

## 23. THE CHIEF TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF RENFREWSHIRE.

(The figures in brackets after each name give the population in 1911, and those at the end of each section are references to pages in the text.)

**Barrhead** (11,387) is situated on low ground near the entrance to the Loch Libo Gap through the volcanic hills of Renfrewshire. It is a manufacturing place with machine-tool works, foundries, and other engineering establishments. In or near the town are several dyeing and bleaching works, and one of the largest sanitary engineering works in Scotland. Originally on the site of the town there were several detached villages, but in the last hundred years Barrhead has grown so rapidly as to swallow up these places. Near the town is Boylestone Quarry, a quarry in the volcanic rocks from which native copper is sometimes obtained.

The town has communication by electric tram with Paisley, and with Rouken Glen on the outskirts of Glasgow. On the hills near the town are the reservoirs that supply water to part of the south side of Glasgow. The town itself is not prepossessing in appearance, but some of the valley and moorland scenery in its vicinity is particularly charming. (pp. 18, 25, 27, 35, 37, 41, 56, 80, 84, 89, 141, 147.)

**Bishopton** is a village situated five miles north-west of Paisley, and is in an agricultural district. At Bishopton the

Caledonian railway enters a deep rock cutting and thence tunnels through a ridge between the village and the Clyde. The making of the tunnel was a matter of great difficulty; it is said that for blasting alone the gunpowder cost £12,000. (pp. 41, 61, 143.)

**Bridge of Weir** (2716) stands on the river Gryfe three miles north-west of Johnstone. It was one of the earliest cotton-spinning centres of Scotland, but is now chiefly a residential place



Quarrier's Orphan Homes

for people engaged in business in the neighbouring large towns. Near the village stand the ruins of Ranfurly Castle, and not far away is a mound said to mark a Roman fortification. In the vicinity are the well-known Quarrier's Orphan Homes, which accommodate over a thousand boys and girls. (p. 143.)

**Busby** (1058) lies on the borders of Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire but chiefly in the latter county. It was formerly a very busy manufacturing town with cotton mills, chemical

works, and bleach-fields, but many of the mills are now deserted and the population is diminishing. The town is in the neighbourhood of much of the prettiest scenery of the White Cart. It is connected with Glasgow by the branch of the Caledonian Railway that goes to East Kilbride. (p. 22.)

**Cathcart** (15,205) is now little more than a suburb of Glasgow. It is mainly a residential place, but a few industries such as engineering and paper-making are carried on. The place takes its name from the old castle on the Cart (*caer*=a castle) the origin of which is lost in antiquity. In the days of Wallace the castle was a place of considerable strength. (pp. 11, 105, 113, 131.)

**Clarkston** lies a mile nearer Glasgow than Busby. It is the centre of a pleasant, undulating, and well-wooded countryside, and in recent years has grown very rapidly in favour as a residential suburb of Glasgow.

**Crosslee** is a little village two and a half miles north-west of Johnstone. It was formerly a manufacturing centre, but its industrial life is now extinct. It has entered on a new lease of prosperity as a residential centre.

**Eaglesham** (1138) is in some ways the most interesting upland village in Renfrewshire. It stands over 500 feet above sea-level at the edge of wide moors that stretch far south into Ayrshire. The moors were the refuge of the Covenanters in the "killing times," and many memories of the martyrs linger round Eaglesham. The present village was founded by the twelfth Earl of Eglinton in 1796, but succeeded an older village which was granted a weekly market in the reign of Charles II. The elevated situation, the fresh moorland air, and the extensive prospects on all sides, have made the place a favourite suburban retreat for city toilers. The absence of railway communication gives the village an added charm. Near it is Pulnoon Castle, said to have been built with the money obtained by Sir Hugh

Montgomery or his father as the ransom of Hotspur, taken prisoner at Otterburn. (pp. 40, 101, 103, 106, 153.)

**Elderslie** is two miles from Paisley on the Johnstone road. All the associations of the place are linked with the name of Wallace. The house in which he was born is still pointed out, and it is probable at least that the site is the same. The estate was granted to Sir Malcolm Wallace, the patriot's father, in the thirteenth century, and remained in the family till 1769. There is a carpet work in the village. (pp. 103, 143, 150.)

**Gourock** (7442) was originally built on the raised beach surrounding Gourock Bay, but has now crept up the hill side and has extended for two miles along the shore. The situation is particularly beautiful. In the foreground the sheltered waters of the bay afford a haven for yachts and other small craft, while across the blue waters of the firth rise the smooth slopes above Kilcreggan, and in the background the rugged peaks of the Argyllshire mountains. In summer Gourock is one of the favourite resorts of the Glasgow holiday-maker, strong points in its favour being its accessibility, its natural beauty, and the facilities afforded by it for all kinds of pastime. It is one of Glasgow's main gates to the Firth of Clyde, for from it starts the fleet of speedy river-steamers owned by the Caledonian Railway Company. Since 1889 the town has been connected with Glasgow by rail. In the basalt quarry behind Gourock good specimens of rare minerals are sometimes obtained, while the sandstones of the neighbourhood are so impregnated with copper as to have been worked for that metal. Gourock is one of the most ancient of Renfrewshire towns. In the seventeenth century Gourock was erected by charter into a burgh of barony with a weekly court and market. (pp. 17, 40, 41, 44, 49, 75, 98, 99, 107, 129, 143, 147, 171.)

**Greenock** (75,140) ranks seventh in size among the towns of Scotland. It is built largely along the raised beach parallel to



Gourock from Lyle Road

the firth, and rises inland in a series of terraces. Greenock first came into importance in the seventeenth century, when by the influence of John Shaw, the principal proprietor, a charter was obtained from Charles I creating the town a burgh of barony. At first the inhabitants were forbidden to engage in foreign trade, a privilege enjoyed only by royal burghs, but in 1670 Sir John Shaw, being high in favour with the king, was enabled to have the restriction removed. At the end of the seventeenth century the population was about a thousand, and until this time the herring fishing had been the most important occupation of the town, but now cargoes of a general nature began to come into the port, and the place rapidly grew in size and importance. It became necessary to improve the harbour accommodation, and after fruitless attempts to obtain help from parliament, the citizens, headed by their far-seeing laird, Sir John Shaw, determined to carry out the work themselves, and in 1710 the new harbour and quays were successfully completed. About the same time a custom house was established at Greenock which was at first subordinate to Port Glasgow, but later the positions were reversed.

At the Jacobite rebellions of the '15 and the '45 Greenock, like practically all the towns of the west, strongly supported the Hanoverian cause. Towards the end of the century active steps were taken to improve the harbour accommodation, an enterprising policy that has been pursued successfully to the present time. A new quay was built and additions were made from time to time until the Custom House Quay had a thousand feet of frontage. In 1805 the East India Harbour was begun, and in 1818 a new dry dock. Still the port continued increasing in size, and in 1850 the fine Victoria Harbour was opened, and twelve years later the Albert Harbour was begun. Then came the Garvel Graving Dock, next the Princes Pier, and finally the magnificent James Watt Dock with a depth at low water of over 30 feet.

Greenock has been an important ship-building centre since the American War. The yards of Caird and Scott are famous



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Greenock from the River

throughout the country. Some of the biggest battle-ships afloat have been built by the latter firm. Naturally the allied industries are well represented in the town. Rope-making and sail-making, saw-mills, the making of anchors and cables, all kinds of deck machinery, and every branch of marine engineering—all these industries flourish in the town. Greenock is still the most important sugar-refining town in Scotland, and in spite of continental competition large cargoes of raw sugar are imported every year. Chemical works add to the wealth if not to the amenities of the town. From any elevated point behind Greenock a magnificent view of the firth and the Highland border can be obtained. Famous names associated with the town are James Watt, Highland Mary, John Wilson, John Galt, and John and Edward Caird. (pp. 10, 12, 17, 27, 46, 47, 58, 61, 66, 75, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 90, 92, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 107, 111, 135, 143, 146, 147, 151, 154, 155.)

**Houston** or Hugh's Town (1345) derives its name from Sir Hugh de Padvinan, who obtained a grant of lands in that neighbourhood in the twelfth century. The barony was originally called Kilpeter, after a church dedicated to St Peter, and the name is still found in Peter's Burn, which flows through the village, in St Peter's Well, and in Peter's Day, the name of the old fair day in July. The present village was founded towards the end of the eighteenth century, and stands rather higher up the burn than old Houston. A relic of former days, however, is to be seen in the fine old Cross of Houston. This is a pillar nine feet high fixed in a four-stepped pedestal and surmounted by a sun-dial and a globe. The dial is 200 years old but the pillar is very much older. The most notable mansions in the neighbourhood are Barochan House and Gryfe Castle. (pp. 122, 143.)

**Howwood** or Hollow-wood lies three miles south-west of Johnstone. Bleach-works in the vicinity give employment to a



number of the inhabitants. It is an old-fashioned place near some picturesque reaches of the Black Cart. (p. 19.)

**Hurlet** is three miles south-east of Paisley. Good seams of coal and iron occur in the locality, and the former mineral has been worked near the village for over three hundred years. For more than a hundred and fifty years chemicals have been made in Hurlet, in fact for some time it was the only place



“Roman” Bridge, Inverkip

in Scotland where copper-sulphate was manufactured. In the vicinity are fine exposures of the fossil-bearing Hurlet Limestone, which is the lowest of the Carboniferous Limestone series, and which attains in places the thickness of a hundred feet.

**Inverkip** (1168), as its name indicates, is situated at the mouth of the Kip about two and a half miles north of Wemyss Bay. Near the village is the mansion of Ardgowan, the seat of the Shaw Stewarts. In the grounds are the ruins of Inverkip

Castle which probably succeeded the old castle that stood on the same site in the days of Bruce. (pp. 33, 52, 53, 129, 138, 143.)

**Johnstone** (12,045) stands on the right bank of the Black Cart nearly four miles west of Paisley. It is a good example of the towns that have grown owing to the development of the coal-fields of Scotland, for 150 years ago the town did not exist. At one time hand-loom weaving was the principal occupation of the inhabitants, but this is now extinct. There is still some textile



Kilmacolm, from the East

work, but engineering is the chief industry. All branches of this trade are carried on, but there is a specialisation in machine tools. (pp. 18, 19, 79, 80, 82, 142, 144, 147, 158, 159, 160, 164.)

**Kilmacolm** (6242) took its name from the ancient church dedicated to St Columba. It is situated in Strathgryfe, a little way from the left bank of the river. Its elevated situation and its nearness to the open moors have made it a favourite residential place. (pp. 122, 143.)

**Linwood** (2055) stands on the left bank of the Black Cart about a mile and a half north-east of Johnstone. It is an industrial village with a cotton-mill and paper-works.

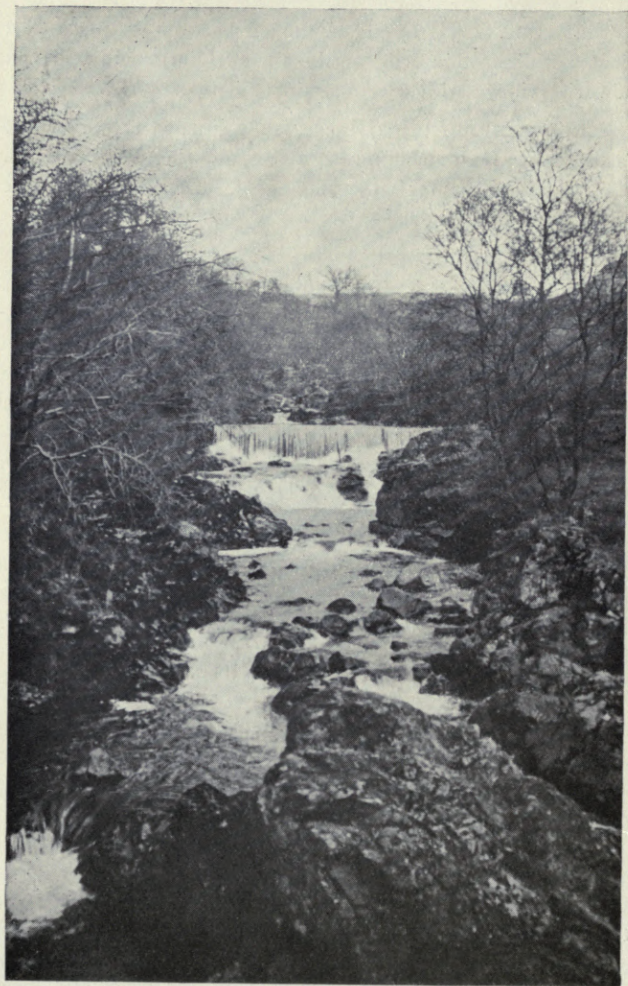
**Lochwinnoch** (4254) is pleasantly situated at the edge of Castle Semple Loch among grassy slopes, and sheltered by woods. The principal industry is the making of furniture. Alexander Wilson, poet and naturalist, worked in Lochwinnoch as a hand-loom weaver. (pp. 41, 61, 130.)

**Neilston** (4616) is situated in the Loch Libo Gap two miles south-west of Barrhead. Most of the village lies over four hundred feet above sea-level. Print-works in the neighbourhood engage most of the inhabitants. Near the village is Neilston Pad, a curious flat-topped eminence which forms a landmark for many miles around. Three miles along the valley to the south-west is Loch Libo, overlooked by Corkindale Law, from which an extensive view can be obtained. The village is on the Glasgow and South-Western Railway to Kilmarnock. (pp. 20, 58, 60.)

**Nitshill**, situated two miles north-east of Barrhead, lies in the midst of coal and limestone bearing strata. Most of the workers are engaged in mines or quarries. In addition there is a chemical factory.

**Paisley** (84,477) is the largest town in Renfrewshire and the fifth in all Scotland. It is situated mainly on the left bank of the Cart some three miles from its junction with the Clyde. The town is built on flat, low-lying land, but to the south the ground rises steeply in the escarpment of the Gleniffer Braes.

The first undoubted reference to the place is in a charter granted in 1157 to Walter FitzAlan, in which the lands of Passeleth are mentioned. This ground was given by Walter to the monks whom he brought from England, and a monastery was created, which afterwards became the famous Paisley Abbey. A town soon sprang up and prospered greatly by its vicinity to



Near Lochwinnoch

the powerful abbey. At the end of the fifteenth century, it became a burgh of barony with liberty to buy and sell, to have workmen and sellers of goods, "likewise to possess a cross and market for ever." Hitherto Paisley had been subject to the royal burgh of Renfrew, and violent quarrels took place before Paisley's independence was vindicated. It is interesting to note that exactly the same thing took place when Glasgow was trying to shake off

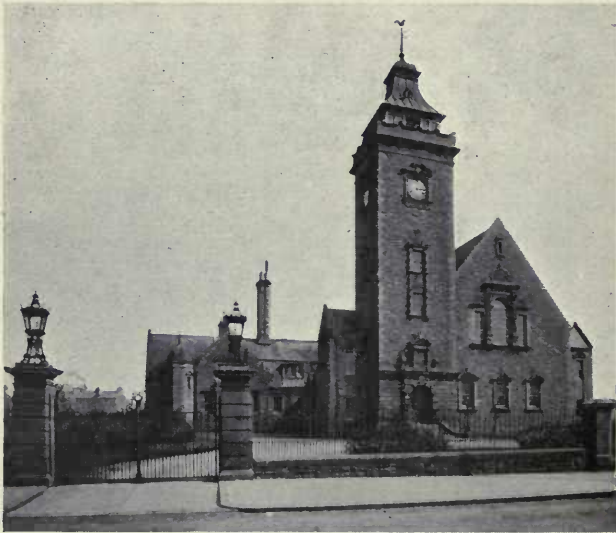


Paisley Grammar School

the authority of Rutherglen. It is strange to think that there was a time when the great towns of Glasgow and Paisley were subject to their now comparatively tiny rivals, far out-distanced in the race for commercial supremacy.

James IV visited Paisley on more than one occasion, and James VI was entertained in the Abbey although it is said that the bailies, thrifty souls, begged him not to enter the town proper, as the civic purse was too empty to give him a suitable reception.

The town, like most of the south-west, was strongly anti-Stewart, although Paisley had not suffered so much as some other places during the Covenanting persecutions. The revolution of 1688 was warmly supported, and the town gave active help against the Pretenders in 1715 and 1745, in consequence of which Prince Charles Edward fined the townspeople a thousand pounds, half of



Burgh Hall, Pollokshaws

which was paid. The weavers of Paisley were Radicals to a man, and serious riots took place in the town at the time of the Chartist movement. The trade and manufactures of Paisley began to develop rapidly after the Treaty of Union in 1707. At the present time the town is noted chiefly for its thread-mills and its engineering works. Paisley's educational institutions are

exceptionally good. The Grammar School dates from the sixteenth century. Famous names associated with the town are Tannahill, Christopher North, Alexander Smith, William Motherwell, and Alexander Wilson. (pp. 19, 22, 57, 58, 61, 66, 67, 73, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 84, 98, 100, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 113, 114, 118, 130, 132, 134, 137, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 150, 155, 156, 157, 160, 165, 166.)

**Pollokshaws** (12,932) is now continuous with Glasgow although it remains a separate municipality. It is essentially a manufacturing place, the industries including weaving, printing and bleaching, and paper-making. The town is situated on the White Cart, and even yet many stretches of the river near at hand are picturesque. In the immediate vicinity is Pollok, the seat of the Stirling Maxwells. (pp. 11, 147.)

**Port Glasgow** (17,749) was founded in 1668, when Glasgow obtained lands at Newark in order to have an outlet for her manufactures by sea. On this ground "they have built ane very fine harbour, some very good houses, both for dwellings, sallaradges, and warehouses." The town grew rapidly, and in 1710 it was made the chief custom-house port of the Clyde. The deepening of the Clyde dealt a staggering blow to the rising port, for traffic now went direct to Glasgow. With praiseworthy energy the inhabitants devoted themselves to ship-building and allied trades, and now Port Glasgow is the greatest ship-building town on the Clyde. Port Glasgow is connected with Greenock and Gourock by electric tram. (pp. 24, 27, 47, 75, 84, 90, 91, 92, 132, 143, 144, 147, 162.)

**Renfrew** (12,565) comes into prominence at the time of David I, who made the place a royal burgh, although a formal charter was not obtained until the reign of Robert III. In the vicinity of the town there was formerly a royal castle, the residence of the Stewarts, though no trace of it now remains. Far more lasting than the solid walls of masonry are the names



Port Glasgow and Ben Lomond



associated with the castle, such as "The King's Meadow," "The King's Inch," "The Orchard," and "The Dog Row." There were many royal visits to Renfrew till the fifteenth century when the castle fell out of favour. Until the end of the fourteenth century the town was a formidable rival of Glasgow and Rutherglen in size, trade, and prosperity. The town then gradually declined in importance till at the end of the seventeenth century it was much decayed, it had no foreign commerce, and its home trade was "not worth the nameing." It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Renfrew's prospects brightened. Then it shared in the rapidly growing prosperity of Glasgow and was caught up on the same wave of industrial progress. Now it is one of the most flourishing towns on the Clyde. It is the greatest centre for dredger-building in the world, it has the largest boiler-works in Britain, and negotiations are in progress for the construction of a graving dock which in size will beat all records. The industrial future of Renfrew seems rosy indeed. In history the town and its surroundings are associated with the defeat of Somerled, Lord of the Isles, in 1164, the death of Marjory Bruce and the birth of her child, afterwards Robert II, the contest of "Palm-my-arm," and the capture of Argyll in 1685. (pp. 10, 12, 13, 25, 75, 83, 84, 91, 92, 97, 100, 103, 107, 110, 114, 135, 147.)

**Wemyss Bay** is situated on the coast just on the border of Renfrew and Ayr. It is one of the chief centres of the Clyde tourist traffic, for the Caledonian Railway trains run on to the pier, whence passengers are conveyed by the company's steamers to various places on the firth, chiefly in Bute and Cumbrae. The handsome villas of Wemyss Bay are built mainly of the red sandstones so well developed in the locality. Castle Wemyss is the residence of Lord Inverclyde. (pp. 12, 33, 38, 53, 143, 165.)

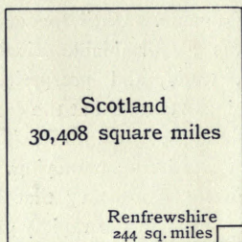


Fig. 1. Comparative areas of Scotland and Renfrewshire

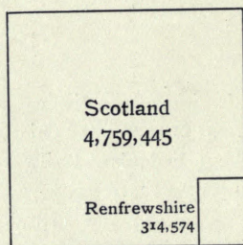


Fig. 2. Comparative populations of Scotland and Renfrewshire, 1911

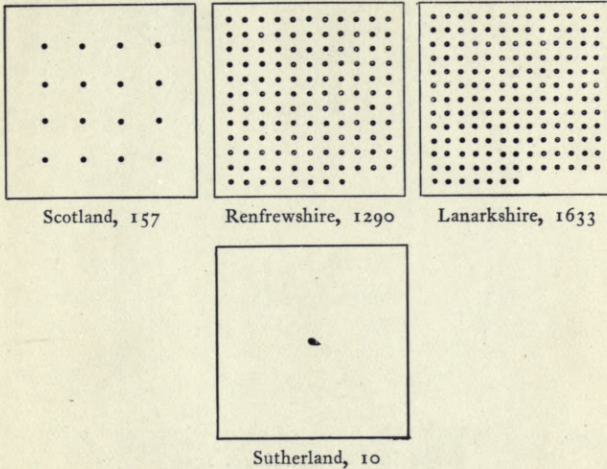


Fig. 3. Comparative density of population in Scotland, Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire and Sutherland

(Each dot represents 10 persons)

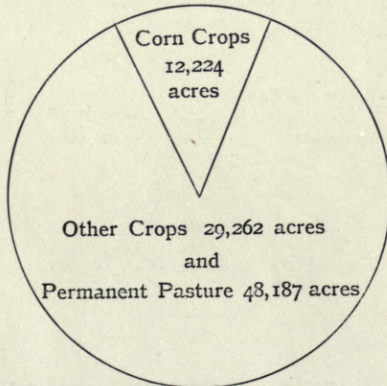


Fig. 4. Proportionate areas of corn and other crops in Renfrewshire, 1910

## RENFREWSHIRE

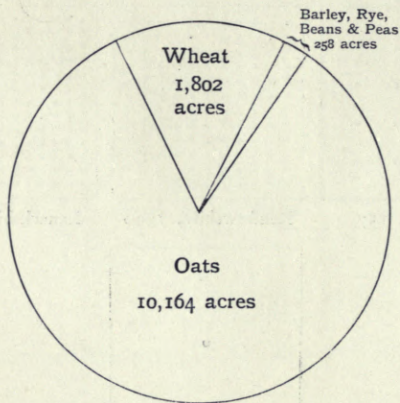


Fig. 5. Proportionate areas of oats, wheat and other crops in Renfrewshire, 1910

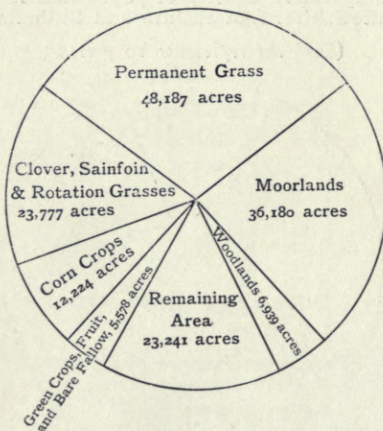


Fig. 6. Proportion of permanent pasture to other areas in Renfrewshire, 1910

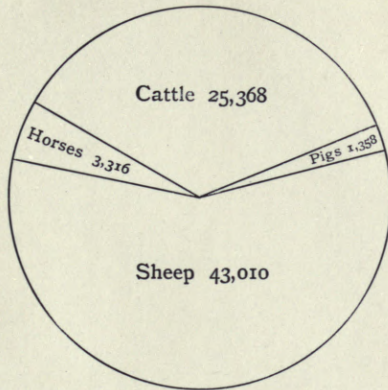


Fig. 7. Proportionate numbers of sheep, cattle, horses and pigs in Renfrewshire, 1910