

MUIRKIRK IRONWORKS



WORKERS AT THE FORGE

MUIRKIRK IN BYGONE DAYS

BY

J. G. A. BAIRD

WITH

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PARISH

Published in 1761

BY AN UNKNOWN WRITER

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Thirdly, The Whitehaugh water has its rise near a place called Tack-me-down, on the south limits of the Parish of Avendale; at which place there is a road that leads from the shire of Lanerk to that of Air; thus it runs about a mile directly S. and receives a rapid rivulet called Pobeth, which takes its rise on the S.W. side of the hill called Bubland, opposite to the head of that called the Strand above mentioned. After running about two miles directly W. it meets the Whitehaugh Water, where they both unite, and then turns a little S.W. about half a mile, at which place is that store-room called the Over-Whitehaugh; continuing its course a mile further, where stands that ancient place called Nether Whitehaugh, the property of the Laird of Logan, it takes its course directly S.E. about another mile, where stands a gentlemen's seat, called the Garpell aforesaid, and then it empties itself into the River of Air.

All these rivers, especially the Rivers of Air and Greenock, afford plenty of trouts; but few or no salmon are found there in the summer; they only frequent these waters about the Michaelmas time for spawning, and then they abound in such plenty, that I have known one family to kill two dozen in one night, with listers, by the light of bleezes made of heather, of which that Parish hath great plenty.

This Parish tho' mountainous is exceeding good for pasturage, affording great store of sheep, which is the chief commodity the inhabitants depend on; there are storemasters here whose rooms contain more than ninety score of old sheep, besides lambs. They have also a great deal of black cattle; some of them will have above thirty milk cows, besides others which they keep in proportion; and each of them has much tilage (a few rooms excepted), as affords them as much corn and bear, as mostly maintains their families, except it be in a time of dearth. The women here are exceedingly fine dairymaids, and make a good deal of butter and cheese; the former they mostly use for mixing tar, for the laying of sheep. I have seen cheese four stone troy in weight, made of ewe milk there, which they sell at a great price. They scarcely at any time sell any of their cheeses below four shillings per stone at the first hand, and I never eat any in my life more palatable than what this Parish affords. Few places can equal them for breeding horses, of which they have great store. Some of the inhabitants will have twenty, and scarce anyone has below six. They have plenty of moss, which they cut into peats, and dry them in the summer-time for fuel. They have also coal and limestone in great plenty in every room or mailing; so that each family, if they please, may dig and find coal and limestone below their house floors. There is also plenty of freestone there. The thing they mostly want is wood, which is very scarce here. The muirs afford great store of wild fowl, such as the heath-cock and heath-hen, partridges, green and grey plover, and a bird with a long beak called a whaap, duck and drake, and hares in great plenty, which makes it a fine place for game in the summer. The chief mountain in the shire is here, and takes its rise about 24 miles from the sea. This mountain is of great height, has two tops, and goes under the name of Carntable. It is seen a great way off, and has a trough cut out of a rock, 12 feet long, 6 feet broad, and 8 feet deep, which stands almost full of spring water, near the top of the mountain; of which several fabulous stories are told, such as, that the Picts made use of this cistern for steeping heather of which they made a delicious drink

G.————— M'.—————.

to His Grace the Duke of Douglas), at a place called the Muirmiln dam head, turning about nearly W. about the eight part of a mile, to the damback which has a lead therefrom, about half a mile long. The water has also another course over the damback, inclosing a pretty haugh of near 20 acres of fine arable ground betwixt that and the lead, at the foot whereof stands the miln, at which the whole corns within the Parish are grinded, being all thirled thereto. The water and the lead being again joined, it takes its course directly W. towards Mr Lickpravicks of Dalquhrame, taking in a small rivulet called Polquharnel on the S. which separates the Parish from that of Auchinkleck. A little below on the south-side of the water, is the iron forge, at which place my Lord Cathcart bestowed a great deal of fruitless labour, being obliged to desist for want of wood charcoal, about the year 1730; and it then continues its course about two miles further, dividing the parish from that of Auchinkeck aforesaid, receiving the Water of Greenock from the N. at a place called Greenock-mains, the property of Mr Campbell; about half a mile further it receives another little rapid water called the Whitehaugh Water, at a place called the Garpell, a gentleman's fine seat, once the property of Mr Campbell of Whithaugh, now Laird of Logan. Going on it leaves the Parish of Muirkirk, and takes its course through the parishes of Sorn, Mauchline, Stair, Culton, and St. Quivox then it runs below the bridge of Air, and loses itself in the Firth of Clyde.

Secondly, The Water of Greenock, arises about eight miles from Greenock-mains, at which place it empties itself into the River of Air. It has two heads, the one called the Strand, and the other the Dippel Water. The first springs out betwixt two mountains, the one called Bubling-wood Law, and the other Bubland. The second spring out of two or three mountains, each of them producing a small rivulet of the same name with themselves, viz. Rodge-cleugh Poquharnel, and Lees-burn in a wild common muir, upon the west limits of the parish of Lesmahago, near a place called Aucingilloch (noted for being a great shelter to the party called Whigs in the time in the time of persecution) belonging to the Lairds of Linburn, Blackside, Nether Priesthill and the Hall muir the property of Thomas Blackwood. Each of these heads runs a mile at least before they unite in that called the Dippel Water, which runs about a mile further straight S.W. till it meets with the first head called the Strand, where they unite at a fine store-room, called the Water-head of Greenock, the property of Mr Brown; taking the common name of Greenock-water and running directly S. for about half a mile, to an old ruin called Haresfield, the property of William Nivine; where it changed its course directly S.W. running all along till it passes Thomas Blackwood's of Halls; and then for a long space, more than three miles, it goes on in a winding and crooked course, which makes it very destructive to the corns, when a flood happens in the harvest time. After which at a place called the Mains-shield it takes a short course N.W. to an old ruinous house called Linshawbog, where it receives a very rapid rivulet from the N. called Pokebbock; and then alters its course S.W. surrounded with inaccessible rocks on each side, till it comes to a place about a mile further called the Wine-burn, where it receives a small rivulet of that name from the N. Then it takes a turn or rather windings S. or S.W. and by S. like an inverted S, leaving that pleasant store-room called the Chapel-house on the W. as it were in its bosom, and the Greenock-mains on the E. (which is situated in the forkings betwixt the waters of Air and Greenock), and loses itself in the River of Air.

PREFACE

This pamphlet contains the substance of a lecture delivered to the Ramblers Club of Muirkirk on 15th October, 1909, with some corrections and additions. The information now presented to the public has been gathered from various sources—the Old and New Statistical Accounts of Ayrshire, Aiton's Survey of Ayrshire, Robertson's History of the County of Ayr, and the Kirk session Book. I am also indebted to Mrs Alexander Donald for a perusal of a lecture delivered by her husband some years ago, and to Mr J. B. Dalzell for sundry notes which he was good enough to allow me to use. There may be inaccuracies within these pages, but for them I am not responsible, and they can be corrected hereafter when further light emerges from sources at present beyond our reach. Several blank pages have been added for the insertion of any future notes which may appear in print, and I hope that this publication may stimulate others to further research which may some day result in a complete history of our Parish,

J.G.A.B.

MUIRKIRK IN BYGONE DAYS

When the district which now forms the Parish of Muirkirk was first inhabited is, and will remain, unknown; but that our primitive ancestors visited if they did not inhabit it there is evidence to prove. Within recent years part of a stone axe, a bronze axe turned up by the plough at West Glenbuck, a bronze spearhead from a drain at Whitehaugh, and a flint arrow-head have been found. These relics of Pagan times show that man was present here in the dim past, but the earliest mention of the district is to be found in a charter of the Monks of Melrose of the 12th century, from which it appears that it was then covered with forest, the haunt of the red deer, whose horn has been found, and probably of the wolf* and wild boar. This forest of stunted birch, oak, mountain ash, and hazel such as may still be seen on the banks about Garpel and Greenockmains, has long since disappeared, and its remains may still be seen embedded in the moss, but it survived long enough to name Netherwood, Harwood, Ashie or Eschawburn, Wellwood, Aitkenleugh (the glen of the oaks), and Polbeith (the water of the birch)—the latter a Celtic word of which there are several examples, such as Dippol, Garpel, traces of men of that race.

The earliest planting of any extent was done by Admiral Keith Stewart about the end of the 18th century. Up to that time the only timber was probably a few ash and sycamore trees grown by the lairds near their dwelling houses for useful purposes—the manufacture of implements and domestic utensils. Up to that time, too, the surface of the land was much more wild and barren than it is now. But the day of improvement was about to dawn. Draining, liming, and improved cultivation removed the heather from the best land in the river valleys. Strings of carts brought lime from the kilns at Middlefield; draining tiles were made at the tilework, the site of which is now submerged by the sinking of the surface beneath the water brought down too rapidly by the drainage of the hills. But these improvements took place during comparatively recent times. At the middle of the 18th century agriculture in Ayrshire was in a deplorable condition. It was described in a report drawn up by Col. Fullarton of the Board of Agriculture in 1793, quoted by William Aiton, writer in Strathaven, in his book "A Survey of Ayrshire," published in 1811, and corroborated by his own experience. Too lengthy to be given here, some extracts taken together will serve. "There were no practicable roads. The farm homes were mere hovels moated with clay, having an open fireplace in the middle, the midden at the door. The cattle starving, and the people wretched. The land, overrun with weeds and rushes, was gathered up into ridges, the soil on the top of the ridge and the furrows drowned in water. No green crops, no sown grass, no carts or waggons. No garden vegetables except a few Scotch kail which, with milk and oatmeal, formed the diet of the people, with the exception of a little meat salted for the winter. The people, having no substitute for oatmeal, were at the mercy of the seasons. If these were bad, famine ensued. Indeed, after a succession of wet seasons at the

* The lower jawbone of a wolf was found not long ago on Crossflat, and has been presented by Mr Howatson to the Royal Scottish Museum.

<i>Names of the Store-rooms</i>	<i>Heritors' Names</i>
Eshawburn)
Mid-town of Greenock)
Greenock Dyke) The Laird of
Chapel-House) Logan
Garpell)
The Nether and Over Whitehaughs)
Lightshaw, West and East Dernhunches	His Grace the Duke of
Douglas	
Over and Middle Wellwoods	John Campbell
gent.	
Nether Wellwood and Nether Priesthill	Thomas Hamilton gent.
Nether-woods and Corshill	Mr Hunter writer
Greenock-Mains	Mr Campbell writer
Terdoes Hairshield and Blackside	William Niven merchant
Auld house-burn and Meg's lee	John Campbell gent.
Corflate East house and Waulk mill	Robert Aird gent
Over-Combs or Combhill	Thomas White
Nether Combs	James Hutchinson
Three parts of Dalquhrame	John Lickpravick
Nether and Upper-halls	Thomas Blackwood
Burn-foot	John Pritchard
Waterhead	Andrew Brown
gent	
Aird's green	John Blackwood
Spire-slack	The Earl of
Hyndford	
Lamont-burn	The Laird of
Ballochmyle	
Middlefield	Mr Francis Vialet
Townhead and Townfoot with Part of Greendike	Hugh Begg
East Glenbuck and Newmains	James Veitch agent
West Glenbuck	Thos Bryce and James
Watson	
Part of Townhead and Greenockdike	John Fogo
Under the brae, Bankend and Garranhill	The Laird of GilmiInscroft

Rivers in this Parish are—

First, The beautiful river Air, which takes its rise from Glenbuck bog, at the west limits to the parish of Douglas, and after it runs about two miles straight west, it receives from the north the water of Ponask, at a place called Aird's green, the property of John Blackwood; and then inclining its course S.W. betwixt the Lightshaw-wood and the Waulk milln, where it receives the a small rivulet called the Aschawburn burn; and then continuing its course about a mile and a half further, betwixt the church on the N. and Auldhouse-burn on the S. receiving several small inconsiderable rivulets on each side all along to the Over Wellwood, the property of Mr Campbell, it receive from the hills on the S. a small rapid river called the Garpel water; on which some years ago a great many fruitless trials were made for

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A description of the Parish in the Shire of Air called he Muir-Kirk of Kyle.

The Parish of Muir-Kirk is bounded upon the N. and N.E. by the parishes of Avendale and Lesmahagow, on the E. and S.E. by Douglas and Crawfordjohn, and on the S. and S.W. by Auchinleck, and on the W. and N.W. by Sorn and Galston.

The church lies near the middle of the Parish, 10 miles N.E. from Mauchline, 20 miles N. by E. of Irvine, 14 miles E. of Kilmarnock, 10 miles E. by S.E. from Newmilns, 20 miles S.E. of Glasgow, 16 miles S. from Hamilton, 10 miles S. from Strathaven, 15 miles S.W. from Lanerk, 14 miles S.W. from Lesmahago-kirk, 10 miles almost W. from Douglas, 14 miles W. of Crawford-John kirk, 16 miles N.W. from Sanquhar, 18 miles N. from Dalmellington, 10 miles N. from Cumnock, and 18 miles N.E. from the City of Air, the presbytery seat.

This Parish was formerly a part of the parish of Mauchline (as was also that of the Sorn), but was constitute into a parish, a church built, a stipend of 1,000 merks per annum, and a minister settled there, viz., one Mr Farquhar, about the year 1625, who lived some little time there, and was succeeded by Mr John Reid, who preached here an till he died, being succeeded by his son-in-law Mr Hugh Campbell, about the time of the planting of the church with bishops, who was then turned out for non-conformity, and one James Gray, a curate put in his room, who enjoyed the benefices till about the time of the revolution, when the said Mr Campbell was restored, and preached there till his death; being succeeded by Mr Alexander Orr, who was transported to Hoddam; and succeeded by Mr John campbell, grandson to the above Mr Hugh Campbell, who in a little time thereafter, was transported to Galston; being succeeded by Mr Wm. Younger, about the year 1738, who preached there till his death, being succeeded by his brother-in-law Mr Andrew Mitchell the present minister.

The Parish is mostly mountainous, and consists of the following store-rooms, belonging to the several heretors whose names are annexed thereto.

<i>Names of the Store-rooms</i>	<i>Heritors' Names</i>
Overpriesthill)
Stranding Cleuch)
Grasshills) The E. of
Loudoun)
Linburn) Superior and Patron
High Black-side)
Harwood)
A fourth part of Dalquhrame with Muirmiln)

end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, the people were obliged to subsist on a little oatmeal mixed with blood drawn from their miserable cattle." This be it remembered, is a picture of Ayrshire as a whole, including the most fertile districts; what the state of matters was in this neighbourhood, what the squalor and poverty, can hardly now be imagined. Aiton's account of the village is far from pleasant. After commenting about others in the County, he writes—"But Muirkirk, Dalmellington, Dreghorn, Dunlop and Barr are despicable places." Again, anent the middens, dirty gutters, and unshaped ground to be met with in front of the houses—"The complaint applies more or less to every town in the country, but in those of Muirkirk and Glenbuck a midden or stenching gutter, and frequently both, are found almost before every door. In some of them the whole ashes, and every species of filth, collected by the inmates since the house was erected, remain heaped up before it, so large and so near that scarcely a road is left to the door." But this state of matter in the wrong place was by no means confined to the above-named villages; it was common throughout Scotland. Indeed, the capital was very far from free of the reproach of dirty and abominable customs. The fact was that, in respect of cleanliness and sanitation, Scotland was still in a primitive condition.

In the Statistical Account of Scotland, published in 1793, the year in which Col. Fullarton's account of Ayrshire Agriculture was printed, the Rev. John Shepherd, minister of the Parish, gives a somewhat better view of things as they existed at that date; Co. Fullarton refers to an earlier period. The value of property was rising. He writes—"A sheep farm which a few years ago was bought for £300, within this twelvemonth gave 1000 guineas, and this is by no means disproportionate to the price of the other lands lately sold here." This rise he ascribes to the discovery of minerals. But even in his time agriculture was of the simplest kind. There was little manure, and the farmers did not care to use lime, alleging that "it called forth the strength of the land for two years and impoverished it for double the number following." It was also believed that lime was unfavourable for sheep pasture. We know better now, but in those days scientific agriculture was unknown except to a very few. Anent roads, he writes—"The road from Edinburgh to Ayr, except a few miles in the Parish itself, is in tolerable repair." This was before Macadam had begun the system of road-making which bears his name, and what these "few miles" were like one can only conjecture. He goes on—"Another great road from Glasgow to Dumfries and Carlisle is now in great forwardness, and will be completed before the end of the present year. It will run across the Parish somewhat in a traverse direction, and intersecting the other near the great new inn (Irondale House), and then stopping its course southwards to Sanquhar will shorten the communication with Dumfries by several miles." What "stopping" means in this connection is difficult to understand. The word must have been used inadvertently and escaped the editor's notice. He also mentions several bridges building—one on the Water of Ayr itself, and one on the Water of Greenock, and a third on the Water of Garpel. Of the people he writes—"They are of the ordinary size in general, and of a healthy and robust constitution"—Healthy and robust in spite of their meagre diet and insanitary surroundings! "Their turn of mind, so far as it is peculiar, is in a great degree formed by their situation and manner of life, and they discover a strong attachment to the place of their birth and

former residence, or in their own words, 'weary fair for the Muirkirk' even when they remove to countries more fruitful and better cultivated." Their chief amusement was curling. The Muirkirk Curling Club is one of the oldest in Scotland. The reverend gentleman also touches on the birds of the Parish, about which he has little to say. He laments the lack of songs of the grove, but, as there were few inducements for such birds to nest owing to the want of the necessary facilities, their absence is not remarkable. There were doubtless black game and grouse on the heathery land, snipe, golden plover, peewits, and whaups among the rushes and on the pastures, while the sandpiper and dipper or water-crow frequented the water courses. The peewit, beautiful and harmless, incurred dislike because in his alarm he was apt to disclose the hiding places of the Covenanters. Of the whaup Mr Shepherd tells the following story. A country gentlemen from the west of Scotland went to stay with a friend in England who took him out one night to listen to the nightingale. On being asked how he like the song, he replied—"It's ver gude, but I wadna gie the wheepling o' a whaup for a' the nightingales that ever sang," with which opinion those who live in a moorland district will surely agree.

The next account of the Parish was drawn up for the New Statistical Account of Scotland by the Rev. Alexander Brown, who died in 1831. In his time improvements had began to take effect. There were numerous dairies of the best breed of cows. The system of husbandry had improved, though some farmers still took two or three crops of oats without manure, and then left the land idle to recover. Green cropping had increased, and some waste land had been reclaimed. The Duke of Portland had been opening roads and building lime-kilns. Mr Aird of Crossflatt was improving his land. The farmhouse were comfortable, but the outhouses still miserable. Fences were few, mostly stone dykes, and in a ruinous condition. But the prosperity of the Parish no longer depended on agriculture; coal and iron had become important products, and Muirkirk was leaving its state of poverty and advancing along with the rest of Scotland.

So much for the land as described for us by the writers quoted above; now for the people who lived in the district from the earliest times of which there is any record. We have seen that men of the stone and bronze ages have left their traces in stone and bronze, and that Gaelic-speaking people recorded their presence in the names still to be found on our maps, but when the ancestors of those now in possession arrived upon the scene there is no evidence to tell. Nor is it wonderful that it should be so. Bleak and barren, there were few attractions to bring colonists to such a region.

The population of Scotland was scanty, and naturally the people preferred the more fertile lands which were in possession of the Church. These lands have their history, such as it is, told in the monkish chronicles and charters, but even then little light is shed upon the lives of the common people. It is in private papers such as the minutes of baronial courts, old diaries, account books, and so on, or the public records of cities and burghs that the manners and customs of the people are to be found, and of these the records of the Kirk Sessions are among the most fruitful. Certainly the greater part of these records is a mere chronicle of parish scandals, and those of Muirkirk are no exception to the rule, but here and there, as

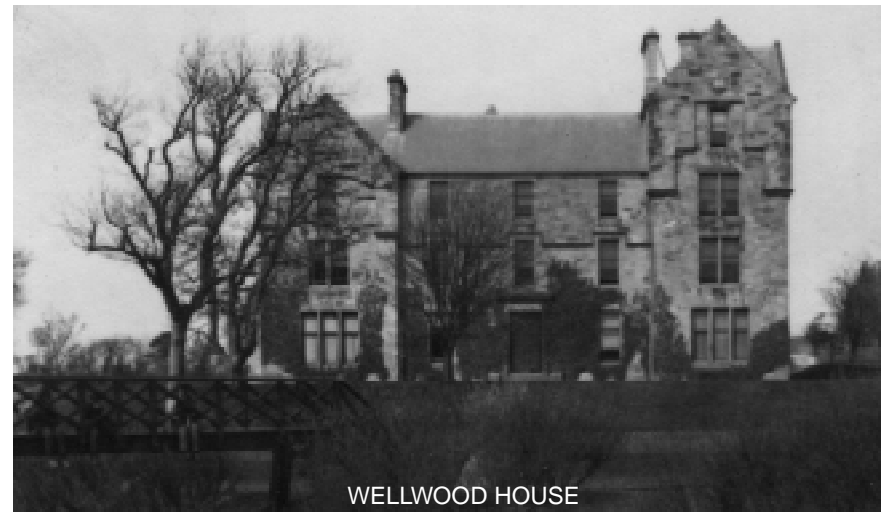
The writer is a little difficult to follow when, in tracing the course of the Water of Ayr, he comes to Muirmill, and the positions of the dam and mill lead are far from clear. An examination of the ground might help to throw light upon the question, and it may be that further information will emerge after these pages have been published.

Interesting to anglers will be the reference to salmon, especially in view of the access to the upper waters of Ayr now provided for fish ascending to spawn. There is for them this further piece of information, that in 1662 James Reid of Tannockhill was owner of certain lands of Dalfram "cum piscatione salmonum super aquam de Air;" which piece of legal Latin they may translate for themselves—no difficult task. The normal depths, however, of the river is probably less now than in former times. Hill drains bring quickly down the rainfall which, before they were made, had to percolate through the soil. Consequently the water rising and falling with greater rapidity remains normally at a fair weather level. This may deter fish of any considerable size from ascending to the head waters.

The final paragraph confirms my conjecture that the Laird of Gilmilnscoff derived authority in jurisdiction over the Parish from the Earl of Loudonn turn delegated authority to his bailie. Hereditary jurisdiction which existed in Scotland until 1747 was abolished in that year by Act of Parliament, and Sheriff Courts took its place.

A last note on the word room, or rowme according to the older spelling, meaning a portion of land or farm, which unfamiliar to us, is good old Scots nevertheless, used in the 16th century at anyrate, and said to be commonly used in Scotland at the beginning of th 19th century.

J.G.A.B.



WELLWOOD HOUSE

which it was written was not for purposes historical, but to bring before the existing generation, so far as it was possible, a picture of the lives led by their forefathers in this Parish. The writer is painfully aware of its shortcomings in that respect, but, such as it is, he begs leave to submit it to the parishioners of Muirkirk.

J.G.A.B.

A P P E N D I X

The article given below is referred to in Chalmer's "Caledonia." It was used by the late Mr Donald for his lecture, and was for some time an object of search to myself and others. At last I found the volume in the library of the Writers to the Signet, and now bring it back to light after these many years.

Whoever the writer who signs himself "G.M." may have been, and it would be futile to enquire at this distance of time, even were it worth while, it cannot be said he adds much to our knowledge of the history of the Parish. Nevertheless there are a few points worth noticing.

It will be seen that he gives 1625 as the date of the erection of the Parish, and Farquhar as name of its first minister. The "Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ" was my authority for the date 1631, and the Rev. John Reid for the first minister. But in the session records, as I have stated, a minute book of 1628 is referred to, and in the Fasti the Rev. Mr Farquhar is mentioned as having, by tradition, been minister "about that time." This vague entry is inserted after that concerning the Rev. Hew Campbell about whose successor there could be little doubt, and the tradition can only be taken as showing that there was at some early period a minister named Farquhar. Hence it is more probable that the writer of the article is correct and the Fasti wrong; but a search in the Presbytery Records would reveal the truth.

The place-names given are interesting. In tracing sources of the Water of Greenock, the Strand, or, as it is now called in the Ordinance map, the Slot Burn, is said to rise between "mountains," one Bubblingwood Law, and the other Bubland. The latter is no doubt the Bibblon Hill of the mapmakers who sometimes confused names, probably by spelling them according to local pronouncing; but what has become of the former? Bublionwoodhall is mentioned in a retour of land dated 1700 as belonging to Farquhar of Gilmilnscoft, but that does not help us much. The "mountain" opposite to Biblon Hill on the other side of the burn is now known as Middlefield Law, and the lands of Middlefield are mentioned in 1666; nevertheless there is no other hill in that part of the Parish worth calling a Law, and it is possible that Bublingwood Law was the earlier name of the hill in question. Hareshiels probably stood where a few trees still remain above the turn of the Water of Greenock, between Blackside and the Strathaven Road. Mainshield, Linshawbog, and Corshill are unknown to me. Combs is of course English for Kaimes or Kaims, though whether the formations of land so called derived the name from a fancied resemblance to a cock's comb is open to doubt.

will presently be shown, there are sidelights upon life in such communities which cannot but interest parishioners as well antiquarians.

The earliest minutes of the Muirkirk Session have unfortunately been lost. Those which survive begin on June 1st, 1659, but a session book of date 1628 is mentioned later. Now, the Parish was not erected until 1631, when it was disjoined from Mauchline, to which with Sorn it had previously belonged—(Sorn was formed into a Parish under the name of Dalgain, from the Church being built on the lands of Dalgain, in 1656)—so that, although public worship was conducted by a reader from Mauchline up to that date, there seems to have been not only a kirk but a kirk session. The new parish was styled the Kirk of the Muir or the Muir Kirk of Kyle, and finally became Muirkirk.

These early minutes of the Kirk Session are far from easy to read. Some of the letters are different in form from those now in use, the spelling is bad, but the chief difficulty is caused by infamous writing. They begin, as has been said, on the 1st June, 1659. Sixteen years earlier the population of the Parish was certified to be 145 between the ages of 16 and 60, so that the village must have been an insignificant clachan. A few houses on the Garranhill or clustered round the Kirk would contain probably a smithy and joiner's shop, a small store supplied by the carrier from the nearest town. A tailor, shoemaker, and a weaver or two would complete the community. There was a changehouse, or inn, as will be seen later. Glenbuck was no doubt smaller still, if indeed there was a village at all. Of other dwellings in the Parish Harwood and Muirmill have disappeared, Lamonburn and Cleughhead have long been in ruins. Greenside and Mansefield are not mentioned, and probably did not exist.

While reading these minutes the mind is chiefly impressed by the extraordinary power exercised by the Session over the parishioners, to us past understanding. It issued edicts, supervised morals and mode of life, investigated minute offences against its laws, cited transgressors and witnesses before it like a court of law, and punished the guilty. Some defied it, some fled the parish, only to fall into the hands of the Presbytery or the Session which governed their place of refuge, but most endured the discipline. And punishment was extremely unpleasant. To make public confession from the seat in the church was bad enough, but to stand in sackcloth at the door between the ringings of the bells, and then to go to the 'public place,' and, standing there before the whole congregation, be rebuked by the minister was far worse. It may be hoped that the fine which usually formed part of the penalty was lightly regarded in comparison. The earliest entry which displays this power wielded by the kirk is dated 6th July, 1659, when "it was appointed that none of the parishioners should receive in family Jonat Richart, in respect of her disobedience in not bringing her testimonials from her last place of abode." The testimonials were of course necessary for her admission to the communion table. Here is a specimen of a later date—"The bearer Matthew Hodge widow (a member and elder of our session while among us), and Matthew Hodge his son, and Marie Blackwood spouses were during yr abode here, and at yr removal from this place viz at Whitsunday last bypast, free of all public scandal knowen to this session, and all shadow or appearance of it qch is testified at Dalgain this twentieth and first

of December jayviic (1700) and tuentione by Mo. Lindsay minister. Janet Richard appears again two years later when, as she was presumably still contumacious, the same edict was issued to the parishioners.

One the same day (6th July, 1659) "The sessioun did mak ane acte anent fieing of servantis, and anent all other worldlie bargaineing anent worldlie employmentis upon the Sabbath day under the paine of being punished as Sabbath breakeries, and peyeing tuintie shillingis Scottis " or twenty pence of our money. Sabbath breaking was an offence which occupied considerable attention. It included loitering in the church yard or on the green after the sermon, leaving church between the sermons or inviting to marriages on the Lord's day, the only day which afforded the opportunity of doing so, for it had to be done verbally. Several cases of Sabbath breaking came before the session. In May, 1664, there was "ane grosse scandall by several personnes committed upon ane Sabbath day after the sermon by Bessie Jamy in midlefeild, and Jonat Jamy her sister, Jonat duncan her woman, Agnes and Bessie beges in Harwood, in the going from their ain houses to the toppe of the law and ther carieing themselves in loupenis (dancing?) and discoursing most unbecoming ane Sabbath day." No doubt the top of the Law offered more or less concealment from the eye of the Session, but alas! they were betrayed by James Begg younger in Harwood and Gavin Wilson younger in Lamonburn. Was this done out of zeal for the law, or because the two young men had not been invited to join the party? What the Session did on this occasion is not recorded. In February, 1671, Thomas Blackwood of Hall was reported for feeing a servant on the Sabbath Day, and in 1679 Adam Wilson in eschawburn, and James Smith in Dalfram were "delatirt," i.e. reported, the one for rickling and the other for thrashing corn on the Lord's Day. Adam's excuse was that when he and his wife were on their way to the kirk they saw two rickles fallen on the road which they lifted. On further enquiry, however, there was evidence that Adam had been seen among his rickles, but having removed to Douglas he was out of the jurisdiction of the Session. James Smith pleaded ignorance, and the Session believing him ordered him to make confession from his seat. Two years later the same excuse was made by Thomas Kennedy, weaver, for plying his loom on that day, and he asserted that as soon as he found out his mistake he went with "sorrow and sadness" and told an elder. The implacable Session, however, ordered him to make public confession. A worse offender was Margaret T———, servitrix to Wm. Crauford in Nether Kames, who not only stole meal on the Lord's Day, but took it with her to church. Her case was referred to Tardoes, who was not only Gilmielnscroft's bailie but also session bailie. He held a court, and sentenced her to go on the next Lord's Day to the "most patent kirkdoor, and there to be put in the braidene there to stand all the time betwixt the second and last bellringing." The braidene or braidyeane was a collar fastened to the wall, similar to the jous. Alas for Margaret, but it was an evil thing to do.

What sort of bailie was Gilmielnscroft's? Farquhar of Gilmielnscroft was returned as owner of lands in the Parish, including Lightshaw and Dernhunch in 1700, and before that, in 1643, the gudeman of Gilmielnscroft brought an action for slander against Alex. Laurie of Muirkirk, from which it appears that they were neighbours

or not. The number of proprietors has slightly diminished, as also that of farmers. Weavers of any kind have vanished long since; indeed, the click of the shuttle, familiar enough in Ayrshire villages forty years ago, can hardly now be heard by the most inquisitive ear.

It will be observed that nothing has yet been said concerning the main industry of the Parish, which has changed it from a purely agricultural district to one of the most important parishes in the county. It is true that the black-faced sheep, bred within its bounds and unsurpassed if not unrivalled by any stock in Scotland, would have made Muirkirk famous for that if for nothing else. But the ability to support its present large population in more or less comfort is due to the raising of coal, and the manufacture of iron, and especially to the former, for this reason that whereas some years ago all the materials necessary for making pigiron were found close at hand coal alone is still within easy distance.

It would be an interesting task to trace the progress of these industries from their beginning in the Parish to the present day, but unfortunately the information needed is wanting. The Ironworks and their accessories have changed hands more than once since 1787, and contemporary records have probably perished. The present writer, therefore, can only offer the following imperfect note procured within the Parish, though the actual process was carried beyond, but close to, its march with Auchinleck.

When the forge at Terreoch was first set to work is not at present known. Mr Donald gives 1705 as the date, but as the Earl of Cathcart, to whom he ascribes its foundations, did not succeed to the title till 1732, the former date is probably too early. At any rate it was founded by an Earl Cathcart, proprietor of lands in the neighbourhood. The haematite ore was quarried and mined on Whitehaugh, in the banks of the Pennel Burn, where the workings abandoned some years ago, may still be seen. It was, according to Mr Donald, "sent on pack-horses to Ayr, and then shipped to Bunaive," at the mouth of the Elive in Argyleshire, to be smelted by the Lorne Furnace Company, to which a great part of the district of Muckairn, in which Bunaive is situated, was let in 1753 for the sake of the timber, which was made into charcoal for smelting purposes. The pig was then brought back to the forge at Terreoch, and manufactured into malleable iron. By water power were the bellows worked and the hammers swung. The lade, dam, and race are still plainly to be seen, but the masonry of the forge itself has fallen into shapeless ruin. The fuel used was charred peat or wood, but the latter became scarce, and the former could not always be obtained on account of the weather, and so the work was abandoned. Mr Donald also says that the pack horses brought salt from Ayr on the return journey, and that the workmen's houses were situated on the northside of the Sorn Road, between Townhead and Townfoot.

Some day it may be that further light will be thrown upon this interesting phase of our staple industry; some day other gaps in its history may be filled up; otherwise the story of the Parish can never be complete. A future historian will, it may be hoped, have access to knowledge which we do not at present possess. To him this pamphlet may be of some aid and guidance, but the immediate object for

to the indulgence, which design was defeated by James, Earl of Loudon. In 1687 he appears to have returned to the Parish after an interval, and preached in his own house at Netherwood after the Liberty. He died in 1714, aged about 80. Wodrow, in his *Analecta*, says—"This month Mr Heu Campbell, minister of Muirkirk, dyed. He was an antediluvian minister, ordeaned before the flood, though never Moderator since the Revolution." During the above interval a Mr Farquhar is mentioned as having been Parish minister, but nothing appears to have been known about him. The Rev. James Gray was appointed in 1684, but did not reside in the Parish. He deserted his charge at the Revolution, and in 1690 was deprived by the Act of Parliament which restored the Presbyterian ministers. Of him Wodrow says—"He (the Principal) tells me there is one Gray (for what I can find he was Episcopall minister at Muirkirk before the Revolution), who is the agent for the Episcopall party at London, and writes papers there, and receives lyes, slander, and misinformation from Scotland, and propagates them there." He is said to have been paid by the Government £100 a year for performing these services.

In 1717 the Rev. Alex. Orr was appointed Parish minister, and was transported(!) to Hoddan in 1729. He was succeeded by the Rev. John Campbell who came from Galston, and returned there as minister in 1735. To him succeeded the Rev. William Younger, who died in 1750, and was followed by the Rev. Andrew Mitchell, transported to Monkton in 1774. Next came the Rev. John Shepherd—"Muirland Jock" of "The Kirk's Alarm," who wrote the account of the Parish in the first "Statistical Account of Scotland." He died in 1799, and was succeeded by the Rev. Wm. Rutherford, D.D., who had been minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Uxbridge in Middlesex, and subsequently assistant at Kelso. He published two sermons, an "Elements of Latin Grammar," and a "View of Ancient History." Rev. Alex. Brown, his successor, ordained in 1814, wrote the account of the Parish for the "New Statistical Account of Scotland," and died in 1832. His successors were—1832, Rev. James Symington, a native of Douglas; 1853, Rev. Alexander Johnstone; 1867, Rev. Lewis Beaton; and 1878, the present minister, the Rev. Robert Montgomery.

In 1790 the stipend was £68 8/-. When Aiton wrote his book, soon afterwards, it was 16 bolls of bear, 32 of meal, and £46 in money, probably about the same in value, while in Mr Brown's time it is given as £150.

The population of the Parish, from a return signed by the minister and others, and dated 9th October, 1643, was 145 between the ages 16 and 60. In 1755 was 745, rose in 1790 (soon after the Ironworks were started) to 1,100, and seven years later to 1,730, standing at in 1801 at 2,560. At the beginning of the 19th century there were in the Parish 60 saddle horses and 61 draught horses, 570 cows, and 12,200 sheep; 11 proprietors and 32 farmers; 3 muslin weavers, and 165 scholars. What would the figures be now? The population in 1901 was 5,670. In the schools 1,000 children are receiving such education as is laid down by the Department. Though there are horses in the Parish which may be ridden, none are kept for that purpose alone, while the number of draught horses is probably the same. As to cows and sheep no figures are available, nor would a comparison be effective, as we do not know whether Aiton included queys and lambs

in a runrig field. This explains the connection with the Parish, but it is difficult to account for the bailie, so far as Farquhar is concerned.* As for the Session bailie, the following entry explains the matter. 28th February, 1700—"The sheriff's commission to Mid Wellwood and Tardoes to be session bailies according to the Act of Parliament, not only for punishing civilly scandalous persons, but also to put the Act of Parliament in force for regulating the poor was delivered to them, and they accepted. There was a case of Sabbath breaking at Gronok (Greenock) which is interesting as it refers to the little hamlet and chapel there, now in ruins. It was on 28th August, 1708, that the Session was informed that James Begg and John Mitchell, tailor in Greenock, had "shamefully scolded and foughten" on the Lord's Day. James Begg being summoned totally denied the offence, but Mitchell, while denying that there was any fighting, confessed to "unchristian scolding which he hoped in the Lord he should never be guilty of the lyk of it again." He was appointed to make public confession, while the case against Begg was prosecuted, and he was summoned to appear before the Session at Greenock, which was considered the most convenient place for the trial as all the witnesses were there. The minister preached upon the day, and after prayer Begg compeared. Seven witnesses were cited, and proved the case to the satisfaction of the Session, who ordered the offender to make a public confession—the same penalty as that of the repentant Mitchell! Begg, however, declined to do anything of the kind, and fled into the neighbouring Parish of Dalgain, where he abode in contumacy for a year, when he applied for permission to expiate his fault and receive his testimonials. But the most interesting case of Sabbath breaking was that of John Browne of Blackside, afterwards of Priesthill, where he was living in 1678. Here is the entry. "Johne Broune in Blacksyde most sinfullie, and scandalousie upoun the Sabbath day brought ane load upon his horse out of the Dyknouck in the Parish of Dalgain into his awin house upon May, 1666 at ten houres of the day witness unto it Mr Johne Reid minister and Gavin Wilsin in Lammontburne." It will be remembered that John Brown was a carrier, and judged by our present standard his sin would be considered comparatively venial, but at the time it was committed the fourth Commandment was strictly enforced, and thought nothing might have been said had he only brought his horse home from Dykeneuk, it was the load which he brought upon it that brought him under censure. We shall happen upon John Browne again.

Drinking and drunkenness were not unknown in those days, for in 1664 Alexander B——— in Glenbuck, an elder, was shamefully drunk in the house of Andrew Hutcheon, in company with Thomas Brown of Nether Wellwood and Francis Aird in Linburn. On 14th March, 1682, "William Aird treasurer was appointed to give 10/- Scots to pay for the kist of Jean Armour poor and also 6/- to buy drink for

* Since writing the above I have seen a paper, preserved in Gilmilnscroft, which gives an account of a court held by the bailie at Alderholm in the neighbourhood of that place, when several men from Muirkirk appeared to answer a charge of taking ruffish, i.e. salmon, out of season, or cutting greenwood. From this it appears that Gilmilnscroft had a baronial jurisdiction, which included the Parish of Muirkirk. Indeed, Muirkirk is mentioned as part of the barony. It is possible, however, that Gilmilnscroft derived his authority from the Earl of Loudon, who was bailie of the Abbeylands of Kylesmuir.

those that carried her to the church yard." This latter sum—sixpence in our money—does not seem an extravagant outlay, but that would depend upon the price of liquor which may have been cheap at the time. In 1705 it was reported to the session that some strangers sat up all night drinking in William Jamieson's house, but upon enquiring into the matter the elders could not find that there had been drinking to excess. Nevertheless an act was made "That whosoever should be found drinking in the changehouses after ten o'clock at night, both the persones giver of them drink, and the drinkers should be pershewed as scandalous persones. Also the minister was desired to speak to Gilmilnscroft's bailie that he wouid in his court make such ane act, whatsoever was found in the changehouses after ten o'clock drinking should be pershewed as Law will, and fyned." Thus was the Kirk Session of Muirkirk two centuries at least ahead of the Parliament of the United Kingdom in the matter of early closing of public-houses. Three years later overnight drinking at the changehouse at the mill was reported, and an enquiry ordered, with no definite result. The keeper of the changehouse and his wife were exhorted not to allow late hours, nor to give drink to access, which they promised, and there the matter ended. There were evidently at least two inns in the Parish at that time. One more case of drinking must be mentioned for another reason. 24th June, 1705—"The Session was informed that the officers of our company in the Muirkirk had given too much drink to their shouldiers at the randivouse, and it was concluded that Grinnockmains, Waterheid, Aloesburn, should speak to the officers that they would not do so in times coming." Accordingly on the 24th July "the persones that was appointed to speak to the officers of our company told that they had spoken to them, and that they were sorie that their was any offence taken for they thought they did not give them soe much drink as might have wronged any, but in time coming none should have that to complain of." This entry is of interest because of the formation lately of a Territorial Company in the Parish, the first local soldiery since the days of Tibbie Pagan, whose remarks on those of her time cannot be here asserted. The reason for the company existing in 1705 was an Act of Parliament of 1704, which "for a further security of the kingdom statutes and enacts that the whole Protestant Heritors, and all the burghs within the same shall furtwith provide themselves with firearms for all the Fencible men who are Protestants within their respective bounds, and those of the bore proportioned to a bullet of 14 drop weight running. And the said heritors and burghs are hereby empowered and ordained to discipline and exercise their said Fencible men once in the month, at least." The drop was a Scottish weight—the sixteenth part of an ounce, therefore this bullet (which was spherical) weighed 420 grains—60 short of an ounce. "Brown Bess" fired a bullet of 490 grains. The above-quoted clause is contained in the Act of Security which provided for the succession of a monarch of Scottish descent upon the death of Queen Anne, and the Fencibles were probably raised to protect the rights of Scotland, though the exclusion of Roman Catholics seems to point to some other object, perhaps defence against a rising in the north.

Strangely enough, there are few references to the Covenanters in the session book. For instance no mention is made of the fact that the men of the west who took part in the Pentland Rising, and were marching for Edinburgh with Dalrymple in hot pursuit, slept in the Church at Muirkirk. They were commanded by Col. James

the heritors considered the condition of the church and school, and agreed to build a new church. The question of a new school was postponed. But the manse took precedence to both. In 1800 it was decided to build a new one, where the old one stood, or nearly so, and in 1801 it was built by Alexander Stewart, wright in Muirkirk, for £456. It reflects little credit upon all concerned that eleven years later this manse was reported to be getting into a ruinous condition.

In the year 1812 the building of the new church was finally settled by a decree of the Court of Session. Why this decree was rendered necessary does not appear. At anyrate, progress was now made. The name of the architect was Stark, no doubt the William Stark who built St. George's Church in Buchanan Street, Glasgow, and other public buildings in that city. The plans were sent by a carrier, who left Edinburgh every Tuesday about mid-day. The contractors were William Leckie, wright, Glasgow, and Peter Menzies, mason, Galston, and the price was to be £1,876. As the front of the church was towards the public road, it was agreed to build it of broached ashlar for the sake of appearance. In 1813 the church was finished. It does not stand on the site of the old one, which the late Mr Donald says was at the head of the churchyard, and was not disposed of until the new one was built, Mr Donald also says that the bell, presented by John, Earl of Loudon, hung on a tree, which is likely enough. The opening service was held on August 30, 1814, when the Rev. Mr Logan of Maybole preached, and the Rev. Alex. Brown was ordained Parish minister.

But again heritors, contractors, and all concerned, must be reproached with a bad piece of work, for in 1820 the roof of the new church was urgently needing repairs. As to the new school, it was built in 1815, presumably on the old site.

The following list of ministers of the Parish is taken from a work entitled "Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae," compiled by the Rev. Hugh Scott, D.D., minister of Anstruther-Wester, and published in 1868, which gives succession in each Parish in Scotland from the Reformation in 1560, with notes. As has been already stated, Muirkirk did not become a separate Parish until 1631. Before that date service was conducted by a reader supplied by Mauchline. The first settled minister was Rev. John Reid, heritor "twa merk land callit the Pennyland," in the parish of Auchinleck, which now belongs to the Marquis of Bute. He was included among the Nonconformists in 1662, but was allowed to remain by connivance. His successor, Rev. Hew Campbell, is said to have been appointed in that year, but there must be some confusion of dates; for from 1661 till 1674 inclusive, when Mr Reid was complained against by the Synod, the session book mentions the "ministeris" as being present. That Mr Reid was indulged appears from John Brown of Priesthill's complaint, as above quoted, that Mr Campbell "kepit cumpani with the indulgit minister," but how there came to be more than one in 1661 cannot be explained without further information. The Rev. Hew Campbell, who had a somewhat stormy life, took his degree in Glasgow in 1654. He was deprived by Act of Parliament in 1662, the year in which he is said to have been appointed, though it appears that he was confined to the Parish. In 1675 he was ordered to be summoned for baptising, and marrying irregularly, and in 1676 for preaching without a presentation, though why he required one is not stated. Two years later he narrowly escaped with his life from the design of the more violent Presbyterians, who were opposed

the heritors would build a wall round it. He also offered to give stones for the house and dyke on condition that the schoolmaster sold no liquor of any kind. Altogether, Mr Niven displayed much public spirit. His offer was accepted, and the heritors agreed to stent themselves in £40 sterling for building the house, for which sum Hugh Begg of Saddlerhead, in the parish of Lesmahagow, got the contract. The house was built alongside the road leading to the kirk. The dimensions of the schoolroom was 15 feet by 12. It had one chimney, and two windows. Off it, and divided from it by a parapet wall one foot thick was a smaller room 8 by 15, with a window but no chimney. The height of the rooms was 8 and 7 feet. Above were two rooms 10 feet 5 inches by 15 feet, each with one window and one chimney, and the entry was from an outside stair. The upper rooms were ceiled with wood to keep out the damp, the slates laid with lime on sarking. The building was begun on Whitsunday, and finished at Martinmas, when the heritors chose Benjamin Maule, the clerk, to be schoolmaster, who was also appointed session clerk. In 1782 Archibald Thom was appointed schoolmaster, on the same terms as his predecessor, but with an additional fee of 3/- a quarter for teaching latin.

In March, 1775, the heritors agreed to repair the kirk by giving it a new roof of slates laid in lime, and a lath and plaster ceiling, with three new windows in the side walls. The whole work, which included raising the walls, was contracted for by John Park of Strathaven for £71.

Next year the manse was repaired at a cost of £21 13/-, the heritors giving the timber growing in the churchyard—thirteen trees valued at £2 19/-—for repairing the offices, which included a brewhouse. In 1778 the minister, the Rev. John Shepherd, was recommended to buy, out of the poor's fund, two mortcloths—a best, and second best. The dues for the first were to be 5/-, and for the other 2/-, and were to be put into the poor's fund, so that while the Parish got its mortcloths the poor were—let us hope—eventually benefited. A set of communion table cloths were also purchased, and a pewter flagon, which cost 12/-; while the churchyard was replanted with timber.

In 1781 the heritors found the loft of the church ruinous, and supported by stoups which might keep it up till the following spring. This loft was at the west end, from which it would appear that the length of the church lay east and west, the pulpit most probably at the east end, the pews and loft or gallery facing it. The new loft was to be 12 feet from breast to back, and the width of the church. It was to be supported by a 9 by 7 inch beam resting on pillars 6½ inches square—five pews on either side of the passage down the centre. It cost £18 15/-, and was built by William Morrison, wright in Mauchline. The sittings were to be exposed to public roupe, the front seats at 1/6 for each person, the second row at 1/-, and the remainder at 6d.

In 1790 the new Iron Company offered, if the heritors would build an aisle on the north side of the church, to take a lease of it for 100 years, or to take a lease of the grounds for the same period and build an aisle themselves. Negotiations went on for some time, but came to nothing. And it was just as well, for seven years late

Wallace, a good soldier who had fought in the Parliamentary army in the English civil war, and whose comment on the village is not complimentary. On 23rd November, 1666, they left Ochiltree for Cumnock, but, hearing there of Dalryell's advance to Kilmarnock, they pushed on to Muirkirk. The weather was very bad. Sir James Turner commanded the troops in the south-west, and, having been captured at Dumfries, was brought prisoner along with them, says—"The way to that church was exceeding bad, a very hie wind, with grievous rain in our faces. The night fell dark before we could reach the place where the foot was quartered, with no meat or drink, and with very little fire. I doe confess, I never saw lustier fellows than those foote were, or better marchers." Yes, these men, stout as Cromwell's Ironsides, had they been well armed and better officered, would have given a good account of themselves at Rullion Green. As it was, they held their own for a while, but were finally beaten and dispersed. Reference, indeed, is made to the troubles in an account given of the election of elders which runs as follows—3rd January, 1674, "The sessionne considering ye pauciti of thir number, they being all dead but four, did think it fit there should be a new electionne since sum of thos elders formerly electit wold not take it, and so ye elders was appontit against ye nxt mitting to think on sum to be addit to their number. 6th Marche ye minister and elders all being present, did unanimoslie chuse Ja. Campbell of Grinokmains, William Ardf of Crosflat, Ja. blackwood of hall, Johne Richart of turdos, Johne Wasonne in Waterheid, John wilsonne in Kames, and Thomas Richart in Grinokmens, as also appontit yhe ministers to spik to them agent ye next day, and give in ther report. 13th App 1674 the ministers according to ther appintment gave in ther dilligence yt they had spoken to them, but ther was sum was unwilling because of ye trubilsumes of ye times, and if they accepted, they wold only accept yt on thes termes, yt we ye present ministers remenit in ye office according to ye actes of ye generall assembly, and did not conforme to episcopaci, which all ye elders thought reasonabill, and appontit yt ye edict might be red thereanent the nixt Lord's day, which was done. 5th May the edict being red ye sabothe befor ye elders was admittit and cam and sat doune, but protestit yt they wold not accept of ye offic no longer than we continued in faithfulness according to ye parliment, and if we should be put out, and anny thrust in on them, that this should be no stay on them, and desayrit yt it might be so insert in ye sessionne book." This somewhat lenghy account of the election of elders shows that the method of election has not changed, amounting as it does to what is called co-opting. But though the congregation seldom interferes, it appears from what happened on a subsequent occasion that objection was sometimes taken to individuals, for in 1704 John Leprevick was objected to because he had taken the test, and, although he had given public satisfaction, the session left him out for fear of giving offence. The test or oath referred to, bound the person taking it to the true Protestant religion contained in the Confession of Faith recorded in the first Parliament of King James the Sixth (1567); affirmed the King's supremacy in all matters ecclesiastical as well as civil; judge it unlawful to enter into covenants, or to take up arms against the King, &c., &c., the aforesaid being the important points. Naturally the test was hated by all sympathisers with the Covenant, and in Muirkirk, in 1693, three persons were debarred from the communion unless they acknowledged that taking it was a sin, and expressed their grief for so doing.

On the 15th April, 1678, there is this significant entry. "We had no sossone for som moneths before this because of the hielanders lying amongst us." This refers to the invasion of the south-west of Scotland by the Highland Host. In December, 1777, Scotland was placed under martial law, and a commission for raising the Highlanders was signed. They were let loose upon the Lowlands, and took full advantage of their license, plundering and destroying. 8,000 strong they marched from Stirling to Ayr and Glasgow, spreading themselves over the country. The Ayrshire heritors sent a deputation to Lauderdale assuring him of the quietness of the shire and praying that so "inhumane and barbarous a crew of spoilers" should be unloosed upon them. He refused to see them. The churches were converted into armouries for discarded weapons, and the churchyards into pounds for horses seized by the Highlanders. Everything was devoured, but there was no personal violence used, at least there is no authentic evidence of it. The losses were great. The Ayrshire heritors prepared a statement for the King showing damages to the extent of £138,000 Scots, and of course Muirkirk suffered heavily. Indeed, what with the visits of the Dragoons and Highlanders, and the finings of several of the heritors and tenants, the Parish must have been reduced to a state of penury during the troubles. No wonder that there were no meetings of the session. At the end of February, however, the Highlanders were recalled.

Of the deeds of Claverhouse, and other soldiers, in the Parish no mention is made, but John Brown of Priesthill appears once more in the session minutes. On the 19th September he, with Thomas Richard of Greenockmains and Jean Weir of Darnhunch were reported for not attending public ordinances, and certain elders were appointed to speak to them on the subject. The next minute gives the result of these interviews, and is as follows:—The 11th November, 1680. "The whilke day ye elders according to ye apuntment ye last sessione gave in ther report. William aird of corsflat told that Jean would give no answer or resonne at all, but being presed said that sheo had no shoune. Thos that went to Johne Broune. I myself (the minister) being present, gave his resonnes first yt I kepit cumpani with ye indulgit minister, nixt yt I paid sesse he being duirse from thos as . . . being sufficient groundis to make seperatione ye 3 resonne yt he gave was yt he whom he looked on as ye true messenger of jesus christ who is now lying at Airsmoss declared and dischargit yt as they wold ansuar to god in ye grat fay yt nun should heir any of thes indulgit persones and therfor he would not. As for thomas richert he is cum in agen to ye church." The cess above-mentioned was a tax raised for the maintenance of troops used for the purpose of putting down field conventicles. It was imposed in 1678, was estimated to produce £\$1,800,00 Scots, and was of course detested by Covenanters. Thomas Richard, five years later, was taken by Ensign Peter Inglis with some dragoons from his house in Greenockmains, and sent to Cumnock, where he was shot and buried, he being then over seventy years of age. It is said that Inglis inveigled him into conversation of an incriminating character—treachery quite in keeping with his reputation.

The story of John Brown's death, as given by Wodrow and others, is well known. Claverhouse himself gives another account of it in a letter which has been preserved at Drumlanrig Castle, part of which may be given here.

have fallen into disuse during the period between these last dates. The little hamlet of Greenock with its chapel, which give it the centuries-old name of Chapelhouse, is now a heap of ruins, with the exception—if so it can be called—of one building, the gable and sidewalls of which are still standing, though in a precarious condition. This building had no windows but two apertures high up in the gables, and may have been a byre. The dwelling-houses must have been of a very humble description. Built of rough stones taken from the land or river bed, with roughly-dressed doorways, when the roofs were removed they could not long resist the action of rain and frost. Such houses soon fall to ruin, as witness Upper and Nether Terreoch, but two of them at least were inhabited within living memory. A road wound gently down the bank, at the foot of which the little hamlet was built, and probably led in the other direction to the valley of the Ayr, and so to Muirkirk or Mauchline. The land the people cultivated is a flat holm between high banks, and their sheep and cattle would feed on a common pasture higher up.

There remain, then, the accounts of the treasurer of the session, and the minutes of the heritors' meetings. The former present few items of interest. In 1800 Tibby Pagan, the Muirkirk poetess, received five shillings from the session. Again in 1816 Mary Pagan, of Garpel Bridge, who must have been the same person, misnamed, had 5/-, and two years later Isabel Pagan 4/-. An account of Tibby will be found in "The Contemporaries of Burns," published in 1840 with some of her songs and verses, which she published in a small volume which the present writer has sought for in vain. In 1800 the voluntary contributions for the poor amounted to £46 11/-. On the 7th June, 1802—a day appointed for public thanksgiving for a return of the blessings of peace—the collection was 7/4. The peace was that of Amiens, which only lasted fourteen months, so that the congregation may be credited with more foresight than generosity. Again in 1814, there was another National thanksgiving when the collection realised 2/0½, which rose to 14/8½ when peace was proclaimed. But in 1815 the Parish rose to the occasion, and £20 9s 11½ were given for the benefit of the sufferers at Waterloo.

The minutes of meetings of the heritors prior to December 11th, 1771, appear to have been lost. On that date the settlement of a schoolmaster was considered and the laying on of a stent, or rate, for the purchase of Communion cups. Before this the cups had been borrowed from neighbouring parishes when required, but the heritors now resolved to stent themselves in £10 Scots upon each £100 Scots of valuation, and authorised the minister—the Rev. Andrew Mitchell—"to purchase decent silver cups for the use of the Parish, not exceeding £18 sterling." They also dealt with the question of a settled schoolmaster, to be appointed by them, with a fixed salary; and a committee was chosen to look for a place for school and schoolmaster's house, and get plans and estimates. It was also agreed that in addition to his fixed salary the fees of the master should be 2/- for reading and writing, and 2/6 for arithmetic, paid quarterly, one half at the beginning and the other half at the end of the quarter.

The next meeting was held at Burnside on the 4th March, 1772, when the minister was appointed to treat with Gilmilnscroft for 20 falls of ground on which to build the schoolhouse. Mr Niven of Tardoes, however, offered 20 falls of ground if

penny bridals, which was read from the pulpit and entered in the session book. The marriage feasts, commonly called penny weddings because the invited guests contributed towards their expense, whatever they may have been at first, had assumed too Bacchanalian a character for the Church to tolerate. Funerals, as is well known, were, despite the solemnity of the occasion, frequently scenes of drunken disorder. Weddings, where there was nothing to subdue, but on the contrary, much to raise the spirits of those who attended them, could not be expected to escape the insobriety which attached to the more serious ceremony. Hence the attempts of the Church Courts to repress the disorders, attempts which, it is to be feared, were more or less unsuccessful.

There does not appear to have been any system of education in the Parish in 1696. Before that date two schoolmasters are mentioned as witnesses in session cases—James Borland and Robert Nisbet—but their schools were private ventures. In the aforesaid year, however, an Act of Parliament was passed anent settling schools and schoolmasters, and a summons was issued by the minister convening all the heritors and tenants, who accordingly met on October 9th together with the elders. The list of heritors was as follows:—

William Campbell of Mid Wellwood	William Aird of Crossflat
James Campbell of Greenockmains	John Ritchard of Burnfoot
Thomas Broun of Nether Wellwood	John Aird of Ashieburn
Andrew Broun of Tordoes	Thomas Bryce of Glenbuck
John Campbell of Auldhouseburn	John Blackwood of Airdsgreen

And of Tenants:

John Blackwood in Hall	Thomas Wilson in Waterhead
John Jamieson in Middlefield	James Weir in Blackside
James Wilson in Linburn	Hugh Mizzie in Muirmill
Alexander Wilson there	John Allan in Lighshaw

The meeting, "none gainsaying," appointed the outer chamber at the kirk for a schoolhouse, and agreed upon a rate of 3% on the valuation, which was £2,320 Scots.

After this date there is little or nothing of interest contained in the minutes of the kirk session, which became a mere catalogue of scandals. But before proceeding to examine the treasurer's account book, and the heritors' minutes, this note on the Chapel of Greenock may be inserted. The religious houses in early days did much for Scotland by encouraging agriculture and useful arts, but their first care was for the religious needs of the people who lived on their domains. Chapels were planted where required. The Priory of Mauchline erected two at least, one near Catrine on the holm still called St. Cuthbert's holm, the other near the water of Greenock, a short distance above Greenockmains. In a lecture delivered by the late Mr Alexander Donald, which he meant to publish had he been spared, he says that it was erected in the 15th century but does not give his authority. A map constructed by Timothy Pont about 1600, corrected and enlarged by Gordon of Straloch, and engraved at Amsterdam in 1654, shows it clearly marked with tower and cross—the usual symbol. Another given by Aiton to illustrate his book published in 1811 marks it "in ruins." As we have seen, it was used in 1709, so it must

"For the Marquis of Queensberry
Ld. High Treas of Scotland

Galston May the 3 1685

May it please your Grace. On Frayday last among the hilles betwixt Douglas and the Piellands, we perseued tuo fellous a great way throu the mosses, and in end seised them. They had no armes about them and denyed they had any, but being asked if they take the abjuration the eldest of the two called John Broun refused it. Nor would he swear not to ryse in armes against the King, but said he kneu no King; upon which, and there being found bullets and match in his house, and treasonable papers, I caused shoot him dead, which he suffered very unconcernedly. Claverhouse then proceeded first by threats of shooting, then by offering to delay his execution and plead for him, to extract a confession from the other, named John Brounen or Browning. While this was going on, says Claverhouse, "the souldiers found out a house in the hille underground that could hold a dusen of men and there were swords and pistolles in it; and this fellou declared that they belonged to his uncle, and that he had lurked in that place ever since Bothwell whre he was in armes." Young Browning confessed a good deal more, and was afterwards sent to the Lieutenant General at Mauchline, where, there is little doubt, he was hanged a few days afterwards. It is outside the purpose of this paper to discuss Claverhouse, his character, or his deeds. Those who wish to know more should consult Dr King Hewison's book, "The Covenanter," and Professor Sanford Terry's "John Graham of Claverhouse."

Let us now return to the session book and see what is to be found therein about the kirk itself. On the 26th August, 16663, payment was made to men for bringing home "sklaitis" to the kirk. The old kirk is said to have been thatched with heather, which is quite likely, and it is possible that slates were used for the first time on the aforesaid date. A year later James Johnstone, glazing wright, received twenty pounds Scots for glazing the windows and wiring thereof. What was the wiring? Perhaps the lead ribbons used for fixing the lozenge-shaped panes then in use. On May 25th, 1670, 6/6 was given to Andrew Hutcheon, notary, for pursuing James White, slater, for not coming to mend the kirk according to his condition. James White had contracted to keep the roof in repair. A similar contract still exists. In July, 1673, "All the elders being present, with many of the gentlemen it was appoynted, for the getting fourmes to the kirk and communion tables, that the readiest of the collectionnis should be taking for defraying the charges." The nice distinction between elders and gentlemen will be observed. The latter were no doubt the heritors of the Parish. On the same day Mr Hew Campbell, the minister, informed the session that, as heritor he wanted a seat, and pointed to one which had been erected by the heritor of Wester Netherwood to which none in the Parish had any claim. He was permitted to remove this seat, and erect a new one for himself, on condition that when the seats were allocated he should take that appointed for him. And on the same day money was given "to buy lead to be tickettis," i.e. tokens. It is improbable that any of these are in existence. In 1748 a fresh issue was made. The token of that date was square, with the name of the Parish in a circle surrounding the date, like a postmark. A subsequent issue in

1799, specimens of which are not so rare, has M.K. on one side and the year on the other, and is slightly smaller than a sixpenny piece. The latest are dated 1868, but about ten years afterwards the use of tokens was discontinued. On May 15th, 1679, twenty-four shillings were paid to William Cowand for fetching lime, sand, and fog to the kirk, and James Lapraik received thirteen shillings and fourpence for mending the back kirk style. Fog or moss was sometimes used for packing the interstices of stones in masonry. On December 24th in the same year the session owed Mid Wellwood forty shillings for timber "to chamber at the kirk," which was paid by a fine of that amount levied upon John Weir. On a previous occasion payment had been made for repairing "the meikle chamber at the kirk, also for mending of lockes and bandes to the chamber windows." And later on "the outer chamber at the kirk" was appointed for a schoolhouse. It therefore seems that the kirk was divided into the kirk proper, where divine service took place, and another chamber or church hall where the meetings of the session were held, which was of course the smaller of the two. It was during this year also (1679) that the first mortcloth was provided. On February 16th "All the elders being present together with several of the gentylemen of the Parish, it was thought convenient that a mortcloth should be bought for the use of the poor of the Parish, and for that effect William Aird of Croddflat was appointed to bring in all the collections and penalties against the the next session day." This was done, and the sum amounted to £43 10/- Scots and some doits (a coin worth less than a farthing) which were appointed to be given to Adam Begg, the precentor, for part payment of the mortcloth. There was another fund which might be used for the purpose, being a legacy to the session by John Reid of Dalfram—20 marks in the hands of James Weir in Grasshill, 8 pounds in the hands of Adam Reid, and 50 marks in the hands of John Watson of Glenbuck. This money was also devoted to the purchase, and the session agreed that if more was wanted Mr Hew Campbell the minister should advance it. The purchase of the mortcloth occupies much space in the session book, and the financial details are difficult to follow, but eventually Adam Begg brought it home at an apparent cost of £49 16s 4d Scot or about £6 12s sterling.

There was a gallery in the old kirk, for on 1st January, 1695, "It was unanimously concluded that before the sacrament of the Lord's supper can be gone about that the Laft be first repaired, and many of the heritors being present thought fit that the servants should be tries what they would give and the surplus to be cast on the heritors." What the result of the appeal to the servants is not stated, nor is any further mention made of the repairing of the Laft. In the previous year two heritors, James Campbell of Greenockmains and George Campbell of Netherwood, asked for permission to put in two pews on the west side of the pulpit and to remove a seat a little downwards since "those that pretends a right are not heritors," and according to the old session book, dated 23rd March, 1628, this seat was to be removed when the session thought fit. Leave was granted on condition that "they big them no higher than those beyond them may conveniently hear and sie," and they left room for the communion table.

The earliest collection recorded was taken on August 26th, 1663, when twenty-seven pounds, and twenty-two pennies were received, or our money £2 6s 10d. Of

this there was given to Andrew Wood "who is poore"—the usual formula—18/-, and to Andrew Brown 30/-, or 1/6 and 2/6 respectively. While the poor were not neglected, the money received was used for a variety of purposes, such as keeping the church in repair, or purchasing a mortcloth, and the session had another source of revenue in fines paid by offenders against their laws. But collections were occasionally made for special purposes, e.g., in 1671 George Johnstone, of Symington parish, sustained a sad loss by fire, where upon the session ordained a collection for his benefit. Again, in 1695, there was collected for prisoners with the Turks, or Barbary Corsairs, £9 7s 5d, and in the same year "the Act of Parliament for the toun of Cullen was read and appointed to be gathered the next Lord's day." The amount gathered was 14/4. There was an act passed in the year aforesaid in favour of the town of Cullen, but the title of the act alone is given, and why Cullen was specially favoured remains for the present, at anyrate, unknown. Occasionally the session contributed to objects neither charitable nor ecclesiastical. Thus, in 1659 they gave ten pounds Scots to the parishioners and heritors of Strathaven, on their application, for the purpose of repairing certain bridges. The Strathaven Road must then have been a mere track across the hills, but streams had to be crossed, and bridges of some description would be required for foot passengers, while horses crossed at the fords.

Of miscellaneous entries in the book the following are of more or less interest. On June 11th, 1661, "John Leckpryke presentit a bill of complaint against William Broun, his wyfe, and his daughter, for the sclandering of him with theft, and consigned fortie shillingis in the hanfis of the treasurer. The sessionne appointit the forsaid persones to be summontit against the nixt sessionne day." The persons, however, did not appear, and were summoned "pro secundo." This time they obeyed, and William Broun denied the complaint, but Margaret Ritchart affirmed "yt Johne Leckpryke took in ther yewe wt his shieip in his house, but she came never out again." Jean Broen deponed the same. Then the complainant called witnesses on his own behalf, one of whom, however, told a still darker tale, for she staed "that William Broune said to her that John Leckpryke had taken in ane yew of his, and had eiten the haggis of her in his house." Hew Reid, however, proved complainant's bill. What was the upshot of the case must remain unknown, for the subsequent minutes are wanting. The name Leckpryke, sometimes spelt Lekprivick, was afterwards spelt and pronounced Lapraik, and became famous through Burns' friendship with "Bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts."

An instance of ancient superstition occurs. In 1670 "It was delated that James Hutcheone in Netherwood had used ane gross charme in cutteing of the heid of ane quicke (live) calf wt ane axe and burieing the samen heid betwixt two lordis lands for to prevent the sturdy from the rest of his bestial." James appeared before the session and confessed that he had used the charm, but could not be brought to see that he had sinned by so doing, nor would he tell from whom he got it. An elder was told to speak to him privately, but not till the following year did he apply for permission to make a public confession.

An old custom came under the censure of the kirk in 1694, in which year the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr passed an act for repressing disorders and abuses at

MUIRKIRK

IN

BYGONE

DAYS



MAIN STREET

