History of the Parish of Minnigaff - James G. Kinna, 1904

HISTORY

OF THE

Parish of Minnigaff.

BY

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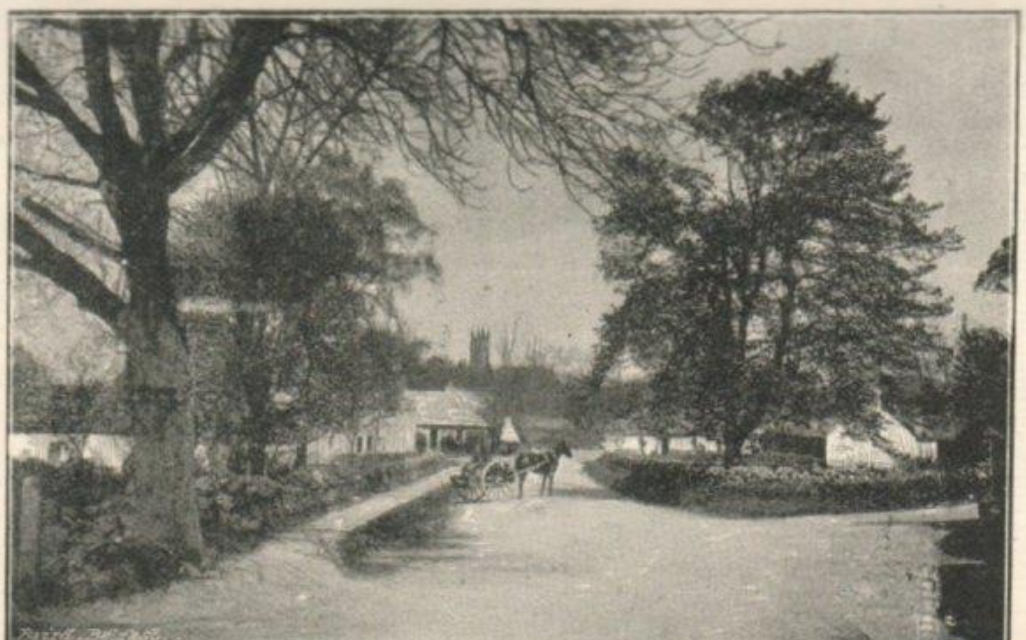


MINNIGAFF VILLAGE.

HISTORY

OF THE

PARISH OF MINNIGAFF.

PART I.

FAR back in the mists of antiquity we find Galloway inhabited by two tribes of Celtic aborigines, the Selgovæ and the Novantes. Within the dominions of the latter the parish of Minnigaff is situated.

The only remains of these ancient inhabitants now existing are the cairns, crannogs, and moats, dotted over the country.

It is wonderful how much of the unwritten history of the past we can learn from the careful examination of those relics which are occasionally discovered on the surface, or are unearthed from the former haunts of the aborigines.

Without descending into particulars too minutely, suffice it to say that there can be traced successively the different periods of the stone, bronze, and iron ages. It must not be supposed that all the remains which have been found are indicative of perpetual inter-tribal warfare. In several instances—if not exactly in Minnigaff parish, certainly near it—articles of ornament have been discovered. And as a proof of the high state of civilisation attained by our remote ancestors, it may be mentioned that there was lately found in a crannog the well-preserved remains of a bone comb. There are few parishes in which more pre-historic remains are to be found than in Minnigaff. But, unfortunately, large numbers of cairns have been utilised for dyke building, to the great diminution of objects of antiquarian interest.

Frequently during the removal of cairns many curious "finds" have been made, but being of no pecuniary value they were not preserved. Happily such is not now the case, as objects of antiquarian interest are now eagerly bought up at fancy prices, so much so that recently attempts have been made to palm off spurious articles on the unwary. "Feyther, wull that broon jug ye made dae for the minister, noo, whun he comes roon lookin' for auld things?" "No; it's no hard eneuch. Gie it anither week in the sun. But the auld ax 'll be roosted eneuch; try him wi't, he'll likely tak' it." This much for the profitable manufacture of relics. So far as I can learn the most frequent finds have been urns of different sizes and shapes. This leads me to suspect that all the cairns and tumuli in our parish belong to the class commonly called sepulchral cairns.

It is difficult to account for such a large number of funeral remains in so limited an area, but I have conjectured this must have been the locality in which the great battle between the Romans and the Picts allied against the Scots raged most fiercely. When it is remembered that within the policies of Kirroughtree these cairns can be counted by scores, it will be admitted that this locality has as much claim to be recognised as the theatre of this ancient battle as any other place in Galloway.

This sanguinary encounter is thus referred to in "Buchanan's History":—"During the reign of King Eugenius, the Roman Lieutenant Maximius, expecting to possess the whole island, if he could only destroy the two northern nations, commenced his operations by pretending friendship to the Picts. As their circumstances were the more depressed, and they were therefore the more ready to listen to terms of pacification, he buoyed them up by magnificent promises if they would prove sincere in their attachment to the Romans, and besides innumerable other advantages he offered to concede to them the whole territory of the Scots. The Picts, blinded with rage and eager for vengeance, allured by his promises and regardless of the future, willingly listened to the General's proposals, and in conjunction with the Romans ravaged the possessions of the Scots. The first engagement took place on the banks of the Cree, a river in Galloway, where the Scots, being inferior in strength, were overcome by numbers. While they fled on all sides, the Romans, certain of victory, pursued without regularity, but in the midst of the pursuit the troops of Argyle and other remote districts, who

GLEN TROOL AND THE RIVER CREE.

had not yet joined the army, arriving in good order fell upon the dispersed Romans and occasioned a great slaughter. Eugenius, profiting by this circumstance, rallied as many as he could of the fugitives and held a council of war on the present state of his affairs, when finding that with the forces he possessed it would be hopeless to renew the engagement he retreated into Carrick."

The slaughter was so excessive on both sides —if we may believe the averments of some historians—that the Cree became discoloured with the blood of the wounded, and almost choked up with the bodies of the slain.

It is strange to reflect that the cairns with which we are so familiar have existed for more than fifteen hundred years. What mighty changes have taken place in that time? Cities once fair to look upon have risen, flourished, and are now passed away. Even Rome, whose imperial eagles then fluttered over the known world, is now scarcely the shadow of its former selt.

> "Rome! Rome! thou art no more,
> As thou hast been,
> On thy seven hills of yore,
> Thou sat'st a Queen.
> Thou had'st thy triumphs then,
> Purpling the street,
> Princes and scepter'd men,
> Bow'd at thy feet."

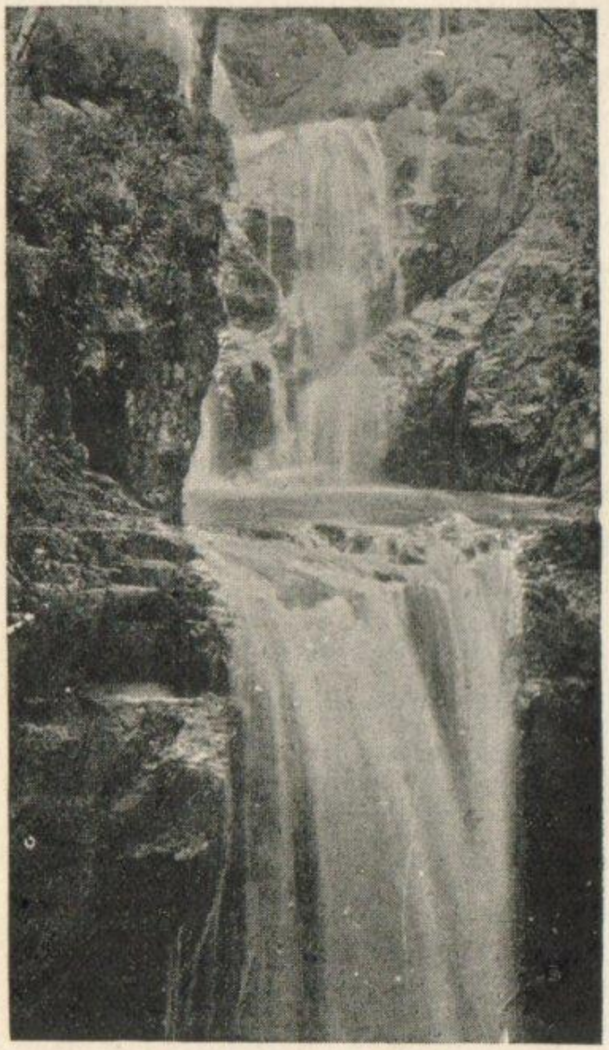
Still these old grey cairns remain telling the story of their origin to those who care to know. It seems almost sacrilege to meddle with any of them, but in this age of research nothing is too venerable to escape investigation. Those which have been disturbed, besides yielding evidence of having been places of burial, sometimes contained curious relics. In the year 1754 some of the cairns in Kirroughtree Park were opened, and in one of them were found three pieces of armour. One of these was formed very much like a hatchet, but subjoined to the back of it there was an implement resembling a pavior's hammer. The second resembled a halbert. The third was like a spade, but much smaller in size. Each of these articles had a proper aperture for the handle. When they were first discovered they were so much covered with rust, with which they were corroded, that it was impossible to distinguish of what metal they were made, but they were at last found to be of brass. They lay for many years in a farm-house in the parish, but it is not now known what became of them. We have several times assisted at the opening of cairns, but have never been so fortunate as to make any important find. The last cairn yielded, after a two days' attack, the head of an old tobacco pipe. similar to those in use a hundred years ago, showing that the cairn had been rifled at some former time. Our other finds consisted of pieces of urns, of different patterns, and fragments of "food vessels," which confirmed our opinion that most, if not all, the cairns in the parish belong to the sepulchral order.

The following account of the opening of a cairn in Kirroughtree Park is taken from the appendix to Symsons's "Large Description of Galloway," where it is reprinted from a MS. account of the parish written during the 17th century :—"Mr Heron one day making pitts for a plantation of firs in that plain was persuaded by a friend standing by him to open a large mount of earth standing in the middle of the ground, and to take the old earth to put into the pitts to encourage his trees to take root, and upon opening of it found it to be a Roman urn. The top of the mount was all covered over with a strong clay, half yard deep, under which there was half a yard deep of gray ashes, and under that there was an inch thick of scruff-like mug metal, bran coloured, which took a stroak of the pick-axe to break it, under which the workmen found a double wall, built circular ways, about a yard deep, full of red ashes like those of a great furnace. When these were taken out at the bottom there was a large flag-stone six feet long and three broad covering a pit of a yard deep, and when they raised up the stone they observed the bones of a large man lying entire, but when they struck upon the stone to break it they fell down in ashes. There was nothing more found in it. There is above a dozen of great heaps of stones detached over the plain in which were found several urns, but none so memorable as this."

It is supposed that this cairn was situated half a mile east of Kirroughtree house. Several of the Minnigaff cairns have names descriptive of colour or some other obvious characteristic. Such is the Boss Cairn, so called from a singular cavity, which many years ago was laid open. The Grey Cairn and the White Cairn acquiring their name from their general appearance. But such names as Drumlawhinnie and Rory Gill's Cairn are not so easily explained. It has been suggested that the name Rory Gill is a corruption of Ruairi, meaning the tawny chief, and Gall a stranger, so that according to this translation Rory Gill was a dark chief and a stranger, and that at his death this cairn was raised to perpetuate his memory.

It cannot fail to have struck most people that two adjectives, "Black" and "White," occur very frequently in connection with names of places in this parish. I shall attempt in as brief a manner as possible to show how the "Blacks" and "Whites" come to be so applied.

As the places these adjectives distinguish are not blacker nor whiter than the adjacent country, it is quite clear that these distinctions could not have arisen from such topographical differences. It is true there are cases where the terms black and white have been applied because they denoted some apparent and striking feature in the landscape ; but in most cases no such explanation is now satisfactory. But what about the settlers in the so-called black and white districts ? It is



THE FALLS OF BUCHAN.

now generally believed amongst those who have made this subject their special study that those localities which yet retain the distinguishing adjectives black and white were formerly inhabited by tribes of different colours. And since the waters of the Black Sea are not black, nor are the waters of the Red Sea red, it is beyond doubt that these seas took their names from the presence of former inhabitants of their shores. For the same reason the blacks and whites of Minnigaff are indebted to former inhabitants for their origin. It is a fact that Galloway was the last portion of Scotland held by the Picts in a semi-independent state, and consequently if any part of the Pictish people might be expected to retain their peculiar languages and characteristics it would be the Picts of Galloway. In pointing out a few of those places whose names still bear the memory of their black inhabitants, it will be noticed that these black names occur near the locality of the Pict's Dyke or Deil's Dyke, which runs through a part of Minnigaff parish. From the foregoing facts I think it is only reasonable to suppose that the blacks and whites of the parish are only the names derived from former inhabitants, and have no reference to the topography of the several districts so distinguished.

Incidentally I may mention that there are the remains of what has been a very primitive village near to Rory Gill's Cairn. The bee hive houses of which the village consisted may be either assigned to the pre-historic era or to the time of

Rory Gill, both historic and pre-historic remains having been dug out of the ruins of such dwellings. Certain it is that the remains of such erections can be clearly seen in the locality of Rory's Cairn.

There is also a bee hive town close to the moat of Torquhinnock, but in this instance the houses have communicated with each other, though having had several entrances to the agglomeration of huts. Perhaps each group of houses would compose the dwellings of four or five families, who might be spoken of as dwelling in one mound, rather than under one roof.

The walls of these primitive houses are built of rough, undressed stones, and the dome shape or bee hive form is given by making the successive courses of stone overlap each other till nothing is left but a small hole at the top, through which the smoke escaped. "The principle of the arch is ignored," says Dr Arthur Mitchell in "Past in the Present," "and the mode of construction is that of the oldest known masonry." Such primitive places of abode are yet found inhabited in Scotland, but there are none in the parish of Minnigaff from which smoke now ascends.

But to return to Rory Gill. He appears to have been the Robin Hood of Galloway, and his end is thus commemorated in a poem by Joseph

Train, the antiquarian correspondent of Sir Walter Scott. Rory appears to have been caught red handed in one of his predatory excursions, and summarily dealt with.

"No justice ayre was called to ordain,
If his life should be spared or straightway ta'en,
On earth, to make up his peace with heaven,
An hour was asked but it was not given ;
And long ere his men could rise on the hill,
Stiff hanged on a wuddy was Rory Gill.
Thus fell in his prime the bravest wight
That ere gear hunting went at night ;
Lamented he was though far and near
The country long he had kept in fear.
And down at night from the blasted tree,
By his merrie men carried away was he,
And where bridle paths on the mountain meet,
They laid him out without a winding sheet,
Save the heathery turf that wrapt his breast,
And left him with tears to his long. long rest.
And oft the wanderer stops to see
The big cairn raised to his memory,
And many bosoms with awe yet thrill
To hear of the deeds of Rory Gill.

Altogether in the parish of Minnigaff there are over one hundred cairns of various sizes, and probably a great many more have been utilised in dyke building.

Moats.—There are three moats still existing—one at the Church, another at Little Park, and a third in Bardrochwood Moor. Various have been the conjectures as to the purposes for which these mounds were originally constructed. The general opinion is that they were places of justice before the institution of regular courts.

It is stated in the MS account of the parish to which we have previously referred, that "the moat at the Church was at first contrived for sacrificing to Jupiter and the heathen gods, but when Christianity obtained it was used as a

THE BUCHAN, GLENTROOL.

mercat place for the inhabitants to meet and do business till such times as villages were erected, and places of entertainment prepared, and ale-houses for converse, entertainment, and interviews." This explanation of the origin of moats is quite feasible when the moat occurs in the vicinity of a village, but it does not hold good when applied to such a place as Bardrochwood

Moor, where it is more than probable a "mercat" never was held.

Sometimes moats were used as places of execution before the abolition of hereditary jurisdiction. In fact, a moat was considered a necessary appendage to a gentleman's house in former times, and to possess the right of pit and gallows was a patent of aristocracy.

In those barbarous days feudal superiors who possessed this right—or wrong—could hang any offending vassal, or drown any female thief within the bounds of his estate. It is believed by some, and doubted by others, that the term Gallow Hill had reference to this summary mode of procedure. This name also occurs in the topography of Minnigaff. On the farm of Kirkland is a Gallows Knowe, and tradition affirms that it was on this spot that MK'Clorg, the smith of Minnigaff, was hanged by Claverhouse in Covenanting times. Claverhouse, in a letter addressed to the Duke of Queensberry, says :—"That great villain, MK'Clorg, the smith of Mennegaff, that made all the clekys and after whom the forces have trotted so often, it cost me both paines and money to know how to find him. I am resolved to have him, for it is necessary I mak' som' example of severity, lest rebellion be thocht cheap here." An old gnarled thorn till within recent years marked the site of the gallows. Amongst the great blessings of enlightened times may be included the abolition of hereditary jurisdiction, which took place in 1746. It is questionable whether the old method of administering the law was not better than the present cumbersome and expensive machinery. At all events the old system was speedier than the new.

Crannogs. — There are traces of several crannogs in Minnigaff parish. Vestiges of one of these ancient dwellings can still be found at Larg Tower. The level plain has been at one time the bed of a lake, and even yet when newly ploughed the sites of the ancient hearths can easily be identified by their peculiar red colou.r Another peculiarity in the field is the causeway which traverses its whole length from north to south.

In the early history of the human race self-preservation seems to have been an idea as deeply rooted in the mind of man as it is now. This is evident from the care taken by the ancients to select a place of safety for their homes. No historical era can be fixed when these crannogs or lake dwellings were inhabited, and we can only judge of their age by sequences. That they were the residences of primitive families all antiquarians are agreed, and the attention which is now being turned to this particular branch of archæology is being rewarded bysome very interesting discoveries.

As the arts progressed and men were able to defend themselves on land from the attacks of wild beasts and enemies the crannogs were deserted. To the crannog as a place of safety succeeded the British fort. One of these ancient strengths is to be found at Larg overlooking the former lake dwelling. In course of time, as civilisation advanced, a knowledge of architecture began to dawn on the natives of this land, and we find the fort being evacuated in favour of the primitive stone building, and I have no doubt that in place of the present ruins of Larg Tower at one time there would stand an example of early Celtic architecture. Thus runs the sequence crannog, fort, castle, the remains of each may yet be seen in close proximity on the farm of Larg. These rude dwellings of the natives continned longer in use in Galloway than in any other district in Scotland. As the surface of the ancient province was formerly much more covered with wood and water than it is now, it offered special facilities for the construction of these "wigwams."

Galloway, at the time of Agricola's first attack in the year 78 A.D., was thickly covered with wood, which greatly impeded that General's march. Subsequent mention of the woods of

Galloway is frequently made, and nowhere can the trees of that ancient period be seen to greater advantage than in some of the mosses in the more northern districts of the parish.

Very large oak trees have been laid bare on some of the farms near the mouth of the Cree, but it is generally thought that these giants of the forest found their way to such low-lying ground through being washed down by "spates." The Wood of Cree, which was formerly celebrated for its oak trees, was sold by Lord Galloway, about the year 1798, for 6000 guineas.

Among the natural curiosities of the parish may be mentioned the Rocking Stone, opposite Dalnotery old Toll House.

We do not find a reference to Minnigaff for many centuries after the battle in Kirroughtree Park between the allied Romans and Picts against the Scots. The Gallowegians were continually in a state of turmoil, and if not engaged in inter-tribal warfare were ravaging some other unhappy locality.

It is thought that the Irish Picts introduced into the parish the practise of brewing ale from heather about the year 1000. Fortunately for posterity this is now a lost art, but some of the places where this process of distilling was carried on existed till within recent years. The Picts' kilns, as they were called, were about 15 feet long and 8 wide, and their shape resembled that of a pear. There were several of these curious relics of antiquity on the farm of Risk, but like many other mementoes of a bye-gone age they got utilised—in this case in dyke-building.

The fortified promontory of the Mull of Galloway—says a writer in Vol. VI. of the "Archæological and Historical Collections of Ayr and Galloway"—is locally believed to have been the last stronghold to which the Picts of Galloway retired before an overwhelming force of Scotic invaders. At last all were slain except two men, father and son, who were offered their lives on condition that they would reveal to their enemies the coveted secret recipe of brewing heather ale, a beverage highly esteemed at the time, and the preparation of which was only known to the Pictish race. "I will reveal the secret to you," said the father, "on one condition, namely, that ye fling my son over these rocks into the sea. It shall never be known to one of my race that I have betrayed the sacred trust." The son was accordingly thrown over and drowned, whereupon the old man ran to a pinnacle of the rock overhanging the sea, and exclaiming, "Now I am certain there is none left to betray the secret; let it perish for ever," and cast himself after his son into the waves.

In writing the history of any particular parish it is almost impossible to avoid the occurrence of long chronological blanks in the undertaking. Minnigaff is, however, more fortunate in this respect than many other parishes, for frequent reference is made to it in national history, more especially after the appearance of Wallace. After that patriot's eventful quarrel with the English officers in Lanark, we find him shortly joined by a gentleman of the name of William Kerlie, whose ancestors had once possessed large estates in Wigtownshire. These estates, together with the ancestral Castle of Cruggleton, had been taken by treachery from the Kerlies, and it was one of the first acts of generosity on the part of Wallace to assist his friend in the recovery of his family property.

On his way to Cruggleton, Wallace appears to have encamped near the village of Minnigaff, and a piece of ground on the farm of Borland is still known as Wallace's Camp. As this flying visit to the parish took place about the year 1297 it proves how tenaciously a name clings to a locality.

When the English governor of Wigtown Castle, John de Hodleston, heard of the approach of the celebrated warrior he fled to his native country. Wallace, upon gaining possession of Wigtown Castle, installed Adam Gordon as keeper. "He then proceeded," says Nicholson in his "History of Galloway," "towards Cruggleton on the same coast, but he found that it would be difficult to take this stronghold unless by stratagem. It stood upon a rock, the base of which at one side was washed by the sea ; the other side, or that next the coast, was well fortified, and had a drawbridge for the ingress and egress of the garrison. Having concealed his men from the view of the besieged, Wallace, with his two chosen companions, Kerlie and Steven, entered the water and swam to the bottom of the rock, they then with much exertion clambered up its steep side. The defenders had no suspicion of danger from that quarter, and had placed no sentinels there upon duty. The intrepid heroes entered the castle and made their way to the gate unobserved. Wallace immediately seized the sentinel stationed there in his iron grasp and threw him over the rock. Having opened the gates and lowered the bridge, he blew his horn, when a chosen party of his men, who had been placed in concealment, rushed into the fort and slew every individual who offered any resistance. They found in it some valuable stores."

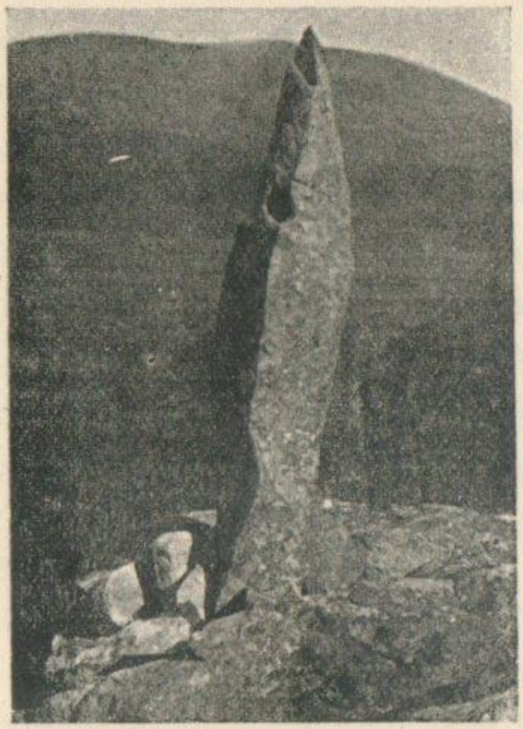
Such was the brief siege of Cruggleton Castle.

There is now only one arch of a lower hall standing, and it is supported by iron bands. It is probable that Kerlie, from his intimate knowledge of the castle contributed in a great measure towards the success of the undertaking. The fosse to the landward side of the castle can yet be traced; whilst seaward there are still the same beetling cliffs unchanged since the days of Wallace.

It would seem as if Minnigaff had attractions for patriots, for, after the tragic end of Wallace, and during the struggle for Scottish independence, Robert Bruce frequently visited the locality. Of his doings there I shall quote at length from the "History of Galloway," being the most graphic, and at the same time the most authentic, record of the King's doings when in the parish. After encountering many hardships and dangers we find the King, wearied and distressed with grief, keeping an appointment with his brother at the solitary farm-house of Craigencallie. The mistress of it, a generous and high-minded woman, was sitting alone, and upon seeing a stranger enter she enquired his name and business. The King replied that he was a traveller proceeding through the country. "All travellers are welcome," answered she, "for the sake of one." "And who is that?" said the King. "It is our lawful sovereign, Robert the Bruce," answered the woman, " who is lord of this country, and though his foes have now the ascendancy, yet I hope to see him soon the Lord and King over all Scotland." " Dame, do you love him really so sincerely," he enquired. "Yes," she replied, "as God is my witness." "Then it is Robert the Bruce who now addresses you." " Ah, sir !" she said in much surprise, " where are your men when you are thus alone." " I have none near me at this time, therefore I must travel alone." " This must not be the case ; I have three sons, gallant and faithful, they shall become your trusty servants." They were absent at this time, but upon their arrival she made them promise fidelity to the King, and they afterwards by their valour became his favourites and rose high in his service.

The enlistment of these three sturdy Minnigaff herds in the King's service give rise to the popular " Legend of Craigencallie." It is embodied in the appendix to Symon's " Large Description of Galloway," and is there told in the quaint language of two hundred years ago, and it is to this effect :—During the time that the old lady of Craigencallie was preparing a hasty meal for the King her three sons arrived, and then the narrative proceeds to say—" When the King had done eating he ask't them what weapons they had, and if they could use them. They told him they were used to none but bow and arrow. So as the King went out to see what was become of his followers, all being beat from him but 300 men, who had lodged that night in a neighbouring glen, he ask't them if they could make use of their bows. M'Kie, the eldest son, let fly an arrow at two ravens perched upon the pinnacle of a rock above the house, and shot them both through the heads, at which the King smiled, saying, 'I would not wish he aimed at him.' Murdoch, the second son, let fly at one upon the wing, and shot him thro' the body ; but M'Lurg, the third son, had not so good success."

In the meantime the English, upon the pursuit of King Robert, were encamped in Moss Raploch, a great flow on the other side of the Dee. The King observing them makes the young men understand that his forces were much inferior. Upon which they advised the King to a stratagem : that they would gather all the horses, wild and tame, in the neighbourhood, with all the goats that could be found, and let them be surrounded and kept all in a body by his soldiers in the afternoon of the day, which was accordingly done. The neighing of the horses, with the horns of the goats, made the English, at so great a distance, apprehend them to be a great army so durst not venture out of their camp that night, and by the break of day the King with his small army attacked them with such fury that they fled precipitantly, a great number being killed. And there is a very big stone in the centre of the flow, which



BRUCE'S STONE, MOSS RAPLOCH.

is called the King's stone to this day, to which he leaned his back till his men gathered up the spoil, and within these thirty years there were broken swords and heads of picks got in the flow as they were digging out peats.

The three young men followed close to him in all his wars to the English in which he was successful, that at last they were all turned out of the kingdom and marches established 'twixt the two nations, and the soldiers and officers were put in possession of what lands were in English hands according to their merits.

The three brothers who had stuck close to the King's interest and followed him through all dangers, being asked by the King what reward they expected, answered very modestly that they never had a prospect of great things, but if His Majesty would bestow upon them the thirty pound land of Hassock and Comloddan they would be very thankful, to which the King cheerfully assented, and they kept it long in their possession.

To anyone acquainted with the locality, the stratagem of the three brothers seems perfectly feasible. The high hill of Cairnbabber, which rises almost perpendicularly from behind the farm-house of Craigencallie, commands a full view of Moss Raploch. A single line of soldiers appearing on the top of this ridge could be spread out at great length, and from the Moss it would be impossible to know the strength in the rear.

There are now no lands in the parish known as the Hassock, but the tradition is that the sons solicited and obtained the bit hassock of land that lies between the burns of Palnure and

Penkiln. This hassock of land is an isosceles triangle, the base of which runs for three miles along the Cree, and the sides formed by the streams of Palnure and Penkiln run five miles into the country.

Emboldened by his success, and having been joined by friends, Bruce determined to search the locality for any of his enemies who might still be lurking in ambush. He accordingly questioned his followers if any of them had any information on this point, as he deemed it not improbable that coming from different directions they might have learned something of the several bands of English scattered up and down. Lord James Douglas answered that he had passed a village where 200 of them were stationed, and reposed in full confidence of perfect security without having placed any sentinel.

Douglas proposed that they should instantly set out and surprise them, and thus they might have an opportunity of retaliating upon their pursuers the injuries which they themselves had suffered during the day. Orders were immediately given to mount, and the Scots coming unexpectedly on the English rushed into the village and with much facility cut them to pieces.

Although the name of the village is not given where the encounter took place, circumstances point to Minnigaff as being the scene of the conflict. And it is more than probable that numbers took refuge in the Church, for it is a fact that at a depth of two feet under the floor of the old Church there is a deep layer of bones covered with burnt and charred slates of a very rude description. Evidently the Church has at some period been destroyed by fire, but whether this catastrophe was caused through civil commotion or accident history sayeth not and tradition is silent.

Churches were favourite places of refuge for the defeated in the olden time, but they were not always treated with that reverence due to their sacred associations. During a party battle between the rival houses of Johnstone and Maxwell, a party of the latter took refuge in a Church. The Johnstones collected a large quantity of hay and straw, which they set on fire, and they burned the Church of Lochmaben with all that were in it as a just punishment in their eyes for the destruction of the Castle of Lochwood.

Bruce employed strategy again with success at Loch Trool. The incident is thus graphically described by Captain Denniston, who, besides being well acquainted with the locality, was also an adept in recounting such exploits. He says: —" Tradition informs us that Bruce retreated to the head of Loch Trool, a wild, romantic, and beautiful lake in the parish of Minnigaff. Bruce, like a wary and experienced general, saw at a single glance the advantages he might reap from his present position, and determined to avail himself of them to the uttermost. The

LOCH TROOL.

path that wound up the margin of the lake was so narrow that two men could not walk, much less ride, abreast, while a steep hill, in some places almost perpendicular, arose from the margin of the water, and skirted it for nearly a mile. About the centre of this path the hill pushes forward a precipitous abutment, called still by the inhabitants of this sepuestered glen the 'Steps of Trool.' The pathway here is about twenty feet perpendicular above the surface of the water, while the hill above is almost the same for a few hundred yards, and very steep for a quarter of a mile higher. It was this spot that Bruce fixed on for the second of his military strategies.

" His slender body of troops consisted of a few hardy tried veterans, who stood by him in many a well-contested field—who had braved every vicissitude of season, and suffered every privation, with their undaunted leader. The rest were a body of half-armed and undisciplined peasantry, who had been induced to join him in his hasty marches through the country, and whilst they added to his numerical force were often a drawback on his slender resources, and even retarded the rapidity of the forced marches which his frequent defeats rendered necessary.

" Fully aware that the English would follow he sent his peasantry up the hill with orders to loosen as many of the detached blocks of granite as they were able to do during the night, and to hurl them down on the enemy at a preconcerted signal, which was to be three blasts on his bugle horn, should they attempt to pass. The reversion of his little band he drew up in a strong position at the head of the lake, and having completed his arrangements he took one or two of his most confidential warriors and ascended a small eminence on the opposite side of the lake to watch the success of his plans. All night his friends laboured with unabated vigour and in solemn silence, so that by the aid of levers and crowbars at the earliest dawn he was delighted with a view of the formidable reception they had prepared for his enemies, and his eye kindled with pleasure at sight of the huge fragments, like the ruins of a wall extending along the face of the hill for almost half-a-mile in length, and his men on the alert and ready for the signal. A glance down the lake showed him the English army in full march up the defile, a body of choice cavalry led the van, a division of heavy armed billmen followed to support them, and the face of the hill was covered with a cloud of archers to protect their flanks. Onward they came in single file, the leading horseman had reached the fatal 'step,' when, hark! a prolonged note from the bugle awakens the mountain echoes and awakens the slumbering boar from his leafy bed. Hark! again it is followed by another blast, louder and shriller than the first. Again it sounds, deep, loud, and portentious, like the first note of the coming tempest as it hurtles through the sky. A moment before this the hill lay smiling in all the soft repose of a summer morning, and in another it seemed to have been rent asunder by the surge of a volcano and its contents tossed into the dell beneath. Down! down! the dreadful avalanche descends, leaping and bounding and tearing up and breaking down everything that obstructs its fatal progress; but woe to the predestined wretches that were penned up for slaughter in the pathway beneath. In vain were there screams for mercy where no mercy could be shown them. Let us not spin out a tale of horror, nor gloat over the wreck of the human race. The whole of the English vanguard are said to have perished in the defile, and the rest to have become so intimidated that they retired beyond the Cree into the County of Wigtown to await a reinforcement before they resumed offensive operations."

Various implements of war have been found at the scene of this mishap to the English, together with several buttons of an antique pattern. The nature of the soil in the locality is such that it possesses in a high degree the property of preserving any metal substance which may become embedded in it. The supposition is that the articles which have been dug up from time to time are relics of this ancient fray. A more sanguinary encounter between the English, having the Gallowegians as allies, and Edward Bruce—brother to the

King—took place on a plain near Caer-Uchtred (Kirroughtree) about the year 1307.

The Gallowegians, unable to withstand the valour of their antagonists, were routed with great slaughter and put to flight. M'Dowal, the most formidable enemy of Bruce in Galloway, was slain. The battle took place in Kirroughtree Park, on the same ground as that fought between the Romans and Picts against the Scots one thousand years previously.

This battle between the English Edward and the Scotch Edward was the last time the sound of war has been heard in the parish. Coins of the reign of Edward I. have frequently been found where the battle took place. It is well known that Edward I. of England was most anxious to obtain the supremacy of all Scotland by fair means or foul, and it is conjectured that from the frequency with which coins of his reign are found, he intended to accomplish by bribery and corruption that which he could not otherwise obtain—possession of the kingdom of Scotland.

After the death of Robert the Bruce, his son, Robert II., a minor, succeeded him on the throne, and Randolph, Earl of Moray, assumed the regency. This ruler administered justice with stern impartiality. He held courts in different parts of the country, and sheriffs of counties were made responsible for property stolen in open fields, because it was their duty to protect it.

On one occasion when he was dispensing justice in the town of Wigtown, a man stepped forward from the audience and complained that a party of assassins were at that moment lying concealed in a neighbouring forest to murder him on his way home. Randolph immediately sent a number of his attendants to seize the villians and bring them before him. When they made their appearance in the court he thus addressed them—"Is it you who lie in wait to kill the King's liege subjects? To the gallows with them instantly." This powerful gang of thieves who infested the country were, according to tradition, overpowered by superior force, made prisoners, and all executed in the moor of Dranandow in the parish of Minnigaff. Two standing stones, each nearly eight feet high and only a few yards apart, mark the spot where the execution took place. These two upright monoliths are called the "Thieve Stones" to this day.

There were formerly more than two stones standing, but they appear to have fallen down, and are now sunk in the soft moss until they have almost gone out of sight. The locality in which these stones are situated presents some puzzling pre-historic problems, and to all appearance has been the site of one of those bee hive towns referred to previously in these papers.

As this gang of robbers intended to entrap the Regent on his return from Wigtown to

THE THIEVE STONES.
(Photograph by Mr David Pace, Newton-Stewart.)

Edinburgh, this circumstance would lead to the conclusion that the direct road from Edinburgh to Wigtown led through Minnigaff, and the assassins were therefore aware that the Regent must pass through their ambush. The leader of the band was Rory Gill, to whom we have previously referred, and whose cairn is yet so prominent an object in the landscape.

What historical events, if any, took place in the parish during the next century or two are not recorded. No doubt the constant state of fear in which the powerful family of the Black Douglas kept the whole of Galloway would be felt in Minnigaff.

After the downfall of these Lords of Galloway, and the annexation to the Crown in 1456, peace seems to have reigned in Galloway for some time.

The fame of the monastery at Whithorn, founded by Fergus, Lord of Galloway, in the middle of the 12th century, had now spread all through Scotland and England, and it was even known on the Continent. To the Shrine of St. Ninian were attracted pilgrims from all parts of the country.

On the 14th December, 1506, the Regent Albany granted a general safe conduct to all persons of England, Ireland, and the Isle of Man to come by land or water into Scotland to the Church of Candida Casa. King James IV. visited Whithorn more frequently than any other sovereign—in fact, once every year, and sometimes twice. He must of necessity have passed through Minnigaff frequently on his way thither, but the name of the "toune" is only once mentioned. The Lord Treasurer's accounts contain much curious information in connection with these pilgrimages of the King, who usually travelled with a large retinue.

In the year 1507, when the Queen was delivered of her first son—who died next year—she was not expected to live. To propitiate the saints the King undertook a journey on foot to the Shrine of St. Ninian at Whithorn. We are able to follow the King's route from Edinburgh to Whithorn by the disbursements made by the way, each payment being faithfully noted down.

In March, 1508, we find the King coming from Edinburgh to Whithorn *via* Penpont, and during the journey the following items of expenditure occur:—"Item, to ane woman that sang to the King, XXVIIIs. Item, for soling of ane pair schune to the King, XVd." From Penpon the crossed to Carsphairn, then spelled "Castell Fern," where one of his outlays is —"Item, for ane sark to the French boy, VS." On the 16th he breakfasted in Dalry and dined on the way, or as the entry stands, "be the gait," between Dalry and Minnigaff. Under the same date is the following entry—"Item, that nycht the King soupit at Menegouf, for the belcher there, IXs." From thence he went to

Penyghame on the 17th "and lost XIIs. on schuting with the corsbow with William Douglas —one of his retinue." On the 18th he was in Wigtown, and the next entry on this journey is —"Item, to ane man that gydid the King fra Wigtown to Quhithorn before day, XIIIs."

The Queen having recovered from her illness, next year, in the month of July, their Majesties repaired in state to Whithorn to offer up thanks for Her Majesty's recovery. Their route this year, however, did not necessitate their spending the night in Minnigaff. They were accompanied by a large retinue, Her Majesty travelling in a litter, sometimes called in the Treasurer's books "the quhenis chariot." It required 17 horses to carry her luggage, three more for the King's wardrobe, and one for his "chapel geir." The journey from Stirling to Whithorn and back occupied thirty-one days.

James IV.'s last visit was in 1512, the year before Flodden. What a stir these grand cavalcades would create during their stay in Minnigaff. One strange fact in connection with these visits of James to Whithorn is that he never made any offerings at the Church of Minnigaff. This might perhaps be explained by his making a present in private, and thus not being a payment of public money no entry would appear in the public accounts. It would also favour the idea that the vicarage was detached from the Church.

There is a tradition that a religious house once stood a little to the north-west of the present Church; this may have been the vicarage. Be this as it may, Minnigaff Church does not appear to have derived any pecuniary benefit from the passing of Kings and Queens through the "toune." It would be a matter of some difficulty to find accommodation for a King's retinue in Minnigaff to-day, but if a King should come we would make an endeavour to make him comfortable during his stay. The next year James, contrary to the superstitious leanings of his nature, and in spite of several mysterious warnings, persisted in waging war on his brother-in-law, Henry VIII. Resolved to invade England at the head of an irresistible force, James summoned all his military vassals, directing them to meet him at the Borough Moor of Edinburgh, attended by all their retainers, between the ages of 16 and 60 years. His summons was obeyed. Out of all the districts in Scotland, his nobles, with their followers clad in armour, hastened to the appointed rendezvous, and on the 9th day of September, 1513, was fought the disastrous Battle of Flodden. The effects of this defeat were keenly felt in every parish in Scotland.

Scarcely was there a castle, tower, or hamlet from which there were not flowers "weeded awa." Amongst the men of note who fell on that bloody field was Sir Alexander Stewart of Garlies.

At this period Galloway was in a very disordered state, and law was very partially administered. A reference to "Pitcairn's Criminal Trials" will show that those who ought to have set an example were most frequently the originators of disturbance. No crime was too serious but its pardon could be bought, if the money could be raised. Frequently in the assize for trial of prisoners at justices ayre at Kirkcudbright or Wigtown appear names of Minnigaff lairds, but they were, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion.

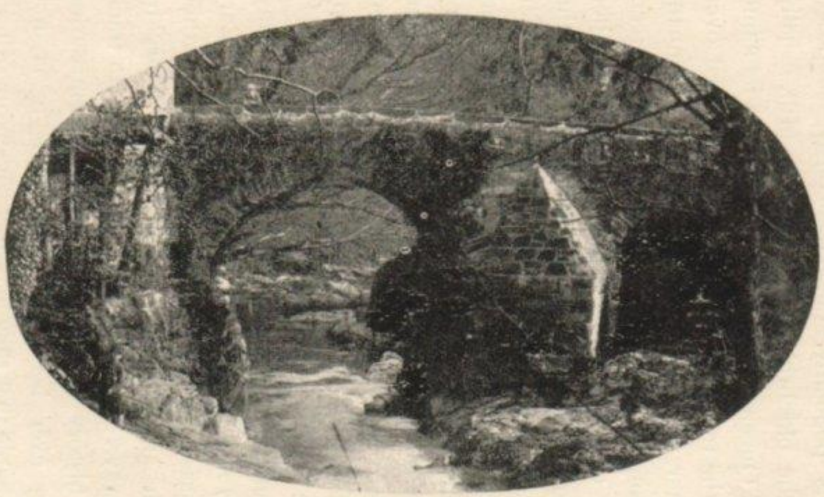
About the middle of the sixteenth century the Gordons of Lochinvar seem to have been the great governing family, In 1555 Sir John Gordon of Lochinvar was nominated by the Queen, Justiciary of the Lordship of Galloway, and he received a renewal of his commission from King James in 1587.

The Gordons identified themselves with Queen Mary's interests, and as they were powerful, both in Church and State, we presume it was to punish their adherents that immediately after the defeat of the Queen at

Langside, Galloway was visited by the Regent Murray.

It is popularly, but erroneously, supposed that the old bridge at Cumloden Mill, usually called Queen Mary's Bridge, obtained its name from the tradition that the Queen passed over it in her flight from Langside to Dundrennan. This supposition, as we have stated, is incorrect. Mary travelled through the Glenkens on her way to Dundrennan. During the course of the journey Lord Herries pointed out to her Earlston Castle, which had been the occasional residence of Bothwell, when she burst into tears at the memory of happier days. The name therefore of Queen Mary's Bridge at Cumloden seems to have derived its origin more from poetic imagination than historical fact.

After the assassination of the Regent Murray in 1570, Queen Elizabeth sent down the Earl of Sussex and Lord Scroop to still further punish and overawe the friends of Mary in Galloway. And although I am unable to trace from history any reference to these emissaries having ever been in the parish, it is not improbable that they may have been in Minnigaff, and from their being associated with the memory of the unfortunate Mary, may thus have been the means of identifying the name of Queen Mary with this romantic bridge.



QUEEN MARY'S BRIDGE.
(Photograph by W. Hunter & Son, Newton-Stewart.)

During the minority of James VI., though the "toune" of Minnigaff does not come into national prominence, it was a frequent subject of discussion at the Convention of Royal Burghs. At this period Minnigaff was a place of some importance, and in which a good business was carried on.

It is interesting to learn that on the arrival of James VI. and his bride at Leith on 6th May, 1590, amongst the guests invited, Minnigaff was represented by Sir Alexander Stewart of Garlies. Sir Alexander, who had been created Lord Garlies on 2nd September, 1607, was in 1623 raised to the dignity of Earl of Galloway; his descent from the illustrious family of Lennox being assigned as the principal reason for raising him to the peerage.

About the year 1604 the first survey of the parish was made by the Rev. Timothy Pont. Of this remarkable man very little is known as to his personal history, nor is the precise date of his death recorded. A brief sketch of him and his works is given in "The Scottish Nation," from which we learn that in 1608 he undertook a pedestrian expedition to explore the remote parts of Scotland. Bishop Nicholson describes him as a "complete mathematician and the first projector of a Scotch atlas, for which great purpose he personally surveyed all

the several counties and isles of the kingdom." The originals of his maps are preserved in the Advocates' Library. They were ordered by King James to be purchased from his heirs, and Sir John Scott of Scotstarvet afterwards prevailed upon Sir Robert Gordon of Straloch to prepare them for publication. Their revision was continued by his son, Mr James Gordon, parson of Rothiemay, with whose corrections and amendments they were published in Blacus Atlas, under the title of "Theatrum Scotiæ."

Sir Herbert Maxwell, M.P., in his recent work, "Studies in the Topography of Galloway," thus refers to Pont's death :—"His death must have taken place between 1610 and 1614, in which latter year Mr William Smith was in occupation of the benefice of Dunnett, but minute as are the circumstantial details of many ignoble lives in all periods of our history Timothy Pont's energetic soul passed away without record and no man knows where his bones are laid."

Pont's maps, finely engraved on copper, carefully coloured by hand, and enriched by quaint emblematical titles and emblazoned shields of arms, were published in Amsterdam. Some of the names in the maps have therefore assumed rather a Dutch complexion. That part of the atlas containing the parish of Minnigaff is called

"Gallouidæ Pars Media," and comprises the district lying between Dee and Cree. In this map is marked every castle, gentleman's seat, farm, mill, or clump of trees, and the course of the smallest stream is shown—Calgow burn even. Each different object in the landscape is represented by a distinct symbol; a church by a cross on a pedestal, a mill by a millwheel, a castle by an enclosed space, hills and trees are shaded to bring their outlines into prominence. Thus at a glance, a bird's-eye view can be obtained of the district as it appeared nearly three hundred years ago. It is surprising to note how many objects have now entirely disappeared from the face of the earth—even in this small speck of the universe—since the survey was first made in 1604. Certainly the names in many cases are still preserved in leases, but the small farms have ceased to exist as separate holdings. This is the case in many instances with farms once tenanted by those who were members of session—Heron in Drumnacht, M'Harg in Terregan, M'Caul in Waulkmill of Glenhoise, M'Whanle in Cleckmalloch, Martine in Carsduncan, and many others.

A side-light is thrown on the state of society in Minnigaff about the beginning of the 17th century by the frequent references made to that "toune" in "Pitcairn's Criminal Trials." Under date of 23rd November, 1605, we find "Robert M'Dowell and Johnnie M'Dowell, sons to Peter M'Dowell of Machirmoir, dilaitit of airt and pairt of the mutilatioune of Patrick Murdoch of Camlodden, and Alexander M'Kie, his servant, of thair richt handis. Persewer Patrik Murdoche of Camloddene, Alex. M'Kie his servand, Sir Thomas Hamiltoune (knycht), Advocat to our soverane lord, Prelocutoris for the pannell, Mr Alexander King, Peter M'Dowell of Machirmoir, the laird of Mondurk, Robert M'Dougall, Mereheand. Peter M'Dowell of Machirmoir became pledge and suertie for Robert and Johnne M'Dowellis, his sonnes, that they sall compeir befoir the Justice or his deputes the third day of the nixt Justice air of the Sherefdom of Kirkcudbrycht, or sooner, upon fifteen days wairning to underly the law."

It would seem that the jury empannelled to try these two young men of the period were in fear of being afterwards treated as had been Comloddone and his servant, for twenty-six of those summoned were "amercait in payne of ane hundreth merkis each for not appearing to pass upon the assize of the M'Dowells."

Peter M'Dowell would be very unpleasantly placed, as he was hereditary coroner of that portion of Galloway which is contained between Dee and Cree, and would thus be called upon to prosecute his own sons.

There are other cases in which the names of local lairds are frequently mentioned, but they are not directly connected with Minnigaff. "Slauchter" seems to have been a common crime in Galloway in the beginning of the 17th century, instances even occurring in the town of Monigaff.

In December, 1610, Patrick Hannay, Provost of Wigtown, who had married a daughter of M'Kie of Larg, was shot in a fray at the Cruives of Cree by John Kennedy of Blauquhan. From the surroundings of the case it would seem that both gentlemen were considerably inflamed by liquor. On the 20th November, 1618, a Minnigaff laird was "dilaitit" of the "slauchter of Robert Gordon of Bairnairny, within the dwelling-house of Andro M'Dowall, mercheand in Monygoff, by running him through with his sword." Through the influence of M'Kie of Larg the affair was hushed up. Such were some of the startling episodes which took place in the parish during the earlier part of the 17th century.

About the year 1623 Peter M'Dowell, who had built the Castle of Machirmoir, got into difficulties—perhaps through the bad conduct of his "sonnes"—and lost both Machermore and Physgill.

The estate of Machermore now passed into the hands of John Dunbar of Enterkyne, parish of Tarbolton, Ayrshire, ancestor of the present respected owner of the property—Major Robert Lennox Nugent-Dunbar.

But we now approach one of the most stirring epochs in Scottish history, and in the crisis Minnigaff honourably bore its part. I refer to the struggles of the Covenanters for religious liberty. That wise fool, James VI., died on the 29th March, 1625, and was succeeded by his son, Charles I., a much more respectable man in many ways, but with faults of character quite as conspicuous.

Charles believed that he reigned by a divine right, and he had the courage to maintain his opinion.

He paid his first visit to Scotland in 1633, and gave the people there a taste of what he had in store for them, by keeping the Sabbath after the manner recommended in the "Book of Sports."

This period of Scottish history is well described by the Rev. N. L. Walker, to whom we are indebted for the following information:—"Hitherto Knox's Liturgy, as it had been called, had been in use where needed. It had been prepared to meet the necessities of past reformation times, when ministers were few and public worship could not have been maintained in many places at all, except by the agency of readers using the Book of Common Order. As vacancies were filled up by educated men the Liturgy fell aside. But, of course, it regained its position under the Episcopal system, and this was the form which Archbishop Laud met with when he came with the King. That a high Anglican such as he should have been dissatisfied is not to be wondered at. He went home with the determination to provide the benighted Scotch with a better service book, and sure enough, what was meant to be a great boon to our nation in due time arrived. It arrived not in the bookseller's shops to be bought by any one who wanted it. It arrived not for delivery to the General Assembly to be examined and approved. It arrived with a sovereign law behind it, ordering every minister to provide himself at once with two copies on pain of deprivation, and directing its immediate adoption by all the congregations of the Church."

This was the last straw, and it broke the long-tried patience of the Scottish nation. Measures were at once taken to resist this attempt at religious intolerance. Now commenced that struggle between the King and the people, which did not end until the Stuarts, fifty years afterwards, were driven from the throne. Into the various phases of events during that terrible time it is not my intention to enter at length, but only in so far as Minnigaff is concerned.

There is no page in Scotland's history since the days of Wallace and Bruce calculated to excite a more glowing emotion of patriotism in the bosoms of Scotchmen than that which relates the events of this period. The era of the Covenanters is a distinct epoch in Scottish history—it is a period presenting instances of Christian fortitude not surpassed in the history of the Church.

The leaders of opinion in Galloway at this time were fully aware of the important issues at stake in the struggle, and quickly formed a committee in connection with the central organisation in Edinburgh to co-operate with them in the maintenance of religious liberty. The Minute Book of the War Committee of the Stewartry casts a faint light on events in Minnigaff in the year 1640. Lord Galloway and Sir Patrick M'Kie, the laird of Larg, were the two gentlemen chosen to represent Monegoff—as it was then called—on the War Committee. Subsequently the Laird of Machermore was added. They were empowered to levy taxes on rents to furnish the sinews of war in the struggle between the King and the people The doings of this committee seem to have been in some cases more arbitrary than those which they wished to amend. Still they walked according to their light, and acted from honesty of purpose and for the best advantage.

It might be mentioned that the original Minute Book of the War Committee of the Stewartry is preserved in the Charter Chest at Cardoness Castle.

When the army of the Covenanters took the town of Newcastle from the King's forces, the troops commanded by Sir Patrick M'Kie were particularly distinguished for their bravery. In the engagement, however, Sir Patrick lost his only son, a brave aspiring youth, who, having seized the English General's colours, was flourishing with them when, by mistake, he was slain by some of his own men. He was standard bearer to Colonel Leslie, and was the only person of note who fell that day on the side of the Covenanters, being much lamented by the whole army.

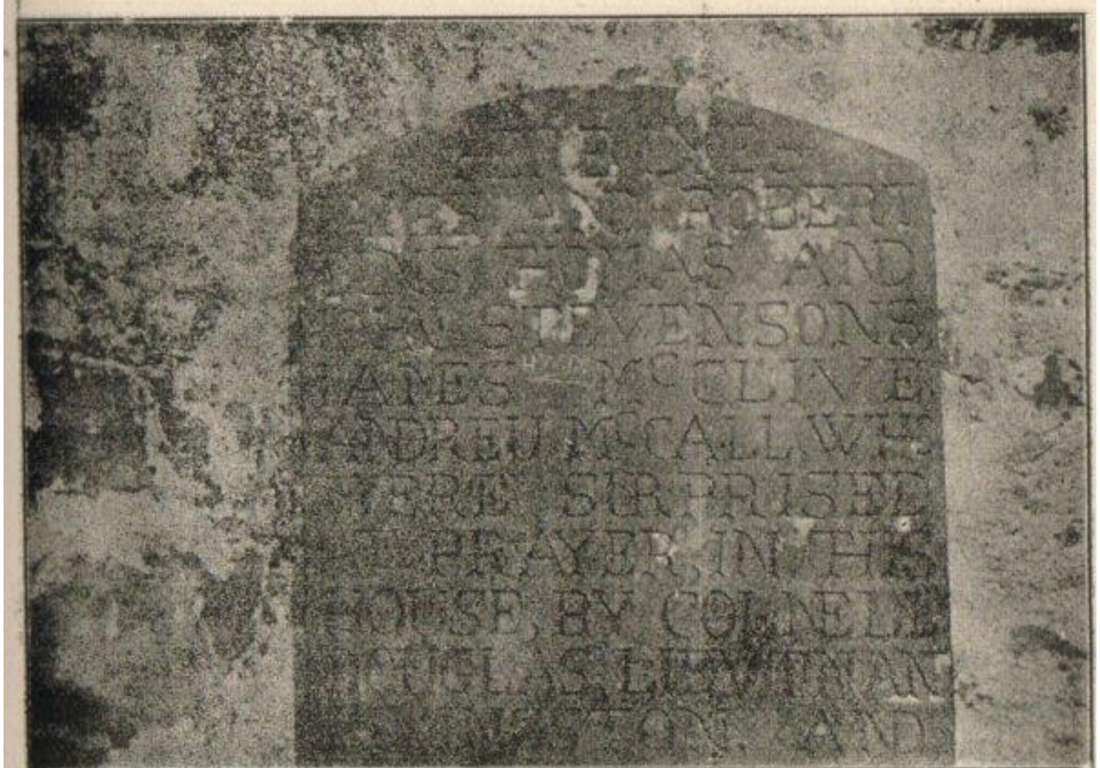
Twenty years afterwards, when the religious had changed into the political struggle, and the National Covenant and Solemn League were declared unlawful, Parliament appointed a committee for selecting the persons to be fined and the sum each person was to pay. Amongst those marked out for punishment for having a mind of their own occurs the name of Patrick

M'Ghie of Largie, who was fined £260, and his friend and neighbour, Heron of Kirrouchtrie, who was mulcted in £600.

In the year 1662 a regular post between Scotland and Ireland—though only once a week—was established. The mails would in all probability be carried on horse-back from Minnigaff to Portpatrick. There is an old feu charter extant in connection with property in the village in which a reference is made to the Post Office building. In winter, when the roads were covered with ice, in going up steep hills the post was obliged to dismount and spread his plaid on the ice in order to give his horse a sure foothold. At this date the postage of a letter across from Scotland to Ireland was sixpence.

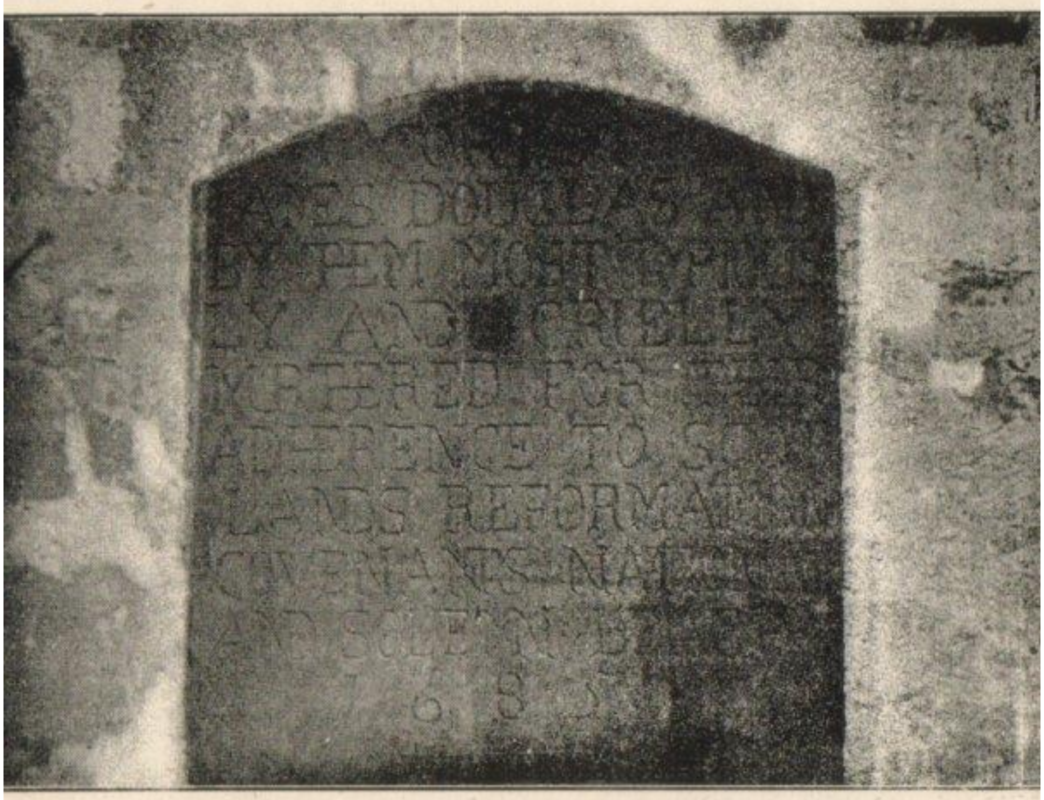
From this period on till the "killing times" we have no definite information as to what went on in the parish, but we do not suppose political or ecclesiastical affairs in Minnigaff were different from what was taking place in other parts of Galloway—and that was far from what was desired. Indeed, the greatest hardships were borne by the folks in Galloway until they culminated in the rising at Dalry on 13th November, 1666. After this date the dogs of war were let slip, and Galloway became for twenty years the happy hunting-ground of men of the most inhuman and infamous character.

Like nearly every other parish in the province, Minnigaff contains the graves of martyrs. We can but briefly refer to the tragedy at Glen-



MARTYR'S GRAVE, CALDONS.

trool. The facts are thus set forth on the tombstone at Caldons :—" Here lyes James and Robert Duns, Thomas and John Stevensons, James M'Clude, Andrew M'Call, who were surprised at prayer in this house by Colonel Douglas, Lieut. Livingstone, and Cornet James Douglas, and by them most impiously and cruelly murder'd for their adherence to Scotland's Reformation Covenants, National and Solemn League, 1685." "In memory of six martyrs who suffered at this spot for their attachment to the covenanted cause of Christ



MARTYR'S GRAVE, CALDONS.

in Scotland, January 23, 1685. Erected by the voluntary contributions of a congregation who waited on the ministration of the Rev. Gavin Rowatt of Whitehorn, Lord's Day, 19 August, 1827." The tomb stands in a lonely marsh near the Water of Trool, shortly after it leaves the loch of that name. The site of the old house of Caldons, or Caldunes, where the martyrs were taken and put to death, is supposed to be marked by a shapeless heap of stones. This tragic event is referred to in the Macfarlane MS. description of the parish, written in the seventeenth century, and now lying in the Advocates' Library—"And it is to be remembered at a house called the Caldons that remarkable scuffle hap'ned between the mountainiers and Coll. Douglas, at which time Captain Orchar (Urquhart) was killed. There was one particular worth the noticing, that when two of these people were attacked they got behind the stone dyke with their pieces cocked for their defence. Upon their coming up at them very unconcernedly one of their pieces went off and killed Captain Orchar dead, the other piece designed against Douglas wou'd not go off nor fire, for all the man cou'd do, by which the Colonel, afterwards General Douglas, escaped the danger. There were six of the mountaineers killed and no more of the King's forces but one dragoon. One of the poor people escaped very wonderfully of the name of Dinn or Dunn. Two of the dragoons pursued him so closely that he saw no way of escape, but at last flying in towards the lake the top of a little hill intercepted the soldiers' view, he immediately did drop into the water all under the brow of the lake but the head, a heath bush covering his head where he got breath. The pursuer cried out when he could not find him that the devil had taken him away. Captain Orchar had that morning uttered a fearful oath, little dreaming that ere night he should have been so suddenly called hence."

In Wodrow's "History of the Church of Scotland" there is mention made of two brothers, Gilbert and William Milroy, who lived at Kirkalla during the persecution. Having fled their house in search of religious freedom, they were captured next day and brought before the Earl of Home at Minnigaff. Here they were examined as to their Church attendance, and the usual enquiries made as to their religious views. When they declined to answer they were tortured with burning matches and kept in the prison at Minnigaff six days, and the torture repeated daily. They were afterwards removed to Edinburgh, and after suffering great hardship banished to Jamaica. William's ultimate fate is uncertain, but Gilbert was liberated at the Revolution and came home safe to his wife and relations, and was in 1710 alive and a useful member of the Kirk-session of Kirkcowan. The following traditional incident is said to have befallen the Rev. James Renwick of the town of Minnigaff. It was known that a conventicle was to be held by him among the desert mountains in a place the name of which is not given, and to this place the leader of a party of dragoons repaired with his men for the purpose of surprising the meeting and seizing the preacher. Mr Renwick and his friends, by certain precautionary measures, however, were made aware of their danger, and escaped. In the eager pursuit the commander of the troops shot far ahead of his party in the hope of capturing by his single arm the helpless minister on whose head a price had been set. Mr Renwick, however, succeeded in eluding the pursuit, in wending his way through the broken mosses and bosky glens, and came in the dusk of the evening to Minnigaff, and found lodgings in an inn in which on former occasions he had found a resting place. After a tedious and fruitless chase through moor and wild, the same leader of the troops arrived at the same place, and sought a retreat for the night at the same inn.

It appears to have been in the winter season when the occurrence took place, for the commander of the party feeling the dark and lonely hours of the evening hanging heavy on his hands, called the landlord, and asked if he could introduce to him any intelligent acquaintance with whom he might spend an hour agreeably in his apartment. The landlord retired and communicated the request to Mr Renwick, and whatever may have been the reasons for the part which on this occasion he acted, Mr Renwick, it is asserted, agreed to spend the evening with the trooper. His habilements would no doubt be of a description that would induce no suspicion of his character as a non-conformist minister, for in those days of peril and necessity there would be little distinction between the plain peasant and the preacher in regard to clothing. It is highly probable that the soldier was a man of no great discernment, and hence Mr Renwick succeeded in managing the interview without being discovered by the person in whose presence he was, and without his being suspected by others who might happen to frequent the inn. The evening passed agreeably and without incident, and they parted with many expressions of high satisfaction and good will on the part of the officer, who retired to sleep with the intention of resuming his search in the morning. When all was quiet in the inn, however, and when sleep had closed the eyes of the inmates, Mr Renwick took leave of the landlord, and withdrew in the darkness and stillness of the night to the upland solitudes, in which to seek a cave in whose cold and damp retreat he might hide himself from the vigilance of his pursuers.

When the morning came and the soldiers were preparing to march, the commander asked for the intelligent stranger who had afforded him so much gratification the preceding evening. The landlord said he had left the house long before the dawn, and was far away among the hills to seek a hiding place. "A hiding place!" exclaimed the leader. "Yes; a hiding place," replied the innkeeper. "This gentle youth, amiable and inoffensive, as you have witnessed him, is no other than the identical James Renwick after whom you have been pursuing." "James Renwick. Impossible! A man so harmless and so discreet, and so well informed, if he is James Renwick, I for one at least will pursue his track no longer."

The officer immediately marched away with his dragoons, and searched the wilderness no more for one of whom he had now formed so favourable an opinion.

Such were some of the incidents in the "killing times," though happier days were in store for Scotland, but not till the last of the Stuart Kings had left the throne.

William, Prince of Orange, landed at Torbay on the 5th November, 1688, and next year turned his attention to religious matters in Scotland.

While tolerating all sections of the Church, he declared his intention of helping that form of Church Government which he understood would be most in harmony with his administration and the wishes of the people. The first step towards the reconstitution of the Presbyterian Establishment was the abolition of the Act of 1669, which had made the King head of the Church. The next was to restore the surviving ministers, who had been ejected for not conforming to Episcopacy after the Restoration.

The Episcopal Clergy, who had been the authors of much of the sufferings of the people in this part of Galloway, had now to feel the effects of retaliation. "Never," says Dr Story, "were enormous wrongs so leniently retaliated. Never in the day when power had passed from the oppressors to the oppressed was the oppression as lightly revenged."

In the parish of Minnigaff the popular enthusiasm vented itself as in several hundred other parishes in "rabbling the curate." The conduct of the rabbler in turning the Episcopal curate out of the manse is not to be justified, but when all is considered—no violence was used—it was perhaps the most expeditious manner of getting rid of one who had always been looked on as an intruder in the parish. These "evictions" took place in the winter of

1688, but what became of the Rev. J. Jonkin after he was ousted from Minnigaff manse I have not learned.

The first meeting of the Presbyterian clergymen within the bounds of the Synod of Galloway, took place at Minnigaff on the 14th May, 1689, when the Rev. Robert Burnet was minister of the parish.

Few of the ministers who had parishes prior to the Restoration were present, but there were numbers of preachers from Ireland, and these were in several instances installed in vacant parishes. The following overture drawn up at the meeting in Minnigaff was forwarded to the General Assembly of the Church—"That there be a general day of humiliation keeped through the whole kingdom with public confession of the general defection in order to the purgation of the said defection and healing the divisions in the land."

A few years after the Revolution Settlement an event happened which produced a considerable sensation in a large part of Galloway. The Rev. John MacMillan, at one time chaplain to the Laird of Broughton, was no sooner ordained minister of Balmaghie than he began to differ from the settled form of Church Government. He influenced other clergymen, and they presented a petition to the Presbytery for an enquiry into Church affairs generally. This the Presbytery looked on as a new form of religious monomania, and desired him for the sake of peace to let bye-gones be bye-gones; but no, MacMillan persisted with his "protestation" till the Presbytery looked at his conduct as insubordinate, and at last deposed him from his parish. After the struggle between him and his successor had continued for fifteen years, MacMillan retired and became the founder of the sect of Macmillanites. He is said latterly to have had his residence at Barncaughla, but the number of his followers in the parish was limited to two or three families. He preached occasionally in different parts of Galloway, and at home but seldom. He died at Broomhill, in the parish of Bothwell, on the 1st day of December, 1793, in the 84th year of his age.

In the meantime a rival town to Minnigaff had sprung up on the west side of the River Cree. A few particulars concerning the early history of Newton-Stewart may here appropriately be introduced.

William Stewart of Castle Stewart obtained a charter from Charles II., dated the 1st July, 1677, for founding a Burgh of Barony to be known as Newton-Stewart, the site of Newton-Stewart being formerly known as Fordhouse.

CASTLE STEWART, PENNINGHAME.
(Photograph by W. Hunter & Son, Newton-Stewart.)

He also obtained the right of holding a weekly market and two annual fairs. At first the town consisted of only a few houses, which were built by the superior as the nucleus of the future town. As Minnigaff began to decline Newton-Stewart increased in prosperity. The building of the bridge connecting the military road from Dumfries to Portpatrick, and thus obviating the necessity of fording the Cree, was a great advantage to the rising town; but it seriously affected the prosperity of "Auld Minnigaff." It is said that rats desert a sinking ship; it is also true that skilled labour leaves a declining town. A short time previous to the building of the bridge we find one of our bailies, John M'Cellan, had left Minnigaff and was a member of Penninghame Kirk-Session. No doubt the building of the bridge did away with his income, for his tombstone in Minnigaff Churchyard informs us that he was "once boatman at Newtoun-Stewart."

The market in Minnigaff still continued to be held, and was attended by many people from a distance for the purchase of meal and other neccssaries.

The food of the common people shortly before the beginning of last century consisted of the meanest and coarsest materials, being both dirty and ill cooked. Those lived comfortably who could obtain a sufficient supply of brose porridge and sowens, perhaps made of meagre grain dried in pots and ground in querns with greens, or kail occasionally boiled in salt and water. The old kiln pots are frequently to be met with in the vicinity of farm houses, but they have now entirely fallen into disuse, and as for quern mill stones they are now objects of antiquarian interest. By this method of drying and grinding meal it was quite possible in a short time to place on the table steaming cakes which had been growing corn an hour before.

The common people had as yet acquired no luxury except tobacco, though the higher classes were in possession of what was then thought the luxuries of life. The Kirk Records towards the latter end of the 18th century testify to the proneness of the folks in Minnigaff to perpetuate the national failing.

By Act of Parliament in 1696 the days for holding the weekly market and fairs at Newton-Stewart were changed from Friday to Wednesday.

In 1784 the lands of Castle Stewart, along with the town of Newton-Stewart, were purchased by William Douglas, of Messrs Douglas, Dale, & Co., who, after erecting an extensive cotton mill, changed the name of the town to

Newton-Douglas. This name is yet to be seen on clocks which were made in Newton-Douglas at this date. It also occurs once on a tombstone in the old churchyard of Penninghame, but strange to say it is not to be found in Minnigaff Churchyard.

As it was thought by the local landed gentry that an increase of millworkers in the district meant a decrease of game, they used their influence against the success of the cotton mill. It thus fell into decay, and was eventually purchased by Lord Galloway in the beginning of the last century for about five per cent. of the original cost of £20,000. After the purchase the name of the town was again changed back to Newton-Stewart, and it is thought that the market day was also altered to Friday, and has since so continued.

But we must return to the Minnigaff side of the Cree, and may, in passing, refer to that old standing grievance—the custom levied by the town of Wigtown on certain farm products crossing from the Stewartry to Wigtownshire or *vice versa*. The Royal Burgh of Wigtown, which was raised to that dignity by David II., obtained by charter from James II. in 1457 the right to levy a toll on all cattle, sheep, pigs, and wool passing over or across the river Cree, where it bounds the County of Wigtown, Charles II. renewed this charter in 1662, the benefit of which Wigtown continued to enjoy till a few years ago. The annual income to the Burgh from this source averaged about £70; the custom at Creebridge generally produced £50 per annum; whilst the railway company paid £20 for their bridge across the river at Parkmaclurg. In the rising of 1715 no one in the parish seems to have been particularly interested, but it is traditionally reported that this is the time at which the first of the Erskines came to Minnigaff

Two brothers of the name, who had fled for safety from the Highlands after the disbanding of the rebels in 1716, came to Galloway. One settled in Kirkcudbright, the other found his way to Minnigaff; and having ingratiated himself into the favour of John Roxburgh—the resident locksmith in Creebridge—eventually married his daughter and succeeded to the business. From him are descended the Galloway Erskines, most of whom still follow the ancestral trade of smiths. The late Mr James Erskine, gunmaker, Newton-Stewart, universally known as the inventor of cartridge loading machines and patents in connection with breech-loading guns, was a Minnigaff man of whom the parish may well be proud. It is also said that Prince Charlie's secretary is buried in Minnigaff churchyard, but this is mere tradition.

For some years after the rebellion of 1715 things seemed to have prospered in the parish. Land let at much higher rents than it had formerly done, and many proprietors in Galloway turned their attention to cattle rearing as a means of increasing their rentals. But the enclosing and fencing of fields was not accomplished without trouble and danger in several parishes. The agricultural labourers saw, or imagined they saw, that when the dykes were reared the employment of their children would be gone. Herding cattle would no longer be necessary. To counteract this threatened calamity the labouring classes formed themselves into bands for the purpose of pulling down all such erections.

These "Levellers," as they were called, were too powerful for the repressive force at the command of the county, so it was found necessary to call in the aid of the military for the purpose of restoring order. It was largely owing to the counsel and direction of Mr Heron of Kirroughtrie—who had been in the army—that a serious conflict between the military and the levellers was avoided. But fortunately order was at last restored without bloodshed.

The leader of the levellers—Billy Marshall—

was a noted character in his day. As he was at one time an "indueller" in Minnigaff, a sketch of his checkered career may therefore be given in this narrative.

We are indebted for the main facts to "Ancient and Modern Britons," in which work Billy is deemed worthy of notice. "If it is not too late in the day," says the author, "to look up the antecedents of the famous Galloway Pict, Billy Marshall, the results obtained from such a search would almost certainly repay the trouble of obtaining them. He is introduced by several modern writers, though he was really of the antique world, not only because of his way of living but literally so on account of his great age. For although he lived on almost to the close of the 18th century, his birth is placed as far back as 1671. This fact, therefore, gives him a great value, for if, like other true 'gipsies,' he clung tenaciously to all the customs of his forefathers—as far as the times would let him—then in Billy Marshall we have a representative of the Galloway Pict of the seventeenth century."

Without attempting anything that can be dignified by the name of research, let us see what some of these modern writers say about him. Of these none has a better right to the first word than Scott, and this is what he tells us of the Galloway chief :—" Meg Merilies is in Galloway considered as having had her origin in the traditions concerning the celebrated Flora Marshall, one of the royal consorts of Willie Marshall, more commonly called the Caird of Barullion, King of the Gypsies of the Western Lowlands. That potentate was himself deserving of notice from the following peculiarities. He was born in the parish of Kirkmichael about the year 1671, and as he died at Kirkcudbright on the 23rd November, 1792, he must have been in the one hundred and twentieth year of his age. It cannot be said that this unusually long lease of existence was noted by any peculiar excellence of conduct or habits of life. Willie had been pressed or enlisted in the army seven times, and had deserted as often, besides three times running away from the naval service. He had been seventeen times lawfully married, and besides such a reasonably large share of matrimonial comforts, was, after his hundredth year, the avowed father of four children by less legitimate affections. He subsisted in his extreme age on a pension from the Earl of Selkirk. Willie Marshall is buried in Kirkcudbright churchyard, where his monument is still shown decorated with a scutcheon, suitably blazoned with two tup's horns and two 'cutty' spoons."

Such is Sir Walter Scott's account of this famous man.

The compiler of the "New Annual Register" for 1792 thought that his death was worthy of notice as one of the principal occurrences of that year.

Many are the anecdotes told concerning Billy, who was, as Mactaggart says, "kind, yet he was a murderer—an honest soul, yet a thief—at times a generous savage, at others a wild Pagan. He knew both civil and uncivilized life—the dark and the fair side of human nature. In short, he understood much of the world, had no fear, a happy constitution, was seldom sick, could sleep on a moor as soundly as in a feather bed, took whisky to excess—died in Kirkcudbright at the age of 120 years, and was buried in state by the hammermen, which body would not permit the Earl of Selkirk to lay his head in the grave because his lordship was not one of their incorporated trade."

Such was the end of Billy. True, such was the end; but who were his ancestors? It is quite evident that William Marshall, tinker, King of the Gipsies of the Western Lowlands, Caird of Barullion, whose family had been tinkers in the south of Scotland time out of mind, but whose uncle commanded a royal frigate in King William's navy, thief and murderer, sorner and brigand, and the cost of whose funeral was defrayed by the Earl of Selkirk—it is quite evident he was not a nobody. From a modern point of view he was simply an old scamp. Viewed in this light, it is impossible to understand why he should have been the pensioner of an old and noble family. Although Scott states that he had been seventeen times lawfully married, it is not to be imagined that he had outlived sixteen consecutive wives before he had wedded his seventeenth spouse. A divorce in gipsy life is easily accomplished, and only consists in the performances of certain observances round the body of a horse sacrificed for the occasion, the time, noon; the officiating priest, any gipsy who may be selected by lot, even the husband himself if need be. Thus Billy may have been lawfully married, and as lawfully divorced from his seventeen wives all within the space of one year. For him Christianity was nothing, because he had never forsaken the religion of his Egyptian forefathers, and in whose eyes modern law was no law, although those of his tribe were inviolable.

If it were possible to examine the pedigree of this particular Marshall family, we might be able to find the solution of the mystery ot his own title of King, of his uncle's rank ot commander of a royal frigate, and of the honour paid to him by the Earl of Selkirk.

That he was the lineal representative of a family of ancient standing seems exceedingly probable, possibly aware also that he was genealogically regarded as the head of one of the families from which they traced their descent, and might thus be led to pay him a respect immeasurably above his merits. And to conclude this notice, the two ram's horns, that were sculptured on his tombstone, were the armorial bearings of a chief whose people had never recognised the right of any Norman feudal herald to modify or alter. We cannot help thinking it strange that the very symbol of power and strength so frequently referred to in Scripture should be found sculptured on the tombstone of the last Pictish King of Galloway—Billy Marshall.

But to return to his more immediate connection with Minnigaff. When Billy sold his property in the village on 21st March, 1792—the year in which he died—he is designated "brazier." Being unable to sign his name, conscientious scruples would not allow of his making the sign of the cross, but a printed copy of his name was placed before him which he imitated as nearly as possible. This unique signature is still to be seen among the title deeds of the property. The cottage in question is now owned by the representatives of the late Mr John M'Quhae—also an old Minnigaff residenter.

Billy Marshall is cited by the Rev. J. G. Maitland in his account of the parish as a remarkable instance of longevity in the parish, he being then upwards of 118 years of age.

Billy was, like the rest of his fraternity, greatly addicted to whisky, which some individual in his hearing denounced as slow poison. "It maun be d——d slow," said Billy, "for I hae drunk it for a hunner years an' I'm leevin' yet."

In a manuscript account of the parish, written partly by Andrew Heron of Bargally about the year 1715, and continued by Mr Maitland of Minnigaff, reference is made to some inscriptions on the gateposts of the churchyard, and also to a "dyal" in the "middle of the churchyard, all done by Bargally's own hand."

Where these ornamental gateposts have gone to no one knows, but it is conjectured that the "dyal" may have been the same which now stands near the village pump. This, however, is improbable, considering the size and weight of the stone on which the dial is carved, and the difficulty of removing such a stone from the "midle" of the churchyard to the square.

Besides, the "dyal" stone has been regarded from time out of mind as the ancient "mercat croce" of the "toune," and this tradition dates further back than 1715. There is, however, a dial in Bargally garden which was carved by Andrew Heron, who seems to have been of an eccentric turn of mind.

He was a celebrated botanist, and the following incident regarding him is related by John Gordon Barbour in his "Unique Traditions." Heron of Bargally went to many gardens, both in England and Scotland, searching for new and singular plants. His name and fame sometimes went before him. It certainly was so in a journey which he once made to the Royal Gardens near London. He had gone into the gardens at Kew or Richmond, and was strolling about looking at all the rare plants or trees with which the Royal Gardens or orchards were furnished. The master gardener, seeing a rustic seeming Scotchman eagerly conning every singular shrub that came in his way, went up to Heron and rather roughly accosted him. "What do you look for there?" cried the gardener. "I'm a loyal subject of his Majesty's," said Bargally, "and surely I may look at the King's newest plants." "What do you know about plants?" queried the gardener; "What is that?" pointing to a certain shrub, "and where is it got?" Heron at once told the name and distinctly explained its qualities, and whence alone it could have been procured. "You must be either the devil or Bargaulie," keenly exclaimed the gardener. "What is your name?" "My name," said Heron coolly, "is Andrew Heron of Bargaulie in Kirkcudbright-shire." "It must be so," said the other, "for none but Bargaulie or the devil could have explained what you did."

On the lawn in front of Bargally House Heron built, during his lifetime, a mausoleum for the reception of himself and his wife after death. This tomb has an arched roof and resembles a flight of four steps seven feet long and one foot broad, and the same number and size of steps down the other side, thus presenting the appearance of a summer-house which has sunk underground. At each end are two crosses with an urn in the middle. In the west end of this unique building is a stone bearing the words—"We dy hopeing, and our ashes receive life. 1730." On the east end are the armorial bearings of Heron and his wife, with their initials, A.H., E.D., and the mottoes, "Fear not" and "Par Valeur." Separating the shields of arms are the words, "Hope, Faith, Love, 1730." We learn from a stone let into the wall of this strange place that "This tomb was erected in 1729 by Andrew Heron of Bargally and repaired by John Mackie of Bargally in 1829." It again stands in much need of repair.

Heron and his wife were thus actually buried not twenty yards from the front of their dwelling-house.

From the period of the Jacobite rising in 1715 to 1745 no event of sufficient importance to be recorded in history occurred in Minnigaff. But after the bitterness of these risings had passed away we find great improvements taking place in the parish. The roads and means of communication between one town and another in Galloway up to this time had rendered intercourse difficult, if not even dangerous, in many instances.

Symson, writing in 1684, refers to the difficulty of getting from the "town" to the Church of Minnigaff during certain seasons of the year "The Kirk of Monnygaff," he says, "is divided from the town by a rivulet called Penkiln Burn, which is sometimes so great that the people in repairing to the church are necessitate to go about a mile, crossing at a bridge built over the said rivulet a short half-mile above the town." This would be the old bridge at Cumloden previously mentioned, and which was built for the convenience of the Lord of Garlies in coming and going to his castle.

There is also another old bridge on the farm of Brigton—hence the name of the farm—which is erroneously styled a Roman bridge. I have no doubt this is the outlet for Garlies Castle in going to and from Ayr and the west.

The two bridges are of exactly the same dimensions, and apparently both of one period, and although of great age still the work is not Roman, nor are the arches of the Roman type. The bridge at Minnigaff leading to the church over Penkiln is the second which has been erected in the same place. The first, which consisted of two arches, was swept away by a flood. The present bridge was built by Samuel Arnot.

Previous to the erection of the bridges across Penkiln, the burn had to be crossed by stepping stones, hence the name of the "Steps End," which is yet used to denote this part of the "toune."

Both the "Mid Close" and the "Steps End" are referred to in the Records of the Kirk as far back as 1772—at least this is the first time they occur, although these places may have been so called, as no doubt they were, for many years previously. Duke Street and the Old Custom

Fey—where the "nolt" stood—are names yet to be heard used by the people of the older generation.

There is now only one fruit tree remaining of what was once the orchard of Minnigaff. It is in the garden attached to Hawthorn Cottage, the residence of the late Mr David M'Dowall, who was himself the representative of many generations of Minnigaff men of that name.

Concerning the name — Primy Ducan— attached to a well near the village, I can obtain no satisfactory explanation.

It may not be out of place to iuclude a copy of "The Antient Valuation Roll of Minnigaff Parish in 1642."

The old record shows the annual rent in Scots money of each farm in the parish at that date. A copy of it, therefore, cannot fail to be of interest to the present tenants of the places mentioned.

Scots money is one-twelfth the value of sterling money, one pound Scots being only equal to one shilling and eightpence of the present currency :—

1642.

The Earl of Galloway has pertaining him within the said parish, the Lands of Arroch, worth to him yearly	£100	0	0
Glenmallock	75	0	0
Lemmoy	50	0	0

Drumjoan	£100	0	0
Carndilly	66	0	0
Dalnasse	60	0	0
Glengrubbock	75	0	0
Bargrennan	100	0	9
Drumlavantie	45	0	0
Drumrichie	50	0	0
The Hullens Hill	9	0	0
The Briggtown	50	0	0
The Minniwick	80	0	0
Little Caldons	30	0	0
The Holm	150	0	0
Borgan and Farroch...	110	0	0
The Larg	50	0	0
The Camer	75	0	0
The Lagbeas	50	0	0
The Cloints	45	0	0
Cordorken	75	0	0
Forthoggan	50	0	0
Drongandow	135	0	0
Barklay	75	0	0
Dirgoal	25	0	0
The Boreland	150	0	0
Claughrie	84	0	0
Knockbrex	40	0	0
Glenmaltock	80	0	0
Glenshalloch	75	0	0
The Gairlirg	120	0	0
Lamochen	75	0	0
The Borland Fishing	20	0	0
Blairbuies	30	0	0
The Craive and Draught	50	0	0
The Mill of Garlies	50	0	0
Dry Multures of do....	66	13	4
For Mart Kine	266	13	4
For Wedders...	125	0	0
For Butter	120	0	0
Lady Larg has pertaining her the Lands of Little Park, worth yearly	150	0	0

Glencaird	£120	0	0
Loch Spraig and Mark	120	0	0
Terraghbane and Meikle Caldons	120	0	0
Casualities is worth yearly	19	0	0
Col. Stewart has pertaining him the Lands of Bardrochwood, worth yearly ...	135	0	0
Gredake	100	0	0
Ardwall	30	0	0
Corwar	25	0	0
The Mill of Bardrochwood...	25	0	0
The Park Crofts	40	0	0
The Casualities	19	0	0
John Dunbar of Machermore has pertaining him the Lands thereof, worth yearly...	68	13	4
Parkmaclurg	50	0	0
Meiklecarse	80	0	0
The half of Carseminnoch	30	0	0
Blackcraig	50	0	0
Carsna	100	0	0
Casualties	16	0	0
Tonnotrie	45	0	0
Craigencallie, half thereof, is worth yearly	45	0	0
John Maxwell of Drumcoltran has the Lands of Bargally, worth yearly ...	75	0	0
Barhoys	30	0	0
Dallash Cairns	45	0	0
The Laird of Larg has pertaining him the Lands of Laggan, worth yearly ...	50	0	0
Craignell	75	0	0
Tonergie	20	0	0
Brockloch	30	0	0
Palbrockbuy	36	0	0
Craignine	45	0	0
Glenamer	60	0	0
Glengerran	45	0	0
Drumnaught	50	0	0
Barncaughla and Cardristan	50	0	0
Torquhinnock	30	0	0
Calgow	120	0	0

Carsduncan	£50	0	0
Stronord	30	0	0
Kirkdrochwood	50	0	0
Kirkland	50	0	0
The Town of Minnigaff	57	0	0
The Mill of Do.	175	0	0
The Fishing of Do.	30	0	0
The Casualities Do.	75	0	0
Laird Murdoch has pertaining to him the Lands of Blacklaggan, worth... ...	30	0	0
Stronbae	30	0	0
Meikle Stronbae	75	0	0
Auchenlick	75	0	0
The Risk	75	0	0
Two Dallashes	80	0	0
Drumlawhinnie	75	0	0
Glenhoise	50	0	0
The half of Lessons	30	0	0
Other half of Carseminnoch	30	0	0
The Mill of Glenhoise	24	0	0
The Waulkmill of Glenhoise	10	0	0
Casualities	29	0	0
The Earl of Cassilis has pertaining to him the Lands of Kireroch, worth yearly...	60	0	0
Kirrimuir	75	0	0
Palgown and Kirkennan	150	0	0
Kirkcastle	150	0	0
The Stron	75	0	0
Kirkirrow	60	0	0
Arskouchan	25	0	0
Kiroradezi and Drostan	50	0	0
Arshnachanlie	37	10	0
Casualities	90	0	0
Grassum	66	13	4
John Gordon of Troquhain has the Lands of Craigencallie, worth yearly ...	40	0	0
Lady Heron has the Lands of Kirrochtree, worth yeariy	100	0	0
Half of Lessons whereas there is ten pounds upon Larg's Lesson	40	0	0

Craigdow	£12	0	0
Laird Heron has the Lands of Drigmorn...	36	0	0
To Lord Kenmure and Laird of Larg for teinds off the parish	480	6	8

After certain deductions the total free valuation of the parish amounted to £7586 4s, or £632 3s 8d sterling.

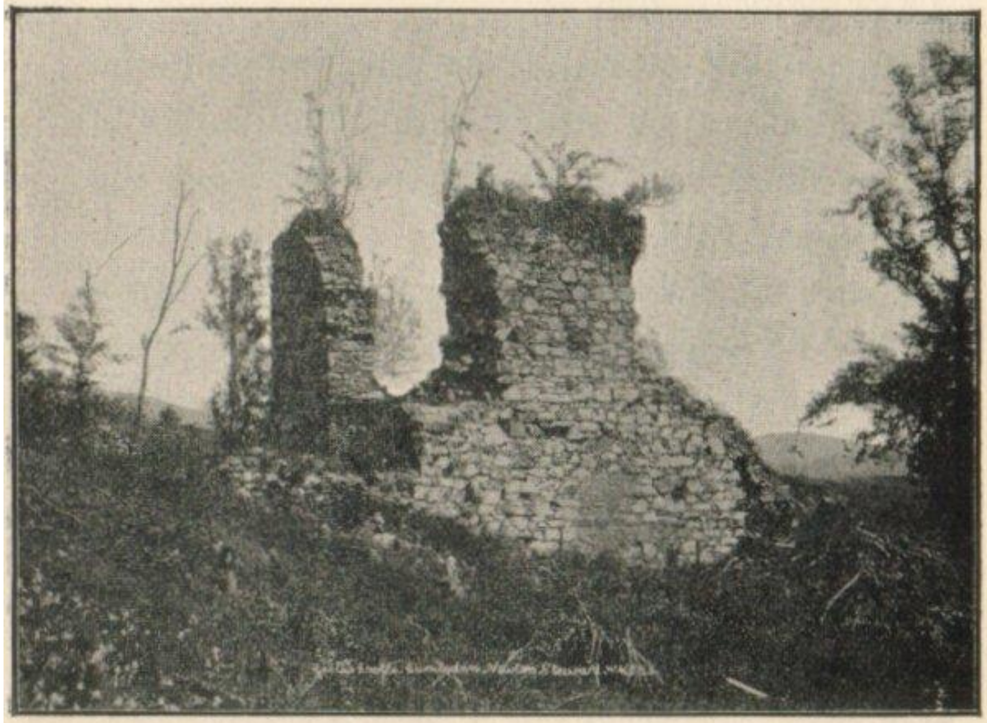
On looking over this old valuation roll one cannot fail to be struck with the number of farms which have now disappeared from the landscape. Still, even yet, in many instances, the sites of former steadings can be distinguished by green mounds, which mark the spots where once a family circle had been wont to gather together. In some cases the crumbling walls yet appear above the ground, but the former inhabitants—where are they ?

"Here sat the fond housewife and parent united,
While virtue's plain precepts oft flowed from her tongue ;
Now silence reigns round, save the Cree's lonely murmurs,
Or the wail of the night bird bereft of her young.

Where are the youngsters with gambol and frolic ?
In life's early morn, light they trod the flowered green ;
Each sod, seat, and path the rude plough has defaced,
And nettles and wild weeds luxuriant are seen.

No more shall the stranger, when wearied and worn,
Find shelter to shield him with comfort or rest
In thy mansions though low, have the nakèd been clothed,
And soothed the sunk heart of the lonely distressed."

It will be noticed that the spelling of names has undergone great alterations since 1642. Of the "Housses of chieffe notte" in the parish—Larg and Garlies—mentioned by Pont in 1604, very little now remains. Larg Tower is now level with the ground, the stones from it having been extensively used for building purposes on



GARLIES CASTLE.

Kirroughtree estate. A carved stone, bearing the initials and date, "P.M., 1641," is—or was lately—preserved among the curiosities at the Hermitage. This is now all that remains of the historical Tower of Larg—once the home of the gallant Sir Patrick M'Kie.

And of Garlies Castle, where formerly the powerful family of Stewart held almost regal sway, all that remains is a tottering ruin.

What a change 'twixt then and now! Unchallenged by the warder, who of yore paced the ramparts of the castle, one may now enter this feudal keep without fear of being immured in its grim dungeon. Hushed alike are the voices of high-born dame and noble knight. No more the mettled palfrey or fiery charger, gaily caparisoned, await their riders impatient of restraint.

No more at the first glimpse of the sun o'er Cairnsmore the neighbouring hills re-echo the bugle sound, or the deep bay of the staghound arouses the slumbering inmates of the castle to the day's sport. No such sounds break the monotony of silence which reigns at Garlies Castle, now is heard :—

> "Only the sound of the north wind sighing,
> Thro' the long rent in the grey castle wall."
>
> . . . .
>
> "Here in the old time was laughing and singing,
> Gaily they welcomed their Christmas of old,
> Now to the hearthstone the ivy is clinging,
> Warm hearts are cold."

The earliest introduction of the Scriptures into the South of Scotland was by means of a copy of Wickliffe's Testament, studied by Alexander Gordon of Airds in Galloway, and Alexander Stewart, younger of Garlies. William

Harlaw was the first Protestant Missionary, who in Dumfries on the 23rd October, 1558, denounced the Mass as rank idolatory, and proclaimed the pure faith of salvation in Christ. He had begun his mission at Garlies, and thus it is not improbable that the dawn of that new era in the religious world first broke in Minnigaff.

While preaching in Dumfries, the Dean sent a legal emissary to Mr Harlaw enquiring "of quhais authoritie and quha gaif him commission to preach he beand ane laitman, and the Queenis rebel and excommunicate, and was repelled furth of other partis for the said causis." To which Garlies boldly replied—"I will avow him and will maintain and defend him against you and all other kirkmen that will put at him."

Another "considerable housse" once stood at Stronord, or as Pont spells it in 1604, "Schroinoird," at which date it was surrounded by trees. It also appears to have been encircled by a fosse which can yet be distinctly traced. A field to the west of the ruin yet retains the name of the Bail Green. Part of a paved approach is yet visible and can be traced for a considerable distance from what would once be the position of the draw-bridge. This house is supposed to have been the residence of Alexander M'Kie of Stronord, whose daughter married the Laird of Kirroughtree about the year 1570.

In a letter from John Crichton of Larg, Kirkmabreck, to the Laird of Barnbarroch, his father-in-law, dated 20th July, 1583, he refers to his kinswoman—"M. Makkie relik of Jhone herron of Kirivhtrie," and also to his kinsman, "Alexander M'Kie of Stronord." From the frequent references made to Alexander M'Kie in the latter end of the sixteenth century he appears to have been a person of considerable importance in the district, and it is therefore interesting to be able to identify the remains of his "considerable housse," but of which there is now little to be seen.

It may not be generally known that the possession of a dove cot was one of the many privileges exclusively belonging to lairds.

Ridiculous as it may now appear, it was solemnly enacted under a Scottish statute in 1617—"That no person shall build a dove cot or pigeon house, either in town or country, unless he be possessed of lands or teinds of the yearly value of ten chalders of victual lying at least within two miles of it." It was also enacted that no person, though having such qualification, shall build more than one dove cot within the "boundis foresaid." Thus a

Kirroughtree.

proprietor could erect a dove-cot for each portion of land yielding annually ten chalders, but the tenant was bound to obtain the written permission from the laird before he could put up a pigeon house. If a dove-cot had fallen into a ruinous condition, it could only be re-built after certain legal formalities had been observed, and only if the person possessed the necessary qualification to enable him to be the proprietor of such an appendage to his property.

The dove-cot at Kirroughtree—the only one in the parish—was erected in 1719, and is yet a prominent object in the landscape ; but it is now more ornamental than useful.

There is also at Kirroughtree, surrounded by large beach trees, a picturesque old bowling green. Harmless as a game of bowls may appear now-a-days, the amusement was formerly unlawful in England. The statute of Henry VIII. declaring the game illegal was repealed in 1845, so that bowling or other games of skill may now be indulged in without fear of pains or penalties.

Comparing the past with the present, the parish of Minnigaff has improved in every respect as much as any other locality in Scotland. People of all classes are now better fed and possess more comforts than it were possible to procure before the days of steam and applied science. Indeed, it would be almost impossible to enumerate all the multiplied sources from which this improved state of matters has arisen, but all have worked together to the benefit of society.

In no way is this social progress better seen than on a comparison of the privileges now enjoyed by the many which were formerly the exclusive possession of the favoured few.

The penny post and daily newspaper are now within the reach of all, and if we have not yet got household suffrage we are much nearer that consummation than we were fifty years ago.

I do not wish to enter on the troubled sea of politics, for there I would assuredly founder; but, as a curiosity, I give here a copy of the list of voters in the parish of Minnigaff in 1831, at which date there were only 172 in the whole Stewartry entitled to vote for a member of Parliament.

In the parish of Minnigaff there were thirteen voters, whose names were as follows:—

1. Major Robert Nugent-Dunbar of Machermore.

2. The Honourable Edward Richard Stewart, son of the late Earl of Galloway, and Deputy Chairman of the Board of Customs. Fiar to vote in absence of Edward R. Stewart, his eldest son, Liferenter.

3. The Honourable James Henry Keith Stewart, son of the late John, Earl of Galloway.

4. The Honourable and Reverend George Rushout son of the late Earl of Northwick.

5. James Stewart of Cairnsmore.

6. John M'Kie of Bargally.

7. Sir Patrick Maxwell of Springkell, Bart., Liferenter.

8. The Reverend William Graham, Rector of Arthard and Kirk Andrews, Liferenter.

9. John Maxwell, Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, Liferenter.

10. The Right Honourable Sir James Robert George Graham of Netherby, Baronet, Liferenter.

11. The Reverend Samuel Richardson of Penninghame, Liferenter.

12. Edward Stewart, eldest son of the Honble. E. R. Stewart, Liferenter.

13. The Reverend George Inge, son of William Phillips Inge of Thorpe, in the county of Stafford, Liferenter.

The next register of voters made in terms of Act 2nd and 3rd George IV.—in 1832—contains 41 new names, and these added to the foregoing 13 give a total of 54 voters in the parish at that date.

I do not know that there could be found in Scotland another name, either of place or individual, on which the changes have been so often rung, as on that of Minnigaff. Each succeeding generation seems to have made an alteration in the spelling in accordance with the pronunciation of the period. The following selections will show the various spelling the name has at different times undergone :—

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the name appears as Monygove, Moniegove, Miniegove; but three centuries later it emerges as Monnygaffe, Munygoiffe, and even as Monygoift. In the Records of the Kirk Session, which commence in 1694, it is indiscriminately Monnygoff, Monogof, Minnigoff, and Monigaf. On the church tokens of 1719, the name occurs as Monigof, and in the old statistical account of the parish, written about the year 1793, as Mounigaff. The name first appears as Minnigaff in the Kirk Records in 1737, in which form it is now generally written, although it is to be met with still under the *alias* of Monigaff.

The meanings assigned to the name are almost as varied as the spelling, though they all bear some descriptive reference to the locality.

Symson, writing in 1684, suggests the derivation being from "Munach's Gulf," from the river "Munach" in the parish. The next attempt at the etymology of the word occurs in the "Old Statistical Account," where it is said to signify a stony moor, which is abundantly descriptive of the greater part of the parish. About the beginning of this century we find the author of "Caledonia" declaring that the true meaning of this perplexing name is the Smith's Moss. In the "New Statistical Account" of the parish it is said to mean the dark mountain region, which is also quite applicable. The latest endeavour to settle this philological conundrum is made by the learned author of "Studies in the Topography of Galloway." He gives as the solution of the puzzle the Smith's wood. Here the matter rests in the meantime, but it will be observed that there is more uniformity of opinion as to the meaning than there is in regard to the spelling of the name of Minnigaff. Two of the authorities quoted agree in the opinion that the name has reference to a smith. This must of course refer to the trade of a blacksmith, which was a branch of industry more extensively carried on in the parish formerly than it is now. Indeed, I can find evidence of more smithies having existed than would readily be believed now, but it is a curious fact the trade then was, as it is now, almost exclusively in the hands of two families. If the original smith from whom Minnigaff derives its name was not an Erskine he must have been a M'Gowan—a name which signifies the son of the smith.

I shall now attempt to sketch the ecclesiastical history of the parish, and although the materials for such an undertaking are scanty, I hope to make the narrative not uninteresting.

Minnigaff appears to have been a free parsonage in the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Such free parsonages were exempted by the Roman Pontiff from the jurisdiction of the Bishop. For this exemption, the monks in return devoted themselves exclusively to maintain and advance the dignity of Rome. It is impossible to say with certainty to which religious order the church of Minnigaff in Catholic times belonged. But the meagre evidence I can gather on this subject leads me to suppose that the church and its property were identified with the order of the Premonstratensians, so called because of their institution having taken place at Premontie in France.

The Premonstratensians first appeared in England in 1146, and were vulgarly called White Monks, from their wearing white cloaks and hats. They rapidly spread all through England, and in the reign of Edward I. had founded twenty-seven monasteries in that country. The pioneers of the Order in Galloway came from Cockersand Abbey, in Lancashire, and settled in Tungland Abbey, which had been erected by Fergus, Lord of Galloway, for the monks of this Order.

As the church of Minnigaff eventually became a pendicle of the Abbey of Tungland, and seeing that the Abbey had been built for the Premonstratensians, I have concluded that their religious interests must have been identical at the time of the annexation. Strange as it may seem, a monastery was recently built at Wigtown for the monks of this same Order Stranger still is the fact that the first Prior of the Monastery — Lewis Gonzaga — and Dr Johnstone, the late minister of Minnigaff, once met in the churchyard. During the conversation which took place, both of the reverend gentlemen alluded to the changes which time had wrought in the way of religious toleration, as indeed they might, seeing that the Doctor conducted the Prior through the church, pointing out the different objects of interest.

The Prior was arrayed in his official dress of white cloth, and created no small stir on passing through Minnigaff.

It is interesting to know that so far back as the beginning of the thirteenth century, we find a vicar of the name of Durand in charge of the spiritual affairs of the parish. His name appears as witness on a charter by John, Bishop of Galloway, at that date, but beyond this fact, all else in connection with him or his doings is pure conjecture. This Bishop of Galloway resigned his charge in 1206, and retired to the Abbey of Holyrood, where he died in 1209. It is thought that Parson Durand was the ancestor of Walter Durand, to whom King

David II. granted the lands of Mabie, near Dumfries.

There now occurs a long blank in the church history of the parish, and nothing is known for centuries concerning the vicarage of Minnigaff. We presume that life in those bye-gone days would be not unpleasant for the vicar. For him there would be no deep responsibility, no heterodox opinions to confute, nor in fact anything to disturb the quiet of his parish. Each day would bring its varied religious duties, which, by the rules of the order, he was compelled to perform. But after Vespers were over, and the tapers extinguished, his work was done, when he would doubtless retire to his scriptorium, there, perhaps, to illuminate one of those beautiful Missals, which, as works of art, cannot yet be surpassed.

No doubt he would visit and be visited by his brethren in the faith, would entertain strangers hospitably as has ever been the wont of priest or presbyter in the manse of Minnigaff. But here the simile stops. In those days no intellectual light originating at the manse was shed abroad in the parish. All was darkness in the religious world, there was no "kindly light to lead amid the encircling gloom." As the Church of Rome had almost unchallenged possession of Scotland for two hundred and fifty years after the death of David I.—that is from 1153 to the beginning of the fifteenth century—it is not probable that ecclesiastical affairs were better conducted in Minnigaff than elsewhere.

The picture which Dr M'Crie gives of this period is a very frightful one, but the trustworthiness of the biographer of Knox as a historian is well established, and we cannot do better than quote what he says upon the subject—but we must in charity hope that things were not quite so bad in Minnigaff as in the majority of parishes. "The corruptions," says Dr M'Crie, "by which the Christian religion was universally depraved before the Reformation had grown to a greater height in Scotland than in any other nation within the pale of the Western Church. Superstition and religious imposture in their grossest forms gained an easy admission among a rude and ignorant people. By means of these the clergy attained an exorbitant degree of opulence and power, which were accompanied, as they have always been, with the corruption of their order and of the whole system of religion. The full half wealth of the nation belonged to the clergy, and the greater part of this was in the hands of a few individuals, who had the command of the whole body. Avarice, ambition, and the secular love of pomp reigned among the superior orders. Bishops and Abbots rivalled the first nobility in magnificence and preceded them in honours. They were Privy Councillors, and Lords of Session, as well as of Parliament, and had long engrossed the principal offices of State. A vacant bishopric or an abbacy called forth powerful competitors, who contended for it as for a principality or petty kingdom ; it was obtained by similar arts, and not infrequently taken possession of by the same weapons. Inferior benefices were openly put up to sale, or bestowed on the illiterate and unworthy minions of courtiers, or dice players, strolling bards, and the bastards of bishops. The lives of the clergy, exempted from secular jurisdiction, and corrupted by wealth and idleness, were become a scandal to religion and an outrage on decency. While they professed chastity, and prohibited under the severest penalties any of the ecclesiastical orders from contracting lawful wedlock, the bishops set an example of the most shameless profligacy before the inferior clergy. . . Through the blind devotion and munificence of princes and nobles, monasteries, those nurseries of superstition and idleness, had greatly multiplied in the nation, and though they had universally degenerated and were notoriously become the haunts of debauchery and lewdness, it was deemed impious to reduce their number, abridge their privileges, or alienate their funds. The kingdom swarmed with ignorant, idle, luxurious monks, who, like locusts, devoured the fruits of the earth. . . . The ignorance of the clergy respecting religion was as gross as the dissoluteness of their morals. Even bishops were not ashamed to confess that they were unacquainted with the canon of their own faith, and had never read any part of the sacred scriptures except what they had met with in missals. Under such pastors the people perished for lack of knowledge. That book which was able to make them wise unto salvation, and intended to be equally accessible to Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, was locked up from them, and the use of it in their own tongue prohibited under the heaviest penalties. The religious service was mumbled over in a dead language, which many of the priests did not understand, and some of them could scarcely read, and the greatest care was taken to prevent catechisms, composed and approved by the clergy, from coming into the hands of the laity. . . . Of the doctrine of Christianity almost nothing remained but the name. It is difficult for us to conceive how empty, ridiculous, and wretched those harangues were which the priests delivered for sermons."

Dr M'Crie adds : "The beds of the dying were besieged and their last moments disturbed by avaricious priests, who laboured to extort bequests to themselves or to the Church. Not satisfied with exacting tithes from the living a demand was made upon the dead. No sooner had a poor husbandman breathed his last than the rapacious vicar came and carried off his corpse present, which he repeated as often as death visited the family.

Ecclesiastical censures were fulminated against those who were reluctant in making their payments, or who showed themselves disobedient to the clergy, and for a little money they were prostituted on the most trifling occasions. Divine service was neglected, the churches were deserted (especially after the light of the Reformation had discovered abuses and pointed out a more excellent way), so that except on a few festival days the places of public worship in many parts of the country served only as sanctuaries for malefactors, places of traffic, and resorts of pastime."

Such is the terrible picture of the state into which religion had fallen in Scotland during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and early part of the sixteenth centuries ; and I am afraid that there are good grounds for believing that such customs as are mentioned by Dr M'Crie were prevalent in Minnigaff. For we find at the period of the Reformation that the revenues of the Church, which had been transferred to the Bishop of Galloway, were let by him to Gordon of Lochinvar for £100 Scots yearly, but this rent was reduced subsequently to £80, as the "pasch fines, corps presents, and umest claiths were no longer paid."

In Bagimont's Roll the vicarage of "Monygove" was taxed at £5, being one-tenth of the estimated value. At the epoch of the Reformation the vicarage was held by George Arnot, who let the revenues to the Laird of Larg for £50 Scots yearly. As it may be necessary to explain to some of my readers what Bagimont's Roll was, I have taken the following extract concerning it from the Rev. Stewart Wright's "Annals of Blantyre:"—"In order to carry out the crusades against the Saracens, upon which he was determined, Pope Innocent IV. was obliged to put forth great exertions. Accordingly in the year 1254 he granted to Henry VIII. of England a twentieth part of the Ecclesiastical Revenues of Scotland for three years, provided he would join the crusade. In 1268 Pope Clement IV. renewed this grant and increased it to one-tenth, but when Henry attempted to levy the tax the Scottish clergy resisted, and appealed to Rome. But the appeal was of no avail, Henry was promised the money and he required it, for already his gallant son was at the head of an English army on their way to the Holy Land. Accordingly the Pope sent a special messenger to Scotland to collect the tithes or tenth of all ecclesiastical benefices. This emissary was one Baiamund de Vicci, better known amongst us as Bagimund, Again the clergy protested and sent the collector to Rome (how modern is the expression); but the Pope was inexorable and insisted upon the hated tax. Of course the laying of it was troublesome and difficult, so much so that bull after bull had to be thundered from Rome to bring the Scottish clergy and people to a proper obedience."

This was the Doomsday Book of Scotland, and it is interesting to find the name of Minnigaff appearing in it. The valuation of the revenue of the parish accruing to the church, as there fixed, continued unaltered down to the time of James V.

The annals of Minnigaff, previous to the Reformation, are lost, or at least they are not accessible at present. At the suppression of the monasteries all the chartularies and ecclesiastical records which the Popish clergy could get into their hands were carried away by them and destroyed, or lodged in the

Vatican at Rome or in the Scotch College in Paris. This was the case in a peculiar manner in the province of Galloway, for of the many religious establishments which it contained no records remain, and the very little that is now known of their history is gathered from the incidental references of contemporary writers.

There would be little danger of the populace seeking plunder in the church of Minnigaff at the commencement of the Reformation, for it contained no richly decorated shrine. But it is probable that the vicar, seeing the course events were taking, would deem it safest to secure any records or papers which might be in his possession by placing them in one of the nearest Abbeys of the Premonstratensian Order—Whithorn or Tongland. As there was constant communication between these larger religious houses and the continent, it is most probable that the ancient records of the parish are in the archives of the Scots College in Paris.

Some years ago, it is said, the Charters of Dundrennan Abbey were offered for sale to a member of the Maitland family, the present owners of Dundrennan estate, but not purchased, as the price asked was considered too high.

There is no record or document known to exist at present which indicates the period when the first church of Minnigaff was built. The name of the saint to which the church was dedicated is unknown. But it is quite evident from the quantity of wrought stones built into the present old church—apart from other evidence—that it is only the wreck of an old edifice. For instance, several of the window lintels are too long for the positions in which we now find them, and could never have been designed for their present places. The lintels have grooves cut into them in which were fixed the leaden window frames.

Judging from the style of the windows and doors, and from the lettering on a carved stone bearing a coat-of-arms, it is conjectured that the building dates back to the middle of the sixteenth century.

The sculptured stone was removed from the wall of the church by the late Miss Maxwell of Creebridge House about the middle of the last century, and built in above the mantle-piece in the Hermitage at Kirroughtree. This secluded and romantic building contained many antique curiosities in the way of carved oak and old china. Not the least striking object in the Hermitage was a stuffed heron, which stood near the door. Suspended from its neck was a bannerette on which the word "Welcome" was emblazoned. The building having fallen into decay the sculptured stone was removed from the Hermitage, and it has again been placed in its original position in the wall of the old kirk.

The inscription surrounding the coat of arms occupies three sides of a square, the lettering reading firstly downwards, then horizontally, and finally upwards. Though difficult to decipher it may be made out as follows:—"Hic jacet Patricius M'Ke dae Caloda, me fieri fesit"—"Here lies Patrick M'Kie of Caloda, who caused me to be made."

The present ruin is not that of the church of Catholic times, for there would not have been a door in the east gable had such been the case. It is therefore thought that "dae Caloda" must have been the territorial designation of Patrick M'Kie. And, as was not unfrequent, a contraction has been made by omitting an "m" and an "n"—"Caloda" for "Camlodan"—which would give the translation as "Here lies Patrick M'Kie of Camlodan who caused me to be made." On the shield of arms are the crowned lion of Galloway and three boars' heads. The supporters are two lions rampant. The workmanship is rude, but in keeping with the period and locality in which it was sculptured. It is believed by authorities on heraldry that this is a memorial stone erected by Patrick M'Kie of Camlodan in memory of his relatives the M'Dowalls and Gordons, whose arms are impaled on the shield.

We have no doubt the pre-reformation church

Hunter Newton-Stewart.

MEMORIAL STONE TO UCHTRED M'DOWALL.

was a much handsomer building than the old church of Minnigaff appears to have ever been. But it was the tendency of the age in which the old church was built to differ as widely as possible from the models then existing. Art seems to have been banished at the period of the Reformation as savouring too much of the

Church of Rome. In the erection of ecclesiastical buildings the object seems to have been to make them as ugly and barn-like as possible —at least that appears to have been the orthodox plan. In Minnigaff success has crowned the effort.

The moulding of the east door is perhaps the only perfect part of the church remaining, and which has been put up as it formerly was, but the door itself has changed its position since Roman Catholic days. For in its present situation, had it been the pre-reformation church, worshippers would have of necessity had to pass the altar during ingress and egress, which was not permitted save to the priest only.

A long stone slab, which had formed the east door step of the old church, was taken up a few years ago and placed inside the building for preservation, as it bore a considerable quantity of runic writing. On the stone was also discovered a Maltese cross carved in relivo. The portion of the step bearing the cross was underneath the heavy moulding of the door and entirely hidden from view till the step was taken up.

There is also in the church another ancient monument, bearing on one side an intricate interlacing design of Celtic character. On the same side appears an incised cross surmounted by a raven, whilst the other side is wholly taken up by a human figure draped and in repose.

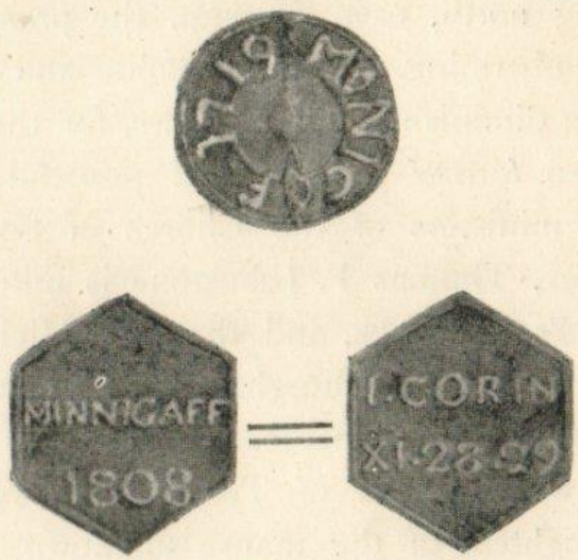
This latter relic of antiquity was found some years ago during the demolition of the old Court House in the village, where it had long served as a window lintel. Fortunately it was rescued from amongst the debris, and afterwards placed in its present position for safety.

Neither of these ancient monuments—which are ascribed to the sixth or seventh century—have been made to reveal the secrets which they hold, but it is to be hoped that some day the meaning of the mysterious hieroglyphics carved on them may be made known.

The old church of Minnigaff was repaired in 1731, as appears from a stone inserted into the east gable. It is thought that the present manse was also built at the same time. All traces of the former manse, which was situated on the side of the approach, equi-distent between the present church and manse, have now disappeared.

Of the communion tokens bearing the date of 1719, only two specimens are known to exist; all the others were melted down in 1808, when tokens of a different pattern were issued. The author of this History is the fortunate possessor of one of the old tokens of 1719.

A writer who visited the manse in 1793 thus aptly describes his impressions. He says: "Above the village stands the Kirk of Minnigaff in a situation somewhat elevated. The manse, which I have repeatedly found the seat of polite and elegant hospitality, stands near. The view down the Cree from fhe windows in the upper rooms in the manse of Minnigaff is highly pleasing. The course of the river—an



MINNIGAFF CHURCH TOKENS.

islet dividing its stream, straggling houses on both sides, the village extending to the south-west, and a green hill with trees straight beyond it, are the groups of objects which make up the landscape. But in enumeration it is impossible to give to objects in scenery anything of the effect which they acquire from their natural attitudes and colour. I cannot communicate the impressions which this prospect made upon my mind."

We can only add our humble testimony to that of the writer from whom we have quoted, and repeat that the view from the manse now is even more beautiful than in 1793. The woods have now grown up on each side of the river, and with the "Crystal Cree" meandering between its richly wooded banks the view towards the south is exceedingly picturesque. Looking north, east, or west, the prospect is equally charming. Nor has polite and elegant learning diminished at the manse, for there are now two former sons of that peaceful abode placed ministers of the Church of Scotland. The Rev. Thomas F. Johnstone is minister of St. Paul's, Greenock, and the Rev. Michael P. Johnstone of Fraserburgh. Another son, the Rev. John M. Johnstone, at the time of his death, was minister of Torphichen. Nor are the daughters of the manse unknown in the world of literature and art, for to them are we frequently indebted for clever sketches in the more popular of the illustrated magazines.

The learned author of "Caledonia," that work of immense research, states that in Catholic times there were two chapels dependent on the Parish Church of Minnigaff. One of the chapels, it has been conjectured, stood in the vicinity of the House of the Hill; but we have never met with any information, or even any suggestion, as to the location or sight of the second of these sub-chapels. I am inclined to believe that it must have stood in the neighbourhood of Blackcraig, for so far back as I can trace there has always been a "clachan" there. It is known that the lead mines have been in that locality for several centuries, and I have been told by some of the miners that they had occasionally found very ancient underground workings when searching for ore. These workings, or "old men" as they are technically called, always run in a horizontal direction, from which it is surmised that the ancient miners had not appliances necessary for sinking a shaft. In the neighbourhood of these old workings are also traces of many houses having formerly existed, but concerning which nothing is now known.

These facts induce me to believe that Craigton, as Blackcraig was formerly called, was existing as a mining viliage in pre-reformation times. There were also the ruins of a superior house standing at the hillhead in the earlier part of this century; but I could never gain much information as to its history. I have been told that it was built by a company, who leased the mine in former times, as a dwelling-house for their agent. It may have been put to this use in its later years, but I do not think it was originally built for any such purpose. There are people living yet, members of one of four families which inhabited "Old Windsor," as the house was called, and they assert that it was no common building, but was of a superior style of architecture andfinish. Old Windsor was totally wrecked by the great storm which took place on Sunday 6th, and finished on Monday, 7th January, 1839.

The Rev. Timothy Pont, whose father was superintendent of Galloway under Knox, made a survey of this district about the year 1604. In this survey he uses distinctive marks or symbols for churches, castles, superior houses, mills, &c., and in this map he shows a superior house surrounded by trees existing at Blackcraig at that date. A row of old and gnarled beech trees yet remains, and tradition asserts that those trees now standing are only the one side of a square which formerly enclosed the garden of Pont's superior dwelling. I have thought that this may have been the residence of the curates who served the unidentified sub-chapel referred to by the author of "Caledonia." The stones of Old Windsor were used in building the farm house of Cloverfield, as the otd farm house had fallen into disrepair. Now there is nothing left to indicate the spot where the curate's house stood except a green knoll, and of the holy men who lived and laboured there, alas, there is not a single trace remaining.

> "Their memory and their name is gone,
> Alike unknowing and unknown.
> Their hatred and their love is lost,
> Their envy bury'd in the dust ;
> They have no share in all that's done
> Beneath the circuit of the sun."

Minnigaff Church with its property, a little previous to the reign of James V., was granted to the abbot and monks of Tungland. In the beginning of the reign of James V., the Abbey of Tungland was settled on the Bishops of Galloway, who, as Abbots of Tungland, enjoyed a great part of the tithes and revenues of Minnigaff. At this time the cure was served by a vicar whose name I have been unable to ascertain. He, of course, received an appropriate share of the revenue of the parish, in the same ratio, we suppose, as a bishop's income is to a poor curate's salary in the present day.

After the Reformation the property of Tungland Abbey was vested in the Crown by the Act of General Annexation in 1587. In the following year the churches of that monastery were granted for life to William Melville the Commendator of Tungland. Melville is often mentioned in the history of this period under the title of Lord Tungland, which he obtained on being made a Lord of Session in 1587. At his death in 1603 the Church of Moniegoff—as it was then spelled—was transferred to the Bishop of Galloway by a grant of the King, which settled the whole of the property of Tungland Abbey on the Bishops of that See. On the abolition of Prelacy by the Revolution in 1689, the patronage of the parish reverted to the Crown. Such is the early history of the Church of Minnigaff, so far as I have been able to gather from all sources known or accessible.

We must now go back a little in point of time and take up the thread of our story at the period of the Reformation. The first General Assembly of the Church of Scotland took place in Edinburgh on the 20th December, 1560. It consisted of forty members, only six of whom were ministers. Minnigaff—then Monygoff—at that time had no placed minister; its spiritual wants were ministered to by John Stewart, exhorter. The following extract from the "Life and Times of Knox" fully explains the duties of this office:—"As there was not a sufficient number of ministers to supply the different parts of the country at this period, and that the people might not be altogether destitute of public worship, certain pious persons, who had received a common education, were appointed to read the Scriptures and the common prayers. In large parishes persons of this description were also employed to relieve the ministers from a part of the public service. If they advanced in knowledge they were encouraged to add a few plain exhortations to the reading of the Scriptures. In this case they were called exhorters; but they were examined and admitted before entering upon this employment."

The exhorter in Minnigaff at this period, as has been mentioned, was John Stewart, whose stipend was 50 merks, or reduced to the current coin of the realm, £2 16s 3d. His "exhortations" would necessarily be short if he preached according to his stipend. We were favoured by Dr Johnstone, the late respected minister of Minnigaff, with the copy of an interesting document, which contains a complete list of the ministers of the parish, from the first settled minister after the Reformation till the Revolution. We insert the document at length, feeling sure that it will afford some original information to many who have tender and endearing memories of Minnigaff Church and its associations. In some instances we have added a few remarks concerning the ministers, which may not be uninteresting; but always remembering that if we could not say something good we would not say anything ill. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

The following is the list, with the date of each minister's settlement in the parish :—

1574.—John Walcar, Kirkmabreck and Kirkdale being also under his care, with £80 Scots of stipend. He was accused in the General Assembly of not waiting on his cure. Length of pastorate, four years.

1578.—John Moffat, exhorter at Kirkmabreck in 1567, and reader there from 1574. Removed to Kirkmabreck in 1590. His stipend is not given.

1590.—Andrew Menzies succeeded John Moffatt, and held the pastorate till 1628, thus continuing minister of the parish for 38 years.

1628.—Alex. Hamilton, M.A. He was laureated at the University of Edinburgh on 30th July, 1614, and a member of the commission for the maintenance of church discipline, 21st October, 1634. In 1636 he contributed £20 Scots towards building the library of the college, Glasgow; but he was dead before 22nd July, 1643, when his son, William, was served heir. Length of tenure of Minnigaff Parish, 10 years.

1638.—William Maxwell, M.A., took his degree at the University of Glasgow in 1631. He was a member of the Commission of Assembly in 1649. Deprived of his parish on the establishment of Episcopacy. He held the parish for 24 years.

His son, Colonel William (founder of the family of Cardoness), was a brave officer, and the last survivor of those who came over from Holland with King William in 1688. He was at Leyden finishing his medical education when the Revolution broke out, and abandoning his profession he got an ensigncy in a Scotch regiment, commanded by the Earl of Leven, and embarking with it served under the Prince of Orange in this country. He was married to Miss Stewart of Castle Stewart, niece of Wm. Gordon of Bush of Bell—who was shot by Sir Godfrey M'Culloch, for which exploit Sir Godfrey was beheaded in Edinburgh on the 26th March, 1697.

In 1715 Colonel Maxwell was appointed Governor of Glasgow, which office he held till the rebellion was over. For the valuable services he then rendered, he received a present of plate from the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, ornamented with the arms of both cities. The greater portion of this plate is still in the possession of the Cardoness family. Colonel Maxwell died on the 16th June, 1752, aged 95 years. Such is the honourable career of a son of the manse of Minnigaff.

1664.—Robert Fleming appears as the first Episcopal minister of Minnigaff. He obtained his degree at the University of Glasgow in 1656. He was translated to Mearns in 1669, so that his tenure of the parish only extended to five years.

1669.—John Arbuckle, the second Episeopal minister of Minnigaff, had been transferred from Stranraer. From Minnigaff he went to Craigie about 1681. He seems to have been a man with a nomadic turn of mind; but he occupied the parish for 11 years.

1681—John Arbuthnot, the third Episcopal minister, was an M.A. of the University of Glasgow, and came to this parish from Colmonell. He remained as minister of the parish tor seven years.

1689.—John Jonkin, the fourth and last Episcopal clergyman of the parish, held the charge only a short time when he w as "outed" by the inhabitants, who took the law into their own hands and summarily dismissed a man who had been intruded on the parish contrary to their wishes.

1689.—Robert Burnet, the first minister after the Revolution Settlement, continued ten years in the parish, when he was translated to Newhills in Aberdeenshire. Here he terminated his life by hanging himself on the bell rope. But whether this catastrophe was brought about through a disappointment in love, or from the pangs of remorse at having given up such a sweet spot as Minnigaff, history sayeth not.

1699.—Thomas Campbell now held the parish. He married a sister of Murdoch of Cumloden. In his time the present manse was built, and the church underwent considerable repair. These alterations and improvements must have taken place about the year 1731, for a stone bearing this date appears to have been inserted in the east end of the church to commemorate the event. This stone is now completely covered with the "ivy green." As before stated, the former manse was situated equidistant between the present manse and the church. Mr Campbell remained minister of the parish till he died in 1744, the length of his pastorate extending to 45 years.

1744-46.—The church was vacant for two years.

In the latter year was ordained George Muirhead. His tenure of office was the shortest in the annals of the parish. He resigned his charge to take up a professorship in one of the Universities.

1748.—Ebenezer Scott was now minister, who, as his tombstone in the churchyard records, "died 17th September, 1788, in the 69th year of his age and 40th of his ministry. "With a friendly heart directed by a sound understanding and with uniform perseverance in discharging the duties of his sacred office, he passed his days happily in the just esteem and affection of his people."

1789.—John Garlies Maitland was presented to the parish. We have now come down to modern times, and some still living, who, of course, cannot remember the "placing" of Mr Maitland, were well acquainted with him ere he died in 1836. His term of office was exactly 47 years, 7 months, and 15 days.

1836-1891.—Michael Shaw Stewart Johnstone was on the first day of September ordained minister of Minnigaff. He has therefore filled the sacred office longer than any of his predecessors. He preached his first sermon in the old church—the new church not being completed—from the text "I have a message from God to thee."

The following paragraph is from the *Glasgow Herald* of date the 20th June, 1836 :—"*London Gazette* of Friday —The King has been pleased to present the Rev. Michael Stewart Johnstone, preacher of the Gospel, to the church and parish of Minnigaff, in the Presbytery of Wigtown and Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, vacant by the death of the Rev. John Garlies Maitland.

1890.—John Reid. Dr Johnstone from increasing years having felt the necessity of having a helper and successor, the choice of the congregation, out of 96 applicants for the office, fell on the Rev. John Reid, formerly assistant in Riccarton in Ayrshire.

In common with every other Kirk Session in Scotland, Minnigaff had its share to do in the suppression of witchcraft. The first attack on this peculiar form of iniquity took place on 3rd June, 1703. The following extract gives full details of the whole affair:—"There being a flagrant report yt. some persons in this parish in and about the house of Barcly have practised that piece of devilrie, commonly called turning the riddle, as also it being reported yt. ye principal person is one Malley Redmond, an Irish woman, for present nurse in the house of Barcly to ye young lady Tonderghie, as also yt. Alex. Kelly, Gilbert Kelly, his son, and Marion Murray, formerly servant in Barcly, now in Holme, were witnesses yrto, the session appoints ye said Malley and ye said witnesses to be cited to ye nixt meeting." Malley after some delay at length appeared, but positively denied having "practised that piece of devilry turning the riddle," but acknowledged that she had seen it done in her father's house in Ireland by two girls on the occasion of something having been stolen, "to fear ye guilty person yt. it might restore yt. was stolen." Malley was exhorted to be ingenuous, but she persisted in asserting her innocence. The session therefore resolved to proceed to proof The proceedings occupy a number of pages, and are too long for insertion ; but the particulars are comprehended in the deposition of Marrion Murray. "Marrion Murray, aged 18 years, having been sworn, purged of malice and partial counsel, deponeth yt. she (not having seen any other person doing it before her), together with ye nurse held the riddle between ym. having a pair of little schissors fastened into ye rim of the riddle, whereof ye nurse Malley Redmond held one point and she the other, and that ye nurse mumbled some words mentioning Peter and Paul, and that when the nurse said these words the riddle stirred less or more, and after ye nurse had said ye words she bad ye deponent say them too, and that she accordingly said the same things back again to the nurse, and that the deponent had said to ye nurse Malley before ever she meddled with it that if she knew yr. was anything evil in doing of it she would not meddle with it, and ye nurse replied yr. was no evil in it, and further that to sift the meddling with it she offered to take ye child from ye lady's arms, but ye young lady put her to it bidding her go do it. As also yt. further ye said Marion depones yt. ye same day a little after ye young lady bad her go to ye barn and yr. do it over again with ye nurse, which she positively refused, whereupon ye young lady did it herself with all the circumstances she and the nurse had done it in the chambers before, moreover that some days after, the chamber door being close upon the young lady and her nurse Malley, ye deponent looking through a hole in ye door saw ye nurse and ye lady standing and ye riddle betwixt ym. as before, but heard nothing. And further, yt. ye lady and her nurse bad her deny these things, but did not bid her swear to it." For her participation in the affair the young lady Tonderghie, Mrs Janet Blair, was cited before the session, and having expressed her penitence for being ensnaired into such sinful practices she and Marion Murray subscribed a declaration to be read before the congregation, "abhorring and renouncing all spelles and charmes usual to wizards, and having been rebooked and exhorted to greater watchfulness for the future they were dismissed." The originator of the affair, Malley Redmond, after making her appearance to be rebooked before the congregation, was banished the parish. But the execution of the sentence was, through influence, delayed, "till Tonderghie younger, his child, should be weaned." In the olden time the fast days seem to have been more rigidly kept than they are now. On the 17th Sept., 1703, is found this characteristic entry—" Richard M'Chisney alleged guilty of breach of ye fast day by fishing, cited, called, and compeared not. The officer is to cite him for ye nixt." The next meeting appears to have been held on the 14th October, when we find Richard M'Chisney summoned, called, and compeared, and being questioned declared he did not fish the water on the fast day before this communion, but that he went with some people from Penigham and showed them the ford of the water and waited until they catched some fish. The session appoints the said Richard M'Chesney for his contempt of the ordinances to be rebooked before the congregation upon the next Lord's day." Were strict account taken by the session of how the fast day is kept in the parish now, I doubt there would be many people found guilty of fishing. The fact of "the people from Penigham" being taken to a ford by Richard M'Chesney looks uncommonly like a planned raid on the "whities" and "kildochs," for it would just be the season at which these fish are most plentiful in the Penkiln burn. It is most probable that the "people from Penigham" were as likely to know all the "lies" of the fish as well as the folks in Minnigaff, perhaps poor Richard's "contempt of the ordinances" was not such a heinous offence when viewed in a proper light.

The old communion cups were "tabled" by the minister at a meeting of the session on 17th Nov., 1703. The cups came from Ayr, and were purchased with the proceeds of penalties imposed by the session. Round the outer rim of each of the two cups is engraved the inscription—"The cupps belonging the Kirk of Monygoff, 1703." These interesting memorials of a past day and generation ought to be specially dear to every member of Minnigaff Church. We borrow the words of a modern writer concerning the cups of his parish, as they are peculiarly applicable to Minnigaff. He says: "Are they not interesting memorials those silver cups which happily are still ours? What a 'cloud of witnesses' seems to rise around them? How many generations, so to speak, have they seen come and go—a long ceaseless train passing and ever passing onwards to the grave. How many the trembling hands that have lifted those cups to trembling lips? How often have been re-echoed over them by pastor after pastor the words of the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep—'This cup is the new testament in my blood, this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me.' Be it ours to use these memorials worthily, and as our fathers have handed them down to us may we hand them down to our children and children's children with the affectionate admonition. Prize these and hear the grand old story which they tell of the love of Jesus Christ, so that this love may constrain you to live not unto yourself but unto Him who died for you and rose again."

Two new cups were gifted by Mrs Johnstone in 1871, bearing this inscription—"Given to the Church of Monigaff, in memory of Miss Dunlop Stewart, by her niece Mrs M. S. S. Johnstone."

On the 27th January, 1704, is found the first reference to the Mortcloth, which seems to have come from London.

Towards the latter end of this year the Kirk-Session seem to have found a case *celebre*, or at least they made it one. The subject is referred to again and again in the minutes, but the main facts are these—"The Session being informed," as the minute of 27th September informs us, "that a certain gentleman in this country did some weeks ago upon the Lord's day ride through the congregation with his servant and cloak bag without waiting for sermon. As also the session being this day informed that two other gentlemen in this country about a month ago were in the toun of Minygoff very drunk, and in their drunkenness upon difference risen between ym. were guilty of loud and frequent blaspheming of the name of God. They unani mously resolve to ask the Presbytery's advice.' At the next meeting the minister reports that he had consulted the Presbytery anent Sir William Maxwell, Laird of Wig, Provost Coltran, whose names were concealed in the foregoing sederunt, and that the Presbytery had advised that the session should do their utmost to exhoner their own conscience and advise the gentlemen respectively. Accordingly, the session appoints the Session Clerk to commune with Sir William Maxwell, and lay home to his conscience the guilt of Sabbath-breaking by riding through this parish with his servant and cloak bag upon the Sabbath day without taking sermon and report." Sir William and the Laird of Wig were summoned from Whithorn to undergo the usual examination, whilst Provost Coltran from Wigtown was also summoned to attend for a like purpose. The witnesses for the Kirk-Session in this case were "James Reid, John M'Bryd, John Boddan, and Mr James Algie, Induellers in Monygaff." Many "dyats" were fixed, but the offenders either had not returned from Edinburgh, were not at home, or gave some equally evasive excuse for their non-appearance before the session. But on the 11th November, 1705, more than a year after the breach of the

Sabbath, the minister reports that he "had at length communed with Sir William Maxwell, who had confessed his fault and promised never to be found in the like again." The session after dwelling on the enormity of Sir William's crime, and having exhorted him to watchfulness "in tyme coming," he was dismissed.

The Laird of Wig was similarly dealt with on 14th November, 1705.

Provost Coltran, alias Drummoral, often promises to appear, but cometh not till 10th Sept., 1706, two years after the offence had been committed, "he compeared, and being questioned, confessed his fault and was dismissed."

There was a close connection between the Bailie Court and the Kirk-Session of Minnigaff in former times, and the fines imposed seem to have found their way into the church coffers. The old Court House—a two storey thatched building—was till recent years a picturesque object in the village of Minnigaff, but it has now been demolished and the material utilised in modern cottages.

In one of the windows of the Court House—which was also an inn—was a pane of glass on which Burns, with a ring, had scratched a verse of poetry. The pane was removed by the late Miss Maxwell of Creebridge House, but has now been lost.

Every offence within the jurisdiction of the Baillie Court was punished by a fine, of which the following are specimens:—

1804, Sept. 5.—Wm. M'Clery's fine for unlawful fishing, £1 1s.

1809, Sept. 3.—Fines upon poachers, £10 9s. 8d.

1812, May 17.—Fines upon boys for tresspassing at Kirroughtree, £0 12s 9d.

1813, Sept. 13.—A fine by the Justices on the farmer in Buchan for cutting young trees, the property of the Earl of Galloway, and remitted by his lordship as a donation to the poor of Minnigaff, £5 12s.

1814, Feby. 27.—A fine by the Justices on A. Murray for breakihg into Sir John Heron Maxwell's deer park *and pulling nuts*, £1 10s. (Query—Did nuts then grow in February?)

1815.—A fine on I. Crawford for scaring a horse, 2s 6d.

1819, Feby. 20.—Edward Hughes's fine for striking Squire Armitage, 5s.

We have now got down to events happening within the memory of people still alive, and it would not be discreet after this date to publish the names of offenders who had appeared before the Baillie Court of Minnigaff.

It may not be inappropriate to close this history with a reference to the illustrious dead. The "Men of Note" belonging to Minnigaff have sprung from no particular class; scions of nobility, sons of the "dutiful gentry," aye, and sons of the peasantry, all born in the parish, have left names that will ever occupy honourable places in the world's history. Military glory scientific achievement, and literary renown have their representatives among the distinguished men of the parish. Minnigaff has a glorious past, and of the future who can speak with certainty? He would indeed be a rash man who would limit possibilities.

The man of genius, like the prophet of old, is ever a surprise, coming from some unexpected quarter. It may be that from among the upland solitudes of the parish, or the busier precincts of Creebridge, may come forth one who shall startle the world by the solution of those psychical mysteries over which the scientific world is at present so much perplexed.

Herein lies one opportunity for the Minnigaff man of genius to reach the highest eminence amongst the leaders in occult research.

The highest hill in the parish of Minnigaff awaits the monument of him who will reveal the secrets, possibilities, and powers of those invisible forces in nature which will eventually be harnessed to the service of man.

J. Maxwell & Son, Printers, Dumfries.