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P. 1.

Prospectus Civitatis AERÆ ab Orientale. The Prospect of the Town of AIR from the East.

This Plate is Most Humbly Inscribed to the Rt. Hon.ble Alexander Lord Polwarth Envoy Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary from the King of Great Britain to the King of Denmark & King of Prussia

12.82.a

ANNALS OF AYR.

IN THE OLDEN TIME.

1560—1692.

From the Author. Dec 2/-
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PREFACE.

The materials employed in compiling these Annals of Ayr have been drawn for the most part from old local Records. It is to such documents that the student of history must ultimately turn for his most reliable information. Their worn and dusty pages, not easy at first to decipher, full of misspellings, bad grammar, and quaint phraseology supply us after all with the truest picture of the storied past. It is therefore a matter for congratulation that the Burgh of Ayr is so richly endowed with these mines of historic wealth. As regards the particular period which I have chosen to describe, the sources of information are most copious. The Records of the Town Council, the Kirk Session, and the Presbytery provide a wonderfully complete account of the town and parish. When I have gone beyond these local sources, I have taken care to mention my authorities.

The work has been laborious, but it has been lightened by the sympathy and assistance of friends. To those who lent me books or engravings, to the Presbytery of Ayr for granting me the perusal of their Records, to the Kirk Session for the like favour and for the encouragement they have given me in the prosecution of the work, to the Town Clerk and his assistants, whose kindness materially facilitated the labours of research, and to all others who have helped me in the preparation of the book, I desire to express my warmest thanks.

J. H. P.

Ayr, September, 1897.

CONTENTS.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL HISTORY.

HEN the morning of the Reformation broke upon Scotland, there was no part of the country which welcomed it more heartily than Ayrshire. The shire had long been noted for its Protestant sympathies. The Lollards, whose name had been associated with Kyle for several generations, had done much doubtless to leaven the popular mind. In 1545 George Wishart visited Ayr, preached at the Cross, and "made so notable a sermon that the very enemies themselves were confounded."* In 1556 John Knox travelled through the district, preaching in the houses of Bar, Kinzeancleuch, Cairnhill, Ochiltree and Gadgirth, and in the town of Ayr. In the spring of 1559 events came to a climax. John Willock—once a Franciscan in the town, but now a Protestant—appeared within the burgh, took possession of the pulpit of St. John's Kirk, and preached openly from there the doctrines of the Reformation.

There was at this time in the west country no stouter champion of the ancient church than Quentin Kennedy, the Abbot of Crossraguel. To him accordingly in this crisis, James Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow, wrote instructing him to proceed to Ayr, and quell the commotion. The reply of the Abbot is extant,† and supplies us with a graphic

* Knox's History, i., 94.
† Bishop Keith's History. App., 393.

account of what transpired. "Please your Lordship to witt" (know), he begins, "according to your wrytting, sent to me with the Prior of the Black Friars, I passit on Pasch (Easter) evin till Air, and thair remainit aucht days. Afoir my cuming Willok had prechit with intolerabill exclamatiouns, cryand out on the mess (mass). I persaivand the peple abusit in this maner, I was constreinzit (constrained) on my conscience to oppone myself to this wickit lymmaris (villain's) heresie and doctrine, and causit my writings to be maid manifest to all the honest men of the town. Schortlie thair wes diverse writtingis past amangs us." But this discussion by correspondence proving unsatisfactory, it was resolved that the two heroes should meet face to face and argue the matter out. Willock proposed that the conference should be held in St. John's Kirk, "because," said he, "I do teache my doctrine oppinlye before the pepil thair." To this, however, the Abbot objected, and the town-house of the Laird of Cairnhill was chosen instead. It was agreed also that neither of the disputants should bring with him more than twenty-four friends. But the conference was not to be. On the day appointed Kennedy appeared at the spot named, accompanied by several religious men and others of his party. Willock had arrived before him, and with him were four or five hundred to fortify him. Afraid of a tumult, the Abbot was content to withdraw. He declared that Willock had broken the terms of their agreement, declined to confer with him, and took a legal protest against his conduct.

Meantime throughout the country the tide of Protestant feeling was rapidly rising. The Queen Regent, anxious, if it were possible, to suppress the movement, commanded Willock and three other Reforming preachers to appear before the High Court of Justiciary on the 10th of May. "These ministers," she said, "should be banished Scotland, though they preached as soundly as ever St. Paul did."

When the day came, the preachers failed to compear. They were denounced rebels, and all persons inhibited to assist or receive them.* A letter from the Regent was received by the Magistrates of Ayr, instructing them "to forbyd the preichors."

But the triumph of the Catholic party was short-lived. A few days later, and the tables were completely turned. The popular feeling, long pent up, broke forth in a destroying torrent. The mob rose at Perth, and laid the monasteries of that city in ruins. It was the signal for a general outbreak. All over the country the old religious houses were razed to the ground.

How events shaped themselves in Ayr, we learn only from fragmentary notices. But it is plain that the Reforming party was supported by the great majority of the townsmen. There were four ecclesiastical buildings to be dealt with. First and oldest, there was the Kirk of St. John the Baptist, a venerable structure which had been built in the twelfth century, and which still partially survives in what is known as the Fort Castle. This, happily, so far as its outer fabric was concerned, the Reformers were content to spare. But there were abominations within it which they could not tolerate. There were no fewer than nine altars, served by as many chaplains. Of the principal four one was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, one to the Holy Blood, one to the Holy Trinity, and another to the Holy Rood. Of the remainder four were sacred to St. Nicholas, St. Michael, St. Ninian, and St. Peter respectively; while the ninth, which had been erected by the craftsmen of the burgh, was devoted to those saints who were the patrons of the several trades. These altars were swept away, and with them went also all that seemed to savour of superstition and idolatry. The old pulpit; the organ and organ loft; the stalls of the priests; the censers, chalices, and "mess-graith;" the

* Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, i., 406, 407.

crucifixes and images; the surplices, chasubles, albs, and stoles—the place that knew them once was to know them no more. The Church was re-furnished, and in the simplest fashion. A new pulpit was erected, and a few "bynks" or benches. These drastic changes were speedily effected, and the work was done with enthusiasm. But there was a fear, apparently, that the adherents of the old faith might regain possession of the building; and the Magistrates, who were heart and soul with the Reformers, engaged two of the townsmen for eight nights "for watching of ye Kirk."

Another of the religious houses which the town possessed was the Hospital and Chapel of St. Leonards. Of its former history very little is known. The chaplain was also the master of the Hospital, and was appointed by the Crown. The Chapel is mentioned incidentally in subsequent records, from which we presume that it survived the zeal of the Reformers. It stood in meadowland, on a site near that which is at present occupied by the church of the same name. Its stones were eventually used in building part of the wall round the race-course.

Thus far the Protestants of the town had carried on their work with moderation. But there still remained two ecclesiastical establishments, for which clearly they had no love, and on which they bestowed no pity. These were the monasteries of the Friars. Of the two convents which existed, the older was that of the Dominicans, or Black Friars. It was founded in 1230, dedicated to St. Katherine, and is supposed to have been the oldest settlement of the Order in Scotland. It occupied the site of the brewery in Mill Street. Round about it was an orchard, which the Friars industriously tilled. The richness of the soil in after days is a proof of their horticultural zeal. Close to the monastery was a pigeon-house, as the old charters tell; and a reminiscence of it lingers in the "Doe-cot Ford," the ford

across the river to which a lane from Mill Street leads down. Amongst the treasures of the monastery were certain holy relics to which offerings were often made. The Black Friars, or Friars Preachers as they were called, held sundry properties without and within the burgh. The mills of Ayr were in their hands, and the salmon-fishing of two cruives in the mill-dam. In addition to such endowments, the town paid them yearly the sum of £10. It is entered in the books of the treasurer as "almous to ye Blak Freris."

The monastery of the Franciscans, or Grey Friars, stood on the site of the present Old Church. It had been founded in 1472, but was not so richly endowed as the monastery of the Dominicans. A trace of it remains in the "Friars' Well," now built upon by the church-yard wall, but still to be seen oozing out of the stones. Within the monastery was an image of the Virgin, which was famous for its wonder-working powers. Shortly before the Reformation, there was a sharp dispute between the Grey Friars and the town, and we learn incidentally that "the Freirs was put in ye Tolbuith." They were a gay and jovial company, these Grey Friars of Ayr. They were not unmindful of the Apostolic precept to "use hospitality one to another." For there is no item which occurs more regularly in the town's accounts than "a hogheid of wyne to the Gray Frers."

But these palmy days were over. There is a time, says the Preacher, to break down, and that time had now arrived. The monasteries had lost their savour, and they were fit only to be trodden under foot. There is a quaint old poem, published in 1595,* which describes with a sly humour the demolition of the monasteries of Ayr. Robert Campbell of Kinzeancleuch, whom the poem commemorates, was an ardent Reformer. He and the laird of Cairnhill were

* "A Memorial of the Life and Death of two worthye Christians, Robert Campbell of the Kinyeancleuch, and his wife, Elizabeth Campbell."

among the most prominent of the Ayrshire Protestants. The lines which we quote tell their own story.

> Whether it was night or day,
> Gude Robert was not mist away:
> When they puld doune the Friers of Ayr
> Speir at the Friers gif he was there.
> The Laird of Carnall, yet in Kyle,
> Quha was not sleipand all this while,
> And Robert wer made messengers,
> Send (sent) from the rest to warne the Friers
> Out of those places to deluge (dislodge):
> Howbeit the carls began to grudge:
> Either withe good will or withe ill
> The keyes they gave thir twa untill,
> After their gudes they had out tane:
> So greater harm the Friers had nane:
> Far unlike to their crueltie
> In their massacring butcherie,
> Resembling well their old Father
> Who ever was a murtherer.

The buildings were completely dismantled. The stones of the Grey Friars lay as they had fallen till 1604, in which year they were employed by the town for the building of a Hospital.

So far as the religious buildings were concerned, the work of Reformation was now complete. Great, therefore, was the jubilation of the burghers. John Willock, who had given the movement its first impetus, was fêted by the Magistrates. "Wyne to John Willock" is one of their disbursements for the year.

The next step to be taken was the appointment of a Protestant minister, and no time was lost in carrying the matter through. There were eight parishes in Scotland which elected ministers in 1559, and Ayr was one of them. The choice of the people fell on Christopher Goodman, a man of outstanding ability. He had just returned from Geneva, where for three years he had acted as the colleague

of John Knox. Knox had lived with him "as a brother," and the two together had compiled the Book of Common Order and the Geneva translation of the Bible. Goodman was a man of strong convictions, and had inveighed like Knox against "the monstrous regiment of women." Cecil, the secretary of Queen Elizabeth, declares in a letter from London that "of all others Knox's name, if it be not Goodman's, is most odious here."* In later times, when the love of the Church waxed colder, the people sighed for "the first zeall of Reformation in Mr. Knox and Mr. Guidman's days."†

The messenger who was sent to bring Mr. Goodman to Ayr was one Richard Bannatyne. He was John Knox's secretary, and a native of the town; and in all probability he had been largely instrumental in directing the current of events. When Goodman arrived he was received with acclamation by the people. The liberality of the Town Council knew no bounds. Curtains were made for his chamber. Silver was given him. A "gowning" was ordered for his use, and a new Bible put in the Kirk. No minister in Ayr, we fancy, has ever since been so lavishly cared for. The following are items of the town's expenditure:—"For blak to be claithes to ye minister—£4." "For ane coatt of French blak to ye minister—£3." "For black silk buttons to ye minister's coat—5s." "Given to the minister to by (buy) him sarks—£3."

Had this state of matters lasted long, Mr. Goodman would probably have been smothered with clothes and kindness. But in 1560 he received a call to St. Andrews. Thither he "raid" away with Richard Bannatyne, and we hear of him no more. He had been the first Protestant minister of the town, and he was the first to celebrate the communion in St. John's Kirk, according to the rites of the

* Sadler, i., 532.
† Diary of James Melville, 89.

Reformers. In the treasurer's accounts for 1559-60, there are discharges for "quheit (wheat) breid," and "wyne to ye communioun."

Between 1560 and 1568 there was no settled ministry in Ayr. During that period there were few qualified clergy to be had, and the churches throughout the country were chiefly served by a staff of itinerant readers and exhorters. Amongst the readers in Kyle was Richard Bannatyne: while John Willock, now promoted to be superintendent for the west, was another who would doubtless take a lively interest in the welfare of the Kirk of Ayr.

In 1562 John Knox visited the shire to cross swords with the Abbot of Crossraguel, and amongst those who subscribed a bond for the maintenance of the reformed religion was "Michael Wallace, provost of Ayr, with fortie more of the honestest burgesses of that town."* It was proposed on this occasion, as in 1559, that the debate between the two divines should take place in St. John's Kirk; but the abbot demurring as before, it was held in Maybole.

In 1567 the Parish of Ayr was erected into a collegiate charge, and in the year following James Dalrymple was appointed minister. Since 1560 he had been one of the readers for Kyle, and he entered the parish with a stipend of £100 Scots.†

At this point it may be proper to indicate what became of the endowments of the ancient church. Their history is to some extent wrapped in obscurity, but certain facts are known. In 1565 the lands of the Black Friars, mills, fishings, houses, etc., were set in tack for nineteen years by Queen Mary to Charles Crawfurd, one of her "gentillmen servandis." In 1567, subject of course to this lease, the lands both of the Black Friars and of the Grey were gifted

* Knox's History, iv., 286.
† Register of Ministers, etc., after the Reformation.

to the town by charter of Queen Mary. By the same charter the Provost and Magistrates obtained a title to the remaining Church property in the Burgh. The lands of St. Leonards and the lands of St. John's Kirk were thus conveyed to them. It is probable, however, that of the latter they received only a third part. In 1614 when they applied for a new infeftment in their favour, only three of the altarages—those namely of the Rood, the Virgin, and St. Nicholas—are mentioned. The remaining six had in all likelihood been made over to the old clergy.

In the charter of 1567 Queen Mary was careful to lay down that the endowments should only be employed for religious and charitable purposes. It was "incumbent," she said, "to provide for the ministers of the Word of God, and to maintain hospitals for poor, maimed and distressed persons, orphans, and children forsaken by their parents." The Magistrates accordingly and their successors were to be "held and astricted to maintain the ministers, readers, and other ecclesiastical burdens with the aforesaid annual revenues, profits, and dues, according to the value and quantity of the same, and to apply them for preparing places and buildings for hospitals, and other above-mentioned uses." The various revenues were to be incorporated into one fund, to be called in all time coming "The Foundation of the Ministry and Hospital of Ayr."

How this trust was at first administered, we gather from the account of an action which was raised by Mr. Dalrymple against the Magistrates in 1573. He complained that he was not receiving the full value of his living. But the Magistrates contended that their Church funds were already exhausted. Two of the Black Friars were receiving annual pensions, one of whom, it may be noticed, lived till 1617. Two of the former chaplains of St. John's Kirk had likewise a yearly allowance. The reader had also to be paid, the Session Clerk, the Kirk Officer, and the "sangstar"

or precentor: besides which a small sum was set apart for the benefit of the poor.

But where is the Church property now? Little by little it has slipped away. The Magistrates apparently forgot that they held it on trust, and that its revenues were to be devoted solely to pious uses. In 1591, to take a single example, they disponed in feu the lands of Crawisland and Castlehill, which had been granted them by Queen Mary's Charter, and applied the proceeds to the reparation of the harbour. One after another the other properties went in the same way, and now, of the whole estate which Queen Mary entrusted to the town, there is only one portion, the mills, which has not been sold.

To complete the account of Mr. Dalrymple's living, it remains to be added that not only did he hold the Parsonage and Vicarage of Ayr, but in 1573 he was presented by the Crown to the Parsonage and Vicarage of Alloway. His stipend for the two parishes in 1579 amounted in Scots money to £149 6s 8d, and out of this he had to pay the salary of a reader at Alloway. The living of Ayr in those days was anything but a prize. It is probable, however, that it was supplemented by voluntary contributions.

We know very little of the character of Mr. Dalrymple. It is plain, however, that he had endeared himself to his parishioners. In 1580 when he died, the Town Council presented the first half of that year's crop to "his widow and fadderless barnes for the ardent luf (love) shown by ye said James to ye said burgh."

The successor to Mr. Dalrymple was John Porterfield. He is styled in the Burgh Records "the chaplain of the Rude Altar," doubtless because his stipend was mainly drawn from that source. Mr. Porterfield had previously filled the charges of Dumbarton and Kilmarnock. He was the friend of "diverse great men" in Church and State, and appears at one time to have been in the enjoyment of

various ecclesiastical revenues. While minister of Kilmarnock he had also held the Vicarage of Ardrossan, and the temporality of the Archbishopric of Glasgow. He was a member of at least eleven General Assemblies, and on one occasion was nominated for the Moderatorship.* He was a man, we are told, of good inclinations, but too easy in his disposition.

When Mr. Porterfield entered the parish, he found it in a state of considerable commotion. The ecclesiastical world had been disturbed in 1572 by the creation of the Tulchan Bishops. In 1588 Montgomerie, the Archbishop of Glasgow, visited the town and was mobbed in the streets. The burghers of Ayr were true-blue Presbyterians, and had no patience with the Bishops. In 1592 when Presbyterianism had been re-established, the Magistrates declare with fervour "that they estemis the cause of religioun and Christ's Evangell, presentlie professit within this realme, to be the generall commoun cause of the said burgh, and to be defendit be yame efter yair poweris to the uttermes."

But the main cause of dispeace at this period was the rivalry which existed among the great county families. They had not yet been taught to obey the law of the land, and the old feudal customs largely prevailed. Each of the lairds had a body of retainers, who rode out with him in his forays, and were ready to shed their blood in his cause. The strife which thus arose was endless, and Ayr, being the county town, was frequently the scene of the disturbance. In 1578, for example, William Hamilton of Sanquhar set upon John Wallace of Craigie "in the verray time he was cumand (coming) from the sermon," and there was a fight with "pistolettis and lang gunnis" in the Kirkyard.† The inevitable consequence of such occurrences was that the inhabitants, growing accustomed to the sight of them,

* Book of the Universal Kirk, *var. loc.*

† Register of the Privy Council, iii., 47.

became imbued with the spirit of lawlessness. The Burgh Records of the time are crowded with accounts of "blude unlaws," or deeds of violence. The authorities were oftentimes openly insulted. In 1583 a company of countrymen, armed with swords and pistols, broke into the Tolbooth, and set one of the prisoners at liberty. The Provost and Bailies were driven into the High Street, and a mêlée ensued. Swords were crossed and blood drawn, and the rioters would have made short work of the Magistrates had not "God and certane gude nybors resistit thair malice." But all that day, "boden (equipped) in arms and drawin swerds," they held the High Street to the terror of the people, and not till the afternoon of the next day, which was Sunday, did they take their departure.

Another evidence of the general unsettlement of the period was the prevalence of piracy. The merchantmen of Ayr complained in 1590 that there were "certane rubberis (robbers) and pirattis, being Scottis Hiellandmen, as is supponit, quha lyis abuin Ailsay, in the middis of the Firth, quha takis, rubbis, and spulzies" (spoils) their vessels. To suppress these buccaneers, the Magistrates fitted out a naval expedition, and promised that should the "mariners and infantrie" suffer damage (as God forbid) by slaughter or mutilation, their wives and families would be supported by the town.

If the Church was to exert a mollifying influence on manners so rude, it could only be through the agency of a strong personality. But this Mr. Porterfield could scarcely be said to have. He was too mild for the age. The town bore him at the same time no little respect and affection. In 1597, in the course of a severe famine, the Magistrates "understanding the greit travell and pains sustanit be yair minister, Johnne Porterfield, in his cure and calling, to ye greit comfort of this burgh," voted him the sum of a hundred merks.

Mr. Porterfield was by this time an old man, and in 1600 the town resolved to present him with an assistant. Their choice fell on John Welsh, then a minister of Kirkcudbright, a man well known already, but destined to make himself still more famous. He entered upon his duties with a stipend of 300 merks, and an allowance for house-mail.

John Welsh (the name is variously spelt) was born in Dunscore about 1570. As a boy he had been somewhat wild. When he was ten years of age he ran away from his father's house, and joined the thieves and raiders who then abounded on the English borders. With them he remained till his clothes were in tatters. On his return he was sent to Dumfries to complete his education, and from Dumfries he proceeded to the University. In 1589 he was presented to the parish of Selkirk, and five years later was translated to Kirkcudbright. While there he married Elizabeth, the youngest daughter of John Knox. He was a man whose speech was not always seasoned with the salt of moderation. In 1596 King James had begun to encroach on the liberties of the Church, and the clergy were roused to indignation. Preaching in the High Church of Edinburgh, John Welsh declared that one devil (Popery) had been put out of the King, but seven worse were entered in its place; and that just as if a father were to fall into a frenzy, it would be right for his children and servants to bind him hand and foot, so too the subjects of his Majesty might lawfully rise and take the sword out of his hand. The illustration was naturally offensive to King James. Proceedings were taken against the preacher, and sentence of outlawry passed. After six months, however, he was indulged, and permitted to return to Kirkcudbright.

This was the man who was now called to be an "aid and helper" to Mr. Porterfield. He was endowed with many and great gifts. As a churchman he was enthusiastic, resolute and fearless; as a preacher, emotional and aglow

with fire; as a friend, warm-hearted and sincere. In his domestic life he was irreproachable, and the devoutness of his private habits was the talk and marvel of all.

Such an one could not minister to the town without leaving his mark on it, and before Welsh had been long in the parish, there swept over it what we now call a religious revival. Everyone flocked to hear him preach. In 1602 the Tolbooth was ordained "to be repairit to be ane place of the common prayers ilk morning and evening." The services on the Sabbath were so crowded that in 1603 it was proposed to erect a new church. Everywhere a zeal for religion made itself felt. It was enacted by the Magistrates that hereafter "the pastor of the toun make a prayer at the meeting of the new Counsell, so that the same may prosper the better for ye glorie of God and ye Townis weill." The quarrels of the citizens were largely diminished, it is said, through Welsh's instrumentality. He would rush forward between contending parties, separate them the one from the other, and then set a table before them that they might eat and drink together. Even Mr. Porterfield was affected by the religious movement. He was a divine of the old school, and not so strict a Sabbatarian as his young helper. At the close of the afternoon service on Sundays he used to walk out to the Burrowfield and shoot with his people at the bow-butts. But Welsh remonstrated with him, and the old gentleman gave up the practice.

Mr. Porterfield died in 1604, and Welsh was unanimously chosen to fill his place. But he was not to be long in Ayr. A storm was brewing in the ecclesiastical world. James VI. was determined to assert his authority in the management of the Church, and the Church was as determined to maintain her independence. The method which the King adopted was the suppression of the General Assembly. He prorogued the Assembly of 1604 to 1605, and when 1605 came he prorogued it again. This arbitrary

action was contrary to an Act of 1592, which laid down that the Assembly should meet at least once each year. The leaders of the Church were not disposed to brook such high-handed treatment, and they resolved to meet in General Assembly as a protest against it. They met accordingly on July 2nd, 1605, in Aberdeen. Welsh was late in arriving, but joined them on the following day.

When King James heard of this independent action, he was exceedingly angry. Orders came down from Whitehall that the ministers who had presumed to disobey him should be severely dealt with. Fourteen of them were arrested and imprisoned, and six of these, Welsh being one, were brought before the Privy Council. But the authority of this body in things ecclesiastical Welsh declined to acknowledge, and he and four others were committed to the Justiciary Court. Pending his trial he was kept a close prisoner in the Castle of Blackness, and "mair straitly used," as one of the Bishops declared, "nor aither Jesuites or murtherers." Here, it would appear, Mrs. Welsh visited him. The Town Council of that year voted £10 "to the minister's wyf to pay her expensses in ganging to her husband to ye Blackness."

In January, 1606, the prisoners were arraigned before the Court of Justiciary for treasonably declining to recognise the jurisdiction of the Privy Council. The trial was lengthy, but in the end they were found guilty by nine votes to six, and were banished from the kingdom for life. A fortnight later, on November 7th, they set sail for France. It was a pathetic departure. Their wives, friends, and acquaintances gathered on the shore of Leith to bid them farewell. Before they embarked Welsh offered up a fervent prayer, the 23rd Psalm was sung, and with that the little company of exiles left Scotland for ever.

The tie between John Welsh and Ayr had been snapped, but the affection for him continued. He is styled in the minutes of Council "the town's minister," "thair pastor,"

"thair weill-belovit pastor," and for several years his stipend was regularly sent him. He on his part thought often and sadly of the parish from which he had been torn. "Alace! brother," he writes to Boyd of Trochrig,* "everie ane knowis not what ance I enjoyit. Baith public and privat, by day and by night, my heart melts in the remembrance of them; and with sorrow and dolor, ryvand ye soul and percing ye very intraillis and lungis, do I now think of them. O that my head were full of wattir! O that my eies were as a fountain of tearis that I might bewail things past! O what was that whilk David saw and ye want whereof sa brak ye heart of hym, in comparison with that whilk now for the space of fiftein yeir, but especialie of ye last five (the ministry in Ayr), whilk I haid (had). I haid my chuse of mony hundreths unto whom I might have been bold to communicate baythe the desolations and comforts of my soul. Weeping myght have been in ye evening, bot joy was ever in ye morning. Bot can pen or paper utter my thocht, and the grieffs of my hart? Na, let them be known unto my God alane."

The subsequent career of John Welsh does not directly concern us, but it should perhaps be recorded. He applied himself to French, acquired a mastery of the language, and ministered to one Continental Church after another with eminent acceptance. On one occasion the town in which he resided was besieged by Louis XIII., and a treaty concluded. By the law of the kingdom the Protestant form of worship was proscribed, but Welsh, fearless of the consequences, held service after his own way. He was summoned before the king, and asked to defend himself. "If your majesty knew," he said, "what I preach, you would command others and come yourself to hear it. I preach salvation by Jesus Christ, and sure I am your conscience tells you your own works will never merit salvation for you. I preach there is

* Wodrow's Biographical Collections, ii., 300.

none on earth above you, which none of those that adhere to the Pope will say." The king was struck with his boldness. "Very well, father," he said, "you shall be my minister;" and from that day forth he became Welsh's protector. In 1622 the preacher's health began to fail him. He came to London, and as he was anxious to return to his native country, his wife sought King James's person, and petitioned him on her husband's behalf. His Majesty asked her who was her father. She replied, "John Knox." "Knox and Welsh!" cried the king, "the devil never made such a match as that." "It's right like, sir," she answered, "for we never speered his advice." Then he asked how many children her father had left, and were they lads or lasses? She said, "Three, and all lasses." "God be thanked!" cried James, lifting up both his hands, "for an they had been lads, I had never bruiked (enjoyed) my three kingdoms in peace." Again she pled that her husband might be permitted to return. The king broke into an oath, but went on to say, "If you will persuade your husband to submit to the Bishops, he shall have my permission." "Please your majesty," replied the brave woman, lifting up her apron and holding it towards her sovereign, "I had rather kep his head there." The petition, however, was a work of supererogation. Welsh died that same year.

For three years after Welsh's departure the parish of Ayr remained vacant, but in 1608 George Dunbar was translated from Cumnock to the charge. The Bishops had by this time been re-established in the Church, and the order of service followed in the induction was one prepared by them. Hew Kennedie, a member of the Session and one of Welsh's old friends, took exception to this. He "protested that he mislyked altogither yat forme of admission be ye Bischopis and Commissionaris, and declaired it was aganes his will, quhairunto he gave na consent and desyred the same to be

minuted." It was not long before the new minister gave offence to the Privy Council. He was summoned before them for praying for John Welsh and the other banished brethren. At first, we are told, "he wold have schiftit the matter upon his generalitie in prayer, saying that he prayit only for the afflicted members of Christ's body."* But this was not considered a sufficient excuse. He was found guilty, and warded in Dumbarton.

Mr. Dunbar's successor was William Birnie, then minister of Lanark. A letter came down from the King, commanding that he "tak a charge of the toune of Ayr." Mr. Birnie was one of "syndrie gude men" who had visited Welsh before his trial in 1606. He was not however an extremist, and the King saw fit in 1612 to make him Dean of the Chapel Royal of Stirling. Affable and charitable even beyond his means, Birnie was also a muscular Christian. While at Lanark, he used often to settle quarrels by appearing in the midst of the combatants with sword in hand. A curious feat recorded of him is that he could make the salmon's leap, by stretching himself on the grass, leaping to his feet, and again throwing them over his head! His ministry was quiet and uneventful. On his death in 1619 a brother minister† composed this epitaph upon him:

> **He waited on his charge, with care and pains,**
> **At Air on little hopes and smaller gains.**

The second charge, though founded in 1567, had never yet been filled. But in 1613, after a year's confinement in Dumbarton, Mr. Dunbar was released, and the people of Ayr, who never forgot their former ministers, called him among them again. Imprisonment had not cowed his spirits. In 1617, seeing the encroachments which were being made on the Church's rights, he signed a Protestation for the Liberties of the Kirk. On Mr.

*Original Letters (Laing), i., 280.
†Bonnar, of Maybole. Quoted in Scott's Fasti.

Birnie's death he was promoted to the first charge, but he had not been long settled when the Court of High Commission resolved to take proceedings against him. He was brought before the Bishops in the beginning of 1622, and charged with refusing to adopt the new ceremonies which the King wished to introduce. But he stood to his ground. He declined to recognise that the Bishops had any authority to try him: at which they were all enraged, and His Grace of St. Andrew's cried out that he and all the Puritans of Scotland were "lyers."* Again Dunbar protested, but in vain. He was deprived of his parish, and ordered to be confined in Dumfries.

But both Dunbar and his parishioners were prepared to defy the authorities. The Bishop of Glasgow was anxious to present a Mr. Forrester to the charge, and brought him down to Ayr to display his gifts. But the Session called together a meeting of the community, and it was agreed to inform the Bishop that Mr. Forrester was "not a meet man for to be a minister amang them." Their hearts were still set on Dunbar, and in September of the same year, "in the great and wonderfull mercie of God," he re-appeared and taught in their midst. This was of course noised abroad, and one Sunday in November, a pursuivant appeared at the Kirk-door, and charged Dunbar to return to his ward in Dumfries. Two months later he was denounced as a rebel. But he still continued to preach, and the Provost and Bailies, for conniving at the disorder, were cited before the Privy Council.

Such a struggle, however, could not go on long. In September, 1624, Dunbar was sentenced to be banished to Ireland, and being "ane aged, decreaped (decrepit), and puire man, and charged with a greatt familie," he declared "that he wald acquiess to his Majestie's will and pleasure."† On April 18th, 1625, he attended his last Session meeting,

* Calderwood's History, vii. 534.
† Reg. Priv. Coun., xiii. 594, 612.

informed the elders "yat he was going for Ireland," and "discoursed lairgelye anent his ministrie at Ayre."

The feelings of the people of Ayr must have been sorely tried through this repeated removal of their ministers. But they were now to have a man of quite a different stamp. This was William Annand, the minister of Falkirk, who was presented by the Crown to the first charge "at ye speciall requeist of ye towne." He had preached once or twice after Mr. Dunbar's removal, and had seemingly approved himself to the people. He belonged to the Episcopal party in the Church, and was "resolutely opposed to all things which he considered Puritanical." Unfortunately he carried this opposition so far as sometimes to drop into an oath, and sometimes to indulge too freely in the fruit of the vine. Other wise he was a man of good address, full of high spirits, an able preacher, and a general favourite with all who knew him.

Mr. Annand was as anxious as any one to introduce the ritual of his party into the services of the Church. But he began cautiously. At his first Communion in Ayr he desired the Session "to keepe thair awen ordour anent ye serving of the tabilles during yat holie actioun." As time went on, however, he initiated new practices. He began the observance of saints' days: he made the collection on Communion Sundays, not at the Church door, but while the people sat at the tables; and, worst of all, at the celebration of the Sacrament in 1635, "he kneeled quhen he took it himself." This last innovation, the Session books tell us, he did not "urge" upon the people, but they were none the less dissatisfied. How they manifested their disapproval we learn curiously enough from the account of a traveller, Sir William Brereton, who happened to visit Ayr that year.* He was lodged with one Patrick M'Kellen, and enquired of the lady of the house "touching the minister of the town. She complained much against him, because he doth so

* Early Travellers in Scotland, 156.

violently press the ceremonies, especially she instanced in kneeling at the Communion; whereupon upon Easter day last, so soon as he went to the Communion table, the people all left the Church and departed, and not one of them stayed, only the pastor alone."

But the climax of this policy was reached in 1637, when it was attempted to foist upon the Church the Liturgy of Archbishop Laud. It was thought advisable that the book should be commended to the country by men of ability, and William Annand was selected accordingly to defend it before the Synod of Glasgow. The story of what happened is graphically told us in Baillie's Letters.* Mr. Annand chose for his text the words, "I command that prayers be made for all men," and argued on behalf of the Liturgy, "as well in my poor judgment," says Baillie, "as any in the Isle of Britain could have done." But the discourse was ill received. "Of his sermon, among us in the Synod not a word; but in the town among the women a great dinne. To-morrow at the outgoing of the Church, about thirty or forty of our honestest women in one voyce before the Bishope and Magistrats did fall in rayling, cursing, and scolding, with clamours on Mr. William Annand. All the day over, up and down the streets where he went, he got threats of sundry in words and looks; but after supper whill needles he will goe to visit the Bishop, he is no sooner on the causey at nine o'clock in a mirk night, than some hundreds of inraged women of all qualities were about him with neaves, staves, and peats; they beat him sore; his cloake, ruffe, and hat were rent; upon his cryes, however, and candles set out from many windows, he escaped all bloody wounds: yet was in great danger even of killing. To-morrow poor Mr. William was convoyed with the Baillies and sundry ministers to his horse; for many women were waiting to affront him more. At his onlouping his horse

* Baillie's Letters, i. 20, 21.

fell above him in a very foul myre in presence of all the company, which occasioned much speech."

The indignation with which the proposed Liturgy was received throughout the country, encouraged its opponents to proceed to stronger measures. A National Covenant was framed, engaging the subscribers to defend the Church against all errors and corruptions, and to stand by His Majesty in support of the religion, liberty, and laws of the kingdom. On February 28th, 1638, with a fervour and solemnity never to be forgotten, it was read and signed in the Grayfriars Kirk in Edinburgh. Thereafter it was carried through the country, and subscribed with acclamation. On Sunday, March 25th, Mr. Burn of Kirkoswald, "in absence of Maister William Annand," occupied the Ayr pulpit, and preached from the words, "Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God." On Thursday, April 5th, Mr. Bonnar of Maybole took the service, "made a relatioun publickly of the haill proceedings of the Commissionaris anent the Covenant, and desyred yat solemnlye on the Sabbothe theye wald conven to renewe ye same." On Sunday accordingly, at the morning service, the people were gathered together. "The Covenant," say the Session books, "was red, and men, wemen, and all, bothe young and old [that] wer, held up thair hands ordourlie be yair rowmes (places), and that conscientiouslie."

And now what was Mr. Annand to do? "I hear," writes Baillie, "that he is put in a great dumpe." His people had virtually repudiated his doings, and there was a movement to elect another minister who would "bear him down." This was ultimately effected, Robert Blair, a thoroughgoing Presbyterian, being appointed to the second charge. Mr. Annand could not endure to remain longer, and he left his parish for Edinburgh.

But the chapter of his misfortunes was not yet closed. The General Assembly, which met in Glasgow in December

1638, was determined to remove from the Church every trace of Episcopacy. Annand was a marked man, and a libel was served against him. The town of Ayr, even to the end, was most reluctant to join in such action. They wrote imploring him to return to the parish, but all in vain. "So they at last," says Baillie, "gave in a complaint of his miscarriages, with a resolution never more to receive him within their pulpit." Annand was in a state of utter dejection and bewilderment. Scarcely knowing what he was doing, he retracted and signed the Covenant. But it was now of no avail. When his case came before the Assembly, he was "deposed by all."

His successor, Mr. Blair, received a call next year to St. Andrews, and both charges therefore became vacant. John Fergushill was translated from Ochiltree to the first, and William Adair was ordained to the second. The stipend of the first charge amounted to 900 merks with a glebe. The living of the second minister was made up largely by voluntary contributions, and in 1642 came to 800 merks.

Mr. Fergushill was a native of Ayr. He was an ardent Presbyterian, and in his younger days had suffered imprisonment for his opposition to the policy of the Bishops. There is nothing notable recorded of him in Ayr. He died in 1644, and was succeeded in the first charge by Mr. Adair.

Mr. Adair was the son of William Adair of Kinhilt, and brother of Sir Robert Adair of Kinhilt and Ballymena. He married the widow of the minister of Holywood, and it happened on this wise. Robert Cunningham of Holywood was one of Adair's greatest friends, and on his death-bed Cunningham desired him to be kind to his dear wife. "Now," says the friend who tells the story,* "when Mr. Cunningham was dead that which Mr. Cunningham said came into Mr. Adair's mind, and it was much borne in upon him what way he should express his kindness to that

* Wodrow's Analecta, iii. 73.

worthy minister's relict; and he thought the best and most effectual way of shewing kindness to her was to marry her himself." After a time therefore he went to the lady and proposed marriage to her. She "seemed to be much surprised," but after consulting her friends "accepts the proposal."

The careers of most of those who preceded Mr. Adair in the cure of Ayr have been interesting as illustrating for us the history of the times. His career is no exception to the rule. It throws a full and vivid light upon the various phases of the struggle through which the country had now to pass.

When he entered upon his ministry, the Covenanters, as they were now called, were in the hour of their triumph. The Bishops had been deposed, and their ritual suppressed. The Communion was observed, say the Session Records, "according to the institution of Chryst, without superstition as befor." The offertory was taken at the Church door, "all collections at the tables being discharged, as smelling of papisticall offering." None might presume to communicate who refused to sign the Covenant. Several were brought before the Session for subscribing what was known as the Irish Oath. This was held to be inconsistent with the National Bond, and they were ordained to abjure it. One man, William Ritchie, declined to answer whether he had taken the Irish Oath or not, saying, "he suld be as stiff as ony of them, and that he suld stand out to his skin." Next week, however, he was otherwise minded, and declared that he was innocent of the charge.

Meantime Charles I. was collecting an army, and the Covenanters made counter preparations. They marched down to the Borders in such numbers that the King was obliged to conclude a treaty at once. But he was not disheartened. In 1640 he took the field again, and they undaunted crossed the Tweed to meet him. Fasts were

kept in Ayr for success to the army, and when the news came of their victory and the terms which they had forced King Charles to make, a thanksgiving was ordained "for ye speciall and extraordinarie favoure of God towards this Kirk and Kingdom."

The success which had attended the arms of the Covenanters led them now to indulge in the most extravagant dreams. They were the masters of the situation. Why should they not improve their opportunity? Why should they not establish the Presbyterian system in England and Ireland as well? To effect this consummation the Solemn League and Covenant was made. On the 12th of November, 1643, it was read to the people of Ayr. Then "for exemple to uthers," the two ministers, the Magistrates of the town, the members of Session, and the deacons of crafts, came forward and signed it; and thereafter the whole body of the people. It was an ordinance of the Presbytery that the names of all "schifters and refusers" should be noted down. When the oath had thus been taken throughout Scotland, it was carried to other parts of the kingdom. Two ministers were appointed by the Church to administer it to the Scots army in Ireland, and one of the two was Mr. Adair. He was away from Ayr for five months, and it was during this period that his colleague, Mr. Fergushill, died. The Session wrote urging him to return and remedy their "present desolation."

The Church was now becoming more and more embroiled in civil strife. In 1645 Montrose appeared in the West, and the zealous Presbyterians mustered to oppose his progress. There was no Session meeting on August 18th, because the minister and elders had gone "out to the expedition." Those who declined to follow them, or who actually joined the enemy, were summoned before the Presbytery. Among them were Richard Gloss, George Grier, and John M'Adam, all burgesses of Ayr.

It is impossible to sympathise with the policy which the Church followed at this time. The Covenanters were no longer united. They were split into a variety of narrow-minded and intolerant sections, each living at enmity with the other. There were the Engagers, the Remonstrants, the Resolutioners, and the Protesters. It was the last-named party, the most fanatical of them all, to which Mr. Adair belonged. They were for forcing everyone to accept their particular tenets. All who thought otherwise, or as they put it, "who breathed out malignancie," were to be punished by the Church and the State. They were to be suspended from the Covenant, excluded from the army, and debarred from holding any public office. It was the blind and bigoted policy of the Protesters which ultimately divided the Church against itself, and put it at the mercy of Cromwell.

Mr. Adair was at this stage without a colleague. No minister of moderate views cared to be associated with him. We hear of one who was appointed to go to Ayr, but thought it better to go to Burntisland or Edinburgh "than to join with Mr. William Adair." In 1648 the minister of Ayr was one of those who raised the insurrection on Mauchline Muir against the Engagers. There was a heated passage in the Session thereafter between himself and some of the elders. The truth was that people at this time could speak or think of nothing but these wretched ecclesiastical disputes. They were the theme of Sunday's sermon, and the topic of the week-day talk. There was no end to the wranglings they occasioned. In 1650 two men, the one an Engager and the other a Protester, were summoned before the Ayr Session for blasphemies they had been heard to utter in an ale-house, when disputing about "King Christ and King Charles."

But there now appeared upon the scene a powerful personality, the sternness of whose discipline did much to suppress these petty bickerings and reconsolidate the Church.

All over the kingdom the will of Oliver Cromwell soon made itself felt. On Ayr in particular he left abiding marks. Early in 1652 he quartered on the burgh a regiment of his Ironsides under the command of Colonel Alured, and instructed them to convert it into a garrison town. The soldiers lost no time in executing the order. They seized the Tolbooth and St. John's Kirk, turned the latter into an armoury, and proceeded to invest it with fortifications. There is a letter extant, written by one of the regiment, in which the work is described. "Our fortification," he says, "goes on fast. After we get the foundation laid we are very much troubled with water, and have no earth but a shattering sand, that as we dig in one place another place falls upon us; but we hope before winter come upon us to get all or most part of the foundation laid. When it is finished, it will be a place of as great strength as will be in England or Scotland; the fresh water well seven or eight foot deepe about two parts of it, and the sea and river about the other part."

The troopers of Cromwell had evidently but a scant respect for the sacred building, and they had just as little for the graveyard around it. In April, 1652, Ex-Provost Hew Kennedie complained to the Session "yat ye fortificationes working by ye Englishes does com clos to the accustomed place where his predicessors and he did burie ther dead, and there is casten up already some of their corps and bones." The Session consulted with the Magistrates on the matter, and it was resolved not only to lay out a new Churchyard, but also to erect a new Church. St. John's Kirk was by this time nearly five hundred years old, and the sand-storms which often and again swept round it had materially weakened its walls. It was well for every reason that another building should take its place.

Pending the erection of the new edifice, the congregation worshipped in the Grammar School, which was enlarged and fitted up for their use. In 1655, we are informed, the

Magistrates restored the lofting of the School "as it was beffoir there was any preaching therein."

We shall describe in a subsequent chapter the building of the present Old Church. Meantime it may be observed that before the work began, the Magistrates received the promise of a subsidy from Colonel Alured. They decided to levy a tax on the inhabitants for the building operations, and gave out that "what is deficient of the money is to be had fra the English." From one of the State Papers of 1654* we discover that a grant of a 1000 merks (£600) was made to the Burgh "towards building of a Church, by reason their former Church was employed for the publique." The money was to be paid by instalments—"two hundred pounds upon laying the foundations one foot above ground, two hundred pounds when it was halfe built, and the remainder when it was finished."

The manners of the garrison during this period were a constant distress to Mr. Adair and his elders. Not being amenable to Church discipline, the soldiers lived as they pleased. In 1656 there was a riot among them, and four or five were killed. We hear of two whom the Colonel ordered to be scourged through the streets for loose conduct. Others of them were hard drinkers, and brawls in private houses frequently occurred. They were billeted of course throughout the town, and the attentions which they demanded on Sunday used often to prevent the inhabitants from discharging their religious duties. Many a good housewife, who was summoned to answer for her absence from the Kirk, alleged as an excuse that she was "making meat for the sojers."

But perhaps the most amazing example of their high-handed conduct occurred one day at a Session meeting. The minister and elders were sitting in conclave when Lieutenant Williams and Ensign Petters came in, and declared "that they had an ordour from Colonel Allured

* Acts of Scottish Parliament, vi. ii. 756.

to sit therein." The Session were powerless to prevent them, but Mr. Adair protested emphatically "that their sitting in the Session might not be taken as if it wer approven by ye Session, or did import any allowance of their power or practice, as savoring of Erastianism; as also he protested against any encroachment upon the autoritie and libertie of the Kirk of Scotland, so far as it might be imported in such practises, and that it might not be prejudiciall to the liberty of the Session, but yat it may be free for the Session to exercise discipline as formerlie."

The only notable event recorded in Ayr during the latter years of the Protectorate was the appointment of William Eccles to the second charge. Since 1649 the election of a minister had been vested in the Kirk Session, and it was they accordingly who sent him the call. He was the oldest son of John Eccles of Kildonan, and a man of great piety and discretion. "I never," said a friend, "saw one moderat better in the Synod of Glasgow than Mr. Eccles did: for he held his brethren closs to the point they were on, and would not let them anyway extravage."*

We enter now upon a period of great tribulation both for the Church and the country. In 1660 Charles II. was restored to the throne of his fathers, and it was not long before he made it evident that he was no friend of the Scottish Presbyterians. The Rescissory Act was passed in 1661 by which all Presbyterian legislation since 1633 was undone. An Oath of Allegiance was likewise prescribed, in which the King was declared supreme governor over all persons and in all causes.

To the ministers of the Church the interpretation of this Oath was doubtful. Did it mean that the King had any jurisdiction in causes ecclesiastical? If it did, they could not take it. In 1662 seven clergymen, Mr. Adair being one, were summoned before Parliament to explain their attitude

* Wodrow's Analecta, iii., 66.

to the Oath. The other six drew up and subscribed a document, declaring that "the sovereignty of the King was in its own nature only civil, and extrinsic as to causes ecclesiastical." But this explanation Mr. Adair declined to sign until it had been submitted to the Lord Chancellor, a course, quoth Wodrow,* which "grieved" his brethren and many others. When the seven ministers appeared before the House, the paper was presented to the Lord Chancellor, and he, seeing that Mr. Adair's name was not appended, ordered him to withdraw. Adair accordingly returned to his parish, and the other six were committed to prison.

The Episcopate was now re-established in the Church, and an Act was passed declaring that all ministers, elected since 1649, had no right to their livings, unless they obtained presentation from the lawful patron, and institution from the Bishop. When this piece of legislation had been passed, Parliament dissolved, and the Lord High Commissioner made a tour through the West country, spending a week in Ayr. It was a week of eating and drinking. Awful stories were told of the excesses committed. It was said that in one of their debauches, about the middle of the night, the Commissioner and his friends gathered at the Cross and drank the health of the devil.

In the autumn of the same year the Archbishop of Glasgow intimated that none of the clergy in his diocese had applied for institution. The Privy Council met accordingly in October, and deprived of their parishes all those elected since 1649, who had failed to comply with the law. By this Act three hundred ministers were ejected, and amongst them Mr. Eccles. The town was loath to see him go, and the Magistrates wrote him a letter desiring "that he wald be pleasit to returne to his chairge conforme to the Act of Counsell." But it was a matter of principle with him, and he replied that he could not return.

* Wodrow's History, i., 295.

Mr. Adair was permitted to remain, but as he would not conform to Episcopacy, he was forbidden to preach outside of the parish. The burgh meantime was in a highly excited state. The Trades gathered in October, 1662, at the Market Cross, and on being ordered by the Provost to go to the Tolbooth, they replied with shouts of "No Tolbooth! No Tolbooth at all!" In 1663 an Act of Parliament was passed, calling upon all public officials to abjure the Covenants. This Declaration, as it was styled, eight of the Town Council refused to sign.

The second charge was filled in 1664 by the appointment of George Whyte, one of the so-called "curates." The Magistrates were now the patrons, but "wishing to show the inhabitants that they intend to doe all things in love and calmness," they convened a meeting in the Tolbooth. The people were asked if they had anything to object to Mr. Whyte, to which "the maist part said they only wished a farder hearing of him, but several cried out they could not condescend to him nor no other, becaus the place was sufficiently furnished by two ministers, lawfullie established who were yet in lyf." The harshness of Mr. Eccles' deprivation was evidently still fresh in their minds.

Mr. Whyte's appointment was unpopular, and he never afterwards appears to have secured the sympathies of the people. The meetings of Session over which he presided were attended by scarcely any of the elders. As a rule there were only himself and the Session Clerk. The minute most commonly occurring begins thus:—"Apud Air: presentibus Master George Whyte, minister, and the Clerk." And there is a still quainter proof of the disfavour in which he was held. A later Clerk objected to see him styled "minister" in the minute-book: and wherever "minister and" occurs, as in the extract above quoted, he has changed it with thick strokes of the pen into "togither with"!

In 1665 the struggle between the Covenanters and the

Government entered upon a new stage. The Covenanters, goaded beyond endurance, decided to take up arms. In point of numbers they were more than two thousand, but in fighting strength far inferior to the Royal forces. When the two armies met in the Pentlands at Rullion Green, the insurgents were driven from the field. A hundred of them were taken prisoners, and tried in various parts of the country. Ralph Shields, a merchant of Ayr, was hanged in Edinburgh. In Ayr itself, at the close of 1665, a Commission of the Privy Council held a Court of Assize. Twelve of the prisoners were arraigned, and all found guilty. Two were sentenced to be hanged in Irvine, two in Dumfries, and the remaining eight in Ayr. Fearful of a rising, the Government planted in the town a strong detachment of soldiers. John Moore, a leading burgess, of whom we shall hear more anon, protested against this measure in the name of the inhabitants, but without effect. The execution was fixed for December 27th.

But as the day approached an unexpected difficulty arose. The hangman of the burgh was unwilling to officiate, and left the town. The authorities sent for William Sutherland, the hangman of Irvine, to take his place. But this man was a Covenanter himself, and objected to perform the work. He was put in the Tolbooth, and Mr. Whyte, the curate, sent to overcome his scruples. "Do ye not know," he said, "that thir men are guilty of rebellion?" But argument and entreaty were alike fruitless, for the hangman would not be convinced. At last Mr. Whyte lost patience. "Away with thee," he cried, "the devil is in thee, and thou hast dealing with familiar spirits." The recalcitrant was next brought before the Council, but persisted in his refusal to act. What followed may be told in his own words. "The Provost of Ayr, when he saw me altogether refusing, he rounded in my lug, 'What! are you afraid of the country folk? I shall give you fifty dollars, and you may go to the

Highlands or where you please.' I answered him, speaking out loud that all might hear, 'What! would you have me sell my conscience? Where can I flee from God? Remember Jonas fled from Him, but the Lord found him out and ducked him over the lugs: so shall He me, if I go over the light of my conscience!' Then I was taken away and put in the stocks."*

The Council were in a dilemma. But a way out of the difficulty presented itself. They offered to grant any of the prisoners his life who would consent to act as executioner to the rest. One man, Cornelius Anderson, a tailor in Ayr and the only Ayr man among them, was base enough to accept the offer. "On the day appointed," says Wodrow, "his heart was like to fail." But the provost plied him freely with brandy, and thus primed he did the work. Shortly after, we are told, he died in distraction.

The seven martyrs are interred in the Old Churchyard. They were by name James Smith of Old Letham; Alexander M'Millan of Carsphairn; James M'Millan of Mondrogat; John Short of Dalry; George M'Kertney of Blairkenny; John Graham of Midtoun; and James Muirhead of Irongray. In 1814 a stone was erected to their memories by the Incorporated Trades of the town. It bears upon its back these lines, which are perhaps modern, but have all the flavour of the Covenanting age.

Here lie seven Martyrs to our Covenants,
A sacred number of triumphant Saints.
Pontius M'Adam the unjust sentence passed,
What is his oun the world will know at last:
And Herod Drummond caused their heads affix,
Heaven keeps a record of the sixty-six,
Boots, thumbkins, gibbets, were in fashion then,
LORD, let us never see such days again.

Who the M'Adam here mentioned was we do not know. The Earl of Rothes was the presiding judge. Drummond

* Wodrow's History, ii., 54.

was the Lieutenant-General of that name, afterwards Viscount Strathallan.

General Dalziel now established himself in Kilmarnock, and various bodies of soldiery were set down throughout the shire. Four hundred and fifty troopers were quartered in Ayr, and the town commanded to make provision for their wants. Newton Castle was chosen as the garrison, and the magistrates resolved "to buy or borrow two furnished fethir beds with bolsteris, cods (pillows), sheits, coverings, blanquets, and curtains." This detachment remained in the town for seven months. In the day-time they scoured the country in search of fugitives: in the evening they returned from their ravages. The recklessness of their manners we may understand from an enactment of the Magistrates that the shops in the town be watched during the night. Altogether this visit of Dalziel's forces cost the Burgh 40,000 merks.

The next severity to be noticed occurred in the year 1668, when Mr. Adair was suspended from the ministry. Hitherto he had been permitted to exercise his office, but there were evidently suspicions afloat that he was abetting the Covenanters. It was therefore thought good by the Synod that he should be suspended for a season. But in May, 1669, the trades of the town petitioned the magistrates to intercede "for his being reponit." This step Mr. Adair had sanctioned, but at the same time had cautioned them "to ingadge nothing for him to the bishop." In August his case came before the Synod, and a clerical deputation who had been appointed to confer with him gave in "a favorable report." He had maintained "a peaceable deportment during the tyme of his silence;" had shown his aversion to conventicles; and had thereby "strenthened the hands of the ministrie in these pairts." Under these circumstances it pleased the Archbishop and Synod to cancel the sentence of suspension, and Robert Douglas,

Prospectus Civitatis AERÆ a Domo de Newtown. The Town of AIR, from ye House of Newtowne.

This plate is most humbly Inscribed to Sr Thomas Wallace of Craigy Bart.

parson of Renfrew, came down one Sunday to Ayr, and declared Mr. Adair "to be reponit to his former charge and exercise of his ministrie."

Mr. Adair was still a Presbyterian, but he was no longer the high-flying Protester he had been in his youth. The day had been when he would have scorned to accept the indulgence of bishop or archbishop, but his ardour against prelacy was now abated. Indeed between himself and his old ministerial friends there was no longer the same cordiality. He seemed to them "to decline somewhat from his former zeal and forwardness: so that his first wayes did far excell his last wayes."*

This change of attitude was particularly noticeable in the year after his reponal. Since the re-introduction of Episcopacy the week-day services had been discontinued, and the parish had been divided into two parts—Mr. Adair ministering to the one, and Mr. Whyte to the other. But in 1670 several of the inhabitants complained to the Town Council "that they want preaching in the church on the week-days, and lykways that they cannot get their children baptised as occasion offered." They evidently did not care that Mr. Whyte should perform the christening.

The matter was brought before Mr. Adair, and he spoke out with surprising warmth. He "very peremptorily denyed aither to preatch upon the week-day or baptise any children upon the north syd of the toun, quhilk he called Mr. George Whyte's syd, seeing it would discurrage and disgrace Mr. George in his ministrie; and Mr. Whyte had his faithful promeis for it quhilk he would not break." But this was not all. He "marvelled mutch that the magistrates, counsell, or toun should offer to afrunt Mr. George Whyte who was not onlie their minister, lawfullie callit as he himself was, but lykwise baptised his own child with him: and that he was ane godlie, pious, and discreet man." Then comes

* Wodrow's Analecta, iii., 74.

a crushing finale. He "desyred them nether to meddle with church nor churchmen, seeing it did not concern them: for they would answer to them that had power ovir them." *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.* One can scarcely believe that this indignant apologist for the rights of an Episcopalian is the same Adair who used to debar from the Communion Table all who had not signed the Covenant.

The truth was that Mr. Adair had developed some resemblance to Mr. Facing-both-ways. He belonged wholeheartedly to neither party, because he wished to stand well with both. In 1670 he had taken the side of his Episcopal colleague. Next year we have an instance of his Presbyterian zeal. Several new members had been added to the the Session, and at the first meeting after their election it was proposed and agreed that Mr. Adair should act as constant moderator. But against this Mr. Adair protested. He moderated, he said, "by office, and not by election"; and his sitting in the Session was not to be construed as an approbation of "any errour in the constitution of the said judicatory," or of "any corruptioun in any constituent member thereof." This was a palpable hit at Mr. Whyte, who protested accordingly "that his not interrupting Mr. Wm. Adair his moderating might not be interpreted as a passing from his oun right and priviledge to moderat *per vices* in the Kirk Session, but that he may resume the said priviledge quhen he finds it convenient." The Session were thoroughly Presbyterian, and supported Mr. Adair. They protested "that their sitting in the Session with Mr. George Whyte may not be interpret as any concurrence with any error that may be in the said judicatory." The incident then closed.

The funds of the Town at this period had reached a very low ebb. The trade with foreign countries had been going back for many years, while the support of the militia

at home was a heavy and incessant drain. "Our harbour," say the Magistrates in 1670, "is totallie ruined and decayed, quhilk we are not abill in the leist to maintain: our bridge daily falling by great spaitts, and yce coming down in the winter tym on it." But the demands on their resources went on without abatement. Foot-guards were quartered in the burgh, and they had to be supplied with coals, "ane load ilk twenty-four hours." In 1672 the Town was ordered to furnish six men for the army and two for the navy. We hear of a sailor's wife who "rest" out of the provost's hands a warrant for impressing her husband "to attend his Majestie's service."

The provost of Ayr for many years had been William Cunningham of Brownhill, a man favourable on the whole to the policy of the Government. Under his regime the prison accommodation in the Tolbooth was fully taxed. Amongst those who were confined we notice the name of Alexander Peden, the prophet. But there was an opposition party in the town, and in 1673 John Moore, their leader, was elected chief magistrate. For a little the Covenanters enjoyed a larger license, and several conventicles appear to have been held in or around Ayr. But the Privy Council were soon informed of the laxities occuring, and the authorities were warned to be more careful in the future. An attempt was made at the same time to coerce the inhabitants into signing a band against conventicles, but "they earnestlie requested three months to consider of the same," and the matter was thus postponed. But indeed there were few departments of civic life in which the arbitrary hand of the legislature did not make itself felt. The mastership of the school, for example, fell vacant, and one applicant was "cleir and reddie to come," but the Archbishop refused to sanction the appointment, because he would not "be tyed to come to the parosh church at all times." The precentor was suspended from his office "for giving over the singing

of the doxologie, he being commanded to sing the same." In 1676 the Magistrates were ordered to sign a declaration against the Covenants; but led by Moore, who was still provost, they declined to do so, and a new council was put in their place.

The whole shire was by this time so imbued with Covenanting sentiments that in 1678 the Privy Council decided to send down a committee to Ayr to take summary measures. This committee sat from the 7th February to the 16th March. They brought along with them "a regiment of rid coats, four bress gunes, twelve wagones: and there was quartered in Alloway and Burrowfield a squad of the King's horse-guard consisting of fourtie." The main object of the committee was the suppression of conventicles, and the various noblemen and heritors of the shire were cited and required to sign a bond against them. If they refused, as most of them did, they were put in the Tolbooth, and libelled "for keeping of conventicles, hearing of vagrant preachers, and speaking with intercommuned persons." The Magistrates, who since 1676 had supported the Government, were among those who subscribed the bond. When the committee had concluded their deliberations they left the burgh, taking with them the troops they had brought. The soldiers had been as costly as ever and as ungrateful. The expense incurred by the parishes of Ayr and Alloway for their maintenance, as also "their robbery and breaking of merchants' shops," amounted in Scots money to £12,120.* "Thair was little or nothing," says the town clerk, "payed for their quarters; and at this tym thair was six or seven northland men quartered in this schyre round about the burgh, quho in lyk mainer made no payment for quarters, but took money for day quarters, and were much given for stelth, those of the north highlands. As lykways," he adds, as if this were the climax of the

* Wodrow's History, ii., 423.

enormities committed," it is to be remembered that the clerk nor his men got no drink money, but great pains, trouble and vexation."

Instead, however, of allaying the popular excitement, the committee seem only to have provoked it. We hear of a large conventicle only a few months afterwards in the Muir of Gierholm, and of James Brown, a Covenanting preacher, being permitted by the magistrates to occupy the town pulpit for several Sabbaths. The community was in a state of extreme disquiet. A guard had "to be keipit nightlie within the town, consisting of sixtein in number, to convein at ten o'clock at night, and to dissolve in the morning at daylight."

It was to put an end no doubt to this commotion, that in the beginning of 1679 two companies of foot and one of horse were quartered in Ayr, the dragoons taking up their guard at the Bridge-end. But on the 3rd of May news startling and terrible rang through the land. The misery of the Covenanters had driven them into frenzy. James Sharp, the old Archbishop of St. Andrews, had been murdered on Magus Moor.

Instantly the whole country was in a ferment. The infantry and dragoons left Ayr, and rejoined the main force. Under the command of Claverhouse an attack was made on the Covenanters at Drumclog, but the aggressors were repulsed. It was the first victory the Covenanters had achieved, and all over the West country their spirits rose. A company of their troops marched down to Ayr, and the Provost and Magistrates made them welcome. They entered the burgh, set at liberty the prisoners in the Tolbooth, took down the several heads affixed to the ports, and gave them decent interment. Then, escorted by the town drummer and the halberdiers, they proceeded to the Market Cross and proclaimed their Declaration.

But the engagement at Bothwell Bridge a few days

afterwards put an end to their hopes, and what followed we gather plainly enough from the fact mentioned in the Town Records, that "John Grahame of Claverse, captain to ane of his Majestie's troups of horse," was on July 9th admitted a burgess of Ayr. The persecutions were resumed and with redoubled zeal. All who had been at Bothwell or who had been guilty of harbouring fugitives, were apprehended by the dragoons. Amongst those who were arrested and imprisoned on these charges were James Wood; William Rankin, schoolmaster; and Andrew Ramsay, baker, all burgesses of Ayr.

In 1681 the Test Act was passed, and the confusion which ensued was so extreme that it is hard to pick one's way through the chaos of details. The Test Act made it compulsory for every public official to acknowledge the King's authority over all persons and in all causes, civil and ecclesiastical. When the day for the election of a new Council came round, a great crowd gathered at the foot of the Tolbooth. The old Magistrates who should then have proceeded to have received nominations for their successors, called for the town officers and dismissed them, saying that "thair was to be no more government in that place." The Privy Council, incensed at this defiance, fined the Provost in £200, and took it upon themselves to nominate Magistrates for the town.

Procedure so violent and high-handed only awakened more resentment. Six of the new Councillors refused to take the Test and retired from office. The two schoolmasters for the same reason resigned their appointments. Among the trades there was a heated wrangle over the matter, and the majority declined to be subscribers. Even among the Magistrates chosen by the Privy Council there were men who were keenly opposed to the policy of the Government. In August, 1682, Bailie William Brisbane was chief actor in a scene which occurred at a public

execution. Brisbane was well acquainted with the leading field preachers in the shire. Two years before he had been the means of bringing "three or four unlicensed ministers to preach, pray, and catechise in the town." On this later occasion a woman had been condemned to death for her "wicked principles against the Government." James Lawrie, a deprived minister, and Matthew Baird, afterwards minister of Monkton, were then in the neighbourhood, and Brisbane conducted them to the cell where the poor creature was warded, holding the door himself "that none of the orthodox ministris of the place should have access." The ministrations of her friends had a powerful effect upon the woman's spirits. Her last words on the scaffold were a bold and ardent disavowal of the principles of the Government.

Yet another result of the enforcement of the Test Act in this year remains to be recorded—the deposition of Mr. Adair. His colleague, Mr. Whyte, had been translated to Maryculter in 1679, and since then Adair had been the sole incumbent of the cure. During this period, as indeed for several years before, he had taken no prominent part in the stirring events of the time. He had maintained his position as a Presbyterian minister, but studied at the same time to give no offence to the Episcopal party. It is pleasant to find that in his last days the old man exchanged this temporising policy for one more heroic. When the Test was presented to him in 1681, he refused to sign it, and was suspended. Two months later, in February, 1682, he was restored, and in presence of the Session he declared "that this was now the third tyme he had in God's Providence escaped from the restraints [that] were put upon him in the exercise of his ministrie; and that without any bonds or obligationes put on him, he had the libertie of his ministrie, and doctrine, and discipline, by connivance granted unto him, and that therefore he joynes with the Session in incontroverted duties of discipline as he did formerly, with this

protestation that his joyning in such a manner be not interpreted his conjunction with, or allowance of any error or fault in the constitution of the said judicatorie or any of the members thereof." He made a similar protest in August of the same year, and still refused to take the Test. The fiat therefore went forth that he should be deposed, and on December 11th the sentence was passed.

For three and forty years Mr. Adair had been a minister of Ayr, and he did not long survive his severance from the charge. He died in February, 1684, and was buried in the shadow of the Church which he had built "betwixt the twa laigh windowes on the east syd of the isle." All through his public life he had been noted for his gift of prayer, and the monument which marks his resting-place represents him on his knees. His character, like his career, had come through strange vicissitudes. Extreme ardour had given place to extreme caution. But it was lit up with heroism in the end. Nothing in his ministry became him like the leaving it.

In 1679 on the translation of Mr. Whyte the Session and Town Council had conjunctly petitioned the Privy Council to appoint William Eccles, who had been deprived in 1662. An indulgence had been passed in Mr. Eccles' favour in 1672, and he was now in Paisley. But the Privy Council were not disposed to grant the request, and the second charge remained vacant till 1682, when William Waltersone was sent to fill it. Next year Alexander Gregorie was translated from St. Quivox to succeed Mr. Adair. Both the presentees were Episcopalians, and the appointments, as we shall see, gave little satisfaction.

Meantime, in spite of all repressive measures, the cause of the Covenanters was gaining ground in the shire, and in June, 1684, a Circuit Court was held in Ayr to grapple with the wide-spread disaffection. A great company of judges and advocates, with a troop of their servitors, assembled in

1684

the town, and according to the custom of the time were all made burgesses. When the Court had been constituted the heritors of the county were summoned, and for convenience sake they were put into three divisions, Kyle, Carrick, and Cunningham. One met in the nave of the Old Church, another in the aisle, and the third in the Tolbooth. They were asked to sign a petition that the Test might be administered to themselves. If they consented, they were dismissed: if they declined, they were detained. The scene in the Old Church was highly exciting. Guards were stationed at the doors to prevent any from going out. Within the crush was so great that there was no room to move. When the judge retired for dinner, the heritors were left to themselver; and they had no food save "what they got towed up by the windows."*

When the Court resumed, the Test was offered to all, and those heritors who refused it were conveyed to the Tolbooth. There they were subjected to indescribable discomfort. In the day-time they were turned into the common prison, and at night they lay down in their clothes in the Council chamber. The press was great and the air stifling. Yet not till several days had elapsed were they released on heavy bail.

The same inhuman treatment was meted out to the common people. They were huddled together in a room above the prison. Outside to frighten the inhabitants a gibbet was erected at the Cross, and the judges or their satellites would point to it and say, "Yonder tree will make you take the Test." Those who had been summoned but failed to compear were put upon a fugitive roll, and amongst the names there entered we notice John Mitchell; James Richard, cooper; Thomas Donaldson; John Martin, merchant; Alexander M'Culloch, merchant; James Pater-

* Wodrow's History, iv., 126.

son; David Charters, merchant; and Richard Riddell, all belonging to Ayr.

Thoughout this period the burgh was under the strictest military surveillance. The names of all strangers and lodgers had to be handed in to the guard. Nothing was left undone to terrorise the inhabitants. In January, 1685, "ane quarter of Baillie of Jerviswood," who had just been hanged in Edinburgh, "was affixt on the Tolbuith."

An unsuccessful attempt was made in the same year to oust from the Town Council those who had subscribed the Test. The engineers of this movement were John Moore and William Cunningham, the latter being a son of the William Cunningham who had once been a supporter of the Government. A sharp passage occurred thereafter between Cunningham and one of the bailies, the account of which we transcribe as exhibiting the political amenities of the period. The bailie, speaking in defence of the Council, told Cunningham "they were much troubled with his factious humour:" whereupon the said Cunningham "did most insolently call the bailie a villain and a rascal, and told him the end of a rope was fitter for him than the employment he was in." To this the bailie replied "that if he did what he ought, he would lay his feet fast." But he was promptly informed "that he and all the magistrates durst not for their death do it: for he was as manie Johnstones as they were Jardanes."

James II. was now on the throne, and as determined as his brother had been to extirpate Presbyterianism. To prevent the Presbyterians from gaining the upper hand in burghs, an Act was passed in 1686, discharging all elections during his Majesty's pleasure. It was in accordance with this enactment that next year the inhabitants were forbidden to hold an election meeting.

In 1687 an Act of Indulgence was passed permitting Presbyterians and other Nonconformists to hold meetings

among themselves. To understand how this affected the Presbyterians of Ayr, it is necessary to go back a little way in our story and enquire how it had been faring with Messrs Gregorie and Waltersone, the Episcopal incumbents. They continued to hold Session meetings, but the attendance of the elders was small. In July, 1683, the whole Session were summoned that they might declare whether or not they wished to continue in office. Of those who obeyed the citation some said they would continue "till Martinmas," others "for a year" or "half a year," others "for a tyme." But there were some also like John Moore, who disregarded the summons and did not compear at all.

It is plain that the ministers were not acceptable to the great body of the people. In November, 1683, Alexander Adair, one of the elders, gave in a libel against Waltersone, but the latter protested that the Session were not competent to judge him, and appealed to the Presbytery. What the charge was we do not know. As time went on, the Church attendances, never great, began to fall away, and the people were "Christianly advertised" to be more regular—"on their perill." The communion was celebrated in 1684, but the collection fell lamentably short of what it used to be in the old days.

Hitherto it had been unlawful to meet for public worship in any other building than the Parish Church. But in 1687 this prohibition was removed by the Act of Indulgence. The immediate result all over the country was that the discontented Presbyterians left the Parish Churches, and assembled in meeting-houses of their own. So it was in Ayr. John Moore and his friends purchased St. John's Kirk, and re-converted it into a place of worship. William Eccles was brought back to act as their minister. Services were held morning and afternoon. A Session was formed and met weekly. Everything was fashioned in accordance with the old pattern, and done decently and in order.

For a year and a half this state of matters continued. There were two Churches and two ministers. But it soon became evident which would go to the wall. As the Presbyterians rose, the Episcopalians fell. The collections taken by the latter sank so low in the first month after the Indulgence that they were obliged to reduce their allowance to the poor by two-thirds, and leave the Presbyterians to make good the rest. The beggars who had been wont to gather about the doors of the Old Church, seeing that in that quarter the hope of their gains was gone, transferred their attentions to the Kirk of St. John; and the Episcopalians discharged the officer whom they had hitherto paid to drive these mendicants away, "considering that he neglects his office, and yat there is but little use for that employment at this tyme." In October, 1688, a man was summoned before the Episcopal Session, who failed to compear; and the Session were informed that he disowns this judicatorie." Next week he did penance for his boldness of speech, but he had struck a note in which others were soon to join. On Christmas-day the Cameronians or extreme Covenanters began the process of "rabbling the curates." A band of them descended upon Ayr on January 10th, 1689, and what they did they did quickly. There was no sermon nor collection that Sabbath, say the Session books, "because both ministers were discharged upon their perill to preach, either by themselves or others, by ane armed partie of rebellious hilmen." The townsmen themselves had taken no part in the administration of this *coup de grâce*, but neither did they do anything to protest against it. A few months later and Eccles was re-established in the Old Church pulpit. Episcopacy had been dethroned, and Presbytery reigned in its stead.

In the civil sphere the revulsion of feeling had been quite as marked. In 1688 Sir William Wallace of Craigie was appointed Provost. He was a personal friend of King James, and a Roman Catholic—the first of that communion

who had held the provostship since the Reformation. But neither his religion nor his political sympathies were acceptable to the great body of the townsmen. Towards the close of that year negotiations were opened up with William of Orange, and the movement had the sympathy of the people of Ayr. Ayr, it is said,* was the first town in Scotland to proclaim its adherence to the new dynasty. James Stevenson, apothecary, engaged "to hire a man sufficiently furnished with horse and arms to attend his Majesty." The burgh at the same time agreed to furnish "twa men to the King's standard." But the contingent thus granted was not called into requisition. James fled from the country without offering resistance.

The accession of the Prince of Orange to the throne was in itself a pledge of civil and religious liberty. There were wild rumours for a time of an invasion of the kingdom on the part of the Irish Catholics. Beacons were to be kindled on the Ayrshire coast, should the enemy appear in the offing. The fencible townsmen were formed into four companies, and drills were regularly held. One night the news reached Ayr "that the Papists had brunt Kirkcudbright, and that they wer coming forward to destroy other places in the cuntrey." But the alarm was of course false. The Catholics knew well that any such attempt would have been futile: for the country was now Protestant to the core. In May, 1689, Sir William Wallace was removed from the provostship of Ayr "in regaird he is a Papist," and John Moore, who had striven so long and so earnestly for the liberties of the people, was elected in his place. The Oath of Allegiance to William and Mary was presented to the new Council, and signed by all save one who "took it to advysement till ye next day." One of the first acts of the Magistrates was to petition the Committee of Estates that Mr. William Eccles might be permitted to preach in the Old Church. Their

* Early Travellers in Scotland, 290.

prayer, as we have seen, was granted, and in 1692 the further step was taken of appointing him to the first charge.

The era whose story we have been trying to tell, from 1560 till 1692, is second in interest and moment to no other in Scottish history. It was the era of one long struggle for liberty in Church and State. There were many reverses and vicissitudes throughout the conflict, and as happens in every great struggle, neither party can be fully vindicated. Of the fourteen ministers of the period who served the Church in Ayr, seven were forcibly removed, four by the Episcopalians and three by the Presbyterians. But the business of the student of history is not merely with these party details. His main interest in the issue of the struggle is not that Episcopacy was disestablished and Presbytery set up in its place. It is rather that the cause of freedom was triumphant, while tyranny was beaten back and overthrown.

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD TOWN.

T has been generally supposed that in early times the mouth of the Doon was much nearer Ayr than at present, and it is conjectured that originally the stream found its way into the sea by two channels, the main estuary passing through the grounds about Blackburn House, and the other entering the bay as at present. The lands of Cunning Park, being thus enclosed by water on all sides, were called the Isle of Cunning Park. But although this name was still given them in the period with which we are dealing, the northerly channel of the Doon had disappeared, and the river flowed into the sea as it does now.

The southern boundary line of the burgh ran up the Curtecan burn, which must at one time have been a tributary of the Doon, joining it about Belleisle bridge. Between the Curtecan and the town lay a stretch of moorland, known as the Burrowfield. On its eastern side stood the ruined Chapel of St. Leonards, on the west was the little property of Bridgehouse. On the moor itself there were no houses, and the ground being marshy in many places, part of it was sometimes called "the foul muir." There was no regular road across the common, but only devious tracks. On the side known to-day as the Knowe stood the gallows of the town.

All along the shore, from Blackburn to the harbour mouth, lay a range of sandhills. The injuries suffered by the burgh through the blowing of the sand were very great. The fabric of St. John's Kirk and the walls of the harbour were in constant need of repair: the graves around the Kirk were frequently upturned: and any arable land in the vicinity was rendered unfit for cultivation. The Sandgate was particularly exposed to the fury of the blasts. Half a century ago the traces of a buried house were discovered eight or ten feet beneath the surface of the street. It was not till 1725 that the sandhills were levelled, and this source of annoyance and danger effectually removed.

The town at this period of its history—say in the middle of the seventeenth century—was guarded by four Ports. There was the Carrick Port at the head of the Sandgate; the Sea Port at the western end of the Boat Vennel; the Bridge Port on the northern extremity of the Old Bridge, and the Kyle Port a little above the Wallace Tower. In attempting to describe the appearance of the town and to give some account of its older buildings, we shall begin on the sea side and travel round to the other.

The Herbery or Harbour is a feature of the town which meets us frequently in the pages of the old Records. In former times there were two quays, both on the south side of the river, the one just below the Ratton hole, and the other lower down. Not till 1677 do we hear of a bulwark on the north side. Large sums were expended on the maintenance of the Harbour. The "auld wrackis of shippis" that lay within it, together with the violence of the storms, were detrimental to the walls. The Harbour expenses were mixed up with those of the Bridge, and the impost known as the "Brig Penny" was used to pay them. We give the terms of this levy, as laid down in 1588:—

"Every horse and mare, ... 12d.
Every ox and cow, ... 6d.

Every sheep, ...	2d.
Every lambe, ...	1d.
Every pack of wool, ...	2s.
Every horse-pack of skins and claith, ...	2s.
Every dacker (dozen) of hides, ...	12d.
Every ship with top, at their incoming within the harbery, ...	13s 4d.
Every barque exceeding 20 tons, ...	6s 8d.
Every boat, ...	3s 4d.

And sua forth (so forth), offearand ane equivalent of goods and merchandise that beis brought and passes by the said Bridge, and bought in the said mercat."

Above the Harbour, on the site of the Fort Castle, stood the Kirk of St. John. It was built in the form of a cross, and but for the tower the Old Church resembles it closely. The tower which is all that remains of the old building stood at the west end. It was originally crowned with two triangular gables, but these were removed in 1784. The belfry contained two bells, a great and a small. Round about the Kirk was the Kirkyard, which covered about an acre of ground.

When the soldiers of Cromwell had taken possession of St. John's Kirk, they surrounded it with fortifications, The expense incurred was so great that when the account was presented to Cromwell he is said to have asked whether they had been built of gold. The whole area enclosed by the walls measured no less than twelve acres. The form of the buildings was hexagonal with bastions at each of the angles. The two walls, facing the sea and the town respectively, were longer than any of the others. At high tide the base of the sea curtain was washed by the waves. The wall which fronted the town was protected by a deep trench. Within this wall stood the main gate, and in a recess above the gate were sculptured the arms of the Commonwealth.

At the Restoration in 1660 an order for the dismantling of the Citadel was issued by the Privy Council, and the

fencible men of the town were called out to demolish the walls. In 1663 it was made over to the then Earl of Eglinton, and by the same charter was created a free burgh of regality, under the name of Montgomerieston. We have seen that in 1687 St. John's Kirk was purchased by John Moore and others, and converted into a Presbyterian place of service. The stones of the Church were afterwards employed in erecting a steeple on the Tolbooth, and when the steeple was taken down they were used in building part of the wall along the Racecourse Road between the road and the Blackburn estate.

On an eminence to the north-east of St. John's Kirk had stood in ancient times the Castle of Ayr. Its external appearance we may gather from the seal of the Burgh, but save in this connection, no mention is made of it in any records of the sevententh century. By that time it had probably disappeared.

The old Grammar School stood originally in the Sandgate. Beside it and forming part of the same building was the Sang Schule. The roof of the institution was of thatch. In 1598, we are informed, "the scule house" had been permitted "to decay untheikit." Education in these days was largely bound up with the Church, and after the Old Church had been built, the Grammar Schule appears to have been transferred to a site near it. A minute of Council, of date 1690, speaks of the great loss which the Sandgate and its vicinity had sustained "through want of the Church and School which wer formerly there." Next century it was re-established close to its old quarters. It stood at the head of the Schule Vennel, or, as it is now called, Academy Street. In 1796 it was replaced by the Old Academy.

But by far the most conspicuous building in the Sandgate was the Tolbooth or Jail. It stood opposite the entrance of Academy Street, and in the centre of the street. In 1610 it was resolved to erect "ane steple of timber on

the Tolbuithe," and to hang thereon "ane bell and knok" for the use of the Town and Kirk. The Tolbooth was approached by a flight of steps, underneath which in the old days were two booths or shops. The inner building was divided into several stories. The Courthouse occupied the second landing, and beneath it on the lowest floor were two cells, reserved for the worst offenders. They were named "the woman's house" and "the thief's hoal" respectively. Above the Courthouse was the steeple, which was also used as a place of confinement. Behind this tall pile lay the common prison which was a building of two stories. Little attention was paid to prisons in these days, and the Tolbooth of Ayr was no exception to the rule. In the next century the buildings were largely re-constructed. First the wooden steeple was removed, and a structure of stone put in its place. Then the jail was rebuilt. In 1825 the whole was taken down, and the present steeple and Council Chambers erected in its stead.

A little below the Tolbooth, opposite the present steeple, stood the Cross of Ayr, called also the Malt Cross. An older Cross occupied the same site till the reign of Charles II., when it was taken down and another put in its place. The latter was removed in 1778. It was a handsome erection and deserved a better fate. The structure was hexagonal and bore the royal arms in front. The pillar was hexagonal also, and was surmounted by a unicorn.

In the Boat Vennel or Sea Vennel, as it was then called, stood a house now known as Loudoun Hall, which belonged in these days to the Earls of Loudoun. From them it passed to Chalmers of Gadgirth, and in 1666 was bought by John Moore. Amongst the evidents of the house were a "yeard" and garden chamber.

Proceeding next up the High Street, or, as it was also styled, the King's Street, we find a Vennel on the immediate left, leading then as now to the Old Bridge. This Vennel,

like the Bridge itself, had been constructed before the period of which we write. The Bridge Port which stood on the other side of the Bridge was the only entrance to the town from the north. It was embellished with the royal arms and the arms of the Burgh, and in 1577 the Magistrates placed beneath these the scutcheon of the Regent Morton "in remembrance of his great liberalitie" to the town. The upkeep of the Bridge was a constant expense to the Burgh. In 1588 it was thoroughly repaired, the town furnishing the stone, lime, and sand; while the masons were re-imbursed for their work by permission to uplift the Brig Penny for one year. The high tides, the spates of the river, and the great blocks of ice which bore down upon the Bridge in winter told severely upon its strength, and accounts for its reparation occur very frequently in the Town Records.

Opposite the Bridge Vennel, and on the other side of the High Street, stood the Fish Cross, where alone in the town fish was to be had, and where "na kind of stuff but fish" was permitted to be sold. The Cross was removed in recent years.

Looking down on the Fish Cross from the opposite side of the street stood a high turreted house, the town residence of Chalmers of Gadgirth. Immediately above this tenement was a building traditionally known as Maggie Osborne's house. The passage which separated the two houses ran down to the water edge, and bore the name of Gadgirth's Vennel.

Above the Fish Cross, and at the corner of Newmarket Street, stood the Old Tolbooth. To distinguish it from the later building in the Sandgate, it was sometimes called the Laigh Tolbooth. It appears to have fallen into disuse at the close of the sixteenth century. In 1810 what was left of it was taken down. A carved head, supposed to represent Sir William Wallace, had adorned the front of the old building. In the modern edifice the knight is more

elaborately commemorated by a full-length statue, but the remains of the older memorial are also to be seen.

On the site of the Winton Buildings stood the Meal Market, which was built in 1586. In 1662 it was replaced by another, which was removed in 1843. Higher up the street stood the "Auld Toure," which belonged at one time to the Cathcarts of Carbieston. In 1670 it was in the hands of Adam Ritchie, and from him it was bought by the town and made a correction-house for the beggars and vagabonds of the shire. It was the relic of a fighting age, a rude massive square building, divided into two apartments, an upper and a lower. The lower was entered from the street, and the upper by an outside stair. A belfry was added in 1731. But in 1834 the whole pile was taken down, and the present Wallace Tower set up in its place. On the other side of the street from the Old Tower was the Carrick Vennel or, as it was commonly called, the Foul Vennel. Its name was no doubt derived from the wet piece of ground in which it terminated, known as the Stank Acre.

Opposite the Foul Vennel was the Mill Vennel, which was known as the Wodgate. On the side of the present Brewery stood, as we have already observed, the monastery of the Black Friars. After the Reformation the property passed into the hands of the Wallaces of Craigie, and by them it was made over to the Wallaces of Shewalton. It thus acquired the name of Shewalton Yards.

Contiguous to the monastery of the Black Friars had been that of the Grey Friars, and it was on the site of the latter that the present Old Church was built. In 1652 when the complaint of the Kirk Session, already referred to,* was presented to the Town Council, the magistrates fixed upon "the Frear yeardis" as the site of the cemetery, and gave orders that the lint and kail with which the ground was planted should be removed. With regard to the church they

* Vide p. 27.

decided to build "aither upon Sewaltounis ground or the Gray Freirs," and in the end they made choice of the latter.

It was necessary to proceed to the work with all expedition, and on June 18th, 1653, an indenture or contract was drawn up and signed for "building the Kirk." The parties who signed it were Mr. Adair, as representing the Magistrates; Theophilus Rankin, smith in Ayr; and John Masonn and John Smith, masons in Kilmaurs. The work is thus described in the contract:—"The body of the Kirk to be four score and ten foot of length without the walls: in breadth thirty foot within the walls: and to fix and build thereto an isle of the length of three score six foot from the pulpit to the gavell thereof: that every side wall be twenty-one foot high from the foundations upwards: every side wall and gavell three foot thick, and one of the gavelles four foot thick: with two sufficient penns (arches) in the side walls, one behind the pulpit and the other before the same, according to the measure of wideness of the isle: to have hewn windows both in side walls and gavells, according to the rule set down by the engineer: all the windows within and without to be of sufficient hewn work with one plaster saillze, and every one of them penn'd: all the cunzies (corners) to be of sufficient hewn work: the roof to be of three score cupples (rafters) or thereby, and every tree to be seven or nine inches in the square of sufficient fir timber: the Kirk and isle to be sarked (covered) with sufficient dales to be slaitted above: the rigging-stone to be put thereon sufficiently: the windows to be all sufficiently glassed with glass bands: and to make sufficient doors, with locks and bands, and to be casten within and without." For these operations Theophilus Rankine was to receive £10,000 Scots in five instalments, "the last when the whole work is fully compleat and the keys of the doors delivered."

The work went busily on all that year and the next. We notice in the Session's accounts a grant made in December, 1653, "to John Hunter, carpenter, to help him to buy a cloak for one yat was stollen from him as he was working at the New Kirk;" and in April, 1654, a grant "to Robert Woodburn who is lamed falling off the New Kirk." Towards the end of 1654 the slaters had begun to the roof, and the Session, as was the custom in these days, made them frequent allowances of drink-money. "To ye sclaters of the Kirk in drink-silver" occurs several times in the Church accounts.

While the outer fabric was thus rising, the internal arrangements were being also pushed on. An indenture for building the pulpit was signed on August 15th, 1653, by John Hunter, carpenter, and his men were still working and drinking in January, 1655. Other contracts for erecting seats, building the galleries, etc., were drawn up. By the spring of 1655 the work was near completion, and the Session were throwing in little addenda of their own: "a pig to keep oyll for the pulpit;" "two stooles for receiving the poores money;" "a sandglass;" "a psalm book;" "two water cloths;" and so on. On July 28th, 1655, Theophilus Rankine received his last instalment of the £10,000, and in March, 1656, the seats were allocated. On the 21st September of the same year the Communion was first celebrated within the new building.

Another step that had to be taken was the levelling of the Churchyard. "The heighest part," it was decided by the Magistrates, "sall be als (as) low or half a foot lower than the threshold of the Kirk door." When the ground had been levelled it was planted with trees, and enclosed by a dyke.

The account of the various charges in connection with the building of the church we here subjoin. It amounted altogether to £20,827 1s 0d in Scots money or about £1733 sterling.

"Account of the charges payed be the Toun of Ayr and be thair order, for buying the ground of ain churchyaird and place of burial—the building of the church and repairing the sameyn (same) within—filling up the ground of the said churchyaird and levelling thereof, as follows, viz. :—

Imp.—For the pryce of the ground of the said Church and Churchyard, to severall parties and persouns, as it was comprised by order of Collonel Allured, and thair aith taken by the said Collonel for the ground foresaid, payed therefor, as will appear by the several particulars, the soume of Threteen hundred fortie-three pound, fortine shilling, ...	£01,343	14	00
Itm.—Paid to Theophilus Rankine, conform to ane indenture, for building of the Church, and completing the haill stone work and slait and glass, Ten thousand pounds Scots money, ...	10,000	00	00
Itm.—To John Crawfurd, for woneing of stones and sand and lyme, Three hundred pounds, ...	00,300	00	00
Itm.—To Theophilus Rankine, for building of the Church-dyke and pavementing of the Church, Twa thousand nyne hundred threteen pounds, seven shilling	02,913	07	00
Itm.—For entries and the porche, ruiff and slaiting with doors and iron-work; in all Six hundred pounds, ...	00,600	00	00
Itm.—For three great lofts, and the Counsal loft, Twa thousand six hundred pounds, ...	02,600	00	00
Itm.—For the pulpit and the seat round about it with the portallis, payd to John Hunter, carpenter, Six hundred pounds,	00,600	00	00
Itm.—For thriescore pewes, One thousand twa hundred pounds, ...	01,200	00	00
Itm.—For the schollares' seat, and ane place for the elements, One hundred and fyftie pounds, ...	00,150	00	00

Itm.—For lime and hair for plaistering the Church and workmanship thereof, One hundred and three score pounds,...	£00,160	00	00
Itm.—For dailles for entering the Church, Seaven hundred pounds, ...	00,700	00	00
Itm.—For levelling the Church-yard, and laying ane sinck, Twa hundred and three score pounds,...	00,260	00	00
	£20,827	01	00

The interior of the Old Church has not been greatly altered since it was built, but some changes have been made. The Magistrates sit now in front of the Merchants' Loft and no longer in a gallery of their own. Their original Loft was a semicircular projection between the Lofts of the Sailors and the Merchants. Behind their pews was "the schollares' seat," mentioned in the preceding account. The Loft was entered by an outside stair which has also been removed.

The Kirk Session and Presbytery used to meet in an enclosure at the back of the Merchants' Loft, but this has been taken away and the space filled up with pews.

Another curious feature of the building was an old ship which was suspended over the Sailors' Loft. The manner of its introduction was noteworthy. In 1662 "some of the seamen, pretending to have had power and warrant from the Magistrates," hung a ship above their gallery. For this misdeed they were summoned before the Council, "acknowledged thar offence, and was heartie sorie for it." The Magistrates were for removing the ship forthwith, but the sailors and mariners of the Burgh came forward, "humbly craving that, as the said schip was now taken down by authoritie, that the Counsell wold be pleised for up-puting of the said schip again by thair power and authoritie." The crave was granted, and the ship hung up again. In 1802 it had fallen

into decay and another took its place. The latter was removed some years ago and stands now in the Carnegie Museum.

Other alterations have been the addition of a vestry, the removal of the "laitron" or reader's desk, and the re-seating of the Church. The photograph of the interior, which is reproduced on the opposite page was taken some years ago, when an organ was about to be introduced.

The only remaining point to be noticed in connection with the Old Church is the approach known now as the Kirk Port. It was called in old days the Friars' Vennel, and led to the Water of Ayr. The archway was erected in 1654, and is the "porche" mentioned in the building account. There were two other entrances into the Churchyard, the one from Shewalton yards which was shut in 1670, and the other from the close behind the Union Bank, which was built up in recent years.

But we must return to the Mill Vennel. Beginning about the site of the Moravian Church, and extending up the street a little way were the Barns of Ayr. These were the grain-stores of the community and attached to them were a kiln and yard. Further up the Vennel in all likelihood was the Hospital of the town. This was not a Hospital, it should be explained, in the modern sense of the term. It was rather a refuge for the destitute. No mention is made of the site which it occupied, but it is very probable that the building which is now styled the Old Poorhouse, and which was erected in 1755, stood on or near the Old Hospital. A little higher still stood the Mill.

From early times the ground between the Mill and the present Station appears to have been occupied by various quarries. But these have now all been filled up. Above them and on the ground where Union Buildings stand at present lay the Fauldbacks. Here was held the Nowt or Cattle Market. A road following the line of Alloway Street

INTERIOR OF OLD CHURCH.

led up to the Fauldbacks from the Kyle Port, and was known as the Cow Vennel.

We have thus made a circuit of the old town, noticing on the way the chief buildings of the period. A few other points deserve to be noticed before we pass from this part of the subject.

There are several public wells mentioned by name in the old records. There was St. John's Well which lay near St. John's Kirk, and which was re-discovered not long ago by the present proprietor of the Fort Castle. There was also the Tolbuith Well at the head of the Sandgate which remained in use till recent years. Below these on the South Quay was the Pat Well. We have noticed already the Friars' Well. Another often referred to stood on the grounds of the Black Friars and was known as St. Katherine's Well. It was famed for its medicinal qualities. Above the Auld Toure at the Townhead was another which was largely resorted to. There were also of course private wells in the gardens of many of the houses. The public wells were watched by the authorities, and preserved as far as possible from pollution. In 1589 it was enacted "that their be na wesching maid at Saint Johnneis Well nor ner (near) the Kirk dyke, and that no pannis be dippit thereintill under ye pain of escheiting (forfeiting) of ye pannis and tubbis and uther vescheill (vessels) that sal happin to be apprehendit with the persoun contravenar." Similarly it was ordained in 1610 "that na claithis or uther geir, undris or uthris, be wessin (washed) in ony tyme heireftir at St. Katherine's Well, becaus the samen is usit to sic medenis (sick maidens') drink for the maist pert, and therefore aucht to be halden clere and undefiled." The various wells, it should be added, were furnished with leather buckets.

There were four fords across the river; one from the Quay at the Ratton Hole; another at the foot of the Sandgate to which the Wattir Vennel led down; a third from a

spot above the Old Bridge, which was reached by Gadgirth's Vennel; and a fourth already noticed, known as the Doecot Ford.

The general appearance of the town was quaintly irregular. Tenements of all shapes and sizes were ranged together. Here were the houses of the county gentry with their high castellated fronts, and there in close proximity a roof of thatch. Some of the buildings were planted with their gables to the street; others had overhanging balconies; others projected as outshots. Closes and wynds named after their owners ran back from the main thoroughfare, the houses within them being entered by outside stairs and furnished with little gardens behind. All along the Sandgate and the High Street were the booths or shops of the merchants. They were covered wooden erections standing close to the walls, which remained open during the day and were "steikit" at night.

We have few data to inform us about the population of the town in this period. In 1610, we learn from the Session Books, "the plague of pestilence did suip away two thousand souls." The accounts of this visitation are so deplorable that we may suppose one in four or one in five to have been taken away; which would give us a population of eight or ten thousand. In 1690 when the hearth-tax was about to be imposed, a census of houses was taken, and there were found to be 1239 chimnies or hearths, "poor pensioners and people under charity not includit." If we allow five persons to each hearth, we have a sum total of over six thousand. The population accordingly appears to have gone back in the course of the century. This doubtless was largely due to the troubled character of the times. Trade and commerce were similarly affected. It was not till the next century was well on its course that the town fully recovered from the ordeals through which it had passed.

CHAPTER III.

MUNICIPAL AND SOCIAL LIFE.

THROUGHOUT the period with which we are dealing the government of the Burgh was in the hands of a Provost, two Bailies, and seventeen Councillors. They were elected yearly at a meeting of the burgesses. The chief officials were provided with salaries. In the middle of the seventeenth century the Provost received £20, the two Bailies £10 each, the Treasurer £5, the Dean of Guild £5, the Procurator Fiscal £3, and the Master of Works £3. When the Provost rode to Edinburgh as Commissioner for the Burgh, he was provided with a horse and footmantle, and forty shillings for each day he was away.

The Council meetings were held generally on Wednesday at 10 o'clock. This in the early years of the century was immediately after morning prayers in the Church. Attendance at the meetings was made compulsory. To promote the conduct of business it was enacted in 1610 "yat nane speak in Counsall till thai be first inquyrit and demandit be the Provest, under the pane of 12s."

The rights of citizenship were jealously guarded by the Magistrates. Up till 1595 a burgess ticket cost £1 13s 4d, and a guild brother's £3. But in that year the sums were raised, the former to £10, and the latter to £20. In 1616 they were still further increased, the one to £20, and the other to £40. The heirs and relatives of former burgesses

were admitted on easier terms. When any one was made a citizen, he took in the first place the oath of fidelity to the town. In early times the taking of the oath was followed by a service of "spyce and wyne." But about the middle of the seventeenth century another usage was adopted. The newly made burgess laid upon the Council table "ane sufficient pyk (pike)," and the burgess and guild brother "ane sufficient fixed musquet with a pair of bandileers (pouch-belts)." These arms were stored up in the Town's Magazine.

The burgess had the right of selling all goods of native production, while the guild brother had the additional privilege of selling foreign imports. None but citizens might exercise any craft within the Burgh. In 1656 an outsider was fined £20 for selling his wares in the town, and thus "usurping a freeman's trade." If a burgess had been guilty of any grave offence the order went forth that his ticket should be "ryven at ye Merkat Croce."

In addition to the ordinary, there were the honorary burgesses. Whenever any person of distinction arrived, he was presented with the freedom of the burgh. The entertainment which followed was always handsome. Confeits (confections), almounts (almonds), figs, suggir, spyce, claret, candy wine, and aquavite served to make up the menu on such occasions.

The trades and professions of the inhabitants were many and various. One of the oldest classes of the community was the sailors. The Mariners' society was founded in 1581, and in 1587, in point of "good schippis and skilfull and able marinaris," Ayr was said to be second only to Leith and Dundee. In 1655 the Merchant Booth-keepers formed themselves into a company. They were closely bound up with the mariners, as many of their goods came from abroad. Wine was imported from France, and wood from Holland and Norway: and there was also trade with Ireland,

Virginia, and the West Indies. Here is part of the will of William Kelso, a merchant burgess of the town, who died in 1650. It serves to illustrate the extensive shipping and commercial interests of the period. "The defunctis pairt of that schipe callit the James of Ayr with her ornamentis, apparelling, and furnitour, all estimat worth £666 13s 4d.* Item the defunct had the saxteen pairt of the stock of tobacco within the saime, newly come fra the Isle of Barbadus, worth £1533 6s 8d. Item the defunct had the eight pairt of that bark callit the Mai-floure, with the furnitour, worth £251. Item, within the same bark, ane but of seck (sack) and ane half, worth £272. Item, certain salt in the defunctis buith, worth £960. Item, sax ball (bales) of French wrytting-paper, worth £250. Item, certain cordage in the buith under the defunctis dwelling hous, worth £533 6s 8d. Item, the defunctis half of a fyscher-boat, worth £50. Item, certain tobacco in the hands of certane persones in Barbadus, worth £124. Item, ane cutt of Spanisch cloath, worth £50. Item, twentie nettis, £20. Item, fyve muskettis with their bandeleris, all worth £30." †

Mining was an industry in which others were engaged. In 1593 the export of coal was forbidden, because of the "derth and skantness of fewall." In 1611 a coal-heugh was opened "at the seasyd and wattersyd," somewhere probably near the site of the barracks. Shafts had been already sunk in the barony of Alloway.

The Incorporated Trades were another old institution of the town. There were in 1647 the hammermen or smiths, the coopers, the squaremen or carpenters, the weavers, the glovers, the cordinars or shoemakers, the

* The sums here and elsewhere mentioned were reckoned in Scots money. The Scots coinage was one twelfth of the value of sterling money. £100 Scots was equivalent to £8 6s 8d sterling. The real value of the old sterling, it should be added, was almost double that of the present currency.

† Records of Burgh of Prestwick. (Maitland Club.) App.

waukers or fullers, and the tailors. Other craftsmen we have noticed were the lytster or dyer, the paynter, the wricht, the gless-wricht, the brasier, the mason, the sklaitter, the potter, the candlemaker, the swordslipper or cutler, the saddler, the skinner, the tanner, the quheil-maker, and the tinker. There were those also who provided the creature comforts: the baxter or baker, the flesher, the brewer, and the maltman. There was the mailman too, or farmer, with his pleuchmen, stabellers, and servants; and the miller with his men. The quarriers and barrowmen are also mentioned, and the gardeners and land-labourers who tilled the soil. The common herd was another member of society who is frequently referred to in the Town Records. He led out the cattle of the burgesses to the Burrowfield, and watched them during the day. There were also, of course, the learned professions. The law was represented by the notar and advocat; and medicine by the apothecary, the schankmender, the leech, and the chirurgeon or surgeon. The latter individual was provided with a special seat in the church. The Session "ordayned ane seat to be chosen in ye kirk quhairin James Harper, chirurgeon, shall sitt on Sabbath dayis and uther dayis, convenient that he may be fund easilie quhen any hes adoe with him, without truble ather to ye minister or heareris of the Word." The surgeon acted also as the common barber. In 1608 the Magistrates forbade all others "to schaiff or poill (poll) ony persoun within the burgh but onlie ye said James, he beand ressonable and also gude chaip for his panis (pains)."

The hours of labour and rest were regulated by the Magistrates. The hour of rising was four in the morning, while work was put aside at six at night. The signals were given by two common minstrels, the piper and drummer. These officials were paid to "gang dayly ilk day through the toun, evening and morning, and gif they failzie (fail), they to ressav na meit that day they gang not; sua (so)

being that they be not stayed be (by) the intemperatness of the weddir."

Since the time of William the Lion, Saturday had been kept as the market day. But in 1690 it was changed to Friday, Saturday having been found unsuitable because of "peoples aither staying lait in the burgh, or going home unseasonablie and unfit for ye work of the ensewing Sabbath." There were two annual fairs in the town, the one in Midsummer at the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and the other at Michaelmas. Each lasted for a week, but the former was the more important.

The price and quality of food in these times were regulated by the Magistrates. The "penny laif"—it was ordained in 1589—was to contain twelve ounces, "and na uther kind of material but quheit to be used in baking." Shortbread, it was fixed later, was "to be weill and sufficientlie bakin with buttir, to contein fourteen unce, and to be sauld for 12d., and na dar (dearer). Ilk pek thereof to haif (have) in it ane pund of buttir, and to be bakin of clene flour without ony mixtor of uther cornis." Cakes of flour and oatmeal were another common article of diet. The hucksters were instructed to "mak the kaik of bread of sufficient clean meill, but (without) dust or seids, to be sauld at threttie pennies the caik, quhilk wilbe ten pennies the fardle." The fleshers exposed their meat in their various shops, as at present, and one of the Bailies went round the town "serching out of ye blawne flesche." The common drink of the people was ale, and the best ale was "to be sauld for 12d., and na dar, ye pynt."

Even in the matter of dress the Magistrates had something to say. In 1610 an Act was passed forbidding single women to dress like those who were married. They were "not to were ony kynd of busk or attyre upon their heids, but only curcheyis (kerchiefs) with hingand (hanging) down lappis, sua (so) that thai may be decernit fra mareit woman,

under the pain of aucht dayis warding in the Tolbuith." Matrons only, it would appear, were permitted to indulge in a mutch or a bonnet.

How the men were dressed we may gather from this inventory of date 1600. The burgess in question was evidently a person of quality. He had "ane clok of Loundan (London) broun claith, lynit with taffatie in the breist, with three passments (strips of lace) about: ane doublet of grogram (coarse silk) taffatie, with ane pair of figourit (embroidered) velvet breiks; ane coat all passmented thicker; ane pair worsit schankis (stockings) with gartanis; ane hat and ane string; ane sark and ane sark neck (collar) of cambrage (cambric) with sewit naipkin (cravat), and ane bonnet mutche (night-cap)." Then comes his armour: "ane hagbut (gun), ane sword, ane pair of pistollets, ane jak (short coat of mail), ane steil bonnet, ane sadell, ane brydell, with the stirrep irnes (irons); girthes, curpell (crupper), and tie; with buitts and sacks (leggings), and spurris." In these stirring times weapons were a necessary part of a man's outfit. He seldom went abroad without his sword or his heavy staff. But, as time went on, it was found necessary to suppress this practice. The Magistrates, in 1609, forbade the citizens "to bere or weir ony battoun or gugeon (cudgel) of tymmer for stryking, abusing, or invading therewith of ony nybor."

The furniture of the houses was not elaborate. The kitchen was generally the chief room and contained most of it. Here is the description of the house of a well-to-do burgess in 1596. There is no luxury about it, but it breathes an air of comfort and warmth. "Ane meit armorie (safe), ane court-buird, ane lang setil-bed, ane mekil greit kist, ane irin pott, ane irin chimlay (grate), ane cruik, ane tangis, ane chair, ane spinning-quheil, ane girdill, ane lattoune pekill (brass vessel), ane flesh fat (pot), ane vescheil-buirde (rack) with plaitis and trunchors (trenchers), ane

laidill (ladle), ane elne-cruik (instrument for measuring), ane pair of peper cornes (pepper grinders), ane calf (chaff) bed, ane windo cloth (blind), ane feddir bouster (bolster) with twa feddir coddis (pillows), twa sowit codwairis (pillowslips), ane covring (coverlet), ane straik (grain-measurer), ane rowing (rowan) tree, ane pair scheitis." The crook was the iron hook on which the cooking vessels were hung over the fire. The rowan tree was placed above the back door, and was supposed to be a charm against witchcraft. The old rhyme ran :—

> Rowan tree and red threid
> Puts the witches to their speid.

Here again are the plenishings of the house of the citizen, whose dress we have already described. It indicates a man in higher social position than the preceding. "Ane furneist feddir bed with sheets, blanketts, codds, bolsteris, and ane caddy (pillowslip), ane basing (bason), ane laver, ane plait, ane trunchor, ane pynt stoup, ane chopene stope, ane mutchkin stop, ane salfer (salver), ane dische, ane saltfat (salt cellar), ane tangis, ane porring-iron (poker), ane ladle, ane cruik, ane spitt, ane mekil pat, ane pan, ane chymnay, ane guis (goose) pan, ane frying pan, ane pestell and mortrar (mortar), ane dozen silver spounes, ane fut hall-buirde, ane compter-buird (desk), ane stand-bed, ane mekil kist and forme, ane lang-settill, ane pair of courtangis (curtains), a coffer, ane meit armorie, ane Bybill, ane steill glass (mirror), ane compass, ane nicht glass, ane astrolaby (telescope), ane windsel-cart (chart), ane cors (cross) staff." The compass and other nautical instruments suggest that their owner had some connection with the sea.

The little gardens which lay at the back of most of the houses were largely subject to the ravages of stray poultry. In 1690 a protective resolution was passed. Considering the damage done "through coks and hens going upon thack houses and taking and destroying of the thack with

their feitt, beiks, and likeways through their going and fleeing into yeards and spoiling and ryving up the ground thereof where seed are now sowen ; and likeways the great dammadge they sustine through geese, their poysoning and destroying of the gress that noe uther beasts can eat the same, therefore the Magistrates and Counsell doe hereby discharge the haill inhabitants of this burgh to keep any hens, coks, or goose in tyme coming, except what they keep within cavies or in other hennies within their house." Similar precautions, it may be added, were taken with regard to vagrant dogs. Any that were found on the streets after eight o'clock at night were ordered "to be hangit."

The town in these early days was not remarkable for its cleanliness. The authorities were constantly passing enactments that the streets should be kept in better order. "Middings, intrallis of beasts, and fishguts" were thrown indiscriminately upon the causeway. The consequence of this state of matters, which was common everywhere else, was that towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century a plague devastated the chief towns of the county. It was apparently a form of typhus, and very deadly. About 1585 it broke out in Johnston, and the Ayr Magistrates began hurriedly to set their town in order. The Ports which had become ruinous were repaired, and the vennels and back-dykes closed up. No "traveller, cadgear, or creilman (packman)," was permitted to enter the town. Any who came in otherwise than by the Ports were to be scourged and branded on the cheek, while any suspected as infectious might there and then be "hangit to ye deyth." The town was divided into several quarters, each being under the supervision of a quarter master, and a nightly watch was maintained at the several Ports.

Through the observance of such precautions the plague was warded off for several years. The Magistrates learned thus the value of sanitation, and the conditions of life

became somewhat cleanlier. Formerly swine had been permitted to roam over the town, picking up a living from the garbage-heaps. Now they were forbidden to go about at large, and if caught in the act were to be slain. The "middings" on the streets were not permitted to lie longer than forty-eight hours. It was ordained that they should be removed to the hills "for quensing and stainching of the blawing of the sand." In 1590 a regular cleaner was appointed who went round the town with "ane strong and substantious quheil-barrow."

But about the beginning of the next century the pest again drew near. In 1600, it is said, two pedlars came to one of the Ports and asked permission to enter. John Welsh, who was then assistant minister, chanced to be on the spot, and suspecting them to be tainted, "Baillie," he said, "cause these men to put on their packs again and be gone; for if God be in heaven, the plague is in these packs." The men thus repulsed went on to Cumnock; but they had not been long in that place before the pestilence broke out among its inhabitants, and raged so fiercely that "the living could scarcely bury the dead."

Another source of danger lay in the goods which were imported by sea. In 1602 a vessel sailed into the harbour, laden with hides. She had come from Ireland which was then plague-stricken. For some time neither crew nor cargo were admitted into the burgh. They remained in quarantine under the sandhills until the moon had changed. Then having cleansed the hides, and having washed themselves and changed their garments, they were suffered to enter the town.

At length, however, the dreaded catastrophe occurred. In the summer of 1606 the disease broke out in the burgh. A public meeting was held in the Tolbooth, partly for humiliation before the Almighty, who had "plesit to veseit this sinfull toun with the seikness of ye pest. justlie deservit

for ye sinnis thereof," and partly to devise remedial measures. That part of the Burrowfield known as "the foul muir" was set apart for those who were actual victims, or who were under suspicion. Booths and lodges were erected for the sufferers, and great caldrons set up for cleansing "the foull geir." Any that left the moor without permission were to be consigned to the stocks, or "brunt with ane hait irn on the chyk." Victuals and coals were sent out to the booths, and, what is still more curious and characteristic of the age, the morals of the patients were strictly supervised. The officials who attended to the caldrons were to see that there was no impropriety in speech or behaviour among the sick people "under ye pane of deid."

In the town itself the work of disinfection was carried on without pause. Special cleaners were brought down from Glasgow, who made a thorough purgation of the town. If any refused to give up the keys of their houses, the cleaners were authorised to break open the doors. For every door they disinfected they received 8s., for every pound of silver 14d., for every kettleful or caldronful of clothes in the town, 6s. 8d., and for every kettleful on the moor, 13s. 4d.

The plague began on the 30th of July, and it lasted till the close of the year. The school which had been closed in the interim was then re-opened, and the Kirk Session, whose meetings had also been suspended, entered upon their labours again. The minute of their first meeting opens thus: "At the brut (burgh) of Aire, the 29 of December, 1606, the Session being convenit after the Lord's rod was removit." It was during this visitation that two thousand of the inhabitants were said to have been swept away.

In 1647 the plague returned to the burgh, and from September to December of that year the town was convulsed with excitement. Lazarettos were re-erected on the

Burrowfield, cleaners engaged, and all the old precautions employed. At this time the community was imbued with a strong religious spirit. Mr. Adair was sole minister in the town, and overflowing, as was his manner then, with emotion and zeal. When the plague had effected an entrance, the inhabitants sank into deep dejection. The calamity was regarded by all as a "messinger of the Lord's wrath." Mr. Adair, taking up this attitude, preached on a certain Sabbath from Zech. xii., 12—"The land shall mourn, every family apart." He suggested to the people that they should meet in their various societies, and make confession of their sins. The proposal was approved by the Session, and eagerly carried out. First met the Session themselves, and individually and as a whole acknowledged the neglect of their duties. Then the Magistrates, assembling in the Tolbooth, bewailed their transgression of the Covenant, their unfaithfulness to the oath of burgess-ship, and other shortcomings. The Trades met next and were addressed by Mr. Adair, who urged them "to assay in speciall manner the great craft and trade of unfained faith and repentance, and try the gaine thereof." They then separated, each Trade going to its own place, and lamenting its iniquities. The coopers, for example, acknowledged that they had broken all the commandments, but especially the fourth. The tailors admitted that many a Sabbath they had slipped carelessly past the church, and that on others they had slept in time of preaching. The confession of each corporation is divided into ten or eleven heads.

After going through the Trades in succession, and praying with each, Mr. Adair met with the Merchants and Sailors. The Merchants he exhorted "to assay the great traffick of buying from Christ," and the Sailors "to studie to know the cart (chart) and compasse of the Word and Spirit of God, according to quhilk, contrarie to all winds of tentationes and tyds of sinne and corruption, they may by unfained faith and

repentance adventer for the true gaine, and at last obtaine the harbrie (in the spight of all pirots and spiritual robbers) and rest of the people of God." The two bodies then retired like the others, and poured forth the tale of their sins. The merchants said they had made "no conscience in buying and selling," but had called "that quhilk was evill good, and that quhilk was good evill." Some of the sailors declared that they had made "ungodlie and unlawful gaine by alluring and cariing of children to the West Indies:" others "that in their travells they did verie much incline to that idolatrous worship of the messe (mass)," and "that the first thing that caused them quyt it wes the swearing of the Covenant in this land."

The remaining societies in the town were thereafter convened, and acted in a similar fashion. The entire proceedings occupied a week, and next Sunday the various confessions were read from the pulpit by Mr. Adair. It was resolved by the Session that they should be engrossed in the Session Books "for the use of posteritie," and there accordingly they stand for our edification. The story of the week was rehearsed to the Synod, who declared themselves "much satisfied and refreshed with the course yat wes takin." The plague in the end proved fatal only to thirty-four persons, but it would be many a day before the flood of penitential feeling it had excited was forgotten in the burgh.

There were no regular facilities for correspondence with other places in the earlier portion of the period we are describing. Letters came and went by special messengers. But in 1663 we hear of the institution of a post to Edinburgh. Two "foot-poasts" were appointed by the Magistrates to go week about between Edinburgh and Ayr, leaving Ayr on the Monday and returning on the Saturday. The freemen of the town were to pay "for a single letter twa shilling Scotis, the packet four shilling:" the country people "for

the single letter thrie shilling, and for ane packet sex shilling."

The institution of a post led to the circulation of newsletters. These were sheets, not printed but written, which were supplied to the burgh by gentlemen of the county who had a residence in Edinburgh, and could make some use of their pens. Robert Crawfurd of Crawfurdston was "agent and furnisher of newsletters" in 1675, and he was succeeded next year by John Cunningham of Enterkine. The newsletter was followed, and in the end superseded, by the newspaper. In 1678 the Magistrates allowed £60 Scots to Robert Muir, postmaster in Edinburgh, for sending "the Weiklie Gazet and newsletters for the space of ane yeir."

Education was provided for the parish by two schools, the Grammar Schule and the Sang Schule. The Sang Schule was the more elementary establishment of the two. The master who was appointed in 1583 was "to teiche the youthe in the art of musik sufficientlie, and to learne yame to sing, als to play upon the pynattis (spinet) and uther instrumentis according to his knawledge, and to learne the barnis that singis to read and write Inglis, and sall sing in ye Kirk ye for (four) partis of music, beginning ilk Sunday at ye second bell." The fees in 1597 were 6s 8d for singing lessons, and 13s 4d for lessons on the spinet, in addition to which the master received £20 from the town. By 1670 his salary had risen to £60.

The Sang School was for a time the girls' school, and the Grammar School that of the boys. In 1600 the Magistrates ordained "ye lasses yat leirnis to reid and write to be put to ye maister of ye Sang Schule to yat effect, becaus it is not seemlie yat sic lasses suld be in ye Grammar Schule amang the laids." So too in 1605, "all maill children are to be taichit only in ye Grammar Scule, except sic as plesis to learn musik at ye music-scule." But as time went on the Sang Schule changed its name and its character.

It came to be known as the Scots School, and its master as the Scots Doctor. Music, instead of being the chief branch, became subordinate to Scots, or, as we would now say, to English.

The Grammar Schule was a very old institution, and its interests were jealously guarded by the town. In 1582 it was enacted "yat na scoles, Inglis or uther, sal be halden within yis toun in ony tyme coming be ony particular person or uther, bot only be the commoun scolemaister of ye toun." All children had access to the Grammar School, and they were to "be learnit baythe Inglis and Latyne at ye optioun and plessure of the parents." There were two teachers in the school, the "scolemaister" and his assistant the "doctor." The dominies in these days looked forward not infrequently to be clergymen, and the master who was appointed in 1605 was enjoined "not to studdie theologie." In an emergency, however, the schoolmaster would often relieve the minister by taking one of his services.

Every Sunday, morning and afternoon, the dominie walked to church with his pupils, and sat beside them in "the schollars' dasks." The children were expected "to tak notes of the sermon," and when they returned it was the custom of the master to "crave an accompt."

In 1586 the salary of the master was £26 13s 4d. In 1670 it amounted to £200. The assistant was originally paid in food as well as in money. In 1591 he received "quarterlie 12d of ilk townis barne with his meit about of ilk barne ane day successive, and of ilk landward barne 2s quarterlie." But this arrangement as to his food was soon superseded by an increase in the fees. The salaries of the teachers rose steadily throughout the seventeenth century, the assistant in 1670 receiving £133 6s 8d. There was in addition the Candlemas offerings. On Candlemas day the scholars brought gratuities, great and small, to their teachers. He or she whose gift was the largest was hailed the king or

queen of the School. If half a crown was laid on the table, the master cried out, Vivat: if a crown, Floreat bis: if a gold piece, Gloriat. The offerings were divided among the head-master, the doctor, and the master of the Sang Schule.

When the Presbytery visited the Grammar Schule in 1642, they regretted "the keiping back of some weill-disposed schollers becaus of the dullness and ignorance of others." Those who were "weill-disposed" proceeded from the School to the University. Of the pupils of the Grammar Schule who rose to distinction in the seventeenth century, the most notable was Robert Boyd of Trochrig, who became Principal of the University of Glasgow. He and his brother, Wodrow tells us, were sent by their mother to the "Grammar School at Air," and when they had been taught "the foundations of the Latine tongue," they were taken to Edinburgh.

The weak spot in the education of these days was the study of English. If one is to judge by the old records, neither spelling nor grammar was taught with any accuracy. The language itself was at this time in a somewhat fluid state, but it is strange that clerks, who were chosen no doubt for their learning, should exhibit such ignorance as they do.

There was no Robert Burns in these days. The only local poet we have discovered was a scribe of the Town Council, who amidst his labours in transcribing the minutes found time on one occasion to break into an elegy which he inserted in the minute-book—

> "In all this world that I doe ken,
> There are but thrie,
> There are but thrie,
> There are but thrie unhappy men."

If this be a fair example of the poetical attainments of the period, we need not mourn that nothing more has come down to us.

The recreations in which the people indulged are another interesting feature of the social life of the times. There

were public sports which were encouraged and promoted by the magistrates. These were held for the most part in what we now know as the Low Green. The grass of the common "from the Kirkyard (St. John's) dyke to the Blackburne" was let for pasture, but always on the understanding that "the pastyme of the honest men in gayming" should be reserved according to use and wont. There it was that the wappinschaws or displays of skill in arms were yearly held. The earliest of such competitions was in archery. Butts stood on ground "besouth of the sandhills" for common practice, and at the annual wappinschaw a papingo was erected. This was a wooden bird, resembling a parrot, which was set on a high pole and shot at by the archers. The papingo was daily bedizened. In 1594 the Magistrates spend £5 on "Taffetie for the beird (beard) of the papingoe."

The bow was ultimately superseded by the hagbut or gun. In 1598, at the request of the youth of the burgh, "ane silver hagbut about ane ounce weight or thereby" is presented by the Town Council to be shot for yearly. The good marksman in these days was a useful member of society. It was laid down, however, that rifle-practice should not take place on the streets. There was to be "no shuting and dilashing (discharging) of hagbuts and pistolettis on the foregait."

Another of the pastimes of the people was golf. There is only one reference to the game in the Council Records, but it goes to prove that it was a common recreation. In 1587 Andrew Blackater was "apprehended reid-hand with reseting of ane gad of irn (iron-club) fra David Ingrames buyth dure and certain goff ballis." Other games are incidentally mentioned. There was football and "catching of the ball:" "barley-breaks," which was played among the stacks of a cornyard, and means probably "breaking a parley:" "tig-about," some kind of tig: and "wadds," a game of forfeits.

The administration of the law was in the hands of the Town Council, but they were zealously aided, as we shall see later, by the authorities of the Church. Full power was delegated to the Magistrates to adjudicate on cases of slaughter, mutilation, theft, and other offences committed within the burgh, and the townsmen were exempted from attendance upon any other court. The Provost and Bailies in these days did not bear the sword in vain. It was a dangerous thing to dispute their authority. In 1662 a riot took place in the town, and the rioters, after having been imprisoned for some time, were ordained "to come from the Tolbuith to the mercat croce upon ane mercat day, bair-foted with ane cord about everie ane of their neks, led be the hand of the hangman with ane paper upon everie ane of their foirheids, beiring this inscription, viz., for John Cauldwell (the ringleader), beiring thir words, 'Beholders tak example. Feir God and obey your Lawful Magistrates:' and the rest with this inscription, 'For Mutinie and Disobedience to Magistrates.'"

The lockman or hangman was a very important, but at the same time a very unpopular personage. In 1595 it was enacted "that nane injure the lockman in word or deid." When the Magistrates held an assize, he attended in an official capacity, and after the sentence had been pronounced, he was called upon to repeat it in the court. It was his duty to see that it was duly carried out. His emoluments are given us in a minute of 1674. He had "ten pund of yearly pension, five merks for cleansing of the calsey (causeway), ane long coat, ane pair of breaches, ane pair of hois, ane pair of schoes, ane groat of ilk brewar, with ane hous and ane yeard; twelve shillings quhen any sall be put in the jogs: half ane crown for whipping; and three pund for ilk execution."

We shall deal with the minor offences that were common in the town when we come to describe the ecclesiastical life.

Of graver crimes the two most frequently occurring were assault and theft. At the beginning of our period cases of the former are numerous, but as time goes on they diminish. The offenders were visited now with fines, now with incarceration, and again with confinement in the stocks. The stocks stood in the Sandgate close to the Tolbooth.

The prevalence of theft gave the Magistrates greater trouble. Thieves, pykers, and cutpurses were constantly in evidence. They became so common at the close of the sixteenth century that the severest penalties were inflicted. A resetter of stolen goods was banished from the town, and informed that if she returned she would be "drownit to ye deith." In 1589 a man was proved to have stolen "three great pocks full of quheyt (wheat) from a bark, a greit sek (sack) full of quheyt, three peks quheyt mair, and ane hogheid of hering." By a majority of votes he was sentenced "to be hangit to ye deyth." A minority pled for "mercy." They urged that instead of being hanged the man "suld be scurgit, brunt on the cheyk, his lug nalit to ye croce, and baneist ye toun." Truly in these days the quality of mercy was strained.

The sentences passed on thieves became gradually less severe. By the close of the seventeenth century scourging was the penalty commonly inflicted. But this, it should be added, was no trifling punishment. In 1690 a thief who had been convicted of stealing "bear" or barley was sentenced to be scourged after this manner. He was "to begin at the Sandgate, there to receave six whips by the lockman, six at the Mercat Cross, six at the Brigend, six at the Meall-mercat, six at the Old Tower, six at the Barnns gate, and to be returned back to the Bridge Port and there to receave other six." Such were the stringent measures by which the law was enforced. The transgressor was not released from its clutches till he had paid the uttermost farthing.

CHAPTER IV.

ECCLESIASTICAL LIFE.

In the period immediately preceding the Reformation when accusations of all sorts and kinds were being levelled at the Church, one of the main counts against her was that she had lost touch with the life of the people. In the period with which we have here to do the pendulum swung round to the opposite extreme. The Church came to be the most important factor in the national life. Not only did her history become synonymous with the history of the country, but there was no branch of the people's life, no ramification however minute, in which her influence was not felt. How this all-pervading ecclesiastical atmosphere affected the Parish of Ayr we shall now endeavour to describe.

The first change which the Reformers effected in the worship and government of the Church was the restoration of simplicity. This simplicity was conspicuous in the arrangements and furnishings of the Kirk of St. John. The walls within were for a long time bare and unadorned. Not till 1613 did the Magistrates resolve to "cast plaster and spargeon (daub) with quhyte lyme the haill wallis," and to "draw and write sic ressonis (designs) upoun ye wallis as ye ministeris sall direct." The "ressonis" chosen by the ministers would no doubt be the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments.

The body of the Church was not seated with fixed pews as at present, save in one part of it where stood the "scholars' dasks." The first to erect seats of their own were the Magistrates who in 1594 built themselves a loft. Their example was followed by the trades in 1603, and by the sailors in 1623. These lofts were reserved strictly for those who were entitled to a place in them. All others who wished to sit had to bring their seats with them. The women generally did so and came to Church with wooden stools in their arms. These stools—"mekil stuils"—gave the Session some trouble. In 1606 intimation was "ordained to be maid to all wemen yat has mekil stuils in the Kirk yat they tak them away, with intimation if they be not tane away, they salbe brokin." This edict came after a little to be forgotten, and scenes of disorder were frequent. The Session passed a minute accordingly, regretting "the misordor of the Kirk in tyme afore sermon quhen wemen came to heir the Word, yat cumming in to ye place quhair yair informall stuils or rather tubbes stuid, they troad upon uthers claythes and kuist (cast) down the stuils to the admiration of people and grieff to the teacher or reader. Thairfor in ane voice and consent ordainit yat intimation shall be made fra pulpit the next Sabbothe yat all sic stuils should be remuiffed, under the censure of the Session and destroying yame all, and if onye wald sit to bring with yame Flanders chairs for remuiffing." Feminine misconduct of this nature was on several occasions the subject of special legislation. In 1628 it was intimated "yat na misordor be in ye Kirk be wemen yat cumes in layt and dichtes yair feit upone utheris, bot as theye cume in to sit down in ye first roume theye cum to." As time went on, liberty was granted to individuals to set up pews of their own. When the present Old Church was built, seats were assigned to those who had contributed £12 Scots to the building fund. Round about the pulpit was a pew for "the faithers of

children quho are to baptise thair children, the collectors of the poor's monie and the visitors upon the Sabboth day, and old and infirme men."

There was daily service, both morning and evening, in the Church till well on in the seventeenth century. In 1621 it was arranged "that the common prayers on the oulk (week) dayis begin at sevin hoors in the morning daylie, and the preaching at a quarter afoir aucht; and the haill action of preaching to be endit afore nyne hoors in the morning." About 1650, when the influence of the Protesters was predominant, the daily service was discontinued, and its place taken by preachings on Tuesday and Thursday. During the Episcopal regime from 1662 to 1689 these week-day preachings were also dropped, much, it ought to be added, against the wish of the people.

The service on Sunday began at eight o'clock. The first bell rang at six, and roused the town. Just before eight the second bell sounded, and the people made their way into the Church. The preliminary part of the service was conducted not by the minister himself, but by an official called the reader. First of all the children were catechised in the face of the congregation. A psalm was then sung, the reader being also the precentor. The common prayers were next read, and a portion selected from the Scriptures. These exercises occupied about an hour. When they were concluded the third bell rang, and the minister himself appeared. He began by offering a prayer which was not read but "conceived." He then announced his text and proceeded with the sermon. The sermon was followed by a prayer of thanksgiving, and the whole service closed with the benediction.

Up till the middle of the seventeenth century the prayers were read, Knox's Liturgy being used. About that time extempore prayers became more common. The Ayr Session in 1642 desired the Presbytery to exhort their reader "to

conceave prayer," though at the same time they professed that "they did not condemn read prayers in the Church." By 1656, however, the practice of reading the prayers had fallen into disrepute. The duties laid upon the reader were "to conceive prayers, read the Scripture, and raise the psalme." Each year he received a gratuity of twenty merks "to buye ane goune."

In these days it was thought wise to fix a time limit for the sermon. A sandglass which emptied itself in half an hour was set up in the Church. On week days the preacher was allowed one turn of the glass, on Sundays two. Some of the extreme Covenanters objected to this "limiting of the Lord's mind by glasses," but the practice was very generally approved. In 1617 the Ayr Session passed a resolution "yat preaching and prayers and psalme be concluded all within the glasse." "For a sandglas, 13s 4d," is a common item in the Church accounts.

The morning service on Sunday lasted generally about two hours and a half, during which time the male part of the congregation remained standing. No one was permitted to leave the building till the service was over. Two elders were planted at the door to prevent "any from going out of the Kirk afore the blessing." In 1651 an unfortunate man was brought before the Session for having left the Church during the service. He pled "yat he was pained with a colick and could not stay." But his reason was not deemed sufficient. He was admonished "to carie himself better in tyme to come"!

The natural consequence of services so lengthy was that the much-suffering people became either very restless or very drowsy. But the authorities kept stern watch over them. All "laughing and kichering" were expressly forbidden. Mothers who brought young children were obliged to sit near the door, "that quhen thair bairns greetis theye maye be remuiffed." It was ordained "that they that stands

at the Kirk dore gathering the pure's alms shall have a white wand in their hand, and mark the behavior of the pepill how they heir ye word, and yat they admonish the unreverent hearars be choppin them with the wand." Several offenders were thus detected. Sundry young gentlemen were brought to book for "casting doun stanes fra the loft" at the people below. Marine Mirrie was found guilty of "dinging William Ritchart's dochter in the Kirk," and John M'Graine of "giffing a man a kuffe in ye bak." John Nicoll was reproved for "his abuse in the Kirk in tyme of preaching be trubling sundrie with nettells." John Neving was summoned before the Session for "trubling of his nybors in the Kirk in broding them with a prin." But John took high ground in the matter. He "compeirit and testified that he only wakinit his nybours." Sometimes, however, the disorder was more serious. In 1676 George Gabriel had to answer for his miscarriage "in taking old John Aird, the keeper of the Merchants' Loft, by the shoulder, and casting him back till his head knocked at the foot of the Session table."

The plate or "poor's dische" stood at the main door of the Kirk of St. John, and after the building of the Old Church, at the head of the Kirk Port. An elder was always stationed beside it, and the position was not a sinecure. The movements of the beggars who haunted the Churchyard had to be closely watched. In 1630 "a maisterfull beggir" was punished "for trubling ye poores dische." Another of the duties of the elder at the plate was the keeping of a quantity of small change for "wissiling" or exchanging purposes. If the people had not a coin small enough, they made application to him. But in 1628 this custom was suppressed, and the people themselves were instructed "to cum with small silver to ye dische." Another practice against which the Session had to lift up their voice was the putting of bad money into the plate. When the collections came

to be counted, there was invariably some spurious coinage to be reckoned with. Intimation was made in 1634 "yat nane presume to give to the poores dische false cunzie (coin) or tinklaris," and again in 1639 "that no trash or tinklers be given in to the poores almes be any persones, bot quhat is current for the tyme."

Fasts were of frequent occurrence. They were observed originally to mark some untoward event. "The great drouth," "the unseasonable frost," "the great inundatioun of wateris," "God's judgments fra ye heavens be storms of raine and wind," "the cruell pest," are examples of the causes for which fasts were kept. As time went on, they became very common. Any important public event justified the practice. "For success to the Princess' marriage," "for success to the army," "for a solid peace betuixt the kingdomes," were reasons for which the people fasted in Ayr. Nor was it merely a nominal observance. Although they did not abstain from food altogether, they were careful to restrict themselves to a simpler diet.

But the commonest season of fasting was before the Communion. On the preceding Sunday the abstinence began, and the rest of the week was "to be spendit in fasting and prayer." There was a quaint old custom that on the Tuesday or Thursday all those who were living at variance with one another should meet before the Session and be reconciled. "Persones at variance," it was enacted, "sall compeir upon Tuysday or Thursday after preaching to be reconciled, utherwayes not to be receaved to the Sacrament." The religious services in connection with the Sacrament underwent some change in the course of the period we are considering. Originally Saturday was the day of public preparation. Here for instance is the order followed in 1619. "Saterdaye, 12 Junii. Maister James Inglishe, minister at Daylie, at ye special ordinance of the Presbyterie teached at twa effer noon ye sermon of

preparation to ye Communion—Mat. v. cap. 6 v.—in respect of Mr. George Dunbar, lawful minister, his seikness." "Sondaye, 13 Junü. The said Maister James began ye sermone afore nyne in the morning, his text Gal. iiii. cap. 4 v., and efter sermone ministred the Communion to nyne tables, continewing till four efter noon. The same daye Maister Johnne Fergusson, minister at Ochiltree, about five hoors at evine teached quhill (till) seven upon Ex. cap. xix. 3 v. All the foresaid were done in great cumliness." After 1638 certain innovations were introduced. Instead of being on one day only, the Communion was celebrated on two successive Sabbaths. A diet of preparation was held on Thursday as well as on Saturday, and Monday was made a day of thanksgiving. But it is noteworthy that with the introduction of these changes the ordinance itself came to be less regularly observed. There was no Communion in Ayr from 1642 to 1647, nor again from 1649 to 1656.

Great crowds gathered to participate in the Communion service. In 1632 there were twelve tables, and a hundred and twenty persons at each table. The collection was always specially large. In 1638 it amounted on the first Sunday to £54, and on the second to £93. In later days the ordinance was unhappily associated with scenes of disorder and profanity. But in these times all care was taken to preserve its traditional solemnity.

The Communion elements were provided by the town. The wine used was claret, and extraordinary quantities were consumed. In 1649 the Magistrates spent £50 on "a hogheid of wyne to the Comunioun." Of the sacramental vessels then in use there is none now remaining. In 1661 the Session gave £92 "to buy two silver cupes for the use of the Kirk." These somehow or other disappeared; for in 1697 the Session reported to the Presbytery that "they have no Communion cups." It was not till 1722 that the four cups at present used in the Old Church were acquired.

Their quaich shape deserves to be noticed, there being only one other church in Scotland—Alvah, in Banffshire—which is in possession of the like.

Another old custom originally connected with the Communion was the catechising of the people. The beadle went through the parish shortly before the Sacrament, and warned the community to the examination. For his labours in this capacity he was presented annually with a new pair of shoes. There was unwillingness on the part of some to appear at the catechising. Each was separately questioned on the heads of the faith, and not only was the process trying, but a parishioner might have to wait some time before his turn came. In the days of John Welsh we hear of one Thomas Boyman who was warned to the examination, but answered, "The last year yat ye minister sed (catechised) me, I died of hunger: yairfor I wil obey na mair of his injunctionnis, and albeit I duel (dwell) in the parochin (parish), I wil obey na mair of his injunctionnis." It is needless to add that this blast of defiance to the authorities was very promptly suppressed. When the minister had satisfied himself of the doctrinal soundness of a parishioner, he gave him a ticket or token which admitted him to the Communion Table. This was of course not transferable, but the rule was sometimes broken. In 1641 William Smyth "confessed ingenuoslie that he gave his tiquet to his gudsister, quhilk he receaved from ye minister at his examination." Because, however, he had done so "in ignorance and simplicitie," he was dismissed with an admonition.

The various offices of the Church were all invested with publicity. Private baptism was an Episcopal innovation to which the Scottish Presbyterians offered a determined resistance. Except in cases of necessity, the child was always presented in the Church, and the rule was that this should be done "incontinent (immediately) efter ye birth at ye first ordinair tyme of preaching." The parents brought with them

witnesses or sponsors, the number of these being restricted to "twa or thrie at ye maist." It was necessary that the father should be able to give some account of the Christian faith. We hear of several who were found wanting when thus examined. William Andro, for instance, described as "ane ignorant creature not haiffing (having) his belief (creed) and refussing to present his bairne," was ordained "within fourtein dayis to learn the Lord's Prayer, belief, and commands (commandments), to saye perfytelie under the pane of 40s." It was enacted in 1650 that for each baptism the precentor should receive 6s., and the beadle 2s.

The ecclesiastical formalities attending a marriage were stricter than at present. As soon as a couple desired matrimony, they attended a meeting of Session, declared their intentions, and asked that their names might be proclaimed. This was termed the contract. Each party at the same time deposited a security, called the consignation, as a pledge that he and she respectively would fulfil the agreement. Sometimes it was a sum of money, sometimes a ring. If either party broke the contract, the consignation was forfeited: if the contract was kept, it was returned. The next act of the Church was to proclaim the banns, and this was done on three consecutive Sundays. The precentor received 12s for reading them, and the beadle 2s for his trouble in the matter. In exceptional cases the proclamation might be made on one day only, but a special fee was exacted for this privilege. In 1691 it was fixed at a rix dollar (£2 18s), which was handed over to the fund for the poor.

The law of the Church was that if there were no impediments in the way, the marriage should take place within forty days after the third proclamation. Often of course the agreement was broken. In 1680 we have a case of both parties resiling. Janet Scott who had been proclaimed with John Smith withdrew from the contract, "because, she affirmed, he hath deceived her in matter of

mentinance:" while John, not to be outdone, "declared that if there were no more women in the world he wold not marry her." Their consignations accordingly were declared forfeited.

The marriage ceremony was always solemnised in the Church. The Session in 1689, "considering the disorderliness of marrying of some folk out of ye Kirk, have appointed yat all persons to be married shall come to ye Kirk between sun and sun under ye pain of £10 Scots." Sunday was at one time a day on which marriages took place, but in 1627 Mr. Annand intimated "yat nane should desyre him to marrie thame upone onye Sabbothe daye hearefter becaus of ye great prophanitie yat followis."

A wedding then as now was an event which excited the curiosity of the public, and the Ayr Session in 1639 resolved "to remuif vagabonds in tyme of marriage fra the Kirk." But the disorder accompanying the ceremony in these days lay chiefly in the festivities which followed. Both Session and Magistrates enacted that "na penny brydellis salbe sufferit to be in the towne." The number of guests was limited to twenty-four, the expenditure to 5s per head, and the bridegroom had to guarantee that good order would be kept. Sometimes the engagement was broken. In 1651 Alexander Osburne and Mareon M'Graine were delated for "scandalous cariag at their bridell," and with them about a score of young men and maidens who had been present as guests. It was proved that there had been "drinking, fidling, and dancing that wholl first nyght and the two dayes and nyghts thereafter." Some of the damsels were shown to have been exceeding bold, and to have prolonged the festivities by "standing up till others danced." The entire party did penance in the Church on the following Sabbath.

The customs that prevailed with regard to funerals deserve also to be noticed. It was an old Roman Catholic practice to hold a wake or lykewake over the dead body.

We read in 1626 of a man who had become uproarious at a lykewake "in tyme of the reading of a chapter." The fact that the occasion lent itself to such disorders led the General Assembly in 1645 to condemn the ceremony. In 1671 Mr. Adair expressly charged the Session to refrain from attending it.

There were no hearses in these day, the coffin being carried shoulder-high by the mourners. The beadle preceded the procession, ringing the dead-bell. It has been supposed that this originated in the desire to drive evil spirits away. The kists or coffins were of the plainest make, oaken work being forbidden. In 1667 the Magistrates, "considering how ordinar a thing it is to persons to be buried in the Churchyard of Ayr with wainscot chists, quhilk will be verie lang in roting, and considering how litle ground is in the Churchyard for burying of the dead, have therefore statut and ordained that in all tyme cuming noe maner of person to be tolerated to be buried in the Churchyard with an wainscot chist." The bier was covered on its way to the grave with a mortcloth. In 1615 it was resolved "that a mortclaithe be bocht to ye use and commoditie of the parish."

"A kist and winding sheet" in 1655 cost £3. For the benefit of those who could not pay such a sum, a curious but repulsive practice obtained. There were two coffins, a great and a small, which were lent out for burials. The lids of these structures were hung on hinges, and when the grave was reached, the body was taken out and buried in its shroud. The charge for "the great dead kist" in 1636 was 13s, and for "the small kist" 6s. In 1656, just after the Old Church had been built, two new mort-kists were provided. It was resolved by the Magistrates that "twa comoun kists or coffingis for the poor that are deid be maid for transport of thair corpis to the Kirkyeard." These parish coffins were kept in the little lumber-closet beneath the Merchants' Loft.

Sunday was a day on which funerals were sometimes held, but timeous notice had to be given to the beadle, who was also sexton, that he might not be compelled to dig the grave during the church service. The beadle has been already referred to, and an inventory of his official goods and chattels may here be introduced. When he accepted office, he took an oath *de fideli administratione*, and was entrusted with "both the bells, the baptism bason and ewer, ane baptism cloath, the bason for collecting the poores money, ane stoole for the bason to stand on, nine hand-spoaks, short and long, two shovells, one spade, one pitch (pick) axe, and nine keyes of the Church." The two bells were the dead-bell, before mentioned, and the skellat-bell which he rang as town-crier.

The churchyard was under the management of the Session, and they reserved to themselves the right of allowing or disallowing the erection of tombstones. It was ordained in 1617 that "na stanes be laid in the kirkyaird without the special consent of the Session." In 1633 part of the flooring of St. John's Kirk was in need of repair, and "it was thocht good that the haill throch (flat) stanes in the kirkyard without names and merks be brocht within the Kirk to pavement the floor nixt the steple door." When permission to erect a head-stone was granted, certain conditions were generally laid down. Archibald Atchison, advocate, asked leave in 1616 "to erect a tombe abuiff his wyffe's buriall (burying place) hard at the Queere dure (Quire door) on the south syde, resembling the tomb of Robert Hamilton of Stennes, his wyffe. Efter dew avysement, ye Session consented, provyding it should be hard bigged to the wall, and of such laichness that na bairns myght break the glassine windowes by standing yairon."

The care of the poor devolved in these days wholly upon the Church. In 1661 the Magistrates declined to take cognizance of any request for the relief of poverty,

leaving such matters entirely to the Kirk Session. The fund devoted to the support of the destitute was known as "ye poores purse." It consisted largely of the Church collections, though sometimes, if they were insufficient, a special assessment was imposed. The fines exacted by the Kirk Session for misdemeanours went also for the most part to the poor's purse. They were not always given with cheerfulness. We hear of one man in 1643 who "in his passion when his penaltie was exacted" declared "that he suld withold from the Session and poore thairefter any moneys he culd, aither in his awin persone or in the persones of uthers whom he culd hinder." When summoned, however, to answer for his boldness, he promised "to recall the said speiches."

Another source of revenue lay in the legacies which were left to the Parish. In 1626, for example, "James Hunter, deane-gild, deliverit to ye Session £40 as for ye latter will of Elizabeth Knoxe, relict of umquhill (the late) Mr. Johne Wealsche, minister of Ayre, quhilk the said Elizabeth left to be distributed to ye poore within ye towne of Ayre." In 1687 it was resolved that a board should be erected in the Church between the two windows on the right side of the pulpit, and that all legacies of 500 merks and upwards should be inscribed upon it in gold letters.

The contributions made by the sailors went also to the support of the poor. Each vessel that sailed from the harbour was provided with an alms-box, and on its return the skipper presented the Session with what money had been gathered. Another common nautical donation was that which a sailor vowed in some moment of danger, or that which he brought as a thank-offering for his safe return. Here are illustrations of the practice. "Fra Henry Osburne for ane vowe in tyme of danger in the sea—£3 12s." "Fra William Cunningham efter ane distresse in ye sea—£10."

The average allowance to the poor was 6s per week, but the sum varied according to circumstances. Clothing was also provided. An appeal was made in 1604 "to all honest wemen that sik as will of yair awin benevolence mak webbis for claithing of the pure, that they do it for Christis sake." When any of the pensioners died, his or her belongings were restored to the Church. In 1631 the Session, "understanding yat sundrie persones inrolled as poore anes and receiving yair almes weeklie, gathered sum pennies yat in end afoire yair death they might inriche sum freend," ordained intimation to be made "yat quhat moneyis or claythes aither in bedding for the night or wearing for the daye they have besyde themeselff or with onye uther, it salbe left to ye Session to be disponit by thame."

As soon as any one became a pensioner it was laid down "that he be not fund beggand." It was a custom of the poor, it would appear, to sit about the Church door on Sunday to ask alms of them that entered into the temple. But this practice was pronounced objectionable as it "prejudged (prejudiced) the collections." It was ordained in 1608 "that the pure quha sittis at the Kirk dore everie Sabbath shall be discharged to keip that place, with certification that gif they disobey this ordinance, thei shall want the Kirk's almes that oulk (week)." In 1628 it was requested from the pulpit "that na honest man gif alms at the Kirk duire," and a few years later a special officer was engaged "for haling out of strong beggaris and ydle boyes out of the town, and not to suffer onye beggers to begg within the Churchyard or the Kirk doores."

Begging was licensed in the town, but within certain limits. A list of those who were entitled to beg was drawn up in 1617, and "all aliants and strange beggaris" were excluded. Next year it was resolved that the poor of the town should receive leaden marks or badges. These were "to be sewed on thair breists to be knawn for receiving

almes, and quha wants ye same to be repudiat." "The merk of leid," we are told in 1633, "was four-square with three hools (holes), the print of the Castle of Ayre thereon, with thir letters, A.Y.R." Another privileged class of men dicants were the blue-gowns or King's beggars. We think of Edie Ochiltree when we come across such items as these in the Session's expenditure. "To the old man with the blew-gown—18s." "To Robert Gothie, one of his Majestie's beadmen—6s."

A hospital or almshouse for the poor of the parish was built in 1607. The Session were the directors of the institution, and all applications for admission were addressed to them. "Bessie Hunter," to quote one case, "a pure bed-rell (bedfast) was upone her humble sute admitted to the hospitall." But there was evidently a reluctance then as now to go to the poorhouse, and the Session had to make the rule in 1612 "that all the pensioners salbe dischargit of yair pensioune, quha will not enter in the hospital as they salbe commandit." Divine service was held within the building every Sunday, and it was required in 1653 both of the inmates there and of the pensioners without that they should know "at least the Lord's Prayer, the beleife, and Ten Commandments, togidder with some knowledg of the Catechisme."

But besides thinking of the regular poor, the Session had to provide for extraordinary cases; and the record of their disbursements in such cases is sufficient to disprove the idea sometimes entertained, that the officials of the Church in those times were devoid of human sympathy. There is a large-heartedness and a delicate consideration revealed in these charities which go far to compensate for severities in other directions. We can only cite a few examples of their beneficence. It was shown to all kinds of people and in all kinds of ways. We read of money bestowed on "ane poor armless babbie," "ane poore blind boy," "a deaf and dumb

man," "a blind man with a doge," "a criple on a barrow," "a poor woman with 2 twinnes," "an infatuat Highlandman," "eight shipbroken Frenchmen," "an auld expectant (probationer)," "a distressed gentleman." Sometimes the benefaction was other than pecuniary. Orphans and foundlings were entrusted to motherly women, and cared for till they were able to work for themselves. Many "a stand (suit) of grey claithes" was given to a boy, and many "a coat to a poor lass." We hear of poor scholars whose fees were paid, of lads who were put to a craft and furnished with "tools to fend themselves," of others who were sent to college and supported while there. The sick poor were always sure of timely assistance. The leech would be paid for mending "a diseased hand" or "a broken leg," or for attending "a man sick of the trembling fevers," or "a sailor who by a fall got his brainpan broken." Leprosy was common in those days, and the hospital at Kingcase is frequently mentioned. In 1644, for example, John Osburne reported to the Session "that he had spoken to the goodman of Garrigs in favor of Dougall Fergusone, leprous and stone-blind, and yat the said goodman had promised that the said Dougall suld have the first vacant place in Kingcase."

In addition to the wants of the parish there were other objects to which the funds of the Church were devoted. In 1632 100 merks (£5 sterling) were given "to the furtherance of the bigging of the College of Glasgow." Donations were often made for the building or reparation of bridges. £36 was given in 1657 "for building a bridg neir Ochiltrie on ye Water of Burnock," and £2 18s in 1658 "for the building of the bridge of Carsfairne." When a calamity befell any part of the country help was sent to the sufferers. 800 merks were transmitted in 1634 "to Orknaye and Zetland and Caithnes" where there was a famine at the time. A collection was made in 1656 "for the distressed people who suffered lose in Edinburgh by burning." Con-

tributions were also sent to the various Reformed Churches on the Continent. We find notices of collections for "the French Kirk," "the Rhoetians," and "the Christian ministers of Bohem and Palatine." Another curious object for which help was sometimes solicited was the ransom of "captives tane be the Turks." This charity was very probably a relic of Roman Catholic times. The Red Friars used to be styled *Patres de redemptione captivorum.* The Turks were the pirates of the seventeenth century, and made frequent captures of ships and men. We hear for instance of two sailors of Greenock, John and Patrick Crawford, who in 1680 were "taken by ane Algeirin Turkish friggot and were carried to Algeirs, and there chained aboard the Gallies at a very sore and unsupportable labour and in extreme want of sustenance: but" (says the minute) "that which is of all most lamentable, are in hazard throw (through) violence of their torment and power of temptatione to be induced to forsake ye Christian and imbrace ye Mahumetan religion, to renounce their baptisme, and deny Christ their Saviour." A special collection was made in Ayr on behalf of the two men, and the sum of £173 19s was raised.

We now pass on to consider the discipline of the Church, a feature of her economy which in these days held a very conspicuous place. Immediately after the Reformation there were formed throughout the country courts which were known afterwards as Kirk Sessions. That one of these courts existed in Ayr is manifest from an entry in the Register of the Privy Council of date 1569, in which Bailie George Lockhart, burgess of Ayr, is accused of "irreverent and contemptuous disobeying of the commandment of the minister, elders, and deacons of the Kirk of Air."* Again, in 1585, we read in the Town Books of an offender who was "convict before the Kirk." But it was not till 1592 that an Act of Parliament was passed, declaring that "gif Kirkis

* Reg. Priv. Coun., ii. 61.

be lawfully rewlit be sufficient ministeris and sessioune, they haiff power and jurisdiction in materis ecclesiasticall." The Kirk Session was thus recognised by the legislature as a Court of the Church. It took upon itself the charge of the morals of the parish. No offence was too small or too great to be brought before it.

The Session of Ayr throughout the period with which we are dealing consisted of the ministers and twelve or thirteen elders, while with them, as administrators of the Church funds, sat as many deacons. It was the duty of the elders, said Mr. Adair once, to rule with diligence, and of the deacons to shew mercy with cheerfulness. The meetings took place every Monday, and attendance was made compulsory. It was enacted in 1608 that "in tyme cuming all and quhatsoever elderis or deaconis, being within ye towne and not frequenting ye Sessioun at ye ordinar dyatt, shall pay halff a merk, without (unless) thei giff ane lawfull excuse for yair absence." In 1639 it was enacted that if a member of Session, being at home and in health, should absent himself "thrie dayes continue," he should be discharged of his office.

In order that the Session might "tak exact inquisition of the maners of the people," the parish was divided into so many districts, and each district was assigned to an elder and deacons who were named overseers. The Session were thus enabled to lay their hands on evildoers at once. Indeed in reading through their Records one wonders how they had the patience to do all they did. For they did not merely take up those cases which had become a crying scandal. Were but a rumour, a whisper of some misdeed to come to their ears, they were eager to test its truth. In all that concerned the good name of the parish they were instant in season and out of season.

When an offence had been brought to the notice of the Session the accused party was summoned by the beadle to

compear at the next meeting. Sometimes he confessed his fault, and his punishment was then read out to him. At other times he protested his innocence. If the protestation seemed untrustworthy the case was delayed till witnesses had been summoned, and as these were not always forthcoming, a particular case might remain for a long time *sub judice*. If on the other hand the accused seemed not guilty, he was allowed to take an Oath to that effect. This Oath of Purgation, as it was termed, was a very solemn declaration, and unless the accused seemed clearly to be innocent he was not permitted to take it. On such occasions as it was administered the defendant repeated it "efter invocation of God his halie name and laying his hand upon the halie Bible."

The offences with which the Session had to deal were of all sorts and kinds. It will give us no little insight into the manners of the day if we go through some of them.

There was in the first place Sabbath-breaking. It was the duty of every parishioner to be present in the Church on Sunday, and if he were absent he had to give an excuse for his absence. The Session spared no trouble in ascertaining who were at Church and who were not. Each Sunday as soon as the service had begun, two elders, called "searchers" or "visitors," made a round of the town. Wherever they discovered anyone who should have been at Church, they took his or her name down, and reported it next day to the Session. One can understand that such "visits" were not highly appreciated. We hear of one man who was "convict for giving ill words to ye searcheris on Sabboth, as also for striking of the boy who delated him." A common device for escaping notice was to bar the door against the "visitors." But the latter were sharp-sighted detectives, and this ruse did not often succeed.

But besides attending Church it was the duty of the people on the Sabbath to do no manner of work. This

rule could not have been more strictly enforced, even among the Jews. Amongst the forms of Sabbath desecration with which the Ayr Session had to deal were "keeping buithes open," "selling aill," "travelling with hering," "walking (bleaching) claithes," "washing aill butts," "pricking lamb skinnes," "gathering sticks," "threshing and convoying corne," "grinding in the mill," "filling secks (sacks) with stuf," "receiving a laid (burden)," "buying nolt (black cattle) fra Heelandmen," "driving nolt towards Glasgow," "slaying a scheepe," "casting stanes at hens," "mucking byres," "sweeping the house."

Still more sternly was any form of recreation repressed. In Roman Catholic times the Sunday had not been hedged about with so many restrictions, and the people broke reluctantly from the old ways. But the Session was uncompromising in the matter. High and low had to submit to its rule. John Maxwell and the Laird of Bar were summoned for "playing carts (cards) on the Saboth day;" others for "dycing and drinking," "fishing of salmone in the water of Dune," "playing on ye yce," "casting snawballs," "sayling in boits," "putting stanes in the Kirkyaird," "dancing on the hills," "lying in the Church-yard before Divine service, talking and discoursing about their worldly businesses and affairs." The heads of households were held responsible for the good behaviour of their children and servants. Boys were specially warned not to play on the streets, nor to engage in the "coppihoal" or the "ninehoal" (games of marbles) at the Church door.

The spirit of Puritanism which had so completely taken possession of the Church, coloured its every view with a sombre tinge. Amusements, in themselves innocent, were denounced as irreligious. There were sundry time-honoured festivities in connection with Yule on which the Session looked with no kindly eye. A curious record occurs of the arraignment of several young women for "playing ye Ladie

Templetoun upon Yule day at evin." This was apparently a dramatic representation, in which dancing played a prominent part. One culprit confessed that she had "buskit ane Ladie Templetoun," which must have been a lay figure: another that she "playit a spring:" others that they "wer present and payed ane pynt aill everie ane of yame." The man in whose house this "prophanitie" took place was fined 40s, and the woman who sold the ale, probably his wife, was mulcted in a boll of malt, and ordained "to stand at the Cross on ane markatt day with ye Ladie Templetoun in her hand."

The damsels of Ayr caused the Session a good deal of annoyance. On another occasion, several of them gathered together "to mak rymes and draw valentines." This misdemeanour led the Session to pass an act that "if ony persoun or persouns shall find, hear, or sie ony ryme or cockaland (humorous poem), they sal reveil the same to an elder." It was in keeping with this enactment that intimation was made from the pulpit in 1617, "for discharging (forbidding) all vyle sangs in the town, learned be the youth at ye mouthe of a prophane fidlar, and quhaever they be hereafter that contravenis salbe under a maist grave censure."

Swearing was an evil with which the Session had very often to deal. It was a common charge against a parishioner that he was "a great banner and swearer." An oath frequently employed was "be God's wounds and passion," *God's wounds* being in later days corrupted into *Zounds*. One strange profanity recorded was that of a man who took "a piece flesche, and casting it fra him, said that was the flesh of Christ." Christina Striveling, to take another example, was summoned to answer "for her feirful blasphemies in cursing baith her body and saul, and for her abusing of ye worship of God, that wald not suffer ye grace to be said, or ye chapter to be red." The malison or imprecation was one of the commonest of these sins of the

tongue. A man, for example, was cited before the Session who had prayed for a certain married couple, "Lord, let never thing thrive they have to do with." A woman in like manner was summoned for saying to a neighbour, "The devill be at your heart in the morning!" On being asked "if that was a good prayer," she answered with some cleverness, "It is evin a guid prayer for them that dois ill." The habit of swearing extended even to the children of the town, and it was ordained that when "tane in the cryme," they should be "apprehendit, wanded, and dung (beaten)." On market days strong language appears to have been specially prevalent, and in 1616 the Session adopted the following curious plan to counteract it:—"The Session understanding ye horrible and fearful oathes used within yair burghe be yair awin inhabitants, as also be cuntryemen, specially on merkatt days in buying and selling, for remeid (remedy) hereof ordains that the gatherer of the pures almes at the Kirk dure, or onye uther of the Session sall await on the mercates to mark the blasphemer of God his halie name, curser, swearer, etc., and exact of yame without exception, 8d." After this accordingly, oaths on a market day were priced at 8d each. Sometimes, it would appear, the elders themselves were detected in the practice, and they, as being less excusable, were fined 2s for the first fault. The money thus gathered was termed "banning silver."

Another common offence was flyting. Amongst the honest men of the town there were some whose powers of invective were well developed, as, for instance, Alexander Aitchler who assured Meg Aitken "yat a better favoured face nor hirs hung on a gallows." But in this department of eloquence, it should be stated, it was the women who carried off the honours. *Place aux dames!* There was a richness and a variety in their vocabulary of abuse and repartee which left nothing to be desired. Another accomplishment in which the gentler sex was notably proficient was that of

"sclandering." Gossips and busy-bodies abounded, who circulated the most extraordinary stories. And it was one of the evils of the time that these calumnies were not allowed to die in the obscurity they deserved, but were dragged by the Session into the glare of day. It was resolv. d in 1622 "yat sclanderous complaintis salbe publicklie red fra pulpit to terrifie persones frae ye same."

"Fechting" and "tuilzieing" were another kind of misdemeanour. The conflict very often took place "on the hie street," though quite as frequently in a private house. Sometimes it was an unruly youngster like Willie Hunter, "a disobedient boy to his mother, that will not spair to thraw hir arm quhen she pushis him fordward to ony turne.' Sometimes it was a drinking husband like William Wilson, who was found guilty of "stryking his wyfe and causing her bleid." Sometimes it was a predominant partner like Elizabeth M'Knelie, "quha on the Sabbath day at evin last bypast, within the nycht in Janet Fairlie's houss cam in upon her guidman, John Hunter, quhair he was sittand at tabill with uther honest men, and kest ane pint stop of aill upon his face, and tuik him be ye thrapple till he glowrit agane, and had almaist wirried him."

Allusion has already been made to sundry alehouses which existed in the town. Cases of drunkenness were frequent, and the Session did what they could to stem the evil. It was ordained "that na ailsellar resave ony within yair houss efter ten hors at nicht to drink." As soon as the ten o'clock bell had rung, all citizens were instructed "to close their doors and incall upone the name of God." Any breach of these injunctions was severely punished, and this, it has been suggested with much probability, is the explanation of the phrase, "elders' hours."

With regard to doctrinal beliefs the people were very much of one mind. It was but seldom that any one was suspected of heresy. In 1616 Thomas M'Ka, younger, was

"suspect of supersticious and Papisticall rites." He was summoned by the beadle in the ordinary way, but for a time failed to compear. He was then charged out of the pulpit, and on his compliance with the order was ordained within twenty days to declare his adherence to the Confession of Faith. At the expiry of this period he recompeared and "declairit afore ye Session that he had read over ye acts delivered to him in wreat (writing) and deeplie meditate yairon be invocating of God's halie name privilie, and touching ye halie Bible confessed yat he acknawledged ye religioun professed in yis cuntrye of Scotland to be ye onlie trewe worship of God, and disclaimed all uther as unlawfull, and promeissed yat he wad remuiff all eyelistes (eyesores) hearefter be communicating on ye first occasion." In 1653 William Muir was said to have imbibed "the errours of Anti-Trinitarianism and Paedobaptisme," and to have gone across to Newton "to be rebaptised and diped in ye Ladie Craigie's well." But the charge was found not proven, and the slanderer who had invented it was punished.

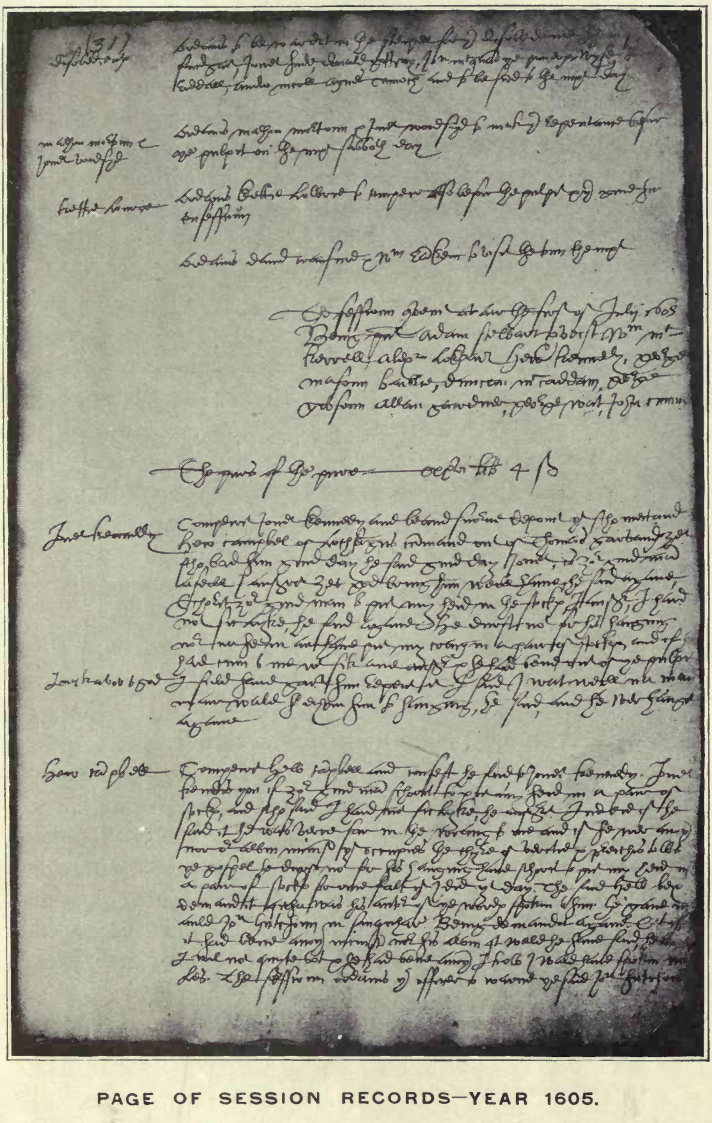
Contempt of the Church authorities was another ecclesiastical offence. Failure to comply with the Session's edicts was one form of this misconduct, and it generally led to an aggravation of the penalty. But there were some who not only failed to obey the authorities, but presumed also to insult them; and they were dealt with more sharply. We hear of one man who was punished "for vile oaths and minacinge the Kirk beddle, and taking away his staffe." Others were rebuked for their language with regard to the Session. A woman, for example, was delated by one of the elders, but told him to his face "yat he was ower halie, and when he complained scho (she) said befoir the Sessioun yat he put hir up of malice." The fines which were exacted from delinquents gave occasion sometimes for sarcastic remarks. Marion Graye was rebuked for "spearing tantingly (tauntingly)" of a friend who had been before the Session

on the Monday preceding, "Have ye been at ye Monendayes merkat?" Another woman took a particular dislike to one of the elders, and declared "that they might have put the devil on ye Session that put him on it." Sometimes again it was the minister who was insulted. When John Welsh had been compelled to leave his parish, his stipend, as we have seen in a former chapter, was regularly sent him. But one parishioner, John Niven by name, on being asked to pay his quotum, made answer, "And (if) we be stentit ilk day as we are lyk to be, I cair not by yat he never cum hame." For this "sclanderous speech" he was severely rebuked. Another in a later day had to do penance for declaring "that Mr. Adair preached false doctrine, and that if he had him at the Cross he wald put a whinger throw his cheiks." One more example of such contempt we shall quote. It occurrred just after Welsh had left for the Aberdeen Assembly. During his absence the pulpit was supplied by a substitute. Janet Kennedy, the wife of this substitute, complained of the language that Hew Campbell of Lochfergus had used of her husband. The two parties were brought before the bar, and told their respective stories in this fashion. "Compeirit Jonet Kennedy, and beand sworne, deponit yat scho (she) meitand Hew Campbell of Lochfergus, cumand (coming) out of Thomas Garvand's yet, scho bad him guid day. He said, 'Guid day, Jonet, is your guidman afeill (out)?' I anserit, 'Yes, God bring him weill hame.' He said agane, 'Schorit (threatened) yor guidman to put my heid in the stocks?' I anser, 'I hard not sic lyke.' He said agane, 'He durst not for his hanging, nor na he (no man) in Air have put my craig (neck) in a pair of stocks, and if he had come to me with sic ane anser, and he had been out of ye pulpit, I mak a vow to God I suld have gart him repent it.' I said, 'I wat weill na man in Air wald eyvin him to hanging (think of hanging him)'. He said, 'And (would that) he were hangit,' agane."

Then follows the man's version of the story. "Compeirit Hew Campbell and confest he said to Jonet Kennedy, 'Jonet, kendis (know) you if yor guidman schorit to put my heid in a pair of stocks?' And she said, 'I hard not sic lyke.' He ansrit, 'Indeed if he said it, he was verie far in the wrang to me, and if he wer anoyer (another) nor our awin minister yat occupies the chyre (chair) of veritie and preaches to us ye Gospel, he durst not for his hanging have schorit to put my heid in a pair of stocks for onie falt yat I did yat day.' The said Hew being demandit quha was his autor of (authority for) the words spoken to him, he gave in auld John Hutchoun in Sanquhar. Being demandit agane quhat if it had been anoyer (another) minister nor his awin, quhat wald he have said, he ansrit, I will not quyte (deny) but and he had been another, I trow I wald have spoken na less. The Session ordainis the officer to warne ye said John Hutchoun."* The upshot of the matter was that Hew Kennedy was found to be in the wrong, and was ordained "to cum befoir the pulpit and confess that he has offendit God, ye minister, and ye congregation, and ask their forgiveness."

The last offence we shall notice is witchcraft. There was a curious horror in these times of the uncanny arts. In 1623 a man called Michael, "quha gaif himself out as a speaman (fortune teller) and deceaved ye people," had to undergo a period of excommunication. In 1651 the Session were informed that "one John Muir did give out himself for a palmister and a reader of fortunes, and also that there was a report going upon ye said Johne Muir of doing wrong to people under the pretence of physick." It was requested accordingly of the Magistrates "that they wald remove him out of this Burgh and Parish." In 1684 similar proceedings were taken against "a dumb man who pretends to tell fortunes and find things lost," and all who had entertained

* The foregoing extract occupies the lower half of the page of the Session Records which we have reproduced.



PAGE OF SESSION RECORDS—YEAR 1605.

or consulted him were rebuked for their misconduct. A still more severe penalty was meted out by the Magistrates in 1595 to Agnes Hutcheoun, who is described as "ane sempill (common) abuser of ye pepill as thocht she was ane witche." It was decreed that "she sal be brocht furth of ye Tolbuith upon a mercatt day, and be set upon ane cart, and thair first at the Tolbuith stair, upon the cairt, oppinlie confess her abuse; and thairefter to be scurgit thairfra, drawin upon ye cart, to ye Cross, quhair she sall stay quhill (till) she mak new confessioun of ye said abuse; and fra that to be convoyit with scurges upone ye said cart to ye Brigend, quhair she sall stay and confess as said is; and thairefter to be transported in maner foirsaid to the Kyle Port to mak confession thair likwis; and thairefter to be put two mercatt dayis in the brankis in the commoun place, and last of all to satisfie the Kirk be signes of repentance."

Such a woman, however, was only a pretender. Accredited witches met with a more dreadful fate. It is curious that amongst the witches of Ayr the name of Maggie Osborne does not occur, though local tradition has woven a story around it which enters confidently into the minutest details.* Unfortunately the evidence for the odium in which witchcraft was held does not rest upon her case alone. A large number of witches are mentioned in the Session Records. They were invariably referred by the Session to the Presbytery and tried by the latter court. The Presbytery Records of the seventeenth century are so very defective that we have no account of the conduct of such a trial. But the Session books give us a few stray glimpses of the the charges which were wont to be preferred. The witch

* "Where there is smoke there is fire," and no doubt there was a veritable Maggie Osborne who was put to death in Ayr. In 1653 the Kirk Session appointed a committee to enquire into several cases of witchcraft and prepare evidence for the Presbytery. The names of the witches are not recorded, but very probably Maggie Osborne was one of them. It is commonly asserted that she was the last witch executed in Scotland, but this is not the case. The last was an old woman of Dornoch, who was burned in 1722.

was generally a wise woman who professed to cure the sick by her charms. Three mothers were brought in 1618 before the Session and reprimanded for having "socht remeid by charming to yair bairns seik at the hands of Janet M'Alister, witche, quha a little afoir her execution be burning deponit and gaif up thir personis." Proceedings were taken in 1605 against Agnes Andro, who "for to get helth to a bairne causit tak the bairne about an aiken trie." Her spell evidently lay in carrying the child round an oak tree. In 1630 two women acknowledged their sin in having been present "at a dog-hanging be way of witchcraft." In 1663 one woman declared that another "had come to her house on a thundery nyght and bad her renunce her baptisme;" but she confessed afterwards that she could not make good the charge. An official who played a prominent part at the Presbytery trials was the witch-finder. He or she knew the various marks which were to be found on the bodies of all witches. In 1644 the minister of Straiton asked the Presbytery if, "for trial of sundrie persones suspect of witchcraft in his parish," he might consult a young woman from Galloway "who took upon her the discoverie of witches throw the cuntrey." It is gratifying to find that the mind of the Presbytery was by that time against the practice and the crave was refused. Witch-trials none the less went on for several years.

While the case was in process the accused party was excluded from the fellowship of the Church. Janet Craufurd and Elizabeth Wallace, for example, were "discharged the halye Comunioun in respect of sum spottes of charming lying upon thame unremuved." If ultimately the charge was proven, the sentence passed was invariably that of burning. One shudders at the awful realism of such extracts as these from the Town's accounts.

> "1586.—In expenses sustenit in ye burning of ye witche of Barnweill in candills, her meit and drink, pyk (pitch) barrels, colis, rosat (rosin), heddir (heather) treis and uthers necessaris—£7 3s 8d."

"1594.—For coles, cordis, tar-barrellis, and uther graith yat burnit Marioun Greiff, witche—£4 4s."

If a witch anticipated the execution of her sentence by a natural death, her body was supposed to be still infected with infernal taints. In 1649 the Magistrates, "with advyse of Mr. William Adair, minister," ordained that the corpse of Janet Smelie, a witch who had died in the Tolbuith, "salbe drawin upoun ane slaid (sledge) to the gallowis foot and brunt in asches." It is with pain and shame that we turn away from these records of superstition and barbarity.

They lead us, however, to describe more particularly the different forms of punishment which were inflicted by the Session. These may be divided into two classes, spiritual and civil. The spiritual consisted of processes of admonition. Sometimes the rebuke was administered privately, *i.e.*, before the Session. The culprit was called upon to give "evidence of repentance," and to submit to an examination upon "the grunds of religion." After the compilation of the Shorter Catechism, the questions commonly asked were:—What is sin? What doth every sin deserve? What doth God require of us, that we may escape His wrath and curse due to us for sin? What is repentance unto life? What is faith in Jesus Christ?

Usually, however, the humiliation took place in Church. If the fault was a slight one, the offender might receive the rebuke of the minister from his ordinary place. If it was grave, he rose from his seat and came before the pulpit. These forms were termed "satisfying laich." If, however, the offence was very grave, he mounted the cutty stool or place of repentance, and received his censure there. This was styled "satisfying heich," and the penitents in undergoing it were clad either in sackcloth or linen sheets.

The repentance stool was a survival of Roman Catholic ritual. Here are the materials employed in the erection of

two cukstules, as they were called, in 1536. They stood together, no doubt, and probably at the entrance to St. John's Churchyard. "Ane geist (joist) to the cukstulis, ane dusane (dozen) of burds to ye samyn (same), a tree to the cukstulis, grit (great) nalis, small nalis, two galloks (crowbars), two burds to yaim, a mylstane to ye samyn." After the Reformation the stool of repentance was brought into St. John's Kirk. It stood for a time in the Magistrates' Loft. Afterwards it seems to have been set up near the door of the Choir. In 1621 an order was given to repair a "mirk holl under the penitent place at ye entress in at the Queere dure." Where the stool of repentance stood in the present Old Church, we have not been able to ascertain from written sources, but tradition affirms that it was in front of the pulpit.

The Session had a fixed order of service for the penitents, which had to be followed minutely. We hear, for instance, of a delinquent—William Angus—who "put on ye sackloth with his right hand above, faicked (tucked) under his oxter, and had a greene woman's stuile quhair-upone he sat all ye tyme of ye preaching, his hands be tourse (turns) under his haffatis (sides of his head). The preaching endit, Patrick Watsone, leadcaller (driver) at the miller's at Ayre, went up to the penitent place with the said William's cloak, and so went baith furthe (out) or (before) the prayers begane." But this repentance of Angus was pronounced insufficient—first, because the sackcloth was only tucked under the armpits; and second, because he had not waited till the service was concluded. He had therefore to go through the service again, on this occasion remaining "all the tyme," and having the sackcloth "on till his schulderis." Patrick Watson was at the same time rebuked for his interference in the matter. "For taking the beddle's office on him to serve William Angusse," he was ordained "to satisfie laiche."

To the mind of the Church in these times the publicity of the penance was one of its recommendations. Nothing therefore was permitted to minimise it. A woman asked on one occasion that she might "cover her head becaus of her infirmitie." But she was an old offender, and the Session refused her the favour. They ordained on the contrary that immediately after the third bell and before the sermon, she should "cum to ye Steple, and lay her plaides fra her yair, and receave ye penitents' habite of sacklothe, and yairefter cum throughe ye people to ye penitent place, and stand as becomes and not sit, with her face uncoverit all ye tyme of ye preaching, and abyde quhill (till) ye blissing be said and ended, and returne to ye Steple agane with ye said habite, and thare receave her plaids fra ye beddle." In 1644 it was made an express rule "that no woman in the public place of repentance sall present themselves with plaides on thair heades, or thair faces anywayes covered." Any indecorum on the part of the penitent was severely punished. In 1668 the Magistrates banished a man from the burgh for coming to the place of repentance in a state of intoxication, and "clattering up to the minister."

When the sin committed was specially heinous, as for instance a murder, the offender was excommunicated. He was not only debarred from all Church privileges, which was the lesser excommunication, but his fellow-parishioners were forbidden to receive or entertain him in any way. The greater excommunication was a sentence which the Presbytery pronounced, and it was read on the Sunday following from all the pulpits within its bounds.

But besides these spiritual chastenings the Kirk Session had a variety of civil punishments. It imposed fines which varied in amount with the gravity of the offence. Sabbath-breakers, for example, had to pay 6s 8d for the first fault, 13s 4d for the second, and 20s for the third. It often happened that the culprits were unable to pay, in which

case they were committed for a season to the Steeple and dieted on bread and water.

An instrument of punishment commonly employed was the Jougs. It was called also in Ayrshire the Braidyean. It was an iron collar which was locked round the neck of the offender, and fastened by a chain to some public place. In Ayr there were Jougs at three places—the Malt Cross, the Fish Cross, and the Meal Market. It was a common penalty to be put in the Jougs "on ane merket day for the space of twa hors." A similar penalty was meted out to Adam M'Rachor, who was "chainyed with an iron chainyie (chain) to a schipmast, thair to remain because of his misbehavior towardis everyie man and woman."

When the offender had been convicted of flyting, he or she (it was most commonly she) had to endure an additional ignominy. A jagged wheel, called the Spur or the Branks, was put into her mouth, the tongue which had been the guilty member thus suffering for its misconduct. Gagged in this way she had to endure the gaze of the people in one of the public places. Another punishment for a brawling woman was that inflicted on Christian M'Kerrell, who was "cairted throu the toun with ane paper on her heid with the inscription—A COMMON SCALD." It was one of the duties of the beadle to furnish the paper for such occasions.

But there were some on whom the Steeple and the Jougs and the Branks were wasted. There was a notorious character who went by the name of "Fair and frie." He was "a drunkand railler, scalder, and blasphemer, and readie at all tyme to promote men to tuilzieing." In order to accelerate his departure from the burgh, the Session asked the Town Council to proclaim "that nane ressave *Fair and frie* in yair housses nor give him work and labor, under ye pane of fyve punds for ye first fault." But the Session did not always act in this indirect fashion. When an offender

became clearly incorrigible they ordered him or her "to pack out of ye toun," and the sentence was carried out with every circumstance of ignominy. Nans Haddoke, for example, was ordained "to remuife betuix this and Thurisdaye, utherways to be banished by sound of drum and to be scourged, if she falye (fail)." Marion Courlands in like manner was sentenced "to be banished presently, and if she resort (return) agane, to be marked with an heat iron." The iron was the property of the Magistrates, and was used ordinarily for branding thieves.

There remains to be mentioned one other feature of the ecclesiastical life of the period. It was the visitation of the parish by the Presbytery. This took place every third or fourth year, and was a very important event. Ayr was visited in 1642, and the proceedings in all their quaintness are recorded in the Presbytery books. Mr. Fergushill was at that time the incumbent of the first charge, and Mr. Adair of the second. The first step taken was to remove Mr. Fergushill from the room and enquire of Mr. Adair concerning the life and doctrine of his colleague. He "approved him largely," we are told, in every particular. The process was then reversed, and Mr. Fergushill was interrogated with regard to Mr. Adair. In like manner he "approved him in all, and thanked God for their conjunction." Both ministers were then requested to withdraw, and questions were put to the Session about their efficiency. The provost "in name of the rest approved them both, and blessed God for them." The congregation were summoned next by the officer, and asked if they had anything to object to in their ministers. But as no one compeared to make objections, the two divines were recalled and "their approbation declared to them." Last of all the Session retired, and the ministers were asked what they had to say concerning them. They approved them thoroughly, but desired them at the same time "to be stirred up to

farther diligence." The Session were accordingly exhorted "to mak progress in all the poynts of thair calling."

We can scarcely find it in us to re-echo the encomiums of the Presbytery, and "approve in all poynts" those old ecclesiastical customs we have been trying to portray. There were features about them which in the larger light of to-day seem crude and repulsive. The liberty of the spirit was fettered unduly by the bondage of the letter. There was too much of the sternness of the old law and too little of the charity of the new. But the times in which they obtained were rude times, and rude methods suited them. Though now we have attained to an ampler freedom and a broader outlook, it ill becomes us to scoff lightly at the efforts which the Church made long ago that her children might lead godly, righteous, and sober lives. Her endeavours failed partially but not wholly. They have left their mark upon the Scottish character. They have given it a gravity, an earnestness, and a strength of purpose, which surely in themselves are a legacy we may well be proud to have received.

APPENDIX I.

MINISTERS OF AYR, 1560-1692.

FIRST CHARGE.

1559—Christopher Goodman, B.D. Translated to St. Andrews in 1560.
1568—James Dalrymple. Died in 1580.
1580—John Porterfield. Died in 1604.
1604—John Welsh, A.M. Came as "Aid and Helper" to Mr. Porterfield in 1600. Banished in 1606.
1608—George Dunbar. Deprived and imprisoned in 1611.
1612—William Birnie, A.M. Died in 1619.
1619—George Dunbar (above mentioned). Translated from Second Charge. Banished in 1624.
1625—William Annand, A.M. Deposed in 1638.
1639—John Fergushill, A.M. Died in 1644.
1646—William Adair. Translated from Second Charge. Deposed in 1682.
1683—Alexander Gregorie, A.M. Ejected in 1689.
1692—William Eccles. Translated from Second Charge. Died in 1694.

SECOND CHARGE.

1613—George Dunbar. Formerly in First Charge. Translated to First Charge in 1619.
1638—Robert Blair, A.M. Translated to St. Andrews same year.
1839—William Adair. Translated to First Charge in 1646.
1656—William Eccles. Deprived in 1662.
1664—George Whyte. Translated to Maryculter in 1679.
1682—William Waltersone. Ejected in 1689.
1689—William Eccles (above mentioned). Indulged at Paisley in 1672. Returned to Ayr in 1687, and officiated in St John's Kirk. Translated to First Charge in 1692.

APPENDIX II.

PROVOSTS OF AYR, 1560-1692.

1560—Michael Wallace of Cunning Park.
1561—Michael Wallace of Cunning Park.
(No Record.)
1568—John Lockhart.
1569—John Lockhart.
(No Record.)
1574—John Lockhart.
(No Record.)
1577—John Lockhart.
1578—Hew Campbell, yr., of Loudoun.
(No Record.)
1580—John Jamesoun.
1581—George Jamesoun of Goldring.
1582—Robert Campbell,
1583—John Jamesoun.
1584—Adam Stewart,
1585—Sir William Stewart of Monkton.
1586—Archibald Fergushill of Sauchrie.
1587—Archibald Fergushill of Sauchrie.
1588—Archibald Fergushill of Sauchrie.
1589—John Lockhart of Boghall.
1590—George Jamesoun of Goldring.
1591—George Jamesoun of Goldring.
1592—Adam Stewart.
1593—George Jamesoun of Goldring.
1594—George Jamesoun of Goldring.
1595—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1596—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1597—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1598—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1599—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1600—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1601—Alexander Lockhart of Boghall.
1602—George Jamesoun of Goldring.
1603—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1604—Adam Stewart.
1605—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1606—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1607—David Fergushill of Cunning Park.
1608—Adam Stewart.
1609—John Lockhart of Bar.
1610—Hew Kennedy.
1611—John Osburne.
1612—Johh Lockhart of Bar.
1613—Adam Ritchie.
1614—Hew Kennedy.
1615—Adam Ritchie.
1616—John Osburne.
1617—Hew Kennedy.
1618—Adam Ritchie.
1619—Hew Kennedy.
1620—John Osburne.
1621—Adam Ritchie.
1622—James Blair of Blairston.
1623—Adam Ritchie.
1624—James Blair of Blairston.
1625—Adam Ritchie.
1626—John Osburne.
1627—James Blair of Blairston.
1628—William Cuningham.
1629—Adam Ritchie.
1630—John Stewart.
1631—Adam Ritchie.
1632—John Stewart.
1633—James Blair of Blairston.
1634—John Osburne.
1635—John Stewart.
1636—John Osburne.
1637—Robert Gordon.
1638—John Osburne.
1639—Robert Gordon.
1640—John Osburne.

1641—Robert Gordon.
1642—John Osburne.
1643—Hew Kennedy.
1644—John Kennedy.
1645—John Osburne.
1646—John Kennedy.
1647—Robert Gordon.
1648—Hew Kennedy.
1649—Gilbert Ritchart.
1650—Hew Kennedy.
1651—Robert Gordon.
(Interregnum.)
1654—James Cochrane.
1655—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1656—John Osburne.
1657—Hew Kennedy.
1658—John Osburne.
1659—Hew Kennedy.
1660—William Cnninghame of Brownhill.
1661—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1662—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1663—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1664—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1665—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1666—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1667—Thomas Knight.
1668—Thomas Knight.
1669—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1670—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1671—William Cuninghame of Brownhill.
1672—Thomas Knight.
1673—John Moore of Park.
1674—John Moore of Park.
1675—John Cuninghame.
1676—Robert Doock.
1677—Robert Doock.
1678—William Cuninghame, yr., of Brownhill.
1679—William Cuninghame, yr., of Brownhill.
1680—William Cuninghame, yr., of Brownhill.
1681—Vaxley Robson.
1682—Vaxley Robson.
1683—William Brisbane.
1684—Robert Hunter of Dogland.
1685—Robert Hunter of Dogland.
1686—William Cuninghame, yr., of Brownhill.
1687—Sir William Wallace of Craigie.
1688—Sir William Wallace of Craigie.
1689—John Moore of Park.
1690—John Moore of Park.
1691—John Osburne.
1692—John Moore of Park.

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