public worship. They formed themselves into a congregation, which slowly gained in strength, until in August 1840, they were able to call as their first pastor, the

(1.) Rev. Mr. SIME, whose ministry, however, was too brief to allow them to overcome all the difficulties they had to face. After remaining for two years Mr. Sime resigned.

(2.) In 1844 the members were fortunate in securing the services of the Rev. P. W. GRANT, who continued to act as minister for nine years. The memory of his high character and faithful work lingers till the present day. Hitherto the congregation had met in a hall belonging to the Black Bull Hotel, but during Mr. Grant's incumbency a great step was taken in the

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purchase, for £700, of a building on the north side of the Square as a place of worship.

Owing to a change in his views on Infant Baptism, Mr. Grant at length found it necessary to resign his pastorate, and to attach himself to the Baptist denomination. In this connection he acted first as minister of the Baptist Church in Cupar, and then for fourteen years in Darlington. Thereafter he retired from active service, and took up his residence in Perth, where he still lives. Mr. Grant has devoted his leisure time largely to study, and has issued through the press several volumes of theology. He is the author of *The Bible Record of Creation True for every Age*, *The Great Memorial Name*, and *The Revelation of John*.

(3.) In 1853 the Rev. JOHN M' AUSLANE became pastor, and remained for eleven years, when he accepted a call to Stratford. Mr. M' Auslane published a small pamphlet entitled *The Young Student*. At the time of his death he was minister of the church at Garliestown. His successors down to the present time, can only be noticed in the briefest way.

(4.) Rev. THOMAS BRISBANE, formerly minister of Duncanstone, was settled in 1866, and after a pastorate of six years removed to Cambuslang.

(5.) Rev. JOHN MURRAY, who followed, resigned in 1876 on account of his adoption of Baptist views.

(6.) Rev. FRANCIS LAMB was inducted in 1877, but left after a ministry of four years for America.

(7.) Rev. ANDREW N. SCOTT, who accepted the pastorate in 1882, resigned in 1884. After being engaged in work at Sullom,

in the Shetland Isles for some years, he accepted a call to Rutherglen, in February 1899.

(8.) The present minister, Rev. WILLIAM MATHESON, formerly at Stuartfield, where he was ordained in 1878, entered upon his charge here on the 5th October, 1884.

The congregation has a beautiful little place of worship opened in 1883 at the cost of £1600. A manse adjoining the church was erected at a later date. Their old church in the Square was bought by the Clydesdale Bank.

Other religious denominations make their appeal as well to the community. A Baptist Chapel was built in 1887. A small Episcopal place of worship exists within the grounds of Glaisnock House, but service is rarely held in it. A Roman Catholic Chapel was erected by Lord Bute in 1882.

In addition to the ministers who have been located in Cumnock, it may be interesting to mention the names of those who have gone out from the parish, to serve in the Church of Christ elsewhere. It is only possible to give the merest outline of their history. The list is long, but it is right to say that, while most of those included in it can claim connection with Cumnock by birth or long residence, a few lived outside the limits of the parish. This is the case especially with several who have proceeded from the United Presbyterian congregation. They are noticed here, however, because, though residing in neighbouring parishes, their church connection was with Cumnock. As far as possible the parish of their birth is given. The names are put down in order according to the date of ordination.

(1.) ALLAN LOGAN (See under "Notable Men").

(2.) GEORGE LOGAN, (do., do.)

(3.) HUGH CRICHTON was ordained to Duntocher U.P. Church on 16th January, 1826. He was translated to Liverpool on 18th April, 1838, and four years later received the degree of D.D. from the University of Glasgow. He died on 14th January, 1871, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. His funeral sermon, preached by Rev. James Towers of Birkenhead, was published under the title of *The Minister's Hope*.

(4.) ALEXANDER LAMBIE (Auchinleck) entered the United Secession Hall in 1822, but joined the Original Secession Church, and became minister of the congregation at Pitcairngreen in 1829. In 1842 he declined to unite with the Original Burghers, and separated from the Synod. After the congregation at Pitcairngreen died out, he removed to Edinburgh, where he ministered to a few persons who agreed with his theological position. He published one or two pamphlets on the principles and government of the O. S. Church.

(5.) GEORGE WELSH (New Cumnock) entered the United Secession Hall in 1826. He proceeded to India as a missionary under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, but died, soon after his arrival.

(6.) JOHN AIRD began his theological studies in 1830, and was ordained to Muirkirk U.P. Church in 1832. Four years afterwards he resigned, and joined the R.P. Synod as a probationer, but obtained no pastorate in that connection.

(7.) ALEXANDER KENNEDY (New Cumnock) entered the Secession Hall in 1830. He was sent to Trinidad as a missionary in con-

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nection with Greyfriars' Congregation, Glasgow. After labouring there for fourteen years, he went to Canada for the sake of his health in 1849, and was called to a charge in Darlington, which he accepted. A few years later he removed to Dunbarton, near Toronto, where he ministered for thirty years. On retiring from active service through old age, he settled in Welland, where he died on 19th January, 1892, at the age of 88. Mr. Kennedy wrote a series of articles in the Canadian *Presbyterian Magazine*, describing "Scenes and Sabbaths in Scotland" in his early days.

(8.) HUGH BAIRD (SOHN), was ordained to Cumbernauld U.P. Church on 5th December, 1837, and died on 10th September, 1879. He was the author of *Words in Season*, *Beaten Oil for the Light of Life*, and *Castlecary and the Great Roman Wall*.

(9.) GEORGE DRUMMOND (See under "Notable Men.")

(10.) JAMES S. JOHNSON was appointed to the Established Church of Cambuslang in 1843. He continued to be minister till his death in November, 1881. In 1875 he received the degree of D.D. from Glasgow University.

(11.) JAMES SAMSON was born in 1811. After serving for some time as a box-painter, he completed his Arts curriculum and entered the U.P. Hall. On the suspension of Rev. James Morison of Kilmarnock in 1841, he joined the Congregational Church. For a time, he acted as tutor to Sir Wilfrid Lawson and conducted service in the chapel at Blennerhasset in Cumberland. Thereafter he was settled in Newcastle, whence he was transferred to Sheerness Congregational Chapel, in which he remained for eighteen years. Having retired to his native place,



he died on 23rd March, 1886. A tablet is erected to his memory in Sheerness Church.

(12.) DAVID JOHNSTON was called to the pastorate of Suffolk Street Congregational Church, Glasgow, in 1850. He went afterwards to Australia, where he died.

(13.) JOHN WEIR was ordained to Crossford U.P. Church in 1850. He retired from the ministry in 1875, and lives now in Ayr.

(14.) ROBERT BLACK was settled in Kilsyth Free Church in 1854. After a ministry of thirty-four years, he died on 17th November, 1888.

(15.) JAMES B. JOHNSTON became pastor of the Congregational Church in Nairn, in 1859. Subsequently he was settled in Great Hamilton Street Church, Glasgow, and afterwards in Garliestown, Wigtonshire, where he died in 1883.

(16.) J. W. MAC TURK, B.A., was connected with the U.P. Church, but joining the Established Church, was ordained to Langholm in 1854, and died 26th December, 1878.

(17.) JAMES BROWN, D.D. (See under "Notable Men.")

(18.) ROBERT CAMPBELL (New Cumnock) was ordained to Calton U.P. Church, Glasgow, in 1863. He is the author of *Lazarus*, *Jezebel*, *David Weir*, *farmer, elder, and saint*; and also of *Ivic and other Poems*.

(19.) ADAM B. ROGERSON went to Burray, Orkney, in 1865, as minister of the U.P. congregation. He is now settled in Banff.

(20.) ROBERT SMITH (Auchinleck) was ordained to the East U.P. Church, Kinross, in 1874.

(21.) MATTHEW M. DICKIE, B.D., son of the Rev. Matthew Dickie of the U.P. Church, became minister of the East U.P. Church, Haddington, in 1876. After a pastorate of some years he resigned through ill health.

(22.) MATTHEW DICKIE, M.A. (Errol), was ordained to Sanquhar U.P. Church in 1879.

(23.) JAMES K. SCOTT, B.D. (New Cumnock), was ordained to Fraserburgh U.P. Church in 1879.

(24.) ROBERT E. WELSH, M.A. (New Cumnock), proceeded to Japan in 1880 as a missionary. After a brief stay he returned home, and was appointed to Harrogate in the English Presbyterian Church. He is now minister of Brondesbury, London. Mr. Welsh, in addition to many magazine articles, is the author of *Romance of Psalter and Hymnal*, *In Relief of Doubt*, *The People and the Priest*, and *God's Gentlemen*.

(25.) JOHN BEVERIDGE, B.D., was settled in 1882 in Stow U.P. Church. A few years later he accepted a call to Wolverhampton.

(26.) ANDREW B. DICKIE, M.A. (Girvan), became minister of Huntly U.P. Church in 1883.

(27.) WILLIAM W. BEVERIDGE was ordained to Princes St. U.P. Church, Port-Glasgow, in 1883.

(28.) ALEXANDER WELSH (New Cumnock), went to South Africa in connection with the Gordon Memorial Mission. He became an ordained missionary of the U.P. Church in 1884, and is now settled at Emgwali, Kaffraria.

(29.) ANDREW M. SMITH, M.A., became minister of Saffronhall U.P. Church, Hamilton, in 1888. In 1891 he was translated to

Trinity Church, Sunderland, and again in 1895 to Darlington Place, Ayr.

(30.) JAMES M'QUEEN (Auchinleck), after completing his studies at Aberdeen F.C. College in 1887, went out to Australia, where he is now ordained.

(31.) ADAM DRUMMOND was ordained to the pastorate of Port Erroll Congregational Church in 1891. He removed to Macduff in 1895.

(32.) ALEXANDER M'CARLIE (Sorn), went out to Western Australia under the auspices of the Free Church, and was ordained at Perth in 1896. In September, 1898, he removed to Cottesloe in the same colony.

(33.) HUGH CLIMIE was called to the Established Church of Meigle in 1897, and ordained the same year.

(34.) THOMAS WARDROP, M.A. (Greenock), became minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ashington, Northumberland, in 1898.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Cumnock and the Covenant.*

Surely if God could be tied to a spot, it would, methinks, be to the moors of Scotland ; the mosses and the mountains of the west are flowered with martyrs.

—*Renwick.*

THE martyr stones of Cumnock bear abiding testimony to the part our parish played in the old days of Claverhouse, when the Stuart kings, with a foolishness almost unparalleled in history, tried to force Episcopacy on Presbyterian Scotland at the point of the sword. The story of the Covenanters is told in its broad features in the general history of our country. Its details are given in a popular form in books like *Gleanings among the Mountains*, which proceeded from the graphic pen of Simpson of Sanquhar. He and others who have worked along the same lines, are largely indebted to such valuable productions as those of the Wodrow Society. In addition, John Howie of Lochgoin in his memorable *Scots Worthies*, has given us much interesting material, which would have been lost but for his wise and patient labour. Burns sympathetically sings,

“ The Solemn League and Covenant  
Cost Scotland blood, cost Scotland tears.”

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Some of Scotland's best blood was poured out on the fields around us, and bitter tears were shed at our door by widows and orphans, when the fatal shot was fired, which robbed them of those who were at once dear to them and dear to God. It will suffice for our purpose, if we first speak of the martyred dead in our own parish, and then tell of some sufferers belonging to Cumnock whose dust lies elsewhere, weaving into the story, as occasion requires, other threads of information which will let us see still more clearly, how sorely our ancestors were pressed by their ruthless enemies.

The most pathetic case of martyrdom in Cumnock was that of Thomas Richard, who was shot and buried at the Gallows Knowe. He did not belong to our parish, but was tenant of the farm of Greenock Mains in the parish of Muirkirk. At the time of his death he was about eighty years of age. Though he never seems to have taken an active part in bearing arms in support of the Covenanting cause, he had rendered himself obnoxious to the political authorities, by his kindness to those who were hunted by the dragoons. His personal piety was well-known.

Before he was finally captured, the troopers had been on the watch for him. Led by the infamous Bonshaw, they came one dark night to his house, in order to apprehend him. So deep was the darkness, that Richard was able to escape. If the darkness on that occasion could not be felt, it was at least long remembered, for it gave rise to the saying among the hill-folk, when a night of special gloom was experienced, "It's as mirk as Bonshaw's nicht." Undeterred by the danger which he ran, the good farmer of Greenock Mains continued his work of harbouring

the persecuted preachers. It was accordingly determined to tolerate him no longer.

A Royalist officer, Peter Inglis by name, with four or five followers pretending to be Covenanters, sought admission one evening to his home. Richard, most unsuspecting, warmly welcomed them. They tried to carry the work of deception so far as to ask him to engage in prayer. As conversation proceeded, the identity of his visitors became apparent. They had been too long accustomed to swear like troopers, to be able to restrain the evil habit in a moment. An oath from one of them revealed the secret. At once they declared him to be their prisoner, and hurried him off to Cumnock, where Colonel James Douglas, brother of the Duke of Queensberry, was stationed. Without the slightest semblance of trial, Douglas sentenced him to be shot next day. The fatal order was duly carried out, not, however, without a kind-hearted attempt to save the life of the old man. Three ladies, who favoured Episcopacy, petitioned the Colonel in his behalf. Their entreaties were in vain. Douglas sent to them only the cruel answer, that he would shew no mercy to any Covenanter. It would have been commendable if the minister of Cumnock had supported these ladies in their petition. His silence is explained by the fact that the incumbent in 1685 was Samuel Nimmo, who had himself no love for Presbyterian worship, or the Covenanting cause.

The inscription on Richard's tombstone runs as follows:—

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HERE LIES  
 THE CORPSE OF  
**THOMAS RICHARD,**  
 WHO WAS SHOT BY COLONEL JAMES DOUGLAS  
 FOR HIS ADHERENCE  
 TO THE COVENANTED WORK OF REFORMATION,  
 ON THE 5TH DAY OF APRIL,  
 ANNO 1685.

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Halt, Passenger, this stone doth show to thee  
 For what, by whom, and how I here did die.  
 Because I always in my station  
 Adhered to Scotland's Reformation,  
 And to our sacred Covenant and Laws,  
 Establishing the same : which was the cause.  
 In time of prayer I was by Douglas shot.  
 Ah, cruelty never to be forgot.

A month after Richard was martyred, two other Covenanters were slain, and, like him, buried at the Gallows Hill. An old headstone guards their dust. One was David Dun, the other Simon Paterson. Little is known of Paterson. According to Mr. Murray in his *Songs of the Covenant Times* (pp. 205-6), Dun belonged to Selkirkshire, where he distinguished himself in a conflict with the arch-fiend. The incident is thus recorded :—  
 “ A curious rhyme, which used to be recited by old people living near the source of the Ettrick and Yarrow, has served to connect the name of David Dunn with a dismal precipitous ravine, situated a little further towards the Lochs of the Lowes and St. Mary's than the Grey Mare's Tail, between Moffatdale and

Yarrow, where persecuted wanderers sometimes found shelter. Few places can wear a more savage and dreary aspect than Dobb's Linn. . . . The old rhyme, which associates the memory of David Dunn with that gloomy place, was never framed by an adherent of the Covenant. More probably it emanated from some facetious curate in the neighbourhood. It is here quoted because it serves to show, after a fashion, that David Dunn was a noted champion of the Covenant, and that popular belief ascribed to him and his confederates, occasional triumphs over the arch-instigator of oppression in person. David's ally on the present occasion was one Halbert Dobson, and their victory over the foul fiend is celebrated as follows:—

“ Little kent the worricow  
 What the Covenant could dow !  
 What o' faith an' what o' fen,  
 What o' might an' what o' men ;  
 Or he had never shown his face,  
 His reiket rags and riven taes,  
 To men o' mak and men' o' mense,  
 Men o' grace and men o' sense ;  
 For Hab Dob an' Davie Dinn  
 Dang the deevil owre Dob's Linn.

“ ‘ Weir, ' quo' he, and ‘ Weir, ' quo' he,  
 ‘ Haud the Bible till his e'e ;  
 Ding him owre or thrash him doon,  
 He's a fause, deceitful loon.'  
 Then he owre him, and he owre him,  
 He owre them, and they owre him :  
 Habbie held him griff and firm,  
 Davie threush him lith and limb,  
 Till like a bunch o' barkit skins,  
 Doon fell Satan owre the linns.”



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Additional information regarding this conflict is furnished by the Ettrick Shepherd in his weird poem, *Mess John*. Dun and his friend contrived to place a hank of red yarn, in the form of crosses, on the path by which Satan came. Over these sacred symbols he could not step. On his appearing, they got behind him and attacked him resolutely, each with a Bible in one hand and a rowan tree staff in the other. With such weapons they "fairly beat the prince of hell."

A little while before Dun and his friend suffered martyrdom, they passed through a memorable experience not far from the village of Wanlockhead. Along with four other Covenanters, they were hiding from a band of troopers, who were known to be in search of them. Their retreat was discovered. Dun, Pater-son, and one of their companions were speedily arrested. No sooner, however, had their captors laid hold on them than a thunderstorm of extraordinary violence burst over their heads. The blaze of the lightning, the crash of the thunder, and the roaring of the rain frightened both man and beast. The horses of the troopers became unmanageable, and scampered off with their riders in all directions. The prisoners, finding themselves in unexpected freedom, made good use of the opportunity to escape. They succeeded in reaching the wild uplands of Galloway, whence they emerged a few weeks later to attend a conventicle, held by Renwick near Dalmellington. They were on their way northward from this gathering, when they were seized on the slopes of Corsegellioch. It is said that Dun had almost escaped, when, through the sinking of his horse in the moss, he became an easy prey. The two friends were at once

dragged to Cumnock. No long shrift was granted. The muskets of the Highlanders were levelled at their heads, and from the preaching of Renwick about the King, they passed at once into the presence of the King.

Some confusion exists as to the exact way in which these men suffered martyrdom. Wodrow says that they were hanged. The inscription on their tombstone, however, which states that they were shot, must be regarded as settling the question. The inscription itself may be given. Its ungrammatical character shows that, like many other similar inscriptions, it was engraved by men who, while they loved the Covenanting cause, were not remarkable for their scholarship. It runs in this way:—

HERE LYES DAVID DUN  
AND SIMON PATERS  
ON, WHO WAS SHOT  
IN THIS PLACE BY  
A PARTY OF HIGHL  
ANDERS FOR THER  
ADHERANCE TO THE  
WORD OF GOD AND  
THE COVENANTED  
WORK OF REFORMA  
TION. 1685.

According to a fairly well-authenticated tradition, this inscription was re-cut by “Old Mortality.” The depth and size of the lettering are quite in keeping with the work of Robert Paterson,

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whose interest in the graves of the Covenanters gained for him the quaint name by which he is now chiefly remembered.

Before we pass from the story of Dun, it ought to be noticed that there were many of this name in Ayrshire, who nobly strove for the liberty of the Church of Christ. One section of the family occupied the farm of Closs or Class in the parish of Ochiltree. In the list of Covenanters denounced as rebels in 1684 by the Government, appears the name of David Dun of Closs. It is quite possible, after all, that Dun may not have been a native of Selkirkshire, but having been born and brought up in Ochiltree parish, made his way to that county for the sake of personal safety. Strength is given to this supposition by the fact, that at this very time Margaret Dun of Closs was shot when on her way to Cumnock, to find out the fate of her brother David, who had been taken prisoner. This circumstance invests the old stone with new interest, and connects the martyr it commemorates with our own locality.

The Gallows Knowe is also the resting-place of Alexander Peden, commonly known as "The Prophet." As far as we can learn, there are few incidents in his life which connect him with Cumnock. His chief claim for recognition is based on the fact, that he received ground from us in which to be buried. No slight honour is thereby conferred on our town. It would take us beyond our present purpose, if we were to give a full account of Peden's doings and experiences. These are almost too well-known to require recapitulation. A few notes will suffice, culled chiefly from the *Scots Worthies*.

ALEXANDER PEDEN was born at Auchincloich, in the parish of Sorn, in 1626. After his studies at the University were completed, he acted as schoolmaster, precentor, and session-clerk in Tarbolton. A little before the Restoration in 1660, he was ordained to the ministry in New Luce in Galloway, but two years later, he was deprived of his charge on refusing to conform to Prelacy. In 1666 he accompanied Colonel Wallace, the leader of the small Covenanting army, on his way through Ayrshire to Pentland. For some reason, he left the army before it reached the fatal field. This step he afterwards bitterly regretted. As Wallace passed through Cumnock, and probably remained in it some hours, Peden would be seen on our streets.

After moving about in different parts of the south-west of Scotland, he was seized in 1673 and carried to Edinburgh, where he was sentenced to be confined on the Bass Rock. Having remained in his island prison for some time, he was condemned in December, 1678, along with sixty other Covenanters, to be banished to America. The exiles, who embarked at Leith, reached Gravesend, where they were to be transferred to a ship bound for Virginia. As the story goes, the skipper, finding out who his passengers were, declined to take them. Perhaps the fact, that Lord Shaftesbury interested himself in them, gives us a hint as to the true cause, why their voyage to the New World came abruptly to an end. The result, at any rate, was that they were liberated.

On his return to Scotland, immediately after the battle of Bothwell Bridge in 1679, Peden paid a visit to Ireland, but speedily came back to his native country. We find him in 1682

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officiating at the marriage of John Brown, the Priesthill carrier. For the next three years he seems to have been again in Ireland. He longed, however, to be back in Scotland. At length he was able to carry out his wish. Lord Fountainhall, in his *Historical Notices*, thus indicates the manner of his return. "News came to the Privy Counsell that about 100 men well armed and appointed, had left Ireland, because of a search there for such malcontents, and landed in the West of Scotland and joyned with the wild phanatiques. . . . They had one Mr. Pedan a minister with them, and one Isaack who commanded them. They had frighted the most part of all the country ministers, so that they durst not stay at their churches, but retired into Edinburgh or garrison townes; and it was sad to see whole shires destitute of preaching except in brughs. Wherever they came they plundered armes, and particularly at my Lord Dumfries's house." (Vol. II., p. 630). The date is 27th March, 1685.

This notice is full of interest. Lord Fountainhall had no sympathy with the Covenanters, but his statement may be regarded as thoroughly reliable. We can only take exception to the phrase "wild phanatiques." His remarks prove that Peden was actually in our parish at the time, though the presence of Colonel Douglas, who was to shoot Thomas Richard a few days later, may have prevented him from preaching. The 100 men who were with him, were probably fellow-countrymen returning from Ireland, where they had taken refuge for a time. The plundering of Lord Dumfries' house, even though Peden approved of it, is not a matter we need be careful to explain or defend. Fountainhall plainly states that only arms were carried

off. It is enough to say that the Covenanters had been forced to take up a position of hostility towards the Government of the day. Lord Dumfries was an active supporter of that Government. Warfare pays no attention to the rights of property. That these men carried away only arms from Lefnoreis and other places which they ransacked, is an indication on their part of a spirit of self-restraint and moderation, only too seldom shown by their opponents.

Many stories are told of the narrow escapes Peden had from his pursuers. On one occasion his strength was nearly gone. Those with him dreaded capture. Peden stopped and said, "Let us pray." Then he said, "Lord, it is Thy enemy's day, hour, and power; they may not be idle. But hast Thou no other work for them but to send them after us? Send them after them to whom Thou wilt give strength to flee, for our strength is gone. Twine them about the hill, Lord, and cast the lap of Thy cloak over old Sandy and thir poor things, and save us this one time; and we'll keep it in remembrance, and tell it to the commendation of Thy goodness, pity, and compassion." Immediately a cloud of mist hid them from their pursuers, and a summons came to the troopers to go in quest of Renwick and a great company with him.

Towards the end of his life Peden could not be prevailed upon to preach much. He said, "It is a time for prayer; it is praying folk that will get through the storm." John Howie tells us that his "last sermon was preached in the Collimwood, at the Water of Ayr, a short time before his death." Feeling his end approaching, he retired to a little cave on the banks of the

Lugar, close to its junction with the Dippol Burn. The cave, which is still pointed out, was at no distance from the farm house of Ten-shillingside, in the parish of Mauchline, of which Peden's brother was tenant. The persistence of the dragoons, however, seems to have driven him from his hiding-place, and he came early one morning to his brother's house. Two days after, he quietly died, and the noble spirit of Peden, martyr in all but the name, went back to God who gave it.

He was buried in the churchyard of Auchinleck, in ground where many others of the name of Peden have also been laid. The *Scots Worthies* makes a mistake in saying that the family vault of the Boswells received his honoured remains. The barons of Auchinleck would hardly open the door of the house, which contained their dead, in order to admit a persecuted Covenanter. But his body was not allowed to remain long, where friendly hands had placed it. He himself is said to have predicted a few days before his death, that it would be subjected to ignominy, by being exhumed and carried to a place of shame. This actually took place. Six weeks after his burial, the troopers from the garrison of Sorn, chagrined at their failure to shoot him as they had shot Cameron, gathered in the Auchinleck churchyard, and raising his mouldering body, carried it to the Gallows Hill of Cumnock. It was their purpose to hang it on the gibbet erected there, but this ghastly intention they were not permitted to put into effect. For the Earl of Dumfries, urged by his Countess, told Murray the leader of the dragoons, that "the gibbet was erected for malefactors and murderers, and not for such men as Peden." Forbidden thus to accomplish their shock-

ing plan, they made no attempt to take the remains of Peden back to Auchinleck. In order, rather, to show their contempt for him and his doings, they buried him at the gallows' foot. By and by, our forefathers, pressed to find another place to serve as the acre of God, than that which had received the dust of generations round the old church, selected the spot which had been consecrated by the burial of the Covenanting "Prophet."

Ker of Kersland, who wrote with the knowledge of a contemporary, states in his *Memoirs*, that "the Cameronians have erected a monument" in memory of Peden. That first stone, which marked his grave, has long since disappeared. Its place was taken by a plain tombstone, the inscription on which is as follows:—

HERE LIES  
 MR. ALEXANDER PEDEN,  
 FAITHFUL MINISTER OF THE  
 GOSPEL  
 SOME TIME  
 AT GLENLUCE,  
 WHO DEPARTED THIS MORTAL LIFE  
 THE 26TH OF JANUARY, 1686,  
 AND WAS RAISED AFTER SIX WEEKS  
 OUT OF THE GRAWF,  
 AND BURIED HERE  
 OUT OF  
 CONTEMPT.  
 MEMENTO MORI.







PEDEN'S MONUMENT AND THORN TREES.

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In 1891, a handsome monument of Aberdeen granite, too ornamental perhaps to be the most fitting kind of memorial to such a weird, rugged man as Peden, was erected by public subscription. Over his grave stand still two thorn trees, planted long ago by some forgotten hand. Though now showing signs of age, they continue year by year, in answer to the gentle voice of spring, to put on their beautiful garments of green, and to fill the air with the fragrance of their snow-white blossoms.

A curious tradition connected with them lingers in our midst. Peden was frequently in the habit of speaking of dark days coming upon Scotland, and he freely associated the name of the French, with the coming of these days. For some reason it was believed in Cumnock, that the words of Peden about our neighbours across the Channel would be fulfilled, and the French overrun Scotland, if the thorn trees were allowed to intertwine. Accordingly, year after year, the women of the town were accustomed to go to Peden's grave, and jealously cut off all branches that seemed about to interlace. The practice has long since died out, but perhaps, the vitality of the historic trees has been in some measure secured by the pruning process, to which they were thus regularly subjected.

It is interesting to remember, too, that the Irish shearers, who came here in autumn long ago, were in the habit of carrying home with them little twigs of the thorn trees. Visitors to Cumnock, from other districts also, showed in the same way their interest in the resting-place of Peden.

The idea of a French invasion of Scotland, as a judgment from God, seems to have been a common article of belief among

the Covenanters. Not only is Peden reported to have said, "Oh, the monzies, the monzies will be thorow the breadth and length of the South and West of Scotland. Oh, I think I see them at our fireside, slaying man and wife and children; the remnant will get a breathing, but they will be driven to the wilderness again, and their sharpest showers be last," (*Duncan's Life of Peden*, p. 28), but Cameron also, in a sermon preached at Grasswater eighteen days before his death, alludes to it. "The rod," he says, "that the Lord will make instrumental in this, will be the French and other foreigners, together with a party in this land joining them." (*Scots Worthies*, p. 336). The fear of such a national disaster survived in the parish, till after the middle of the nineteenth century. Little children used to talk, with bated breath, of Schankiston wood running with blood up to the horses' bridles. They had heard the old prophecy from their mothers' lips.

Certain relics, connected by tradition with Peden, were formerly in the district. Mr. Murray (*Songs of the Covenant*, p. 202), tells us that a Mrs. Cooper, who lived in a cottage at Mossend, on the slopes of Corsegelloch, had in her possession several articles, said to have belonged to Peden. There was his wig, and also his "fause face," with which he used to disguise himself, and which Mr. Murray describes as a very "portentous looking" thing. In addition, there were a short rapier in a leathern sheath, a stick with a whistle on the top, and an oval-shaped, metal tobacco box. Mrs. Cooper was a descendant of Peden's brother. There is likewise a pistol in the possession of Mr.

Murray of Carston, which is believed on good authority to have been carried by the great Covenanter.

Peden did not write much. One or two of his sermons, as well as some letters from his pen, notably one to the prisoners confined in Dunottar Castle, will be found in Miss Jean L. Watson's *Life and Times of Rev. Alexander Peden*.

The following lines composed by Professor Blackie, who took a leading part in the ceremony at the inauguration of Peden's monument, are a fitting tribute to his courage and his faith:—

Here let me stand, beneath the sacred shade  
Of these twin thorns, that shield a prophet's bones !  
I have stood high on monumental stones,  
Where Memphian kings, august, made high parade,  
Not moved as here. My loves are with the braves,  
Who stand erect for freedom and for right,  
When rampant pride, harsh law, and sworded might  
Would crush out thought, and stamp all men for slaves ;  
And such was Peden. In the day when kings  
Claimed right divine to murder honest men,  
And venal bishops flapped their vulture wings  
O'er God's dear souls, hounded from glen to glen,  
Peden stood firm ; and to his faith then shown,  
We owe that now we call our souls our own.

Only one other martyr stone lies within our parish. Its story is interesting. In June, 1688, the Rev. David Houston, a Covenanting minister whose sphere of labour was principally in the north of Ireland, was being conveyed by troopers through Ayrshire, in order to be tried at Edinburgh. He had been imprisoned for six months already in Dublin. The men of our district, who knew him by name, at least, through his connection with Renwick whom he assisted for a time, resolved to rescue

him. The attempt was made just beyond the confines of Cumnock parish. The exact spot is well-known by the name of Bello Path. The dragoons reached Cumnock on the 19th of June. They halted all night at the Blue Tower, a building now removed, but used then as an inn. Its situation was in Tower Street, which obtained its name from it.

During the night, the loyal Covenanters of Cumnock gathered together in the narrow pass of the Bello, and as soon as the dragoons appeared, opened fire on them. The rescue was successful; the soldiers were routed, leaving some of their number dead. The minister, whose feet were tied beneath his horse's belly, suffered in the fray. He received severe injuries by being dragged along the road, after he had fallen from his steed. His head was so wounded, that Michael Shields says in his *Faithful Contendings*, that "he was discovered afterwards" to be "short in his naturals," evidently implying that his mental power was affected. Houston eventually died in Ireland in 1696.

The rescuers lost one man, John M'Geachan by name. He was the farmer in Meikle Auchingibbert, and in the fight was mortally wounded. He tried to make his way home, but only reached Stonepark, where his pitiable position failed to call forth the sympathy of the inmates. Doubtless, they were afraid of the consequences, in the event of the return of the dragoons to avenge their defeat. At length his friends found him, but as a warrant had been issued by the Government, for the apprehension of all engaged in the rescue, it was not deemed safe to take the wounded man home. They hid him, therefore, in a turf built sheep cot. For three weeks he lingered in great agony, till death

put an end to his sufferings. He lies buried at Stonepark, on which the peasants were long accustomed to believe a curse rested, making its soil poor, because of the inhumanity of its dwellers towards their sorely stricken neighbour.

That M'Geachan was thoroughly in sympathy with the Covenanting movement, is evident from the insertion of his name in the proclamation of Charles II., in the year 1684, for the apprehension of all in our parish, who favoured the cause of Reformation. Decree is there given for his capture.

The circumstances of his death are fully set forth in the inscription on the stone raised over his grave:—

HERE LIES  
 JOHN M'GEACHAN,  
 WHO FOR HIS CONSTANT  
 ADHERENCE TO THE WORD OF  
 God,  
 PROSECUTING THE ENDS OF  
 OUR NATIONAL LEAGUE AND  
 COVENANT, AND APPEARING FOR  
 THE RESCUE OF THE  
 REV. DAVID HOUSTON,  
 ONE OF THE PERSECUTED  
 MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL,  
 WAS SHOT AT BELLOW PATH BY  
 A PARTY OF BLOODY DRAGOONS,  
 XXVIII JULY, 1688.  
 ERECTED ANNO 1728.

The date here is wrong. The month was June, and the day of the month the 20th. A fresh stone, on which the old inscription is engraved, was erected in 1836.

No other martyr lies buried within the limits of our parish. The well-known monument on the lonely heights of Corsegelloch, marking the resting place of Joseph Wilson, John Jamieson, and John Humphrey, is situated within the borders of New Cumnock. As the worthy men whom it commemorates, do not appear to have had any connection with our parish, it is not needful to trace their history.

Cumnock, however, supplied a number of additional heroes who laid down their lives for the Covenant.

One of them was George Crawford, who was executed at Edinburgh, along with two companions, on the 14th December, 1666, for taking part in the Pentland rising. He is duly returned in the martyr lists as belonging to our town. Crawford, who was a weaver by trade, was well able to give a reason for the hope that was in him. Here are his words spoken in defence of his taking up arms:—"That which moved me to come along with these men, was their persuasion and my desire to help them (which with a safe conscience I could not well refuse), who being tyrannically oppressed by the prelates and their defenders and upholders, and seeing no other way was left to be taken, took up arms for their own defence. And if this be rebellion, I leave it to the great God, the supreme Judge, to discern; for in my weak judgment, I found it warrantable from the word of God." (Todd's *Homes, Haunts, and Battlefields of the Covenanters*, p. 242).



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Another sufferer was Patrick M'Naught, who was indicted in 1667, for being "with the rebels at Mauchline in arms and at Pentland," and was condemned to be executed (Wodrow, II., p. 73). In all probability both Crawford and M'Naught joined Colonel Wallace, when he stayed at Cumnock on his way to Edinburgh. Wallace, who was an able officer and a devoted adherent of the Covenanting cause, published a *Narrative of the Rising at Pentland*. Not only does he tell us in it that Cumnock lay on his route, but he gives us a vivid glimpse of local affairs at the time. "That night," he says, "being Tuesday, we stayed at Mauchline, where our dear friend, John Ross (who is now in glory), gave us notice that there was so much hazard from Drumlanrick and others in and about Cumnock, as might cause us not to be secure." And again, "Upon the morrow, being Friday, we marched towards Cumnock, but before we came that length, John Millar in Glasgow, who had been one of those sent off for intelligence, came and told us that John Ross and the rest of that party were taken prisoner by the Duke's troops, and that he himself had hardly escaped, having lost his horse and arms. From Cumnock we marched the same night to the Moorkirk in a most violent rainy night."

We can therefore picture Colonel Wallace, with his nine hundred men, moving through our old town and being joined by Crawford and M'Naught, both of whom perished for their boldness. Wallace was carrying with him at the time, as a prisoner, Sir James Turner, a Royalist officer who had been recently captured. Sir James, who wrote *Memoirs of his own Life and Times*, gives us an account of his experiences with the Covenant-

ing army, corroborating the statement of Wallace. "On the twentieth third day of the month" (November), he says, "they (the Covenanters) broke up from Ochiltree about eleven of the clock in the morning, and marched to Cumlock." (p. 164).

Mention must also be made of Robert Mitchell, a native of Cumnock, who, with four others, was shot at Ingliston, in the parish of Glencairn. His tombstone thus records his death, and that of one of his comrades, Robert Edgar, who was buried with him in the same grave. The date of their martyrdom was the 28th April, 1685.

Halt, passenger, tell if thou ever saw  
Men shot to death without process of law.  
We two, of four, who in this churchyard lie,  
Thus felt the rage of Popish tyranny.

A different fate awaited John Gemill and James Mirrie, two of the representatives of Cumnock at the battle of Bothwell Bridge. On that disastrous field they were captured, and taken with 250 companions to Edinburgh, where they were confined in the Greyfriars' churchyard. After months of great suffering, they were sentenced to be banished to America. The ship in which they embarked, the *Crown* from Leith, was wrecked off the coast of Orkney. Only fifty escaped. Gemill and Mirrie were among the drowned. An obelisk 40 feet high, with a crown on the top, at Scardating, Orkney, marks the place where the bodies washed ashore were buried.

Occasionally some of our local Covenanters, though sentenced to death, were fortunate enough to obtain a reprieve. Wodrow, for instance, says in 1685, "By the Council Registers I find

James Napier, Allan Atkin, John Peirson, sentenced to die by Colonel Douglas and the Commissioners at Cumnock, are reprieved and recommended to the secretaries for a remission." He adds "June 12th, their remission comes for the crime of concealing the rebels, who lately went through the shire of Ayr." (*Hist.*, IV., p. 234.)

It was a common practice as well, when the penalty of death was not inflicted, to exact a heavy pecuniary fine. Thus, it is recorded that Patrick Crawford of Cumnock was fined at Ayr in 1662 £2000 Scots, and John Campbell of Glasnock £480 Scots. Such sums were big in those days. But in the matter of fines, Cumnock was in no way different from the rest of Ayrshire. It has been calculated that, in a few years, £280,000 Scots were wrung from the pockets of the Presbyterians of the south-west of Scotland.

The custom was universal to demand a payment, in money or goods, from all who declined to attend the services of the curate in the parish church. Diligent inquiry was made by the Crown officials. When the people were found to be absenting themselves, they were at once prosecuted. Instances of this procedure occurred in our neighbourhood during the incumbency of Samuel Nimmo. "In the town of Cumnock," we are told under date 1683, "William Creighton, Sheriff-depute, held a court and most part of the men of Auchinleck were cited before him, and many compelled to swear whether they kept the church, at least, every third Sabbath. The curate sat in the court with the Sheriff-depute. All who came before them were likewise obliged to declare upon oath, what they knew anent their neighbours not

keeping the church ; and such, who would not swear and engage to regularity, were fined in fifty pounds, whereof they behoved to pay twenty presently, otherwise soldiers were sent to their houses to poynd and drive." (Wodrow, III., p. 494.)

Certainly such a process of examination was intolerable. Men had to part either with their conscience or with their property. We can only wonder at the moderation of our forefathers, when such a state of matters prevailed. So thoroughly and systematically was the attempt made to carry out this work of inquisition, that in 1678 all the heritors of Cumnock, like those of every other parish in Ayrshire, were summoned to take a bond to the effect, "that neither they, their wives, bairns, tenants, cottars and servants . . . shall go to field conventicles, or harbour or commune with rebels." Few, however, took this bond. Among those who subscribed it was the Earl of Dumfries.

Even that was not all. The inhabitants, at the same time, were required to give food and lodging to the soldiers, whenever they passed through Cumnock, and keep them as long as they stayed. This must have been a most annoying experience. For the soldiers seem to have given themselves up to every kind of excess and violence. It is said of the militia and Highlanders employed in this work, that they ravaged to the utmost, "Kyle, Carrick, and Cunningham, where they committed the most notorious outrages, wounded and dismembered some persons without the least show of provocation." (Wodrow, II., p. 410.)

We get some idea of the injury sustained by the people of our town, from the following account of expenses and damages, drawn up for the year 1678. It is Wodrow who gives it. (II., pp.

423-425.) He calls it a statement of the losses sustained "by quartering, robbing, and spoiling of the soldiers and Highland Host." The sum for the whole of Kyle is put down at £55,419 11s. We give, however, the details only for Old and New Cumnock, which were then united.

"The parishes of Cumnock, Old and New, sustained of loss by quartering two hundred and fifty Caithness men, fifteen nights, with some officers, ... ..	£1093	6	8
Exacted by their officers and cleared off their quarters as appears from their notes, ... ..	200	0	0
Item, dry quarters to some officers, ... ..	64	0	0
Free quarters to them, ... ..	60	0	0
Plunder by these soldiers, ... ..	958	17	4
By quartering ninety-five of Caithness men six nights, ... ..	171	0	0
By quartering three hundred and twenty Caithness men one night, ... ..	96	0	0
Dry quarters and plunder by these, ... ..	372	2	4
Extendeth to ... ..	£3015	6	4."

The money is of course Scots, but the sum even in the old currency is large, while the different details give us a glimpse of the tremendous strain resting upon the inhabitants, through the presence of those bands of licensed marauders, whom they were forced to entertain in their homes. As the statement of damages, which has just been given, is only for twelve months, we must conclude that the same kind of loss and suffering was endured year after year, until the killing time came to an end,

An incident of another description took place in 1680 at Bello Path. It comes to us from an unexpected quarter. Dean Swift, in the twelfth volume of his collected works edited by Sir Walter Scott, has published the *Memoirs of Captain John Creichton*. This Captain Creichton, an Irishman by birth, was a kinsman of the Earl of Dumfries. Born in Donegal in 1648, he received, at the age of twenty-six, a commission to join the troops in Scotland employed against the Covenanters. For a brief period at least, he was in our neighbourhood, living in all likelihood at the home of his relative. Let him tell the story in his own words, though we may well suppose he gives to the incident, a more ludicrous appearance than it actually wore. The date is some time after the action at Airsmoss, where Cameron fell and where Creichton himself was severely wounded. Steel, whose name is mentioned, acted as military leader of the Covenanters after Hackston was captured in 1680.

“Sometime,” says Creichton, “before the action in which he (Steel) was killed, General Drummond, who was then newly made Commander-in-chief, sent for me in haste to attend him in Edinburgh. My way lay through a very strong pass, hard by Airsmoss, and within a mile of Cumlock; as I was going through Cumlock, a friend there told me that Steel with a party waited for me at the pass. I had with me only one dragoon and a drummer; I ordered the latter to gallop straight on to the pass, and when he had got thither to beat a dragoon march, while I and the dragoon should ride along the bypath on the edge of the moss. When Steel and his men heard the drum, they scoured along the bypath into the moss, apprehending that a

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strong party was coming in search of them ; but either I or the dragoon (I forget which) shot one of the rebels dead, as he crossed us to get into the moss." Now Captain John Creighton's forgetfulness of the source of the shot which killed the Covenanter, may have arisen from that hardness of spirit which some kinds of warfare, at least, are fitted to produce. But it is just possible that the Royalist officer, with his one dragoon and one drummer, was in greater danger than he cared to admit. Those who rescued Houston, at the same place eight years later, were quite likely to know the strength or the weakness of the force, which this scion of the House of Dumfries had with him.

The *Memoirs of Captain Creighton* are sad reading. He freely admits that he gave himself up to hard drinking, and actually imagined that the hiding-places of the Covenanters were revealed to him in dreams, after he had succumbed to the influence of drink. Sir Walter is not too severe on him when he says that he felt no more sympathy for the men he was persecuting, than the hunter feels for the game he destroys. There is little wonder that the name of this officer was held in abhorrence, long after his hateful work came to an end, and he retired to the country of his birth.

Occasionally the arch-persecutor himself, more dreaded even than Creighton, must have been seen in our parish. For Ayrshire was part of the district over which Claverhouse, grimly called the "Bloody," ruled with a rod of iron. Mark Napier, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, has tried to picture Claverhouse as a noble-minded gentleman, wholly consumed with a love of duty, and practically guiltless of all the tragic scenes con-

nected with his name. But even if other evidence were lacking, the oral traditions, which live to this day all over the county of Ayr, would themselves be ample proof of the truthfulness of the charges brought against Graham of Claverhouse. Widespread reports on such a matter are only too well founded on fact.

The thoroughness with which Claverhouse did his work, is manifest from the letters he sent from time to time to his superiors. It is only with Cumnock, however, that we are concerned. Our town is mentioned several times in his correspondence.

On the 15th June, 1684, five days after his marriage, he writes from Kilbryde to General Dalzell in the following terms:—  
“ I parted on Friday (13th) at twelve o'clock from Paisley, went by Kilmarnock and Mauchline, but could hear nothing of these rebels. So hearing Colonel Buchan was at the old castle of Cumnock, I took by Ochiltree, who sent an express to a tenant's house of his, near Airdmoss, and he brought certain notice that they had been at a meadow near his house the night before, to the number of fifty-nine, all armed.” Then, having narrated the steps taken by the different troops of dragoons, employed in scouring the whole district, he continues, “ We have left no den, no knowe, no moss, no hill unsearched. There is a great drought, so that we could go almost through all. We traced them from Boghead near Airdmoss to the Haxhill, within two miles of Cumnock town, and from that to Gap towards Cairntable, but never could hear more of them. They are separated, as most believe, and gone towards the hills of Moffat. I am



sure there is not one man of them within these bounds. Earlshall is not yet come this length, nor Captain Strachan. But they are, I am sure, near, for the last was at Cumnock all night. The troops complain mightily of this march, and I know not what further can be done." On the next day to another correspondent he writes, "I sent for Captain Strachan's troop from the Glenkens, and ordered him to march to the old castle of Cumnock, down to Sorn."

These references make it quite certain that Claverhouse was seen in person in our neighbourhood. Possibly the Earl of Dumfries gave him hospitality. A friendly welcome would also await him at Boreland Castle, whose proprietors at the time, the Montgomeries, threw the weight of their influence into the scale against the Covenanters.

Very definite orders came to Claverhouse regarding his work. The names of individuals who were obnoxious to the Government, and accordingly marked off for imprisonment or death, were sent to him. On the 5th May of the same year in which Claverhouse wrote these letters, Charles II. issued his famous proclamation "for the apprehension of persons, who were supposed to have been under arms, or to have harboured those who were." The proclamation embraces many counties besides Ayrshire, each parish being dealt with in turn.

The names of those belonging to Cumnock are interesting. There are nineteen in all. Some of them belong to New Cumnock, but the whole list may be given as it stands in Wodrow's *History* (iv. p. 12):—

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Mr. JOHN HALBERT in Cumnock forfeited.  
 JAMES MITCHELL, cordiner there.  
 ——— CRICHTON in Craigman.  
 PATRICK GEMMIL in the old Castle of Cumnock.  
 WILLIAM STILLIE there.  
 JOHN REID in ———.  
 ALEXANDER STILLIE in Townhead of Cumnock.  
 JOHN TENNANT at the old castle of Cumnock.  
 JAMES DALZIEL near the kirk of Cumnock.  
 JOHN WOOD, son to Hugh Wood in Lowis.  
 WILLIAM LAMBIE in Polquhays.  
 JAMES STEEL tenant to Carleton.  
 GEORGE GEMMIL in Minaucht.  
 ——— GREIG there.  
 ROBERT MURDOCH in Knockmarnoch. .  
 JOHN MACKECHAN in Auchingibbat.  
 JAMES WILSON at the old castle of Cumnock.  
 WILLIAM SKILLING in Pablow.  
 JOHN CAMPBELL in Townhead of Cumnock.

Two other names appear under Kirkoswald,

ROBERT M'GAVIN in Cumnock.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL in Townhead of Cumnock,

and one name under Carluke,

JOHN WEIR, tailor in Cumnock.

This list proves two things. It shows first, that many of the ordinary residents in the parish, bravely bore the heat and burden of the day of persecution; and secondly, it lets us see how

minutely Cumnock, like other parishes in Ayrshire, was inspected by the authorities, and how thoroughly they were acquainted with every family and individual that refused to conform. The informers, who have gained for themselves such an evil reputation, must have been both active and numerous.

In places where a curate had been installed, part of his duty was to take note of all, who failed to attend the services of the parish church, and were believed to frequent conventicles. Occasionally, artifices were resorted to by the country people, in order to allay suspicion. Some were perfectly legitimate, and even possessed a jocular element. At other times, expedients were employed which were not entirely free from unworthiness, though we must make full allowance for the terrible strain put upon a man, when there was the probability of his name being sent up to headquarters as a rebel.

An illustrative case occurred during the curacy of Francis Fordyce. John Campbell of Lochingerroch had incurred his suspicion. His name was at once placed on the roll of offenders. By and by, Campbell, or some one for him, sent a note to the curate, requesting prayer to be offered for him in the prospect of death. Fordyce, imagining that Campbell was about to depart this life, deleted his name. Of course, as long as his name was on the fatal list, his life was in danger every day; but it was clearly intended that the request should be understood, as if the good farmer was approaching his end. Doubtless the distance of Lochingerroch from the curate's manse rendered it easy to carry out the ruse.

The name at the head of the list of fugitives which has just

been given, is interesting. It is that of Mr. John Halbert. The title "Mr." shows he was a minister. Some connection he must have had with our district, else he would not have been proclaimed as an offender, whose domicile was Cumnock. As there were Halberts or Harberts at the time in the farm of Auchincorse (Paterson, i. p. 201), it is extremely likely that he was one of them. His story, so far as it can be traced, is thus told in the Acts of Parliament for 1690:—

"Anent the Petitione presented and given in unto his Majestie's High Commission and honourable Estates of Parliament be Mr. John Harbert, minister of the gospel, showing that the petitioner being forefault upon ane most frivolous pretence of being present at Clock Lownie in Cumnock paroch, where it was alledged some few men were exercising their armes, as will appear by the books of Adjournal; neither was the petitioner ever cited being off the country a whole year and more before his said forefulture. And the sum of 3000 merkes which was his whole fortune, being in the Lord Crichton's hands, his Lordship was forced by the cash keeper for the tyme, to make payment thereof and of its annual rents since Whitsunday, 1682," therefore he craves, "the High Commission and Honourable Estates of Parliament, as other persons are restored to their lands, soe to order reparatiōne and repayment to the petitioner of the 3000 merks and annual rents."

It is evident therefore that Halbert sought restoration of his property, on the ground that he had been unjustly accused, and had actually been away from Scotland at the time. Who then was this John Halbert, minister of the gospel, whose name is

associated with Clockclownie? Scott's *Fasti* gives us the information. It is contained in the notice of the parish of North Berwick. The entry is as follows :—

“1690. John Herbert, A.M., studied and was graduated at Glasgow 27 July, 1676, was forfeited for being present at Clock Lownie, Ayrshire, when some men were exercising arms, and 3000 merks seized which the Estates of Parliament, 3 July 1690, recommended to be restored; presented by William and Mary after 7 January the same year, member of Assembly in October, 1690, and died Edinburgh 14 July 1691, about 36 years.”

Halbert thus came at last into the possession of his inheritance, but only to enjoy it for a brief space. His ministry at North Berwick lasted just eighteen months. That he was a man of considerable worth, is manifest from the sympathetic words which the Earl of Crawford used regarding him, in a letter supporting his claims addressed to the Earl of Melville, then Secretary of State for Scotland. “I know,” he says, “the character he bears of an ambassador of Christ, his deep and patient sufferings in the late times, his zeal for the King’s interest and your Lordship’s service will plead strongly at your hand.”

It was good for Halbert that he was not settled in his native parish. Had he been ordained in Cumnock instead of Nimmo or Fordyce, the Gallows Knowe would have been his resting place. His restoration to his rights was, perhaps, the earliest fruit in our parish of the Revolution, which set William and Mary upon the throne.

Another matter bearing upon the Covenanting history of the district, deserves notice. Richard Cameron occasionally preached

here. John Howie thus tells of his connection with Cumnock, and of the treatment he received. "When he came to preach in and about Cumnock, he was much opposed by the Lairds of Logan and Horsecleugh, who represented him as a Jesuit and a vile, naughty person. But yet some of the Lord's people, who had retained their former faithfulness, gave him a call to preach in that parish. When he began, he exhorted the people to mind that they were in the sight and presence of a holy God, and that all of them were hastening to an endless state of well or woe." One of the audience, Andrew Dalziel by name, cried out, "Sir, we neither know you nor your God." Cameron, musing a little, said, "You and all who do not know my God in mercy, shall know him in his judgments, which shall be sudden and surprising in a few days upon you; and I, as a servant of Jesus Christ, whose commission I bear, and whose badge I wear upon my breast, give you warning and leave you to the justice of God." Strange to relate, Dalziel died with startling suddenness shortly afterwards. "This admonishing passage," continues the historian, "together with the power and presence of the Lord going along with the gospel dispensed by him, during the little time he was there, made the foresaid two Lairds desire a conference with him; which he readily assented to. After which they were obliged to acknowledge, that they had been in the wrong to him and desired his forgiveness. He said, from his heart he forgave them what wrongs they had done to him; but for what wrongs they had done to the interest of Christ, it was not his part; but he was persuaded that they would be remarkably punished for it. And to the Laird of Logan he said, that he

should be written childless; and to Horsecleugh, that he should suffer by burning.—Both of which afterwards came to pass.” (*Scots Worthies*, p. 335). Doubtless, Howie is correct in his reference, but no recollection lingers in the district, as to the manner in which Horsecleugh House was destroyed. It has long since disappeared.

It is only to be expected that a district like ours, lying in the very centre of the Covenanting country, should possess a number of relics belonging to those memorable days. The most valuable memorial to be found in our town, is the Covenanting banner, in the keeping of Mr. Douglas M'Geachin. It has been wrought by careful hands and sewn with special skill, but we shall never know who were engaged in the work of producing it. Tradition asserts that it was unfurled at Drumclog.

For many years the flag lay forgotten in the house of a medical practitioner, Dr. Kirkland. On its discovery some time before 1830, its value and interest were at once recognised. It was frequently borne in public processions at the time of the Reform Bill, as if in proof of the kinship of the Covenanters of 1680, with the Reformers of 1832. It is now somewhat torn, and its inscription partly defaced. It is easy, however, to supply what has been lost. After a scroll in which the name of our town is inserted, there runs in Latin the device,

PRO RELIGIONE ET PATRIA.

The material of which it is made is cream-coloured silk. At one of the upper corners, there is a St. Andrew's cross on a blue ground. The flag is nearly square, being about 6 feet long and

the same in breadth. Cumnock may well be proud of its historic banner. Mr. Murray's lines aptly describe it :—

“ Old and tattered as thou art,  
Little heeded, little known,  
Thou didst play a valiant part  
In the struggle long bygone,  
And our boasted liberty  
Partly purchased was by thee.”

Another flag almost similar was found at the same time by Dr. Kirkland. He presented it to the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, where it still hangs upon the wall.

Three swords are also in the town, which doubtless drew blood in Covenanting times. One of them was found about thirty years ago, not far from the martyrs' monument on Corsegellioch hill. It is a Ferrara blade, being stamped on both sides with that well-known name. For nearly 200 years it must have lain in the moor, concealed by the heather and the grass, till a passer-by chanced to see it, and carried it in triumph to Cumnock, where it still remains in the possession of Mr. William Clark. It is old and rusty, but if it could speak, it would be able to tell some stirring stories about the strong arm that wielded it, and the deeds of cruelty, it may be, it was asked to perform on some of our Covenanting ancestors.

Another sword is in the possession of Mrs. Smith, Barrhill Road. It was discovered a few years ago in the roof of an old house, which was taken down in order to make room for the Baird Institute. It, too, is a Ferrara, but its history is unknown. The third sword is in the possession of Mr. William King. It



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was picked up at Bello Path. Perhaps it dropped from the hand of one of the captors of the Rev. David Houston.

In the custody of Mr. Reid of Milzeoch are some fragments of clothing and a lock of hair, taken from the grave of the Corsegellioch martyrs, when the foundation of the monument which marks their resting place was dug in 1827. They are in a wonderfully good state of preservation, and are interesting not only in themselves, but also as indicating the antiseptic properties of the peat-moss in which the martyrs lie. Those present at the erection of the memorial stone were in the habit of saying that the bodies of Wilson and his comrades, even after the lapse of 142 years, were free from the marks of decay.

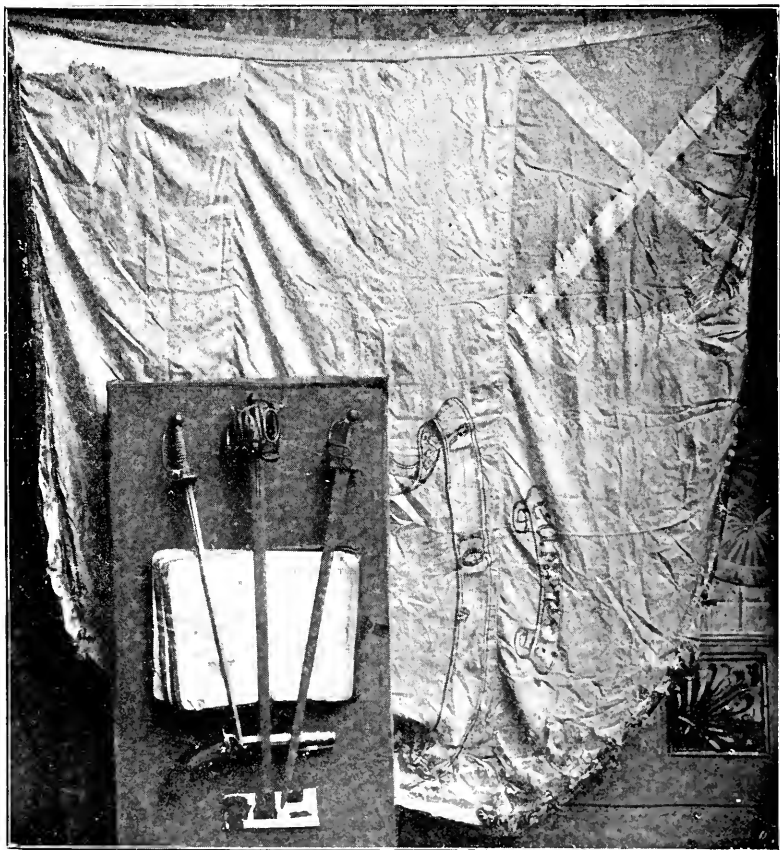
Another relic lies in the Free Church Manse. Though its history does not actually connect it with our district, its presence in our parish warrants a reference to it in this sketch of Covenanting days. It is a large folio Bible of venerable appearance, printed in Amsterdam in 1643. Trustworthy evidence regarding it states, that it was possessed by a family in the Pentland district, into whose cottage the dragoons came in search of the persecuted folk and their books. The Bible only was discovered. One of the dragoons, in contempt, drove his sword into its pages, meaning to lift it up and toss it into the fire. Each time he did so, the heavy Bible fell from the point of his weapon, and it remains to this day with the cuts of the trooper's sword distinctly visible. Like many of the old martyrs themselves, it could use the words of the apostle and say, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

All these relics, as well as Peden's pistol, appear in the annexed engraving.

Enough has now been said, to show that Cumnock took no small part in the great struggle for civil and religious freedom at the close of the 17th century, when the Stuart kings made loyalty impossible by the test they imposed. Our ancestors had a difficult work to do, and they did it nobly and well. The crisis was keen, and the issues at stake were vast; but farmers and weavers, illiterate labourers and humble shepherds, strong in the purity of their heart and the sincerity of their convictions, were able to brave the forces of organized oppression, to break the power of an unjust tyranny, and to overturn the throne of an unworthy king.

To us, who live two centuries after they fought and suffered, their memory should be ever dear. They laboured, and we have entered into their labours. The fruits are ours of the seed they sowed. Bannockburn freed us from political oppression; the struggle for the Covenants sealed that freedom, and added to it the still more priceless heritage of freedom in the things of God. The field was held for us by Peden and Richard, by M'Geachan, Paterson, and Dun. They and their comrades throughout the country quitted themselves like men, standing true even unto death.

Doubtless the Covenanters had their faults, and made mistakes in carrying out their purpose. Nevertheless, their purpose was grand and their aim high. For they sought nothing else than to bring Scotland into Covenant with God, and to make their



COVENANTING FLAG AND OTHER RELICS.



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country devoted to His will. This was no mean vision. The very thought of it was sufficient to elevate and inspire.

In their external form the Covenants have disappeared. But the idea of a nation working in unison with God, has been imprinted by them on Scotland's life and character, and that idea is destined never to pass away. It well becomes us, therefore, who are the children of such heroes, to be like them in their love of their fatherland, and especially in their burning desire to bring that fatherland, into true sympathy with the will and purpose of God.

The words of the old martyr, James Guthrie, have a truth in them, the full realization of which ought to claim the thought and effort of every Scottish patriot—

“ They may scatter their dust to the winds of Heaven,  
To the bounds of the utmost sea,  
But her Covenants, burned, reviled and riven,  
Shall yet her reviving be.”

## CHAPTER IX.

*The Story of the Kirk-Session.*

“ I will a round, unvarnished tale deliver.”—*Shakespeare.*

THE church records of Cumnock are documents of considerable interest. They throw light upon the social, religious, and ecclesiastical state of the parish in olden days. The most valuable portions of them, however, have been lost, and the loss is extremely great. It would have been of the utmost importance for the full understanding of the history of Cumnock, especially in the years that followed the Reformation and in Covenanting times, if the contemporaneous accounts engrossed in the official statements of the Session had been still in existence. For we can hardly imagine that they would have been silent, regarding the doings of Claverhouse and Douglas in relation to Alexander Peden, to Richard Cameron, to Thomas Richard, and to others who suffered for the sake of the Covenant in our immediate vicinity. We can only deplore the loss which cannot be made up, and be thankful for the volumes of records which remain. Ministers and session-clerks, two or three centuries ago, failed to realize how their records would be examined to-day, by eyes eager to know the story of those old times, else they would have taken greater care to keep them safe, and also to put in writing facts,

illustrative of the doings and circumstances of their people, of greater importance than many of those they do relate.

The ease, with which the earlier documents of the church disappeared, may be understood when it is mentioned that for a considerable time in the middle of the 18th century, the minutes of the Session of Cumnock were written on separate pieces of paper. Even then complaint was made that many of them had gone astray. Accordingly, for their preservation an order was given in 1754 to George Mackervail, to re-write the minutes from February, 1742, to February, 1753. This was done by him, and for his work of copying into a permanent record 117 folio pages, he was paid the sum of fifteen shillings sterling.

The volumes which have reached us begin on the 16th November, 1704, and come down to the present day practically without intermission. They are in fairly good condition, and though the penmanship is not always first class, and the ink has sometimes faded, the writing can in most cases be easily made out. Some matters of interest culled from their old yellow pages, will indicate the kind of story they have to tell.

### *I.—The Session and the Discipline of the Church.*

The greater portion of the records is taken up with the action of the Session, in matters requiring the discipline and censure of the church. It is well-known that the method of discipline, pursued by a session up till the 19th century dawned, was much more severe and inquisitorial than we are accustomed to in modern days. Everywhere in Scotland, measures were adopted

for the punishment and reclamation of offenders, at which we almost stand aghast as we read of them. The most amazing feature, perhaps, about the old system was this—the people seemed to approve of it. For there can be little doubt that it would have been changed much sooner, if it had not received the support of the community. Use and wont, it may be, had a great deal to do with its continuance, and customs of every kind are slow to die. But it is difficult to get a really satisfactory explanation of the continued existence of the old system of discipline, down at least to the beginning of the nineteenth century, unless we recognise the fact that it received the sympathy of the people. Ministers were powerless to keep it up of themselves, even had they wished to do so. The elders, who carried out the process in every congregation along with the minister, derived their title to rule from the people, with whom they were in close touch. If congregations had risen against it, as they would have been certain to do, if there had not been a fairly general approval of it, they could have overthrown the old system, and forced the introduction of a new system, a century earlier than the change really took place.

Cumnock, at the time the existing records open, was in no way different from the rest of the country. The stool of repentance was hardly ever empty on Sabbath. This happened indeed, not so much through the number of individual offenders, as through the number of appearances in public which every offender was required to make. The path to absolution was long and tedious, and many Sabbaths sometimes elapsed before the last step on it was taken. It was no uncommon thing for the guilty person to



appear "in the usual place of repentance," for four or five Sabbaths in succession. In certain cases seven, and even eight, separate appearances were required. Sometimes, at least, the offender was clothed in sackcloth. Thus, under date 10th August, 1729, we read:—"Jean Paterson appeared this day in public, with sackcloth on her;" and again, 20th April, 1740:—"Mary Sherringlaw was appointed to appear in sackcloth next Lord's day at the usual place in order to be rebuked."

At length a change came. By the year 1800, the custom of appearing publicly in church in order to be rebuked had practically ceased in Cumnock, though a solitary case remains on record, of a person being appointed to occupy the stool of repentance as recently as 1818. The change in every way was a happy one.

About the middle of the eighteenth century, we find another practice beginning to be adopted in connection with discipline, though it only became frequent after public appearances ceased. This was the payment by the breaker of church law, of a fine which went to swell the Poor Fund. The minutes in such cases run in this manner:—"J. D., having satisfied the treasurer as to the penalty, was rebuked and absolved;" "A. B. paid 6s. 8d. for behoof of the poor;" "E. C. was fined 10s. 6d. for the poor." One guinea, however, seems to have been exacted from wealthier offenders, as in the case of R. T., who gave that sum to the poor. The session, of course, exercised discretionary power as to the amount of the fine, for sometimes we read:—"The fine was remitted in this case, because of the indigent circumstances" of the person. The last notice of the payment of a fine is 30th March,

1835, so that this custom only ceased five years after the settlement of the Rev. Ninian Bannatyne.

The session, likewise, tried with a strong hand to check disorderly conduct, which would now call for the interference of the police. Thus, in April, 1737, Janet A. appeared before the session on the charge of beating her mother, Jean T. Witnesses were examined in due course, one of whom swore that she saw Janet A. "take a veal's head, which her mother had laid down at the fireside, and beat her mother with it till she had to fly the house." Another deponed that after harvest she saw Janet A. beat her mother and pull her down, and when witness reproved her, Janet A. "threw an old rusty kaill-whittle at her, and so hurt her that she could not move for a while." The case was deemed so bad, that Janet was cited to appear before the Presbytery. This she refused to do, whereupon she was laid under the sentence of the lesser excommunication.

Another case, which happened in May, 1753, shows the readiness with which the civil magistrate of the day, lent his authority to support the session in their duty. Allan Aikin of Horsecleugh was desirous of taking the oath of purgation, in order to declare his innocence of the charge made against him. The necessary delay of the church in granting him permission to do so, for the Presbytery required to give its sanction before the session could administer the oath, irritated Aikin. One Sabbath morning he appeared before service at a meeting of session, and demanded that he should have the opportunity of taking the oath that day in church. Mr. Muir told him it could not be given that day, but would be given on the earliest possible

occasion. Before the congregation was dismissed, however, Aikin "came forward and, in a manner that gave universal offence, demanded of the minister to take the oath; and even after the minister had repeated the case to the congregation, which Allan Aikin's conduct obliged him to do, he still persisted in his demand and threw down a sixpence upon the clerk's desk, using words to this purpose, 'Since you refuse me my oath, I hereupon take instruments against you.' As evidence of the offence his behaviour gave, the civil magistrate, without any application from the session, thought himself bound immediately to incarcerate him." Aikin's case was referred to the Presbytery. Eventually the oath of purgation was administered to him in February, 1754.

The session also endeavoured to make more agreeable the home life of married persons, who were inclined to forget their vows. Thus it is recorded that on 11th February, 1753, "James Smith and Janet Johnstoune, spouses, were both summoned to this diet, and being interrogated as to a report made to the session of their disorderly life and unchristian behaviour towards each other, acknowledged their fault and promised better behaviour in time to come."

The elders, too, were careful in their official capacity not to allow any persons to remain in the parish, who could not testify to their character. For in October, 1724, we read that "a dancing master and a musician having come to the town without any testimonials were cited before them," and as they did not compear, the session applied to the civil magistrate to have them removed.

Persons with unruly tongues were called to account as well. As late as 1832 it is stated that James H. appeared before the session for using unbecoming language to Jane G. "He was rebuked for his unseemly conduct, and admonished to be more circumspect, and bridle his tongue in the future."

These specimen cases of discipline, taken out almost of a countless number, are sufficient to show the kind of work, which the elders regarded themselves as called upon to do along with the minister, and the manner in which they performed their work, by subjecting offenders to the censure of the church.

### *II.—The Session and the Services of the Church.*

During the whole period covered by the old records, there seem to have been two services in church on Sabbath, both in summer and in winter. Thus we read under date 15th June, 1707, that elders were ordained "after forenoon service," the words "forenoon service" implying that there was an afternoon service as well. On 28th February, 1768, it is said that the session met between services, and on 20th April, 1776, reference is made to the afternoon service. No information is given as to the way in which the church services were attended. Naturally, however, the session took cognizance of the manner in which the people observed the Lord's day. Thus the session, being informed on the 12th September, 1731, that "A. Hamilton and his two sons were gathering nuts through the woods last Lord's day," cited him to compare before them next Sabbath. This he did, and confessed that "he went through the wood with his two

youngest sons, to bath his sore arm in the Woodside well, but that he gathered no nutts. He owned that it was a sin in going thither in so public a manner, in the time of divine service. The session rebuked him for his untenderness and the breach of the Sabbath, and for giving so bad an example to his children. His two sons, not having come to years of discretion, were not brought before the session." Again, on 15th January, 1744, they summon before them James Girvin of Watson, who was reported to have been guilty of the profanation of the Sabbath, "by offering on that holy day before witnesses, to hire a servant."

In connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper during the eighteenth century, a remarkable fact comes out. There does not seem to have been any regular day fixed for its administration. It was held whenever the session thought most convenient. Thus, in 1705, the session fix the 15th July as the day of communion, but the day fixed in 1739 is the 5th August. In 1749, the session, after consultation, "consider the second Sabbath of August the fittest time for the Lord's Supper, but arranged that if any member of session found any reason before Sabbath fortnight, which would make that day inconvenient for the parish, the session should meet and consider the matter." On the 6th July, 1756, the session agreed to dispense the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but delayed "fixing the time till they could do it with more certainty, as to the convenience of the congregation." The convenient day is found on September 5th. In 1763 the communion is held on May 8th; in 1764 there are two communions, one on 12th February, and the other on 20th October. It is therefore perfectly plain that up till 1764 at

least, there was no fixed season for holding the communion. It seems certain, too, that until Mr. Muir introduced in that year two communions, it was the custom only to have one in the twelve months. At what time the two seasons so long associated with the observance of the Lord's Supper in our parish—the fourth Sabbath of June, and the second Sabbath of December—were set apart for the purpose, the records nowhere state. Oral tradition, however, tells that during Mr. Frazer's ministry, the communion, usually held then in August, was one year celebrated on the fourth Sabbath of June in order to allow Mr. Frazer to leave home for the sake of his health. The day fixed upon corresponded with the communion day in the parish of Auchinleck, and was adhered to ever after.

What extra services were held at the period of communion during the eighteenth century, cannot be determined with precision. As early as 1645, certain preparatory services were ordered by the General Assembly. The act runs in this form:—“That there be a service of preparation delivered in the ordinary place of public worship, upon the day immediately preceding the communion.” This accounts for the origin of a Saturday service. The thanksgiving service on the Monday took its rise at the time of the revival in Shotts under Livingstone in 1630. The Fast days, to which Scotland was so long accustomed, but which have now almost completely disappeared, in the Lowlands at least, were never recognised in the legislation of the Church, though the practice of receiving the communion fasting, is an ancient custom. It is even said to have been common in some parts of Scotland, during the first half of the nineteenth century.

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There are, however, very few references to any of these extra services in the session books. One or two only have been noticed. In November, 1739, mention is made of the "last communion Fast," and in the minute of 6th February, 1800, the words occur, "the night immediately before the Fast, previous to the last dispensing of the communion." It would be difficult at the present time for the ecclesiastical authorities of a parish, to appoint a Fast day during the week preceding the communion Sabbath, if that Sabbath were liable to be altered every year as the Session thought fit. But in bygone days, when our forefathers were shut off in great measure from the rest of the country, through lack of the means of communication, the Fast day might, without much inconvenience, be fixed for the day that seemed best to the session. It was so, at any rate, in Cumnock.

The elders, having appointed the Fast day, likewise exercised great watchfulness over the way in which the people observed it. For its sanctity was deemed almost equal to that of the Sabbath. Thus, on the 18th August, 1820, we read:—"James Shankland appeared before the session, for having gone to the smithy at Whitesmuir on the sacramental Fast day, and gotten two horses shod by the apprentice of James Inglis there, who is an anti-burgher. He pled ignorance, having forgotten it was the Fast, was rebuked and restored to church privileges, from which for a time he had been debarred." Doubtless the custom of changing the Fast day, caused Shankland to forget it. The anti-burgher, James Inglis, who kept his smithy open that day, was, of course, not amenable to the jurisdiction of the session.

As far as has been observed, this is the earliest reference in the records to the existence in Cumnock of the Secession Church.

The communion Sabbath was a great day. The services held upon it were very prolonged. A number of ministers from surrounding parishes, as well as from a distance, were present. Even within the recollection of people still alive, neighbouring churches, like those of Auchinleck, New Cumnock, and Ochiltree, were closed on that day, in order to permit the people to gather here to witness the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the ministers to assist at it. Our church would in turn sometimes be shut, when the minister was giving help elsewhere, and many of the parishioners would make their way to the neighbouring communions. Of course, the church was not large enough to hold all who flocked to it. It was accordingly arranged that the communion should be celebrated in church, where also the action sermon was preached, while in the churchyard an open-air service was carried on for a good many hours. The number attending the service in the churchyard was much greater than the number in church, though the church seems to have been completely filled. Those who still remember these outside gatherings, which prevailed everywhere through our district, and which furnished Burns with a theme for his satire, say there was only too good cause to speak of them as he does in his *Holy Fair*. His picture, doubtless, is overdrawn, but it is too true to fact, to be regarded altogether as an exaggeration or a caricature. At the same time, we must remember that a similar scene on a smaller scale was enacted every Sabbath. The "change" houses, as the public houses are always called in the session records, were



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open and were frequented every Lord's day. The evil was only accentuated and made more apparent, by the larger gatherings at the special communion seasons. Happily at length, the custom of holding these open-air services, attended by people from far and near, ceased. Even before they passed away, the whole of the services in the church and at the churchyard, were conducted by the resident minister and one assistant, who divided the work between them, each taking a share of the work indoors and out of doors. On one of the last occasions, now nearly sixty years ago, when there was a service in the churchyard in connection with the communion, the time came for the two ministers to exchange. Mr. Bannatyne was officiating in the church. He arranged with his helper to come down to the church at a certain hour, when Mr. Bannatyne was to proceed to the churchyard to continue the open-air service. The precentor in the churchyard that day was Mr. George Goldie, then leader of psalmody in Auchinleck. Before the assisting minister left the open-air service to make his way to the church, he gave out a psalm and told the people and the precentor to sing till Mr. Bannatyne arrived. The distance is not great; but Mr. Bannatyne was not quite ready to come. At any rate the time appeared very long to the precentor, who manfully stuck to his post and sang till the minister arrived. Long years afterwards he said, that he had never been "sae sair pit till't" as then.

Mention must also be made of a very appropriate custom, which prevailed at the meeting of Session immediately before the observance of the Lord's Supper, when the roll of membership was revised. The minister and several of the elders, we are told,

engaged in prayer. Thus in July, 1705, the session met “to consider some things relative to the great work of celebrating the Lord’s Supper, which was at hand, and especially to consider whom they could warrantably admit thereto, of whom they drew out a list from the minister’s examining roll. After several had prayed to God for light and direction in so weighty a business, they appointed the said list to be kept *in retentis*.” Again, under date July 26, 1755, we find the following similar entry:—“The Session met, and after prayer they had the communion roll read over in their hearing, and agreed to spend the rest of that sederunt in prayer. Accordingly the following members prayed, Andrew Hodge, Alexander Johnston, John Templeton, John Vallance.” Such meetings, devoted to prayer for this purpose, could not fail to have a good effect on the members of Session themselves and on their people.

Tokens of admission to the Lord’s Table were given to intending communicants at the preparatory service. Those in use after the middle of the 18th century, were thin pieces of lead, about half an inch square, stamped with the name Cumnock, and with the date 1756. As the name of the parish was too long to be stamped in legible letters in one line, the first syllable, “Cum,” appears at the top, and immediately below it the second syllable, “nock.” The date is at the foot.

There are few references in the records to the Sacrament of Baptism, which, in accordance with the Directory for Public Worship laid down by the Assembly, would, except in cases of necessity, be performed in church. Towards the end of last century, the custom of baptizing the child on the earliest possible

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day—a custom which has wisely disappeared from the Presbyterian Church—seems to have prevailed. For, according to an entry in 1774, we read that “George Caldow, son of George Caldow and Janet Sloan in Scarrington Miln, was born on the 21st and baptized on the 24th July.”

Long ago, the custom of celebrating marriages in church, was much more usual in Scotland than it has been in recent years, though now it seems to be reviving. What the exact custom was in olden time in Cumnock the records do not state, for they contain only one reference to it. On 11th January, 1705, the Session considered “the most contemptuous and prophane carriage of Hugh Black by contending, swearing, and slandering for an alledged displeasure received from the church officer, which carriage was public before many witnesses in the time of the solemnization of marriage in the church, notwithstanding of several rebukes given him by the minister to restrain him.”

In connection with the question of marriage, the Session books frequently refer to “irregular marriages” contracted by members of the church. These marriages, which took place mostly in Glasgow, whither the parties went, were recognised by the Session as perfectly valid. The ceremony was usually performed by Episcopal curates. Very probably it was a desire to have the knot tied without publicity, which led to the adoption of this course. At any rate, it was frequently followed. On their return, the newly-married couple were in the habit of presenting their certificate of marriage to the Session, in order to have it duly recognised by them. The Session always recognised it, but at the same time took care to rebuke the persons, and ordered

them to pay, not only the usual church fees exacted for marriage, but a fine as well. Thus we read on 20th May, 1788, that John Graham and his spouse were rebuked for their irregular marriage, and were ordained to pay the ordinary marriage fees and six shillings and eightpence of a fine. In some cases the persons were rebuked publicly in church.

Little is said about the conduct of Psalmody in the house of God. There is noted from time to time the appointment or the resignation of the precentor, but we look in vain for any information regarding the duties, the qualifications, and the salary of the leader of praise. Frequently the schoolmaster acted as precentor. Some little attention, however, must have been paid to vocal music, for our parish, in the middle of the 18th century, furnished a teacher of singing, who found employment for his gifts in various districts. On 17th March, 1754, we are told that "the Session appoint a certificate to William Tannahill for upwards of twenty years preceding this date. Only he has been off in the way of his business as a teacher of church music, in other parishes for several years past, for months together."

The Session had also charge of the collections made at the church door. The money thus contributed was devoted by them to the proper purposes. They were very careful in having their treasurer's accounts audited, usually appointing the minister and two elders to examine them. In the financial statement, which was always rendered on these occasions, an entry, which sounds peculiar in our ears, is frequently to be met with. For example, it is said in November, 1738, that the balance in the treasurer's hands consists of £17 14s. Scots good money and £60 Scots bad

money, and in October, 1742, that he had in his possession £45 0s. 7d. Scots bad money and £5 11s. Scots good money. It would be to the credit of our predecessors, if we were able to say that they did not put into the plate, money which was not authorized by the law of the land. And certainly there was a good deal of coin at the time, which had become so defaced that it would not pass current. But truth requires it to be said as well, that there was a large amount of copper coin in circulation, which had been manufactured in an illegal way, so that it looks extremely suspicious that, at his balance in 1738, the treasurer should have in his hands, probably altogether in copper, the large sum of £60 Scots in bad coin. This sum, however, may have been the accumulation of years, and we shall give our predecessors all the benefit of that supposition.

Special collections were made from time to time in accordance with the injunctions of the Assembly. Thus, on the 24th December, 1752, there was a collection for the suffering Protestants in North America, when the sum of £5 5s. stg. was received. On the 14th October, 1753, we read that "this day a collection was made for Eyemouth harbour, which amounted to £18 Scots." On the 22nd September, 1754, a collection for New Jersey College was made, "when besides £18 Scots of common collection, my Lord Dumfries gave £240 Scots."

### *III.—The Session and the Poor.*

It fell to the session to take charge of the poor. Even with the small population of the parish in the 18th century, great

difficulty was found in meeting wisely the necessities of the case. It must be said that the session acted all through in this matter with prudence and generosity.

To begin with, they took cognizance of persons, who preferred to beg rather than to work. A somewhat amusing instance of this may be given. In March, 1754, they were informed that "Janet Wyllie, a young, healthy woman, will not work, but habitually begs, which they judge unworthy of the Christian name." They accordingly cited her to appear before them. After a little delay she came, "acknowledging that she was in use to beg since Beltane last, notwithstanding her youth and health. Thereupon she was rebuked, and being exhorted, promised that, except in case of extreme necessity, she would not do it again."

Probably the session found it expedient to take up the case of Janet Wyllie, in order to give force to certain rules which, under the guidance of Mr. Muir, they had just drawn up. To this they had been stimulated by a most praiseworthy Act of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, issued first in 1748, and ordered to be read again from the pulpit in 1753. That Act called upon every session to look after its own poor, "that vagrants may be discouraged." If vagrants form a difficult problem in our own day, let us not forget that they were as difficult to deal with 150 years ago. The session asked the heritors to meet with them to discuss the question. Logan of Logan and Douglas of Garrallan attended. Three steps were agreed upon.

1. A list of poor persons was prepared, to whom weekly or quarterly supplies were to be granted.

2. They decreed with great wisdom that, in the case of those who should be wholly dependent on them or dependent on them for life, an assignation should be subscribed on receipt of the first allowance, by which all the effects of the recipient were at death, to become the property of the session for the behoof of the poor.

3. If any begged, the supply was to be stopped at once.

It was further agreed that, as the interest of the endowments and half of the weekly collections would not suffice, an assessment should be made on the parish, and a meeting of heritors summoned for the purpose. Altogether this attempt to deal with pressing poverty in 1754 is most commendable, and the plan of the session extremely sagacious.

In the end of 1800, the session found themselves face to face, not only with the ever present fact of poverty, but also with the problem of scarcity of food. This was in Dr. Miller's time. During the years 1799 and 1800, the harvests had been bad. Everywhere the price of the necessaries of life rose. The Linlithgow boll, for instance, which stood at 10s. 4d. in 1775, was £1 4s. 8d. in 1799, and £1 15s. 6d. in 1800. The country then was largely dependent for its support on itself, and did not draw supplies from the continent or from America. Every district felt the scarcity and the high price of provisions. The session took the matter up, and the town as well displayed a sympathetic interest. A combined meeting of the elders, the heritors and certain householders was held on the 4th December, 1800, "to devise the means most proper for supplying the mercat of Cumnock with meal, for the accommodation of poor housekeepers."

Those present agreed to furnish three hundred and forty bolls of meal, at the rate of eight or ten bolls a week, which they deemed sufficient "to answer the demands of poor housekeepers till harvest next, and subscribed a paper to that effect." On the following week the session again met and deputed the minister to suggest to the heritors, that meal be supplied to poor persons weekly, "at a rate below mercat, not exceeding 9d. per peck, and for this purpose the sum of £100 stg. was advanced out of the poor fund. They urged also that a public subscription be inaugurated for this object as well."

There can, therefore, be little doubt that in the hands of the kirk-session year after year, the poor of the parish were wisely and generously dealt with. A new state of things now prevails. The official relief of the poor is entrusted to other hands. Such a change was inevitable, after the unity of the Church of Scotland was broken. Yet it may well be asked if the present system is as effective and as kindly as the old system, which made the poor of the parish the burden and the care of the Church of Him, who was Himself poor, and whose gospel, in its practical form, was to be preached specially to the poor.

The mention of endowments, the interest of which went towards the relief of deserving cases of distress, calls attention to the benefit the parish has enjoyed, from the thoughtful gifts and legacies of persons connected with it. Some of these are of old standing. Previous to 1711, for instance, the session were able to lend 2000 merks Scots of poor money to the laird of Logan, who paid interest to them at the rate of 5 per cent. In 1713 Mrs. Janet Watson, relict of Mr. John Watson, Episcopal minis-



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ter at Auchinleck, bequeathed 50 merks Scots to the poor of the parish. In 1754, payment was made to the session of a legacy of £50 stg., left by Mr. Mitchell, planter in Jamaica.

A valuable privilege of another kind which may be enjoyed, not simply by the poor of the town, but by any who care to take the needful steps to procure it, may fittingly be mentioned here.

By the will of the late Mr. Paterson, who made a large fortune in the West Indies, and who died in Ayr, the people of Cumnock have the perpetual right to send two patients at any time, under one condition, to the Royal Infirmary of Glasgow. The following minute tells the story. Under date 24th June, 1834, we read that “the Rev. Mr. Bannatyne, having last week received from Glasgow a communication from Mr. William Orr, importing that the minister and kirk-session here are empowered in all time coming, to send two patients from this parish to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, the session appoint the same to be recorded here as follows :—

*Copy of Mr. Orr's Letter.*

“GLASGOW, 16TH JUNE, 1834.

“SIR,—I beg to send you an extract from the records of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, and to inform you that the legacy therein referred to having been paid some time ago, the directors of that institution are bound in all time coming, to admit into the Infirmary two patients, recommended by the minister and kirk-session of Old Cumnock.

“I am,

“Your most obedient servant,

“WILLIAM ORR.

“The Rev. Mr. Bannatyne,  
“Old Cumnock.”

The extract, referred to in the letter of Mr. Orr, contained a clause from the will of Mr. Paterson, in which he bequeathed £500 to the directors of the Royal Infirmary, on condition that six patients from the town of Kilmarnock, four from the town of Ayr, and two patients from each of the several parishes of Riccarton, Galston, Craigie, Old Cumnock and Newton-on-Ayr should at any time be received into the infirmary, if recommended by the session of their respective parishes.

A boon of this kind is too valuable to be lost sight of. Though from a business point of view, the Glasgow Infirmary made a bad bargain, we may the more readily rejoice in our good fortune, when we remember that we do not stand alone in the enjoyment of this privilege.

More recently, in 1861, Major General Campbell of Avisyard bequeathed £50 for the poor of the parish, and in 1895 Dr. James Lawrence, who practised in Cumnock for over forty years, left by will for the same object the sum of £500. The example of these benefactors may well be commended to others still in our midst, whose worldly goods have increased. They may even be asked to improve upon the example, in one important particular. The gifts to the suffering and to the poor would be much more valuable to those who share in them, and bring more joy to those who give them, if they were bestowed not when death separated them from their possessions, but in their lifetime, when their eyes could see and their hearts be cheered by the good that was done.

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*IV.—The Personnel of the Session.*

It would not be possible to give any account of those who acted as elders in our parish. Their names from 1704 are all recorded in the session books. They were simply people of the town and neighbourhood, who were chosen to rule in the church, and solemnly set apart for that work in the presence of the congregation. The average number in the session in these olden days was seven or eight. The family names of some of them are to be found still in Cumnock. There appear, for instance, in 1764 the names of John M'Geachan and Hugh M'Geachan; John Gibb and Alexander M'Kerrow; Andrew Hodge, John Templeton, and John Vallance. The treasurer of the church in 1738, and for some years after, was James Howat. In 1793 William Simson, the schoolmaster, who is better known, perhaps, as the friend and correspondent of Burns, was elected a member of session.

Another name may be mentioned, which shows the close connection existing in former days between one of the landlords of the parish and the church of the people, to the great benefit, we may be certain, both of the landlord and of the church. On the 9th January, 1753, the Earl of Dumfries was ordained to the eldership by Mr. Muir, and received from the session the right hand of fellowship. The full minute is of interest. It runs in this way:—"After the officer of session had called for objections three times at the most patent door of the church, against the ordination of the Earl of Dumfries as an elder in the parish, and no objection being offered, the session proceeded to

ordain the said Earl of Dumfries, when the minister preached, the congregation being assembled, from 1 Timothy, v. 17, 'Let the elders that rule well, etc.,' and after sermon took the said Earl of Dumfries publicly engaged to the faithful performance of the several duties of that important office, and set him apart to it by prayer. Upon the dismissing of the congregation, the Session received the said Earl of Dumfries into their number, and accordingly gave him the right hand of fellowship, when he in their presence subscribed the Westminster Confession of Faith and Formula of this Church." This somewhat cumbrous minute will be recognised by all, as a faithful statement of the solemn service in which members of the Presbyterian Church, whether they be peers or peasants, are ordained to the eldership. On the following Sabbath the newly ordained elder took part in the meeting of session, which dealt with the unruly home life of the husband and wife already noticed.

Sufficient has now been said, regarding the old church records, to prove the interesting character of the information they reveal. Times have greatly changed since the first minute was written in 1704 in their yellow pages. But no one who examines them can doubt that we have made progress. The story they tell is often dark, and doubtless the story of the present day faithfully told is dark enough too. Yet if the perusal of the session records makes one fact clearer than another, it is this—that Cumnock, with all the blots which may still stain its moral and social life, is a different place from the Cumnock of two hundred or one hundred years ago, and that the difference is vastly for the better.

## CHAPTER X.

*The Heritors' Minute Book.*

“ I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls  
The burial-ground God's Acre ! It is just !  
It consecrates each grave within its walls,  
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.”

—*Longfellow.*

IN every parish the heritors have certain responsibilities resting upon them, as owners of land liable to public burdens. The authority they possess to-day is not so great as it was formerly, because certain privileges enjoyed by them have been transferred to the people of the parish. Once, for instance, the heritors, along with the minister, appointed the schoolmaster. Now the inhabitants, through their School Board, elect the teachers. Of some of their burdens, too, the heritors have been relieved, for the introduction of the poor law has freed them from any official connection with the parish poor. Up till the change, however, in our system of education and in our management of the poor, the heritors played a very important part in the affairs of Cumnock. Even yet, though their authority has been diminished, they retain certain rights, and are obliged to perform certain duties.

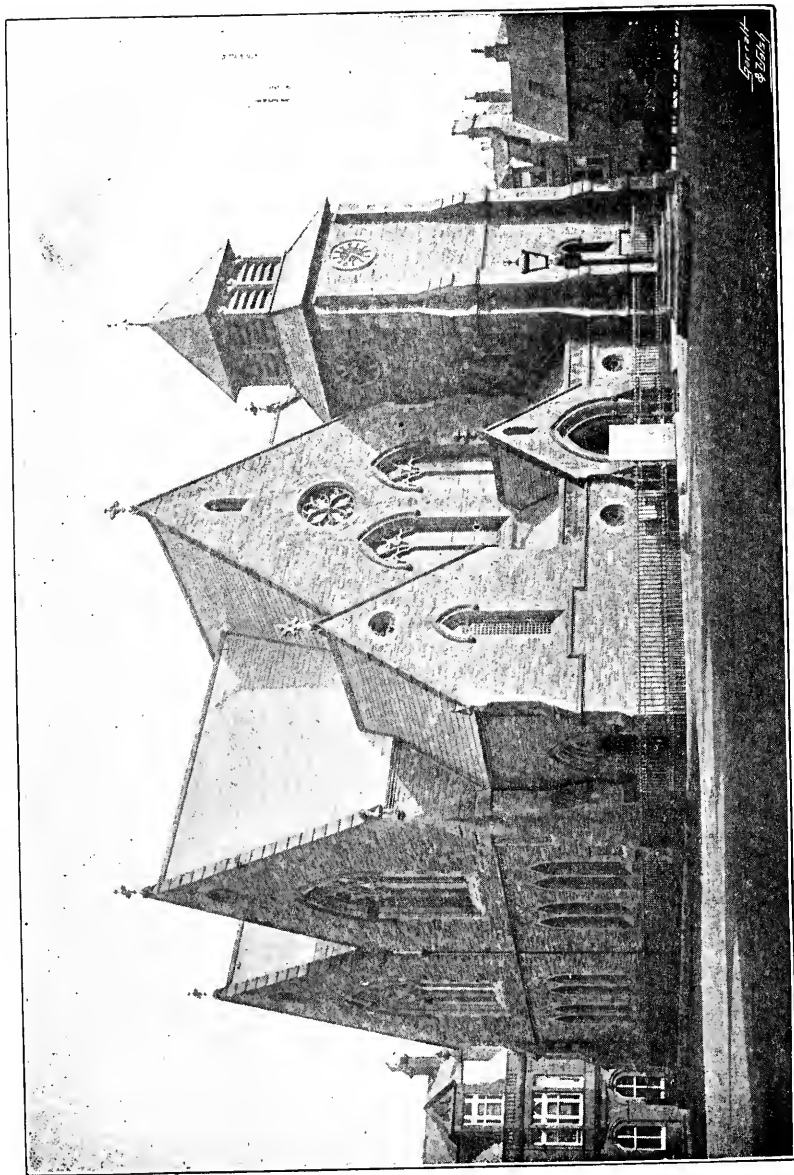
The heritors in the parish are seven in number. They are as follows :—

- (1) The Most Honourable the Marquis of Bute, K.T., Dumfries House.
- (2) Major R. Bannatine-Allason of Logan.
- (3) The Trustees of the late P. C. D. Boswell, Esq., of Garrallan.
- (4) Captain R. M. Campbell of Avisyard and Glaisnock.
- (5) William Campbell, Esq., of Skerrington.
- (6) George Mounsey, Esq., Auchinleck House.
- (7) The Glasgow & South-Western Railway Co.

The minute-books of their court date only from the 11th August, 1803. All earlier records have disappeared. Their loss is to be regretted almost as much as that of the early session records.

From the statements already made in treating of the poor in relation to the Session, it is clear that the heritors were interested in dealing with the question of social distress, and endeavoured to do something to meet pressing needs. One or two instances of their generosity may be given. Under date January 30, 1823, we read that “the meeting, finding the ordinary source of supply inadequate for the poor at present, agree to a voluntary contribution of £50 stg.” In May, 1825, they give £30 for the same purpose—a donation which they repeat in June, 1834. Again, in December, 1837, it is said that “the meeting, finding that the ordinary collections at church are inadequate to the present exigency, agree to assess themselves in the sum of £30.” In 1840





*Engraving  
© 1884*

ESTABLISHED CHURCH.



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they give the same contribution once more, and follow it in 1841 by £25. No grants are noted after 1845. The introduction of the Poor Law in that year explains their cessation. These instances, however, suffice to show that the heritors expressed their sympathy practically with those who felt the keen edge of poverty.

The repair of the church and manse of the parish, and the re-building of them when necessary, were also a burden upon the heritors. The present Established Church was built by them and opened in 1866. Its total cost was £6227 14s. 8d., in addition to the vault and gallery belonging to the Marquis of Bute. The old church, which it superseded, was erected in 1754, during the ministry of Mr. Muir. It held about seven hundred people, but of its erection no record remains. On one of the walls on the outside the joughs were fastened, but long before the church was taken down, they had disappeared. Only the mark was left on the wall, to show where offenders against civil and ecclesiastical law were wont to be pilloried. In 1822, in order to provide more sittings in the church, the inside stairs, which led to the galleries, were removed, and their place taken by two outside stairs, which were familiar features in the old building. These outside stairs were used by Parliamentary candidates as the hustings from which to address the people. The present manse was built in 1750, though large additions have been made to it from time to time.

It was also the duty of the heritors to appoint the precentor. Mr. M'Kinnell, for instance, on being elected schoolmaster in 1839, became "bound and obliged according to the terms of the

advertisement, to prevent or to find a substitute." They also had to do with the beadle. In 1842 they doubled his salary—a step which might be regarded as an indication of great liberality, were we not informed that before it was doubled, the beadle's salary was only one pound.

The care of the churchyard as well rested upon the heritors till 1884, when it passed into the hands of the Parochial Board. The burying ground at the Barrhill began to be used as the ordinary place of interment, about the middle of the 18th century. The oldest stone records the death, in 1756, of a Frenchman who was killed at the building of Dumfries House. It is close to Peden's monument. A few burials had taken place earlier.

Previously the churchyard was round about the church, so that, when we pass through the Square, we are treading upon the dust of generations, who fought the battle of life before us in Cumnock and, having finished it, were gathered to their fathers. The date at which burials ceased in the ground round the church was somewhere about 1768 or 1769. The interment of the Laird of Logan in 1802 was exceptional. About 1768, too, the grave-stones were removed, and the whole area levelled for the purposes of general traffic. Chambers, in his *Picture of Scotland*, refers to the soreness of feeling, even as late as his visit to Cumnock in 1827, occasioned by the burial ground being closed and turned into a thoroughfare. We can easily imagine how such a feeling would prevail.

Of course, when the churchyard encircled the church, there was no passage for traffic through it. Houses surrounded it

then, just as houses surround the Square now, the graves coming up to the walls of the houses. But while the fronts of the houses now are towards the Square, the backs or gables were towards the churchyard then. Such streets as existed at the time, ran round about the churchyard on the far side of the buildings. The road, for instance, from Auchinleck to New Cumnock, could not originally have traversed the Square, as that was the churchyard. It went along Bank Lane and, turning up by Tower Street, crossed Glaisnock Street. It then continued up the Townhead, for the present road to New Cumnock is of modern date, and passing Barshare, struck out by Craigends towards New Cumnock. Similarly the road to Muirkirk also proceeded by the Townhead and, turning towards the left by Drumbrochan, joined the present Muirkirk road, somewhere beyond Longhouse. Traces of both of these roads are still quite distinct. A little while before 1804, the road to Muirkirk was given up by the Townhead, and a new route provided by what we now call the Barrhill Road. From the head of Tower Street, it passed at the back of the Black Bull Hotel. Part of the old way still remains there, to remind us of the narrowness of the streets a century ago. The awkwardness of the turning into the Black Bull lane, was increased by the presence of two or three thatched cottages, forming a continuation of Tower Street on its north side. Their removal is one of those improvements on which the town may congratulate itself.

Lest it should be thought that a road, of sufficient width to allow traffic, must have existed from time immemorial as a means of access to the Established Church manse along Manse Lane, it

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may be mentioned that the portion of the glebe, facing the Barrhill Road, was not originally the minister's ground. It only became so in 1769. Formerly the glebe extended in another direction, embracing ground towards the Lugar, occupied now in part by Millbank. Here is the statement of an excambion arranged on the one hand, by Rev. Thomas Miller, and on the other, by the Earl of Dumfries and Robert Wilson, surgeon. The date is 27th April, 1769, and the extract is taken from the Presbytery records.

“The two ridges of the present glebe in the Holm, at the back of the town of Cumnock, together with the houses and yards on the glebe foresaid, shall henceforth appertain and belong to the Right Honourable Earl of Dumfries, and be exchanged for the Holm to the south of the manse, now given by his Lordship in lieu thereof, and that the said Holm, formerly the property of the said Earl, shall henceforth be a part and pendicle of the glebe of Cumnock.” It is further added that the park of Kilnholm belonging to Robert Wilson, surgeon, has also been transferred to the glebe lands. Apparently, therefore, the entrance to the manse long ago would be somewhere in Lugar Street, and not on the Barrhill Road. It may be the excambion was arranged to give the present more suitable means of access. The heritors, of course, would have something to say about the exchange of ground. Perhaps, too, the alteration of the glebe was connected with the removal of the churchyard, which took place at the same time.

As it was the business of the heritors to look to the proper maintenance of the churchyard, we read sometimes in their

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minutes with reference to the Barrhill churchyard:—"This day the heritors perambulated the burying ground." At first the burying ground does not seem to have been protected by a wall. It doubtless had a hedge or a wooden fence, but there was no wall round it. Accordingly, in August 1803, the heritors inspected the burying ground, and "were unanimously of opinion that a stone wall, two ells high, should be built around it." The subject had been before them on a former occasion, for some years before the witty Laird of Logan is reported to have given his opinion in the dry remark, "I never big dykes till the tenants complain."

An entry of a much later date carries the imagination to somewhat gruesome scenes, in which some still living had a share. On 18th November, 1869, we are told the heritors "direct the small wooden house in the churchyard to be removed forthwith." This was the old watch-house which stood in the middle of the burying ground, and was used as a shelter, sixty years ago, by those who went at night to watch during the exciting time when body-snatching was rife. Stories still linger in the parish which recall the awe pervading the community, and the anxiety of those who had committed the bodies of their friends to the ground, that they should be allowed to rest in peace. One body was indeed raised by the hardened miscreants and carried to a little distance; but it was discovered and brought back. Another seems to have been successfully made away with. Our late townsman, Mr. John Samson, who long kept the secret to himself, and who never could be persuaded to let the name of the family be known, was in the habit of telling

what he himself had seen. The rumour had spread that a child's grave had been disturbed. Mr. Samson undertook to have an examination made. Soon he saw that the little coffin had been removed. Nothing could be done to recover it. Anxious only to spare the feelings of the parents, he quickly told the workers to refill the grave, saying at the same time, "I see now, that's quite enough."

The heritors were also charged with the education of the children of the parish. They had to provide school accommodation, as well as a dwelling-house for the master. The salary of the teacher, too, was a burden upon them, though they were at liberty to charge fees. In 1803, in accordance with an Act of Parliament passed at the time, they gave the teacher 400 merks Scots. The Act bade them pay a salary of from 300 to 400 merks. They gave the maximum amount. As before, they continued to exact fees.

In 1804, a new schoolroom was built on the site now occupied by the Clydesdale Bank, at a cost of £350 stg. Attached to it were a library-room and a jail. One sees the reason why a library should be in connection with a school, but it is more difficult to understand why offenders against the laws of the land, should be imprisoned in part of the building used for the training of the young. Such an object lesson in the awful results of indifference to law, might surely have been taught to the children in some other way. The heritors thought otherwise, and so the school and the jail formed part of the same building in Cumnock for many years.

As the 19th century advanced, the heritors, as beloved owners

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of land to be tenanted in a short time by some of the boys then at school, arranged to provide them with special instruction in chemistry. In 1845 they agreed to pay a certain sum "to enable the schoolmaster to procure a set of chemical apparatus, in order that he may introduce agricultural chemistry as a branch of instruction in the parish school." More than fifty years ago, therefore, our far-seeing heritors tried to do what County Councils regard it as their duty to do now, from time to time, in almost every district.

The schoolroom was also regularly used for the purpose of holding Justice of Peace and other courts. Its proximity to the jail made this a convenient arrangement. But as the scholars required to be dismissed when the Justices assembled, it was resolved in 1839 that the school be no longer given for such a purpose.

The heritors were generous enough to allow various evening meetings to be held in the school. In 1840, "the schoolmaster was directed to grant the Total Abstinence Society the use of the schoolroom for this time," and in 1841 it was given to "The Old Instrumental Band" for a concert on the evening of the Mayfair.

From this account of their doings during the greater portion of the nineteenth century, it may well be said that the heritors evinced a genuine desire to promote the well-being of the community, and were willing, from time to time, to exceed the legal limits of their duty. They did so in their gifts to the poor, in their payment to the schoolmaster, and in the erection of a much more expensive church than the law required. When they see

their way to build the spire which the church still lacks, a new architectural feature will be added to the town.

The writer of the annals of Cumnock at the close of the twentieth century, will have a pleasant task to perform, if he is able to tell a story about the heritors similar to that which has been given in the foregoing pages.



## CHAPTER XI.

*Robert Burns and Cumnock.*

“ Auld Coila now may fidge fu’ fain,  
 She’s gotten poets o’ her ain,  
 Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,  
     But tune their lays,  
 Till echoes a’ resound again  
     Her weel-sung praise.”

—*Burns.*

ROBERT BURNS, who has shed so much lustre on Ayrshire, which gave him birth, had certain relations with Cumnock. We might safely conjecture that during his stay at Mossgiel, as well as when preparations were going on for his removal to Ellisland in Dumfriesshire, he frequently visited our town. Direct evidence is forthcoming, however, to prove that he was seen sometimes on our streets.

To his friend, James Smith of Mauchline, he writes in a letter which is simply dated Mossgiel, Monday morning, 1786 :—“ On Thursday morning, if you can muster as much self-denial as to be out of bed about seven o’clock, I shall see you as I ride through to Cumnock.” The poet-farmer would cover the eight miles which lay between him and his destination on his favourite mare, to which he had given the historic name of Jenny Geddes. In 1788, on the 2nd March, he stopped at Cumnock on his way

back from Dumfries, where he had been arranging about his new farm, and wrote one of his numerous letters to Clarinda, signing it with his Arcadian name of Sylvander. "I am here," he says, "returning from Dumfriesshire, at an inn, the post-office of the place, with just so long time as my horse eats his corn to write you."

Burns had not any friend at this date in Cumnock to show him hospitality, but very soon there came here to live one, whose name is closely associated with that of our national poet, and who would only be too willing to have him as his guest. This was the schoolmaster, William Simson, a native of Ochiltree, where he had been teacher before he was appointed to what would be the more lucrative post in Cumnock. Simson was in the habit of corresponding with Burns, and even addressing to him some rhyming effusions, which he never published, though his great contemporary urged him to do so. His name and character Burns has enshrined in a familiar poetical epistle, beginning with the lines—

" I gat your letter, winsome Willie ;  
 Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie ;  
 Though I maun say't, I wad be silly,  
                   An' unco vain,  
 Should I believe, my coaxin' billie,  
                   Your flatterin' strain."

We may well conclude that after "Winsome Willie" took up his residence in Cumnock, Burns would find his way to his house whenever he passed through our town. There is a well-authenticated tradition, too, which tells that Burns was on terms of intimacy with Mr. Hall, the Secession minister, on

whom he sometimes called. It is even said that the poet, appreciating the finished style of Mr. Hall as a preacher, submitted some of his verses to him for criticism.

Another resident in Cumnock, whose descendants still live among us, had a close connection with Burns. This was Annie Rankine, daughter of the farmer of Adamhill, near Tarbolton. Her father, John Rankine, was a boon companion of the poet, who addressed him in the well-known strain—

“ O rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,  
The wale o' cocks for fun and drinkin' ! ”

Annie, who afterwards came to Cumnock as the wife of John Merry, and died only in 1843, had many reminiscences of Burns. It was she who sat beside him in church that Sabbath in Mauchline, when he caught sight of the creeping creature on the bonnet of a lady in front of him, and made it the theme of a poem which, though somewhat revolting in its subject, has gained world-wide fame from its closing stanza so often repeated—

“ Oh, wad some power the giftie gi'e us,  
To see oursel's as others see us !  
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,  
And foolish notion. ”

Annie Rankine was sometimes escorted by Burns to her father's house, from festive gatherings in the neighbourhood. On one occasion he set himself to tell her weird stories of ghosts and goblins, with which his vivid imagination filled the clumps of trees on the dark road. So powerfully did he depict the creations of his fancy, that Annie arrived at Adamhill in a state of great terror. Next day Robbie came back to ask for her,

when he was so soundly rated by her mother, that he declared "he never had sic a downsettin' in his life."

The original of the Annie who walked with Burns through "The Rigs o' Barley," has always been a matter of dispute. Various claims have been put forth in behalf of different persons bearing the name. With a good deal to be said in its favour, the claim has been advanced in behalf of Annie Rankine. It is impossible, perhaps, to decide the question, but in the midst of the competing claims it is well to put in a word for the old friend of Burns, who lived so long in our town, and who was accustomed to speak of herself as the heroine of the song. The refrain is almost too familiar to be repeated—

"Corn rigs an' barley rigs,  
An' corn rigs are bonnie ;  
I'll ne'er forget that happy night  
Amang the rigs wi' Annie."

It is recorded that on meeting Burns after the publication of the song, she told him she had not expected to be celebrated by him in print. The poet naively replied, "Oh, ay, I was just wanting to put you in wi' the lave." To the last, Annie sang *The Rigs o' Barley* with great spirit, and always spoke affectionately of the memory of the author.

A good many relics of Burns were in her possession. A punch-bowl was one of them, though unfortunately it was broken in pieces a few years ago. One of her descendants in Airdrie has a snuff-box which the poet used. Annie, likewise, had a very fine miniature portrait of Burns, and a tea-caddy, both of which he gave to her. They are now in the possession of Mr. Crichton

of Hillside. To her dying day she kept some locks of Burns' hair. On one occasion, a gentleman from Glasgow called at her house, to hear about Burns and see the relics she had of him. He was made happy by the gift of a small portion of the poet's hair. Some of his friends in Glasgow, admirers like himself of the Ayrshire bard, desired to become possessors also of some of his hair. In due time the request came. "Hoots," said Annie, "I canna be fashed seekin' out Robbie's hair for them. I'll just gie them a bit o' my ain; it's the same colour." Proud possessors, therefore, of a lock of the poet's hair in Glasgow and elsewhere, need not be too certain of the genuineness of their treasure. After all, it may only be a bit of Annie Rankine's.

Another friend of Burns resided in the parish. This was John Kennedy, under-factor to the Earl of Dumfries. Burns sent to him the manuscript of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, and begged him, in a poetical epistle which accompanied it, to meet him soon in one of his favourite "howffs" in Mauchline and "haud a bouze." Possibly, too, it is he who figures in *The Kirk's Alarm*, as

"Factor John, Factor John, whom the Lord made alone."

A good deal of correspondence passed between Kennedy and the poet. Burns thus addresses him in a letter written early in August, 1786, when he thought himself on the eve of starting for the West Indies:—"Your truly facetious epistle of the 3rd inst. gave me much entertainment. I was only sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you as I passed your way, but we shall bring up all our leeway on Wednesday, the 16th current, when I

hope to have it in my power to call on you and take a kind, very probably a last adieu, before I go to Jamaica." He anticipated the leave-taking in words which breathe the spirit of true comradeship—

"Farewell, dear Friend ! may gude luck hit you,  
And 'mang her favourites admit you !  
If e'er detraction shore to smit you,  
    May nane believe him !  
And ony deil that thinks to get you,  
    Good Lord, deceive him."

Burns' proposed emigration, to which he thus refers, brought him into contact with another family in our neighbourhood. For it was a Douglas of Garrallan, to whom he was indebted for the situation in Jamaica to which he intended at the time to proceed. The story is told at length by Chambers in his *Life of Burns* (ed. Wallace, I., p. 315).

"Patrick Douglas of Garrallan," so the record runs, "had been trained to the medical profession, and was for a time surgeon in the West Lowland Fencible Regiment. In the list of shareholders in the ill-fated and short-lived Douglas and Heron Bank, . . . he appears as a 'surgeon in Air,' and as involved to the extent of £500. But although he lived for a time in Ayr, and was known as Dr. Douglas, he practised but little. He had succeeded to the family estate in 1776, and purchased a property in Jamaica, which one of his brothers, Charles, personally superintended. . . . Application was made to Dr. Douglas either by Burns, or more probably in his behalf by his friends. Dr. Douglas seems to have done for the poet all that was in his power. There is a tradition that when Burns was or believed

himself in danger of imprisonment, his new friend actually arranged that he should sail direct from the port of Ayr, but that at the last moment Burns refused to go on board ship. Whether there be any truth in the story or not, Dr. Douglas applied to his brother in Jamaica. The result was the offer to Burns by Charles Douglas, of the post of book-keeper on his estates in the neighbourhood of Port Antonio (formerly St. Francis), at the salary of £30 a year for three years. The situation was a poor one, but Burns accepted it." We know, of course, that the poet's intention to leave his native land was not carried out, but the laird of Garrallan's interest in him is a strong link of connection between Burns and our parish.

Another local proprietor has his memory perpetuated by Burns, though not altogether in the most agreeable way. The Rev. Dr. Andrew Mitchell, minister of Monkton from 1775 to 1811, was owner of the small estate of Avisyard. He was the son of Hugh Mitchell of Dalgain, and therefore belonged to an old Ayrshire family. He fell under the lash of Burns in connection with a famous heresy case, which came before the Presbytery of Ayr. Dr. William Macgill, one of the ministers of Ayr, had published a theological essay which was supposed to be tinged with Socinianism. The matter occupied the attention both of the Presbytery and Synod. The debates in the Church courts took the fancy of Burns, who employed his sarcastic pen to assail the reverend fathers and brethren. *The Kirk's Alarm* was the fitting title he gave to his poetical effusion. Dr. Mitchell felt his scathing wit in the lines—

“ Andro Gouk, Andro Gouk,  
 Ye may slander the book,  
 And the book nane the waur, let me tell ye ;  
 Though ye’re rich, and look big,  
 Yet lay by hat and wig,  
 And ye’ll ha’e a calf’s head o’ sma’ value.”

Evidently Burns had no great idea of Dr. Mitchell’s intellectual power. The nickname “Gouk” and the expression “calf’s head” doubtless describe, with a good deal of exactness, the amount of brain force which he possessed. Chambers tells us that “an extreme love of money and a strange confusion of ideas characterized this clergyman. In his prayer for the Royal Family he would express himself thus : ‘ Bless the King—*his* Majesty the Queen—*her* Majesty the Prince of Wales.’ . . . Notwithstanding the antipathy he could scarcely help feeling towards Burns, one of the poet’s comic verses would make him laugh heartily and confess that ‘after all he was a droll fellow’ ” (*Life of Burns*, III., p. 94).

Dr. Mitchell, at his death in the eighty-sixth year of his age, left his property of Avisyard to his relatives, the Campbells of Auchmannock, in whose possession it still remains.

A case of another kind connected with Cumnock, has likewise been commemorated by Burns. His poem, *Passion’s Cry*, beginning with the words—

“ Mild zephyrs waft thee to life’s farthest shore,”

he is usually supposed to have put into the mouth of Mrs. Maxwell Campbell of Skerrington, whose domestic affairs formed the subject of investigation before the Court of Session in Edinburgh. In passing, perhaps, it may be noticed in connection



with this poem and *The Kirk's Alarm*, how very full and intimate the information was, which Burns possessed of the character and life of his contemporaries, at least in the counties of Ayr and Dumfries. He hits off the peculiarities of numberless individuals in a single word or clause, with an apparent accuracy which can only be regarded as surprising.

Besides these allusions to persons in our parish, Burns makes one or two references to the district itself. In *Death and Dr. Hornbook* he sings—

“ The rising moon began to glower  
The distant Cumnock hills out-owre,”

though, it may be, he is alluding to the New Cumnock heights. Then he weaves into his verse the name of the stream, which glides past our doors, and which he must have often crossed—

“ Behind yon hills where Lugar flows,  
'Mang moors an' mosses many, O.”

And in his *Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn*, he introduces—

“ The fading yellow woods,  
That waved o'er Lugar's winding stream.”

Had Burns actually been located within our borders, there would certainly have come from his pen some rare gem, describing the beauties of Glaisnock Glen or the wooded grandeur of The Bank. Proximity to Peden's grave, too, would have made him break the almost perfect silence in which he wraps the sufferings of the Covenanters, and give us a stirring and pathetic song worthy of taking its place by the side of *Scots wha hae*.

It only remains to be mentioned that his unfinished ballad, *A Vision*, which sometimes goes by the name of *The Minstrel at Lincluden*, was adapted by Burns to the tune of “Cumnock Psalms.”

## CHAPTER XII.

*Past Industries.*

Clitterty, clatterty,  
Pull up for Saturday ;  
My wob's oot, nae pairs to fill,  
And Monaday, batter-day.

—*Old Weavers' Rhyme.*

THE town of Cumnock has enjoyed a noteworthy industrial history. Some of the industries for which it was famous, have in the course of years entirely disappeared. Others have sprung up in their place, affording at the present time a fair amount of occupation, to those who are willing to pursue a quiet country life, in preference to the busy stir of a great commercial centre. Three of the staple industries of the town, during the first half of the nineteenth century, are now extinct. They were so important while they lasted, that they deserve more than passing mention. These trades were boxmaking, handloom weaving, and muslin flowering.

*I.—Boxmaking.*

So common was this trade in the days of our grandfathers, that a visitor to Cumnock at the time might have looked upon it as the leading industry of the town. Everybody talked of

it, and almost everybody had some connection with it. There was hardly a home, which did not send out one at least of its inmates, regularly each morning, to take part in the production of boxes. Men, women and children were engaged in it. The habit of snuffing was then very general over the English speaking world, and the boxes that were made, were chiefly for holding snuff, though card boxes, as well as more useful work boxes, were also made. Several manufactories existed in Cumnock in the heyday of the trade, which began in a very small way about the year 1800. No mention is made of it by Dr. Miller in his account of the parish in 1793. Its greatest prosperity was between 1820 and 1830. After that period it gradually died away.

The Cumnock snuff-boxes had a special feature, by which they were long well-known, and for which they were greatly sought after. The secret was kept for a time, but at length it was discovered; and the special characteristic of our local boxes became the common possession of all engaged in the trade. Their distinguishing excellence lay in the hinge, which was most ingeniously constructed. Very accurately it was called the "invisible wooden hinge." The honour of discovering it is attributed to William Crawford, a native of our town, who was working at the time in the shop of Mr. Wyllie, a gunsmith and watchmaker in Auchinleck. The story is as follows:—

"Upon one occasion, Crawford was employed to mend the joint of a Highland mull. In attempting to do so, the solder was so run into the joint, as to render it useless. In this dilemma, Wyllie and Crawford thought of various expedients,—

amongst others, of melting the solder by the application of heat. This, however, was afterwards deemed impracticable, from the danger of injuring the hinge. Crawford at last succeeded in making an instrument, by which he cut the solder out of the joint in a very neat manner. This tool Mr. Wyllie and he afterwards used, in forming the joints of the wooden snuff-boxes, which came so much in vogue. Between them they kept the secret for twelve years, when, a misunderstanding occurring, Crawford removed to Cumnock, and commenced business on his own account. Unfortunately, he employed a watchmaker in Douglas to make a duplicate of the instrument; and suspecting its use, a person employed by the watchmaker divulged the secret. From that period new hands daily commenced making boxes; till now an article, which would have then cost five pounds, can be had for eighteenpence." (Paterson's *History of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton*, Vol. I., p. 181.)

Another version of the discovery of the hinge is given by Robert H. Smith, in his *Memoir of Sir Alexander Boswell*. "An incident," he tells us, "which is said to have occurred during the sojourn of one of Sir Alexander's guests, merits preservation as connected with the rise of fancy wood-work in Cumnock, Ochiltree, Auchinleck, Mauchline and Catrine, a department of industry for which Ayrshire has since deservedly become famous all the world over. It originated, says an old issue of the *Scots Times*, in the simple circumstance of a Frenchman, visiting at the house of Sir Alexander Boswell, having sent his box to the village to be replenished with snuff. It was accidentally broken, and the only person who could be got to mend it, was John (?)"

Crawford, the father of the trade." After the mull had been repaired, Crawford "sought it as a model to make another for Sir Alexander, and in this he succeeded so well, that others were ordered and so on, till the manufacture of these boxes became his sole employment."

Though these two stories differ slightly in detail, they evidently refer to the same incident. The one really supplements the other. Both of them give to Crawford, the honour of introducing the hinge into the boxes of the district. And as he was one of Cumnock's sons, we claim the credit of the invention for our parish.

The wood used in the manufacture of these boxes was the plane or sycamore tree, which from the closeness of its texture was eminently suited for the purpose. In order to have it thoroughly seasoned, it was kept five or six months before being used. The work of producing and finishing the boxes was lengthy. One set of workers made the boxes; others, with more or less artistic skill, painted scenes or portraits on the lids, and sometimes on the bottom and the sides as well. A third set, chiefly composed of women and children, varnished and polished them. The varnishing process took a number of weeks. Even six weeks were not considered too long for varnishing the finest boxes. If spirit varnish was used, thirty coats were sometimes put on. Copal varnish required only fifteen coats. When the varnishing was completed, the surface was polished with ground flint, and then the box was ready for the markets of London and Glasgow.

The prices got for the best executed boxes, with highly-

finished designs, were very big. As much as £6 or £7 could be obtained for them. Inferior boxes, of course, were cheaper. It was the quality of the workmanship and the beauty of the painting, which regulated the selling price. A log of plane tree, purchased for twenty-five shillings, was calculated by the purchaser, in 1825, to be sufficient to make £3000 worth of snuff-boxes (Chambers, *Picture of Scotland*, Vol. I., p. 322).

High wages went with good trade. From 1820 to 1830, a boxmaker could easily earn £1 1s. a week, a very large wage at that time. The scene-painter could earn £2 2s., and the varnisher 12s. After 1830 the wages went gradually down, till only about half the amount mentioned could be made. The cause of the decrease of prosperity is quite manifest. A great social custom, long adopted by the male portion of the population, was dying out. Men were ceasing to snuff, and therefore they ceased to need snuff-boxes. An interesting book could be written on the effect of fashion and the change of custom upon trade. Not the least interesting chapter would be the extinction of the snuff-box industry, owing to the people giving up the habit of snuffing. In 1825 the value of the boxes sent out was £6000; in 1837 it was only £1,600.

Before the end came, somewhere about 1850, the practice of putting expensive designs on the lids was given up. The boxes were no longer hand-painted, but chequered in an ingenious way by machinery, after which printed pictures were stamped upon them. A very common device ere the industry ceased, was the imitation of tartan. A good deal of business was always done by the boxmakers, on the arrival of the mail-coaches on their

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way to Glasgow or Carlisle. Many a snuff-box was exchanged for a guinea while the coach waited.

One of the Cumnock boxes has an interesting history. It was presented to the Queen by the Marquis of Ailsa. His lordship's order was of a special kind. It came to Mr. Lammie, and for some time taxed the ingenuity of all in the trade. A work-box was wanted in imitation of the poems of Burns in two volumes, placed above each other in such a way, that the front of the one volume and the back of the other should be seen at the same time. The difficulty, of course, consisted in turning the wood and adjusting the hinges so as to secure the resemblance required. The task was almost given up as hopeless, when John Samson, afterwards the well-known merchant in our town, but then a boxmaker, hit upon the means of fulfilling the order. In due time the box was completed, and found its way into the hands of Her Majesty.

It was only to be expected that the high wages received by the miniature painters would attract young men with artistic skill from other parts of the country. This actually took place. Three artists were here for a time, who afterwards rose to great fame.

The first of them was destined to reach the highest place of honour in the world of Scottish art. His name was Daniel Macnee. At the age of nineteen, he came to Cumnock as an apprentice in Adam Crichton's boxwork, but he did not remain long. Some anatomical drawings, which he executed for Dr. James Brown, gained for him a situation in the atelier of Mr. Lizars, the famed Edinburgh engraver. His widowed mother,

who sometimes came from Glasgow to see him, told his landlady in the Townhead, "that they could make nothing else of Daniel; he would just sit and draw and paint." One, who still remembers the young lad going to and from his work, remarked, in his quiet, pawky way, some time ago, "Ay, Macnee had a great name in Edinburgh by and by, but when he was here he was na muckle thocht o'." The humour of this we can all appreciate, and doubtless there were some engaged in box-painting along with him, who failed to detect the genius and the fineness of touch, which are certain to have distinguished even the early productions of one of the greatest portrait-painters of our time.

A curious incident is told regarding a piece of Macnee's Cumnock work. One evening, long after he had risen to fame, he was dining at Ballochmyle House. The conversation turned on Ayrshire scenery. Macnee, who said he had not seen much of it, referred to one scene of great beauty with which he had been impressed, and which he had sketched as a lad in order to paint it on a snuff-box, about to be presented to a young man leaving for South America. One of the guests immediately handed his snuff-box to the great painter, who, looking at it with surprise, remarked, "That's the very box." "And I," said the other, "am the young man." The owner of the box, which thus was seen again by the artist after the lapse of forty years, was the late Dr. Ranken of Demerara, whose representatives in Ayr still possess it.

Other boxes which felt the touch of his brush must be in existence, treasured simply as mementos of a bygone trade. If their possessors only knew that they owed part of their beauty



to the skilful hand of the young painter, who afterwards became Sir Daniel Macnee, President of the Royal Scottish Academy, they would deem them worth their weight in gold.

The second distinguished artist, who worked in Cumnock, was Horatio M'Culloch, so deservedly noted for his Highland landscapes. No reminiscence of his stay, however, seems to linger in the town. The fact only is certain that he served here for some time, trying his "prentice han'" in one of our local box-works.

The third was William Leighton Leitch, who became a water-colour painter of the greatest eminence. His stay in Cumnock is still remembered by old residents. The story of his struggle with adverse circumstances, till he reached his position of honour and fame, is so full of interest, that it may be briefly told as a stimulus to others. It is recorded at length in a small volume by Mr. MacGeorge of Glasgow, published in 1884, and dedicated to Queen Victoria :—

"Coming home one afternoon from his work (of scene-painting)," says his biographer, "he met a young artist friend, who told him that several of his early associates, including Macnee and Horatio M'Culloch, had gone to Cumnock, in Ayrshire, and had there found employment in painting snuff-boxes, . . . and he strongly advised Leitch to go there also. This, after consulting his friends, he resolved to do. He first went by himself, and soon after Mrs. Leitch joined him with their baby daughter. From working on a scale so large as the painting of scenes for a theatre, to the very minute work of snuff-box painting, was a great change, but he very soon got into the way of it, and easily found employment. It was often difficult, how-

ever, to get payment for his work, and he and his young wife underwent at this time some hard trials. For about a year he worked for the general trade in Cumnock, finding employment from different dealers, when Mr. Smith, the head of a large establishment in Mauchline, having discovered his superior talent, engaged him to superintend his painting-department, and here he did some beautiful work in box-painting."

After spending some time in Mauchline, Leitch proceeded to London. Eager, however, to excel in the art he loved so well, he set out in 1833 for Italy and other continental countries, remaining abroad for four years. During this time he made himself acquainted with the masterpieces of the great painters, and gave himself up to unremitting study. On his return to London, he found profitable employment in teaching and water-colour painting, and also in making drawings to be engraved for illustrated works. The Duchess of Sutherland became one of his pupils. In 1842, she showed a portfolio of his studies to the Queen and Prince Albert. Two of them he was asked to copy for the Queen. The result he tells himself in the following words. Shortly after "I had a note from Lady Canning (to whom I had been giving lessons), saying it was the Queen's desire that I should go down to Windsor, to give Her Majesty a series of lessons in water-colour painting."

During the next twenty-two years, Leitch gave attendance from time to time on the Queen at Windsor and Osborne, as well as at Balmoral and Buckingham Palace. She was so delighted with his method of teaching, that he was commissioned to superintend the art studies of all the members of the Royal Family.

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He gave lessons also to the Princess of Wales after her marriage. Among his other pupils were many ladies of noble rank both in England and in Scotland. The Duchess of Buccleuch, the Duchess of Manchester and the Countess of Rosebery were among the number of those who profited by his instructions. In 1864 the Queen conferred on him an annuity, "in consideration of his long and valued services to Her Majesty."

Some idea of his diligence in his work may be gathered from the fact that the pictures, left by him at his death, realised £7000. Such a competent critic as Sir Coutts Lindsay of the Grosvenor Gallery says of him, "I never met anyone who could impart knowledge so clearly, or who had so definite a system of art instruction—precept ever followed by example, and both equally clear." From the box factory in Cunnock to the drawing-room of the palace, where he had our noble Queen as pupil, is no mean accomplishment for a man to achieve. Yet that was done by one who worked alongside of men, who still walk our streets.

It was no uncommon thing in this trade for boxes to be sent out, on the lids of which were inlaid small pieces of wood taken from places of historic interest. Sometimes these were placed in the bottom of the box as well. One of the finest specimens of this kind of workmanship is in the possession of Mr. George Stoddart. The box was made about 1820 by George Crawford, familiarly known as "The Colonel." Sixteen different pieces of oak wood are sunk in it, eight in the lid, and eight in the bottom. It is of the ordinary snuff-box size, and seems to have been well used, as the various inscriptions on the inlaid portions are a good

deal rubbed. They are all legible, however, and may be given here in order to show the desire of the box-makers, to make their manufactures as valuable and attractive as possible in the eyes of the public. For it cost both time and money to get possession even of a square inch of some of the kinds of wood wrought into this box.

The eight pieces in the lid with their inscriptions are as follows:—

1. Oak of Lord Nelson's Flagship *Victory*.
2. Oak of the State Prison on the Bass Rock, 1670.
3. Oak of the Ship which brought over King William and Mary, 1688.
4. Oak of Alloway Kirk.
5. Oak of Dunnottar Castle.
6. Oak of the Piles of London Bridge, built 1176.
7. Oak of the Bishop's Palace, Orkney.
8. Oak of the *Royal George*, sunk 1782, raised 1810.

The pieces in the bottom are:—

1. Oak of Holyrood Palace.
2. Oak of Montrose Steeple.
3. Oak of John Knox's House, Edinburgh.
4. Oak of the *Bellerophon*, Ship of War.
5. Oak of Glasgow Cathedral.
6. Oak of the Tower of London, built 1067.
7. Oak of Airly Castle.
8. Oak of Elgin Cathedral.

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It will therefore be admitted that this old relic, fashioned from so many different portions of wood, each with its own historic associations, is a unique and interesting specimen of the snuff-box trade, which made Cumnock so famous during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The leading box-makers, each of whom had a separate establishment, were Adam Crichton, Peter Crichton, George Crawford, Alexander Lammie, George Buchanan, and James Drummond. In 1843 only Peter Crichton, Alexander Lammie, and James Drummond carried on the trade. A joint company also started business in the upper portion of the Lugar Mills, but a fire in the premises put a speedy stop to their work.

It need only be further added in connection with this vanished industry, that the perfection attained in the manufacture of boxes gave rise to a proverb, once more familiar than it is now—“As close as a Cumnock hinge.”

## *II.—Weaving.*

The second industry of our town which is now practically extinct, but which for generations afforded employment to a large section of the community, was hand-loom weaving. When it was started as a special trade in Cumnock, it is impossible to say. All through our history, weaving of some kind for local purposes must have been prosecuted, for the simple reason that the art of weaving is coeval with civilization. In the martyr lists, George Crawford of Cumnock, who suffered death as a Covenanter at Edinburgh in 1666, is described as a weaver.

As a distinct branch of trade, to which men devoted their whole time, we find it thoroughly established in our town by the close of the eighteenth century. Dr. Miller tells us that in 1793 there were twenty-eight weavers besides apprentices. As most of these apprentices, whose number is not given, sat at looms in their masters' shops, we are not surprised to find him say that at the time seventy-four looms existed in Cumnock.

The great seat of the weaving trade was the Townhead. Looms could be heard in other places, as in New Bridge Street, and even down at Bridgend Cottages, where there were once nine looms, but the great majority of them were worked in the Townhead. That was emphatically "The Wabsters' Street." Almost every house in it had its set of looms. When the trade was at its height, there were three shops in the Townhead which had six looms each, and six shops which had four looms each, besides others with a smaller number of looms. One hundred and twenty men were employed, with more or less regularity, at the work up to about the year 1845, when the gradual introduction of looms driven by steam, put a decided and perpetual check on the use of hand looms. The weavers of our town, however, died hard. They did not give up the work to which they had been trained, without a brave and patient struggle. They persevered till poverty stared them in the face, and they were forced to break up the looms, at which their fathers and grandfathers had sat, and turn to new employment.

One hundred and twenty looms at work meant more than one hundred and twenty men and boys engaged in weaving. The yarn required to be spun, and so the women of the house with

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skilful fingers prepared the thread, sitting patiently at the wheel hour after hour, or snatching broken time from household duties, in order to supply a plentiful stock of full shuttles to the busy workers. Cumnock, if much quieter then than now, must have presented a very business-like appearance with its numerous weavers' shops, while the quick click of the shuttle and the heavy thud of the treadle must have been one of the cheeriest sounds heard in our streets. For it told of willing toil and of homes made comfortable by labour and by labour's reward.

A throb of pity passes even yet through the heart, as mention is made of the straits to which the old weavers were put in endeavouring to keep up a dying industry. The following extract from the Heritors' *Minute Book* gives to those who did not pass through that period, a glimpse of the strain to which many were put, when the old state of things was disappearing. In November 1861, the Rev. Mr. Murray reported "that at a meeting held some time ago, the heritors agreed to give £50, on condition of the inhabitants of the town subscribing £10, for the purpose of providing webs for the weavers out of work." This condition was fulfilled, and the weavers got their webs. But, that the demand had well nigh ceased, is evident from a later minute, which tells that six webs were still in Mr. Murray's hands for disposal.

During its prosperous days, the industry was so large, that several agents lived in Cumnock, who made it their business to secure the webs from the weavers after they were completed. These men usually represented Glasgow firms. Sometimes they bought on their own account. This was certainly the easiest

method for the sale of their cloth on the part of the weavers. Means of transit, before the railway, to the great markets was slow. The journey to Glasgow with a bale of goods meant time. The weaver was saved that trouble by disposing of the finished article to an agent, who was able to pay him ready money. The cloth that went out from the Cumnock looms was of different kinds. For the most part it was made of wool or cotton, but pieces of silk were not uncommon.

Mention has been made of apprentices. Young lads, who sought to be initiated into the mysteries of weaving, were bound for a certain number of years to an employer, who undertook in turn to teach them all that was necessary for the carrying on of the trade by themselves. The following quotations from an indenture, dated 8th April, 1796, and now in the possession of Mr. John Moodie, Gatehouse, are not without interest for the light they throw upon the methods adopted in giving instruction in the work of weaving, and the duties the apprentice was expected to perform. The contracting parties were John Grier, weaver, and James M'Millan, son of John M'Millan, tailor.

The deed bears witness, "that the said James M'Millan, with the special consent of his parents, becomes apprentice and servant to the said John Grier for the whole space of three years . . . during all which space of time he shall serve his foresaid master honestly and faithfully, and shall not absent himself from his master's work neither by day nor by night, holy day nor week day, without liberty first asked and obtained; and for every day's absence without leave, he shall pay one shilling sterling or two days for one. . . . And further, the said apprentice binds



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himself for the first three months, to give his said master the whole product arising from his work, and during the rest of his apprenticeship to allow his master fourpence of every shilling he shall earn.

“And on the other part, the forementioned John Grier becomes bound to teach, learn and instruct the forementioned James M‘Millan in his whole art and trade of a weaver, and shall do the utmost of his power to make him knowing and expert therein, and shall not conceal any part thereof from him, so far as it be practised and said apprentice is capable to take up.

“James Ranken, weaver in Cumnock, becomes cautioner and full obligant for and with John Grier for his implementing as above. Both parties bind and oblige themselves to implement the whole foresaid premises to each other, under the penalty of five pounds sterling to be paid by the party failing to the party observing or willing to observe.

“In witness whereof these presents wrote upon this and the two preceding pages of stamper by Hugh Thomson, tanner in Cumnock, this eighth day of April, one thousand seven hundred and ninety six years. . . . Further, the foresaid John Grier, the master, binds himself to allow James M‘Millan, his apprentice, liberty to go to the night school two months each winter, and for every two pound of candle the apprentice shall use in his work, the master shall provide him in a third.

JOHN GRIER.

JAMES M‘MILLAN.”

This document, duly drawn up and signed before witnesses, shows us the usual form in which terms of indenture between weavers and their apprentices were recorded. No lawyer was employed. The writer in this case, as the deed tells us, was the tanner of Cumnock. The arrangement about the night school and the supply of candles is interesting. Sometimes it was stipulated in such agreements, that the apprentice should be at liberty to go to the shearing in harvest time. If he remained at the loom, all he earned was his own. Weavers made it a point, unless they were very busy, of going to the harvest field in autumn. Payment for such labour was good, and the indoor worker laid in a stock of health which was beyond price.

It should also be mentioned that silk weaving received special attention from the last Countess of Dumfries. The "Jenny-house" she erected for that purpose in Lugar Street, is still known by that name. But the industry, even under such noble auspices, did not long continue.

This Countess of Dumfries was on the most friendly terms with the people of Cumnock, and exerted herself in many ways for the good of the community. She carried her homely habits so far, that she sometimes looked into the weavers' shops and expressed interest in the work. An order, of course, was occasionally left, or a purchase carried off. She liked a joke too, and the "wabsters" of these good old days were able to crack a joke with the lady of the manor. On one occasion she stopped at the open window of a weaver's shop, where a plaiding web was being woven. "How much an ell do you get for that?" she asked. The weaver merrily replied, "'Three bawbees, pappin' an' a'." If

such days returned to Cumnock, and our landowners now held friendly intercourse with the people of the parish, both landowners and people would be a good deal the better of it, and the social atmosphere we breathe be wonderfully softened.

At the present moment the old familiar sound of the shuttle and the treadle can still be heard in three shops—one in the Townhead, another in the Ayr Road, and the third at Glaisnock roadside. They are relics of a bygone day, which serve to show what our town was like, when one hundred and twenty looms moved unceasingly from morning till night.

### *III.—Muslin Flowering.*

The form of needle-work, whose local name of “Flowering” is so well known, was a favourite and profitable industry among the women of Cumnock. Many still living engaged in it in their youthful days. It consisted of various patterns sewed on muslin and cambric for ladies’ dresses, children’s robes, etc. The demand for work of this kind done in Ayrshire was very great. Edinburgh, London, and Dublin provided ready markets for it. It also found its way to France, Germany, and Russia. Bremner, in his *Industries of Scotland*, thus speaks of it:—“The lasses of Ayrshire showed great aptitude for embroidering, and soon made a name for the excellence of their work—indeed, for a long time, the embroidered muslins were sold in the home and foreign markets as Ayrshire needle-work” (p. 306).

It is not possible to say how many persons were engaged in

this industry. One "flowerer," still with us, tells how, in her father's house, two sisters and she did the house work week about, and thus had a fortnight each to devote to the needle. All were glad when the week's housekeeping came to an end. There must, however, have been a considerable number of people employed in embroidering, for several agents lived in Cumnock ready to take up finished work, and forward it to the wholesale merchant. The newspapers of the time contain frequent advertisements, calling attention to this kind of fancy work. An establishment for the sale of it existed in Edinburgh, under the name of the "Ayrshire Needlework Warehouse."

The profits earned by the workers were good. Eighteen pence a day was a common wage. A good flowerer could make two shillings, and sometimes even more. This industry, however, has completely died out, and the art of flowering is practically a lost art to the young women of the present day.

In addition to these three great industries of Cumnock in former days, two others may be briefly mentioned.

Tanning was carried on to some extent long ago. The street we know by the name of "The Tanyard," indicates the locality in which it was prosecuted. Though the trade has been given up for more than fifty years, some old people still remember the tanpits close to the banks of the Lugar. In the *Register of the Privy Council* for 1622, a very interesting reference occurs to tanning in our district. It is there recorded that Lord John Erskine laid a complaint before the Council to the effect, that although he had lately "to his grite charges and expensis broght within this kingdome a number of strangeris, skilled and expert

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men in the tanning of ledder, to instruct the tanneris and barkeris of ledder in this kingdome," nevertheless, Matthew Mure in Cunnok, Patrick Harvie in Cunnok, Andrew Donald there, Richard Aird there, and others elsewhere, have resolved to their utmost to "oppose thame selfis aganis this reformation, and to foister and interteny the foirmair abussis in that trade, quhilkis are notourly known to be most hurtful and prejudicial, not onlie to thame selfis but to the commounweill." It is further stated that these persons not only refuse instruction from the skilled foreigners, but will not allow hides to lie "in thair pottis" during the space prescribed, but send them to the market raw to the abuse of the lieges.

For their opposition to the decree of the Council, Matthew Mure and his fellow tanners in Cunnock were denounced rebels. The incident is of value in as much as it shows that in the beginning of the seventeenth century, tanning was carried on to a considerable extent in our town. Perhaps the fact that the expert strangers introduced into the country were Englishmen, explains why the leather merchants of Scotland looked with suspicion upon the new methods brought under their notice.

Closely connected with tanning is the trade of shoemaking, and so we find that as long as the tanpits continued in operation, a very fair business was done in the production of boots and shoes. The *Statistical Account* puts the number of shoemakers in 1793 at thirty-three in a population of 1,632. Accordingly, a good deal of the work done by these thirty-three tradesmen, must have found purchasers outside the parish. The figures show that no fewer than six thousand pairs of shoes and one

hundred pairs of boots were turned out in 1792. A side light is here thrown on the fashions of the time. A hundred years ago it was much more common to wear shoes than boots. In our day the local demand for foot gear is supplied by those engaged in the trade, but we furnish no market beyond our own doors. And as even the supply the shoemakers are asked to provide is comparatively small, owing to the large sale of ready made boots and shoes brought from the great factories of the country, shoe-making, like the trade of tanning, its elder sister, may correctly be described as one of the past industries of the town.

The survey, therefore, which we have made of the commercial condition of Cumnock during the first half of the 19th century, reveals the astounding fact that three large remunerative trades and two smaller ones have disappeared from our midst. Box-making, handloom-weaving, muslin-flowering, tanning, and shoe-making, no longer exist to give occupation to the people. Certainly they passed away by degrees, so that their extinction was not the act of a day, throwing out of employment unexpectedly the great majority of the tradesmen. Yet, had the question been put to a native of the town three-quarters of a century ago, "How would Cumnock prosper without boxmaking, without handloom-weaving, without muslin-flowering?" he would unhesitatingly have replied, "Not at all; the town is certain to die if these trades forsake it." But the town lives still in spite of their death. What other industries have taken their place, and abide with us to-day, must be told in another chapter. Meantime, this account of the life of our town may be fitly closed with the following table of the occupations of the

grown-up persons in the parish in 1793. We are indebted for it to Dr. Miller.

Clergymen, ... .. 1	Gardener, ... .. 1
Established Schoolmaster,... 1	Millers, ... .. 3
Surgeons, ... .. 2	Carriers, ... .. 5
Shopkeepers, ... .. 10	Carters for Coal and Meal, 8
Innkeepers and Stablers, ... 4	Day Labourers, ... .. 35
Carpenters, ... .. 9	Skin and Wool Dealers,... 2
Cart and Mill Wrights, ... 3	Chelsea Pensioners, ... 4
Coopers, ... .. 3	Lint Dressers, ... .. 3
Masons, ... .. 12	Butchers,... .. 3
Smiths, ... .. 9	Bakers, ... .. 2
Weavers, besides apprentices, 28	Colliers and Coal Heavers, 18
Shoemakers, ... .. 33	Male Servants, Domestic
Tailors, ... .. 15	and Farm, ... .. 44
Stocking Weavers, ... .. 7	Female do. do. ... 72
Waukers, ... .. 2	Average Number of Poor, 23
Tanner, ... .. 1	

Dr. Miller also gives us a list of wages :—

Farm Servants, from £7 to £10 per annum.

Women do. from £2 to £4 do.

A man for harvest, 25s.

A woman for do. 18s.

Domestic servants get nearly the same as farm servants.

A day labourer, without meat, 10d. to 15d.

A mason do. ... .. 1s. 10d.

A carpenter do. ... .. 1s. 2d.

A tailor, with maintenance, 6d.

Living must have been extremely cheap a few years before Dr. Miller wrote, for he adds in a note, "Almost every kind of provision, meal excepted, is doubled at least in price within the last fifteen or twenty years." His remarks about the inhabitants are worthy of being copied. "The people," he says, "in general, are above the middle size. . . . Next to the occupations peculiar to their several lines of life, their leading object is to converse and dispute about religious subjects and church government, concerning which there is a considerable diversity of opinion amongst them."



## CHAPTER XIII.

*Education in Olden Time.*

“Every person has two educations, one which he receives from others, and one more important which he gives to himself.”—*Gibbon*.

No definite information has come down to us regarding the method of education in Cumnock, before the close of the eighteenth century. Previous to the Reformation in 1560, education was practically non-existent in country parishes. Many of the clergy, even, were illiterate, and quite unable to read their own service books. Among the laity, writing was almost unknown. Nobles and barons despised literary culture as tending to effeminacy. Here and there a boy, who showed ability and inclination, might be taken in hand by the local priest, and instructed in such branches of education as Latin, geography, history, writing and arithmetic, with a smattering of astronomy and botany. But in a sparsely populated parish like ours in these olden days, the number of such favoured boys must have been very small. The choristers, who took part in the service of praise, would certainly receive a little training in reading and singing. But old and young, as a rule, throughout the district, were ignorant of the simplest elements of knowledge. They could neither read nor write. Yet we must not blame our ancestors too much for their

ignorance of those rudiments of education, with which every child is acquainted in our day. They did not have the means of gaining a proper education, and even if they had, another difficulty was too great to be overcome; they had no books to read.

The Reformation worked a change. Knox's scheme of education is well-known. It was regarded by him and his supporters as imperatively necessary that there should be a school in every parish, for the instruction of young people in the principles of religion, in grammar, and in Latin. The support of these schools was made a burden upon the patrimony of the Church. The nobility and gentry, however, were obliged to educate their children at their own expense. Great care was shown, at a very early stage, by the Assembly, in regard to the supervision of schools. For in 1565, Mr. John Row was commissioned "to visit the kirks and schools in Kyle, Carrick, and Cunningham, and to remove or suspend ministers and readers as he found them offensive or incapable."

By 1579, considerable progress had been made in general education. An enactment, made by Parliament in that year, ordained that all "gentlemen, householders, burgesses and others possessing 300 merks" yearly rent, and "likewise householders, esteemed with 50 pounds in lands or goods, be holden to have a Bible and Psalm Book in the vulgar tongue in their houses, for the better instruction of themselves and families in the knowledge of God." That law would not have been passed, if there had not been the likelihood of the Bibles and Psalm Books being read.

Yet it was not possible that the national system of education,

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recommended by Knox, could be established at once over the whole country. Many difficulties were in the way. Schoolmasters could not be easily got. The work, however, went on steadily, if slowly, until at the great Glasgow Assembly of 1638, Presbyteries were directed to see that schools were provided in every landward parish, and such support secured to schoolmasters as should render education accessible to the whole population.

In accordance with this liberal idea of education, a school would be established in Cumnock as soon after the Reformation as possible. Who taught it, and how many scholars took advantage of it, we cannot say, but the seed of that scholastic system was sown then, which, under the enlightened care of the Reformed Church, Cumnock enjoyed with the rest of Scotland,—a system, which, with all its limitations, did its work admirably, until in 1872, it was asked to give place to the order of things we now see. It is not too much to say that the measures, devised at the Reformation for the spread of education in Scotland, made our nation the best educated in the world. Nowhere has education been more highly prized than in Scotland, and in no country have its benefits been more apparent in every class of the community.

We are therefore entitled to think of a teacher carrying on his work in Cumnock soon after 1560, to whose training some, at least, of the boys and girls in the parish came with more or less readiness. It is quite possible that for a number of years after the Reformation, the minister, through lack of a regular teacher, discharged the duties of the schoolmaster's office. Up to the close of the sixteenth century, this was a common arrangement

in country parishes, and very likely it obtained here. One land-owner in the neighbourhood took an interest in the Cumnock school and wished to promote its welfare. For in 1625, "Helein Lockhart, spous to Charles Campbell of Glasnock, maid hir testament as follows:—I give and leif to be wairit and bestowit upone the school of Cumnock, twentie punds money." (*Paterson*, II., p. 339). This good lady's gift to the cause of local education is the earliest notice we have of a regularly organized school in the parish. Perhaps her legacy was a grateful acknowledgement of the benefit she herself had derived from it.

In accordance with the regulations of the Church, the Presbytery of Ayr exercised a certain supervision over the school. References to it, however, in the Presbytery records, are far from numerous. One occurs under date 1642, in connection with a Presbyterial visitation of the parish. "Inquisition," we are told, "was made concerning the shool and shoolmaster of Cumnok, wherupon compeired Mr. Andro Bryane, shoolmaster and reader thair, and gave in a supplication for taking order with his bygane stipende, (which was not payed to him according to condition), and for tymes to come, q<sup>lk</sup> was ten s[hillings] out of every mkland; whairupon the presbyterie appointed a commission to the next adjacent brethren, viz., Mr. George Young, Mr. Johne Shael, Mr. Johne Blyth, Mr. Johne Reid, to consider the foird supplication, and to take notice thairof, and that intimation of the foird commission suld be published from the pulpit to the parocheners the nixt Sabbath."

Another reference takes us to 1738. In that year the Presbytery appointed "the classes of Cumnock, Maybole, and Galston

to visit the grammar schools within their respective bounds, at their first classical meeting.”

Both of these extracts prove the interest of the local Presbytery in the cause of education, and the attention which they paid to the Cumnock school.

We have no means of judging of the qualifications of the various teachers, who were appointed to look after the instruction of the young. It is possible, however, to give the names of the schoolmasters from nearly the beginning of the eighteenth century. This information is provided by the session records, for, as a rule, the session found it convenient to make the schoolmaster their clerk.

The list is as follows :—

ROBERT TROTTER,	schoolmaster,	resigned	1724.
JAMES WILSON,	„	appointed	1724.
WILLIAM RAE,	„	„	1731.
WILLIAM HOGGYARD,	„	„	1764.
DAVID VALLANCE,	„	„	1764.
GEORGE SWINTON,	„	„	1768.
ARCHIBALD WHITE,	„	„	1785.
WILLIAM CLOGSTON,	„	„	1787.
WILLIAM SIMSON,	„	„	1788.
JAMES CAMPBELL,	„	„	1815.
JOHN MCKINNELL,	„	„	1839.

In 1843 Mr. McKinnell connected himself with the Free Church, but continued to act as parochial teacher till February, 1844. In the following year he was appointed teacher of the

Free Church school,—an office which he held, with the exception of two short intervals, until 1862, when ill health compelled him to resign. He emigrated to California, where he died a few years ago. In the old parish school he was succeeded by Mr. David L. Scott. The memory, both of Mr. McKinnell and Mr. Scott, is still warmly cherished by many old pupils. In 1863, Mr. Robert Brown succeeded Mr. McKinnell in the Free Church school. After the passing of the Education Act, he was appointed to the headmastership of the public school of Cumnock, jointly with Mr. Scott. On Mr. Scott's retirement from duty in 1882, Mr. Brown became sole headmaster, a position he still continues to hold.

It is disappointing to be told by Dr. Miller, in his account of the parish in 1793, that "education is little valued." The truth of this statement is borne out by the fact, that the average number of scholars in attendance was only 40. As the population of the parish at the time was 1,632, the enthusiasm for education displayed can hardly be said to have been great. Dr. Miller gives us the scale of fees exacted in his time. Perhaps the fairly large amount charged stood in the way of some families sending their children to school.

The charge for English was	-	-	8/-	per annum.
Do. with Writing,	-	-	10/-	„
Do. do. with Arithmetic,	-	-	12/-	„
Do. do. do. with Latin,	-	-	16/-	„

Even if all the pupils took every subject, the total income from fees would only be £32. In 1837, the average number of scholars

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at the parish school was 100, but there were five private schools as well in the neighbourhood. District adventure schools, especially during the winter months, were not uncommon. Men who were good at the three "R's," would go to a distant part of the parish, and, in some farm-house where they lodged, have placed under their care the children of the neighbourhood. A night school was frequently opened as well by them for the young men and women engaged in farm work. Many persons still remember such schools being held from time to time in different quarters. They seem to have supplied fairly well a real need.

The school was open every week day. Long after the nineteenth century began, Saturday was only a half holiday. No mention is made of any help given to the schoolmaster by pupil teachers or fully qualified assistants. Probably it was felt he could attend with ease to the education of 40 boys and girls without assistance. As the number attending school increased, help of some kind must have been given to him in his work. It was no uncommon thing for lads, whom we should almost call young men, to continue under the instruction of the teacher. One resident in our town tells how his father attended school, in Mr. Campbell's day, till he was 18 or 19. The master even allowed him on Saturdays, after the time for closing came, to remain in school at his work. The door was locked, and the solitary pupil was left inside. By arrangement with the master, he made his exit, when his work was done, by the window!

The schoolmaster was fêted once a year by his pupils. This was a general practice throughout Scotland. In most places the festival was held on Candlemas. In Cumnock, as in other parishes

in Ayrshire, it took place on New Year's day. The day was observed as a holiday. The boys and girls, dressed in their finest attire, vied with each other in bringing presents to the teacher, and laying them before him on his desk. The gifts were both in money and kind. Their value depended largely on the position and inclination of the parents. Half-a-crown, or even at times a whole crown, was laid on the desk by a smiling pupil, proud of the amount of his offering. Cakes, parcels of tea and sugar, with other similar gifts, found their place before the master, who received them with looks and words of satisfaction.

When all the gifts were presented, the teacher's part of the entertainment began. For, as became the recipient of so many proofs of regard, he provided a treat for the children in the form of apples and oranges, cookies and sweets. In some places in the neighbourhood, though fortunately it does not seem to have been the custom in Cumnock, a supply of mild toddy was served to the boys and girls. Some persons who have experienced this expression of the goodwill of these old teachers, assuringly state that the toddy was extremely weak. Well is it that it was so, but better far that the mistaken custom has long since disappeared.

Another part of the day's proceedings remains to be recorded. This was the coronation of a king and queen; for the title of king was given to the boy, and that of queen to the girl, who brought the costliest gift to the master. It would be difficult to say what method he took, in deciding the respective values of all the articles brought to him. In what way could he, or any one else whom he called in to act as arbiter, tell the difference between two parcels of tea of the same weight, or hold the



balance impartially between two home-made cakes of the same size? Still he was expected to pronounce an opinion, and so nominate the king and queen for the day. The election of these royal personages may have caused a little heartburning sometimes, but usually it was accepted amidst the cheers of the less fortunate onlookers.

On this day of rejoicing in many parts of Scotland, the degrading practice of cock-fighting was indulged in. The school was cleared of its benches, and the room turned into a cock-pit, with the children and others who cared to come, as spectators. The conquered birds fell to the teacher as his perquisite. But to the credit of our parish be it said, that such a revolting exhibition seems to have been entirely unknown. Probably, the ministers and the schoolmasters alike set their faces against it. It is interesting to know that this cruel form of amusement prevailed so near us as Mauchline, and that it was put down there, in 1782, by "Daddy" Auld.

The annual examination of the school in the old parish days by the minister and one or two neighbouring clergymen, was a great event. It usually lasted some hours. Small prizes were given to those who acquitted themselves well. A favourite reward from Mr. Bannatyne was a penknife. In Bible knowledge the pupils were carefully examined. This was a feature in the school life of the past, which it is only to be regretted has not the prominence it ought to have in our present system. Church and school were in closest union until the separation came, a quarter of a century ago. Not the least valuable result of that

union was the constant supervision and interest, which the minister was able to take in the education of the young.

The schoolmaster held many offices. Not only was he usually expected to act as session-clerk, but he was also precentor, and at the same time clerk to the heritors. Yet, as if these multifarious duties were not enough, he was charged with another as well. For a time, at least, he acted as postmaster. There were certainly not many letters to be distributed in Mr. Simson's time, or even in Mr. Campbell's, but the responsibility of seeing them handed in at their proper destination belonged to these teachers, and doubtless also to their predecessors. The letters were delivered in Cumnock from door to door, probably by a messenger whom the schoolmaster employed. Letters for people in the country districts were forwarded in another way. They were given to the children at the school to deliver as they went home. If a boy belonging to the family to whom the letter was addressed was a pupil at school, then it was entrusted to him. If no representative of the family was there, it was given to a child whose home was near, and who could be trusted to deliver it in due course. This method of distributing the contents of the mail-bag was quite in keeping with the quiet and leisurely days of old. It stands in vivid contrast to the stir and bustle of the post office to-day.

In order to show the progress made now in attendance at school, the following figures for 1898 may be given for the two schools under the management of the Board. At Cumnock School the number on the roll was 629, with an average attendance of 535. At Garrallan School the number was 163 on the

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roll, with an average attendance of 123. A denominational school also exists in connection with the Roman Catholic portion of the community. At Cunnock £1,051 were paid in salaries to the teachers, and at Garrallan £284. The present school buildings in the town were erected after the passing of the Education Act in 1872. The Garrallan school was opened in 1876.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Notable Men.*

“The worth of a state, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it.”—*J. S. Mill.*

A NUMBER of notable men have been connected with Cumnock by birth or residence. Mention has already been made of some of them in the foregoing pages. This chapter will be devoted to an account of others, whose life and work in different directions make them worthy of being remembered. As far as possible they will be put down in historical order.

## (1). ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM.

Alexander Cunningham, only son of the Rev. John Cunningham or Cunynghame, minister of the parish from 1647 to 1668, is the most distinguished literary man whom Cumnock has produced. His great scholarship is an indirect proof of the ability of his father. Of Alexander's early days nothing is known. He seems to have completed his academical course at Leyden, for Professor Jacobus Gronovius, in a letter from Leyden dated 9th May, 1687, says: “Where Cunningham is living after he left this town, I have been unable to discover, except that certain

*populares* say he has gone on a German tour, and not fixed his residence anywhere.”

His university career was so distinguished that he was invited to act in Edinburgh, first as Regent or Tutor of Humanity, and then as Regent of Philosophy. The appointment in Philosophy was given to him in 1689. His special study, however, was law. Through the influence of the Duke of Queensberry, who had entrusted him with the education of his son, Lord George Douglas, Cunningham was appointed by Parliament, in 1698, Professor of Civil Law in Edinburgh. Of this chair he was the first occupant. Seemingly it was created for him, though he never actually lectured to students. As far as can be gathered, the formal appointment was made to allow him to draw a grant of £150, to enable him to publish an edition of the *Pandects* of Justinian. This work, for which he was thoroughly qualified, was never completed, apparently because the salary was not always forthcoming. His income from the chair was to be derived from a tax on shipping, but prior claims upon that tax sometimes left little or nothing for the Professor of Civil Law.

On the death of his mother in 1677, Cunningham came into the possession of the family estate of Bloak or Blook, near Stewarton, in Ayrshire. He enjoyed at the same time, a pension from the Duke of Queensberry. With this provision he withdrew from his anomalous position in Edinburgh, somewhere about the year 1709, and taking up his residence in the Hague, gave himself up to literary work. He soon made a name for himself as a scholar, by entering the lists against the great Bentley, who found in him a foeman worthy of his steel. Roscoe

speaks of him as "the ablest antagonist that ever attacked Bentley." In 1721 Cunningham brought out his *Animadversiones* on Bentley's Horace, and boasted that he had corrected the text in four hundred places. His edition of the poems of Horace—a separate work from the *Animadversiones*—is very beautifully printed. He also prepared an edition of Virgil, and the *Fables* of Phaedrus, which were published after his death.

The means, which Cunningham had at his disposal, made it easy for him to indulge his literary inclinations. He set himself to the congenial task of gathering a splendid classical library, and spared no pains to secure the best editions of standard works. Certain letters written by him to J. P. D'Orville, whom he employed to purchase rare literary gems, show how great a book-hunter he was. Here is one dated Hague, July 17, 1726. It is from the collection of Cunningham's letters preserved in the Bodleian library.

"I need not advise you to buy all the classicks, and good modern Lat. and Ital. poets, and histories Lat. Ital., as likewise all the editions of the classicks of the Alduses, if cheap and fair, and some other poets printed by old Aldus; all the old editions of classicks before the 1480, if cheap, for you know, I suppose, that the prices of the old edd. and of all the Alduses, Juntas, Torrentinos, are much lower than they were three years ago."

Like a true Scotsman, Cunningham, while eager for the coveted volumes, had no wish to pay more than their market value.

Another letter to his friend gives us a further glimpse of the methods he pursued in furnishing his shelves. D'Orville was in Italy at the time. A list of books wanted by Cunningham

reached him with this note. "Such as I have marked with a cross, you can safely exceed the prices marked. Those that you purchase at Genua, Turin, Milan, it is best to send from Genua, and those that you purchase in Piacenza, Modena, Bologna, Lucca, Piza, Ligorno, Firenze, to send them from Ligorno. Nor do you forget to find out the shops of old books in every town you pass through, and to find one of the booksellers who uses to get books out of private libraries, or out of the libraries of the cloysters."

The result was that Cunningham accumulated a most valuable library, which was sold after his death. The catalogue of the sale, which mentions that most of the books are in "gilt vellum or calf," reveals by its title the splendour of the collection. It runs in this way—"Bibliotheca Cuningamia, continens selectissimos rarissimosque omni in lingua libros. Hos omnes multo judicio, vigilantia, ac labore collegit celeberrimus ac eruditissimus Vir D. Alexander Cuningamius, Jurisconsultus et Polyhistor eximius. Lugd. Bat. 1730."

From his Dutch home, Cunningham carried on correspondence with some of the best-known literary men of the day. Addison, Le Clerc, Cuper, Leibnitz, and Locke, were on terms of intimacy with him. He lived, however, a private life in Holland. There is no evidence to show that, during his stay there, he taught civil or canon law. Besides his reputation as a critic and an author, he gained for himself the distinction of being the finest chessplayer in Europe. About the year 1700, Professor Wodrow played at chess "with Mr. Alexander Cunningham of Bloak, his old acquaintance. Mr. Cunningham, after playing a game with

him, said he thought he was able to give him a rook and a bishop of advantage, and his very utmost was the queen, but he doubted that would be too much, which was high commendation from him, who is reckoned the best chessplayer in Europe" (Wodrow's *Life of Prof. James Wodrow*).

Certain volumes in the Edinburgh University Library are specially associated with Cunningham. A copy of the works of Servetus bears this inscription—"Presented to the library be Mr. Alexander Cuninghame of Bloak, preceptor to the Lord George Douglass." Henderson's catalogue shows that it was given "to preserve the memory of his dear pupil." Occasionally the University records contain a notice like this, regarding a particular book—"Returned for that which was lost by Mr. Alexander Cunningham of Bloak, Professor of Law."

Theology, likewise, interested Cunningham, who had some idea of publishing a scheme of the Christian Religion. Friends, who knew the bent of his mind, eagerly pressed him to put his thoughts on paper. Burnett, for instance, the ingenious author of *The Theory of the Earth*, writing in 1699 to Locke, then resident in Holland, says, "I thought of sending this packet with Mr. Cunningham, who told me at my chambers, some days ago, he was about to go out to you; but now after waiting longer than his set time, I was resolved to wait no longer. I wish you would indulge him before he leaves you, to piece together his proofs of the Christian Religion, that the world may enjoy that light he hath so long promised" (King's *Life of Locke*, p. 403). This idea, however, was never carried out. Leibnitz, also, who calls him "doctrina et ingenio valentem," alludes to a plan



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Cunningham had formed of illustrating the Anglo-Saxon language, but no trace of such a work has been found.

Cunningham died at the Hague in 1730. A co-incidence in name has sometimes caused him to be confounded with Alexander Cunningham, the historian, who died in 1737. (*Cf.* Grant's *Edin. University*, I., p. 361; Irving's *Memoirs of Buchanan*, Appen. XI.; Irving's *Scottish Writers*, Vol. II.; Leibnitz, Tom. VI., pp. 271-278).

(2). WILLIAM LOGAN.

William Logan of that Ilk, by profession a writer in Edinburgh, is to be remembered for the wise and liberal views he expressed in print on the system of local government, which obtained in Scotland until the middle of the 18th century. Two small pamphlets were published by him on the subject, one in the form of an anonymous "letter to an English member of Parliament from a gentleman in Scotland, concerning the slavish dependencies which a great part of that nation is still kept under by Superiorities, Wards, Reliefs, and other remains of the feudal law;" and the other, published about the same time, 1721, in booklet form, bearing the author's name on the first page, and similar in title and substance to the letter which had already come from Logan's pen. They constitute a calm and well-reasoned attack on the heritable jurisdictions existing in Scotland at the time, and an appeal to remove them out of the way, "for the safety of our happy constitution, and the releasing of His Majesty's subjects from their slavish dependencies and

heavy oppressions." The writer advocates that "all the other cumulative jurisdictions of Stewarties, Regalities, Commissorials, and Baillaries, which are not only useless, but hurtful," should utterly cease, and the power be placed in the hands of the crown.

Though nothing else is recorded of this laird of Logan, it is well to recall the fact that Cumnock furnished, through him, a bold and skilful reformer, whose views were put into effect by the abolition of heritable jurisdictions in 1747. William Logan's writings and efforts doubtless helped to bring about the change. He did not live, however, to see it. He died in 1727.

### (3). REV. ALLAN LOGAN.

The house of Logan furnished at the same period another name, which figures in the history of Scotland. For Allan Logan, brother of William, occupied a fairly prominent place in the Church, doing good service both in the pulpit and in the ecclesiastical courts. Having completed his theological training, he was ordained in 1695 to the ministry in Torryburn, whence he was translated to Culross in 1717. On the death of his brother in 1727, he succeeded to the Logan estate. Six years afterwards he died, in the thirty-ninth year of his ministry. His wife was a daughter of Lord Colville of Ochiltree.

It is said of him that "he was a considerable philosopher, a smart disputant, well skilled in controversy, an able and zealous minister of the Gospel, though keen in supporting the view of the majority in the Church against the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, and some of his co-presbyters" (Scott's *Fasti*). He

rendered special help to the Church by serving on the committee of Assembly, appointed to deal with the case of Professor Simson of Glasgow. His interest in the matter is shown in a small treatise he published anonymously, entitled, "*A Countryman's brief remarks on the Reverend and Learned Mr. John Sympton, Professor of Divinity, his letter to the Reverend Presbytery of Glasgow.*" There came from his pen, also anonymously, "*Queries upon the Overtures concerning Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries, by a gentleman in the country.*" This appeared in 1720.

Mr. Logan, at the same time, appears to have been addicted to the work of prophesying. In 1801 a chap-book was printed in the Saltmarket of Glasgow, giving an account of "the surprising Fore-knowledge and Predictions of the Rev. Allan Logan." These predictions referred to calamities which Mr. Logan hinted would take place between the years 1753 and 1793.

#### (4). REV. GEORGE LOGAN.

The most famous representative of the Logan family, however, appeared in the person of George Logan, who attained high honour in the Church, and distinguished himself in the controversial world of the day. His exact relationship to the Logans of that Ilk is not quite clear, but there is no doubt that his father, George, was a close connection of the house, while his mother was the only daughter of the Rev. John Cunningham, minister of Cunnock from 1647 to 1668. Accordingly, he was the nephew of Professor Alexander Cunningham.

Young George, who was born in 1678, passed through the

University of Glasgow, taking his Master of Arts degree at the age of eighteen. Having decided to enter the Church, he was licensed about the year 1702 by the Presbytery of Glasgow, and on the 7th April, 1707, ordained to the parish of Lauder. Twelve years later he removed to Sprouston, in the Presbytery of Kelso. He remained at Sprouston just three years, for on the 22nd January, 1722, he was inducted to the charge of Dunbar. His popular gifts secured for him additional preferment in 1732, when he was admitted one of the ministers of Edinburgh in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

About the time he went to the capital, he published three tracts on "the right and power of electing ministers," in which he strongly supported the popular side of the question. In 1736, he showed the strength of his liberal convictions on the matter of the relation between Church and State, by refusing to read the Act of Parliament appointed to be read from every pulpit once a month for a year, with a view of bringing to punishment those connected with the Porteous Riot. His opinions on the matter he published in 1737. Soon after, his abilities gained for him the highest honour the Church could bestow, for in 1740 he was raised to the Moderator's chair in the General Assembly. In his official capacity he took part in an historic incident. It fell to him solemnly to depose the eight brethren, who founded the Secession Church. The sermon he preached at the opening of the Assembly in the following year, he published.

During the occupation of Edinburgh by the Highland clans under Prince Charlie in 1745, Logan, along with most of the

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city ministers, left the capital for the sake of safety. His house, situated somewhere near the Tron, was occupied by the Pretender's troops. On returning to it after his unwelcome guests had left, he showed his humour by advertising in the newspapers for the recovery of certain articles taken away. He managed in the notice to make some biting, satirical remarks on the Tory party.

Logan set forth his Radical views in 1746 in *A Treatise on Government*, showing that the right of the Scottish kings to the throne was not strictly hereditary. Next year he published a second pamphlet on the same subject. Ruddiman, the grammarian and controversialist, took up the pen against him. In reply Logan issued three other tracts. Into the merits of the controversy we cannot enter. It must suffice to say that Logan, to the weakness of his position, sought to establish his opinions, not upon intrinsic truth, but upon historical precedent. He tried to show that in one case at least, the crown of Scotland had rested on the brow of a monarch, who was not of true royal blood. The well-known question of the legitimacy of Robert III. served his purpose. Ruddiman, in defence of the royal house, brought against Logan the charge, frequently made on such occasions, of "despising dominions, speaking evil of dignities, and throwing out railing accusations against kings, though the archangel Michael durst not bring one against the devil himself, whom our author, I hope," he says, "will allow to be worse than the worst of kings."

The controversy was carried on with great spirit on both sides, and certainly with considerable ability by Logan, till 1749, when both combatants had passed the three-score years and ten.

The matter is of little moment now, but the position Logan took up is interesting, from the very emphatic way in which he set himself to demolish the plea of the divine right of kings. In days when Radicals were few and Toryism was rampant, he fearlessly fought the battle of freedom and boldly supported the rights of the people.

George Logan died in Edinburgh on the 13th October, 1755, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. He was twice married. By his first wife, a sister of Sir Alexander Hume of Eccles, he had a son, George, who became minister of Ormiston, and a daughter. His second wife, Lilius Weir, survived him.

(5). HUGH LOGAN.

Hugh Logan, well known as "the witty laird," deserves more than passing mention. He was born in the year 1739. As he was the youngest of three sons, there was every prospect that he would need to earn his own livelihood. But when his father asked him what profession he would like to follow, he naively replied, "I'll just be a laird, like yersel'." "Maybe so, Hughie," answered his father, "I was the youngest o' three mysel'." And so it actually turned out. His two brothers died, and Hugh became laird of Logan at the age of twenty-one. For some time before, he had been under the care of a Mr. Walker, an accomplished Aberdeen scholar, who acted as his tutor. The laird became so attached to him, that he would not allow him to leave. Accordingly, Mr. Walker remained with him till his death, some eighteen months before that of his old pupil and friend.

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Hugh Logan is chiefly remembered for his racy humour, which kept the festive table in merriment. Near the house of Logan there is a lofty stone obelisk, which goes by the name of Logan's Pillar, where he is said to have been in the habit of sitting and cracking jokes with his companions. Fifty years ago many of his witty remarks were current in the district. Unfortunately, however, as Mr. Bannatyne records, they were frequently disfigured by "a mixture of coarseness and profanity, which did not help to promote the interests of religion or morality" (*New Stat. Acc.*). Some specimens of his humour, not liable to such an objection, may be noted.

On one occasion a gentleman, not conspicuous for the cleanliness of his person, or the neatness of his attire, consulted him about a suitable disguise he wished to assume, in order to remain *incognito*. "Why," said the laird, "just wash your face and put on a clean shirt, and nobody will know you."

The story of the Buchanites, who owed their name to Mrs. Buchan, the strange religious enthusiast of Irvine, is too familiar in Ayrshire history to be repeated here. With the converts who came under the power of her extravagant delusions, Mrs. Buchan left Irvine in 1784, with the intention of finding a peaceful abode in Dumfriesshire. On her way thither, she passed through Cumnock. Logan, expressing much alarm at seeing a motley crowd approach his house, sent a servant to enquire the nature of their business. The servant returned with the information, that "they had come from Irvine, were going to heaven, and had nothing to say to anyone." This reply removed the laird's fears, and he

further declared that he was delighted to find that "Logan stood on the road to that happy region."

Dean Ramsay tells us that Hugh once sold a horse to an Englishman, saying, "You buy him as you see him ; but he's an honest beast." The purchaser took him home. In a few days the horse stumbled and fell, to the damage of his own knees and his rider's head. The angry Englishman remonstrated with the laird, who calmly replied, "Well, sir, I told you he was an honest beast ; many a time he has threatened to come down with me, and I kenned he would keep his word some day."

Another characteristic story reveals his ready wit. At a meeting in Ayr, held at the time of Napoleon's proposed invasion of Britain, Logan was taunted with the lack of loyalty shown by the people of Cumnock, who had not raised a band of volunteers to help in repelling the enemy. "What set of people are you up in Cumnock," said an Ayr gentleman, "you have not a single volunteer." "Never you heed," was the quiet reply ; "when the French land at Ayr, there will soon be plenty of volunteers up at Cumnock."

On one occasion the proprietor of Coilsfield had a young plantation of fir trees wantonly damaged. A meeting of Justices was convened, with Sir Adam Fergusson, M.P., in the chair. The inquiry proved that the damage had been done by children whom it was useless to summon. To please Coilsfield, however, Sir Adam said he would consider the propriety of bringing a bill into Parliament, to make parents and guardians liable for the misdeeds of their children, and in a case like this, making the crime punishable with death. Logan raised a laugh. The



chairman asked the cause of his mirth. "Sir Adam," he said, "when your bill is made law, we will have few auld lairds." "How?" said the M.P. "Because the auld sons will only have to break young plants to become lairds themsel's."

Though Logan was at college for a time, and boarded with Professor Hunter, he made little progress in education. His spelling was simply atrocious, as his extant letters prove. He wrote wholly by the ear, being guided by the sound of the word. Sir Isaac Pitman would have found in him a ready disciple, but they would have been at opposite poles with regard to the pronunciation of syllables. After the true Scottish fashion, Hugh pronounced "reason" as if it were "raisin." Once in Edinburgh he happened to meet Foote, the mimic and wit. Those who arranged the meeting—one of them being Maule, afterwards Lord Panmure—told Foote beforehand of the eccentric character of his fellow-guest. The two wits were seated next each other. Foote made some remark which forced the query from Logan, "What raisin do you give for that?" Foote put his hand into his waistcoat pocket, and, bringing out a raisin, replied, "There, sir, is what you seek." The laird at once rose and took a seat some distance off, saying, "I'll sit no langer beside a fellow that carries his wit in his waistcoat pouch."

Logan died, in 1802, at Wellwood, where he was living at the time, and was buried in the family vault at the north-east corner of the old churchyard, now the Square, although for more than thirty years ordinary burials had ceased to take place there. Perhaps the laird, as an heritor in the parish, retained the right to his own portion in the acre of God. No stone of any kind

marks the spot. His old tutor, Mr. Walker, is buried in the same grave.

A collection of anecdotes, entitled *The Laird of Logan*, was published a number of years ago, but the compilers do not pretend that all the stories emanated from him.

Before Hugh died, his estate became embarrassed through his unfortunate connection with the banking firm of Douglas, Heron & Co. To meet the calls made upon him as a shareholder, he was compelled to sell a large portion of his property. The estate has now entirely passed out of the hands of the Logans of that ilk. The present mansion-house, which the laird had begun to build a short time before his death, was completed by his nephew and successor, Hugh Campbell.

A commonplace book, kept partly by Logan and partly by Mr. Walker, is in the possession of Mr. Ranken, solicitor, Ayr, who also has a few of his letters. The Laird of Logan's chair was deemed of sufficient interest to find a place in the Glasgow Exhibition of 1888.

#### (6). JOHN FRENCH.

John French's claim to remembrance rests on his musical abilities. He was a violin player of considerable merit, and composed Strathspeys and Reels, which have not altogether passed out of sight. At social gatherings his presence was always welcome. At kirns he was a great favourite.

In early life he followed the trade of shoemaking, but, as his reputation increased, he devoted his time wholly to music.

Various stories are told of this self-taught genius. On a certain occasion the Earl of Dumfries laid a wager with a guest, that a Cumnock man could play a hundred different tunes on the violin without a pause and without the score. French was sent for and at once began the task, which he completed successfully. Doubtless, the Earl handed him the wager.

At another time, in Ayr, he met Neil Gow, who recognised in him a formidable rival. An assembly of some kind had gathered together, at which both Gow and French had a part to play. The Perthshire man, however, with a mixture of frolic and envy, poured some boiling water into the belly of French's instrument, rendering it useless for the time at least. Sir Alexander Boswell, who happened to be present, was jealous of the reputation of his humble neighbour. He quickly mounted his horse, rode at full speed to Auchinleck House, and in an incredibly short time returned, carrying a Strad, which he handed to French for his use during the rest of the performance. Tradition asserts that Gow did not secure all the honours that night.

After French's death, which occurred in 1803, in the fifty-first year of his age, a number of his compositions were published for the behoof of his widow and children. They bear the title:—*A Collection of New Strathspeys, Reels, etc., for the Pianoforte, Violin and Violoncello, dedicated to Mrs. Boswell of Auchinleck.* There are sixty-four pieces in all. Many of them have local names, either of places or persons. Thus one of the Strathspeys is called *Lugar Banks*, and another *Cumnock Fair*. There are also to be found *Mr. James Boswell's Jig*, *Mrs. Hamilton of Sundrum's Reel*, *The Monkton Lasses*, and *The Weaver*.

French harboured no ill-will towards his fellow-player at Ayr, for he gave to another tune the significant title, *John French's Compliments to Mr. Nath. Gow*. In all probability he met with the younger Gow as well as with Neil. Testimony to the sterling character of his productions is borne by the fact, that Mr. Godfrey, the celebrated bandmaster, has incorporated into his *Lord of Lorn Lancers* one or two of French's airs.

Like many of his profession, it is to be added with sorrow, this able musician was too convivial in his habits, and frequently indulged heavily in strong drink. French is buried in the churchyard on the Barrhill Road, not far from the entrance gate.

(7). JAMES TAYLOR.

There was long resident in our town one, whose name holds a conspicuous place in the history of invention. James Taylor was born at Leadhills in 1758. After fitting himself to enter the medical profession, he was engaged by the well-known Patrick Miller of Dalswinton in 1785, to act as tutor to his sons. His selection for this position was greatly helped by his love of mechanics, in which his patron was deeply interested.

In the year in which Taylor entered the service of the laird of Dalswinton, Mr. Miller was engaged in certain experiments with a view to apply paddle wheels to vessels, and thereby extricate them from perilous positions, when wind and tide were adverse. The power he employed for this purpose, on a vessel sixty feet long in the Firth of Forth, was simply manual labour. With true inventive genius, Taylor saw that this was utterly useless, as

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the men were speedily exhausted, and in a happy moment suggested the use of steam power. (James Nasmyth, *Autobiography*, p. 29.) Mr. Miller was very sceptical, being under the belief that in a stormy sea, the fires of the engine would be put out by the waves. Taylor pressed his point and prevailed to such an extent that, with the help of a young man named Symington, who also belonged to Leadhills, a vessel, fitted with a steam engine upon the deck, moved at the rate of five miles an hour on Dalswinton Loch. This took place on the 14th October, 1788, and is memorable as the first occasion on which steam was applied to propel vessels on water.

A number of Mr. Miller's friends were on board. Robert Burns was there. So were Henry Brougham, the future Lord Chancellor, and Alexander Nasmyth, the painter. With a larger engine in 1789, Taylor attained the speed of seven miles an hour on the Forth and Clyde Canal. All this, however, meant expense to Mr. Miller, whose money alone permitted the operations to be carried on. He found the cost too great and decided to experiment no further. Taylor was unable to go on by himself, and the war, then in progress against Napoleon, turned public attention away from the matter.

Some time after, Mr. Fulton from the United States, accompanied by Mr. Henry Bell of Glasgow, inspected the vessel which had been run on the Forth and Clyde Canal, with the result that in 1807 Fulton launched a steam vessel on the Hudson, and Bell another on the Clyde in 1812. These were the first vessels of the kind ever used by the public in the new and old hemispheres. Great credit is due to these two men for carrying out the idea of

employing steam power on board ships at sea as they did, but beyond all doubt they simply adopted the invention of Taylor, who by circumstances was prevented from giving to the world the practical application of his discovery, after its value had been proved.

By and by, Taylor came to Cumnock where he acted as inspector of mines on the Dumfries House estate. He also started the Cumnock pottery. His house was on the Ayr Road.

When in the course of years the vast possibilities of steam navigation began to be realised, Taylor was urged to make a statement of the position he occupied in relation to the discovery. This he did in 1824, addressing it to Sir Henry Parnell, Chairman of a Parliamentary Committee on Steamboats. No response came before he died in 1825, at the age of sixty-seven. Government, however, recognised the justice of his claim, and awarded a pension of £50 a year to his widow, who enjoyed it as long as she lived. In further recognition of his services, each of his four daughters received in 1837 a gift of £50 through Lord Melbourne.

The engine which he was instrumental in making, and which was used on Dalswinton Loch, is now in the hands of the Commission on Patents, who have placed it in South Kensington Museum. It is labelled, *The Parent Engine of Steam Navigation*.

Cumnock may well cherish the name of James Taylor, and be proud that there lived in it for many years one, who may justly be enrolled among the greatest benefactors of the human race.

He lies buried in the churchyard. A suitable inscription on his tombstone records the valuable discovery he made.

## (8). GEORGE M' CARTNEY.

If Cumnock was honoured with the residence of James Taylor of steam navigation fame, it also numbers on its list of notable men the name of an inventor, whose genius in mechanical work is borne out by the improvements he effected on the old wooden thrashing-mill, invented by Andrew Meikle in 1787. George M'Cartney, who was born in Ochiltree in the closing years of the eighteenth century, early lost his father. His mother, who could claim relationship with Peden, struggled nobly to give her only child as good an education as the parish could supply. Even while a schoolboy, "Wee Geordie" displayed great aptitude for drawing and the construction of models. One of his earliest achievements was a "wag at the wa'," which he fashioned out of a bit of wood, and which kept time with amazing regularity for years.

Having served his apprenticeship as an engineer to George Galbraith, joiner and millwright in Cumnock, M'Cartney started business on his own account at Clockclownie, about two miles south of the town. The first mill he sent out went to the farm of Auchencorse, and was so satisfactory that orders began to pour in upon him. Soon afterwards he removed to Cumnock, to the premises still occupied by his successors, who continue the business under the founder's name.

The first improvement he made on the old mill was suggested to him in a very simple way. He was walking one day between Minnishant and Maybole, when his interest was aroused by the position of the large wheel, which drove the hobby horses of a

travelling show. The teeth of this wheel were turned towards the ground. In the thrashing mill, up to that time, the horse wheel had always been set with its teeth upwards, with the result that they frequently became choked and were often fractured. At once he determined to adopt this method in the construction of his mills, and so contributed greatly to their strength and safety.

Another valuable improvement was effected by him a little later. Under the old style of mill, a good deal of trouble was experienced by the drawpole continuing to revolve, after the horses had been loosed. As it kept on its course, both men and horses were sometimes caught by it and injured. Mr. M'Cartney pondered the matter long, and at length discovered a remedy. He introduced a ratch-wheel into the machinery, *i.e.*, a wheel which revolves in the reverse order and is quite distinct from the rest of the machinery. The result was just what he desired. The drawpole stopped as soon as the horses stopped, while the machinery inside the mill gradually played itself out. The utility of this contrivance was at once recognised, and was adopted by millwrights all over the country. Had he patented it, he would have made a fortune, but he was content to make a present of his discovery to his fellow engineers.

So little was M'Cartney set on money-making that, at his death at the age of 78, he was comparatively a poor man, even though his firm for a lengthened period was turning out mills at the rate of something like 100 per annum, and of the value of more than £80 each. These mills found their way to almost every county in Scotland, to England, to Ireland, to the Isle of



Man and even to the British Colonies. At the first great exhibition in Melbourne, a Cumnock mill was awarded the gold medal, which with unusual generosity was sent home to Mr. M'Cartney by the farmer who gained it.

Many other medals reached him, but he did not lay much store by them. He had another aim in life than to gain such rewards. It was his one ambition to turn out genuine work of the highest kind. No "scamped" work ever left his premises. The mere fact that a mill had come from the shop of George M'Cartney, was sufficient to guarantee the excellence of its material and the quality of its workmanship.

Mr. M'Cartney died in 1868, and is buried in Ochiltree churchyard. On the occasion of the centenary of his birth, an appreciative article on his character and work appeared in the *Scotsman* newspaper of the 17th August, 1891.

(9). GEORGE DRUMMOND.

George Drummond is a son of Cumnock whose record is full of honour. Born in the Townhead in 1808, he received part of his education from the late Rev. Dr. Hugh Crichton, and at the age of fourteen was apprenticed to Adam Crichton as a boxmaker. Soon after, he resolved to devote himself to the work of Christ in the Foreign Mission field. In the face of considerable difficulties, he attended evening classes held by the schoolmaster, William Simson, and pored over his books in his father's house, late and early, till he was able to enter the Theological Academy of the Secession Church in Glasgow. He eventually finished his course

of study at Ongar in 1838, where he enjoyed the stimulating influence of Isaac Taylor, and formed a friendship with David Livingstone, which was maintained by correspondence for many years.

Having been accepted by the London Missionary Society, he was ordained at Kilmarnock in June, 1839, and appointed to labour in Tahiti, one of the Society Islands. He sailed from England along with his wife, in August of the same year, and thirteen months afterwards reached his destination. On arriving at Tahiti, however, he found it had been arranged by the local missionaries that he should settle on the Samoan group of islands. Continuing his voyage, he landed at Apia on the 27th January, 1841, and for the next sixteen years worked among the heathen of those islands. In 1857, he visited the New Hebrides and the Loyalty Islands, as a deputy of the London Mission. Returning home in 1858, he remained in this country for eighteen months, visiting many towns for the purpose of giving information about his work.

In June, 1860, he reached Samoa again, laboured there for twelve years longer, and finally came back to his native land with health so much broken, that he could not face any more the work in the Pacific, which he had carried on for a generation. His tall figure and venerable appearance were well-known in Cumnock, which he frequently visited in his later years, though he made his home in London.

During the earlier period of his work in Samoa, he assisted in the revision of the Scriptures in the native language. Among the islanders he was known by the name of Talamoni,—The

True Story,—a testimony at once to his own worth, and to the confidence the Samoans had in him as their teacher and friend. It is interesting to recall the fact, that the work of a man like Drummond, in its civilizing effects, made Apia a spot where Robert Louis Stevenson could find a peaceful and happy abode.

George Drummond died in London in December, 1893. He was twice married. His first wife, Miss Drummond, died in Samoa. His second wife, Miss Ogilvie, survived him.

(10). JAMES ARTHUR CRICHTON.

A well-known family in the parish during the nineteenth century found its most distinguished public representative in the person of James Arthur Crichton, who was born on the 25th April, 1825. His grandfather held for many years the position of factor on the Dumfries House estate. His father was first a partner, and eventually the head of the firm of Messrs. Tait & Crichton, Writers to the Signet in Edinburgh. The family residence at Hillside, Cumnock, acquired more than fifty years ago, has long been celebrated for the beauty of its grounds.

Mr. Crichton, who received his early education at the High School of his native city of Edinburgh, studied law with the intention of practising at the bar. Having been admitted a member of the Faculty of Advocates at the early age of twenty-two, he came to enjoy the respect of his brethren in such a high degree, that he was appointed Advocate-Depute in November, 1862, and again in December, 1868. He held the important office of Vice-Dean for ten years from November, 1876.

Promotion of another kind came to him in 1870, when on the 13th July, he was appointed Sheriff of Fife, a position which he only resigned in 1886, in order to enter upon the still higher duties of the Sheriffdom of the Lothians and Peebles. This office he continued to hold till his death, at the age of sixty-six, on the 29th May, 1891. Further testimony is borne to the high esteem in which he was held by his fellow officials, by the fact that he was elected Convener of Sheriffs in January, 1882.

The day of his funeral was rendered striking by the circumstance that his father, Mr. Hew Crichton, who had attained the patriarchal age of ninety-six, and had died only two days before him, was buried at the same time in the Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh.

Sheriff Crichton left behind him the memory of a true Christian gentleman, whose private virtues rendered more conspicuous the faithfulness with which he discharged his public duties. In Cumnock he is remembered for his unfailing kindness and wise generosity.

#### (11). JAMES BROWN.

Among the distinguished men of recent times to whom our parish can lay claim, mention must be made of the Rev. Dr. James Brown, of Paisley, who was born in Cumnock on the 5th March, 1835. His father was the Rev. Robert Brown of the United Presbyterian Church. At school the boy was a great favourite. On one occasion a little girl ran home in tears. When asked why she was crying, she sobbed out, "Because Jamie

Brown's got his licks." Among his companions he was known as "The Bishop," because during his father's last illness, he went about among the people of the church, inquiring for the sick, and conveying to them messages of sympathy from the minister.

For a year after his father's death in 1847, young Brown remained in Cumnock. Part of the time was spent in a lawyer's office, and he was wont to tell how he began life as a clerk, by attending the "roup" of a mad cow at Auchinleck fair. Thereafter his widowed mother removed with her family to Glasgow. For four years James served in the City of Glasgow Bank, and while still a clerk, enrolled himself as a student at the University. At college he showed his literary faculty by contributing to the University album, an essay entitled *The Village Beauty* and also two poems. In 1854 he entered the U.P. Hall, and during his course of study there, he acted as sub-editor of *The Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography*.

Having been duly licensed to preach the gospel, he was called to St. James' Street Church, Paisley, and ordained on the 30th August, 1859. His ministry was successful in the highest degree. The 366 members to whom he went steadily grew in number, till at the close of his pastorate 800 names stood upon the roll. A handsome new church was built by the congregation in 1884. Paisley felt the influence of his powerful mind and energetic character. In addition to local work, he took a prominent part in the general life of the Church. Not only was he a frequent speaker in the Synod, and a valued member of many of its Committees, but for eleven years before his death, he was the editor of the *U.P. Missionary Record*. He likewise raised the sum of

£20,000 to free the Synod Hall from debt. In 1878 his *Alma Mater* recognised his worth by conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Besides many fugitive articles which appeared in newspapers and magazines, Dr. Brown contributed to the ecclesiastical literature of the day several excellent biographies. In 1877 appeared *The Life of a Scottish Probationer*, in which he told the story of his friend, Thomas Davidson, who, in spite of many notable qualities, never secured a settled place in the Church. The following year saw the publication of *The Life of John Eadie, D.D., LL.D.*, and in 1884 there came from his pen *The Life of William B. Robertson, D.D., Irvine*. He also completed and edited *The Scottish History and Literature to the Period of the Reformation*, by his old friend and fellow-student, Dr. John M. Ross of the Edinburgh High School.

Dr. Brown was a great traveller, though sometimes he had to travel in search of health. Palestine, the West Indies and Australia were all visited by him. He preached his last sermon on the closing Sabbath of June, 1890, and died on the 9th November following, at the age of fifty-six, in the thirty-second year of his ministry. He is buried in Paisley Cemetery. His wife, Katharine Brown Scott, unexpectedly predeceased him during the summer of 1890. A sketch of his life, prefixed to a volume of sermons, was published in 1892 by his son.

## CHAPTER XV.

*Parish Chips.*

“Give us as many anecdotes as you can.”

—*Johnson to Boswell.*

THERE are certain items of interest to which it has not been possible to refer in the preceding pages, but which ought to find a place in the history of the parish. They throw a good deal of light on the manners and customs of olden times. It is proposed accordingly to treat of them in this chapter.

*I.—The Market and the Market Cross.*

The weekly market with which our town is familiar is not a very ancient institution in its present form. The *Statistical Account* of 1793 says, “There is no regular market.” Old records, however, speak of a weekly market at a very early date. The charter, granted to Cumnock by James IV. in 1509, gives liberty to the burgh to hold a weekly market on Saturday (*die Sabbati singulis hebdomadis*). Six years before, an Act of Parliament had been passed decreeing that “there be na merkate nor far halden apoun halidais, nor zit w<sup>t</sup> in kirks and kirkyards apoun haly dais or other dais, under the pane of escheting of the

gud (goods)" (*Acts of Parliament*, vol. III., p. 138). The charter of 1509, therefore, must be interpreted in the light of the Act of 1503. Wherever the market was held, it could not take place in the old burying ground beside the church. The law forbade such a procedure, though it may have been common once. Where, then, was this weekly market held, and on what spot was the market cross erected?

Old people still with us remember that a market for the sale of live stock was held occasionally at the top of the Coldsideheads, on an open plot of ground close to the present new railway station. Coldsideheads, it may be noticed, is the original and correct form of the name of that portion of Glaisnock Street, commonly known as Calstoneheads. Such a place was doubtless quite convenient for the purposes of a market. Yet its use as such, in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, was comparatively recent. The charter of 1509 gives the right to the burgh of the barony of Cumnock, not only to have a weekly market, but also to have a market cross; and there can be no doubt that the market would always gather round the market cross. Now, the cross was never at the top of the Coldsideheads.

No one is able to recall the time when the cross, which adorns the Square, was placed in its present position. Yet it need hardly be said that it could not have been put there, until after the churchyard was removed. A chart in the possession of the Marquis of Bute, and dating at least from 1769, represents the cross as standing at the north-east corner of the Square, just where the Barrhill Road touches it. Yet that does not seem to





THE CROSS.



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have been its original position, though the ground now occupied by Hillside was free then for market purposes.

A reliable tradition affirms that the cross stood near the top of the Townhead, where the street is narrowest, and slopes down towards the old ironstone pit. A causeway of waterworn stones has been made for some reason at the point. A stone larger than its fellows, and about nine inches square, right in the middle of the street, marks the place where the cross is said to have originally stood. The tradition is constant, and gives, at the same time, the explanation of the large stone imbedded in the road in a conspicuous manner. A reminiscence corroborative of this view lingers in the name, which aged residents give to the Townhead. They call it *The Crossrigs*, that is, the rigs which lead to the cross.

It seems likely, therefore, that from its old site at the far end of the Townhead, sometime after the obliteration of the churchyard, the cross was taken and erected, first in the north-east corner of the Square, and then in its present position close beside the church. Yet it does not seem to be the original cross. On one side of the ornamented stone which forms its apex, there runs the inscription, "1703, repaired in 1778." The first of these dates must refer to the period when this cross was set up; the second date, in all probability, points to the time when it was placed in its present position. If so, our cross must be the successor of the one raised in terms of the charter of 1509, though perhaps after all our ancestors did not avail themselves of the privilege granted by the King. The arms of the Earls of Dumfries, with the Crichton motto, *God send grace*, appear also

on the apex of the cross, but the carving is a good deal weather-worn.

The town may well be proud of its old cross, though one cannot help regretting that it should have been made for many years the support of a useful but commonplace gas lamp. Quite recently, when our Commissioners secured a burgh seal, it was thought most fitting that it should bear the impress of the cross. All official documents, therefore, drawn up in the name of the town, are stamped with the representation of the old cross of Cumnock, reared at first outside the town in the immemorial market place at the Townhead, and then erected on the ground consecrated by the dust of our fathers, who had often bought and sold in its immediate presence.

## *II.—Fairs.*

In addition to the right of holding markets at the cross in terms of the royal charter, an annual fair was permitted to be held in autumn on the occasion of the festival of St. Matthew the Apostle. The date of St. Matthew's festival is September 21st. The fair, however, was not to close with the feast of the apostle. It was to continue for eight days. As long as it was kept up, this fair must have been the great event of the year in Cumnock, bringing together a vast concourse of people from the surrounding districts, and offering opportunity to packmen and pedlars to display their wares, and to jugglers and minstrels to amuse the crowds which gathered round them. It would also be made the occasion for games and sports of different kinds. In

the main, however, it would be a great trading institution, at which articles of all descriptions, now provided by shops, were presented for sale. Eggs, butter, cheese, grain, meal, flour, salt, clothing, boots and shoes, live stock and every variety of utensil for the house and for the farm, in wood and tin, in earthenware and iron, would be exposed to meet the wants of town and country alike.

No record of this special fair remains, nor can we tell how long the people of Cumnock availed themselves of the permission of the king, to hold it regularly as September came round. In course of time it was given up, and its place taken by three fairs held respectively in June, July, and October. These fairs were appointed by Act of Parliament in 1681, and authority was given to the Baron of Cumnock, or rather to his son, to uplift all duties leviabie on such occasions. The Act of Parliament is so interesting that it may be given.

“ Warrant to Charles, Lord Creichtoun, for three yearly ffares and a weekly mercat at the toun of Cumnock.

“ Our Sovereign Lord and Estates of Parliament, taking to consideration that it will be very convenient to his Mäties leidges that there be three ffares kepted at the toun of Cumnock yearly, besyds the weekly mercat formerly granted by Act of Parliament,

“ Therefore his Mätie, with advice and consent of the Estates of Parliament, doth hereby give and grant to Charles, Lord Creichtoun, his airs and successors, the full libertie and priviledge of three free ffares to be kepted at Cumnock yearly—The first to be kepted the second Tuesday and Wednesday of June, to be called—, the second upon the second Tuesday and Wednesday

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of July, to be called —, and the third the last Tuesday and Wednesday of October, to be called — yearly, with the liberty of the said mercat upon — weekly in all time coming; with power to the said Lord Creichtoun and his foresaids, or such as they shall appoint, to uplift and exact the tolles, customs and other dewties pertaining thereunto, and with all other priviledges, liberties and immunities pertaining to or accustomed in any other ffares or mercats.”

It would have been interesting to have had the names of these fairs inserted, but for some reason they are not given. By and by, the dates, on which they were held, were altered, probably because they came too close to each other. At any rate it was arranged that, instead of these three fairs, four were to be held during the year, viz. :—the Race fair on the third Thursday after Candlemas O.S., the May fair on the Wednesday after the last Tuesday of May O.S., the Scythe fair on the Wednesday after the first Tuesday of July O.S., and the Harvest fair on the Wednesday after the third Tuesday of October O.S. Thus, while the dates of the original fairs were altered, an addition of one was made to their number. Moreover they were to last only for one day each.

The relation of the Baron to the fairs remained just as it was under the Act of 1681. He continued to impose certain customs “on all cattle, horses, meal, cheese, butter, and other goods, on each crame, stand, or stall where goods were exposed, and on all shows, exhibitions, etc.” These duties were levied and paid without question till 1833, when James Crawford, one of our townsmen, raised the question of the lawfulness of their exaction,

and instigated those who used the market-place on such occasions to withhold payment. The ground of his objection was that, in the charter of 1509, the right to collect the customs was conferred on the magistrates of the burgh. Lord Bute took the case to court where it was decided in his favour. He continued to levy the duties till 1869, when he gave authority to the Provost and Commissioners to lift them for behoof of the town. With commendable generosity, the Marquis sought no equivalent for the surrender of his rights. The dues levied by the magistrates in recent years have amounted to £10 or £12 per annum.

Three of these statutory fairs continue to be kept. The Scythe Fair was given up for the first time in July, 1898, though it and the May Fair had long ceased to be well attended. The Race Fair and the Harvest, or Hin-Hairst Fair, alone are now of any importance, and their popularity appears to be on the increase. It is computed that over 2000 persons come to them from neighbouring parishes. They are in large measure hiring fairs, at which servants chiefly for farm work are engaged. Much of the hiring or feeing is done at the registries which exist in the town. Formerly such business was transacted in the open street, by direct application on the part of the servants wishing to be engaged, or of the farmer needing a ploughboy or a dairymaid.

Shows of different kinds, shooting-ranges, swings, etc., offer their attractions at these fairs to the youthful crowd, while stalls filled with sweetmeats and toys, as well as with a great variety of small articles more or less useful in their nature, tempt visitors to purchase. The sale of cloth, books, kitchen and dairy requisites, together with agricultural produce, has gradually died out.

Cattle and horses, too, in course of time, ceased to be offered for sale. The institution of auction marts, now universally patronised by farmers at larger centres like Ayr and Kilmarnock, hastened their disappearance.

One other feature of these old fairs deserves notice. Up till fifty years ago, it was no uncommon thing for those who set up stalls to bring their supply of sweetmeats, nuts and toys, in little wheeled carts drawn by dogs. Two or even three dogs were sometimes yoked to one of these carts. It was a sight which evoked interest among young people, to see the dogs make a rush at the steep ascent of the old Lugar bridge and go down the other side. Frequently forty or fifty dogs were gathered together in the Square. Imagination is left to picture the snarling and the fighting. When the fair was over, they trotted off home again, or made their way to another fair held elsewhere.

A popular incident in the March fair is the horse race. So integral a portion of the day's proceedings is it held to be, that the fair is commonly known as *The Race*. It has been run for many years in a field belonging to the Dumfries Arms Hotel. Formerly it took place down the Ayr Road, the horses running a little way beyond Bankend farmhouse and back to the starting point close to the town. The high ground on the south side of the Ayr Road, then unbuilt upon, was always crowded with spectators, who watched the progress of the horses from their elevated position.

The race is a very old institution, though it may not have been kept up with unbroken regularity. As far back as 1610, the *Register of the Privy Council* tells us of a quarrel taking



place on the "occasioun of ane horse race whiche was then run at Cumnoke." In 1778, the Session records mention "the Draff race in June last."

### *III.—Riding the Broose.*

A custom, to which the present generation is entirely strange, formed more than half a century ago, a very prominent feature in connection with the celebration of marriage. At an earlier period, it was even more characteristic of the proceedings. It was known by the name of "riding the broose," or "the braize."

Immediately after the knot had been tied, the young men of the company, and sometimes the young women as well, rode off on horseback to the house that was to be the home of the newly wedded couple. There the mother of the bridegroom usually awaited the arrival of the marriage party. The rider, who reached his destination first, turned back at once to meet the bride and bridegroom, carrying with him a bottle of wine or whisky, with which the health of the happy pair was drunk. Great emulation was frequently displayed in order to win this race. The fleetest horses in the district were borrowed for the contest. The owner of the victorious steed was proud of his achievement. Burns makes his Auld Farmer say to his Auld Mare Maggie,

At brooses thou had ne'er a fellow  
For pith and speed.

People in the parish, by no means old, tell of great feats done on these occasions, and also of disastrous falls experienced by too hasty riders.

A custom like this must have arisen out of special circumstances. In the end as our fathers knew it, the broose was merely a bit of amusement, but in the olden days it had a much more serious meaning. A very probable suggestion traces its origin back to those unsettled times, when it was no uncommon thing for a bride to be carried off by a disappointed suitor, who appeared with his retainers upon the scene and forcibly kidnapped the lady. Accordingly it was a suitable thing, that the mother of the bridegroom, who was not present at the marriage herself, should have early information that no mishap had occurred on the way to church or the minister's house, where the marriage service at the time usually took place. The race was undertaken with that end in view, and he who first arrived with the good news was crowned with special honour. Sometimes he may have had to announce that, willingly or unwillingly, the bride had been snatched away.

Fully forty years have gone by, since the broose was last ridden in Cumnock. Almost the final occasion on which it was witnessed was at a marriage at High Garleffan. The goal in this case was the farm of Watston. When the late Lord Bute was married to Lady Sophia Hastings in April, 1845, it is said that the tenantry, after entering the Dumfries House grounds, broke "into what used to be called the riding of the broose." (Paterson, *Autobiog. Reminiscences*, p. 197).

Penny weddings were fairly frequent in earlier times. They got their name in the following way. The invited guests were expected to make a small contribution towards the expense of the marriage supper. After the fiddler was paid for his services,

any sum left was regarded as an expression of the goodwill of the guests towards the newly married pair, but as the gift in many cases was limited to a shilling, the balance would be small after the supper accounts had been discharged. If rumour speaks correctly, the practice of holding penny weddings is not quite obsolete in our own day.

Another custom connected with weddings claims still to linger in the district, though it has almost died out. On the night before the wedding, the companions of the bridegroom made their way to his house and forcibly washed his feet. The fun ran high if, as in most cases, the officious attendants used not soap, but soot. The result need not be described. This, however, in all probability, was an addition to the ceremony prompted by the spirit of frolic. The origin of the practice as first observed is difficult to trace. It may possibly have an ecclesiastical beginning, and correspond to the washing of the feet which, in the case of catechumens, preceded baptism. In Roman Catholic days our fathers were taught to regard marriage as a sacrament of the Church.

#### *IV.—Baptism.*

In connection with baptism a custom prevailed, which was looked upon as necessary for the future welfare of the child. Bad luck was deemed to be the penalty of failing to observe it. The mother or nurse, who carried the child to church, gave to the first person whom she met, a piece of bread or cake. Even in recent years this has been done. Apparently it was thought

that the little child, in whose name the gift was bestowed, would never come to want himself, after having shown his charity on the first occasion on which he was taken out of doors. For, of course, the old fashion, wisely departed from now, was formerly rigidly observed, in accordance with which the visit of the child to church for baptism was the earliest time he was carried out of the house, into the big world in which he had begun to take his place.

#### *V.—Funeral Customs.*

Special notice must be taken of a custom which prevails in connection with funerals. The practice of having a brief religious service, conducted by the minister or an elder, when the body is placed in the coffin, is of long standing in Cumnock. Though it is found in other parts of Scotland, it seems to have its strongest hold upon the counties of the south-west. By some families it is being given up, while it is hardly ever expected that the minister should be present for the purpose at any great distance from town. Persons brought up in other districts of the country, where the practice does not prevail, are naturally surprised on becoming acquainted with this strange and unnecessary procedure.

How long the custom of having all the members of the family and other friends present with the minister on such an occasion, has existed in our neighbourhood, it is impossible to say. It has simply come down from generation to generation. Very likely it was general at one time over the whole of Scotland.

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Its origin has been traced with some degree of probability to an Act of the Scots Parliament of the year 1686, ordaining that "no corps of any persons whatever be buried in any shirt, sheet, or anything else except in plain linen, the relatives of the deceased being ordered to repair to the minister of the parish and declare on oath within eight days that the rule had been complied with." In 1695 there was a further Act, decreeing that "the nearest elder or deacon of the Paroch, with one neighbour or two, be called by the persons concerned, and be present to the putting of the dead corpse in the coffin, that they may see the same done, and that the foresaid be observed."

The reason of these Acts is evident. It was hoped in this way to extend the use and encourage the manufacture of linen in Scotland. Certainly the method chosen to protect and develop a national industry was very peculiar. Be that as it may, an extremely likely reason is supplied why in our part of the country, there is still found the custom of holding a brief religious service at the "chesting" of those who have died. If it is still to be kept up, the hope may be legitimately expressed that little children be not present at an ordeal which proves terrifying to many of them, and awakens painful thoughts in their minds long after. Yet there seems no reason why the ordinary custom of the country should not be adopted here, in accordance with which this necessary act is performed in utmost privacy, and at a different hour from that at which the minister reads the cheering words of Holy Scripture, and beseeches the blessing of heaven to rest on the sorrow-stricken home.

It is a pleasure to note one improvement which is steadily be-

coming more marked on such occasions. Very seldom is wine or other drink offered to those who assemble in the house of mourning. Even the last ten years bear decided witness to the disappearance of the practice of offering refreshment. Certainly no excess was possible in recent times. The wine or other stimulant supplied was meant to be taken only in a very slight measure. But that is only another reason why the custom should be totally abolished.

In other days, however, it was very different. The intoxicating drink consumed at funerals was large, and often it had a serious and sad effect on some of those who had come to show respect to the dead. A hundred years ago the state of matters in Cumnock on such occasions was so discreditable, that the townspeople, headed by the minister, Dr. Miller, drew up a bond by which all who signed it, became obliged to keep the regulations it set forth, with regard to the amount of drink offered at funerals. The document may be regarded as unique. It is in the possession of Mr. M'Cowan of Whitehaven, and is given here in full. Reform was urgently called for, and, accordingly, reform was made as the document itself will testify.

#### COVENANT OF HOUSEHOLDERS REGARDING THE METHOD OF CONDUCTING FUNERALS.

“ We, Subscribers, being in or near to the village of Cumnock, taking into our serious consideration that, by the present method of conducting burials among us, much time is misspent and money thrown away, and that by entertainments given at many of them the Living are injured and the Dead in many cases dishonoured ;

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and being convinced that a reform is necessary, have agreed and do by our respective subscriptions hereto annexed agree, bind and oblige ourselves to the Rules or Articles following, viz. :—

“ 1<sup>mo</sup>. That none of us shall give any general or public entertainment either immediately before or after the Burial of our friends, and that, exclusive of the members of our family and those connected with the chief mourner by blood or relationship, we will not invite any number exceeding 12 to partake of the refreshment that may be provided suitable to the occasion, which we hereby agree shall not exceed 3 glasses of wine, or where this cannot be purchased, one glass of spirituous liquors, and bread proportioned; Binding and obliging ourselves to pay a penalty of Five Shillings sterling in all cases where any of us shall be found to do otherwise.

“ 2<sup>do</sup>. That in our Invitations to Burials we shall invite persons to attend punctually at the time at which it is intended to carry forth the corpse for interment, which hour being notified to the persons invited by the ringing of the church bell for so long a time as to allow the Invited to come from the most distant part of the village, the corpse shall be immediately carried forth to interment, under the penalty of Two Shillings in case of Failzie.

“ 3<sup>tho</sup>. That the company invited shall be received at the Door of the House, where the corpse lyes at the time, by some of the relations of the deceased, with a Bow and Uncovering of the head, and the corpse being carried forth shall precede and the company follow to the place of interment.

“ 4<sup>to</sup>. That, in order to carry the above specified Reform into execution, such of the subscribers as may be judged best acquainted with the mode of Burials in Towns where they are properly conducted, shall, upon being called, cheerfully give their assistance to the same.

“ 5<sup>to</sup>. That the fines raised and collected from Delinquents shall be applied for purchasing coffins and towards the necessary expense of interring the Poor in the village or neighbourhood, which fines shall be paid into —, who shall be accountable for the same to any of the subscribers desirous to know in what manner they have been expended.

“These regulations we bind and oblige ourselves to observe, as witness our respective subscriptions at Cumnock, the 5th day of May, in the year 1800.”

Among the 82 signatures attached to this document, the following names occur:—

THOMAS MILLER.	GEORGE DRUMMOND.
JOHN GIBB.	WILLIAM M'OWAN.
WILLIAM SIMSON.	WILLIAM CRICHTON.
JAMES HOWAT.	ANDREW MURRAY.
WILLIAM M'GEACHAN.	JOHN VALLANCE.
JAMES MOODIE.	ANDREW HODGE.
ADAM CRICHTON.	WILLIAM MURRAY.
JOHN LATTA.	JAMES TAYLOR.
THOMAS LATTA.	JOHN KING.

If, by this agreement, the amount of hospitality was limited to three glasses of wine or one glass of spirits for each mourner, we can easily imagine how liberal the allowance must have been



before. And yet it was believed by some, that such an exhibition of hospitality was a needful and proper mark of respect towards the person who had died. So much was this the case, that the first among those who signed this covenant, into whose house death entered, pled with the committee to let him go back to the old custom. Wisely this request was refused.

The old state of things continued in some quarters, however. All householders in the parish did not come under the covenant. Mr. Bannatyne, writing in 1837, says:—"It was very much the custom some time ago to give half a dozen rounds or more of spirits, wine, etc., at funerals; but there has been a decided improvement in this respect in later years." (*New Stat. Account.*)

Though this document of the year 1800 exists to show what Cumnock customs were in relation to funerals a century ago, we need not think that our town was worse than other places in Ayrshire or the rest of Scotland. It is only too true that such a state of matters prevailed over the whole country, and it says a good deal for the people of Cumnock at the time, that they sought to combat this evil in a way which some persons regarded as stringent. Yet when we look at the picture presented to us in the old Covenant of Householders, and compare it with the procedure which now obtains in regard to this question, we cannot be too thankful that an advance of the most commendable kind has been made, and that our present method of fulfilling the last rites to the dead, is much more seemly than the method of our ancestors.

*VI.—Roads and Means of Travel.*

At the close of the eighteenth century, roads were not numerous in the parish. There were certain regular highways, but they were not at all well kept. In addition, one or two cross-roads had been formed by the Earl of Dumfries to facilitate communication with his coal and lime works. These private roads, which the public were allowed to use, were only 10 or 12 miles in extent (*Stat. Acc.*). They were the beginning, however, of that network of splendid roads, which now cover the surface of the parish and afford easy access to its most distant parts. Some idea of the condition of our roads in still earlier times, may be gathered from an anecdote told of one of our kings. The time is the first half of the sixteenth century.

“Sir William Hamilton of Sorn was Lord Treasurer to James V. When his daughter and heiress was about to be married to Lord George Seton, the King resolved to honour his Treasurer with a visit to Sorn Castle. . . . It would appear that His Majesty had a most comfortless journey to Sorn; he had to pass through a long and dreary tract of moor, moss, and miry clay, where there was neither road nor bridge, and to crown the whole, when about halfway from Glasgow, his horse got into a quagmire from which His Majesty was with difficulty extricated. From want of better accommodation, he was under the necessity of sitting down by the edge of a well to take a cold refreshment on a cold day. He at length declared that if he were to play a trick on the devil, he would send him to a bridal in

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Sorn in the middle of winter." (Forsyth, *Beauties of Scotland*, II., p. 437.) Now, we may rest assured that, if the route to Sorn from Edinburgh by Muirkirk and Cumnock had been in better condition than the road the King actually took, he would have chosen to travel by it. We must therefore believe that our parish roads were in a miserable state at the time, and in that state they remained till after the middle of the eighteenth century.

How then was communication carried on? How, for instance, did a farmer perform his ordinary work and take his crops to market? For without roads, wheeled carts could not be used. Of horses there was no lack, and upon their labour as beasts of burden, the farmer had mainly to depend. He employed them to draw his crops of hay and corn to the stackyard on broad wooden trays, while heavier material, like potatoes, was conveyed in large panniers or creels hung across the back of the horse. This mode of transit was also the only one available for taking produce to the market, and naturally it was adopted. The sight of 50 or 100 horses, so laden at the great fairs of Cumnock, may have been primitive, but it could not but be extremely picturesque.

Before the introduction of carriages, consequent on the improvement in the state of the roads, riding and walking were the only means by which people could pass from place to place. Walking was the more common method. To church, to market, and to school, to any place where business or inclination took them, the inhabitants, for the most part, required to go on foot. Even until fairly recent times, it was no unusual thing for those who lived in distant parts of the parish to walk barefoot on

Sabbath to church, carrying their shoes and stockings in their hand. In this fashion they came close to the town; then, having washed the dust from their feet at one of the neighbouring burns, they put on their shoes and stockings, and were ready to enter the house of prayer. It was the habit of one or two shoemakers in town to have a "boyne" of water in their workshop on Sabbath, with a supply of towels, which their customers were at liberty to come and use.

Though most people walked on Sabbath to church, a few rode. It was a frequent practice for two to ride on the same horse—a farmer and his wife thus making their way together to town. Sometimes a child took the place of the goodwife. Even after the necessity of this mode of travel was past, old people liked to keep up the custom. Some among us still remember the old tenant of Boreland Mains and his wife journeying regularly down to church, both seated on their stout farm horse. Panniers were also used for the conveyance of little children.

Gradually this style of things disappeared. When roads became general, carts began to be used. Dr. Miller tells us that in 1793, there were in the parish 5 carriages and 150 carts. The farm cart, therefore, was now employed to bring the family to church. Clean straw, or sacks stuffed with hay, made the ride as comfortable as possible. The stable-yard of every inn in Cumnock on that day was crowded. So numerous were the carts that, even along the side of the street, they were arranged, with the horses unyoked and tied to the shafts. The present generation has seen another change. Carts have entirely disappeared as a means of conveyance to church and market. Gigs and dog-

carts abound, while even an ordinary farm road of the present day excels the best kept road of which the parish could boast a century and a half ago.

It was only, however, after the nineteenth century was ushered in, that the great improvement in the roads of Ayrshire took place. Naturally our county held a leading position in this respect, for Macadam, the maker of modern roads, was a native of Ayr. Forsyth tells us, in his *Beauties of Scotland*, published in 1805, of the progress made in our locality. "A great zeal," he says, "for improvements of every sort exists in Airshire. This in particular appears from the state of the roads. . . . In this respect few counties on the whole are so well accommodated. In all directions where land or water gravel can be procured, the roads are formed of these materials. The turnpike roads are made and repaired by the produce of the tolls, and cross roads by the statute labour of the different parishes. The usual breadth is conformable to the statutory regulations, being never less than 24 feet wide for bye-roads, and 34 feet for turnpike roads." (II., p. 437).

There were six tolls in the parish. One was in the town at the present Bank of Scotland, another at Logan, and a third on the Polquhap Road. There were bars likewise at Garrallan, Mossback, and Sykeside. As the town extended, the toll at the Bank of Scotland was removed, and in its place a bar put at Bridgend, and another at the Pottery Row. To prevent traffic evading the old toll at the Bank, by going along New Bridge Street, an iron gate was erected at the bridge near the United Presbyterian Church. It was always kept shut. Foot passengers

made use of a side gate. The entrance to the town from Auchinleck was covered by a toll at the corner of the road leading to the Rigg farm. All tolls were abolished in 1883.

The road from Cumnock to Ochiltree was altered in 1837. The old road, which was hilly, ran nearer the Lugar. Its proximity to Dumfries House made the Marquis desire to change its course. The alteration, which extends for fully a mile, was carried out chiefly by the labour of the weavers whose trade then was slack. The old road is still well marked within the policies of Lord Bute, and is adorned with some splendid beech trees.

With the introduction of good roads into the parish, the building of bridges became a necessity. At an earlier period, fords across the Lugar and Glaisnock were found sufficient, but as soon as coaches began to run laden with passengers, and carts with all manner of goods, it was felt to be unsuitable, as well as unsafe, to trust to a shifting path in the middle of a stream, sometimes heavily swollen by the rain.

In the year 1753 a bridge was thrown over the Lugar at Stepends. In all likelihood, it was the first which was built. It met, however, with an untimely end, and brought sudden death to a number of workmen engaged in its construction. The incident is thus told in the *Scots Magazine* of that year. "On the 8th August several workmen employed in building a bridge over the Lugar at Cumnock in the shire of Ayr, in order to shelter themselves from a heavy shower of rain, went in under a new finished arch from which the cumb or timber arch had been taken away the day before. All of a sudden the arch fell; by which four men and four boys were killed, three had their legs

broken, several others were hurt, and a horse was killed. This is thought to have been occasioned by the arch being too low. It was fifty-five feet wide, and had but eight feet of spring." It is somewhat singular that when the present bridge was being constructed over the Lugar at the same place, an accident of a similar nature took place, though happily without loss of life.

Another familiar bridge in the town crossed the Glaisnock close to Tower Street. Like its companion bridge at Stepends, it was taken down over thirty years ago, and another substituted for it, which seems so much a part of the street, that the name by which it is usually known, "The Bridge," appears inappropriate until we remind ourselves that the water runs below out of sight. New Bridge Street indicates by its name that another bridge was built in the town for the public convenience. It is situated at the junction of the Glaisnock with the Lugar. The advent of the railway caused the erection of the two stately viaducts, which form such a conspicuous feature in our local scenery.

#### *VII.—Dress and Food in Olden Times.*

As late as 1820, a few old men kept up the fashion in dress of a former generation. They wore the broad Kilmarnock bonnet, the long breasted waistcoat, the blue or brown swallow-tail coat, knee breeches, and shoes adorned with large buckles. Some, whose social position was high, dressed in pantaloons, and wore long hair, tied with ribbon. The plaid was the universal wrap both of men and women. It was not till long after the middle

of the nineteenth century that the less picturesque greatcoat took its place. Occasionally the plaid is seen still. Its disappearance is a change in fashion which may well be regretted.

Up to the same time a few old women continued to go to church with a mutch and a black silk hood over it. They carried their Bible usually wrapped in a snow-white handkerchief, and holding in their hand a piece of fragrant "apple-ringing" or sweet-scented balm. After the mutch was discarded, the black silk hood was retained. It, too, at length disappeared.

The food of the people a hundred years ago was very simple. Forsyth tells us that in Ayrshire then "very little butcher meat was used, except a proportion which every family salted at Martinmas to serve during winter with their groats or prepared barley, and kail or broth; the rest of their food consisting at that time only of porridge, oatmeal cakes, and some milk or cheese." (*Beauties of Scotland*, II., p. 444). To-day, the style of living is very different, and the good old custom of preparing porridge for all the members of the family, at least once a day, is too much a thing of the past. Tea and loaf bread, with other too tempting products of the baker's art, have taken its place. It is possibly the case that the disappearance of porridge explains the disappearance of health, and the advent of many complaints to which our ancestors seem to have been entire strangers.

In the end of the eighteenth century, there were just two persons classed as bakers in Cumnock. Home-made bread was mostly used. Butchers' shops, too, as we are acquainted with them, were unknown then. Even as late as 1830, it was the



custom at the October fair to buy a sheep or small bullock, which, when killed and salted, supplied the household with meat during winter. Sometimes two or three families clubbed together and shared the "mart" among them. In summer a dealer occasionally killed a sheep, for a portion of which he had already received orders. Then presenting himself at the door of a likely customer, he would cry, "Are ye wantin' a fine leg o' mutton the day?" These primitive times and ways have certainly long passed away. As in other towns butchers' premises abound.

Dr. Miller, in his *Statistical Account*, gives us the price of various articles of food. In 1793,

Beef	was	4½d.	to	6d.	per lb. of 24 oz.
Mutton,		4d.	to	5d.	"    "
Veal,		4d.			"    "
Lamb,		5d.			"    "
Eggs,		3d.	to	4½d.	per dozen.
Fowls,		from	8d.	to	1/-.
Sweet Milk Cheese,		from	6/-	to	8/- per stone.
Common Cheese,		from	3/6	to	5/-      "
Meal,		11d.	to	11½d.	per peck.

#### VIII.—*Tenants' Obligations to their Landlords.*

Throughout Ayrshire long ago, tenants were burdened with a great number of vexatious servitudes. Before entering upon their farms, they were forced to come under an obligation to give to the landlord each year so many days' ploughing and so

many days' harvesting. As these obligations could only be fulfilled at the very time the farmer wished to plough his own fields and reap his own crops, they necessarily interfered with the working of his farm. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, these burdens were almost entirely removed (Forsyth, II., p. 443). About the same period, feuars in Cumnock had to give one day's shearing to Lord Bute in addition to their ground rent. This, for instance, was the condition in the feu charter of the well-known Ayrshire banking firm of Douglas, Heron, & Co. Their property, to which the burden of giving one day's shearing was attached, stood in Glaisnock Street, on the site of Mr. M'Letchie's house. In 1792 John M'Letchie, after the failure of Douglas, Heron, & Co., took over the property, and agreed to give a day's shearing when called upon.

It was quite common for a portion of the rent to be paid in kind. Hens and chickens, along with oatmeal and beir, were taken at the stipulated time to the landlord. Thus, on the Dumfries House estate in 1789, in addition to the rent paid in money, the farms of Boyleston and Over Glaisnock had each to furnish 6 hens and 12 chickens. Over Glaisnock had also to carry 20 loads of coal. Knockterra, besides providing 8 hens and 8 chickens, had to furnish 1 boll of meal and 40 loads of coal. Skerrington Mill paid, as part of its rent, 2 bolls of meal. The following statement of the payments in kind, on the whole of the Dumfries House estate, in the year mentioned, is of interest. The various tenants had to furnish—

6 bolls of meal,  
4 pecks beir,

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316 hens, valued at 9d.,  
312 chickens, valued at 4½d.,  
732 loads of coal, valued at 3d. per load.

Ten years later, even this large supply of poultry and coal had increased, for in 1799, there were provided 439 hens, 483 chickens, and 821 loads of coal. Certainly the hen-house and the coal cellar of the lord superior of the day were kept fairly well stocked. Of course a load of coal would only be what could be carried on horseback in creels. The farmer did not purchase the coal; he simply conveyed the allotted quantity from the pit to its required destination.

On the other estates in the parish, the same custom prevailed. Even after the second half of the nineteenth century began, it lingered in a few cases. Meadow farm supplied its annual charge of fowls to Glaisnock House until 1858. Mr. Bannatyne tells us in 1837, that though rents were generally paid then in money, a few tenants gave "one-third money and two-thirds cheese and meal, according to fiars' prices."

In another way the landlord had power over his tenants. In virtue of the old law of hypothec, the right was given to him to carry off the cattle of any farmer on his estate, who failed to pay his rent. This right was sometimes exercised. A case happened towards the end of the eighteenth century. Patrick Macdowall of Freugh, was Earl of Dumfries at the time. His lordship, who had been in the army, did not take much interest in the management of his estate. The stock of a farmer who had fallen behind with his rent had been seized, and put in some enclosure not far from the mansion-house. The cows, finding themselves in strange

quarters, were restless and excited. The noise attracted the Earl's attention. On learning the cause, he ordered the cattle to be taken back at once, and "not kept there to make a noise." Doubtless, the farmer appreciated at once the sensitive nature of the Earl, and the love of home displayed by his captured cows.

*IX.—Dovecots.*

There is only one dovecot in the parish. It is near Dumfries House, on the west side. Though there is now no stock of pigeons in it, long ago it would be used for the purpose of keeping them. It is well no others were erected in the district. For the inmates of a pigeon-house of ordinary size were able to consume 20 bolls of grain in harvest. This was a serious matter for the farmer. Accordingly, at an early date, the law stepped in to protect him. In the year 1617, a Scottish statute enacted that no person should build a dovecot, "unless he had lands and teinds, extending in yearly rent to 10 chalders victuals, lying within two miles of it, nor build more than one within the said bounds." This was a wise provision. Yet it is well that the only pigeon-house seemingly ever erected in the parish, should now be without inhabitant. The date 1671, cut upon it, indicates the year in which it was built. It was repaired in 1842.

*X.—Kirns.*

Some kind of entertainment was usually given long ago to the reapers after the harvest was gathered in. This went by the name of the Kirn or Harvest Home. As our part of Ayrshire is

not a great corn-growing district, the number of reapers hired for the harvest was comparatively small. Many of those who were so employed were Irish, who came across usually to England, where the harvest was ready first, and then made their way north to Scotland. We know that the local weavers took their part in field work when the crops were ripe. Shoemakers and other tradespeople likewise offered themselves for hire. Women and boys acted as bandsters.

Up to the third or fourth decade of the nineteenth century, the work of reaping was wholly done with the hook. An interesting contest took place at the close of shearing. A few stalks of uncut grain were tied together, and, from a little distance, the reapers in turn threw their hooks at them. The first who managed to sever them, received some reward for his dexterity. At the kirn which followed, just before the reapers left, the farmer provided the entertainment. The night was spent in merriment, dancing being kept up to the strains of the fiddle often till break of day. The character of these gatherings may be seen from the fact that John French called one of the reels he composed *The Kirn*, while Burns in his *Hallowe'en* sings,

“An’ aye a rantin’ kirn we gat.”

### XI.—*Beggars.*

It is only about fifty years ago since the custom died out, by which cripple beggars were carried about in handbarrows. As they were so disabled that they could not move about themselves, they secured a handbarrow, similar to those builders use for

carrying large stones, the only difference being that the centre portion was a box. In this humble carriage the mendicant was placed, and then borne by sturdy hands from one farmhouse to another, or from one door in town to the next. If he appeared in the morning at a farm, usually the farmer transferred him to a neighbouring house before nightfall ; but, if he arrived toward evening, it was necessary to keep him till next day. Certain farmhouses were famed for the hospitable treatment of these visitors. Craighends and Glengyron enjoyed this reputation. In such houses beggars' blankets were kept.

Many infirm persons were lifted in this way through the parish. In return for food and shelter, they were able to make a certain payment in the form of local gossip, of which they had ever a fresh supply. Occasionally a poor cripple dispensed with the favour of being carried from house to house, by appearing in a little wheeled box drawn by two powerful dogs. Instances of this mode of conveyance are still remembered. Sometimes, however, a cripple beggar was such only in appearance. The kindness of farmers and others was presumed upon, and a few able-bodied men, unwilling to work, sought to gain a livelihood by adopting the *rôle* of the maimed and the helpless. A ludicrous case of this kind may be given. The would-be cripple had been deposited at Refuge Cottage. His next resting place was to be Over Glaisnock. In due time he was carried in the direction of the farmhouse. The path lay through a field; in the field was a bull, which began to show signs of hostility towards the invaders of his domain. At his approach the carriers sought their own safety, laid down their burden and left the cripple to his fate.

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Immediately the cripple found his legs, and outstripping his helpers put himself beyond the reach of danger. After that, he was allowed to carry his own barrow.

### *XII.—Colliers.*

The social position of coalworkers in the end of the eighteenth century was pathetic. They were practically slaves, being bound to serve the proprietor of the soil, and were actually sold to the new owner with the collieries, whenever these changed hands. In such cases it was distinctly stated that they went with the coal. If they fled from the district, the laird could bring them forcibly back. He could exchange them or lend them. Even if they enlisted in the army, he had power to recover them.

In many parts of the coal-producing districts, "gifted" men, that is, men who were in the gift of the landlord, wore iron collars like a dog's, rivetted round their neck. A specimen of the collar worn is in the Antiquarian Museum, Edinburgh.

Very likely the early colliers in the Cumnock pits were subjected to this degrading treatment. At least, there can be no doubt that they went with the land, and were recoverable if they moved to another part of the country. The law on the point is perfectly clear. Cochran-Patrick tells us that "in 1606, it was enacted that no person should fee or engage any colliers, coal-bearers or salters without a testimonial from their last master, showing a reasonable cause for their removing, and if any one engaged them without such a certificate, the master from whom they deserted could claim them within a year and a day, and

they had to be given back within 24 hours, under pain of £100 damages. The deserting workers were to be punished as thieves." (*Records of Mining*, p. xlvii.)

This slavery, of course, could not continue. The wonder is that it remained so long, and that the attempt to remove it should have met with opposition from unexpected quarters. For it was only in 1799, that an Act of Parliament was passed liberating colliers and salters. Against this Act, both the Town Council and the Merchants' House of Glasgow petitioned. The conditions under which colliers work to-day may be sad enough, and some of them in the very nature of the case can never be improved, but one can rejoice with the labourers underground that the hard and unfeeling laws, imposed upon them by selfish landlords, are relegated to the limbo of the past to be recalled only with a deep and burning sense of shame.

### *XIII.—The Drummer.*

The Drummer was a well-known personage long ago. The last who held the office, and of course the best remembered, was Drummer Johnson. His memory is still kept up in the name of *The Drummer's Brae*, given to the old lane which runs off Tower Street. There he had his house. It was his duty to go round the town about 5 o'clock in the morning, to rouse the inhabitants to their daily work. Boys sometimes thought it good fun to accompany him. He did the same in the evening, when the day's work stopped. A New Year's donation, for which he called at all shops and houses, rewarded him for his



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labours during the preceding twelve months, and started him in good heart on the work of the next year. Sometimes he had a less agreeable duty to perform. He was occasionally employed to drum people out of the town. Seemingly, sixty or seventy years ago, incorrigible offenders, who disgraced the district and would not reform, were marched to the outskirts of the town by the baron bailie's officer, the drummer lending military *éclat* to the proceedings by beating as loudly as he could. Cases of expulsion in which he thus figured are remembered by the old residents.

It was the custom also to ring the parish bell at eight in the evening, until the present Established Church was built. It intimated the hour of closing to the shopkeepers. But doubtless it was a survival of the curfew.

An old drum, inscribed with the words *Cumnock Pikemen*, is in the possession of Mr. John Moodie of Gatehouse. It was purchased for a company of pikemen proposed to be raised in the beginning of the nineteenth century, at the time of the threatened French invasion. Nelson's victory at Trafalgar made their drill unnecessary. The drum remains to speak of Cumnock's readiness to fight the foe.

#### XIV.—*Epidemics.*

In 1597, a severe epidemic visited Cumnock, the tradition of which remains to this day. Its exact nature cannot be ascertained. The story connects it with the name of Knox's son-in-law, John Welsh, minister in Ayr at the time. Two pedlars, each with a pack of cloth on his horse, desired admission to the

county town in order to sell their goods. They produced certificates from the magistrates of the town from which they had come, and which was quite free from infection. The opinion of Mr. Welsh was asked. After a little while he told the magistrates that "the plague was in the packs" of the travellers, and advised them on no account to allow them into the town. The packmen, having been turned away from Ayr, came to Cumnock, where they found a ready market for their goods, which "kindled such an infection in the place, that the living were hardly able to bury the dead." (*Scots Worthies*, John Welsh.) Many who fell before it were buried not in the churchyard, but in that little bit of ground looking down on the Glaisnock, which we know by the name of the Greenbraehead.

Smallpox has made its ravages more than once. Mr. Muir, in his MS. book, makes it plain that many young people succumbed to it during his ministry, and Dr. Miller tells us that in his day an aversion to inoculation prevailed, in consequence of which smallpox occasionally made havoc among the children.

Cholera has appeared at intervals in Cumnock during the nineteenth century, but it never claimed many victims. Precautions were taken to keep the town as clear as possible from its grasp. Fumigation by sulphur was the method adopted in the case of all who entered Cumnock from infected districts. The process was very thorough. A tall, oblong box was placed at each of the main entrances to the town. Into this the passenger to be fumigated was thrust, while a cloth covering the top of the box was tied round his neck. An opening in the roof allowed his head to be outside for the sake of respiration.

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Thereafter a mixture of sulphur and quicklime was put into the bottom of the box and lighted. For the appointed time, the fumes enveloped the person of the traveller, whose eyes and lungs doubtless suffered from the ordeal. This was the mode of procedure during the cholera scare of 1848. After each passenger on foot or by coach had been subjected to it, he was permitted to move freely throughout the town.

*XV.—Tombstones.*

In addition to the martyr stones in the churchyard, another situated on the north wall calls for notice. It is so weather-beaten that the inscription is in part illegible. The words, "Patrick Hume, minister at Kirkmichael," can easily be made out. How then did this Dumfriesshire minister come to be buried in our parish? The story is soon told.

Patrick Hume graduated M.A. in Edinburgh University in 1687, and was called to the parish of Kirkmichael, in the Presbytery of Lochmaben, in 1691. He continued minister of Kirkmichael till 1725. Nine years afterwards, he died at Garrallan, in the 68th year of his age. His only daughter, Katharine, became the wife of Hugh Douglas of Garrallan. At the time of his death, he seems to have been staying with his daughter, and naturally in those days, the funeral took place to the Garrallan burying ground. The stone marking his grave stood originally in the old churchyard, now occupied by the Square, and remained there until the new Established Church was built, when it was removed for preservation to its present site. Hume was married

twice. An interesting relic of his marriage to his second wife, Elizabeth Johnstoun of Poledean, is treasured in Garrallan House in the form of a large linen napkin, into the borders of which the names of the husband and wife are woven, while the centre is devoted to scenes from the life of Joseph. The patriarch's visions of the sheaves and of the sun and moon making obeisance, find a place in it.

A tombstone of a different character may also be mentioned. The inscription which it bears, sets forth the qualities of a wife as they appeared to her husband after she was taken from him. Tradition avers, however, that he did not regard her in this beautiful light when she was alive. Be that as it may, the inscription runs in this way :—

HERE LIES INTERRED ANN MENZIES,  
 SPOUSE OF JAMES JOHNSTON, MERCHANT IN CUMNOCK,  
 FOR GOODNESS OF HEART FREE OF ALL GUILF,  
 FOR SINCERE HONESTY AS A FRIEND,  
 FOR FAITHFUL AFFECTION AS A WIFE,  
 FOR PREFERRING DOMESTIC HAPPINESS AND DECENT ECONOMY  
 TO DISSIPATED PROFUSION, EQUALLED BY FEW,  
 SURPASSED BY NONE.  
 IN JUSTICE TO HER WORTHY CHARACTER,  
 FROM THE CONSTANT EXPERIENCE OF ELEVEN YEARS,  
 THIS CONCLUSIVE TESTIMONY IS INSCRIBED  
 BY HER AFFLICTED HUSBAND, AS THE  
 LAST PLEDGE OF HIS HEARTFELT DUTY  
 AND MOST TENDER REGARD.

SHE DIED,  
 MAY 20TH, 1776,  
 AGED 36 YEARS.

*XVI.—Election Incidents.*

The years preceding the passing of the Reform Bill were full of excitement in Cumnock. Voters were few in number, and most of them were opposed to the extension of the franchise. The weavers were Radical to a man. Chartist principles were avowed on every hand. Candidates for Parliamentary honours delivered their speeches from the outside stairs of the old Established Church. The people listened in the Square. Sometimes they did not listen, but subjected the candidate to treatment which rendered his words inaudible.

When the day of election arrived, political feeling rose to its greatest height and frequently showed itself in unworthy forms. The votes were recorded in the parish school, which then occupied the site of the present Clydesdale Bank. Those bold enough to enter the precincts had to run the gauntlet between two rows of unenfranchised opponents, from whose wrath the efforts of constables, ordinary and special, failed to preserve them. Offensive mud and unsavoury eggs formed the least hurtful part of the programme. Voters were jostled from side to side and often severely bruised. A more criminal device still was resorted to. Some of the bystanders, with their hands to all appearance placed innocently in their pockets, grasped sharp-pointed instruments like a shoemaker's awl. These were allowed at the wished for moment to protrude through the clothes for about half-an-inch. The unfortunate voter was pushed against the sharp point, which after having served its purpose was speedily withdrawn and became invisible. Such conduct was as mean as it was indefensible.

Yet it lingered in our midst till the election of 1859, when several persons who indulged in it, received a just recompense in the Sheriff Court.

*XVII.—Folklore.*

It is only to be expected that our parish would furnish instances of superstitious belief. Doubtless many illustrations of credulity have passed out of mind. One or two still float about, and may be given as relics of a day long gone by.

Fairies were formerly believed in, especially those of the good sort named brownies. They helped the farmer to thrash, and the dairymaid to churn, so that the corn in the morning was beaten out of the straw, and the butter ready for table or market. Some farms, like Barshare, had the enviable reputation of being under the kindly protection of "the little people," who only asked, in return for their labour, a supply of food placed in the barn or dairy. An old man, who died a few years ago, remarked that his mother not only believed in these good fairies, but had even seen them.

Bad fairies were apt to show their ill-will towards farmhouses. In such a case the churn would not produce butter. It was therefore evident that it had been bewitched, and would do no more good until the charm was removed. This was done by taking it to a place where the lands of three lairds met, and rinsing it in the stream which flowed past. Such a spot was found immediately opposite the gates of Glaisnock House, a little more than 100 yards through the fields on the other side of the

road. There the land of Lord Bute touches the lands of Glaisnock and Skerrington. A pool in the stream, which serves as the march, was used to dispel the hurtful influence. Stories telling of this actually having been done, not more than two generations ago, have reached our time.

The district could also boast of the presence of one or two witches, whose evil eye wrought mischief alike on man and beast. A so-called witch, in the early part of the nineteenth century, was Nannie Reid, whose uncanny power was thoroughly believed in. She made cows give little milk, and scones be badly mixed or burnt on the girdle. People took care to propitiate her by gifts of money or provisions. When well treated she did no harm.

Another form of superstition connected with witches held its ground in our neighbourhood. It was believed that sometimes they took the form of hares. One day a lad was out shooting. He brought down a hare, which immediately stood up on its hind legs and wagged its fore paws. His companions told him that he had shot a witch, and that some calamity would befall him. On reaching his home in a state of terror, he was sent off to seek the advice of an old woman near at hand. She told him to go back to the spot and fire a piece of silver from the gun, after which he would be relieved of the bad effect of having shot a witch. The farm on which this happened was Lowes, in New Cumnock.

As indicating a curious phase of religious belief this story may be given. The old farmer at Shiel, many years ago, was in the habit of asking a lengthy blessing before meals. At break-

fast he always sought protection from the assaults of Satan, of whose movements he seems to have had an intimate knowledge. For this petition was regularly repeated:—"Deliver us from the devil, who goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He's here the noo, next moment he's in France, in a meenit he's in America, and then back again at the Shiel before breakfast time." The deep, personal interest of Satan in the farm of Shiel was evidently rooted in the good man's mind. Still he had a very clear conviction that, however speedy the enemy of man could be in his movements, he was not omnipresent. So far his theology was excellent.

A superstition of a different nature still lingers in the parish. Some old people will tell you that the door latch of the house in which a sick person lies, will be suddenly lifted and a step heard as of some one entering. Yet no one is there. This is regarded as a sure indication of the approaching end of the patient. It is the *dead knock* or the *dead step*. A case illustrative of this belief happened not long ago.

#### XVIII.—*The Father of the Cycle.*

The question is often asked at the present day, when cycling is a favourite pastime as well as a most speedy method of travelling, "Who introduced this mode of locomotion?" A good deal has been written in answer to this question. The place of honour has been usually given to Gavin Dalzell of Lesmahagow, who constructed and used a bicycle prior to 1846. Dalzell's bicycle was exhibited in the Glasgow exhibition of



1888 as "The first Bicycle." Ten years earlier, however, Kirkpatrick Macmillan of Closeburn anticipated Dalzell. "His bicycle," says an article in the *Windsor Magazine* for September, 1897, "was up to that time the only machine which placed the feet of the rider clear of the ground, and which could be propelled and steered satisfactorily." But more than sixty years before Macmillan's day, there was often seen in Cumnock a cycle, which can fairly claim to be the first ever made. It was not invented by a Cumnock man, but by a native of the parish of Auchinleck. While giving to Auchinleck all the honour connected with its manufacture, our own town saw it so frequently that reference to it is fitting here.

The maker of it was John Murdoch, the tenant of Bello Mill, close to the village of Lugar, and just a few yards from the boundary of Cumnock parish. The fame of John Murdoch has been eclipsed by that of his better known son, William, who, born in 1754, was "the first maker of a model locomotive in this country, the introducer of lighting by gas, and the inventor of many valuable parts of the working steam engine." Of Murdoch, the elder, it is said that "he made a wooden horse on which he could ride to Cumnock, a distance of two miles, in a very short time." Young William, who had a hand in making it, rode about on it too. The date at which it was first used is difficult to determine, but, as William went to England in 1771, it must have been earlier than that year. There are persons still in Cumnock, whose fathers were accustomed in their boyhood to go to Bello Mill and ride Murdoch's horse.

This oral tradition was put down in print at a fairly early

date. In 1829, a descriptive poem, entitled *A Tour in Ayrshire*, was written by H. Campbell, who thus refers to the inventions of the two Murdochs:—

“ And Murdoch (pass the author without blame,  
The world should know thy scientific fame,)  
Sprung from a curious deep-seated sire,  
Who rode a horse no mortal e'er could tire,  
Improved upon his predecessor's laws,  
And wrung from darkness bright refulgent gas.”

Lest there should be any doubt as to the meaning of his words, Campbell adds a note (p. 156), in which he says that William Murdoch's father, “ the honest and scientific proprietor of Bellamln, made a wooden horse on wheels, on which, by the assistance of propelling poles, he used to visit Cumnock.”

Now, it is certain that whatever the “ propelling poles ” exactly may have been, Campbell means to represent Murdoch, whose son William was alive at the time Campbell wrote, as riding upon his “ tireless horse ” without touching the ground with his feet. He propelled the poles, and thereby gave movement to his machine, just as the modern cyclist propels his machine by acting upon the pedals. Accordingly we may fairly claim for Murdoch the proud distinction of being the first of whom we know, to use the mechanical contrivance for locomotion, which in a splendidly perfect form is seen in the cycle of to-day. It seems hardly too much to say that he is the “ Father of the Modern Cycle.”

*XIX.—Feckless Fannie.*

More than a century and a quarter ago, there was seen occasionally in our district a lady shepherdess, whose story is at once romantic and pathetic. She was accompanied by a small flock of sheep, which displayed towards her a remarkable degree of affection. People spoke of her as *Feckless Fannie*. She wandered a good deal through Ayrshire, and had her favourite resting places in the open air, where she stayed overnight with her dumb friends. Fannie was the only daughter of a wealthy squire in the north of England. Having fallen in love with her father's shepherd, she incurred the anger of the squire, who in his passion shot her lover with a pistol. Ere he breathed his last, the shepherd bequeathed to her all he had, but she only accepted his hat, his crook and his plaid, along with a few sheep, and with these she proceeded to move about from place to place. By the shock she received, her mind became unhinged, and she would not be persuaded to return to her friends, or to avail herself of the shelter of a home during her wanderings.

The story of Fannie attracted the attention of Sir Walter Scott, who in his notes to *The Heart of Midlothian* confesses that his first conception of the character of Madge Wildfire, though afterwards greatly altered, was taken from this squire's daughter. All that is known of her, during the eight years she wandered in Ayrshire and Galloway, is to be found at length appended to Scott's well-known story.

Tradition fixes on one field in our neighbourhood, where

Fannie was accustomed to spend the night with her sheep. It is on the farm of Boreland.

*XX.—Old Parochial Registers.*

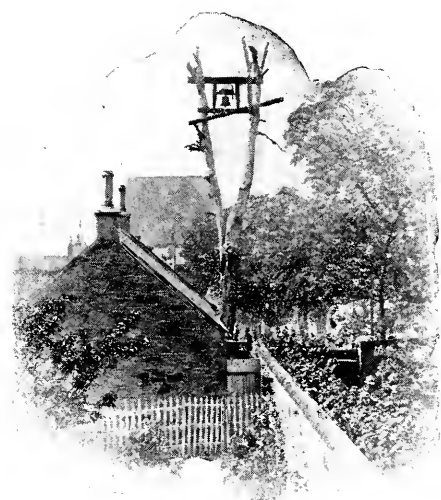
“The register of baptisms begins in 1704. There are blanks in it from 1706 to 1724, from 1739 to 1740, from 1746 to 1751, and from 1752 to 1753.

“The baptisms only are recorded up to the year 1768. After this period the births also are, for the most part, entered along with them. A few only of the Dissenters register their children. The register of proclamations for marriage begins in 1758; but up to the year 1782, no notice is taken of the marriages. Subsequent to this period, the date of the marriage is also entered. No register of deaths is kept.” So wrote Mr. Bannatyne in 1837 in the *New Statistical Account*. The documents referred to, now find a place in the Register House, Edinburgh.

The population of the parish in 1755 was 1336 persons.

		1765	„	1305	„
„	„	1792	„	1632	„
„	„	1821	„	2343	„
„	„	1831	„	2763	„
„	„	1841	„	2836	„
„	„	1851	„	3777	„
„	„	1861	„	3721	„
„	„	1871	„	4041	„
„	„	1881	„	4861	„
„	„	1891	„	4712	„





BELL TREE

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*XXI.—Peculiar Feu-Charters.*

One or two of the old feu-charters have embodied in them certain peculiar conditions, on the fulfilment of which alone, the superior can claim the duty. In Cooper's Close, for instance, there is ground held on the condition of the annual payment of one penny Scots, but it is part of the bargain that the landlord shall come for it in a coach and six. In other cases a small nominal fee is to be laid on the window-sill of the house at the appointed term, to be uplifted by the landlord or his agent. It is needless to say that payment is never exacted. Such tenures in legal phraseology are called "blench holdings."

*XXII.—The Bell Tree.*

For a number of years the bell tree was a familiar object in the town. When the old Established Church was taken down, the bell was removed and hung on an aged tree in the Strand, where it was regularly rung on Sabbaths and on other occasions. As a new bell was provided for the new church, the old one was no longer required. It continued, however, in its airy position, until the tree became too frail to bear its unusual burden. On the erection of the present school, an appropriate place was prepared for it, and now it regularly calls the children of the town to their lessons. The tree itself was condemned as dangerous and taken away.

To the minds of many dwellers in Cumnock, the mention of

the old bell will recall memories of the bellman, Hugh M'Lellan, who must be regarded as one of the interesting figures of the town in recent times. Many stories are told about him which reveal genuine mother-wit. Their comic element was greatly increased by a persistent stammer in his speech.

For some reason the belfry in the present Established Church was long in being completed. Alterations were frequently made upon it, and portions added, before it was ready for its proper purpose. Hugh caustically remarked about these changes and delays, "They're p-p-pitting it up in p-penny numbers."

On one occasion, as he was ringing the bell while it hung on the old tree, the heavy tongue of the bell fell down and narrowly missed his head. On recovering from his fright, he quietly said, "I've rung ye lang, m-m-my wumman, b-but this is the first t-t-time ye've ever p-p-pit oot your t-tongue at me."

### *XXIII.—The Flood of 1898.*

On the morning of 2nd December, 1898, a disastrous flood visited Cumnock. In little more than half-an-hour, the Lugar and the Glaisnock rose eight feet above their ordinary level. The low-lying parts of the town were speedily inundated, the rooms in some cases having more than three feet of water in them. Wooden bridges were carried away at various points, while much damage was done to goods and property. Fortunately no lives were lost. Had the flood taken place during the night, many persons would, in all probability, have been swept away by



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the vast volume of water, which rushed past the doors of the houses.

No similar occurrence has happened within living memory. To find a parallel case we need, perhaps, to go back to the year 1775, when a flood on the Lugar deposited sand on the site of the first Secession Church.

*XXIV.—The Knights Templars.*

The Knights Templars seem to have held property in Cumnock, as the phrase Temple Lands (*terrae templariae*) occurs in old records. No trace of them, however, is now to be found in our parish, though Temple and Templand are to be met with in Auchinleck.

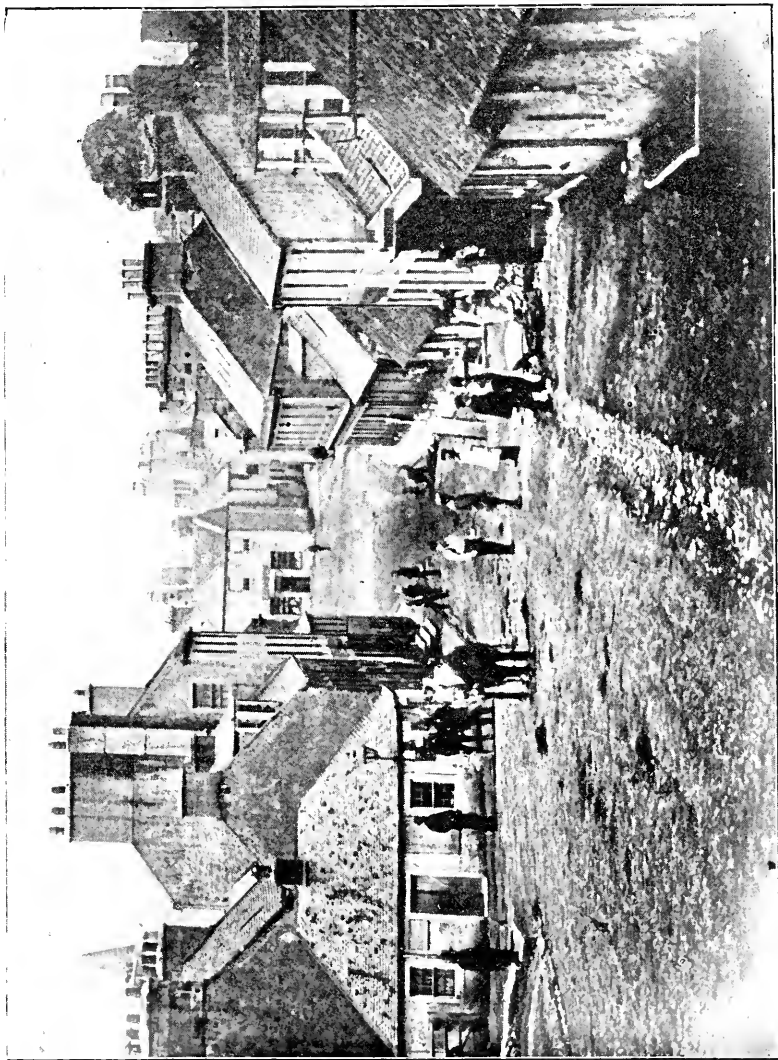
## CHAPTER XVI.

*Cumnock of To-day.*

Speak of me as I am ; nothing extenuate  
Nor set down aught in malice.

—*Shakespeare.*

THE changes that have come over the town of Cumnock during the last fifty years are very great. Improvements are to be seen on every hand. To those who remember the old-fashioned village half a century ago, the place hardly looks the same. There has been wonderful growth in the size of the town. Within a much shorter period than has been mentioned, many new houses have been erected along the roads that lead out of Cumnock. With the exception of old buildings like those in the Spout Row and the Pottery Row (formerly called the New Row), the town long ago was practically made up of the Square, with the Townhead Street running in one direction and the Townfoot in the other. Now it stretches itself out in four other directions. According to the latest returns, there are 708 inhabited houses in the burgh, with an estimated population of 3,450. In 1831 the population of the town numbered only 1600. Within a period therefore of sixty-seven years, the town has increased in population 108 per cent. In the landward part of the parish there are about 1450 persons, making a total estimated population of 4900 in the parish at the present time.



GLAISNOCK STREET FIFTY YEARS AGO.  
(FORMERLY CALLED THE GORBALS)



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Great improvement has also taken place in the character of the buildings erected. Not to speak of the comfortable villas and cottages built away from the business part of the town, Glaisnock Street and the Square have been almost completely re-modelled. The old tenements, with their low doors and picturesque thatch roofs, have disappeared, and their place has been taken by large and substantial buildings. Every class of shop has multiplied three or four times over.

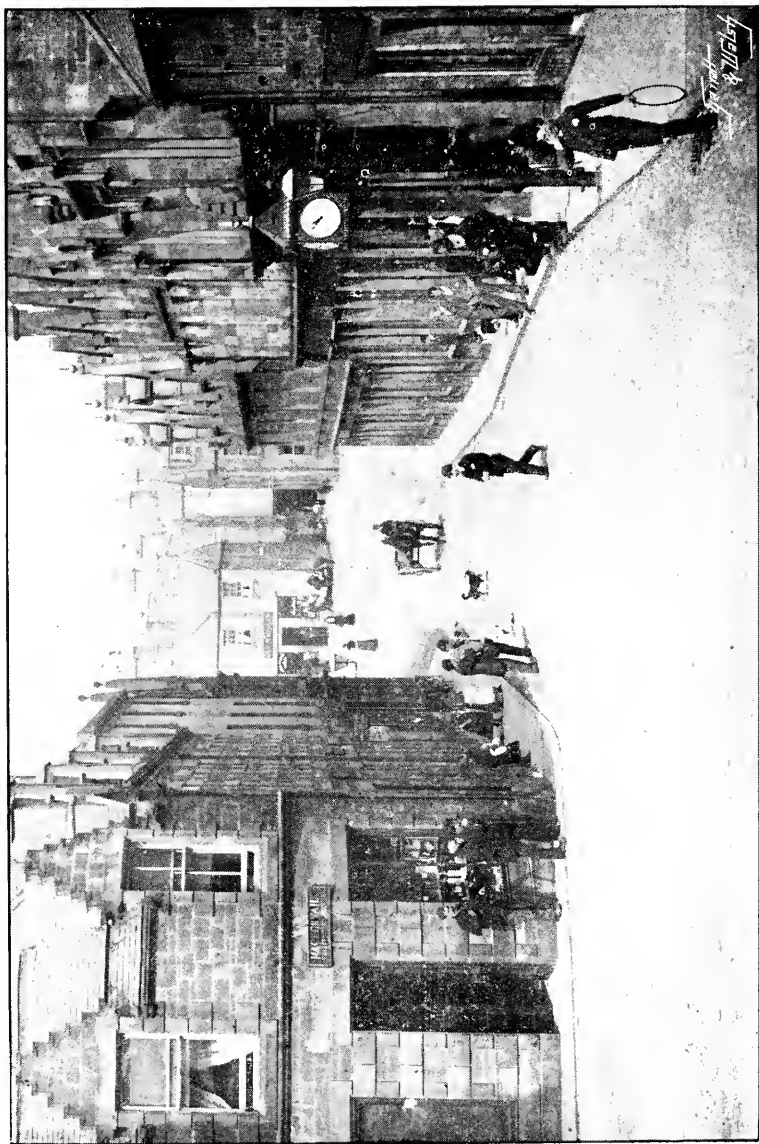
Up till 1866, the streets were in utter darkness after sunset. Not even an oil lamp threw out its feeble, yellow light. Though the Gas Company was founded in 1837, and undertook to supply gas to householders, it was not till 1866 that steps were taken to light the public streets. Up to the same time, too, all the water required for domestic purposes, in addition to rain water, was obtained at the pumps in the street. That supply, never very sufficient, threatened to run short through the drainage caused by the pits underneath the town. Accordingly, it was needful to provide a new supply from another source. After due consideration, it was agreed to form a reservoir on the farm of Boreland Smithy, at a height of 237 feet above the level of the Square. Filters were made a little lower down. The cost of carrying out this scheme was over £2400. On the 11th January, 1869, the townspeople were informed that they could take the water into their houses. The boon thus conferred upon the community has proved incalculable. The assessment per annum for the use of water has varied. It has been as high as 8d. per £ of rental, and as low as 5d. For the present year it is 6d.

Various results have followed the introduction of a plentiful supply of water. In 1875, provision was made against fire by the insertion of fire plugs on the main pipes, and the purchase of a fire hose. A fire brigade was also organized, which languished, however, partly from lack of cohesion and partly, and very fortunately as well, from lack of employment. In 1896, it was set on a proper footing, and each of its members insured by the town for £250.

These beneficial changes could not have been brought about, unless there had been some representative authority acting in the name of the town and watching over its welfare. Accordingly we may say that they have been the direct result of the erection of Cumnock into a burgh. That took place in 1866. Opinion is universal now that the step was a good one, by which our town determined to avail itself of the powers and privileges of the Police Act of 1862. Yet considerable uncertainty prevailed at the time, and a good deal of opposition to the adoption of the Act was shown. At the meeting held for the purpose on the 5th November, 1866, only 67 persons voted. Of these 35 supported the adoption of the Burgh Act, and 32 expressed disapproval. The majority was small, but it was sufficient. Application was made at once to the Sheriff, who had no difficulty in declaring Cumnock to be a populous place in terms of the Act, and authorised the election of nine Commissioners, of whom one was to be called the Senior Police Magistrate or Provost, and two were to be Junior Police Magistrates or Bailies. The remaining six were to be ordinary Commissioners.

The election of these representatives was immediately pro-





GLAISNOCK STREET.



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ceeded with, and the first meeting of the Police Commissioners of Cumnock was held on the 10th December, 1866. The full title given to the new Burgh was *The Burgh of Cumnock and Holmhead*, the name Holmhead indicating that the part of the parish of Auchinleck, close to the town, and known as Holmhead, was joined to Cumnock for municipal purposes. It was this portion of Auchinleck which, in 1895, was joined to Cumnock for parochial purposes as well.

In October, 1869, the Commissioners agreed to establish a Court for the trial of offenders within the burgh. This Court has been regularly maintained since then. It meets as occasion requires, under the presidency of one of the magistrates. In 1880, the question of providing a Town Hall was raised, but the matter did not take shape till 1883, when Lord Bute gave a free site and £500 towards the erection of a suitable hall. Subscriptions were given by the people of the town and by friends outside, with the result that the large and handsome hall in Glaisnock Street, with its suite of smaller rooms, was opened on the 7th June, 1885, by a concert, over which Lord Bute presided. Few provincial towns can lay claim to the possession of a finer building for public purposes. It cost nearly £3000. A debt of £750, which rested on it at the time of its opening, and which gradually increased to £1000, was swept away in 1896 by means of a bazaar.

Since its institution as a burgh, Cumnock has enjoyed the services of seven different Provosts. The term of office is three years. The names of the Provosts, with their dates of office down to the present time, are as follows:—

---

WILLIAM DALGLEISH,	-	-	1866-1869.	
”	”	-	-	1869-1872.
”	”	-	-	1872-1875.
”	”	-	-	1875-1878.
JOHN McCOWAN,	-	-	-	1878-1881.
GEORGE T. SAMSON,	-	-	-	1881-1884.
”	”	-	-	1884-1887.
WILLIAM McLETCHE,	-	-	-	1887-1890.
JOHN BANNATYNE,	-	-	-	1890-1893.
THOMAS HUNTER,	-	-	-	1893-1896.
JAMES RICHMOND,	-	-	-	1896-

The civic reign of all these gentlemen has been characterized by much excellent work, for which the town can only express deep gratitude. Some of them stand out conspicuously as associated with great improvements in the burgh. Thus Mr. Dalgleish's name will always be connected with the introduction of gas into the public streets, and also of the present water supply; Mr. Samson's with the erection of the Town Hall; and Mr. Hunter's with the extinction of the debt with which the hall was burdened. Other improvements, which would greatly enhance the amenity of Cumnock, await the advent of a Provost, who has the courage and the ability, along with his fellow officials, to carry them out. Chief among these improvements is the thorough and efficient sanitary drainage of the town. This may even be called a necessity. The hot months of summer prove it to be so. The time for dealing with the question has fully come. The Provost who, supported by the popular vote, or pressed by the Public Health

Authorities, takes up this problem and solves it in a satisfactory way, will achieve even a more lasting title to honour than any of his predecessors. The expense certainly would be heavy, but the benefit conferred would be cheap at any price.

Improvements of a smaller kind might also be suggested, such as the provision of seats along the country roads, a work in which the Parish Council could well associate itself with the town authorities. Additional trees planted at intervals on the public streets, and even in the Square, would lend new beauty to the town. The drinking fountain, erected in the Square in memory of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, provides a free supply of water to quench the thirst of the busy worker and of the stranger far from home. But no drinking trough for horses is to be found within the limits of the burgh, or immediately outside of them. Our beasts of burden might well have this want supplied.

A new feature was added to the social life of the town by the opening, in 1891, of the Baird Institute, in Lugar Street, by the trustees of the late John Baird, in accordance with his will. It is a striking edifice, and embraces a reading room, well supplied with newspapers and magazines, a small museum of curios collected by Mr. Baird, a recreation room, and a billiard room. The institute, for membership in which a small annual fee qualifies, is largely patronised, especially during the winter months. A much older institution is the Athenæum Library, whose treasures are deposited in the Town Hall, and laid at the disposal of the public on payment of a trifling charge.

Of facilities for healthy recreation there is so great a supply in

the town that, if mere recreation could elevate a community in the truest sense, Cumnock ought almost before now to have reached the height of perfection. Our splendid bowling greens take a leading place in Ayrshire, while our spacious tennis courts afford ample scope for all who glory in the racket and the ball. More recently a golf club has been formed, with a short course over parks quite close to the town. Near at hand, too, football is provided for its devotees. Winter with its frost draws enthusiastic curlers to Woodhead, where the roaring game proceeds from early morn, till darkness drops its curtain on well-played stone and busy broom. Skaters exhibit the outside edge and cut many curious figures on the same sheet of ice, while, nearer home, the Flush attracts the younger portion of the community.

Recreation of a different kind, with the possibility of a sterner purpose in view, is afforded to others in the drill and rifle shooting provided by the auxiliary military services of the Crown. The E Company of the 2nd V.B. Royal Scots Fusiliers has its headquarters in Cumnock, as well as the C troop of the Ayrshire Yeomanry Cavalry (Earl of Carrick's Own). The targets, where rifle practice is carried on, are at the Bank.

Two societies pay homage to St. Cecilia—the Choral Union and the Cumnock Orchestra. A Literary Society affords in winter opportunity to its members of acquiring facility in correct writing and fluent speaking. The love of flowers, which the gardens of the town so beautifully betray, finds special expression in September in the annual exhibition of the Horticultural Society. The Agricultural Association, appealing more directly

to the farmers of the district, holds its cattle show early in April. Thrift makes its claims upon the community through no fewer than six different societies. The Foresters, Free Gardeners, Freemasons, Oddfellows, Rechabites, and Shepherds have all set up a court, a lodge, or a tent in our midst, and endeavour with generous rivalry to lengthen their borders and strengthen their stakes. A Total Abstinence Society, with a prolonged history, patiently bears witness against the great evil of intemperance.

In addition to the Burgh Court presided over by the Magistrates, law and order are represented by a Justice of the Peace Court, held on the first Monday of every month, for our own parish and for New Cumnock, Mauchline, Sorn, Muirkirk, Auchinleck, and Ochiltree. For the same district four times a year a Sheriff Court is held, presided over by the Sheriff-Substitute of Ayrshire. A Superintendent of Police and a staff of constables protect our persons and our property from harm. The Parish Council, which came into existence in 1895, is charged with the care of the poor and with other duties connected with the well-being of the community. It consists of fourteen members, nine of whom represent the burgh, and five the landward portion of the parish. A Cottage Hospital for accident cases, built on the Barrhill Road in 1882, is maintained by Lady Bute. Three banks, with handsome premises, the Bank of Scotland, the Royal, and the Clydesdale, offer financial facilities to the people.

On application to the Sheriff in 1876, power was granted to secure a new cemetery on the outskirts of the town. The site chosen was a field on the Glaisnock Road, immediately beyond

the line of the Ayr and Cumnock Railway. The old churchyard on the Barrhill Road, which has been used for fully one hundred and forty years, is gradually being closed. The number of memorial stones in the new cemetery are a striking proof of the ceaseless harvest reaped by death.

Two local newspapers appear week by week. *The Cumnock Express*, published in Ayr, upholds the interests of the Conservative party, while the principles of Liberalism are expounded by *The Cumnock News*, printed in Ardrossan. Both papers devote a large space to the news of the town and neighbourhood.

Fifty years ago all public communication with the outside world was by coach. As Cumnock lay on the great main road from the West of Scotland to England, a coach passed each way every day between Glasgow and Carlisle. Two local coaches left the town daily. The *Independent* carried passengers to Ayr, while *The Lass of Ballochmyle* ran to Kilmarnock. Now we have our two lines of railway with a station at each end of the town, giving opportunities for speedy travelling never dreamt of by our more leisurely grandfathers.

Certain industries carried on at present deserve to be noticed. The oldest business of any kind in the neighbourhood is the spinning and woollen factory known as Lugar Mills, and founded so long ago as 1718. Dyeing also is prosecuted in the same premises. A much later establishment of a similar kind is the Greenholm factory. Two engineering firms turn out thrashing mills, water wheels, cheese presses and churns. Our local pottery maintains its reputation through the special brown ware, which it sends out under the name of Cumnock pottery, and also

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through its glazed flowerpots. Besides a factory for jams and confections, there is one for the production of aerated waters. A small coachwork also exists. These industries employ a fair proportion of the labour power of the community, and contribute to the commercial prosperity of the burgh.

In the landward portion of the parish, agriculture receives its due share of attention. The farms are largely pastoral. One hardly ever sees a field of wheat or barley. Practically the only grain crop is oats, which farmers raise chiefly for their own use. Root crops are grown almost wholly for consumption on the farm. Grass parks for pasture and hay are the feature of the parish. Dairy farms more or less extensive everywhere abound, with 15 to 30 milk cows in each. Cheese of an excellent quality is produced. A few farmers send milk by train every morning to Kilmarnock or Glasgow, railway facilities of a favourable nature being provided for the purpose.

The system prevails to a small extent still, by which a farmer sublets a portion of his ground with suitable premises attached, and undertakes to supply his tenant with milk cows at so much per head. He thus lets not only the parks, but the cattle as well. The price for each cow per year is £9 or £10. According to the bargain made, the farmer may also supply a quantity of turnips and meal for feeding. The tenant, who enters into this arrangement, is called a "bower," a name which has the same origin and pronunciation as the Dutch word "Boer." The farm taken under such conditions is known as a "bowing." The practice, however, of taking a bowing is not so common now as formerly.

The only mill in the parish is at Boreland. It is both for

meal and wood. In 1837, there were three corn mills and one wheat mill. In olden days, too, there was a *walk* mill at Logan, on the banks of the Lugar, and another at the foot of Donaldson Braes, on the Glaisnock.

The district abounds in minerals, the royalties on which bring the Marquis of Bute a large annual revenue. Coal has been freely worked for more than 130 years. Dr. Miller tells us in 1793 that one coal mine had been in operation for more than thirty years. He puts the number of colliers in the parish at eighteen. The number of coalpits now wrought in the parish is four. The output of coal for the year ending 31st May, 1898, was 141,000 tons. The average number of workers in connection with these pits is 350 below ground and 60 above ground. Ironstone was likewise worked to a considerable extent within the limits of the parish, but the pits have all been wrought out. Practically the whole of Cumnock is undermined by the workings, a fact to which the falling of ceilings, the jamming of doors, and occasionally the cracking of walls bear sufficient testimony. A number of pit-workers live in the town, but miners' cottages at Glengyron, Garrallan, and Skares provide accommodation for them, in fair proximity to their work. The pits in Auchinleck parish have also a good many workers who live in Cumnock.

Stone is not quarried to any extent in the parish now. A famous quarry with a splendid white sandstone was worked for many years at the back of the Mote hill. The quarry became exhausted more than a quarter of a century ago. Most of the houses and public buildings erected recently, are of red stone



from the extensive quarries at Ballochmyle, close to Mauchline. Sometimes a stone of a pink hue, found near the village of Auchinleck, is employed. But the Ballochmyle stone is at present the favourite. The Public School, the Town Hall, the Congregational Church, and the new Free Church are all built of it.

No institution has grown to such large dimensions in Cumnock as the Post Office, which had its day of small things when letters were delivered throughout the parish, under the superintendence first of the schoolmaster and then of a postmaster, who had a business of his own to carry on as well. Now the Post Office has reached its day of great things, with its six indoor officials and its eight post-runners. No record can be given of the number of missives which fell to be delivered fifty years ago, but one letter-carrier was able to overtake the whole work. According to the returns for the year 1897, there were received for delivery in the town and district:—

181,116 letters,  
 89,856 book packets,  
 24,596 newspapers,  
 10,036 parcels,  
 57,252 postcards,  
 4,278 telegrams,

making a total of 367,134 documents distributed from house to house, while there were handed in to the Post Office for despatch,

205,660 letters,  
 34,528 book packets,

23,400 newspapers,  
4,264 parcels,  
54,756 postcards,  
4,353 telegrams,

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making a total of 326,961 documents dealt with and despatched. In addition, 19,293 telegrams were received in Cumnock for transmission to other places, and as these messages have to be taken off the wires and forwarded anew, some idea will be gained of the importance of our Post Office as a centre, and of the amount of work to be done by those in charge.

During the last five years the average number of persons in receipt of parochial relief has been 71, being about one recipient for every 67 individuals in the parish. The sum allowed to each, per week, varies from 2s. to 6s. ; the average grant is 3s. The assessment for the poor in 1898 was 8½d. per £ of rental, paid in equal shares by proprietors and occupiers. The total receipts for the same year amounted to £1003 8s. The expenditure was £994 7s. 5d. That sum, therefore, represents the burden imposed by law upon the parish, in relation to those who are unable to maintain themselves. Much charity is likewise given privately, as well as through the different congregations in the town.

The gross rental of the parish in 1898 was £27,474 8s. Sixty years before, it was about £8000. Within that period, therefore, the value of the parish has increased more than threefold.

Enough has now been said to show that Cumnock has made great progress in many different ways. Much rebuilding has taken place. The large amount of new building which made its

appearance twenty-five years ago, testified at once to the prosperity and the enterprise of the inhabitants. Since then, however, the erection of new houses has in large measure ceased, and as a result Cumnock no longer grows. There cannot be any doubt, that this cessation in the expansion of Cumnock has been owing to the difficulty experienced in obtaining sites on favourable terms from the feudal superior, to whom practically the whole of the soil on which the town is built belongs. It has been the custom of Lord Bute and his predecessors to grant ground for building purposes, only on a lease of 99 years. No grievance would be felt on this matter, if compensation for the property built were given at the time it passed to the Marquis. But by the conditions on which the lease is given, not only does the shop or house fall into the hands of the feudal superior at the end of the 99 years, but it is to be surrendered in good, habitable order. A considerable amount of property, of the annual value of more than £140, has already been handed over to Lord Bute, in accordance with this agreement. A great deal more will fall to him during the next 25 or 30 years, while almost all the new villas and cottages which have been built in recent times, will pass to his heirs on the expiry of the allotted term. It is estimated that there are 120 different properties in Cumnock just now held on this tenure. These represent an annual value in rent of over £3000. At fourteen years' purchase they are worth £42,000. In due course they must all be delivered up, without a single penny of compensation.

Let the matter be put definitely for the sake of illustration. A man builds a dwelling-house on ground for which he pays the

stipulated duty. The house costs, let us suppose, £400. He and his successors keep it till the first day of the hundredth year after the lease was granted. That very morning it belongs to them no longer, though they paid for every stone of it. The feudal superior steps in, takes it over from them "in good, tenantable and sufficient repair," and charges them for remaining in it something like £18 or £20 a year. Such a procedure to be enacted as the years roll on, in the case of the 120 properties held on these conditions, abundantly proves the literal truth of a clause which appears in a certain "tack." For it is there said that this "ground is let for the special purpose of building a house or houses thereupon, for the benefit and improvement of the said Marquis of Bute's estate."

It is this condition, then, imposed upon all who seek to build new properties, that has kept back the growth of Cumnock and retarded its prosperity in recent years. Business of every description would have greatly increased, if facilities for building houses, workshops, and factories had been more reasonable. It is not for the historian to enlarge on the moral aspect of the question. Hard as they may seem, the terms, on which alone the lord superior has been willing to grant ground, were agreed to by those who took it. Of course, they could not get it on any other condition, and the case could be argued from that point of view. But the fact remains that the purchasers of the ground entered into the bargain, and, however onesided it may be, the bargain must be fulfilled. No court of law would interfere with the action of Lord Bute. Legally his position is unassailable.

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In 1898 permission was given to feu the glebe. On the Auchinleck estate, in the immediate vicinity of the town, leases of 999 years may be secured, but the sites to be obtained are not so suitable as those on the ground of the Marquis. Is it too much to hope that the noble Lord will yet listen to the prayer of the people of Cumnock, and in the exercise of a gracious power, remove the restrictions which have interfered so long with the growth and prosperity of our town ?



## INDEX.

---

- Adamson, Rev. John, a disorderly preacher, 103.  
 Antiquities, 14-17.  
 Auchinleck, 3, 4, 9, 14, 25, 35, 55, 84, 97, 136, 171.
- Bagimond's Roll, 63-65.  
 Baird Institute, 194, 353.  
 Balfour, Rev. Dr., of Sorn, 129.  
 Ballochmyle Quarry, 359.  
 Bank, The, 9, 13.  
 Bannatyne, Rev. Ninian, 10, 11, 69, 131-134, 202, 209, 217, 271, 285, 317, 344.  
 Baptismal Customs, 210, 311.  
 Barbour's *Bruce*, 57, 59.  
 Barons, power of, 43.  
 Bass Rock, the, 168.  
 Beggars, 329-331.  
 Bello Path, 176, 184, 195.  
 Bell Tree, 345.  
 Beltane, 214.  
 Black Agnes of Dunbar, 29-31.  
 Black Loch, 10.  
 Black Rock, 56.  
 Blackie, Professor J. S., 175.  
 Blench Holdings, 345.  
 Blind Harry, 55.  
 Blue Tower, the, 176.  
 Body-snatching, 227.  
 Bonshaw, 161.  
 Boreland Castle, 8, 23, 187.  
 Boswells of Auchinleck, the, 35, 171.  
 Boswell, Sir Alexander, 242, 289.  
 Bothwell Bridge, battle of, 180.  
*Bower*, 357.  
 Boxmaking, 240-251.  
 Bridges, 322.  
 Broose, riding the, 309-311.  
 Brown, Rev. Dr. James, 147, 298-300.  
 Brown, Rev. Robert, 147.
- Brownies, 338.  
 Bruce, Robert, 28, 31, 57-61.  
 Buchanites, the, 285.  
 Building Leases, 361-363.  
 Burgess Oath, 138.  
 Burgh, creation of, 350.  
 Burgh Court, 351.  
 Burns, Robert, 160, 231-239, 291.  
 Bute, Lady, 355.  
 Bute, Lord, 14, 19, 22, 23, 33, 42, 154, 302, 307, 351, 358, 361-363.  
 Bute, the late Lord, 42, 132, 307, 322.
- Cairnscadden, 5, 18.  
 Cambuslang Revival, 108, 117.  
 Cameron, Rev. Richard, 174, 191-193.  
 Cameronians, the, 99, 172.  
 Campbell, Rev. George, 85.  
 Campbell, Rev. Robert, 157.  
 Cemetery, new, 355.  
 Chapel-house, 69.  
 Chess-playing, 277.  
*Chesting*, 312.  
 Charter, royal, 51-54.  
 Choir, vicars of the, 67.  
 Cholera, 334.  
 Church, earliest reference to, 65.  
 Church discipline, 199-204.  
 Church, murder in, 34.  
 Church, patronage of, 65.  
 Church services, 204-213.  
 Churchyard, 224-228.  
 Claverhouse, 185-187.  
 Coal, output of, 358.  
 Colliers, 261, 331, 358.  
 Coldsideheads, 302.  
 Communion Tokens, 210.  
 Congregational Church, the, 152-154.  
 Cope, Sir John, 114.  
 Corsegelloch, 165, 178, 194, 195.  
 Covenanting Banners, etc., 193-195.

- Covenant, National, 91, 92.  
 Covenant of Householders, 314-316.  
 Creichton, Captain John, 184.  
 Crichton of Abercrombie, 39, 95, 96.  
 Crichton Peel, 40, 41.  
 Crichton, Rev. Dr. Hugh, 155, 295.  
 Crichton, Sheriff James A., 134, 297.  
 Cromlech, v. Dolmen.  
 Cubs' Glen, 13, 56.  
 Cumnock Castle, 27, 38, 56, 60, 61, 186, 187.  
 Cumnock, meaning of, 5-7.  
 Cunningham, Professor Alexander, 96, 274-279, 281.  
 Cunningham, Rev. James, 90.  
 Cunynghame, Rev. John, 39, 95, 281.  
 Cunynghame of Caprintoun, 38, 39, 48, 50.  
 Cycle, the first, 340-342.  
  
 Dead Knock, 340,  
 Dettingen Wood, 12.  
 Dickie, Rev. Matthew, 149-151.  
 Dolmen, 15.  
 Dogs drawing carts, 308.  
 Dovecot, 328.  
 Dress in olden times, 323.  
 Drinking customs at funerals, 314.  
 Druids, the, 15-17.  
 Drumclog, battle of, 193.  
 Drummer, the, 332.  
 Drummond, Rev. George, 295-297.  
 Dumfries House, 13, 19, 21, 310, 322.  
 Dumfries, Countess of, 256.  
 Dumfries, Earls of, 1, 20, 23, 39, 41, 93, 96, 97, 124, 139, 169, 171, 182, 184, 219, 226, 289, 303, 327.  
 Dun, David, 163-167.  
 Dunbars of Cumnock, 32-38.  
 Dunbars of Mochrum, 33, 39.  
 Dunbars of Westfield, 32, 33, 37.  
 Dunbar, Bishop of Glasgow, 21, 39.  
 Dunbar, Bishop Gavin, of Aberdeen, 38.  
 Dunbar, Rev. George, 88-90.  
 Dunbar, Rev. John, 81-83.  
  
 Education, 263-273.  
 Edward I., 26, 27, 56, 60.  
 Edward II., 28, 31, 60.  
 Edward III., 61.  
 Election incidents, 337.  
  
 Epidemics, 333-335.  
 Erskine, Rev. Ralph, 111, 143.  
 Established Church (old), building of, 223.  
 Established Church (new), building of, 223.  
 Ettrick Shepherd, the, 165.  
  
 Fair Maid of Cumnock, 13.  
 Fairies, 338.  
 Fairs, 52, 304-309.  
 Fast Days, 206.  
*Feckless Fannie*, 343.  
 Feu-Charters, peculiar, 345.  
 Flodden, battle of, 35.  
 Floods, 140, 346.  
 Folklore, 338-340.  
 Food in olden times, 323.  
 Food, price of, 325.  
 Fordyce, Rev. Francis, 98-100.  
 Frazer, Rev. John, 127-131, 206.  
 Free Church, 132-135.  
 Free Church School, 268.  
 French Invasion, 173.  
 French, John, 288-290.  
 Funeral customs, 312-317.  
  
 Gallows Knowe, 35, 44, 161, 163, 167, 171.  
 Gas Company, 349.  
 George II., 12.  
 Gillespie, Rev. Thomas, 111.  
 Glaisnock, the, 4, 10.  
 Glaisnock Glen, 13.  
 Glebe altered, 226.  
 Gow, Neil, 289.  
 Grant, Rev. P. W., 152.  
  
 Halbert, Rev. John, 188, 190, 191.  
 Halkeid, Rev. John, 39, 95.  
 Hall, Rev. James, 140-142, 232.  
 Hallow Chapel, v. Chapel-house.  
 Hammiltoun, Rev. William, 86-88.  
 Henderson, Alexander, 93.  
 Hepburn of Urr, 106, 137.  
 Heritors, list of, 222.  
 Highest point in parish, 4.  
*Home's Tragedy of Douglas*, 107.  
 Holmhead, 3, 351.  
 Hospital, 355.  
 Houston, Rev. David, 175-178, 195.  
 Howie of Lochgoin, 160, 170.



- Hume, Rev. Patrick, 335.  
 Humiliation, days of, 116.  
 Hutton, Rev. William, 151.
- Infirmary, Glasgow, privilege in connection with, 217.  
 Industries, past, 240-262.  
 Industries, present, 356-359.
- Johnson, Rev. Dr. James S., 156.  
 Jongs, the, 223.  
 Justice of Peace Court, 355.
- Kennedy, Rev. Alexander, 155.  
 Kennedy, John, 235.  
 Ker of Kerland, 172.  
 Kilpatrick, Rev. Hugh, 100-101.  
 Kirns, 288, 328.  
 Knights Templars, 347.  
 Knox, John, 21, 39, 85, 264.  
 Kyle Castle, 9.
- Lawson, Rev. Dr., 143, 147.  
 Lefnoreis Castle, 8, 19, 41, 49.  
 Lefnoreis, Craufurds of, 19-21.  
 Leitch, William L., 247-249.  
 Logan, Rev. Allan, 155, 280-281.  
 Logan, Rev. George, 155, 281-284.  
 Logan, Hugh, 227, (284)-288.  
 Logan, William, 279.  
 Lord's Supper, celebration of, 105, 205, 208-210.  
 Lugar, the, 4, 9, 44, 140.
- March, Earls of, 26-32, 65.  
 Market Cross, 52, 301-304.  
 Markets, 49, 52, 301, 305.  
 Marriage Customs, 140, 211, 309.  
*Marrow of Modern Divinity*, 280.  
 Miller, Patrick, of Dalswinton, 290.  
 Miller, Rev. Dr. Thomas, 69, 122-127, 226, 316.  
 Miller, Rear-Admiral Thomas, 127.  
 Mitchell, Rev. Dr. Andrew, 237.  
 Mochrum, 33, 39.  
 Note Hill, 9, 44, 358.  
 Murdoch, John, 341.  
 Murdoch, William, 341.  
 Muir, Rev. George, 108-122, 202, 206, 214, 223, 334.  
 Murray, Rev. James, 135, 163, 174, 253.  
 Muslin Flowering, 257.
- Macdowall, Patrick, of Freugh, 41, 327.  
 Macnee, Sir Daniel, 245-247.  
 M'Cartney, George, 293-295.  
 M'Culloch, Horatio, 247.  
 M'Geachan, John, 176-178, 183.  
 M'Lellan, Hugh, 346.
- New Cumnock, 1, 4, 38, 44, 58, 178.  
 Newspapers, 356.  
 Nimmo, Rev. Samuel, 96-98.
- Oath of Abjuration, 104-106.  
 Ochiltree, 3, 8, 9, 20, 84, 103, 167.  
 Ochiltree, Colville of, 35.  
*Old Mortality*, 166.
- Parish Council, 355.  
 Parish, rental of, 360.  
 Parochial Registers, 344.  
 Parochial relief, 213-218, 222, 360.  
 Paterson, Simon, 163-166.  
 Peden, Alexander, 45, 167-175.  
 Penny Weddings, 310.  
 Pentland Rising, 178-179.  
 Pikemen, 333.  
*Pirleuing*, 129.  
 Poor, gifts to the, 216-218.  
 Population, 344, 348.  
 Post Office, 359.  
 Precentor, 212, 223.  
 Pre-Reformation Clergy, 67.  
 Prince Charlie, 114, 121, 282.  
 Prophecies, 24.  
 Provosts, 352.
- Queensberry, Earl of, 39, 40.  
 Queen Victoria, 245, 247, 248, 249, 353.
- Race, the, 308.  
 Randolph, Earl of Moray, 29, 59.  
 Rankine, Annie, 233-235.  
 Rankine, John, 138-140.  
 Regality Court, 98.  
 Rent in kind, 326.  
 Renwick, Rev. James, 165, 175.  
 Repentance stool, 200.  
 Reservoir, 349.  
 Richard, Thomas, 161-163.  
 Roads, 225, 318-322.  
 Romans in Ayrshire, 17-19.  
 Rule, Principal, 99, 100.  
 Rynd, Rev. John, 84, 85.

- Samson, Rev. James, 156.  
 Schankiston, 35, 70, 174.  
 School fees, 268.  
 Schoolmasters, 228, 267, 269.  
 School, New Year custom at, 270.  
 Scott, Sir Walter, 29, 32, 76, 184, 343.  
 Servitudes, 325-328.  
 Shearers, Irish, 173, 329.  
 Shoemaking, 259.  
 Simson, Rev. Professor, Glasgow, 102, 281.  
 Simson, William, 232, 267, 316.  
 Skerrington, 34, 50.  
 St. Blais, 85.  
 St. Conval, 54, 71-80.  
 St. Kentigern, 71.  
 St. Matthew, 52, 54, 304.  
 Stage Coaches, 356.  
 Steam vessel, first, 291.  
 Steel, Rev. John, 101-106.  
 Steel, Rev. John, of Stair, 106, 107.  
 Stevenson, Robert Louis, 297.  
 Stewart, Professor Dugald, 123.  
 Stewart, Professor Matthew, 123.  
  
 Tables, Committee of the, 90.  
 Tanning, 258.  
 Taylor, James, 290-292.  
 Taylor, Rev. Dr. W. M., 151.  
 Temple Lands, 347.  
 Tent preaching, 143, 209.  
  
 Terringzean Castle, 8, 21, 22.  
 Thomson, Rev. Adam, 107, 108.  
 Thornhill Museum, 14.  
 Thorn Trees, Peden's, 173.  
 Thrashing mills, improvements in, 293.  
 Tolls, 321.  
 Total Abstinence Society, 150, 229, 355.  
 Travelling, means of, 318.  
 Trees, large, 12.  
 Tombstones, 335.  
 Town Hall, 351.  
 Turnbull, William, Bishop of Glasgow, 68.  
 Turner, Sir James, 179.  
  
 Union of Scotland and England, 101.  
 United Presbyterian Church, 136-152.  
  
 Wages, 261.  
 Wallace, Colonel, 179.  
 Wallace, Sir William, 27, 55-57.  
 Water supply, 349.  
 Weaving, 251-257.  
 Welsh, Rev. John, 88, 333.  
 Welsh, Rev. Robert E., 158.  
 Whitefield, George, 109, 114.  
 Wilson, Rev. David, 142-146.  
 Wishart, George, 21.  
 Witherspoon, Rev. Dr., 121.  
 Witches, 339.







