

**JOURNAL**  
**OF LOCAL EVENTS,**  
*Or,*  
**ANNALS of FENWICK.**

*A sentinel to watch  
The change and current of the times, - to nose  
Men's actions, - to record their lives, - to view  
Their sports and pastimes, - hear them talk, - and, with  
Impartial and unbiass'd mind, award,  
To every one, the tribute that is due.*

By  
**JAMES TAYLOR**  
(1814-1857)

Edited by  
**TOM DUNNACHIE TAYLOR**

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**(1814 - 1857)**

**Edited, with an Introduction and Epilogue**

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“That their memory might be handed down to the living”

Ayrshire  
Archaeological and Natural History  
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## CONTENTS

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| I INTRODUCTION : THE WEAVER OF FENWICK ...    | 6    |
| Discovery of the Manuscript .....             | 6    |
| His Native Village .....                      | 9    |
| His Musings of Leisure .....                  | 11   |
| His Religion and Politics .....               | 14   |
| His Poems .....                               | 17   |
| His Love Letters to Jean Dickie .....         | 22   |
| II "THE ANNALS OF FENWICK, 1842 - 1856" ..... | 26   |
| Preface .....                                 | 26   |
| Two Characters .....                          | 26   |
| A Village Scandal .....                       | 28   |
| An Accident .....                             | 29   |
| A Burglary .....                              | 30   |
| Death is a Tyrant .....                       | 31   |
| Disruption of the Church of Scotland .....    | 32   |
| The Harvest and the Weather .....             | 33   |
| Religious Arguments .....                     | 35   |
| The State of the Nation .....                 | 36   |
| The New Year .....                            | 37   |
| The Immortal Memory .....                     | 38   |
| The Cruel Factor .....                        | 41   |
| The Auld Smith .....                          | 43   |
| A Rural Reprimand .....                       | 46   |
| A Petition to Parliament .....                | 46   |
| The Farmers Blacklisted .....                 | 47   |
| The Free Church of Scotland .....             | 49   |
| Secession Defended .....                      | 50   |
| Parish History .....                          | 52   |
| A Meeting of Radicals .....                   | 55   |
| Days of Glory .....                           | 56   |
| The Miserly Weaver .....                      | 57   |
| A Soiree .....                                | 58   |
| Bright Holiday .....                          | 58   |
| "Wee Peggy" .....                             | 60   |
| Moorland Winter .....                         | 61   |
| A Radical's Life and Love .....               | 62   |



|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Class Distinction .....                          | 64     |
| The Opposite Man .....                           | 64     |
| The Potato Famine .....                          | 65     |
| A Determined Bride .....                         | 66     |
| A Domestic Tragedy .....                         | 66     |
| Old Customs Pass Away .....                      | 67     |
| A Ratepayers' Meeting .....                      | 67     |
| Supporting the Library .....                     | 68     |
| A Prisoner Released .....                        | 69     |
| Old and Narrow .....                             | 70     |
| The Negro Abolitionist .....                     | 70     |
| A Keen Reformer .....                            | 71     |
| Abolition of the Corn Laws .....                 | 72     |
| A Public Celebration .....                       | 72     |
| The Mutual Improvement Society .....             | 75     |
| A Vain Show .....                                | 77     |
| Fenwick Statistics .....                         | 78     |
| The Oldest Inhabitant .....                      | 80     |
| <br>III EPILOGUE : THE NEW ZEALAND FENWICK ..... | <br>83 |
| The Weaver's Death .....                         | 83     |
| The Village Emigrants .....                      | 84     |
| The Dickie Pioneers .....                        | 86     |
| One Century Later .....                          | 88     |
| Return to Gainhill .....                         | 89     |
| Ayrshire in the South Pacific .....              | 91     |
| The Village Centenarian .....                    | 95     |
| The Bonnie Carmel Water .....                    | 99     |

MAP OF FENWICK ..... between pages 7 and 8

PAGES FROM THE JOURNAL ..... between pages 14 and 15

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## NOTE

The original "Journal of Local Events, or Annals of Fenwick" is in the possession of the editor, Tom Dunnachie Taylor, of 8 Massey Street, Palmerston North, New Zealand. Volume I comprises a fragment of six pages, but Volume II of seventy pages is written in a plain notebook, size 9 ins. by 7½ ins. The edited version omits many references to births, marriages and deaths, but includes all entries where the author has made personal comments on the people concerned. Finally, readers should note that the name of the village is pronounced Fen-ick, not Fen-wick.

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# I. Introduction

## THE WEAVER OF FENWICK

### DISCOVERY OF THE MANUSCRIPT

When my father died in Scotland in January, 1960, my aunt, Jean Dickie Taylor, went to our old home in Stirling and packed a crate of his books and other family relics, for despatch to me in New Zealand. The crate duly arrived, and among these books I found the manuscript of "The Annals of Fenwick" which I had particularly requested. The existence of this journal had been known to me for a long time, but I had never read it. In fact, I doubt if anyone had read it for over a hundred years. But it belonged to the family and it was now my property, so after a curious glance or two, it was put away in a drawer, once more unread.

This journal was written by my great-grandfather, a handloom weaver in the Ayrshire village of Fenwick, which is situated high on the moors, some miles north of Kilmarnock on the road to Glasgow. He was born on 14th February, 1814, and died on 5th September, 1857, at the early age of 43 years. His parents were Robert Taylor, weaver, and Margaret Mitchell. They were married on 28th May, 1804, and had a family of three sons and six daughters, including one set of twins. All their births and deaths were recorded in the Family Bible in the usual way. An old photograph survives showing an ornate mansion called Hillhouse Lodge, which my aunt claimed was Margaret Mitchell's home. If she came of wealthy folk, it is certain that she married much beneath her station in life.

My own memories of Fenwick are very slight. My father had no interest in the place and never took me there. Perhaps he was embarrassed by our family's humble origin. In any case, he preferred to dwell on his friendships among the moneyed classes of Arbroath where he spent his youth, and the glories of the County Cricket games where he made his reputation. Once, motoring over Fenwick Moor, sometime in my childhood, he pointed vaguely to a huddle of grey houses on the distant horizon, but that was all I ever saw of the village.

My grandfather, Robert Mitchell Taylor, was a child of ten when his father died, and did not remember much about him. Instead, he was virtually adopted by his cousins, the Dickies of Gainhill Farm, and there he spent the happiest years of his boyhood, as I have

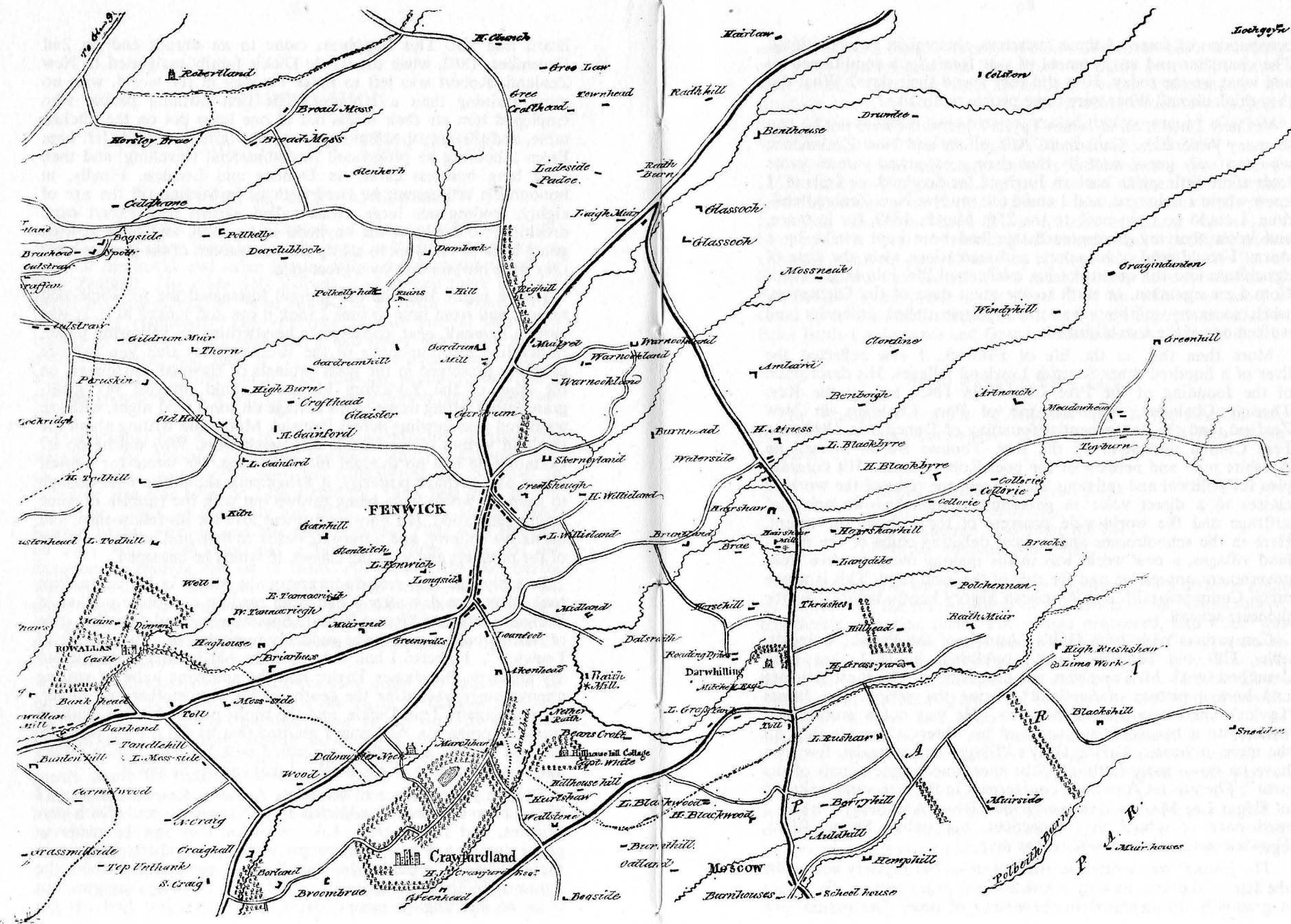


heard him tell. This happiness came to an abrupt end on 2nd December, 1862, when the whole Dickie family emigrated to New Zealand. Robert was left to make his way in the world, with no more training than a labourer. The first farming people who employed him ate their meals out of one large pot on the kitchen table, and the horror of having to eat like this never quite left him. From labouring he progressed to commercial travelling, and then to a long business career in Dundee and London. Finally, in honourable retirement, he lived with us in Stirling till the age of eighty, tending our large, stone-walled garden with expert care, dreaming no doubt of his boyhood at Gainhill, and once at least going back to Fenwick to set up the tombstones of his parents after they were blown down by a great gale.

I must admit that the old journal fascinated me for some odd reason, and from time to time I took it out and looked at it. It was written in small, neat, copperplate handwriting on yellowing paper, rather like the notebooks of the Bronte sisters that you can see carefully preserved in the glass cabinets of Haworth parsonage, on the edge of the Yorkshire Moors. I could imagine my great-grandfather sitting down in his cottage on some wild night, with the wind and rain howling across Fenwick Moor, and writing about the sins and virtues of his friends and neighbours. Why did he do it? Certainly he had no thought of publication. He wrote for himself alone, and perhaps posterity, if Providence should be kind enough to keep his words from being thrown out with the rubbish of some future generation. His only motive was love for his fellow-men, and his native country, and a burning desire to help and improve the lot of the peasants and working classes, to which he belonged.

Possibly, the first real discovery of the magic in his manuscript took place one day after I had been reading a popular edition of William Cobbett's "Rural Rides". Somewhere I had seen this style of writing before, and I was suddenly reminded of "The Annals of Fenwick". Hitherto I had only used the old journal to puzzle out my ancestry. But James Taylor had the annoying habit of writing anonymously, recording the deaths of his own mother and father, his marriage to Jean Dickie, and the births of his children, without clues or comments. And now I realised that he did this on purpose, because he was not mainly concerned with his own family affairs and relations, but with the whole of mankind as he saw it.

Despite the existence of the Scots Ancestry Research Society, I have never been much addicted to old registers, and death certificates, and family trees. Like statistics, they can be made to prove anything. I have seen people with framed charts hanging in their hallways, proudly showing their descent from Robert the Bruce or William the Conqueror. And what are these diagrams, but a lot of meaningless names? Now if we could just find out the



occupations of some of these ancestors, that might be something! The character and environment of our forefathers conditioned us and what we are today. How did they spend their days? What did they think about? What were these people really like?

Yet here I had it all in James Taylor's journal! I need not be like so many Americans, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders, who can only guess wistfully that their great-grand-parents came from some little place back in England, or Scotland, or Ireland. I knew where I belonged, and I could tell my five New Zealand children. I could go right back to the 25th March, 1842, for instance, and know that my great-grandfather had been kept awake by a storm. I could read of his sports and recreations, view the state of agriculture and the quality of his intellectual life, join in the Anti-Corn Law agitation, or thrill to the great days of the Disruption, when so many ministers and their people defied authority and walked out of the Establishment.

More than this, in the life of Fenwick, I saw reflected the lives of a hundred other Scottish Lowland villages. His description of the founding of the Free Church in 1843, led by the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, reminded me of Port Chalmers in New Zealand, and the consequential founding of Dunedin in 1848 as a Free Church settlement by the Rev. Thomas Burns, himself an Ayrshire man and nephew of the poet Robert Burns. His constant plea for political and religious liberty, and the right of the working classes to a direct voice in government, fore-shadows universal suffrage and the world-wide progress of the Labour movement. Here in the schoolrooms and radical debating clubs of the moorland villages, a new world was in the making overseas, free from government oppression and the rule of the local laird. This is where much Commonwealth and American history began, before ever the pioneers set sail.

Comparison with John Galt's "Annals of the Parish" is inevitable. This old Scottish classic, published in 1821, has been described by G. M. Trevelyan, the historian, as "the most intimate and human picture of Scotland" during the period. But James Taylor's characters are not fictitious. He was not a professional writer, but a handloom weaver, and his observations are thus all the more authentic. Taking Gray's "Elegy" as his model, few men have set down more faithfully "the short and simple annals of the poor". There is an American counterpart in the free-verse epitaphs of Edgar Lee Masters' famous "Spoon River Anthology", which I read once at school in Connecticut, but unlike Spoon River, Fenwick can easily be found on the map.

The journal was written in two volumes, but mystery surrounds the fate of the first, as only a few tattered pages remain. No doubt it gradually disintegrated in the course of time. The period now



covered extends from February 1842, to December 1856, including one short interval and one long blank of many years. The writer was entirely self-educated, apart from some rudimentary instruction at the village school, and his spelling varies from page to page. Obvious errors have been corrected, but no special effort has been made to standardise the spelling of places and names.

Registration was not compulsory in Scotland until 1st January, 1855. As the self-appointed registrar for the village, James Taylor recorded innumerable births, baptisms, deaths and marriages, most of which have been omitted for reasons of space. However, I have made a point of recording all entries where he made some personal comment, and I make no apology for including his list of Fenwick farms and farmers, who must by now have thousands of descendants in all parts of the world. For the sake of accuracy I could do no less, and in any case I love the old Scottish names like Brier Bush, Cauldstanes and Gree too much to leave them out.

### HIS NATIVE VILLAGE

The "Statistical Accounts of Scotland" tell us that Fenwick was part of Kilmarnock parish until 1642, and there was a little rhyme about it:

"When Fenwick parish did untae  
Kilmarnock once belong,  
They seldome gaed untae the Kirk  
Because the road was long."

At that time the parishioners were apparently in a state of great ignorance, but the ministrations of Mr Guthrie, the first minister, completely reformed them. The village prospered, and trade was brisk, for in pre-railway days the great highway to Glasgow across Fenwick Moor was busy with long lines of carriers' carts. The main industries in the late 18th and early 19th centuries were handloom weaving and shoemaking. Most of the weaving consisted of tweeds, blankets, muslins and some silk. The weavers were men of character and enterprise, and their society, founded in 1769, was the first Association in Scotland to buy foodstuffs (oatmeal) co-operatively for the benefit of its members. Religion in the Covenanted tradition was strong among them. From the mid 19th century there was a decline in weaving and shoemaking, and a reduction in the number of farms, and many of the people emigrated to Australia and New Zealand with the help of a village scheme of co-operative finance.

Fifty or sixty years ago, the "Kilmarnock Standard" printed an article describing the district in the late 18th century.

The parish had a population of 1,113 which included 244 families with an average of five in each family. That comprised all the farms, and both villages, Kirk-town with 42 families, and Fenwick-town with 36. The sparse population was very much scattered, the moorland and bog in some places extending for miles without a human habitation.

Many of the farmers' sons became discontented with the hard work and scanty remuneration and struck out on new lines for themselves, which was rather unusual, for the farmers as a class were conservative. It was quite common for the same family to remain for hundreds of years as tenants upon the same soil. Landlords came and went, but tenants, like the brook, went on forever. There is a famous instance of this in the Howies of Lochgoin, mentioned in the "Annals" on 27th March, 1845. The written records of their tenancy go back over 800 years, and span more than thirty generations, possibly the longest tenancy in the history of the British Isles. This is history indeed, of which Australia and New Zealand have no inkling!

The land is saturated in history and in blood. One of the Lochgoin farmers, John Howie (1735-1793), was so overwhelmed by it that he sat down and wrote his book "The Scots Worthies", full of memories of the persecuted Covenanters, passed down to him by forebears who had survived the "Killing Times". When John died at the age of 57, the last words he was heard to utter were "Christ will come". He belonged to the Cameronians, or followers of Richard Cameron, who was outlawed and killed at Airds Moss in 1680.

There were no fewer than forty-six looms in the parish, of which fourteen were muslin looms. There were sixteen shoemakers in the place, which seems too large a proportion for the number of inhabitants, but some of them worked for the export trade carried on by the Kilmarnock merchants. The work was all done by hand, so it was unnecessary for the workers to be massed together. It was so with many trades, weaving for example, and the handlooms working for one man were often scattered over a considerable area.

There were five tailors with their apprentices in the parish. These men were not stationary, but moved from house to house, taking their thimbles, thread and goose (smoothing iron) with them, and making up the farmers' suits of hodden grey. The wool grown on the moorland sheep was spun by the women of the household and sent into the village to a customer weaver to be woven, or on some farms a loom was kept in an outhouse, and one of the farmer's family might weave the yarn himself. Then the tailor appeared on the scene, and the wool which a short time before had kept the

sheep warm and cosy in the winter cold, was performing the same service and in the same place upon the persons of the farmer and his family.

There were nine masons in the parish, and two maltmen. Malting is now an extinct trade. Tea was a very uncommon luxury, and men were rather ashamed when they were found drinking it, as it was considered effeminate. Strong liquor was a luxury also, and not much indulged in by the rank and file of the people. Their food was different too. There was not such a variety of vegetables. Potatoes were grown for household use, with the thrifty kail for the broth pot. Butcher meat was rare, and the farmers fattened their own winter meat. A few cattle were killed before harvest, and a few after. They were salted, and no fresh meat was to be had, or even thought of, during the long winter. However, there were plenty of cakes and bannocks, and the wholesome porridge occupied a foremost place in the daily menu. More meal was made in the parish than the inhabitants consumed, and consequently it was cheap for everybody, and always a penny less per peck than in Glasgow or Paisley markets.

The moors were stocked with moor fowls and curlews, and lapwings were also in abundance. The swallow and the cuckoo were the only birds of passage, and there were hares in great numbers, but much destroyed by poachers. Conditions had no doubt changed somewhat when the "Annals" came to be written, but this was certainly the world of the writer's father who was born in 1785.

### HIS MUSINGS OF LEISURE

My aunt in Scotland, amused at my growing interest in her grandfather's affairs, and perhaps with the premonition of her own sudden death in January, 1963, at the age of 84, began cleaning out old desk drawers, and sending me a further collection of musty manuscripts, faded photographs, notebooks filled with poetry, and ancient letters, some of which dated from before Waterloo, in the handwriting of ancestors whose relationship to our family even she could not explain.

From this material it was at once evident that James Taylor had been a voluminous writer and correspondent, taking an active part in public life. The fragments before me included addresses for meetings and debates, pamphlets on political and religious questions, and a great many random notes which he designated under the titles of "Solitary Musings" or "Musings of Leisure". These included verse and intimate thoughts and observations. The pamphlets had been written on blank paper, roughly sewn together with needle and thread, and carefully duplicated in numbered copies for distribution to Fenwick people. Thus pamphlet No. 171



still survives, but what has become of all the others written before and since? We can only conclude that the bulk of his work has been irretrievably lost. As our knowledge of the writer is almost solely derived from his own pen, it is worth giving a few extracts from these miscellaneous pieces, which may help us to understand what kind of man he was.

### **The Village Sabbath**

"It is the evening of the Sabbath day. Spring is far advanced. Everything around is still. The sun, disarmed of his meridian rays, can now be gazed at as he lies in the west, bright and burnished as the shield of an ancient warrior. All around, nature is clothed with a new garb. The withered and storm-wrinkled face of winter is superseded by the bright and opening spring. Light clouds, like a graceful drapery, fold up the blue, untrodden regions of space. No sound of busy, bustling man breaks the stillness of the scene. The song of the thrush comes full and mellow from its joyful breast. Nor is the redbreast silent. Its lay resembles the mingled cadence of a lonely feeling, and the more stirring strain of a battle song. Crowds of insects, with light wing and joyful abandon, dance in the air to the sound of their own music, and the whisper of the playful breeze. The crow is seen striding over the new turned furrows, and uttering a strange cry as it hops to a tempting morsel that another equally needful is ready to seize. Or it rises and on outstretched pinion, seeks its leafy abode.

"It is pleasant to look at that quiet village and its embowering trees, to see the smoke curling up from so many happy homes, and to know that the fear of God fills them all. At this hour, this hour of Sabbath evening quiet, it may be said that almost every dwelling has become a family sanctuary, every hearth an altar, every home a temple of praise. Pass along that long range of thatched dwellings, and your ear will often catch the evening song of devotion, as it rises from poor and humble men to the throne of the Eternal. On this day no children are allowed to break from the family circle and run on the street. No Sabbath breaker, with his trotting dog at his feet, is to be seen. All keep within their dwellings, or sit in their little garden plots. Children repeat to their parents the questions of the catechism, or recite some of the songs of David. Those of more advanced years ponder over the Word of God, or investigate the writings of the practical, the pious, or the more profound of our divines. It is the day of God, the day appointed for man to worship, the day of rest for man and beast, and it is meet for the children of the Father, the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, to keep sacred his sacred day. It is a happy thing for youth to be reared in such a spot, to be impressed with such feelings, to be

imbued with such principles, Ever may my native village present such a scene, ever may its inhabitants keep the Sabbath day, ever may its youth grow up in virtue, ever may its aged attain wisdom, knowledge and happiness!"

### Farewell to Scotland

"Like you, I love this island home,  
Like you, with pleasure I did roam,  
Or musing view the vaulted sky,  
Wondering at the star's bright eye.  
Like you, I love the rocks and woods,  
The mountain lochs and swelling floods,  
Or by the silent, sloping hill  
Delight to hear the wandering rill.  
Or in the distant lovely glen,  
By heathy bent or moorland fen,  
Delighted I have often stood  
Making a friend of solitude.  
I love the mountains towering high  
Above the clouds that crown the sky,  
I love the music of the sea,  
The rocky cliffs that round it be,  
The grassy vales that widely spread  
The flowery fragrance that they shed,  
The tree, the stream, the wild flower fair,  
The humming bee that murmurs there,  
The birds that harp the tender song,  
The lark that sings the clouds among,  
The sparrow, chattering on the spray,  
The robin's wild sweet wintry lay,  
The cooing of the gentle dove  
Dwelling alone in constant love,  
And every sight and sound and name  
That Scotland's lovely isles proclaim,  
I love them, and her sons, the same,  
I love all with a mother's flame.

Yet all I sacrifice to be  
A freeman mingling with the free,  
Longing, lingering, would I stay,  
But tyranny says haste away.  
Fain would I have my bones to sleep,  
My native earth the dust to keep;  
Away, and never linger more!  
Hope calls me to another shore,  
And when I reach that far-off strand  
It is my own adopted land!"

## HIS RELIGION AND POLITICS

Tobias Smollett, writing in 1771 about a visit to Scotland, remarked : "There is a sect of fanatics who have separated themselves from the Established Kirk, under the name of Seceders. They acknowledge no earthly head of the church, reject lay-patronage, and maintain the methodist doctrines of the new birth, new light, efficacy of grace, insufficiency of works, and the operations of the Spirit."

The trouble started in 1712 when the British Parliament interfered with the Church of Scotland by restoring patronage, that is, the right of proprietors to appoint ministers to the parish churches. This measure altered Scottish religious and social history for the next 150 years. The patrons, being landed gentry, were largely Episcopalians, often fellow-travellers of Roman Catholics and Jacobites, and to impose their will on the people they naturally made appointments unpalatable to the democratic taste of the strongly Presbyterian churchgoers.

My great-grandfather belonged to the old Secession Church, and in his lifetime he witnessed an even greater secession over a similar question, leading to the founding of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843. The Secession Church joined with another dissenting sect known as the Relief Church in 1847, to form the United Presbyterian Church, which in turn joined with the Free Church in 1900 and became the United Free Church. Following the traditional Presbyterian pattern of secession and reunion, the United Free Church completed the circle in 1929 by rejoining the Church of Scotland.

Thus at the time the journal was written, there were three churches in Fenwick, the Auld Kirk or Parish Church, the Secession or U.P. Church, and the Free Church. Despite doctrinal differences, there is evidence of a cordial relationship between the manse, the ministers' wives meeting each other socially, and their children attending the same school. There were also some Cameronians remaining in the district, who were known as Reformed Presbyterians.

By the early 19th century the harsh narrow inquisitorial judgments of Presbyterianism had given way to a new tolerance. In his tracts on temperance, James Taylor is not so concerned to condemn the drinker, as to show how addiction to liquor can thwart the emancipation of the working classes. He advocates Sabbath observance, not as a dogma, but as an opportunity for poor weavers, artisans and labourers to think for themselves and gain some education. It was a day of refuge, a precious relief from the exploitation of the wealthy classes, when by prayer and faith, new plans for a brighter future might be made.

## Journal of Local Events for 1844.

✓ The year 1844 has begun its course. None can predict with certainty the events that will occur in it close. Many look forward to the approaching year with excited hopes. Something great is anticipated. Movements of vital interest stir the depths of Society. A crisis in national affairs seems to be approaching. The human mind is beginning to step out of the fetters that for ages have held it in thralldom. In the Religious world, the dogmas of Creeds and Confessions lose their hold: in the political, institutions venerable for age, but venerable also for iniquity, heavy with crime, totter to their base.

A few of the great questions in dispute, are, whether we are to have the authority of the Bible, or the Church—the voluntary or the compulsory <sup>system</sup>—a ritual or a spiritual religion—private judgement or priestly domination—superstitious bondage or healthful liberty—complete, or ~~only~~ class representation—free or restricted commerce—and whether reason or force are to govern the destiny of this

great nation. With dark brow the oppressor and bigot range themselves on the side of things as they are. With quick step and hopeful eye the 'outraged party' hasten to out-catch some of the outposts of Reformation, to narrate the shifts of the one, or the progress of the other, any farther than Geniue is concerned falls not within our province. In such a small place as Geniue this can be easily accomplished.

January 1<sup>st</sup> A frosty morning, with a cold snow shower about midday. The only public amusement, a ball shooting for two pair of curling stones. There was very little drinking this New Year's day.

January 12<sup>th</sup> Andrew Nelson, former Gen. ock, marries Miss Marion Stewart, eldest daughter of Thomas Stewart, Raithmorr. This marriage has caused a good deal of talk throughout the parish, chiefly on account of Andrew being an Elder, and then a widower for only about 10 months. Marion has

## Journal of Local Events. December 1844. January 1845

The first day Curling this season took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup>

Dec<sup>r</sup> 20. John Waller, weaver Farnwickton  
beat May Gemmill married

Dec 24 The Farnwick Curling Club, and the  
Kilmarnock Town End Curling Club played  
on Crookfordland Loch. The Farnwick curlers  
obtained victory by 19 shots.

A game of curling took between the Farnwick  
and Stewarton clubs on the 26<sup>th</sup> Dec<sup>r</sup> Farnwick  
players beat their opponents 58 shots.

The 26<sup>th</sup> A Congregational Service was  
held in the Session Meeting-house in behoof  
of the Library connected with the congregation.  
The Rev Mr Orr in the chair. The speakers were  
the Rev Mr Graham, from Duke Street, Glasgow  
the Rev Mr Low of Barrhead—the Rev Mr  
Robertson, of Irvine—and the Rev Mr Burnett  
of Eaglesome. The Farnwick vocal club also  
gave their services. The brilliant display  
of Naptha lamps with which the building  
was lighted had a fine effect. The lower  
part of the church was nearly full.

Tickets 8 pence The money donation amounted  
to £13-7-4 = the expenses incurred  
£7-6-4 =

Peter Gemmill, and Jane Taylor  
married Dec 31<sup>st</sup>

Time is ever pressing onward. 1844  
has now passed away—yes! 1844 with all  
its cares, sorrows, conflicts, crimes; its joys,  
pleasures, hopes, and happiness has gone, gone  
never to return. We now turn to another  
year—



January 1<sup>st</sup> 1845. A most beautiful day.  
The frost indicated fine sunshine cheer the face of  
nature. Bright day, be thou the harbinger of a bright  
a year! Very little drinking took place this  
New-year-day. Men are now more given  
to reflection, than to noisy revelry. Numbers  
resorted in the afternoon to Crookfordland  
Loch, and amused themselves on the strong  
and transparent ice. It was a beautiful  
sight to see. The clear frozen Loch,  
bounded by woodlands—the blue heaven  
above, while round the edge of the horizon  
the clouds glowed like burnished gold—  
the sun just seen above the trees, through  
his long shunting beams on the ice and  
woods at the upper end of the Loch, the  
number of the Farnwick ladies sport  
in its light (True to their nature for



SHORT & SIMPLE ANNALS OF LOCAL EVENTS, FOR ANNUALS OF THE TOWN OF NEWBURY

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;  
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor

GRAY

To attend to the neglected, and to remember the forgotten  
BUTLER.

1846

January 1<sup>st</sup> This new-years-day the weather has been very unpleasant. Snow showers continued to fall at intervals during the day, and a keen frost set in at night. The people were all very sober, most of them attending to their work.

January 23<sup>rd</sup> Robert Montgomery, late of Kenwick, and Mary Reid, Kirkton, married. The new married couple set off to Glasgow on the same night.

January 25<sup>th</sup> James Hutton, son of James Hutton, woodspinner, waterside, and Mary Grant baptized— Elizabeth Morton, daughter of Robert Morton and Elizabeth Barr baptized.

January 31<sup>st</sup> David Gemmill, son of Arthur Gemmill, Mylicland Hill, aged 3 years. He died of scarlet fever.

January 31<sup>st</sup> The weather throughout this month has been very unpleasant.

# JOURNAL OF LOCAL EVENTS.

FOR

1847.

January 1<sup>st</sup> 1847. New  
year day is nearly over. It has  
passed away with the utmost quietude.  
The old year is gone, we have passed  
— forward a friend with which we are  
daily familiar. It belongs to history, it  
is added to the annals of time. Its  
— repose cannot be disturbed. It is  
another bond placed by the Eternal  
— on our world, for which we must give  
an account. A new period of  
time has begun its flight; its events  
are as yet unknown. They meet in  
the womb of futurity, to be developed  
— in days and weeks, and months, rolls  
on. I was as first with words  
to day.

January 1<sup>st</sup> Agnes Gemmill  
daughter of Robt Gemmill, labourer,  
and Ann Anderson born.

January 2<sup>nd</sup> Robert Taylor, eldest son  
of James Taylor, mason, and Ann  
Daskie born.

January 6<sup>th</sup> The Greenwich Mutual  
Improvement Society held its first  
Annual Meeting in the house of Mr  
Hugh Thomson Innkeeper, John Hamilton  
in the Chair. After a good repast,  
Mr John Fulton Junr read on able  
— Essay on Man, and his adaptations for

Above all, his religion was filled with a belief in God, and an awareness of the snares of riches and the transitoriness of human life. The Bible ruled his days, and forgiveness was never far from his heart. The words of Edmund Burke: "To attend to the neglected, and to remember the forgotten," were inscribed in his journal. When he died, he could not have known that one of his sons, despite all his teaching and example, would spend thirty years as an incurable alcoholic, whispered about behind closed doors and perishing in obscurity, to mingle his bones in Ayrshire soil.

"Man is a being of complex character," he wrote. "At one time he is great, at another weak. Now he is noble, then base. His mind can comprehend the varied relations of the universe, reach the proudest pinnacle of thought, and yet can stoop to the most sordid appetites. He thirsts after fame, though the brow that is to wear the laurels may be cold in an hour. He is vain, thoughtless and ambitious, unmindful that his tread is on the dust of a thousand generations. He can attain some excellence here, and yet neglect far higher good. Subjected to a religion unspeakably lofty and pure, that has the direct tendency to lead and mould him to the character of its divine Author, he rather turns away, and surrenders himself to the dominance of his own passions. He leaves forgotten a moral law, holy, just and good, and follows the dictates of his own wayward judgement. Under the beneficent government of a kind Creator, he is found in constant sedition against his authority. Hence man is ever prone to cavil with the best and most useful gifts of God."

His political sympathies are well indicated by some of his correspondence, which includes a letter dated 18th August, 1840, from his friend and neighbour, John Brown, whose tragic death on 10th March, 1846, is described in the journal. James had given John some work for a Glasgow printer, and after attending to this, John continues: "You will have heard of the liberation of the five cotton spinners, who were sentenced to seven years' transportation for illegal combination. They arrived in Glasgow at the beginning of last week, and there was a public meeting in the Bazaar on Monday night for the purpose of welcoming them home. I was there, and we had a very good address from the chairman, Mr Cullen, a draper, who was an excellent speaker. He stressed the necessity for the working classes to unite for the protection of their labour. Then Mr Hackett, one of the five cotton spinners replied, giving us a statement of their apprehension, trial and condemnation, interspersed with some very cutting remarks on Sheriff Allison, and the judges and Crown lawyers, with an account of the prison hulks and the manner in which the convicts are employed and treated. He was followed by Mr Jones, the Socialist lecturer, who is a very clever man and a good speaker, and he gave the Government some very

severe cutting with regard to the punishing of the poor men for such a trivial offence, while the rich are not intermeddled with. Of course he gave all monopolies, and especially the Corn Law one, a pretty severe cutting. Then followed some other resolutions, but as the night was getting late, the proceedings were hurried over. I went yesterday to hear the Chartist preachers, and was afraid that the house would not be filled. But the people kept pouring in till every seat was taken and some standing."

Besides supporting the birth of trade unions, James Taylor took his part against American slavery, and on 5th April, 1846, describes the visit of Frederick Douglass the agitator, who was one of the most effective orators the Negro race has ever produced, and whose autobiography has recently been republished. Indeed his name still makes news in modern issues of "Time" magazine.

James Taylor's political opinions were not peculiar to himself. He shared them with all the working classes, and the only difference was that he wrote them down. In them can be seen both the influence of religious secession, and the radical ideas of equality fostered by Robert Burns. His opposition to privilege may have been treasonable, but his voice has the ring and fire of "some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood".

"Our chief aim", he declared, "should be to undermine monarchical government and state churches, by dissipating the delusive dream of their divine origin. I have little hope for the people till the blood built throne be in ruins, and the state church known only to the page of history. It may be imprudent on many occasions to advocate Republican principles, before persons who can neither understand nor appreciate just and logical reasoning. We should cultivate prudence and urbanity of manners as well as zeal. Still there is not one but could do his duty to society and offend nobody. We have all brothers and sisters into whose minds we could instil the genuine sentiments of freedom. In a word, politics should be made a part of home education, and freemen, aye Republican freemen, reared from the very cradle.

"There is another duty we owe to society—that of independence. The greatest of all dangers is, I conceive, that of a general pusillanimity, of moral cowardice, of losing a proper and manly independence of character. We should on all occasions stand boldly up and deliver our opinions without asking or caring what others think. It may sometimes be rough and harsh, but at any rate it is independent. Who is ever to correct the faults of society if nobody lifts up his voice against them, if everybody goes on openly doing what everybody privately complains of, if all shrink behind the faint-hearted apology that it would be over bold in them to attempt any reform?



"Look at it in a larger view: What barrier is there against the universal despotism of our public institutions in this country, but individual freedom? Who is to stand up against tyranny, but the possessor of that lofty independence? If you yield in this point, if you are forever making compromises, if all men do this, everything will be swept beneath the aristocrat's wave. There will be no individuality, no hardihood, no self reliance, no fearless dignity, no glorious manhood of mind left among us. The holy heritage of our fathers' virtues will be trodden underfoot by their unworthy children. Let us beware how we become entangled in the yoke of bondage.

"I know of but one safe thing in the universe, and that is truth. And I know of but one way to truth for an individual mind, and that is unfettered thought. And I know of but one path for the multitude of truth, and that is thought freely expressed. Make of truth itself an altar of slavery, guard it about with a mysterious shrine, bind thought as a victim upon it, and let the passions of a prejudiced multitude minister fuel, and you sacrifice upon that accursed altar the hopes of the world."

### HIS POEMS

We come now to the gentler side of his nature, embodied in that slim, unfinished anthology of verse entitled: "The Village Lyre, a Collection of Original Poems. Fenwick, 1838." In this volume he preserved in his exquisite copperplate writing the verses of his friends, notably those of John Kirkland, the weaver, and including some more of his own "Solitary Musings".

In his preface he says: "It is not the design of the Collector to obtrude these pieces upon the notice of the public, nor is he actuated by any other than purely intellectual motives. All the remuneration he expects to derive, is the gratification of snatching from utter oblivion a few of the poetical effusions in early life, of some of his friends and associates in his native village. Their feelings he regards as sacred, and he is hopeful that he can turn their poetical genius to good account, although destined to no higher distinction than a place in the catalogue of his own private library. In looking through the vista of the years into the far future, if the Almighty should be pleased to lengthen out the span of life, he contemplates in his present task a source of intellectual enjoyment in the memory of other, perhaps better days which this poetic record of youthful thoughts and feelings may perchance inspire. Like a happy dream, they may brighten up the gloom in which cares and toils too often involve the nobler faculties in the evening of life. So if this volume should ever chance to fall into the hands of anyone whom circumstances necessarily render indifferent to the

same motives for perusal, and the same rule of appreciation by which he was influenced, he is solicitous that such an individual shall think of it in the spirit of charity."

Whatever merit the Fenwick bards may, or may not, have had, there is no doubt whatsoever, from four of these poems all written by the Collector, that a "mute inglorious Milton" did indeed live among them. And if this book has any good purpose in being printed, it is to reverse the intention of the author, and bring to the notice of the public at least one poem, "The Rose in the Heather", which for its haunting tenderness must be unsurpassed, and which deserves to live forever in the literary annals of Scotland. Again, in the first poem, we have the same devotion to Republican ideals which made exiles of so many Scots in years gone by, and in the fourth, which is also the last he ever penned, who can guess the unspeakable sorrow which led to the terrible finality of those carefully chosen words? Who can guess?

Perhaps, after all, the depth of his nature is best understood and appreciated from his love letters to Jean Dickie, whom he married on 9th July, 1845, at the age of 31, and I have therefore added two of them after the poems, to complete our knowledge of him.

### THE EMIGRANT'S SALUTE TO AMERICA

Oh Scotia dear, my native land,  
Farewell unto thy rugged shore,  
Sore ground beneath oppression's hand  
I leave thee to return no more.

It pains my heart with grief and woe  
To see, to feel, thy many wrongs,  
Oh for the might to lay them low!  
Who causes first, then mocks thy groans.

How sad I feel to leave thy shore,  
Yet sadder far to leave behind  
My country wasting 'neath a yoke  
From which no refuge she can find.

My heart, my heart is full of thee,  
And I must part with many a sigh,  
A stronger than oppression's hand  
Must sever nature's filial tie.

Ye lordly rulers, sunk in self,  
A thousand curses on you rest,  
That ye may wallow wild in wealth  
What thousands must there be oppressed!

Compelled by your relentless yoke  
 The noblest of the land have gone  
 To seek, far from their native heath,  
 A kinder and a happier home.

There is a land far in the west,  
 Beyond the wide Atlantic sea,  
 Who welcomes to her happy shore  
 All those whose souls long to be free;

The land of Patriot Washington,  
 Whose virtues they still imitate,  
 His spirit yet broods o'er that land  
 Making it happy, good and great.

No hell begotten vampire brood  
 There gormandise the people's wealth,  
 Nor by the hook of godless laws  
 Make all subservient to their self.

Uncursed with Tyrants, Kings and Lords  
 And titled paupers, proud and great,  
 Her nobles are her artisans,  
 The treasured jewels of the State.

There liberty unfolds her charms,  
 A mighty people's pride and care,  
 There virtue only has a crown,  
 There merit only honours wear!

The labourer there, Oh happy sight,  
 He is rewarded for his pain;  
 We should inquire if all is right  
 Where those who toil must toil in vain.

There—freedom like a fruitful tree  
 Its hallowed shade o'er all it throws,  
 While peace and plenty o'er the land  
 Shower ever from its laden boughs.

Far as her boundless forests wave  
 May freedom still her blessings shower,  
 And like her giant floods still prove  
 Far stronger than tyrannic power!

## CARMEL WATER

Oh the bonnie Carmel water,  
The sweetly winding Carmel water,  
Lang be green the flowery banks  
And clear the stream o' Carmel water.

Fu' weel I mind the sunny days,  
Ere love's young lips had learned to flatter,  
We played about the bonnie braes  
And lav'd the stream o' Carmel water.

The time drove on twix schule and play,  
And how we learned it disna' matter,  
But out frae neath the taws away,  
Away we hied to Carmel water.

An' monie joys, an' monie waes  
O'er monie years our memories scatter,  
The joys are linked o'er Carmel braes,  
The waes are a' gane doon the water.

Our schuling done, the wark we plied  
Wi' implement o' clank and clatter,  
But aft at meals awa' we hied  
To bathe our limbs in Carmel water.

Now far frae scenes I loved sae dear,  
And far frae ane I loved still better,  
I ne'er recall without a tear  
The joys I left on Carmel water.

But gin I e'er come back again,  
She ne'er shall say that I forgot her,  
For were I King, she'd by my ain,  
The bonniest lass on Carmel water.

Oh the bonnie Carmel water,  
The sweetly winding Carmel water,  
Lang be green the flowery banks  
And clear the stream o' Carmel water.



## THE ROSE IN THE HEATHER

Oh wha will pu' the rose  
That blooms among the heather,  
Ere the shades of evening close,  
Ere the bright blossoms wither.

I watched it in the bud  
Till I saw its bursting glory,  
Anon it shed a flood  
Of peerless glow before me.

They've tried to pu' the rose  
Whose touch would blast the dew,  
But still it blooms and grows,  
And for such aye will do.

I saw it bathed in dew  
Once more as I passed near it,  
My hand was stretched to pu',  
My heart said, spare Oh spare it.

The sun now at its height  
Shone full into its bosom,  
It glowed with tints more bright  
Than any garden blossom.

It scatters its perfume  
O'er deserts of brown heather,  
It droops and fails to bloom,  
And no eye sees it wither.

If I mayn't pu' the rose,  
Then all my life I'll venture  
To guard it where it grows  
From the rude blasts of winter.

Oh I would pu' the rose  
That blooms among the heather,  
Ere the shades of evening close,  
Ere the bright blossoms wither.

### THE BROKEN HEART

If tears could move thee to revoke  
That stern resolve of thine,  
That turns to adamant rock  
A heart that once was mine,  
And bids me now forget the hour  
When I was all to thee,  
My tears would flow as rivers pour  
Their waters to the sea.

Could time wring from his balmy vine  
My heart one drop afford,  
Or sweeping onwards, wake in thine  
One sympathising chord,  
I'd bid long years on years roll on  
Though steep'd in grief the while,  
Nor ere regret, if one short sun  
I lived beneath thy smile.

Aye! time may cure a widow's grief  
And soothe the childless mother,  
And tears may haply bring relief  
To her who mourns a brother,  
And time and tears not often fail  
E'en when fond lovers part,  
But Ah! nor tears nor time avail  
Thy cold, my broken heart.

### HIS LOVE LETTERS TO JEAN DICKIE

Fenwick,  
24th June, 1844.

Dear Jean,

Having an idle hour on hand, I thought I could not spend it better than writing a few lines to you. The mind finds pleasure in communicating its impressions to those we love. Thoughts often spring up in the mind when alone, that are forgotten when we mingle in society. It is this opinion now leads me to address you.

A finer train of feeling often fills our bosoms when we are absent from those that we esteem, than when we are in their presence. At least this has often been the case with me. I felt a sort of indifference when in the company of her I loved, but no sooner was I absent, than recollections of her worth, her tenderness or her beauty filled all my thoughts. I felt that away from her she became

doubly dear. Some fine trait of feeling that I had scarcely observed when in company now comes vividly into my recollection, making her a thousand times dearer than what she formerly was.

Thus it is that love often grows strong in the absence of the one we esteem, from some impression we received when last in their company. We look back to our past intercourse, and from this source draw new materials for our future love. Two young persons going together in early life with their minds thus constituted, methinks, will never grow weary of one another's society. For when they become somewhat indifferent to the pleasures of the present moment, the past scene of their lives and of their love will add flame to the fuel of their affections.

Though their life may be spent in poverty, though they meet with neglect from all around, though the world frown coldly on their lowly condition, they have that within themselves that constitutes happiness — love to one another. Without this, the richest may be miserable, the most talented wretched, the most successful hopeless. It is this exalted feeling that often makes the cottage of the humble far more to be envied than the palace of the rich. It is this that gives life a charm, that wealth of power or influence vainly endeavour to attain. What can a boasted name or an ancient pedigree confer, if the heart is cold and callous within?

Love, constant, faithful, tender, love existing in the present and flowing in upon the heart full and fresh from the memory of the past, it is this that gilds life with sunshine, that throws a tender halo of sweetest interest round our mortal existence, and that but fades with that existence itself, to be renewed if we but follow in the steps of the Saviour of the world, with a fresher, a brighter, and eternal lustre.

I present these thoughts to your consideration, in full confidence that they will meet with a full response in your bosom, knowing well that you desire to live a humble and lowly life, loving and being loved. With God for your stay, with health for your portion, with some one you love for your companion, you will not count it loss that you were not born with wealth for your dower, or amid the gaudy splendours of the worldly great.

But my paper forbids that I should write more, so for the present I bid you adieu.—Yours, etc.,

**James Taylor.**

Fenwick,

20th September, 1844.

Dear Jean,

In writing a few lines now and then for your amusement, you are by no means to expect what are commonly called love letters. I have no taste for such kind of writing. I care little for the

rhapsodies of love-sick swains. To praise your charms or to extol your beauty would give you no real pleasure, and it could give no higher idea of my constancy, though I were to vow by all the Gods that my love for you would be eternal. The high flown language that is often used in love letters serves no good purpose, it speaks neither from nor to the heart. It can only flatter the pride of the one, and the vanity of the other.

The praise that some seem so fond to lavish on the object of their fancy (for I will not call it love), is often without meaning, and the vows of their unalterable attachment seem to have a hollow sound. Such love is the mere impulse of the moment. It has no firmness, no strength of purpose. It goes and comes with the tide of feeling, and may vanish like the dew of the morning. The love of some resembles the flood of the mountain stream, and for a time it is all noise, fury and excitement. If they do not marry while the excited passions are strong, their love like the spent torrent soon subsides. If they do marry, it soon falls as far below as it was above the ordinary level, and in this state they are doomed to drag on a weary existence. No precious love burns on their family altar, no hope lights up with resplendent beam the weary aspect of the future, no kind affection gilds the passing hours of life. They want that unity of feeling that makes constant intercourse agreeable. Yet such is the fate of many.

There are others again whose love resembles the flow of the fertilizing river, always constant, steady, delightful, adorning life with the highest moral qualities, and nourishing into luxuriant growth the finest of the social affections. To such, marriage is an accession of love. And as they glide down the stream of life, the circle of their sympathies and the number of their endearments are ever widening, till they reach the great ocean of eternity. Happy is the love, blessed is the union of such. They live for each other. Calm and peaceful, their lives glide on. Their repose is not disturbed by vanity, nor their peace broken by the tattle of the idle. Pride and scorn mingle not with their thoughts, and ambition does not checker the prosperous hour. Grief may throw its solemn influence around them, sorrow may mingle in their cup of joy, but still they are far better prepared to bear the ills of life than those who are united without love. They are one in heart, one in all the different relations of life, one in asking the blessing of their God, one in their hope of an endless and blessed immortality.

If death should "all untimely" set his dark signet on the brow of the one and leave the other sorrowing behind, this very love, this oneness of soul, will prove a balm to the wounded heart. With all the hallowed remembrances of love around, the spirit of the one thus bereaved, when the world knows it not, may often pierce the mysterious future, and in the celestial land join the fellowship of those they love, and mingle their voices together in the cadence of a



deathless song. Or if less imaginative, they may look forward with perfect certainty to a coming time when they will be united in the bands of a holier, more heavenly love.

I have endeavoured to describe the difference that exists in the love of individuals, and to show the one most to be desired. I need not ask of you which of the two you would prefer. Your gentle heart, I am sure, would fondly cling to the one, while if it came into contact with the other, it would pine and languish. To a woman it is of the utmost importance that she possess the love of her husband. A man may do without the love of his wife. Wanting it, he may drown reflection and kill time in the busy round of exciting society. But she, at home, isolated as it were from the world, with only her own thoughts to brood over, without any return of love, is more to be pitied than many of those on whom the unreflecting lavish all their sympathy. But I must close, however tempting the theme. I would only say to you in conclusion, "think on these things".—Yours truly,

**James Taylor.**

## II.

## THE ANNALS OF FENWICK

“ A sentinel to watch  
 The change and current of the times, to note  
 Men's actions, to record their lives, to view  
 Their sports and pastimes, hear them talk, and with  
 Impartial and unbiassed mind, award  
 To every one, the tribute that is due.”

## PREFACE

In beginning another volume of the Journal of Local Events, the writer desires to say that he will continue to narrate things as they happen as accurately as possible. The language of this work may not be elegant, the composition may not be grammatically correct, but the record may be depended on as true.

To many, our village life will be of little or no importance. Fenwick is not a place for stirring events, or a field for topics of historic interest. Her sons may not be distinguished as orators, or stand high in literary or political excellence. But they occupy their station in society as atoms of mankind.

And wherever man is, there is interest. Whatever be the stage whereon he acts the drama of human life, whether in a public or private station, his actions, his character, his habits are interesting to the curious and contemplative.

Besides the description of events, the phenomenon of nature will be noticed. The rain torrent, the snow drift, the burning meteor, the storm with its devastating effect, in thunder's roll, the lightning's flash, with all the milder appearances of nature's varied loveliness — these delight and fascinate the sensitive beholder.

Such are some of the humble aims of the writer of the following pages.

The dates of this Journal may be relied on as correct.

James Taylor.

February 1842

## TWO CHARACTERS

February 20th: Died at Kirktown, Mr Hugh Hopkin, shoemaker, aged 80. His sister, Jean died twenty-four hours after. For a long time they had lived together. Both were remarkable char-

acters in their way, Hugh for his rhetorical powers, his general information, his political liberality, and his love for polemical controversy — Jean for her love of gossip.

For a long time their house had been a resort for folk to go to and hear the news, and get a crack. Hugh had a sort of knack at telling a story, and many thought the news more entertaining when they heard it from him than when they read it for themselves. He had considerable conversational powers, but he lacked the faculty for concentrating his ideas. His language was largely developed, and gave him great fluency of speech.

He had a very excitable temperament. On one occasion when at Kilmarnock making arrangement with his creditors, a lawyer (David Andrew) called him a swindler. This put Hugh in high dudgeon, and he left Kilmarnock all but mad. Coming into Fenwick, he hoisted his staff with his pocket napkin on it for a flag, and thus equipped, he walked through the village shouting: "Here goes Hopkin the Swindler!"

Hugh had an excellent character, and none would have believed what the lawyer called him. At one time he was a weaver, at another a small merchant, besides trying his hand at lay preaching.

Two more odd characters are not left in our village. They represented the oddities of a past age, rather than the present. They were always up early in the morning, having their breakfast ready at six o' clock. Jean was never overly nice, particularly in her cooking department. She had a practice of dishing the parritch (porridge), the new on the top of the old, and she took care that they always had some left. Dr Currie once on paying a visit to Hugh, who was rather unwell, saw Jean at her wonted practice. He told her that if she did that it would kill Hugh.

"'Deed no, Doctor," says Jean, "Hughie's gotten his parritch a' his days that way, ye see, an' it ne'er did him any ill."

She would have thought nothing to have boiled a whole pound of herring at one time for "her and Hughie's potatoes." Jeanock, as the auld wives about the Kirktown called her, never lost much of her time in washing dishes. Nevertheless, they were hale and hearty to within a short time of their death.

All his days, Hugh was a firm dissenter. Neither he nor his sister were ever married. Jean had a natural son (William, nicknamed Bilch), who died before her, leaving two daughters. Hugh and Jean were both buried in one day, side by side, in one grave. Hugh left a great number of manuscripts.

A new kind of weaving was introduced into Fenwick this month, being printed warps, wafted with coloured worstet. . .

The weather in February was more than ordinarily mild.

### March 1842

March 2nd: The annual ploughing match of the Barony of Rowallan took place on Dalmusternock holmn, with twelve competitors. Robert Young, Mosside, took first prize; Peter Gemmel, Todhill, second; Robert Dickie, Tannacreif, third; and Hugh Robertson, Dalmusternock, fourth. A great many spectators were present.

March 3rd: A day of uncommon rains. The roads between Fenwick and Kilmarnock were in several places overflowed, and some parts of the fields under water.

### A VILLAGE SCANDAL

A fama (rumour) arose about this time that raised a wonderful talk in this and some of the neighbouring parishes. It was this: Margaret Calderwood of Blackbyre was said to be with child to Alexander Mitchel, some time in September, 1841. It is further stated that a marriage contract existed between her and William Fulton, Junior, of Kirktown, and that to enable her to keep this engagement, it was necessary that the child be put away. For this purpose, Dr Wallace of Waterside was applied to, and drugs obtained from him that effected the purpose. This remained a profound secret from September, 1841, till the beginning of March, 1842. What gave publicity to the affair was the following:

Alexander Mitchel and Dr Wallace were both going to America, and to make something out of it, the doctor is said to have made a demand on Mitchel for five pounds, although it was also said that he was handsomely paid at the time for his services. This was refused, and he threatened to make it public if the sum was not paid to him. It was still refused, so he made it public, spreading it by every means in his power.

It was talked of for about eight days in the parish, before it reached the ears of the authorities, and led to the apprehension of the parties early on Saturday morning, 12th March. They were taken to Kilmarnock for examination. Miss Calderwood got home on Monday evening, and the two gentlemen were sent off to Ayr jail on Tuesday morning, from whence they were bailed out for six months by their friends on the following day.

March 18th: Gavin Dalzell married Janet, eldest daughter of Samuel Howe. Janet would be at least ten years older than Gavin.

March 25th: a night of uncommon wind. In the morning it was calm and soft-looking and as the day advanced, the weather improved. By the afternoon, however, it was plain that a storm was brewing. By nightfall it had increased in violence, and at nine the

wind had reached the utmost pitch of its fury. It was a grand but terrific moment to look at nature. The full moon seemed to rush with tremendous speed through the sky, when seen in the openings of the storm-riven clouds. The trees writhed as if in agony, houses shook and rattled on their roofs or flew about ears, staples shot through the air like arrows, and the wind howled as if singing the last dirge of dissolving nature. Large drops of rain at times accompanied the wind. If it had not abated somewhat before ten o'clock, many houses in the village would have been seriously injured. Throughout the country in general, great damage has been done, and in some places lives have been lost. A more violent storm of wind, it is thought, has not been in this part of the country for upwards of forty years.

March 26th: Died at Upper Fenwick, Mrs Allan Galt. Mrs Galt is allowed to have been one of thirteen drunken wives in the small village of Fenwick at this time.

## April 1842

### AN ACCIDENT

On Sabbath, 3rd April, a horse and phaeton ran away with a party of gentlemen from Kilmarnock, who were out on a Sunday excursion. Three of the gentlemen were fortunate enough to get out before it fairly started. One unfortunate wight, however, remaining in the vehicle, down it came through the village at full speed, turning the corner at Waterslap. When at Thomas Taylor's the gentleman leaped from the carriage, and fortunately for himself, alighted in the dirt more frightened than hurt. The horse was stopped after a good race, it and the phaeton sustaining considerable damage. So much for the respectables jaunting on Sunday !

April 4th : Alexander Mitchel and Margaret Calderwood married.

April 5th : The effects of William Cuthbertson, farmer, Gardrum-hill, sold by public roup, by order of the sheriff. William Cuthbertson left this country for America sometime in January this year. He had been in the dealing way for some years past, and had considerable creditors. The debts he left behind him amounted to about six hundred pounds, all in small sums, from six shillings to forty pounds. He cut without letting anyone know, not so much as his wife (only a few months married), or his mother. A good number in Fenwick suffered more or less by his flight.



## A BURGLARY

The house of John Orr of Orange Bovan was broken into on the night of 4th April. The thieves made an entry by the window, where the eldest daughter's (Elisabeth's) kist (box) was standing, and carried it out by the front door, without disturbing any of the inmates, into one of the Walston parks, where they gutted it completely of its contents, amounting in value to about ten pounds. They left nothing but the empty kist and a New Testament. Four policemen were on the spot the following day, but discovered no trace whatever of the depredators.

April 11th: William Craig and Agnes Mitchel married. They were proclaimed three times on the Sabbath, left Waterside early on Monday morning, were married in Glasgow, and sailed immediately for Pictou in Nova Scotia.

Alexander Mitchel and John Wallace were indicted to stand their trial before the Lords on 11th April for procuring an abortion, Margaret Calderwood to appear against them as King's evidence. Her mother and sister, and several other witnesses from Waterside were summoned to attend. Alexander Mitchel and John Wallace, not appearing were outlawed, besides forfeiting their bail of thirty-three pounds each. Dr Wallace sailed for America with his two eldest sons a few days before his trial. Alexander Mitchel kept out of the way till he could conveniently leave this country.

Mr Barr, a young gentleman from Glasgow, commenced teaching in the new school at Waterside on 11th April.

April 15th: John Dickie, labourer, died at High Fenwick.

Thunder and lightning on Saturday, 24th and Monday, 26th, particularly on Monday, the thunder pealed and the lightning flashed incessantly from noon till six in the evening.

Robert Sheddon of Gardrum-mill left Fenwick with his wife and family for America on 28th April. Robert sold his farm for the sum of one thousand and ninety pounds.

(Many pages of the journal are missing here).

## August 1843

August 9th: For more than a month prior to this date the weather has been uncommonly soft. The farmers were getting alarmed for their hay crop, which was actually in a bad state. Now however, the weather has brightened up, and gives promise of being excellent.

August 11th: The weather splendid — the farmers are through cutting their rye grass and meadow hay.

August 14th: Matthew Fulton, Spoutmouth, and John Bicket, Fenwick-town, arrived from America. They had been upwards of three years there.

The Rev. Dr Cunningham, from Edinburgh, delivered a lecture on the Church question in the Secession Meeting House on the 18th August. The doctor is one of the leading men of his party. Since their separation from the Establishment, he has been appointed one of the professors of the Free Church. Though a man of talent, he does not appear to belong to the highest order of genius. The audience was fully as large as on former occasions.

Saturday, 19th August: An uncommonly warm day. The thermometer stood at 85 in the shade and 115 in the sun. The weather for some days previously had been uncommonly warm.

### DEATH IS A TYRANT

Margaret Fulton, daughter of the late James Fulton, Kirktown, died August 24th, her age, about thirty. Margaret for twelve or fourteen years was one of the most patient of sufferers. For that whole time it could not be said that she enjoyed a day's health.

Before taking her trouble, Margaret was a young and lively girl, full of life and spirit, but a canker was at the bud, though it was long before the withered and blasted flower faded wholly away. With regret, we see many a fine and interesting woman cut off in the dawn of youth. While the glow of beauty was on the cheek, while the light of newly awakened thoughts sparkled in the eye or played upon the lip, while attention was attracted to the gracefulness of the form, or to the beauty of the face, or to the active, unassuming industry of their lives, suddenly some fatal stroke prostrates for ever the flower of loveliness and promise.

Death never assumes the look of the ruthless destroyer more than when such a one becomes its victim. When the bent frame, the tottering steps and the wrinkled brow sink in its embrace, the heart, however sorrowful, feels that death has been reaping a matured harvest. Not so however, when the brow of youth turns cold, when the eye of beauty is closed, when the lip of mirth is silent, when the bosom, lately full of youthful emotion, ceases for ever to beat. It is then we feel death to be a tyrant.

August 26th: This day in the afternoon there were several terrible flashes of lightning with loud thunder peals. The electric cloud was uncommonly near the earth, and the fire intensely vivid. A young man of the name of Smith, a grandson of John Smith of this parish, was killed by the lightning on the Jocksthorn farm. A horse was also killed at Cutstray.

The call to the Rev. Mr Graham was moderated in the Parish Church on the 29th August. A number of the neighbouring clergy

attended, and about thirty-four of the parishioners. Mr Aiken, from the Chapel, Kilmarnock, preached. With those who were present, and those who sent in their names, about fifty signatures were obtained to what they styled the Call. At the close of the ceremonies of the day, the clergy and a few of Lord Glasgow's tenantry dined on cold viands, with wine to drink, brought from the George Inn, Kilmarnock. It was represented as a sumptuous feast.

### September 1843

September 11th: Harvest is now pretty general on the farms around Fenwick.

September 12th: Jean Robertson, Dalmusternock, married to a Mr Gavin Lindsay, of Nether-nitton, parish of Loudon. There was no wedding party at this marriage.

### DISRUPTION OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

The Rev. Mr MacNaughton, from the Free Protestant Church, Paisley, delivered a lecture on the Church question in the Fenwick Meeting House, September 14th. The reverend gentleman is an excellent speaker, and managed his subject with considerable ability. He dealt out some severe thrusts at the Rev. Mr Graham, the presentee for this parish. He stated that he had been a forward non-intrusionist up till the disjunction from the Establishment. He would leave others to draw their own conclusions from such conduct! He scourged at an awful rate the residuary Establishment, and strongly maintained that they were not the Church of Scotland, but that the Free Protestant Church was the true Church of Scotland. The Free Church, he stated, had every prospect of success. They had seven hundred and ninety congregations, including a population of upwards of one million.

September 15th: Hugh Wyllie, widower, and Elizabeth Dunlop, Thorn, married.

September 21st: The Rev. Mr Graham was inducted to the charge of this parish, or more properly speaking to be pastor to the few who remain within the pale of the Establishment. The Rev. Mr Steven, Stewarton, preached, and conducted the other proceedings of the settlement. The attendance was but small. It was intimated that at the close of the proceedings, Mr Graham would stand at the South gate to shake hands with his parishioners. The people at first seemed a little backward in going forward to shake the reverend gentleman's hand. At last, no less a personage than Mr William Cuthbert stepped forward, and was the first to shake hands with the new minister, or what Mr MacNaughton a few nights before,

styled the new "State policeman". After the affair was finished, the clergy drove off to dine, at a very different rate than the Apostles ever did, at the George Inn, Kilmarnock.

September 21st: On several of the farms around Fenwick, the shearing is finished. Never was there more beautiful weather than what has been for some weeks past. Its only fault, at least for those who are shearing, is its uncommon warmth. The corn everywhere is finely ripe, and of a beautiful golden hue. On lea ground it is not as heavy as was expected, but is well filled out. An hour or two is all that has been lost on account of rain since the beginning of harvest.

September 22nd: The Equinox. A calm, beautiful and sunny day. As yet, no equinoctial gales have blown. The weather for several weeks has been extra calm.

Andrew Gemmil, Aikenhead, and Matthew Gemmil, Wyllie-land, finished their harvest on the 29th September. Several others in the neighbourhood have either finished, or very nearly so. On some of the farms around Fenwick, the harvest has been finished in three weeks.

### October 1843

Thomas Anderson, shoemaker, died on October 7th, aged 76. Thomas was not a man of public spirit, but he had enough to struggle for in bringing up a very numerous family. Thomas was admitted to be a very sprightly young fellow in his youth, but care and age had sadly altered his appearance.

October 12th: John Anderson, mason, with his wife and five children, left Fenwick for America. Three of the family were grown up. They were intending to settle in the Illinois. John sold his house to John Ferguson (laird the Brae) for £64.

The Rev. Mr Ramage from the Relief Church, Kilmarnock, preached the annual sermon for the Fenwick Missionary Society (Female) in the Meeting House on Sabbath the 15th October. The reverend gentleman took for his text: "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." He managed his discourse with great ability. The fame of the preacher filled the house.

### THE HARVEST AND THE WEATHER

October 18th: The harvest in the upland part of the parish is not yet finished, or are there many of the potatoes raised. The fine weather broken on 29th September, the day that several of the farmers around Fenwick finished their harvest. Those who were not fortunate enough to have finished, got little done to it for the next

fortnight. Previous to the breaking up of the fine weather, we had three nights of frost. From the 29th September till the 10th October, we had soft, splashy weather. On the 11th October, a perfect deluge of rain fell, and continued for about twenty-four hours. On the 12th October the weather brightened up, and we had a strong drought. It froze at night, and the frost continued on the 13th, 14th and 15th. On the 16th we had some rain, on the 17th a considerable shower of snow fell, and on the 18th we had uncommon, keen night's frost. On the 19th the frost was still keen, but on the 20th, a thaw.

Margaret Galt, widow of the late James Fulton, Kirktown, departed this life October 21st, aged about 60. Mrs Fulton was one of those who were driven from their comfortable homes on the Glebe by the ruthless tyranny of the Rev. Robert Ferguson. Another circumstance in her life may be mentioned: Her family as they grew up to man and womanhood, were all cut off by consumption. Of a numerous family, only one daughter survives her. She saw her children, one after another, drop into the grave around her like leaves in autumn, leaving the parent stem forlorn and desolate.

October 27th: David Walker and Janet McLaughlan, married. David had earned for himself a rather unenviable notoriety for his doings among the fair sex. He has had no fewer than three natural children, by different women, before his marriage.

October 31st : John Dunlop, son of Matthew Dunlop, Duntan, came home from America. He had been away nearly six months.

### November 1843

November 1st: James Stewart, son of Henry Stewart, Colonrie, came home from America, after being away about six months. Farmers' sons, who have not been very hard wrought at home, do not appear to like America.

Oatmeal at the present time is selling at 25/- per load, and at 7d and 8d per peck. Potatoes 12/- per bole. Beef 7/6 to 8/6 per tron stone. Mutton 3½ to 4d per pound. Fresh pork 6/6 per tron stone, or 3½ per pound. Butter, 9d per pound. Herring, 1d, 1½ and 2d per pound. Cheese 8/- to 8/6 per tron stone.

November 30th: Fenwick Fast Day. Mr Orr had the Rev. Mr Ellis from Saltcoats assisting him, who preached two discourses highly tinged with High Calvinism. The Rev. Mr Graham was assisted by the Rev. Dr Muir, from St James', Glasgow. In the Free Church body, the Rev. Mr Macbeth from Glasgow preached.



## RELIGIOUS ARGUMENTS

A meeting of the Secession congregation took place on the Fast evening, to see and revive the missionary spirit among them, Robert Lindsay of Gardrum in the chair. In the course of a conversation on the best means of effecting this purpose, Mathew Foulds made some remarks that caused a good deal of talk for some days. In his address, Mathew found fault with some of the electors and elders of the congregation, for voting for members of Parliament who supported a Ministry, whose policy both at home and abroad was inimical to the spread of Christianity. He also censured in no measured strains, the conduct of the Kilmarnock Presbytery for the manner in which they had treated the Fenwick congregation in their late mission at Crosshill. He styled their conduct not only anti-missionary, but anti-Christian in a high degree.

Mr Ellis, from Saltcoats, who took a leading part in the Presbytery against the Fenwick people, sat and heard all this in silence. But Matthew did not stop here. He found great fault with the sermons preached for the last two years. Both in spirit and opinion, he considered the most of them as hostile to the missionary cause (alluding to the high Calvinistic views that had for some time previous been so strongly insisted on). He mentioned a sermon preached in Fenwick about a year before by the Rev. Mr Robertson, Kilmaurs. He styled this sermon "the greatest burlesque on preaching it had ever been his misfortune to hear".

The chairman here interfered, and said that he considered him out of order in using personalities, and that he could not allow him to go on, unless the congregation wished it. No one signifying a desire that he should proceed, and not persisting himself to be heard further, the matter was dropped. After some more conversation, it was ultimately agreed that missionary prayer meetings should be heard in the different quarters of the congregation.

## December 1843

December 1st: The female hearers of the Rev. Mr Graham presented him with a new pulpit gown, and a pulpit Bible and Psalm Book. Upwards of £9 was uplifted for this purpose.

December 3rd: the Sacrament Sabbath. On this occasion Mr Orr was assisted by the Rev. Mr Low from Barrhead, and Mr Graham by the Rev. Mr Steven, Stewarton. The Free Church people had the Rev. Mr Ferguson from Edinburgh, and late of this parish.

Those who attended the Free Church of Fenwick thought it proper on this day, preaching Monday, 4th December, to present the Rev. Robert Ferguson, late of this parish, with a silver snuff box that cost upwards of £3. A word about these presents: As for

the Rev. Mr Graham, he has not been long enough in the place for people to know whether he deserves a present or not, and as for Mr Ferguson, he did nothing whatever while in this parish to merit the approbation of anyone, while he did much to tarnish his character, and render his name odious. The public will not soon forget his conduct. Deeply injured families, and ruined houses, stand a living monument of guilt!

December 15th: Mary Higgins, youngest daughter of John Higgins, labourer, married to a man from Glasgow, of the name of Duncan McNevey. A couple of Glasgow coaches conveyed away the wedding party.

December 29th: A social meeting was held in the new school room, Waterside, Mathew Foulds in the chair.

Alexander Murdoch addressed the meeting on "The Advantages to be Derived from the Cultivation of the Mind"; Mr Barr, teacher, on "Gentleness of Disposition", Stephen Wallace, student, on "The Evil Effects of War," Peter Gemmil, tailor, on "Persecution for Opinion's Sake". John Wilson Dickie recited a long poem, written by himself, on the state of the country. Songs and recitations filled up the intervals between the different speakers.

### THE STATE OF THE NATION

The year 1843 is past. Another leaf in the ever-thickening volume of Time has been turned. History has had a new period of annals added to its store. To many, the year 1843 will have been a period of momentous interest. To others, nothing remarkable will have occurred to make it remembered. To some it will have brought joy, to others sorrow. Some it will have made rich, others poor. Some will have led their blooming brides to the altar, others will have carried all that they loved to the grave. Such is the ever-varying occurrences of human life.

In a public point of view, the year 1843 has been remarkable on account of the secession of the Free Church from the establishment. Between four and five hundred ministers, giving up their stipends and throwing themselves on the voluntary support of the people, is not an everyday occurrence. The Free Church has started throughout Scotland about seven hundred congregations, embracing, according to their own calculation, a population of about seven hundred thousand souls. They have fairly launched their bark on the ocean. Time alone can determine the success and skill with which it is to be guided. They still hold by the principles of an Establishment, though under the necessity of working their church by voluntary means.

The national mind has been agitated by three great political movements during the year that is past: The Anti-Corn Law

League Agitation, the Agitation for a Repeal of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, and the Complete Suffrage Movement. The first of these great movements that shake the empire, is guided by the powerful energies of a Cobden and a Bright, backed by the no less powerful purses of the middle class manufacturers. Daniel O'Connell is the soul and centre of the Repeal movement, while the indomitable spirit of a Sharman Crawford and Joseph Sturge directs the momentous struggle for the enfranchisement of the people. With these few remarks we conclude the annals of Fenwick for 1843.

## January 1844

### THE NEW YEAR

The year 1844 has begun its course. None can predict with certainty the events that will occur e'er it close. Many look forward to the approaching year with excited hopes. Something great is anticipated. Movements of vital interest stir the depths of society. A crisis in national affairs seems to be coming. The human mind is beginning to step out of the fetters that for ages have held it in thralldom. In the religious world, the dogmas of creeds and confessions lose their hold. In the political, institutions venerable for age, but also stained with iniquity and hoary with crime, totter to their base.

A few of the great questions in dispute are: Whether we are to have the authority of the Bible or the Church, the voluntary or the compulsory system, a ritual or a spiritual religion, private judgment or priestly domination, superstitious bondage or healthy liberty, complete or class representation, free or restricted commerce, and whether reason or force are to govern the destiny of this great nation.

With dark brow the oppressor and bigot range themselves on the side of things as they are. With quick step and hopeful eye, the onward party hasten to occupy some of the outposts of reformation. To narrate the shifts of the one, or the progress of the other, any farther than Fenwick is concerned, falls not within our province. In such a small place as Fenwick, this can be easily accomplished.

January 1st: A frosty morning, with a cold snow shower about midday. The only public amusement, a ball shooting for two pairs of curling stones. There was very little drinking this New Year's day.

January 12th: Andrew Picken, farmer, Glassock, married to Marion Stewart, third daughter of Thomas Stewart, Raithmoor. This marriage has caused a good deal of talk throughout the

parish, chiefly on account of Andrew being an elder, and having been a widower for only about ten months. Marion has been servant about Glassock since the death of its former mistress. In this marriage we have the striking contrast of a young and respected wife, carried amid sorrow to the grave, and in a few short months, another established in her place amid mirth, festival and dancing. Such are the strange changes of human life.

January 18th: Mrs Howat, better known by the name of Nanny Tannahill, departed this life. Upwards of twenty years ago, Nanny was deserted in the most heartless manner by her husband, and left with a small family of children. He went through about Edinburgh, where it is said he has long been married to another wife. Howat was not a Fenwick man. Mrs Howat died of dropsy, and was up in years.

### THE IMMORTAL MEMORY

January 25th: Burns' Anniversary. About forty-three individuals of both sexes again met in the house of Mr Hugh Thomson, inn-keeper, for the purpose of commemorating the anniversary of the Scottish bard. Mr Andrew Gemmill, Aikenhead, was in the chair, with John Kirkland as croupier.

After partaking of an excellent supper furnished in the landlord's best style, the chairman rose and gave "The Sovereignty of the People", which was received with great enthusiasm. He next gave the toast of the evening, "The Memory of Robert Burns", and in a beautiful address, delineated on the worth of his poetry, and the independence of his character as a man. The meeting was also addressed on other interesting topics by individuals present. Mr James Taylor (writer of the "Annals") gave, "Success to Every Cause whose Aim is the Improvement of Mankind". Mr John Gemmill, "The Memory of those Master Spirits in every Age, who by their writings have adorned our English Literature". Mr John Fulton, Junior, Kirkton, "The Elevation of Genius and Moral Worth to its proper Station in Society". Mr Peter Gemmill, "The Memory of Sir Walter Scott". Mr William Fulton, Junior, Kirkton, "The Press, its Purity and Freedom". Mr Alexander Murdoch, "Our Native Land". The chairman, "The Health of Alexander Roger". Mr John Kirkland, "The early Song Writers of Scotland". Alexander Murdoch, "The Health of Thomas Campbell". Mr John Kirkland, "The Ladies, more especially those present."

The whole of the speeches on these subjects were distinguished by vigour of thought and elegance of diction, exhibiting a complete acquaintance with British literature, and giving a clear proof of the rapid advances that the working classes are making in knowledge. In a short notice like this, no proper idea of the speeches

can be given. Suffice it to say that the chairman was powerful and sarcastic, John Fulton argumentative and disquisitional, Peter Gemmill easy flowing, Alexander Murdoch flowery and eloquent, William Fulton solid without being tedious, and John Kirkland witty, brilliant and poetical.

A number of the Fenwick Glee Club were also in attendance, and sang of their most beautiful pieces, which showed their mastery of the science, and delighted the audience with their harmonious notes. The songs were appropriate to the occasion, and contributed greatly to the hilarity of the meeting. One of the songs was original, composed by Mr Andrew Gemmill, and sung by William Fulton, Senior, which showed that the author had no mean power of versification, and that he had also been kneeling at the shrine of Apollo.

After enjoying both a mental and moral feast, the meeting separated, resolving that when the 25th again came round they would have another meeting, as it was a memento to them that immortality had been ushered into the world in the genius of Robert Burns, on that day. We cannot but think that meetings of this kind should occasionally take place, relieving as they do the dull monotony of life, softening its rough asperities, and what is of more consequence, prompting intelligence and virtue, raising the mind above the grovelling pleasure of earth, and fixing it on the grand, the beautiful and sublime. There were present at the meeting, thirty men and thirteen women.

### **“FOR BURNS THAT’S AWA’”**

The following is the song alluded to above:

We’ll a’ be wae and sad noo’,  
There’s nane to mak’ us glad noo’,  
We’ve lost our Ayrshire Bard noo’  
Since Burns is awa’,

There’s nane to sing of love noo’  
In strains that move the heart noo’,  
He’s now a saint above noo’  
Our Burns that’s awa’.

There’s nane to wail the flower noo’,  
The couter turning ower noo’,  
Sic things are a’ gane ower noo’  
Since Burns is awa’,

There’s nae vision seen noo’,  
A’ dressed in tartan sheen noo’,  
Wi’ leg like bonnie Jean noo’,  
Since Burns is awa’.



Nae withered witches prance noo'  
 Nor Cutty Sark doth dance noo',  
 Nae Nick wi' amorous glance noo'  
 Since Burns is awa',

Nae Tammy Shanter flees noo'  
 Like leaves before the breeze noo',  
 Nane eager rins to seize noo'  
 Since Burns is awa'.

The birds nae mair will sing noo'  
 In merry months o' spring noo',  
 They'll cower their wee bit wing noo'  
 Since Burns is awa',

A' nature's dull and dreary noo',  
 Our lives are wae and weary noo',  
 There's nane to mak' us cheery noo'  
 Since Burns is awa'.

We'll wail wi' tearfu' e'en noo'  
 An' murn the death that's been noo',  
 A' mankind's lost a frien' noo'  
 In Burns that's awa',

There's nane o' mortal race noo'  
 Can fill our Poet's place noo',  
 We a' may say alas noo'  
 For Burns that's awa'.

January 28th: Remarkable as was the weather during the months of November and December, it has been equalled if not surpassed during the present month which, generally speaking, is the stormiest of the twelve. Instead of high winds, biting frosts, drifting snow, or as is just as bad, hail and sleet, we have had the mild, genial influence of spring descending on us in gentle rains and sunshine. The month has not elapsed, however, without a touch of winter. The 30th and 31st brought frost, snow and storm.

January 31st : Elizabeth Fulton, wife of John Kirkland, departed this life, aged 65 years. Mrs Kirkland was an excellent woman, quiet, frugal and industrious. In her youth she had been very handsome, tall and slender person, with regular and finely marked features. She left a husband and grown up family to lament her loss.

## February 1844

February 1st: A fall of snow through the night. We have had frost for two or three days.

February 2nd: A splendid night — the earth lies covered with snow of the purest whiteness. Dun dusky clouds skirt the horizon. A full moon up in the sky, and surrounded by a ring of great dimension, sheds a glorious light around. Here and there amid the dun clouds, a star flashes with unwonted brilliance. All is cold, silent, lovely, but cheerless, as if the earth lay wrapt in the vestments of everlasting repose.

Today there was a Social Meeting at Waterside. Mr A. Murdoch spoke on "Our Native Land", Mr Walter Barr on "Fortitude", and Wilson Dickie on "The Right of the People to the Suffrage".

February 4th: The Reverend James Morrison from Kilmarnock preached to a crowded audience in the Waterside Schoolroom. The topics on which the reverend gentleman chiefly dwelt were the universal extent of the Atonement, God's love to the whole and not to any particular portion of mankind, and that true believers will know with perfect certainty whether they are saved or not. The reverend gentleman got access to the schoolroom by paying 2/6, a new deed of the subscribers requiring all who enter it to pay that sum.

The first curling for this season took place next day.

## THE CRUEL FACTOR

On Monday, 5th February took farewell of this earth, John Anderson, better known by the name of the "Auld Smith of Fenwick," in the 82nd year of his age. He had been confined to his bed for some months previous, not so much from the effects of disease, for he had little trouble upon his body — with the exception of a slight affection of the gravel and occasional dizziness — as from the decay of age which gradually untied the knot of life, till it parted from him when least looked for, and without exciting a struggle for its retention.

In taking a short notice of this individual, one of the oldest residents of the place, it may be neither improper nor uninteresting to take him up a little in connection with his father's family. He was the eldest son of Gabriel Anderson, blacksmith in the smithy of Doghillock, the site of which is now occupied by the house built by Andrew Fulton, which smithy had been possessed without interruption by the Anderson family upwards of four hundred years.

It is from this point that the most of that name in this neighbourhood have sprung. And although the clan has never arrived at great numerical strength, yet it can boast of higher local antiquity, per-

haps, than any other name in the place. But the time came when they were obliged to leave it, and that in an evil hour. For before John had reached the years of manhood, while but a boy in a manner, before he was well able to take the labour and responsibilities of the business upon his own shoulders, his father was attacked with a paralysis which confined him entirely to his bed, depriving his family of his support, and his son John completely of his aid and instruction in learning the trade.

This of itself was severe enough upon a family that had nothing to support it but the produce of labour. Heaven had thus rendered them the object of pity. But in the midst of this calamity, the factor of Rowallan estate, of which the smithy was a part, for some real or supposed misconduct, had taken an umbrage at the old man, and immediately served him with summons of removal, quite unexpectedly to him and the family.

It may be imagined, more easily than described, what were the feelings of the wife and mother at this juncture, about to be thrust from house and hall, her husband almost unconscious of his existence, and every prospect of a young family left entirely in her charge and care, not one of them with the exception of John — and him very imperfectly—in any condition to lighten her burden. What was she to do? It was a very natural question for her to ask in such circumstances.

She thought, but she thought wrong as it turned out, that the factor might yet revoke his order if entreated with. She could not believe that he would be so cruel, and so dead to the claims of humanity as to enforce his threat. Impressed with this idea, she immediately repaired to him, taking her eldest boy with her, and represented to him the circumstances of the family, pleading for his mercy, and using every argument the feelings of a wife and mother could suggest in support of her petition. But all was in vain. He was quite immovable. He had already let the smithy to another of the name of Alexander Dunlop. And in these circumstances, to gratify the malevolent passion of an underling, the family was forced from the home of their fathers upon the wide world, which furnishes generally a very imperfect bield (shelter) against the storms of adversity!

This was a rather serious beginning for the young vulcan, but the storms of February must precede the smiling of summer. There is a kind of instinctive reasoning in man, which ascribes everything of that sort to the direct visitation of the Deity, whose will in these matters he is in every way backward to resist. But in this instance, the general principle appears not to have been acted upon, for the public loudly and effectively sympathized with him. And so with public encouragement, and the assistance of his friends, another smithy was erected for him, named the Blackfall, at the very head

of the present village, where he supported his father's family. For his father died a few days after he was removed, and John lived a considerable time, head of a family of his own, and prospered till he was enabled to erect a more convenient and commodious smithy, the one which he occupied till death, and which is presently possessed by his sons. I am afraid I have taken too much time on this part of the story. I promise brevity in the remaining.

### THE AULD SMITH

In person, the "auld smith" was of the middle size, but of a very stout make, which never belied him. He had a constitution which never failed him, howeved severely tried. He could endure any fatigue, and he endured more perhaps than in duty, he was bound to do, or the fragile nature of his character, or purse would admit of. A night's dissipation never disabled him from work, never having so much as a headache on account of it. From his very infancy he was blessed with a stock of robust stomach health, so much so that he often remarked, even within a short time of his death, that doctors' drugs had never crossed his craig. In connection with this he would sometimes tell a story of his early youth, with great glee, as follows:

Being attacked with some disorder, he was ordered by the gossip who in days of yore monopolized the whole of doctor trade in country places, to take a doze of salts. But instinct or some other thing (not experience), had given him a distaste for them, because in those days they had little better claim to the favourable opinion of a boy than now, and the disease not being so virulent as to overcome his "principles of taste", he declared he would not take them. But there was a will above the young smith's which declared that he would. In accordance with which they were got, and prepared, and placed near him, that he might take them. But knavery will ever seize a favourable opportunity when it occurs, and one exhibited itself to him in the absence of his mother in the never ceasing duties of a family. Getting hold of the vessel which contained the salts, he bolted out of the door as fast as his legs could carry him, and applied them faithfully to the roots of an old thorn tree that stood in the garden. "Whether they did any guid or no," he said, "he didna' ken, but anyway, he got better."

Personal health and strength of constitution were not all he was possessed of. He was the father of a large family, having no less than six sons and four daughters, all of them alive and healthy like himself, and all (with the exception of the eldest daughter who is not yet married), heads of large families of their own, who in their turn give every evidence of their descent from the old parent stock. He lived to see his great-grand-children.

His mental character bordered upon oddity — a real curiosity he was! He was a great reader, even in his youth when there was little for a working man to read, and few of his contemporaries to assist him, or who cared anything about it. At his work, a book lay always beside him to occupy an idle hour, which with a country smith in his early years were more plentiful than at present. But although he read much, yet it was entirely under the government of his feelings. Generally the books he selected for reading were of this kind.

His feelings were of the finest texture, too powerful to be under the control of judgment in anything whatever, and they had formed prepossessions in his mind of the most powerful and unyielding character — all had to bow to them. Any man who is influenced solely by his feelings has no time and less taste for resolving actions into principles — actions and things must be taken as they are. Generalization is quite low enough for them, else their fabric of cherished emotions will fall to pieces. So it was with him, and with him as with others, feelings clashed with feelings. Deeds stamped the man, quite apart from their motives. A brave man was a great man, though in other respects he had no claim to the epithet, and his ideas of goodness or religion were to a considerable extent measurable by the same rule.

To the principles of the Reformation he was devoutly attached, and he almost adored them who suffered in its cause, particularly the Covenanters. On the other hand, he was an enthusiastic admirer of the brutal heroism of Montrose, although he hated cruelty from the bottom of his heart. But the passion for heroism here predominated, as in almost every instance, over his principles of justice and benevolence, when brought into collision. Yet he was benevolent — scarcely could any be more so!

A character exactly suited to the romantic nature of his notions appeared in the person of the "Young Chevalier". The daring of the enterprise, the chivalrous character of its conductor, and his heroic and successful achievements, were too strongly marked, and consequently appealed too powerfully to his near of kin sentiments, not immediately to call out his unbounded admiration. This was strengthened by the hero's subsequent reverses, as it united in one channel the feelings of the benevolent with the passions of the heroic. He scarce ever thought of him without weeping at his misfortunes. He literally made his arm swell with the tension of his nerves, and if in his own house, he would draw an old, rusty, sheep-headed, two-edged sword from its place on a dusty press-head, and make it swing about him with all the energy his arm was capable of. He told how ready he would have been to embark in his cause, and yet, despite this, his chivalrous spirit almost chafed with the Powers that he was not born some forty years earlier, that he might



have had an opportunity of adding his prowess in overturning a cause to which he owed so much, and to which he nevertheless was devotionally attached.

But he was a good kind of character after all! No man bore an ill will to the "auld smith" — the goodness of his nature forbade it! He was unusually beloved, and did love. However much he detested some people, yet no sooner would they plead the tale of distress than his vindictiveness forsook him, and he embraced them all in the arms of pity and benevolence. Of him it may with truth be said: He rejoiced with them that rejoiced, and wept with them that wept. His company was courted by all, not so much for his intelligence — for with all his reading and opportunity for observation, it never could be said of him that he was an intelligent man — as for his open, free turn, and cheerful demeanour, his fondness for and fullness of anecdote, or antidote as he mistermied it.

He was ever ready to spend a groat when in company, for like all his craft he was at times troubled with a spark in his throat, which had to be extinguished. But there was a still more powerful reason for his company being agreeable! Having naturally a very retentive memory, and being a kind of historical antiquary, he had gathered up a great deal of the incidental occurrences connected with local history, and the rude adventures of the inhabitants. These he could relate with fluency, and was fond of doing so. And if Fenwick in his day had had a Scott to have taken down scraps from his memory, he might have been furnished with many a tale that would have exhibited simple nature in all its phases as correctly, though in humble life, as any that came under the notice of the author of "Waverley".

Besides, during his early years, there was a class of old cronies living in Fenwick, which I believe were not equalled in any similar locality. Almost every different character was perfect in its kind. What a novelist has to seek for through a whole countryside — apart from the regions of imagination — in getting characters to furnish a tale, was quite common here. And the various scenes they were engaged in were quite as romantic as any of the fictional tales which attract the attention of the gaping multitude of the present day. With these "rude fore-fathers" of the hamlet he was intimately acquainted. Indeed, he was an actor in their drama, and he "loved to linger long" on their history. And often, often have I listened with rapture as he repeated their conversations, or related their exploits, and as often did I wish to hear them again, and do so still, but it is vain. For the last of the race is cold as the first! They all rest together. No bard has sung their deeds, no historian has recorded the variety of their lives, that their memory might be handed down to the living. And when a few short years have circled their course, they will only be known by the space which is occupied by their bones.

February 13th: The Fenwick Curling Club beat the Waterside Curlers by upwards of seventy shots.

Janet Cameron gave birth to a son, February 17th. The reputed father is Walter Osborne, servant in Gardrum Mill. The young man, however, denies that it is his, though nobody believes him.

At the Crawfordland ploughing match, held on the 19th, John Stevenson, servant with Andrew Gemmill, Aikenhead, took the 1st prize. David Reed, servant with Matthew Gemmill, Wyllieland, the 2nd. William Barr, Marchbank, 3rd, and Alex Taylor, Burnhead, 4th.

### A RURAL REPRIMAND

February 23rd: William Steel, cadger, Lightmoor, married to Elizabeth, second daughter of the late Mr John Raeburn, carrier, Stewarton.

Old James Craig, of Raithburn, gave William Steel a very good cut some time since. To understand it properly, it is necessary to state that some years prior to this, Miss Ann Ramsay of Calstanes had a child to him, and from the way he had carried her on, it was thought by many that he ought to have married her. Shortly after he came to Lightmoor, which was not long since, "Old Raithburn" went in one day to see him. Being a hearty old buck, he hailed Steel with great good humour, after which he said:

"All things are in order, I see, but still ye want one thing."

"What is that?" asked Steel.

"A wife," said the old fellow.

"Whar wid ye advise me to gae to get a guid ane" asked Steel. Old Raithburn, looking hard at him, replied:

"Whar ye bared the bank, Will, there ye should cast your peats."

Steel, though he generally had plenty to say, made no reply. It was a cut in the right direction, and was felt to be such.

### A PETITION TO PARLIAMENT

On Wednesday, 28th February, a public meeting was held in this place in the Fenwick-town schoolroom, to consider the propriety of supporting Mr Sharman Crawford, M.P., in the course of policy that he is at present pursuing in Parliament, for the purpose of stopping the supplies till once the representatives of the people (or what are called the representatives of the people), seem disposed to pay a little more attention to the rights and interests of the nation. Mr Alexander Dunlop was in the chair.

After the chairman had stated the object of the meeting, and several individuals present had delivered their opinions on the great questions now agitating the public mind, the meeting unanimously

agreed to petition Parliament upon the subject. A petition was accordingly brought forward and read, couched in appropriate but respectful language, stating some of the grievances under which the people laboured, and the source from whence they have sprung: the monopoly of legislation possessed by a class. The petition stated the remedial measures that should be adopted, which, if carried into practical effect, would tear away those badges of helotism so long unwillingly worn by the industrious classes of this country, and make it truly a land of liberty, never to be trod by the feet of slaves. The petition was adopted, and signed by upwards of two hundred male inhabitants, come to the proper age. It is to be sent off immediately to Mr Robert Wallace, M.P., for presentation.

In the course of a few days, a respectful letter was received from Mr Wallace, stating that he had presented the petition, and urging the people to agitate for an extension of the Suffrage, and the abolition of the Corn Laws.

February has been cold and stormy throughout. A cold, often a high wind, with frost and snow almost every day. The other months will have no reason this year to curse a fair February.

### March 1844

March 1st: Mary Wilson, widow of the late Alexander Gordon, died. There was nothing very particular in Mary's life or character. She lived to the age of 88 years, and saw her great-grandchildren. The most part of her life was spent in poverty, besides having great family calamities to struggle with. She had a way of prefacing everything she said with, "By my faith!" For instance, she would say:

"By my faith, the only comfort a poor body has is to get a drap warm kale (broth) on a sabbath day."

Her husband was a stout, little, old Highlandman. He was for many years a bowlman and egg cadger in this parish.

March 6th: Died at Horsehill, Jean Dickie, aged 86 years. It may be worth mentioning that Jean was an aunt to Robert Pollock, author of "The Course of Time".

The Fenwick and the Kilmarnock Townend Curling Clubs contended for victory on Crawfordland Loch, March 7th, sixteen players a side. The Town-end players gained the game by ten shots. The ice was excellent.

March 8th, a very wet day. March 9th, a perfect tempest of wind — great damage has been done throughout the country.

### THE FARMERS BLACK-LISTED

The following black list contains the names of those who signed a requisition to the Lord Lieutenant, to call a county meeting of agricultural interest, for the purpose of keeping on the present Corn

Laws, and to stop, as far as possible, the agitating of the Anti-Corn Law League. The requisition, and the names of those who signed it in this parish, are extracted from an advertisement in "Ayr Observer":

"To the Right Hon. the Earl of Eglinton and Winton, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Ayr: My Lord, We, the undersigned, considering that it is incumbent on the agriculturists of Ayrshire to adopt measures for the purpose of effectually counteracting the injurious proceeds of the Anti-Corn Law League, and of maintaining that protection to native agriculture, to which our country owes so much of its prosperity and greatness, do hereby request that your Lordship will convene, for an early day, a meeting of owners and occupiers of land, and others, belongings to the County of Ayr, who concur with us in the foregoing sentiments and objects."

James Picken, Parkhead  
 Henry Stewart, Colliery  
 John Alexander, Artnock  
 John Gemmil, Drumboy  
 John Dunlop, Drumboy  
 John Vallance, Blaircraig  
 Robert Currie, Fieldhouse  
 Robert Watt, Greelaw,  
 John Vallance, Blair  
 James Dunlop, Gree  
 Robert Currie, Little Gree  
 William Currie, Townhead of  
 Gree  
 James Lindsay, High Church  
 John Steel, Low Church  
 John Steven, West Broadmoss  
 John Wardrop, West Polkelly  
 James Lindsay, East Polkelly  
 Thomas Sheddon, Clonherb  
 John Sheddon, East Broadmoss  
 James Stevenson, Darclubock  
 John Wyllie, Burnfoot  
 James Harvey, Polkellyhall  
 Robert Orr, Balgray Mill  
 James Murchland, Hill  
 William Wallace, Drumhead  
 James Young, Hairshaw  
 George Wallace, Hairshaw Mill  
 James Craig, Raithburn  
 John Adam, Lightmoor  
 John Kerr, Righiel  
 Hugh Wyllie, Paudhouse  
 John Schouler, Gardrum Mill

John Stewart, Langdyke  
 Robert Clark, Greenhill  
 Alexander Dickie, Tannahill  
 Daniel Thomson, North Craig  
 Hugh Loudon, Mosside  
 John Templeton, Mucklewood  
 John Robertson, Dalmusternock  
 Robert Young, Mosside  
 James Reid, Rowallan Mill  
 James Dunlop, Brierbush  
 John Dunlop, Burnhouse  
 John Fairlie, Schoolmaster  
 Alexander Boreland, Grocer  
 John Gemmil, Junior, Grocer  
 John Fowlds, Fenwick  
 James Wyllie, Little Fenwick  
 James Smith, Gardrumhill  
 Matthew Tod, Mooryet  
 John Barr, Townend  
 John Dunlop, Warnockland  
 James Wright, Warnockland  
 James Wilson, Glassock  
 John Picken, Glassock  
 James Ramsay, Cauldstanes  
 William Carruthers, Kingswell  
 Archibald Loudon, Hairlaw  
 David Dunlop, Raithhill  
 John Lamberton, Burn  
 Adam Dunlop, Thorn  
 William Wallace, Oldhall  
 Peter Gemmill, Todhill  
 James Gemmill, Kiln

|                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Andrew Dunlop, High Gardrum | David Dickie, Gainhill    |
| John Graham, Glaister       | Alexander Gemmill, Tanna- |
| Andrew Gemmill, High Gain-  | crief                     |
| ford                        | Robert Dickie, Tannacrief |
| John Gemmill, Gainford      | David Walker, Prieskin    |
| James Picken, Crofthead     |                           |

We have thought it proper to give a correct list of the names of the persons who signed this much talked of requisition. It appeared strange to the public that so many men should have signed it, who were professed reformers and dissenters. The tendency of our times appears to be more for self than for public interest. The farmers in particular, of late, have become more affluent, and with their affluence they have lost their independence. A great portion of them will now bow to the will of their landlord, whatever that may be. They are fast becoming soil-bound serfs, ready to sacrifice every opinion or principle, if their "Laird" wills it.

We would not include all the farmers, however, in this sweeping charge. There are many noble exceptions. A good number refused to sign this requisition. To the honour of the farmers on the Crawfordland estate, be it recorded that not a single individual would sign it.

March 14th: The annual ploughing match of the Rowallan Barony took place on Gainford farm, twenty ploughers competing. The first prize was awarded to Peter Gemmill, Todhill, second David Wallace, Laigh Todhill, third James Clachan, servant with John Robertson, Dalmusternock, fourth James Millar, servant with Alexander Gemmill, Tannacrief.

March 16th: Certainly the coldest day this season — keen frost, with a high wind.

### THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

March 19th: This day the foundation stone of the Free Church here was laid by Mr Crawford of Crawfordland.

At one o'clock a sermon was preached from Psalm 68:18 by the Reverend Mr Arthur, Stewarton, after which the congregation proceeded to the site of the new church, where after psalms and a prayer by the Reverend Mr McIndoe of Galstone, the following list of articles contained in the bottle to be deposited in the foundation stone was read by the Reverend Mr Arthur, viz.:

The Church of Scotland's Claim of Rights in 1842.

Memorial of the Commission to Government in 1842.

Petition to Parliament by the extraordinary Commission.



Memorial submitted to Sir Robert Peel, and the other members of Her Majesty's Government, adopted by a meeting of ministers of the Church of Scotland, assembled in Convocation at Edinburgh, November 17th to 24th, 1842.

Protest by ministers and elders, with a facsimile of all the signatures.

Act of Separation and Deed of Demission.

Answer by Her Majesty's Government to the Memorial transmitted to Sir Robert Peel and the other members of Administration, by the General Assembly.

"The Western Watchman" newspaper.

"The Scottish Guardian" newspaper.

"The Ayr Observer" newspaper.

Medallion of the Reverend Thomas Chalmers, D.D.

Roll of the Members of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, held at Glasgow in October, 1843.

List of the members and adherents of the Free Church in Fenwick.

Names of their Session.

Names of the Building Committee.

Names of the Contractors for the erection of the Church.

Silver and copper coins of Her present Majesty's reign.

Medallion of Queen Victoria, the time of her birth, ascension to the throne, and Coronation.

Orr's "Scottish Almanac."

Dr. Duff's sermon, with the adherence of the missionaries in India to the Free Church.

Mr John Welsh's letter from Blackness Castle.

Population of the Villages, and Parish of Fenwick.

The bottle being shown to the spectators, Mr Crawford descended from the platform, and deposited it in the place cut out in the stone for its reception, and performed the ceremony of laying the foundation stone, which he followed up by a short speech from the platform.

### SECESSION DEFENDED

The Reverend Mr McFarlane of Renfrew then gave the address, in which he pointed out a striking resemblance between the Free Church and the outed party in the days of Mr Guthrie of Fenwick, in their struggle for independence, in three points of view, viz.: In their resistance of the intrusion of ministers upon reclaiming congregations, in their defence of the doctrine of the Headship of Christ, and in their sufferings in consequence of their resistance to the encroachments of the civil law.

He also ably defended the Free Church from the charge of schism from Established Church, on the ground that having allowed the civil magistrate to trench upon the prerogative of Christ to be Head in his own church, the Establishment had departed from its original principles to which the Free Church adhered. The Establishment had allowed the Court of Session to assume the headship of the Church to the supplanting of Christ, its rightful spiritual Head, so that in so far as it had withdrawn itself from Christ the Head, as a spiritual body it was without a head, and was guilty of schism in as much as it had separated the Head from the body — not the Free Church, which still retained the Head.

Altogether the address of Mr McFarlane was much admired by his audience.

The dinner was served up in Mrs Lockhart's hall in her very superior style, Mr Crawford in the chair, Mr Snodgrass, banker, Stewarton, croupier. Reverend Mr Orr asked the blessing. Mr McFarlane left the table as soon as dinner was over, to address a meeting in Paisley on the same evening.

### TOASTS

“The Queen”, from the chair.

“Prince Albert”, from the chair.

“The Free Church of Scotland”, from the chair, replied to by Mr McIndoe of Galstone.

“The Free Church of Fenwick”, from the chair, replied to by Mr McLeod Barr, Marchbank.

The chair also proposed the health of Mr Orr, and prosperity to his congregation and the Secession Church, which was replied to by Mr Orr.

The health of Mr Arthur, Stewarton, and prosperity to his congregation, was proposed by Mr John Wallace, blacksmith, and replied to by Mr Arthur. I need not enumerate more of the toasts. The meeting broke up about eight o'clock, after enjoying a few hours of the greatest harmony and sociality.

March 22nd: John Stewart, widower, Langdyke, married to Margaret Young, widow of the late John Sneddon, Broadmoss. Both parties in this marriage are kittle sticks.

Through the whole of February and up to the 27th March, the weather has been coarse, cold and wintry. Now, March 27th, the weather has set in fine.

March 29th: David Calderwood, Windyhill, married to Janet Howie. Janet was David's servant lass.

March 29th: The seed corn is pouring into the earth.

Notices left out of their proper place:

On Sabbath, the 25th February, the Rev. Mr Orr, on coming to the third hymn in his regular course of morning exposition, said he could not give out the three last verses for singing, as they contained heretical doctrines, the fourth and fifth verses being rank Arminianism, and the sixth rank Sandemanianism.

A good deal of snow fell between the 23rd and 27th February. On the 26th the roads between here and Glasgow were blocked up.

Three rinks of the Fenwick and Rowallan Curling Clubs contended for victory on the 27th February. The Fenwick Club gained the day by one shot. The ice was bad.

### PARISH HISTORY

Reminiscential Notice: The parish of Fenwick was separated from that of Kilmarnock, and its church built, about the year 1643. William Guthrie, their first minister, was ordained November 7th, 1644. He was not thrust out with the rest in 1662, but continued a few years longer up to July 14th, 1665. In 1672, Mr Thomas Wayle, one of the indulged, succeeded and continued about four years. After him were three curates in succession: Mr Ogilvie, Mr Crawford and Mr Main. After the Revolution in 1688, Mr Andrew Fowlds was ordained in 1691, and continued till his death in 1700. Next to him, Mr William Simpson was ordained in 1703, and continued till his death in 1718. Next, Mr John Chiesly was ordained in March, 1719, and continued till his death in 1740.

It is related of Mr Chiesly, that when an officer came to the manse with a government paper, ordered to be read from all the pulpits in Scotland, condemning the execution of Captain Porteous by the Edinburgh mob, he took the paper from the hand of the officer with the fire tongs, and thrust it into the fire.

Next, Mr James Halket was ordained in 1741, and continued till April, 1779. In 1779, Mr Reid was presented (the first presentee to Fenwick parish), but after much opposition, and just when about to be ordained, he got a presentation to Mauchline, and resigned his presentation to Fenwick. After Mr Reid's resignation, Mr William Boyd got the presentation, and after long and strenuous opposition from the parish was placed in Irvine tolbooth, June 25th, 1792 (as prison chaplain).

A short time previous to this, the parish received a kind of missive, designed by the title of a written obligation, subscribed by Mr Boyd, declaring that he would allow them the choice after his ordination, of any licentiate to preach in the parish church of Fenwick, and to encourage them give £15 of his stipends for his maintenance; that he, the said Mr Boyd, should not insist

on preaching there for four months after his ordination &c, and that only once in the fortnight or three weeks ; that he would allow his assistant to exchange pulpits with any minister in the presbytery for administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper ; and that any person who may have a child to baptise, should upon receiving a line of their character from the elder, make application to any minister in the Presbytery for this privilege, without application to him.

Thus, Fenwick church was vacant for three years after the death of Mr Halket, and Mr Boyd's forcible settlement caused a secession in the parish. However he was a very inoffensive man, and a good neighbour, and continued to occupy the incumbency till his death, which took place in 1828.

Next to him, Mr John Geddies Crossby, a very pious minister, was placed in April, 1829, and after continuing till April, 1836, he resigned his charge and connected himself with the Irvingites, by whom a station was assigned him at Dundee, where he died. Next came Mr Robert Ferguson, who was ordained August 24th, 1836, and continued till May 15th, 1843, when he was translated to St. David's Church, Edinburgh. He was a firm non-intrusionist, and joined the Free Protestant Presbyterian Church at the time of their secession from the Church of Scotland, as by law established. Next came Mr James Graham, who was inducted September 21st, 1843.

### April 1844

April 2nd: Jean Orr, fifth daughter of John Orr, Orange Bovan, left Fenwick for America. Jean is a young woman going out to the new world to push her fortune.

April 5th: A thirty-five years' courtship terminated tonight by a marriage. The long and constant lovers thus united are John Gemmill, customer weaver, and Mary Anderson, eldest daughter of the "Auld Smith". This is the longest courtship ever known in Fenwick, and John went regularly to see her all this time.

April 6th: Agnes Howie, second daughter of Robert Howie, weaver, and Mary Wilson, born.

John Kirkland, Junior, and Jean Gilmour (Mrs McGavin) married, April 19th.

James Gemil, farmer, Moor, departed this life 25th April. James was up in years when he died. He was a very good specimen of an old Scots moorland farmer. He was a man of coarse and blunt manners, yet under this rough exterior was a great fund of droll wit and keen sarcasm. Many a good laugh Jamie was the means of creating, and many a sly thrust some of his presuming neighbours received at his hand. He had a mortal hatred of doctors' drugs, and held out against taking them to the last. The

antipathy at taking drugs is much more common among the old, than among the young of the present generation. Another of James' peculiarities was his fear of wind. When a storm blew, and many a one swept past the Moor, he is said to have shook like a child.

The weather through the month of April has been uncommonly fine.

### May 1844

May 3rd: Margaret Mitchel, wife of Robert Taylor, departed this life, aged 63 years (the writer's mother).

Catharine Frazer, wife of Thomas Sim, farmer, Benbough, died May 15th. Kate, as she was commonly called, died up in years. She was a clever, off-hand sort of woman, with a vast deal of talk.

The following persons left Fenwick for America on May 21st: Alexander Calderwood, Laigh Blackbyre; Gavin Alston, Water-side; and Samuel Ritchie, High Fenwick.

May 31st: A total eclipse of the moon. It was a fine, clear night. The eclipse was well seen from the time it came on, between eight and nine o'clock, till about twelve o'clock.

### June 1844

June 11th: Margaret Muir, eldest daughter of James Muir, Netherwraith, married to James Whiteford, Kilmaurs.

June 18th: Robert Dickie, Tannacrief, married to Marion Hay, daughter of the late James Hay, Mid Buston.

June 19th: John Clachan, farmer, Broadmoss, departed this life. This death was uncommonly sudden. He had been out working among the potatoes, and not coming home to his supper as usual, his wife got alarmed, and on going out to the field found him lying dead with the spade in his hand. John was a man up in years. He was an elder of the Secession Church. As a man he was reckoned quiet, industrious and religious.

June 20th: Jean Cameron, second daughter of William Cameron, Langside, married to a man from Ayr side, of the name of John McCorker.

June 21st: Margaret Dickie, youngest daughter of the late David Dickie, Tannacrief, married to Alexander Mitchel, farmer, Pul-baith, parish of Kilmarnock.

David Gemmill, shoemaker, and George Calderwood, High Blackbyre, came home from America this month, after a short stay there.



### July 1844

A public dinner, and presentation of upwards of £40 to John Young, farmer, Midtown, took place July 5th. John had made himself very useful to the farmers in the parish by attending their cattle when unwell, and as he took no hire for his skill, the farmers in the neighbourhood took this handsome method of acknowledging his usefulness. Upwards of eighty gentlemen and women sat down to dinner. Andrew Gemmill, Aikenhead, was in the chair, and Robert Lindsay, Gardrum, croupier.

July 9th: William Howie, wright, Fenwick-town, departed this life aged 73 years. William was a very quiet, unobtrusive individual. Though he did not say much, nor took any active part in public affairs, he could form, and when once formed could hold, his opinions as firmly as any man in the place. Like the rest of the Lochgoin family he was a staunch Radical in politics.

July 25th: Isabel Graham, daughter of the Reverend Mr Graham, born.

### August 1844

#### A MEETING OF RADICALS

August 5th: A public meeting of the inhabitants of Fenwick took place in the United Secession Church, to hear an address from Mr Henry Vincent, the well-known and powerful advocate of civil and religious liberty, Mr Robert Lindsay of Gardrum in the chair. Mr Vincent, accompanied by Mr Hugh Craig, Kilmarnock, on entering the meeting, were warmly cheered by the audience. Mr Vincent's address gave universal satisfaction. There was throughout it a purity of principle, a loftiness of resolve, a sternness of purpose, and a mildness of manner when speaking of political opponents, that quite delighted the audience.

Mr Vincent gave a graphic sketch of the state of public opinion at, and prior to, the passing of the Reform Bill, and showed that the public men of that period did not so much aim at the infusion of right principles into the popular mind, but rather urged the necessity of destroying the Tory power of the country. The present time, he said, though less exciting, was more favourable for the people to receive and digest the great truths of political science.

He showed how nations, in the frenzy of despair, had often risen and hurled their proud oppressors to the dust, but that for want of sound and lofty principles, they had sunk back again into a state that allowed a tyranny equally galling to shackle them with chains.

The Whig and Tory administrations were next brought under review, and the little real difference between the two was well shown up. The speaker, with great power, urged on the meeting the

necessity for more earnestness and activity among Radical reformers, and that it was absolutely necessary that a power be created in the country, fearless yet wise, honest yet bold, which would act independently of both parties. This power should have mainly in view the complete enfranchisement of the people; it should be based on the principles of justice, virtue and religion, and thus constituted it would soon acquire sufficient force to make any party government bend before its pressure.

Mr Vincent was listened to throughout a long address with the most marked attention. The meeting closed with a hearty vote of thanks to the talented lecturer.

August 7th: Janet Wyllie, Kirkton, died aged 75 years. Janet was distinguished for nothing, but for being very ignorant and outspoken.

John Robertson, Dalmusternock, commenced regular harvest on the 29th August. Some barley was cut previous to this.

### DAYS OF GLORY

August 30th: For some days we have had the most delightful weather. For about six weeks it was very soft and broken, considerably retarding the hay harvest, which is just finished. A most delightful change, however, has taken place. Never shone there more glorious days, never beamed there more pleasing nights. By day a resplendent sun gilds the heavens. At night a full moon rides high up in the sky, surrounded by a pearly sea of clouds. When morning dawns, the mysterious drapery that veiled the brow of night disappears, and not a speck is left to bedim the azure home of worlds. All is so calm, so pure, so bright, it seems the bridal of the earth and skies. At such a time the fancy can paint (if man would but allow it), the great Ruler of the universe, ready and willing to baptize earth into the millennium.

### September 1844

September 4th: The harvest is pretty general around Fenwick.

The Free Church of Fenwick was opened on Sabbath, the 15th September, when the Rev. Mr Somerville of Anderston, Glasgow, preached in the forenoon and afternoon, and the Rev. Mr Arthur, Stewarton, in the evening. The collection amounted to £31.11.3. This is the largest collection that was ever made in Fenwick.

September 18th: Several of the farmers around Fenwick have finished the shearing. By the 23rd, several had finished their harvest. The crop is not only early, but abundant.

September 24th: John Kirkland, weaver, raised a potato weighing two pounds five ounces, from his plot on the Greenwalls farm. The potato was of the common red kind, and of a fine shape.

### THE MISERLY WEAVER

October 18th: James Kent, customer weaver, Fenwick-town, departed this life aged 82 years. James was rather a remarkable man in his way. He was very small in stature, and towards the latter end of his life, had rather a venerable appearance. No man living in this parish had heard so many sermons as James. He had a strong passion to hear ministers, and went far and near to preachings, often as far as Glasgow. In many respects he was a just, upright and religious man, a man who lived soberly, morally, and who did not in any way intermeddle with the affairs of his neighbour.

His great fault was the penuriousness of his nature. "Accumulate" was the great watchword of his life, wealth, the touchstone round which his thoughts chiefly centred. "Give" was a word, in the practice of his life, which he knew not the meaning of. He started with nothing, but through dint of industry, by marrying two wives who possessed a little money, and giving nothing away that he could possibly help, he died laird of three good properties besides a large amount of money. He had a son by the first wife, who it is said he used rather harshly. This son enlisted, and it is supposed that he fell in the war in Spain. The son and daughter of the present wife are his sole heirs.

October 28th: Mary Ramsay, wife of William Brown, toll-keeper, Kingswell, departed this life. Mary had been a wife three months and nine days when she was summoned, in the heyday of youth, from the bridal chamber to the cold, silent tomb.

October 29th: Elizabeth Muir gave birth to a son. Its father is James Young, carrier.

### November 1844

November 2nd: William Gemmill, weaver, Fenwick-town, departed this life. He was up in years. William was a man of considerable abilities that he did not always put to a good use. He left considerable property behind him.

Andrewanna Thomson, daughter of Mr Thomson, dancing master, Hallhouse, and Mary Sawers, born November 11th.

November 30th: A Total Abstinence Society was founded in Fenwick. This society was not long till it numbered fifty members.

### December 1844

The first day's curling this season took place on December 7th. The Fenwick Curling Club, and the Kilmarnock Town End Club played on Crawfordland Loch on the 24th. The Fenwick curlers obtained victory by 19 shots. Another game took place between the Fenwick and Stewarton clubs on the 26th. Fenwick players beat their opponents by 56 shots.

### A SOIREE

December 26th: A congregational soiree was held in the Secession Meeting House in behoof of the library connected with the congregation, the Rev. Mr Orr in the chair. The speakers were the Rev. Mr Graham from Duke Street, Glasgow, the Rev. Mr Low of Barrhead, the Rev. Mr Robertson of Irvine, and the Rev. Mr Carswell of Eaglesham. The Fenwick vocal club also gave their services. The brilliant display of naphtha lamps with which the building was lighted had a fine effect. The lower part of the church was nearly full, tickets eightpence. The money drawn amounted to £13.7.4, and the expenses £7.6.4.

Time is ever pressing onward — 1844 has now passed away — yes! 1844 with all its cares, sorrows, conflicts, crimes; its joys, pleasures, hopes and happiness has gone, gone never to return. We now turn to another year.

### January 1845

### BRIGHT HOLIDAY

January 1st: A most beautiful day, the frost moderate — fine sunshine cheers the face of nature. Bright day, be thou the har-binger of as bright a year! Very little drinking took place this New Year's Day. Men are now given more to reflection than to noisy revelry.

Numbers resorted in the afternoon to Crawfordland Loch, and amused themselves on the strong and transparent ice. It was a beautiful sight to see: The clear frozen loch bounded by woodlands, the blue heaven above, while round the edge of the horizon the clouds glowed like burnished gold. The sun, just seen above the trees, throws his long, slanting beams on the ice and woods at the upper end of the loch, where numbers of the Fenwick lasses sport in its light (true to their nature, for woman ever seeks the sunshine rather than the shade of human life); while enamoured swains hover near the bright band, that they may bask and live in the influence of their smiles, which also show to the curious spectator that though frost reigns all around, at least in their hearts thaw is to be found. Thus passed away New Year's Day!

January 7th: Margaret Gilmour Dunlop, natural daughter of Margaret Gemmil, baptized.

January 9th: Robert Burns, son of John Burns and Mary Howat, born.

Ann Thomson, wife of Andrew Foulds, departed this life January 23rd. Before her death, Mrs Foulds suffered a long and painful illness. In her days of health she was a proud, high-minded woman, but not without good traits of character.

January 25th: Mr Thomas Brown from Kilmarnock gave a lecture in the Fenwick Town Schoolroom on "Total Abstinence". The meeting agreed to petition Parliament to suppress, to some extent, Sabbath drinking.

January 31st: James Young, carrier, and Elizabeth Muir, dress-maker, married. Their son Robert was baptized 7th January.

A rink of the Fenwick Curlers played the Earl of Eglinton and three of his crack players, at Eglinton, for a load of meal. The Fenwick players gained the day by 12 shots. The needful in the parish got the meal distributed among them.

## February 1845

February 2nd: The Rev. Mr Orr told his congregation this Sabbath that he had now been fifteen years their minister, and that during this period, 280 belonging to the congregation had died, of members 145, of adherents 135. Fifteen years is not a long time, and yet how many blanks in a single congregation has it made.

February 3rd: Mr Fairlie of Williamfield and three Symington curlers played a game with one of the Fenwick rinks on Crawfordland Loch, for a load of meal. The Fenwick players beat by 3 shots, and the meal was divided among the needful.

February 6th: A meeting took place today of the members of the Established Church, to choose a successor to the Rev. Mr Graham, who is to be removed to the Parish Church of Penpont. The patron, it seems, has allowed them to choose one out of six to be their minister. The choice fell on a Mr Dickie, who is a helper in the parish of Terregles. He had 21 votes.

February 11: Archibald Loudon, farmer, Hairlaw, departed this life aged 76 years. Archibald was a kind, frank, hospitable old fellow, full of anecdote and fun. With his snuff mill in his hand, he interested all who went about the house with lively stories.

February 16th: Ellen Doe Watt, daughter of Alex Watt and Ellen Orr, Gainlech, baptized. This is Alexander's 17th child.

The Rev. James Graham, incumbent of this parish, preached his farewell sermon on Sabbath, February 23rd. He leaves here for the parish church of Penpont. Mr Graham has been settled in Fenwick



about seventeen months. He leaves the parish with the respect of the inhabitants in general. He possesses a frank and somewhat engaging manner, and is an ordinary preacher. He may be about 46 or 47 years of age, and has a wife and eight children.

February 26th : The Rowallan Barony ploughing match came off this day on the farm of High Todhill. David Wallace, Low Todhill, took the first prize, Robert Young, Mossie, second, William Dunlop, High Todhill, third, John Currie, servant with David Dickie, Tannahill, fourth.

### March 1845

March 6th: Robert Tannahill, baker, departed this life aged 24 years. Robert died of consumption. He continued at his work till within a few days of his death, and his friends did not see him die. So sudden did the destroyer do his work!

### "WEE PEGGY"

March 10th: Margaret Young, better known by the name of "Wee Peggy," departed this life aged 93 years. Wee Peggy was the wee'st woman by far in the parish. She was a droll bit body, uncommonly fond of gossip and village stories. She visited almost everybody that was in trouble, and was sure to shed tears when anyone died. But when her own end came, there was none to smooth the bed of death, or to shed a tear over her.

She had fairly lived out her generation. All her relations, friends and acquaintances were long dead, and she was left isolated and forlorn, without a claim of near relationship to anyone in the world. The blood of no kin coursed in the veins of those who laid her in her last lowly resting place. She was a genuine relic of a gone-by age.

No one could be more superstitious. She was a true believer in ghosts, witches, wraiths, and warnings as ever lived. Some twenty or thirty years since, Peggy was quite in her element when she could meet a number of village crones, as old or older than herself, and gossip on a sabbath or weekday night on the village news, or relate stories teeming with wild and marvellous superstition. Such characters are now rare to be met with, but in her prime they were as rife as the stars of winter.

All her life-time, she was a devoted follower of the Established Church, and I am not sure if she would ever hear a sermon anywhere else. She had seen six different ministers fill the pulpit of Guthrie, and nothing gave her more pleasure than to tell what Mr Halket had said to her, or what the two Mr Boyds, Mr Crosby, Mr Ferguson or Mr Graham had given her.

Peggy was never married, and a lonely, solitary life she must have led, cooped up in a little garret year after year, passing away her life without any change whatever. She was poor, and had been on the parish for most of her life, and though she had been in Fenwick all her days, but a few turned out to her funeral.

There is surely something wrong in this. Let the relation of a rich man die and crowds hasten to the funeral. But let one that is destitute, friendless and forlorn die, and scarce as many will turn out as carry them to the grave. The spirit that worships wealth is seen paying its homage even at the grave's mouth. It matters little, however, to the dead whether few or many carry them to the grave. Here the poor rest as securely as the rich, the dews of heaven fall as gently, and the wind plays as softly on the grave of the most insignificant, as of the most mighty. Still, it is a wrong feeling that leads crowds to the rich man's funeral, and leaves that of the poor comparatively deserted.

March 12th: Another and unexpected death. Today died Jean Sim, eldest daughter of William Sim, aged 17 years. Jean had been in her ordinary health on the 8th. How sudden and striking the transition of the 12th! Well may it be said, in the morning the flower opens fair and full of promise to the sight. Evening comes, and its beauty and fragrance is gone.

Sabbath 16th March: The Rev. Thomas Mathieson, from Galston, assisted Mr Orr at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. The Rev. William Reid, from Collessie, preached in the Free Church. About £12 was collected. It is about sixteen years since Mr Reid was assistant to the Rev. Mr Boyd.

Robert Taylor, son of Dr. Taylor and Barbara Gibson, born March 19th.

## MOORLAND WINTER

March 20th: For eleven days previous to this date we have had the most intense frost. What weather! Old Winter, grim as the grave, seizes young Spring by the waist and turns her into an icicle. What a fund of conversation have these days afforded to that mysterious personage who goes by the name of the oldest inhabitant! How he must have rubbed up his memory, and to how little purpose, to find a parallel to the present middle of March! A thermometer ranging at six, a north-east wind bleak enough to turn the current of one's blood into ice and to transform men into crystalised mummies, bursting water pipes, freezing deep spring wells—these are the meteorological freaks one is seldom privileged to witness which will serve as landmarks of memory while the existing generation lasts.

The curlers were out for several days and had excellent ice.

Mrs Wilson (Margaret Craig), formerly of Drumbowie, departed this life on 20th March, aged 86 years. Margaret was a gair saving woman all her life. She had a good deal of money, but it was mostly spent before she died. She never, however, made any use of it herself. One and another kept picking at it till it finally disappeared.

March 26th and 27th: Two very stormy days, heavy rain, loud wind, bright flashing lightning, followed by a raging storm that seemed as if it would burst the heavens.

### A RADICAL'S LIFE AND LOVE

March 27th: Robert Howie of Lochgoin departed this life aged 70 years. Robin was a droll bit body. Under a very rough exterior he possessed an excellent, and well-informed mind. When once his natural diffidence was overcome, he could converse freely on any subject. He took a decided part in political affairs. A more genuine radical never breathed. Before the passing of the Reform Bill, and at the commencement of the Chartist movement, he was in the habit of going all the way from Mossnook, or Lochgoin, to Kilmar-nock to attend political meetings. Perhaps he did not exchange a word with anyone at these meetings, but he thought it incumbent on him to be there. In this he felt the satisfaction of having done his duty to his country, and to the cause of liberty.

Robert was never married. Towards the latter end of his life, however, he took a strange affection for a young girl of the name of Ann Wallace, daughter of the late Thomas Wallace of Kiln. He gave her numerous presents, both of dress and money, and though he would not take her himself he offered any other man £20 if he would marry her. This was rather a peculiar characteristic in an old man of 70 years of age, more so when it is considered that he scarcely ever spoke to a woman in his life. Robin left a considerable sum of money behind him, and on the whole he was an excellent man. No one could say that black was in the eye of Robin Howie.

The whole number of real keen frosty nights for this winter is sixty-one.

### April 1845

April 11th: Elisabeth Taylor departed this life aged 40 years (the writer's sister).

April 15th: Janet Walker died, aged 80 years. Like the rest of the old maids, Janet was fond of gossiping, particularly about deaths and marriages. Janet was a stiff dissenter.

April 21st: William Taylor, Junior, son of John Taylor, departed this life aged 27 years. William was a first-rate singer. About two years since he went to Glasgow to be precentor in one of the Secession Churches, where he acquired considerable fame as a singer. He came home from Glasgow with ruined health and broken constitution, to die in the bosom of his family.

April 24th, John Picken, Senior, labourer, departed this life. John was commonly called "Wee Picken" from his smallness of stature. He was not distinguished for any public or mental characteristic, and was upwards of 50 years of age.

April 28th: The Secession and Free Church congregations agreed to petition Parliament against the Maynooth College grant. The petition from the Free Church congregation was founded on the "No Popery" principle. That from the Secession was based on the principle of no endowment to any religious body whatever.

April 29th: Jean Brown, wife of William Cameron, departed this life. At her death Mrs Cameron had ten children alive, two sons and eight daughters. It was something surprising that among such a large family no deaths should have occurred.

### May 1845

May 3rd: Mr Hedly, agent for the Western Scottish Temperance Union, delivered a lecture in the Fenwick-town schoolroom.

May 8th: The Rev. Mr Dickie was inducted to the charge of the Parish Church of this parish. The Rev. Mr Stevenson of Dalry conducted the services of the day.

May 29th: Fenwick Fast Day. The Rev. Mr Dalrymple from Tarbolton assisted Mr Orr. The Rev. Mr Orr from Symington preached in the Free Church, and the Rev. Mr Buchanan, Kilmaurs, assisted Mr Dickie.

Today the United Secession congregation of this place agreed to memorialise the Queen on the subject of the Maynooth College grant. The memorial was respectably signed and transmitted to the Marquis of Breadalbane for presentation. The main feature in it was that the Queen was to use her royal prerogative to dissolve Parliament, and give the people the opportunity of expressing their opinion on this much agitated question.

### June 1845

June 1st: The Fenwick Sacrament. The Rev. Mr Andrew Johnstone, from Duntocher, assisted Mr Orr on this occasion.

On the same day, Robert Montgomery, Junior, son of Robert Montgomery, weaver, departed this life aged 12 years.

June 23rd: Gavin Alston, mason, with his wife, two sons and two daughters, left Waterside for America.

On Thursday, the 26th June, a game of quoits came off at Laighmoor, between the parishes of Stewarton and Fenwick, ten players on each side, game 51 shots. The Fenwick players came off victors by 45 shots.

### July 1845

July 9th: James Taylor, Fenwick town, married to Jean Dickie (the writer's marriage).

### CLASS DISTINCTION

July 22nd: Miss Crawford of Crawfordland, married to I. O. Fairlie of Williamfield. The curlers, and the Crawfordland tenantry, made a procession at the marriage, and a great turn-out of the inhabitants of Fenwick took place to see the gewgaw. They got the gates at the Angle, however, shut in their faces. This proceeding made the processors and the marriage party highly unpopular, and on their return from the Castle, the assembly greeted them with a loud groan, a very unpleasant thing to aristocratic ears!

### August 1845

August 12th: For some time past the weather has been very soft, and has rather retarded the hay harvest. August 25th: The weather still continues soft, and fears are entertained for a late harvest.

### September 1845

September 5th: A holm of corn cut on the farm of Dalmuster-nock. This is the first corn cut in the parish this season.

September 8th: We have had a fortnight's delightful weather. The crops are making rapid progress towards maturity. A few more sunny days and the bright sickle will be called to do its work. In fact, Peter Gemmill, Todhill, commenced regular harvest today.

September 15th: Regular harvest commenced on the farms of Aitkenhead, Wyllieland, Presken, Oldhall, &c.

### THE OPPOSITE MAN

September 23rd: James Fulton, cotton and customer weaver, better known by the name of "The Cripple", departed this life aged somewhere about 70 years. The cognomen of "Cripple" was doubtless derived from the use he made of stilt and staff in walking. James was in every respect a singular man. For awkwardness of disposition and self-conceit he was unparalleled. The way in which his self-conceit developed itself was singular. Because other



people found it convenient to go with shoes tied and a napkin about their necks, to be contrary he went with his shoes untide and his neck bare. Other people wore harn (coarse cloth) for shirts and plaiding for coats and trousers. He reversed this order, wearing harn trousers and plaiding for an outer garment.

He carried this spirit of contrariety into everything else. He did not go to church, he let a good house go to ruin, he did not shave his beard till it was a month or six weeks old, and he had a different opinion on everything from every other person. He had a particular propensity for prying into the private affairs of others. He pretended to know all about their money, their debts and their family secrets. His knowledge was limited to such things as these. And yet, with all these foibles in his character, the Cripple had about him a kind of stubborn independence, that with a regulated judgment might have become a virtue.

"As contrary as the Cripple", was a standing by-word in Fenwick.

### October 1845

October 11th: James Orr departed this life aged 30 years, another young man cut down in the bloom and vigour of life. Manhood is reached, but to sleep in the silent tomb. James was a fine, tall, open-hearted, frank fellow. He learned the tailor's trade with his father, but did not like it, so he went from Fenwick and was several years in Ireland, following the business of a draper. He came home unwell, and died after a protracted illness.

Robert Dickie, farmer, Tannacrief, finished his harvest on the 14th October. He is the first who has finished in Fenwick.

October 17th: The weather continues to be very backward for completing the harvest. A good deal of stuff is yet exposed.

### THE POTATO FAMINE

October 18th: An unexpected calamity has befallen the country in the almost total failure of the potato crop. Within the past fortnight, every field in Fenwick parish has been discovered to be more or less infected with this new and singular rot. Some large fields are already entirely useless, and will not pay the lifting. The questions are anxiously asked: How are the people to get food, and where is seed to come from for next year?

October 23rd: Several of the farmers around Fenwick have finished their harvest. Aikenhead finished on the 22nd, Wyllieland on the 23rd, and Midland and Gainhill on the 24th. On the whole, the harvest has been somewhat tedious.

### A DETERMINED BRIDE

A good deal of gossiping was caused in Fenwick about this time, on account of a somewhat peculiar marriage between Janet Walker, daughter of Hugh Walker, shoemaker, and a moleman of the name of David Clarkson, in the employment of James Robertson. After the proclamation of marriage, Clarkson took it into his head to cut from Fenwick, leaving his intended bride in no very enviable situation. It is said a difference took place between them, when he called Jenny a "whitening wife", and she retorted by calling him a "baneman". However this may be, it is certain he made himself scarce in Fenwick.

Jenny, however, was not to be daunted by a trifle. As soon as the cries were out, she got the extracts in her pocket, and set out in quest of her false love. After some search she found him about Paisley, and got married in that town, taking care not to let him slip out of her fingers a second time.

October 22nd: Mary Macgrigor Murdoch, second daughter of Alex Murdoch, teacher, and Jean Armour, born.

### November 1845

November 6th: Fenwick Fair. Though the day was fine, very few people were present, and the market was dull.

### A DOMESTIC TRAGEDY

November 14th: Mrs Gemmill (Janet Bunting) departed this life today, under painful and distressing circumstances, aged 76 years. Her clothes caught fire in the absence of the rest of the family, and before assistance could be obtained, were nearly burnt off. This was about seven o'clock in the morning. She lingered till 12 o'clock midday and expired. She is the last of the name of Bunting in this parish.

Many old names once familiar about Fenwick are dying out. The Hopkins, Buntings and Millars have become extinct. Manners and customs are greatly changed since Janet Bunting was born. At the time of her birth it was customary to have a great gathering of wives at the baptism of children. After leaving the kirk where they all sat on the same form, they repaired to the house of the parents, and partook of what was called the Blithmeat. Twenty-eight wives were at the baptism of Janet. They came all over the Braeheads, from the kirk in a bang (large number), along with the infant, to the house of William Bunting, her father in Fenwick Town. Every wife brought with her a sixpenny loaf to grace the banquet. It is pleasant to look back to those times of social pleasure and homely feeling.

## December 1845

December 1st: A man was found dead this morning near to Wraithburn. He had been drinking at Laighmoor on Sabbath, the day before. He appeared to be between 50 and 60 years of age. He mentioned to the people of Laighmoor, that he was on his way from Dumfries to Glasgow. He had 2/2 of money in his pocket. This is all that is known of him. Thus perished an immortal being, unknown and unpitied. You who quaff the bowl, beware!

December 5th: Mrs Fulton, Spoutmouth, (Margaret Blackwood), departed this life. She was a most worthy and industrious woman. She had a very retentive memory, and was fond to speak of bygone days. She reared a large family, and at her death she had six manly sons and two daughters living, among whom is the justly celebrated John Fulton (builder of the famous orrery).

December 5th: Mrs Fulton, Spoutmouth (Margaret Black-Good from Galston, a buxom widow between 50 and 60. Andrew is an old man about 75 years of age. It would have been more wise-looking if this old man, instead of entering on a marriage engagement, had been making a covenant with the grave!

## OLD CUSTOMS PASS AWAY

December 11th: Fenwick Fast Day. Mr Macbeth from Glasgow preached in the Free Church, and Mr Forrest from Troon in the Secession. Fast days, like other things, are undergoing a change. Once upon a time they were strictly kept, nearly as much so as the Sabbath. Now, a great many work before and after the preaching, while some work all the day. I once heard an elder of the Secession Church object to hold a missionary meeting on the Fast Day, as a thing that was not sacred enough for such occasions. Some now prognosticate that the time is coming when they shall cease to be.

## A RATEPAYERS' MEETING

December 15th: A public meeting of the inhabitants of this parish was convened, in the parish school house, to deliberate on the new assessment for the poor, Mr James Taylor, Senior, in the chair. It having been understood that the recently constituted parish board intended to assess landed property at the rate of sixpence per pound, and house property at the rate of one shilling per pound, a strong feeling was raised at the injustice of the measure, and accordingly this meeting was called to consider the propriety of resisting the exaction by legal means. After several intelligent speakers had made observations on the animus displayed by the members of the board on this unequal assessment, it was unanimously resolved to petition the same authorities to reverse their decision, and put all the ratepayers on a footing of

equality; and that if the prayer of their petition was not attended to, it was agreed to memorialise the board of supervision in Edinburgh on the subject.

A number of the leading farmers were present and took part in the proceedings. A committee was appointed to carry the resolution into effect.

December 31st: This month has been cold, wet and stormy. Frost set in several times, but only lasted for a day or two. Then came several days' rain, with a high wind. 1845 has now come to a close. Everything of any importance that has happened in the parish has been duly recorded. We must now turn another leaf of our annals, and enter on a new page of time.

Farewell, 1845!

### January 1846

January 1st: This New Year's Day the weather has been very unpleasant. Snow showers continue to fall at intervals during the day, and a keen frost set in at night. The people were all very sober, most of them attending to their work.

January 23rd: Robert Montgomery, late of Fenwick, and Mary Reid, Kirkton, married. The new married couple set off to Glasgow on the same night.

January 31st: David Gemmill, son of Matthew Gemmill, Wyllie-land, died aged 3 years. He died of scarlet fever.

The weather throughout this month has been very unpleasant, and almost every day has been dark, dull and rainy. Towards the latter end of the month, scarlet fever broke out in Fenwick, and has been somewhat prevalent.

### February 1846

#### SUPPORTING THE LIBRARY

February 3rd: A congregational soiree was held in the Secession Church for the benefit of the library. Mr Ellis, from Saltcoats, spoke on the advantage of congregational libraries. He was followed by Mr Knox from Ayr, on "Christian Union". This was the finest speech of the evening. It breathed throughout a liberal and lofty tone. Mr Stirling from Mearns followed on the same subject, and Mr Low from Barrhead wound up the speeches with a highly humorous display.

At the close of the proceedings, Mr Robert Lindsay came forward and presented the Rev. Mr Orr with a purse containing upwards of £30. The tickets for the soiree were sixpence each. The sum uplifted amounted to £12.19.6, and after paying expenses a balance of £4.0.9 remained for the library.

February 9th: Mrs John Gemmill (Janet Tannahill) departed this life aged 77 years. Her husband, Customer Gemmill, was a man of noted character. They reared a large family.

February 20th: Robert Bair, flesher, departed this life. Robert, when he died, was an old man. "Old Blair", as he was generally called, came to Fenwick about thirty years since. During the whole of that period, till within a short time of his death, he went to Kilmarnock almost every day. He was employed by the Kilmarnock fleshers to purchase sheep and cattle for them, as he was allowed to have first-rate skill of living animals. This is all, however, that can be said in his favour. From a moral and intellectual point of view, he stood very low.

February 25th: The annual ploughing match of the Rowallan Barony came off this day on the farm of Mucklewood, sixteen ploughs in the field. Robert Young, Mosside took the first prize, a lad of the name of Sillers, servant in Craighaw 2nd, James Dunlop, Brierbush, 3rd, William Dunlop, Todhill, 4th.

February 26th: Hugh Black died. Hugh was a labourer who came to Fenwick a few years ago. He was a quiet sort of man, and left a widow and small family.

This month has been remarkably fine.

### March 1846

March 4th: A strong wind today, but it calmed by the afternoon. A few houses were slightly damaged. During the storm, a gleam of broken sunshine shot through the clouds at times, like a smile of mercy on a face of wrath.

March 9th: Margaret Boreland, only daughter of Alex Boreland, innkeeper, departed this life aged 11 years.

### A PRISONER RELEASED

March 10th: John Brown, Junior, weaver, departed this life aged about 40 years. For four years previous to his death he had been confined to his room, a prisoner enchained by a power more potent than despotism. It might almost have been said of him that he was dead while yet in life. For a man in his prime to be confined for four long years is a trying circumstance. Time glides not away in suffering, as in health. How many lonely hours he must have passed during that period! No one can tell the amount of suffering endured by such a one.

Living in the world but completely isolated from its interests, you hear, year after year, the storms of winter pass over your



dwelling, and you know that the smile of summer was on the earth — but not for you. To be completely shut out from hope, lonely and in trouble, would crush almost any spirit, and would render miserable the existence of any being who had no exalted sense of religion. He died, however, in peace, having that knowledge which passeth all understanding.

March 16th: William Brown, Kingswell-toll, married for the third time, to Mirian Raeside, Flockside.

### OLD AND NARROW

March 26th: John Smith, late farmer of Grassyards, departed this life aged 93 years. John was a large, gray-headed old man, stiff and narrow in his opinions, but firm enough to act out his views independent of consequences. He was fully up to the spirit of the age in which he was bred, but did not advance, like some old men, beyond it. Consequently some things of modern adoption did not suit his notions. He would not sing a repeating tune in the church, but coolly closed his Bible when such a tune was started, and would not sing. He was a stiff Seceder the greater part of his life, but a few years before his death he joined the Establishment.

Old men who continue in active life, and who do not advance with the spirit of the age, are often placed in disagreeable circumstances about their opinions, and how society ought to be managed. They should be judged with great tenderness.

### April 1846

April 2nd: James Gemmill Senior, Gainford, departed this life aged 87 years. James in his day was rather a public man, and a good deal out in society. He had a lively turn of mind. Death is busy weeding the hoary-headed props of society.

April 5th: Robert Young, carrier, Fenwick town, died aged about 70 years. Robert, in his own way, was rather an active bustling man. However, in one sense he was not a public character: he cared not how the world moved on, providing he managed to find work for three or four horses. Notwithstanding, Robert was a quiet, industrious man, and generally respected. He was at his work on Friday and dead on Saturday, today mingling with his fellow men, next day before the throne of his Creator. What a warning to the living.

### THE NEGRO ABOLITIONIST

April 5th: Mr Frederick Douglass, once an American slave, addressed a public meeting of the inhabitants of Fenwick in the Secession meeting house, on the subject of "American Slavery". The Rev. Mr Orr occupied the chair. In the course of his speech, Mr Douglass made some severe animadversions on the Free

Church of Scotland, for going to the slave states of America and uplifting money to support their church. Mr Thomas Brown from Kilmarnock followed in the same strain. The Rev. Mr. Dickie of the Parish Church, also spoke in condemnation of the American slave system. An uncommonly large meeting agreed unanimously to a resolution condemning churches in this country for having fellowship with the slave-holding churches of America. Mr Dickie closed with prayer.

April 8th: Mrs James Kent departed this life aged 83 years. Mrs Kent had a propensity for accumulating money.

April 13th: Alexander Thomson Senior farmer, Meadowhead, died aged 83 years. Alexander was a droll body, but distinguished for no particular characteristic. The aged are dropping with more than ordinary rapidity into the tomb.

April 20th: A meeting took place today in the Parish Church to elect three members for the parish poor rate board. Alex Watt, Hugh Montgomery and Matthew Fowlds were elected. The meeting was but thinly attended.

The seed potatoes this year were sold at two shillings per peck. This was the general price. They were scarce on account of the failure of the crop.

## May 1846

### A KEEN REFORMER

May 10th: James Fulton, shoemaker, Fenwick Town, departed this life aged 77 years. James was in some respects rather a remarkable quiet man. He was a first-rate workman, as well as one tinued so till his death. He sat in two Scottish conventions as delegate from Fenwick in the years 1792 and 93. He was a man of firm and decided mind. In his religious and political opinions, he kept fully up-to-date. He read extensively, and showed as keen a relish for a new book or magazine as the youngest man in the place. It is a fine thing to see an old man who has stood true to his principles all his life, and who grows daily in intelligence and nobility as he approaches nearer to the tomb.

May 21st: Thomas Wilson, son of James Wilson, Glassock, died aged about 16 years. Thomas was a young man of promise who had been attending college for some time.

May 26th: James Dunlop, farmer, Brierbush, died of a fever, aged about 30 years. He had been but a few years married to a fine young woman, who is now left a widow with one daughter. He was a handsome young fellow, with a good smack of pride, but not distinguished for any other thing.

## June 1846

June 7th: John Gemmill, Senior, shoemaker, died aged about 65 years. John was the third John Gemmill who has died out of the

same house, and there are another two John Gemmills living in regular succession. Many who are living have known the whole five John Gemmills, all in direct descent from father to son. John was a remarkable quiet man. He was a first-rate workman, as well as one of the best curlers in Fenwick. He left behind him his wife, four sons, and five daughters, all grown up to man and womanhood except one. There never was a death in his family, which is a somewhat unusual circumstance.

June 23rd: Mr James Picken, Hillhouse Cottage, married to Miss Sampson, Kilmarnock. Miss Sampson is the grand-daughter of the celebrated Tam Sampson.

June 26th: Mary Orr, Orange Bovan, married to William Brown, teacher, Dykeneuk.

### **ABOLITION OF THE CORN LAWS**

June 27th: A public meeting of the inhabitants of Fenwick was held this evening in the open air, to see what measures they would adopt on Monday, the 29th, in honour of the passing of Sir Robert Peel's Corn Law Abolition Bill. Alex Watt, farmer, Gainleish, was in the chair. It was unanimously agreed to hold a public rejoicing.

### **A PUBLIC CELEBRATION**

June 29th: A great public meeting and rejoicing was held in Fenwick today to celebrate the abolition of the Corn Laws. In the afternoon the inhabitants were all astir. Two large bonfires blazed on the streets, the freshest boughs and the fairest flowers adorned the houses, the banners of Freedom waved in the breeze, the parish bell rang out its merriest peal, a numerous discharge of fire-arms rent the air like explosive thunder, and the people with one accord joined in the nation's jubilee. The inhabitants walked through the village in procession, after which they held a meeting in the Secession Church, Alex Watt, Gainleish, in the chair. Alex Murdoch, John Kirkland, Alex Dunlop, Matthew Fowlds and Robert Lindsay were the principal speakers. All went off in a most orderly and becoming manner.

We only had 20 nights' frost last winter.

### **July 1846**

July 5th: A severe thunder storm.

July 10th: Married at Dumhead, Mary Wallace to James Dickie, Horsehill.

July 14th: Jean Millar, wife of John Allen Junior, departed this life. Jean was a quiet young woman, not long married. She belonged to Stewarton.

July 15th: The crops look remarkably well. The potatoes look but middling in some places. In general, the corn is evenly shot.

July 28th: The Free Church congregation met tonight to petition the presbytery for a moderation. The preacher they fixed on is a Mr Gibson. Mrs Wyllie, Little Fenwick, departed this life. She was up in years, and went suddenly and unseen. Janet Fulton, third daughter of Alex Fulton, shoemaker, married to James Steel, victualler, Glasgow.

### August 1846

August 6th: An uncommon sultry day. Several waterspouts were seen from this neighbourhood.

August 8th: A severe thunderstorm, with a heavy fall of rain. The waters were unusually swollen, and many places flooded. The lightning broke on a tree at Little Fenwick. This is the fourth thunderstorm this season.

August 15th: Corn harvest commenced today on the farm of Dalmusternock.

August 20th: The Free Church congregation elected Mr. Hamilton Gibson to be their minister. No other candidate was proposed, and 94 members signed the call.

August 21st: Matthew Fowlds, Graystone-Knowe, married to Agnes Craig.

August 21st: Harvest commenced on several farms around Fenwick.

August 24th: The mysterious potato disease has visited us again this season with greater virulence than last year. The whole of the potato crop is a complete wreck. On account of the disease coming on sooner this season, before the crop was filled out, they are rendered completely useless and will never be raised.

### September 1846

September 2nd: James Picken, farmer, Crofthead, finished his harvest today.

September 9th: John Cooper departed this life up in years. John was silly-minded.

September 11th: Several of the farmers around Fenwick have finished their harvest. It is allowed that the corn is not well filled out this season.

September 12th: Jean Taylor, wife of the late Alex Thomson, farmer, Meadowhead, departed this life aged 73 years. She was a fine, quiet, kind sort of woman.

This month has been uncommonly warm and sultry.

### October 1846

October 7th: A negro named Joseph Carter addressed a meeting in the Secession Church on the subject of American slavery, the Rev. Mr. Dickie in the chair. He wanted a collection to free his mother and sisters from slavery, and £1.13.1d was uplifted.

October 13th: Hugh Bicket, shoemaker, Fenwick-town, departed this life aged 74 years. Hugh was long an active and public man about Fenwick. He was a keen curler, a keen reformer, besides a dealer in bees, hay, corn, etc. Hugh was small in stature, dark in complexion, cheerful and hearty in appearance, but with it all both a man of skill and deep cunning.

October 17th: A new society was started in Fenwick designated the Fenwick Mutual Improvement Society. The first subject of discussion was "The Tendency of the Present Age". The society starts with nine members.

October 18th: Robert and David Dickie, twin brothers, sons of David and Eliza Dickie, Gainhill, baptized.

### November 1846

November 10th: The Free Church Presbytery of Irvine met in Guthrie Church, Fenwick, to induct Mr. Hamilton Gibson to the pastoral charge of the congregation assembling there. The Rev. Mr. Connel of Perceton preached, and put the usual questions to Mr. Gibson. The Rev. Thomas Main of Kilmarnock addressed the young minister and his people. After divine service was over, Mr. Dunlop of Highfield rose, and in the name of the congregation presented the Rev. Mr. Arthur of Stewarton with an elegant book-case, as a small token of their regard for him because of his attention to them when destitute of a regular pastor.

Today, Jean McGavin was married to a man from about Flockside named Thomas Hand. Jean is one of the handsomest young women in the parish.

November 16th: James Dunlop, Haghouse, departed this life, a middle-aged man. James was a very quiet man. He never married, and seemed to be chiefly set on gathering a little money. It is said that he died worth about £300.

### December 1846

DECEMBER 3rd: Janet Murchland, wife of Peter Dickie, Horsehill, departed this life up in years. She was by far the largest and heaviest woman in the parish.

December 10th: Mr Alexander Picken of Hillhouse Cottage, died aged 77 years. Mr Picken in his young days was a weaver in Stewarton. He married an active widow with a little money, and came to reside in Kingswell, just at the time when this road was in its height of prosperity. He resided there during most of his life, accumulating a considerable amount of property and money, and



retired to Hillhouse which he had purchased, to live on the fruits of his increase. He was a frank and liberal minded man.

December 11th: Janet Cameron, third daughter of William Cameron, married to a Hugh Paton. The newly married pair went to reside in Galston. Marion Sheddon, wife of Claude Barr, Marchbank, died instantaneously today. She was in her ordinary health, and died in a moment. She was up in years. The unthoughtful should take heed.

December 15th: The Fenwick Curling Club and the Townend Club, Kilmarnock, contested for the Caledonian Medal. The Fenwick players lost by two shots.

On December 14th, James Craig died at Graystone-Knowe, aged about 70 years. James was a half-witted man, and a sort of oddity in his way. He had been on the parish for a long time.

December 24th: Margaret Currie, wife of William Dalziel, Crawfordland Mains, departed this life. Mrs Dalziel was a woman in the very prime of life, strong and lusty in appearance. But, alas, strength is no guarantee for life. She came to the church on the Fast Day in good health, but on rising to go out at the interval, she was taken suddenly ill, and died before the close of the day.

December : 29th : William Fulton, flesher, married to Ann Bickett.

Thus closes the "Annals of 1846."

### January 1847

New Year's Day is nearly over. It has passed away with the utmost quietness. The old year has gone. We have parted from it as a friend with whom we were daily familiar. It belongs to history, and is added to the annals of time. Its repose cannot be disturbed. It is another bond placed by the Eternal upon our world, for which we must give an account. A new period of time has begun its flight, and its events are as yet unknown. They rest in the womb of futurity, to be developed as day, and week and month roll on. It was fine, mild weather today.

January 2nd: Robert Taylor, eldest son of James Taylor, weaver, and Jean Dickie, born. (The writer's first child.)

### THE MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

January 6th: The Fenwick Mutual Improvement Society held its first annual meeting in the house of Mr Hugh Thomson, innkeeper, John Kirkland in the chair. After a good repast, Mr John Fulton, Junior, read an able "Essay on Man", dealing with his adaptation for society, and the ends to which he should aspire. Mr James Taylor gave "Ireland," and may its inhabitants soon

become worthy of so fair a land. Joseph Irvine gave "The Press", John Gemmill "Popular Education", and Alex Murdoch "Man and his Improvement". The healths of George Gilfillan, Lord Brougham, etc., were drunk. With song and speech, the night passed agreeably off, sixteen members present.

January 19th: A great turn-out of the curlers today for a game, for the purpose of uplifting money to distribute among the poor. £4.8.0 was uplifted.

January 22nd: The oatmeal is selling at £3.5.0 per load, retailing at 1/8 per imperial peck.

Today a number of friends of the Fairlie parish schoolmaster met in the house of Mrs Lockhart, to give him a dinner and present him with a pair of gold spectacles and a silver case, value about £8.

January 24th: Robert Mitchell Taylor, eldest son of James Taylor, weaver, and Jean Dickie, baptized. Matthew Burns, son of John Burns, weaver, and Mary Howat, baptized. Agnes Gemmill, daughter of Robert Gemmill, labourer, and Ann Anderson, baptized.

### February 1847

February 16th: Allen Galt, Senior, wright, married to a Mary Ross, servant in Hillhouse. Allen will be about 60 years of age. Grey hairs, when they are worn by the principal party, seem out of place at a bridal.

February 20th: Mary Raeside, third wife of William Brown, Kingswell Toll, died. She was up in life.

February 23rd: Matthew Watt, youngest son of Robert Watt, farmer, Law, departed this life. Matthew was a young man attending Glasgow College. He caught typhus fever in Glasgow, came home, and died.

February 25th: John Anderson, shoemaker, eldest son of Archibald Anderson, Waterside, died of typhus fever, aged 16.

John Steel, farmer, Clench, died during this month, up in years. John was quite an original character, coarse, witty, clever, fond of spree, splore and fight — in a word, a man of great energy, but directed to worthless objects.

### March 1847

March 2nd: The annual ploughing match of the Rowallan farmers came off today, 14 ploughs contending. 1st prize went to Robert Sillars, ploughman to R. Barr, Craighall, 2nd to Thomas Meikle, ploughman to John Young, Midton, 3rd William Dunlop, ploughman to Peter Gemmill, Todhill, 4th Thomas Young, Mosside, 5th David Dickie, Gainhill.

Today died Margaret Reid, wife of Alex Armour, weaver, in middle life.

March 16th: Thomas Taylor, weaver, departed this life aged about 70 years. For upwards of thirty years, Thomas was an elder in the United Secession Church. The qualities of his mind were of a solid, rather than a shining order. He was a firm, intelligent, industrious and liberal man. He lived respected, and died regretted by all. He was not only a religious, but a public spirited man also.

There are ten widow women living in Low Fenwick at the present time, rather an unusual number.

March 30th: Mrs Montgomery, widow of the late Robert Montgomery, flax dresser, departed this life nearly 80 years of age. John Lindsay, farmer, Tayburn, died aged 73 years. John was a very quiet man. Oatmeal is selling at £3.2.0 per load.

#### April 1847

April 9th: Mrs William Orr (mother of the Rev. William Orr) departed this life aged 72 years. Mrs Orr was a fine, quiet old woman, sensible, intelligent and pious.

#### A VAIN SHOW

April 27th: Mr Reginald Crawford the younger, of Crawfordland, was married to a Miss Hamilton. His marriage was celebrated by what many thought a vain show. Most of the curlers in the parish, along with the Crawfordland tenantry, marched in procession from Fenwick with music and flags, also with mimic plough and harrow and about fifteen of their number bearing torches, to meet the new married party at the Boreland road end. When Mr Crawford and his spouse arrived, the company took the horses out of the carriage and drew the couple from the Green gate up to the Castle, a most loyal display of devotion to wealth, for there was no public merit whatever connected with the parties thus drawn.

Men should never lose their dignity so far as to draw their fellow men, however great or good they may be. In fact, no great or good man would allow such a thing to be done to him. It is only the thoughtless, the interested, or the servile that will draw on such occasions, and it is only the vain or the childish that will allow themselves to be so treated. When will men learn to be wise? When the people cease to worship wealth, and stop shouting at its empty glitter? When will they assume the calm and thoughtful dignity that ought to characterise their being, and war against, rather than countenance, the absurd distinctions that exist in society? When will they cease to be worms for the proud to tread on?

### May 1847

May 5th: Robert Kirkland died. Robert was a young man, poor, unfortunate, neglected, one who was more the enemy of himself than of others.

May 25th: Prior to this date the weather has been somewhat cold. A few days ago, oatmeal was selling at £3.5.0 to £3.7.0. per load. It was retailing at 20 and 21 pence per wee peck. Almost every other eatable is proportionably dear.

### June 1847

June 1st: Hugh Bicket, labourer, married to Miss Mary Welch.

June 12th: Died at Fenwick, Mrs James Love, late of Moorend. Mrs Love was an old woman. Her life was a singular contrast of circumstances. She lived queen for a long time on the farm of Moorend, of which her husband, James Love, was proprietor. Here she had abundance. When he went, it had to be sold, and before her death she received support from the parish. She was a proud, narrow-minded woman. In the days of her prosperity she had plenty of visitors, but when poverty came her friends were few. The change that prosperity or poverty makes is wonderful.

### FENWICK STATISTICS

Population of Fenwick in 1841, 2018. Annual value of real property in the parish in the year 1843, £9,365.13.9. Number of poor on the roll 1st February, 1845, males 15, females 24, total 39. Total sum derived for the relief of the poor from February, 1845 to February, 1846, £246.2.7½. Sum expended on the relief of the permanent poor, £228.7.3, on relief of occasional poor £1.11.6, on medical relief, £3.2.3, on management, £10.0.0.

### August - November 1847

August 5th: Agnes Calderwood, wife of James Gilmour, departed this life after a lingering illness. Mrs Gilmour was quite a decent woman, cut off in the prime of life.

August 9th: Hugh Wyllie cut his bear (barley) today. This is the first harvest about Fenwick.

August 18th: Alexander Watt, Gainleish, cut a small lot of corn on his farm today.

August 21st: Oatmeal selling at 1/1 per peck, Indian meal 8 pence per peck, barrel flour 1/1 per peck, mutton 6½d per pound. The mysterious potato disease has again appeared in some places this season.

August 27th: Alexander Gemmil, Tannacrief, commenced regular harvest today.

August 31st: Alexander Thomson, stocking farmer, married to Janet Wardrop.

September 3rd : Harvest pretty general around Fenwick.

September 9th: Oatmeal selling at 11 pence per peck — a few weeks ago it was selling at 1/8 and 1/9 per peck.

October 4th: Alexander Armour departed this life aged 48 years. He died of typhus fever. Alexander held the Post Office in Fenwick since its commencement, besides going post to Kilmarnock for upwards of twenty years. In both capacities he gave universal satisfaction.

November 12th: Robert Shields, farmer, Thrashes, departed this life. Robert was a very old man. He was none of your gentle farmers — not he — but a good, coarse, rough man of the old school. Today also, Robert Taylor, Senior, weaver, Fenwick town, departed this life aged 62 years (the writer's father).

Editor's note: With the death of his father, James Taylor abruptly stopped keeping his journal, and did not begin again for nearly nine years. In the interim he noted the births of three more children to himself and Jean Dickie: David 22nd April, 1848, James 19th July, 1850, and Anna 31st January, 1853.

### August 1856

After a long, long silence I resume my jottings.

August 2nd: Margaret Picken, daughter of Quentin Picken, a fine little girl about a year old, went out at the back door and was drowned in the garden well.

Near the beginning of this month died Allan Brown, Laird of Beanscroft, aged somewhere about 70 years. Beanscroft was not in any sense a public man. He was a stiff churchman and a keen Tory. For a long time before his death he had a good deal of bodily and mental suffering.

August 7th: A shower of enormous hail stones fell on the farms of Artnock, Meadowhead, Greenhill and Tayburn. Many of the hail stones measured  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in circumference. They broke a good many panes of glass, and went down clean through cabbage stalks like a gun bullet. This summer has been uncommonly cold and wet up till July 30th, when the weather changed to an extreme, fiery heat, which continued till the 8th August. We had much thunder on the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th, but little rain. On the 9th it became very cold. We had a spell of cold dry weather for a long time in the Spring.

August 13th: John Gemmill, cartwright, Moscow, departed this life aged 73 years. John was a very quiet, industrious man. He was the first who built a house in Moscow. On August 26th, 1855, died David Dickie, labourer, another old resident of Moscow, aged 72 years. Both were interred in Fenwick.



August 17th: The Rev. Mr Smith, Stewarton, preached a total abstinence sermon this Sabbath evening to an audience of about two hundred.

August 19th: William Bicket commenced reaping his barley.

August 22nd: Fine weather — farmers are through with their hay thrashing. This has been an excellent hay harvest.

August 23rd: The potato disease very general. Oatmeal  $1/1\frac{1}{2}$  per peck, half quarter loaf  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d, Stewarton bread  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d, mutton  $6\frac{1}{2}$ d and 7d, old cheese 9d per pound, new cheese 7d.

### THE OLDEST INHABITANT

August 30th: William Todd departed this life. William was reputed to be the oldest man in the parish, 92 or 93 years of age. According to his father's Bible he was born in 1763. He was a bachelor, and a quiet, canny living man. He inherited some money and made more. For the last thirty years of his life he lived on his money, and was ready, as he stepped about, to do a turn in the meeting house. To the congregation worshipping there he was much attached. In his younger days he went to Wales, and made a good deal of money as a bent delver (scrub cutter). At his death he left about £560 to be divided into equal shares between his brothers and sisters or their heirs. He left £16 to the session of the meeting house for the poor. He is said at one time to have had about £1,500.

The Todds seem to be a rather long lived race. John Todd of Mooryet, William's father, died at the age of 78. William Todd, his uncle, died at 93 years of age, being born in 1723 and dying in 1816. William Todd was the only son of John Todd by his first marriage. Mary Carswell, his father's second wife, had eleven children, ten of whom reached man and womanhood. At her death, which occurred in 1827 aged 84 years, she had sixty-four grandchildren and twenty-six great grandchildren all living.

### September 1856

September 5th: Robert Dickie, Tannacrief, commenced harvest. Alexander Gemmill commenced on the 6th. These are the two first who are at harvest work.

September 7th: The quarter sacrament in the meeting house, Mr Stillie from Girvan assisting.

September 9th: We had a violent thunderstorm this afternoon. For two hours peal after peal followed each other in quick succession. The darkness was intense. At about three o'clock, p.m., all labour was in a manner suspended for want of light. Women trembled, and men stood more than ordinarily awe-struck at the war of the elements around them.

September 15th: Harvest is now pretty general. The corn is very heavy and a good deal down.

September 20th: William Wallace, late of Dumhead, William Stevenson, Darclubock, and Mary Craig, Polkelly Haw, left this country for Australia. The two latter were proclaimed three times on the Sabbath, married, and went away next day. Quick work.

September 23rd: Day and night equal. Weather, soft and calm till the 27th and 28th. On both of these days and during the night, we had a violent gale of wind. During the storm the corn was sadly wistered, and a good deal of loss at sea.

### October 1856

October 6th: Mr Hugh Thomson, grocer, and Jean Fulton, Clackmannan, married. They were proclaimed three times on the Sabbath and married on Monday. Mr Thomson had been a widower about five months. This is his third marriage.

October 10th: Harvest is pretty well over around Fenwick. General report speaks of a good crop.

October 21st: Margaret Orr, Orange Bovan, departed this life aged 40 years. She was acting as dairy-maid in the Thorn, took dysentery, and though a very stout woman, was cut down in a few days. Today also, Mary Wyllie, Kirktown, died. Mary was an old maid upwards of 70 years of age, and was blamed like the rest of old maids for being a little peevish in her temper.

### November 1856

November 3rd: Corn still cut out on farm of Highfield.

A coloured man named Mr Woodhouse delivered a lecture to a large audience in the meeting house on American slavery. Rev. Mr Dickie was in the chair.

November 5th: Peter Dickie, Horsehill, departed this life aged 85 years. He was a strong, healthy old man but was cut off very suddenly. Peter was long a public man about Fenwick. He attended all Fairs and congregational meetings, etc. He belonged to the United Presbyterian body, in whose affairs he took a deep interest. He was held to be a stiff, dogmatic man in his opinions. Besides farming he acted as a dealer.

November 8th: Robert Lockhart, High Fenwick, departed this life aged 78 years. He had been away from Fenwick, and separated from his wife and family for upwards of thirty years. He lived at Ayr, but came home about a twelve-month before he died.

November 14th: William Currie, Gree, and Ellen Ramsay, Cauldstanes, married.

Hugh Alexander, Waterside, got a presentation of a silver-headed staff from his workers. Within a few days of the present

date, Mr Alexander has a fine new steam engine starting to drive his mill. This is the first only steam engine in the parish.

November 18th: Andrew Dunlop, Thorn, and Margaret Lindsay, Polkelly, married.

November 20th: The house of Andrew Picken, Glassock, was entered by thieves this night and a quantity of wearing apparel taken away. No trace of the depredators.

November 21st: Robert Thomson, Meadowhead, and Margaret Taylor married. Mr Balmer addressed a meeting in the Fenwick Town schoolroom on the Total Abstinence question to a very small audience. A boy of the name of Hutcheson, Waterside, died of lockjaw, aged about 11 years. A few days previous he got three of his fingers crushed at the wool mill. They were amputated after some days, but too late to save his life. This is the first accident at Waterside mill.

November 26th: A very heavy fall of snow last night. It was calm, and the snow lies evenly spread over the ground to the depth of from eight to ten inches. Up till within a few days we have had beautiful weather for nearly two months.

November 29th: Clear hard frost — several beautiful meteors seen tonight.

### December 1856

December 2nd: Four young men left this parish for Australia, Hugh and Robert Woodburn, James Gemmill, Lamclaird, and Adam Barr. They sail from Liverpool in the "Champion of the Seas" paying £14 for their passage.

William Wilson, customer weaver, died very unexpectedly aged 84 years. William was a bachelor, and a very healthy, jovial old fellow. He never had a visit from a doctor, either during his life or at his death. Happy man. He was known far and near, and was of good natural wit and sociable disposition. His principal failing was being too often at, and tarrying too long over, the social bowl. William, however, was greatly respected, and his death will be felt by not a few as a loss.

December 5th: Thaw today — we have had an uncommonly severe frost for seven nights, the ground covered with snow.

David Dickie, son of David Dickie, Tannahill, a boy of about 10 years of age, died of lockjaw. He got himself hurt about the threshing mill eight or ten days previous.

Lord Glasgow sent unasked £25 to this parish to purchase coals for the poor. The farmers drive them gratis.

December 9th: William Young, Sunbed, married to Martha Young, daughter of John Young, farmer, Moorshields.

December 11th: Fenwick Fast Day. Rev. Mr Dickie from Cumnock preached with general acceptance in the United Presbyterian

Church. A congregational meeting took place after the service was over. It was agreed to introduce the Hymn Book into congregational use on the first Sabbath of January. The congregation agreed not to go into the aged ministers' scheme, also not to send the statistics of the congregation to the synod, and further, to make a contribution to pay the debt of the meeting house.

December 13th: Mary Craig (Mrs Mitchell), Raithburn, suddenly departed this life aged 59 years.

December 14th: Fenwick Sacrament — Rev. Mr Thomas from Mauchline assisted Mr Orr.

December 14th: Janet Currie was found this morning dead in her bed. She was a woman perhaps about 70 years of age. She was successively Mrs Currie, Mrs Dickie and Mrs Ramage. Her last husband died in the Thorn, and she herself carried the head of his coffin to the grave. She remarked sometime afterwards, that if it was the Lord's will she would have a fourth husband. She was a strange, eccentric woman.

December 18th: Agnes Boyd, Fenwick Town, died in her 86th year. Agnes was a very quiet, industrious woman and was never married. James Craig, farmer, Raithburn, died aged 61 years. His death was rather unexpected, as he died about the time that the people were assembling for his sister's funeral. He was spoken of as a hard, narrow, worldly-minded man. Next day died Mrs Stevenson, Darclubock, a woman up in years.

December 28th: Robert Reid, Fenwick Town, suddenly departed this life aged 84 years. Robert and his wife had lived together 59 years. He was rather a crusty old carl, and seldom or never visited a neighbour's house, and had no associates. Yet he was a remarkably industrious man, and had a mind of his own.

December 31st: A concert on behalf of James Taylor was held in the United Presbyterian Church. After all expenses were paid he received £15.0.0.

Farewell, 1856.



### III. Epilogue

## THE NEW ZEALAND FENWICK

#### THE WEAVER'S DEATH

James Taylor died on 5th September, 1857. The final entry in his journal refers to a church concert held on his behalf, evidently to provide him with some financial relief during his illness. The cause of his death is not known. Like many Fenwick people he was probably prejudiced against doctors, and the death certificate records "No medical attendant".

Writing from London in the year 1913, Mr Thomas W. Orr says: "Many years ago, more than I now care to reckon up, I was seated at Mr Murdoch's school in the Laigh Toon, Fenwick, beside a number of very estimable chums now scattered far and wide. Among others was a cousin of Alexander Dickie, Robert Mitchell Taylor. His father suffered from a long illness which ended in his death in the prime of life. He was a universal favourite, and great was the sympathy extended to him by the neighbours, Mrs Meysie Ritchie, Mrs John Gemmill and Mrs Jasper Howat among the foremost of them."

Mr T. W. Orr was the son of the Rev. William Orr, the Secession Church minister from 1830 to 1882, who is often mentioned in the Annals, and whose influence, in the words of my grandfather, "was felt and left its impression on every girl and boy in the parish for over fifty years".

Writing to Mr Orr from Narringa, N.S.W., Australia, about the same time, John Gibson, a native of Fenwick, who at 86 was still hale and hearty, is quoted as saying: "James Taylor lived in a house belonging to James Kent, between Hugh Montgomery on the one hand and John Brown on the other. He was a well-informed weaver. His wife was Jean Dickie, who was (after James' death) married to Walter Barr. Mr Taylor took a leading part in the Debating Club in my day."

These extracts show that the writer of the "Annals" was a "universal favourite" in his native village, and that he rented a house from James Kent, the miserly weaver described in the journal on 18th October, 1844. The Family Bible shows that Jean Dickie, or Taylor, married Walter Barr, a weaver, aged 56, on 26th August, 1859, and two children were born to them. Walter is mentioned in the Annals on 2nd February 1844, when he addressed a social meeting on "Fortitude". Jean died at Greenock on 9th August, 1907, aged 88, and was buried at Fenwick.



## THE VILLAGE EMIGRANTS

People of Fenwick descent are scattered all over the world, and readers of the Annals will note frequent reference to families departing overseas. Had he lived, James Taylor would possibly have emigrated himself. In most cases in the early days, relatives gradually lost contact with each other. Pathetic attempts were made to keep family connections alive, but letters were long in coming, and treasured memories passed away with each person.

In 1832 some Dickies from Fenwick established a community at Galt, Ontario, Canada, and fifty years later they held a gathering attended by about three hundred of the family. Today there are no Dickies to be found in Galt, although some of their descendants have been traced to Waverley, New Zealand.

On 28th April, 1842, James Taylor records in his journal that Robert Sheddon of Gardrum Mill sold his farm for £1,090 and went to America with his wife and family. What became of them? Did they just disappear into the unknown? Not quite. More than sixty-six years later, Mr T. W. Orr received a letter dated 10th October, 1908 from Elgin, Illinois:

"Dear Sir: No doubt I will be quite a stranger to you. Perhaps you will remember me. My name is J. B. Shedden. I was born and lived in High Gardrum, Fenwick. I left Scotland April, 1842, and came to Elgin, Illinois, U.S.A. I was then 14 years of age. The first prayer meeting that I ever attended was in your father's church. Many times have I received your father's blessing with his hand on my head, even when he met me on the road. Please excuse this freedom but I am glad to revive old memories. I am now nearly 82 years of age. My hand shakes so that I can hardly write, so I use a typewriter. Please excuse. I walk two miles to the Presbyterian Church here in Elgin. When it storms or I be in a hurry I take the car. I would like to hear from any of your father's family.

Very respectfully yours, J. B. Shedden."

The Fenwick Emigration Society was founded on 23rd April 1839 and was widely patronised. The treasurer often had £400 in hand, the deposits of intending emigrants, and during all the years covered by the minutes, from 1839 to 1857, there is a constant stream of departures for Canada, America, Australia and New Zealand. The preamble embodied in the constitution of the Society tells its own tale:

"A fearful gloom is fast thickening over the horizon of our country. Every prospect of comfort to the working man is daily becoming darker and more dreary. Trade and manufactures are rapidly leaving our shores. And, to all appearance, a crisis is at hand, in which the sufferings of the working classes will form a prominent feature. It is desirable, therefore, that they should have



it in their power, as far as possible, to avoid the miseries to which a large proportion of the community must be reduced by the depression of wages, scarcity of work, and starvation by hunger through the operation of the Corn Laws. This can be best effected by fleeing from the scene of destitution and distress. But as it cannot be effected without considerable expense and as few working men can command a sufficient fund for that purpose, unless by the gradual process of weekly deposits, it is hereby proposed to form an association for the purpose of encouraging emigration among the working classes, and of acquiring the means necessary for the accomplishment of that object."

Fifty years after leaving Tannacrieff, Fenwick, Mr James Dickie, one of the Canadian immigrants, recalled another reason for departing from Scotland. He and others founded a township 150 miles west of Winnipeg and called it Carlyle, after the illustrious Scotsman of those days.

"It was because of the open voting," he said, "before the agitation resulting in the Ballot Act. My father voted Liberal and as a result the farm rent was raised £50. My brother David took the farm of Tannahill, and at the election of 1868 he voted Liberal. The factor upbraided him and told him he would be put at the end of the lease. Eighteen years afterwards a renewal of the lease was refused, and he left for Perthshire. Twenty years later, my brother-in-law, Mr John Watt, J.P., Knocklandside, Kilmaurs, was also evicted from his farm for taking the chair at a Liberal meeting."

This conversation was noted down during a visit to Canada by Mr James Dunlop, who was himself evicted from his farm by a Tory landlord, and numerous other political evictions are on record. In the words of another Fenwick man, the Rev. James Barr: "The system of Government by hereditary title is happily passing away. God speed the day. It is the greatest absurdity, injustice and mockery still remaining in a free country. But if we must have legislation by lineage, let us choose as our peers of the realm noblemen like the Howies of far descent, of honourable name, with ages of suffering and service in the cause of human liberty. Compared with them our present lordly legislators are but upstarts, and creatures of yesterday."

The Secesion Church library, which was started on 5th April, 1833, and with which the name of James Taylor is closely associated, also contributed to the stream of emigration and incidentally to a reduction in the congregation. It contained a large collection of well-worn volumes describing life in America and the colonies, and it encouraged many to seek new homes across the seas.

Perhaps of all countries, New Zealand was most popular among Fenwick folk, and descendants of these settlers must run into thousands: Dickies of Gainhill, Youngs of Waterside, Watts of



Glenleitch, Muirs of Skernieland, Dunlops of Highfield and Midland, Curries of Blair, Findlays of Grassyards, Dalziels of Crawfordland Mains, Wyllies of Laigh Blackbyre, Bickets of Waterslap, Pickens of Glassock, Galts and Boyds of High Fenwick, Browns, Craigs, Mackerrows, Gemmills — their names are legion. Where are they all today, and their children's children? They are all New Zealanders now. But do they ever give a thought to the past, "the dear, remembered past, the days that are no more"?

In 1854, Jean Dickie's sister Mary married William Fulton, Junior, the betrayed lover of Margaret Calderwood, as recorded in the Annals of 3rd March, 1842. He also appears as a speaker at the Burns dinner on 25th January, 1844, and elsewhere. They emigrated to Australia. In 1906, when Mary Fulton died after 51 years away from Scotland, her son Jack wrote to his "Dear Cousin" (my grandfather) from his home at Colac, Victoria, where he was a town councillor:

"Now that Mother has gone, what has hitherto been the connecting link between our families in the old world and the new is sundered. But I desire to express the hope that we may not be entirely lost to one another. With this post I send you a photo of our house which you will notice we have called 'Fenwick' after the dear old place of which I have heard so much in years gone by."

Here the correspondence ceased. Mary's death certificate showed the names of her parents as "unknown", and when I tried to trace the Fultons of Australia a few years ago, all I could find was one very old lady living in a Presbyterian rest home. She had no recollections of her Scottish ancestry.

### THE DICKIE PIONEERS

However, I could still recall vividly my grandfather's stories about his Dickie cousins who emigrated to New Zealand in 1862. Might it not be possible to trace these people? Having come with my wife to live in New Zealand immediately after service in India during the Second World War, we were not at the time aware of having any New Zealand relations. Yet the annals and letters might help us to find them.

The person in the Annals who most interested me was David Dickie, farmer, of Gainhill. His name is listed in March, 1844, in support of the Corn Laws, but James Taylor's dismissal of him as a "soil-bound serf" may have been hasty, and is discounted by his subsequent removal to New Zealand. On 18th October, 1846, we see recorded the baptism of twin sons, Robert and David, and on 2nd March, 1847, he is competing in the annual ploughing match. On 5th December, 1856, we note the tragic death of Robert's twin brother in an accident.



David Dickie was a member of the Secession Church, and married his step-cousin Eliza, so James Taylor's wife Jean was related to them both. David and Eliza had ten children, all born in Fenwick. After Eliza died of consumption in 1858 he married Margaret King Lindsay of Tayburn, and had four more children, two being born in New Zealand. The Fenwick farms of Gainhill, Tannahill and Tannacrieff were all leased by members of the Dickie family, and are often mentioned in the journal.

The prime mover of the scheme to go to New Zealand was David's eldest son Alexander who left the Laigh Toon Schule at the age of twelve to help on the farm. He competed in the local ploughing matches when he was fifteen or sixteen. Mr T. W. Orr in remembering his schoolmates fifty years later wrote :

"Alexander Dickie, of Gainhill, was a fine representative from the farmer's fireside, tall, strong and energetic, withal gentle and genial. He has succeeded in an eminent degree in Southland, New Zealand, and his place 'Edenglen' is a very tangible fruit of early day-dreams, in which I shared, of islands to be taken possession of, where a new Eden might be evolved. Appropriately Mr Dickie sought to carry out the project by giving his domain the name 'Edenglen.'"

On 1st June, 1860, at the age of seventeen, Alexander left Scotland for New Zealand, sailing from Greenock on the "Robert Henderson". Half a century later my grandfather Robert Mitchell Taylor wrote: "I well remember the day he bade farewell to Gainhill and those dear to him, and sitting in the cairt behind old Dick or Jenny, I forget which, set out on the first stage of his journey to that far-off land."

On 2nd December, 1862, the entire Dickie family followed the eldest son, sailing in the Clyde-built ship "Arima" for Otago, accompanied by Andrew Watt, James Brown, and Willie and Andrew Muir, all from Fenwick. They arrived at Port Chalmers on 20th March, 1863. The parting between Robert Taylor aged 15 and Robert Dickie (the twin) aged 16 was particularly poignant. Both boys had been schoolmates and playmates on the farm all their young years, and they never forgot each other although they never met again.

Over the decades that followed, letters and photographs were exchanged at long intervals between the Taylors and the Dickies. After his success as a farmer, Alexander and his wife re-visited Scotland, and in 1892 another brother James and his wife went home and stayed with my grandparents.

Writing from Gainhill, Mataura, on 16th July, 1906, forty-four years after their separation, Robert Dickie says:

"My dear Robert,

It was with feelings of mingled joy and sorrow that I received your letter. I was pleased to get it, but at the same time sorry to



hear that you were in poor health. I hope you are fully restored to good health by this time. I am thankful to say that I am enjoying very good health lately, although beginning to feel the effects of old age coming on.

"I don't think it is at all likely that I shall ever visit the old country again, but if ever you should come out here I would expect you to make your headquarters with us as long as you were in New Zealand . . .

"I heard that your Aunt Mary died over in Australia.

"You ask for a sort of family record: Well, David went as traveller in the North Island for J. B. MacEwan & Co., a firm in the dairy line. John is still farming at Riversdale and doing fairly well. Maggie is married to W. B. Hopcroft at Riverton and has two children, a boy and a girl. They were up here recently and stayed about a fortnight and we enjoyed their visit very much. But it makes one feel rather old to be called Grandfather. Charlie is in a dairy factory as butter maker at Waverley. Annie, Ruby, Robert and Leonard are all at home. Leonard is still at the high school at Gore, going up in the train in the morning and coming home at night.

(Here follow two pages of news about all his brothers and sisters and their families.)

"My step-mother (Margaret King Lindsay) is still alive but very frail. I am your sincere well-wisher,

Robert Dickie."

The last letter from Robert Dickie was written for him by his daughter Ruby from Box 16, Matura, on 18th December, 1916, giving all the news from the New Zealand Gainhill. As Robert died on 2nd June, 1918, all correspondence then ceased.

### ONE CENTURY LATER

For some time after the old letters came into my possession I did nothing more about them. They lay in a drawer with the Annals, while I concentrated on the business of earning a living and supporting a large family.

But one day I happened to glance at the Post Office telephone directory for Matura and found seventeen Dickies listed therein, which seemed an inordinately large number for a village of two thousand inhabitants.

Soon afterwards, a letter from me addressed to Box 16, Matura, brought this gracious reply:

Gainhill, Matura,  
24th October, 1962.

"Dear Mr Taylor,

I am writing on behalf of my husband Alan to thank you sincerely for writing to us and enclosing the two letters. We are most interested in them. The one from Robert Dickie was written from



Alan's grandfather to yours. The son Robert mentioned in it (Alan's father) farmed Gainhill until 1953 when he retired to Matura, where he is still living and enjoying good health. His sisters Maggie and Annie are still living, also brother Leonard. Ruby died in 1918 after an illness.

"Robert Dickie has five children of which Alan is second eldest and Robin his only brother is youngest. You will see by the form I am sending that there is to be a great family get together in January. Robin is the secretary and has prepared a family tree twelve feet long dating back to 1750.

"Now I don't know if you would be interested in the celebrations or not, but if you would like to come, yourself, wife and family would be made most welcome here. I think we would find plenty of accommodation. In fact you could come any time.

"We will be anxious to hear from you again.

Kind regards,

Avis and Alan Dickie."

The highly successful Dickie Centennial Celebrations took place at Matura Town Hall on 25th-27th January, 1963, when almost five hundred descendants of David Dickie of Gainhill, Fenwick, assembled from all over New Zealand, and even from Australia. The family tree listed a total of 950 descendants of this one Scottish farmer, 845 of them living. The oldest living descendant, David Dickie Pryde of Wairoa, Hawkes Bay, was the only person still able to remember his pioneer grandfather. David Pryde died in the following year aged 93.

The exhibits in the hall included many family photographs, with pictures of Gainhill, Tannahill, Tannacrieff, Tayburn and other Ayrshire farms whose names have been perpetuated on the New Zealand landscape. Messages were received from all parts of the world, and from the New Zealand Prime Minister. On Sunday afternoon the family attended a church service, at which the sermon was preached by the Rev. S. White, a direct descendant of David Dickie.

## RETURN TO GAINHILL

At the first opportunity, with my eldest daughter, I made the long journey of 660 miles from Manawatu to Matura by car, and one September evening at dusk drove up the steep farm road to Gainhill where my New Zealand relations awaited me. Before the wide-eyed children, the old journal and letters were spread on the kitchen table, while Alan Dickie and his father, Robert, examined them. In that meeting we bridged a century.

There was much to do in the next few days exploring farm and district, admiring the magnificent view over to the Hokonui Hills and down to the lights of Gore. I stood in the old homestead, now used as a woolshed, where Robert Dickie, Senior, had written to my grandfather in 1906 offering him hospitality. With Alan's parents I wandered from room to room through Alexander Dickie's fine old mansion of "Edenglen" at Tuturau, empty now and abandoned by the family for a brighter, modern dwelling. Robert and his wife drove me to Riverton to see Maggie Hopcroft, discussing the agricultural prospects of every farm on the road, and the family affairs of every farmer, assisted by a life-time of memories and relationships.

Best of all, I met another of David's grandsons, old Bob Pryde of Maitaia, and he actually knew my grandfather.

"That's him, that's him!" he cried when I produced a photo of Robert Mitchell Taylor, looking very impressive with his short white beard and bald head. "I stayed with him in England when I was over there with the New Zealand Army in the Great War. They told me he was only the boy about the farm at Gainhill, and I never expected to meet such a very distinguished gentleman!"

Old stories came echoing back across the years, of my grandfather's youthful pranks and mischief which Robert Dickie had heard repeated by his father, and of David Dickie courting at Tannacrieff away back in 1840, when his uncle said to him: "If you're thing of taking your cousin Maggie to Gainhill you'll need to have the house done up", and David replying: "Well Uncle, I wasn't thinking of Maggie, but I'd be awful pleased to have Eliza!"

There were tales too of David's mother Mary Stevenson, who married his father Alexander Dickie in 1811, and who went queer in the head after the loss of a child. On Monday morning she would come downstairs shouting: "Today's Monday, tomorrow's Tuesday, the next day's Wednesday — the week's half gone and nothing done!" How well I remember my own grandfather chuckling over that story.

In many places the Dickie family history overlapped with James Taylor's Annals. Here is the New Zealand account of the accident to the twin boy in 1856:

"Tragedy came to Tannahill when a ten-year-old twin son, David, was killed in an accident with a chaffcutter. The boy had not been well but he wanted to see the chaffcutting, so his mother wrapped him up warmly in her own shawl and let him go to the barn where the chaffcutter was at work. The boy's shawl caught in the belt of the machine and he died of his injuries."

## AYRSHIRE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Of course the Dickie family is only one among thousands who left Scotland for North America, Australia or New Zealand in the 19th century. But in the progress of this family, may we not hold up a mirror to them all? Today such families are citizens of their adopted lands. Their ancestries are often forgotten. Settlers do not live much in the past. They are too busy working for the golden future. And when at last a new generation can afford to re-visit the Old Country, they often do so without giving a thought to the fact that their great-grandparents lived and toiled on Scottish soil, often suffering dire poverty and oppression. Mention of Fenwick to a young Dickie may bring only a blank stare and a shrug of the shoulders.

But if we go back half a century or so, memories were still fresh and the Dickie family scrapbooks are full of lively information. In 1910, James Dunlop of Midland, Fenwick, a member of the Scottish Farmers' Commission, travelled widely overseas looking up everyone he could find who came from Fenwick, and writing of his meeting and experiences for the "Kilmarnock Standard", James Dunlop's wife was Marion Hay Dickie, grand-daughter of Robert Dickie of Tannacrieff whose marriage is recorded in the Annals on 18th June, 1844.

"There are few places in New Zealand more distinctly Ayrshire", he writes, "than the district around Mataura on the borders of Otago and Southland. And needless to say, there are few more fertile or better farmed areas anywhere. Many Fenwick families are settled around here, and the district is sometimes called 'New Fenwick'.

"Perhaps the largest and best-known family is that of the Dickies, whose father Mr Dickie, Senior, died some years ago. But his widow, who is Maggie Lindsay of Tayburn, although bordering on ninety, has few grey hairs, a fresh countenance, and all her faculties except that her eyesight is failing.

"She gave us many interesting reminiscences of Fenwick, and remembered Mr Orr being placed as minister (in 1830), and his first visit to Tayburn. 'My hair was put in papers' she said, 'and we were all dressed for the occasion. We expected he would drive up in a gig with one of his elders, but he arrived — a fine young man — on his feet, with nothing but a stick twisted something like a womble in his hand.' (Many still remember the kenspeckle stick.) Although her father was a Cameronian and worshipped at Crookedholm, Mr Orr was a regular and welcome visitor.

"I expressed surprise at finding her cognisant of most of the changes about Fenwick. She replied that her brother (the late William Lindsay, that well-known, intelligent and pawky tenant of Craighends) had until his death written to her regularly, and kept

her fully informed of her much loved native parish. He was her favourite brother, and his death had thus made a great blank in her life, although living so far apart.

"Twice married, the late Mr Dickie had a large family, ten of whom are still living. His children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren already total 152, all New Zealanders by birth or adoption.

"The eldest son, Alex Dickie, and his wife (who is Lizzie Young, a daughter of William Young, joiner in Waterside before he emigrated) were home on a visit three years ago, and had a good time with many of their old friends.

"We much enjoyed the generous hospitality of his happy circle and comfortable home — Edenglen. Mr Dickie's farm, which extends to about 500 acres, is one of the most desirable in New Zealand, and although he modestly describes himself as 'a somewhat slovenly farmer compared to those in Ayrshire', it is also one of the best managed. At the same time he thinks more can be made of it as two farms, and he was building a second steading on it for one of his sons, who was about to be married at the time of our visit.

"The land is a rich sandy loam, and is as broken and undulating as a similar farm about Kilmarnock would be. He has a large herd of big, milky-looking cows of which he is keeping a record, and which yields him from £11 or £12 each, selling the milk to the Co-operative cheese factory at 1s. per lb. butterfat, equal to 4½d or 5d per gallon. As elsewhere in New Zealand, the cows milk for about eight months and never lie in at night. Their winter feed (when dry), besides pasture, consists of what they can draw out of a straw stack, and occasionally a few turnips.

"The land grows extraordinary root crops, and Mr Dickie frequently wins the turnip competition with crops of from sixty to seventy tons per acre. His crop this year gives promise of an enormous yield. I have never seen anything like them in their rankness and growth. His yield of oats sometimes goes over a hundred bushels per acre, and this year which was considered a drought year, it averaged over eighty.

"He keeps a large number of sheep, and the lambs not fit for the freezers off their mothers, are soon fed off on rape. Unlike many New Zealand farmers Mr Dickie does not neglect 'the gentleman that pays the rent', and on a five acre plot of natural bush, which affords ideal shelter without a house, he breeds and feeds on pasture, factory whey, unsound fruit and other waste products, a considerable number of pigs annually. He has also two or three acres of orchard, and after supplying the requirements of his large household, sometimes sells upwards of £100 worth of apples, pears and plums. With an eye for a good draught horse, his teams are among the finest in the district.

"Mr Dickie, who is exceptionally well-informed, and has a fine grasp of public affairs, was an originator of one of the first Co-operative cheese factories in New Zealand, and has served with distinction on all the local boards. It is a matter of regret to his friends that his natural modesty and retiring disposition were always proof against their inducements for him to stand for Parliament, where his high character, encyclopaedic information, practical experience and sound judgment would doubtless have proved of great service to his country. Already six of his twelve strapping sons and daughters are married and settled for themselves, and an ever-increasing crowd of vigorous youngsters fondly lisp 'Grandpa' and 'Granny'.

"At one time when Southland was mentioned as a place in which to settle, shoulders were shrugged and it was unanimously voted the poorest province of New Zealand, and never likely to be closely farmed. Mr Dickie, whose farm is on the other side of the river from the original province of Southland but now included in its land district, showed me a letter he received recently from his old classmate in Laigh Toon School, Fenwick, Mr James Boyd, now an influential settler in California. The letter told of his fine estate and the glorious climate of California, and proceeded to commiserate his old friend on his misfortune in settling in back-lying, cold, wet, sour Southland. I can yet see the amused smile which played on Mr Dickie's fine features, and which expanded into a hearty laugh that shook his gigantic frame (for he is a giant physically as well as mentally), when he referred to Mr Boyd's mistaken impression of his fine farm and district.

"Not far distant, his brother Robert Dickie, shrewd and contemplative, farms at Gainhill on much the same principle, and with similar success. Farmers in New Zealand, as well as at home, have not a great reputation as gardeners, but Mr Dickie's hobbies are his garden — the finest I have seen — and his bees. He has won numerous prizes with the products of the bees, and at the great Exhibition in London three years ago, his exhibits of honey gained the highest honours against all-comers. His worthy and jolly wife hails from Perth, and several of their clever family are in farms or prosperous businesses.

"Another brother, Matthew Dickie, energetic and far-seeing, farms a large area along with his sons. Possessing a fine herd of deep-milking cows, he says his ideal in cow-keeping has ever been to have a herd like that kept by his uncle Matthew Gemmill at Wyllieland, Fenwick, which he remembers as a youth. Mr Dickie is the champion of the sheep dog trials in New Zealand, and is now their most popular judge. They claim that these trials have improved their sheep dogs, and a good, everyday working collie sells at from £10 to £15.



“Besides his herds and flocks, Matthew specialises in Clydesdale horses, and has bred numerous champions. He has a number of very fine animals: a one year old filly got by Baron Bold, bred by Mr Samuel Gibson, Melbourne, was one of the best of its kind we saw in New Zealand. Although an admirer of the noble animal, he is not one of the ignoble admirers referred to by a noted judge, but like all the Dickies is most interested in the well-being of his district. Only a few weeks before our visit he was the recipient of a handsome testimonial on his retiral from the superintendence of a country Sabbath School, initiated by himself over thirty years ago. Mr Dickie is ably assisted by his clever wife, Jeanie Young, daughter of the joiner in Waterside, Fenwick, who had many inquiries about her old schoolmates. Several of the family are married and in comfortable farms of their own.

“The fourth son, Mr James Dickie, along with his wife, visited Scotland fifteen years ago. On their return they sold their farm and devoted themselves entirely to missionary work for the Presbyterian Church. Mr Dickie's experience as a farmer, his high character and commonsense, combined with zeal and enthusiasm in his work, make him a popular evangelist and a valuable emissary of the Church, and his services are in great demand.

“The youngest son, John Lindsay Dickie, occupies his father's farm for Tayburn, Kaihiku. His five sisters, now veritable mothers in Israel, vivid in their recollections of Fenwick, all have numerous children and grandchildren, a credit to themselves and their forebears. His aged mother, Maggie Lindsay, is the magnet who attracts the kindly attention, loving concern, and frequent visits of 152 descendants. Well may the old lady say: ‘There's scarcely ever a day but I have some of them, but I don't know what I would do if they all came at once!’

“A well-known Fenwick family that settled in the Mataura district was that of William Young, joiner, Waterside. His two sons came out somewhat earlier, but he sold off and emigrated about 1870. He succeeded well as a farmer in New Zealand. His worthy partner had quite a reputation and practice as a self-taught doctor, and died only a few years ago. For about thirty years she was busily employed, and never had a fatal case. Their sons both have fine farms, and besides the two daughters, Mrs Alex and Mrs Matt Dickie already mentioned, their family are all married and the total offspring of the worthy couple already total about seventy souls.

“Many will also remember William Young's brother James, mason in Fenwick. His only son emigrated to New Zealand with his cousins, and prospered. About twenty years ago the old man went out to his son and spent a happy old age, dying not long ago. I missed the son but met two of the grandchildren, and was sur-

prised to find them quite familiar with Fenwick and its people, through listening to the grandfather's stories. They have 1,600 acres of land, and both dairy cows and sheep."

Here we may suitably end our extracts from the sentimental journey of James Dunlop, the Fenwick farmer, and turn our attention to a double Golden Wedding which was celebrated at Mataura on 18th May, 1919. Fifty years before, Alexander Dickie and Elizabeth Young stood before the Rev. John Waters and were pronounced man and wife. At the same time and place, his sister Eliza Dickie and her Fifeshire husband William Pryde went through a similar ceremony.

"Of the young and joyous band who foregathered on the banks of the Waiwera on that bright May morning half a century ago," said William Pryde, "all are still alive today except Robert Dickie (who died in 1918). In this respect the occasion is unique. It is also unique because all this little company were then, and still are, non-smokers and non-drinkers."

So he warned the young folk of the third generation that if they took to these practices, they did not inherit them from their grandparents!

In these later annals I have quoted, there is not much hint of the gloom of the Hungry Forties in Scotland, or the cold silent tomb that haunts the writings of James Taylor. But while we reflect on what New Zealand has done for the Scottish peasant, let us not forget that these New Zealand pioneers were all Lowland Scots born and bred. What they learned in Scotland, whether of farming or religion, they applied in their adopted land, and their characters made the country what it is today.

Alexander Dickie died on 21st December, 1922, at Edenglen in his 80th year.

### THE VILLAGE CENTENARIAN

"Though Fenwick be an inland place,  
And in it moorish ground,  
Yet men of understanding good  
Are therein to be found."

Old Rhyme.

No book about Fenwick can be considered complete without some account of Matthew Fowlds, the last of the handloom weavers. His life extended from 1806 to 1907, and although he never left his native village, and died in the cottage where he was born, his name perhaps links Fenwick to New Zealand more closely than any other.

Why was it that when his Centenary was celebrated at the George Hotel, Kilmarnock, on 22nd May, 1906, a cablegram of "heartfelt congratulations and good wishes" was received from Richard John Seddon, Prime Minister of New Zealand? The three hundred guests included four New Zealand Members of Parliament, among them Sir Joseph Ward who addressed the gathering on the future development of his country, and then shook Matthew warmly by the hand amid a hearty round of applause. At the time, Sir Joseph could not have known that Dick Seddon would be dead within a few days, and that less than three months later he would himself take office as Prime Minister.

Two of Matthew's sons, Robert and John, settled in Minnesota, U.S.A., but George, who was born on 15th September, 1860, and had worked at the loom himself, chose South Africa. There he married a Fenwick girl, Mary Ann Fulton, who went out to join him, but in 1885 he sailed for New Zealand and opened a small draper's shop in Queen Street, Auckland. His business prospered to such an extent that in later years he was able to devote himself completely to politics and public life. Needless to say, he never forgot Fenwick, and he and his wife were frequent visitors to Alex Dickie at Edenglen.

"Sir George Fowlds' home in Scotland", says the New Zealand Encyclopaedia, "had been the meeting place of Radicals and Liberals. True to these youthful influences, he was throughout his life a generous supporter and advocate of social reform. Politically he was on the left wing of the Liberal Party, and prohibition, free trade and proportional representation were among his chief interests. In 1899 he was elected to Parliament for the city of Auckland, and in 1906 he gained Cabinet rank as Minister of Education.

"In 1911 he resigned, proclaiming the need for a 'New Evangel' — a return to the high ideals of the first years of Liberalism. Following his defeat in the general election he joined the United Labour Party, but opposition to an employer in the role of Labour leader proved too strong. Thereafter he devoted himself primarily to higher education as a member of the Senate of the University of New Zealand, and as chairman of Auckland University College and later Massey College. He was knighted in 1928, and died at Auckland on 17th August, 1934. His papers were presented to Auckland University, and give a unique historical coverage of the years 1890-1920. They are considered to be the best collection in existence on the Seddon Liberal era."

Matthew Fowlds is mentioned several times in the Annals of Fenwick. He was an elder of the Secession Church for over fifty years, and on 30th November, 1843, we read that he was so outspoken at a meeting of the congregation, that the chairman ruled him out of order and made him sit down. His marriage is recorded

in the Annals on 21st August 1846: "Matthew Fowlds, Greystone-Knowe, married to Agnes Craig."

In paying tribute to his father at the Centenary, his son George epitomised the spirit of Fenwick:

"If there is one thing I prize more highly than another as a heritage from my father," he said, "it is his fearless advocacy of everything he believed to be right. His judgment might be faulty, but having surveyed the position and come to a conclusion, no fear of earthly loss, no fear of discouragement or the frowning of those who are supposed to be great, no fear of any pecuniary disadvantages ever deterred him from saying what he thought. There is nothing I prize more than a little of that character and spirit. My friends who are here from New Zealand, whom I heartily welcome, will bear testimony that what I adopt from conviction I will fight for, whether it is popular or unpopular, and no temptation of political preferment has ever swayed me from advocating what I know to be true."

Matthew Fowlds was a direct descendant of the famous Covenanter Captain John Paton, who is honoured as a martyr, but was hanged as a rebel in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh, on 9th May, 1684. Matthew was always a rebel against tyranny and oppressive legislation such as the Corn Laws. "All such laws are made only for the benefit of the few to the hurt of the many", he declared. His son George recalls the old man's early struggles on the parochial board, when he stood alone against the great territorial magnates and their hireling, the parish minister, showing that the attitude of the rebel was innate in him.

"How different his worldly circumstances might have been in the latter years of his life," wrote George, "had he been prepared to trim his sails to favouring winds, and to work in harmony with the great, who had favours to bestow. But what a wealth of self-respect would have been lost, what loving admiration of family and friends would have been lacking!"

At the age of one hundred, long after all the village looms had fallen silent before the power-driven machine, he was still working at his trade. In fact he presented each of his six New Zealand grandchildren with a pair of blankets woven by his own hands. He retained all his mental faculties, and was in good health. He neither smoked nor drank.

"Another reason he lived so long," wrote the Rev. James Barr, "was that he had very little to do with doctors and medicines. If he had been a doctor's patient he would not have survived. Fenwick always had the greatest difficulty in maintaining a doctor. The people managed to keep three ministers quite easily, but at times there was not a doctor in the parish. (Matthew was also careful to avoid lawyers.) Not only did he keep his body active, but he

kept his mind at work too. He had a well-informed mind, rich in knowledge of great and lasting books. Beyond everything he had strong convictions and fixed principles. The blood of the Covenanters was in his veins, and he stood firm and fast by the principles he so intelligently held. Withal, he had a quaint and quiet humour that came out pleasingly in all his conversation."

The chairman at the Centenary, his son, William, said that he had observed from the papers that his father was described as a staunch Radical and Free Trader.

"Well," he remarked, "I do not see how he can be anything else than a Free Trader because he has outlived all competition. He has a complete monopoly in his own profession. He has the open market of the world and can command his own price. If he is prepared to take an order for a hundred pairs of blankets tonight, he can name his price. Therefore he does not need protection."

These observations having been received with much amusement, Matthew Fowlds finally rose to address the gathering, expressing himself as "fairly nonplussed" by the enthusiastic reception accorded to him. However, after a pause or two, and a few general remarks, his mind went back to an age before his hearers were born:

"When I was a boy," he said, "there was not a man in Fenwick who had the vote except two or three landlords. The nobility got all their letters sent through the Post Office without payment, but the poor folk had to pay postage. It was the aristocracy who made the laws. They always took care of themselves, and it was very difficult to interfere with their privileges. But we got a Reform Bill passed, and things are entirely different now."

After Matthew died on 31st January, 1907, his handloom was transported to the Antipodes and placed on view in Auckland Museum. The name of his cottage home, Greystone Knowe, was perpetuated in the residence of Sir George Fowlds at Mount Albert, Auckland. And a memorable biography was prepared for publication under the editorship of the Rev. J. K. Fairlie, successor to Mr Orr as minister in Fenwick.

The promoters of the volume faced a curious problem. No one alive could remember what Fenwick was really like in the eighteenthies. There were plenty of reminiscences available from people of my grandfather's generation. "It was found, however, that the uneventful, quiet course of a customer weaver's life, even though extended over a whole century, afforded slender material for a biography." The minutes of the Weavers' Society, an old rent receipt book, church records, a few letters, and one or two addresses given to the Mutual Improvement Society — little else remained.

"His life at Greystone Knowe was too full of labour, strenuous and unremitting, to admit of its events and experiences being set



down in the form of a diary," wrote Mr T. W. Orr. "If such a diary had been left us, how brimful of interest its pages would be now, extending as it might have done from the year 1818 to the year 1907. Nor has any poet yet arisen to sing the praises of this favoured parish."

For the poems and diary of James Taylor remained undiscovered.

A compromise was necessary, and it was decided to expand the biography into a history of Fenwick, starting with the Howies of Lochgoin, three brothers once named Huie or Huet, members of the Waldenses, who fled from religious persecution raging in Southern France and in 1178 came to Scotland, one of them to settle in the inaccessible moors of Ayrshire.

The Reformation in Scotland dates from 1557. On 24th August 1560 the Acts were passed abolishing Papal jurisdiction. During the next 150 years took place the struggle between the Episcopal and Presbyterian factions, which left the Presbyterian religion firmly established. But disagreement did not end here. In December 1733, Ebenezer Erskine, minister of Stirling, and others, constituted themselves into a presbytery disowning the authority of the General Assembly. Thus began the history of the Secession Church, whose members formed their first Fenwick congregation in 1782, and whose principles included the inalienable freedom of the people to choose their own pastors.

One minister of the Establishment mentioned in the Annals, the Rev. Robert Ferguson, was prevailed on to attempt the rooting out of Dissenters by demolishing the houses on the church land, or glebe, in which they dwelt, and his action caused great indignation in Fenwick. Matthew Fowlds remembered the burning of his effigy. But the poor minister was so unsuccessful at the rooting out of Dissenters that within a few years he became one himself, for he was translated to St. David's, Edinburgh, in 1843, and was one of those who "came out" at the Disruption.

Perhaps of most significance to our modern times is the undoubted fact that the Fenwick Weavers founded the first Co-operative Society in the world, buying and selling food to members, and trading continuously for thirty years. Thus history errs in giving this distinction to Rochdale in 1844. It belonged to Fenwick on 9th November, 1769.

### THE BONNIE CARMEL WATER

Why do so many people of Scottish descent go half-way round the world to look for the ruins of a moorland cottage, or to turn the musty pages of old parish records in New Register House, Edinburgh? What are they seeking? The tombstones tumble down in

time and the names are obliterated by the rough weather. All their researches fade eventually into the mists of antiquity.

I am reminded of an epitaph I once saw in a graveyard on the banks of the Farmington River at Windsor, Connecticut:

“What once was writ upon this stone  
The writer hears is now wash’d out and lost and gone,  
’Twas writ, hoping in time he would it find,  
Not on this stone, but on the reader’s mind.”

“The human spirit cannot do without a past,” says Laurens van der Post, “and unless it can feel itself putting its roots into its own past as a tree goes deeper into the earth for every inch it grows, it cannot move on into the future.”

The New Zealand Dickies can go back to three brothers, John, Robert and David, who married three sisters named Agnes, Margaret and Mary Muir. Nothing is known of the birth and parentage of the three brothers. They belonged to Carmelwood, and John, the eldest, was married four times and had seventeen children. No attempt had been made to trace the descendants of John or Robert beyond listing their children, but David was the grandfather of the David Dickie who settled in New Zealand in 1863, and all his descendants were known.

For me, only one minor problem remained. Nowhere on the Dickie family tree could I discover my great-grandmother Jean Dickie, and none of the Southland family could tell me anything about her. I knew her father’s name was David, but there were dozens of David Dickies. In the close-knit community of Fenwick, all the relationships and inter-marriages had been intimately known but now the link was lost, and somehow the mystery must be solved!

“Among the seventeen children of John Dickie you will notice two Davids on the list,” wrote Miss Elizabeth Smith of Invercargill. Miss Smith was a granddaughter of Alex Dickie of Edenglen, and had made several journeys to Scotland in quest of her ancestors. “Presumably the first David died young, but the second, born in 1783, could have grown up, and may be the one you seek. The only way to connect your David with our family is to find his parentage. If this is known, it will tell whether or not he fits into my records.”

Then I had an inspiration: James Taylor had resumed writing his Annals in August, 1856, and in that month he made this curious entry: “On 26th August, 1855, died David Dickie, labourer,

another old resident of Moscow, aged 72 years." Of course I knew that this Moscow was not the capital of Russia but a hamlet of sixty inhabitants near Fenwick. I had even heard that the little burn running through it was called the Volga. (There is a New York in Scotland too!) But why had my great-grandfather gone back one year to record this old man's death? Was it perhaps because this was his father-in-law?

The certificate obtained from Edinburgh soon put an end to all speculation. It showed that the labourer's parents were John Dickie, farmer, and Agnes Muir. It listed his children, in tragic mute sequence as Agnes 46 dead, Ann 44 dead, John 40 dead, Jean 36 living (James Taylor's wife), William 34 living, Janet 31 living, Mary 28 living (William Fulton's wife in Australia) and David 25 dead. My own excursion into ancestral research was over. I was descended from John Dickie the eldest brother, and with that I was content. Here indeed is a noble lineage — farmers, weavers, peasants and labourers, better by far than lordly rulers in their castles and estates!

I hope some day to go back to Fenwick, and when I walk quietly alone down by the Carmel burn, I will know much more about the village than ever I did in my Scottish youth. For I have learned that history does not begin when the first ship touches the geography of a new land. Our New Zealand, and Australian, and Canadian, and American history began here, long ago in the home of the emigrants, where the children played on Carmel braes, and where the young weaver met his lass in the cool of the day, after the clank and clatter of the loom.

For now we see in a glass darkly, but the time will come when everything will be revealed and made plain. Nothing will be hidden any more. There will be neither registers nor family trees, and tombstones will be forgotten. Our knowledge is but a shadow of things to come, and our heaven may flow with Ayrshire milk and New Zealand honey.

Like bright blossoms in the heather, the people of the moors have withered away, yet shall they live, while the stream of memory runs clear:

Oh the bonnie Carmel water,  
The sweetly winding Carmel water,  
Lang be green the flowery banks,  
And clear the stream o' Carmel water.

**TOM DUNNACHIE TAYLOR.**

8 Massey Street,  
Palmerston North,  
New Zealand.

## INDEX

- Adam, John (Lightmoor) ..... 48  
 Aitkenhead Farm ... 33, 55, 64, 65  
 Alexander, Hugh (Waterside) ... 81  
 Alexander, John (Artnock) ..... 48  
 Allen, John, jr. .... 72  
 Alston, Gavin ..... 54, 63  
 Anderson, Archibald ..... 76  
 Anderson, Gabriel; blacksmith .. 41  
 Anderson, John; mason ..... 33  
 Anderson, John; shoemaker ... 76  
 Anderson, John — the "auld smith" ..... 41ff.  
 Anderson, Mary ..... 53  
 Anderson, Thomas; shoemaker . 33  
 Armour, Alexander; postman ... 79  
 Armour, Alexander; weaver .... 77  
 Armour, Jean—Mrs Murdoch ... 66  
 Artnock Farm ..... 48, 79  
  
 Balgray Mill Farm ..... 48  
 Barr, Adam ..... 82  
 Barr, Claude (Marchbank) ..... 75  
 Barr, John (Townend) ..... 48  
 Barr, R— (Craighall) ..... 76  
 Barr, Walter; schoolmaster. 30, 36, 41  
 Barr, Walter; weaver ..... 84  
 Barr, William (Marchbank) ..... 46  
 Beanscroft ..... 79  
 Benbough Farm ..... 54  
 Bicket, Hugh; labourer ..... 78  
 Bicket, Hugh; shoemaker ..... 74  
 Bicket, John ..... 31  
 Bicket, William ..... 80  
 Bickett, Ann ..... 75  
 Black, Hugh; labourer ..... 69  
 Blackbyre Farm ..... 28  
 Blackfall Smithy ..... 42  
 Blackwood, Margaret — Mrs Fulton ..... 67  
 Blair, Robert; flesher ..... 69  
 Blair Farm ..... 48, 87  
 Blaircraig Farm ..... 48  
 Boreland, Alexander; grocer and innkeeper ..... 48, 69  
 Boyd, Agnes (Fenwick Town) ... 83  
 Boyd, James ..... 94  
 Brierbush Farm ..... 48, 69, 71  
 Broadmoss Farm ..... 54  
 "Broken Heart, The"—poem ... 22  
 Brown, Allan; laird of Beancroft. 79  
 Brown, James ..... 88  
 Brown, John ..... 15  
 Brown, John, jr.; weaver ... 69, 84  
 Brown, William; teacher ..... 72  
 Brown, William; toll-keeper 57, 70 76  
 Bunting, Janet—Mrs Gemmill .. 66  
 Bunting, William ..... 66  
 Burn Farm ..... 48  
 Burnfoot Farm ..... 48  
 Burnhouse Farm ..... 48  
 Burns, John; weaver ..... 59, 76  
 Burns, Matthew ..... 76  
 Burns, Robert ..... 59  
 Burns Supper (1844) ..... 38-9  
  
 Calderwood, Alexander (Laigh Blackbyre) ..... 54  
 Calderwood, David (Windyhill) . 51  
 Calderwood, George (High Blackbyre) ..... 54  
 Calderwood, Margaret (Blackbyre) ..... 28, 29  
 Cameron, Janet ..... 46  
 Cameron, Jean ..... 54  
 Cameron, William ..... 63  
 Cameron, William (Langside). 54, 75  
 Carmel Burn ..... 102  
 "Carmel Water"—poem ..... 20  
 Carruthers, William (Kingswell) ..... 48  
 Cauldstanes Farm ..... 46, 48, 81  
 Churches in Fenwick ..... 14  
 Clachan, James (Dalmusternock) ..... 49  
 Clachan, John (Broadmoss) ..... 54  
 Clark, Robert (Greenhill) ..... 48  
 Clarkson, David; moleman ..... 66  
 Clench Farm ..... 76  
 Clonherb Farm ..... 48  
 Colomrie Farm ..... 34, 48  
 Cooper, John ..... 73  
 Corn Laws, effect of ..... 86  
 — repeal celebration ..... 72  
 — requisition ..... 47-9  
 Craig, Agnes ..... 73  
 Craig, James (Graystone Knowe). 75  
 Craig, James (Raithburn) . 46, 48, 83  
 Craig, Mary (Polkellyhall) ..... 81  
 Craig, William ..... 30  
 Craigends Farm ..... 92  
 Craighall Farm ..... 69, 76  
 Crawford, Sharman; M.P. ... 37, 46  
 Crawfordland Loch ..... 58  
 Crawfordland Mains Farm ..... 75  
 Crawfords of Crawfordland 49, 64, 77  
 Crofthead Farm ..... 49, 73  
 Cunningham, Rev. Dr ..... 31

|   |            |  |                    |
|---|------------|--|--------------------|
| Currie, Dr .....                        | 27         | Dunlop, Andrew (Thorn) .....           | 82                 |
| Currie, Janet .....                     | 83         | Dunlop, Andrew (High Gar-              |                    |
| Currie, John (Tannahill) .....          | 60         | drum) .....                            | 49                 |
| Currie, Robert (Fieldhouse) .....       | 48         | Dunlop, David (Raithhill) .....        | 48                 |
| Currie, Robert (Little Gree) ...        | 48         | Dunlop, Elizabeth (Thorn) .....        | 32                 |
| Currie, William (Gree) .....            | 81         | Dunlop, James (Brierbush). 48, 69, 71  |                    |
| Currie, William (Townhead of            |            | Dunlop, James (Gree) .....             | 48                 |
| Gree) .....                             | 48         | Dunlop, James (Haghouse) .....         | 74                 |
| Cuthbert, William .....                 | 32         | Dunlop, James (Midland) .....          | 92                 |
| Cuthbertson, William (Gardrum-          |            | Dunlop, John (Burnhouse) .....         | 48                 |
| hill) .....                             | 29         | Dunlop, John (Drumboy) .....           | 48                 |
|   |            | Dunlop, John (Duntan) .....            | 34                 |
| Dalmusternock Farm. 28, 48, 49, 56,     |            | Dunlop, John (Warnockland) ...         | 48                 |
| 64, 73                                  |            | Dunlop, Margaret Gilmour .....         | 59                 |
| Dalzell, Gavin .....                    | 28         | Dunlop, Matthew (Duntan) .....         | 34                 |
| Dalziel, William (Crawfordland          |            | Dunlop, William (High Todhill). 60,    |                    |
| Mains) .....                            | 75         | 69, 76                                 |                    |
| Darclubock Farm .....                   | 48, 81, 83 | Duntan Farm .....                      | 34                 |
| Dickie, Alexander (Edenglen,            |            |  |                    |
| NZ) .....                               | 93, 96     | East Broadmoss Farm .....              | 48                 |
| Dickie, Alexander (Gainhill) ...        | 88         | East Polkelly Farm .....               | 48                 |
| Dickie, Alexander (Tannahill). 48, 84   |            | Edenglen (NZ) .....                    | 87, 93             |
| Dickie, David; labourer .....           | 79, 101    | Emigrants .....                        | 85                 |
| Dickie, Rev. David ... 63, 71, 74, 81   |            | "Emigrant's Salute to America"         |                    |
| Dickie, David (Gainhill) ... 49, 76, 88 |            | —poem .....                            | 18                 |
| Dickie, David—twin (Gainhill) ...       | 74         |  |                    |
| Dickie, David (Tannacrieff) .....       | 54         | Fairlie, John; schoolmaster .....      | 48                 |
| Dickie, David (Tannahill). 60, 82, 85   |            | "Farewell to Scotland"—poem ..         | 13                 |
| Dickie, Eliza (Gainhill) .....          | 74         | Fast Day .....                         | 67                 |
| Dickie, James (Horsehill) .....         | 72         | Fenwick Curling Club. 46, 47, 52,      |                    |
| Dickie, James (NZ) .....                | 95         | 58, 59, 75                             |                    |
| Dickie, James (Tannacrieff) .....       | 86         | Fenwick Emigration Society .....       | 85                 |
| Dickie, Jean .....                      | 84         | Fenwick Glee Club .....                | 39                 |
| — love letters to .....                 | 22-5       | Fenwick Missionary Society ...         | 33                 |
| — marriage .....                        | 64         | Fenwick Mutual Improvement             |                    |
| Dickie, Jean (Horsehill) .....          | 47         | Society .....                          | 74, 75             |
| Dickie, John; farmer .....              | 102        | Fenwick Parish, description .....      | 9                  |
| Dickie, John; labourer .....            | 30         | Fenwick Total Abstinence               |                    |
| Dickie, John Lindsay (Tayburn,          |            | Society .....                          | 57                 |
| NZ) .....                               | 95         | Ferguson, John; laird of Brae ...      | 33                 |
| Dickie, John Wilson .....               | 36, 41     | Ferguson, Rev. Robert ... 34, 35, 53   |                    |
| Dickie, Margaret (Tannacrieff) ...      | 54         | Fieldhouse Farm .....                  | 48                 |
| Dickie, Mary .....                      | 87         | "For Burns that's awa"—song .          | 39                 |
| Dickie, Matthew (NZ) .....              | 94         | Foulds, Andrew .....                   | 59                 |
| Dickie, Peter (Horsehill) .....         | 74, 81     | Fowlds, Andrew .....                   | 67                 |
| Dickie, Robert—twin (Gainhill) 74, 88   |            | Fowlds, John .....                     | 48                 |
| 65, 92                                  |            | Fowlds, Matthew. 35, 36, 72, 73,       |                    |
| Dickie, Robert—twin- (Gainhill). 74, 88 |            | 96, 97, 98, 99                         |                    |
| Dickie, Robert (Tannacrieff) .....      | 80         | Free Church .....                      | 14, 49, 56, 63, 73 |
| Dickies of Carmelwood .....             | 101        | Fulton, Alexander; shoemaker ...       | 73                 |
| Dickies of Galt, Ontario .....          | 85         | Fulton, Andrew (Doghillock) ...        | 41                 |
| Dickies of Mataura (NZ) .....           | 90         | Fulton, Elizabeth—Mrs Kirk-            |                    |
| Doghillock Smithy .....                 | 41         | land .....                             | 40                 |
| Drumboy Farm .....                      | 48, 62     | Fulton, James—"the cripple". 31, 64    |                    |
| Drumhead Farm .....                     | 48, 81     | Fulton, James; shoemaker .....         | 71                 |
| Dunlop, — (Highfield) .....             | 74         | Fulton, John, jr. (Kirkton) ... 38, 39 |                    |
| Dunlop, Adam (Thorn) .....              | 48         |  |                    |
| Dunlop, Alexander; blacksmith.          | 42         |  |                    |
| 46, 72                                  |            |  |                    |



- Fulton, Margaret ..... 31  
 Fulton, Matthew (Spoutmouth) . 31  
 Fulton, William; flesher ..... 75  
 Fulton, William, jr. (Kirkton). 28, 38, 39, 87  
  
 Gainford Farm ..... 49, 70  
 Gainhill (NZ) ..... 88, 90, 94  
 Gainhill Farm ... 6, 49, 65, 76, 88  
 Gainlech Farm ..... 59, 72, 78, 87  
 Galt, Allen, sr.; wright ..... 76  
 Galt, Mrs Allen (Upper Fenwick) ..... 29  
 Galt, Margaret—Mrs J. Fulton . 34  
 Gardrum Farm ..... 35, 55  
 Gardrum Mill ..... 30, 48, 85  
 Gardrumhill Farm ..... 29, 48  
 Gemmill, Agnes ..... 76  
 Gemmill, Alexander (Tannacrieff) ..... 49, 78, 80  
 Gemmill, Andrew (Aitkenhead). 33, 38, 39, 46, 55  
 Gemmill, Andrew (High Gainford) ..... 49  
 Gemmill, David; shoemaker ... 54  
 Gemmill, James, sr. (Gainford). 70  
 Gemmill, James (Kiln) ..... 48  
 Gemmill, James (Lamlaird) ..... 82  
 Gemmill, James (Moor) ..... 53  
 Gemmill, John ..... 38  
 Gemmill, John (Drumboy) ..... 48  
 Gemmill, John (Gainford) ..... 49  
 Gemmill, John; cartwright ..... 79  
 Gemmill, John, sr.; shoemaker . 71  
 Gemmill, John; weaver ... 53, 69, 76  
 Gemmill, John, jr.; grocer ..... 48  
 Gemmill, Matthew (Wyllieland). 33, 46, 68  
 Gemmill, Peter (Todhill) ... 48, 49, 64, 76  
 Gemmill, Peter; tailor ..... 38, 39  
 Gemmill, Robert; labourer ..... 76  
 Gemmill, William; weaver ..... 57  
 Gibson, Rev. Hamilton ..... 73  
 Gibson, John ..... 84  
 Gilmour, James ..... 78  
 Gilmour, Jean ..... 53  
 Glaister Farm ..... 49  
 Glassock Farm ... 37, 48, 71, 82, 87  
 Gordon, Andrew ..... 47  
 Graham, Isabel ..... 55  
 Graham, Rev. James ... 31, 32, 35, 53, 55  
 Graham, John (Glaister) ..... 49  
 Grassyards Farm ..... 70, 87  
 Gree Farm ..... 48, 81  
 Greelaw Farm ..... 48  
 Greenhill Farm ..... 48, 79  
 Greenwalls Farm ..... 56  
  
 Greystone Knowe ... 73, 96, 98, 99  
 Guthrie, Rev. .... 50  
 Guthrie Church see Free Church.  
 Haghouse Farm ..... 74  
 Hairlaw Farm ..... 48, 59, 69  
 Hairshaw Farm ..... 48  
 Hairshaw Mill ..... 48  
 Harvey, James (Polkellyhall) ... 48  
 Hay, James (Mid Buston) ..... 54  
 Hay, Marion (Mid Buston) ..... 54  
 Higgins, Mary ..... 36  
 High Blackbyre Farm ..... 54  
 High Church Farm ..... 48  
 High Gainford Farm ..... 49  
 High Gardrum Farm ..... 49  
 High Todhill Farm ..... 60, 69, 76  
 Highfield Farm ..... 74, 81, 87  
 Hill Farm ..... 48  
 Hillhouse Lodge ..... 6, 75  
 Hopkin, Hugh ..... 26  
 Hopkin, Jean ..... 26  
 Horsehill Farm ..... 81  
 Howat, Mrs Jasper ..... 84  
 Howe, Janet ..... 28  
 Howie, Janet ..... 51  
 Howie, Robert, of Lochgoin ... 62  
 Howie, Robert; weaver ..... 53  
 Howie, William; wright ..... 55  
 Howies of Lochgoin ... 10, 85, 100  
  
 Irvine, Joseph ..... 76  
  
 Kent, James; weaver ..... 57, 84  
 Kent, Mrs James ..... 71  
 Kerr, John (Righiel) ..... 48  
 Kiln Farm ..... 48  
 Kingswell Farm ..... 48  
 Kingswell Toll ..... 70, 74, 76  
 Kirkland, John; weaver ... 17, 38, 39, 40, 57, 72, 75  
 Kirkland, John, jr. .... 53  
 Kirkland, Robert ..... 78  
  
 Laigh Blackbyre Farm ..... 54, 87  
 Laigh Todhill Farm ..... 49, 60  
 Lamberton, John (Burn) ..... 48  
 Lamlaird Farm ..... 82  
 Langdyke Farm ..... 48, 51  
 Langside Farm ..... 54  
 Library ..... 68, 86  
 Lightmoor Farm ..... 46, 48  
 Lindsay, Gavin ..... 32  
 Lindsay, James (East Polkelly). 48  
 Lindsay, James (High Church). 48  
 Lindsay, John (Tayburn) ..... 77  
 Lindsay, Margaret (Polkelly) ... 82  
 Lindsay, Margaret (Tayburn) ... 92

- Lindsay, Robert (Gardrum) 35, 55, 72  
 Lindsay, William (Craigends) ... 92  
 Little Fenwick Farm ..... 48  
 Little Gree Farm ..... 48  
 Lochgoin ..... 10  
 Lockhart, Mrs; hall-keeper ... 51, 76  
 Lockhart, Robert (High Fenwick) ..... 81  
 Loudon, Archibald (Hairlaw). 48, 59  
 Loudon, Hugh (Mossie) ..... 48  
 Loudon, Jean (Hairlaw) ..... 69  
 Love, Mrs James (Moorend) ... 78  
 Low Church Farm ..... 48  
  
 McGavin, Jean ..... 74  
 McLaughlan, Janet ..... 34  
 MacNaughton, Rev. — ..... 32  
 Marchland, James (Hill) ..... 48  
 Mataura (N.Z.) ..... 89  
 Meadowhead Farm ..... 73, 79, 82  
 Meikle, Thomas (Midton) ..... 76  
 Midland Farm ..... 65, 87, 92  
 Midtown Farm ..... 55, 76  
 Miller, James (Tannacrieff) ..... 49  
 Mitchel, Agnes ..... 30  
 Mitchel, Alexander ..... 28, 29, 30  
 Mitchell, Alexander (Pulbath) ... 54  
 Mitchell, Margaret—mother of James Taylor ..... 6, 54  
 Montgomery, Hugh ..... 84  
 Montgomery, Robert ..... 68  
 Montgomery, Robert; flax dresser ..... 77  
 Montgomery, Robert; weaver ... 63  
 Moor Farm ..... 53  
 Moorend Farm ..... 78  
 Moorshields Farm ..... 82  
 Mooryet Farm ..... 48, 80  
 Mossie Farm ... 28, 48, 60, 69, 76  
 Mucklewood Farm ..... 48, 69  
 Muir, Agnes—Mrs Dickie ..... 102  
 Muir, Andrew ..... 88  
 Muir, Elizabeth; dressmaker. 57, 59  
 Muir, James (Netherwraith) ..... 54  
 Muir, Margaret (Netherwraith). 54  
 Muir, William ..... 88  
 Murdoch, Alexander; weaver ... 36, 38, 39, 41, 66, 72, 76, 84  
 "Musings of Leisure" (J.T.) ..... 11  
  
 Netherwraith Farm ..... 54  
 New Zealand emigrants ..... 86, 87  
 North Craig Farm ..... 48  
  
 Oldhall Farm ..... 48, 64  
 Orange Bovan Farm ..... 30, 53, 81  
 Orr, James; draper ..... 65  
 Orr, Jean (Orange Bovan) ..... 53  
 Orr, John (Orange Bovan) ... 30, 53  
 Orr, Margaret (Orange Bovan) . 81  
 Orr, Mary (Orange Bovan) ..... 72  
 Orr, Robert (Balgray Mill) ..... 48  
 Orr, Thomas W. .... 84, 100  
 Orr, Rev. William ... 35, 51, 52, 58, 59, 61, 68, 70, 77, 84, 92  
 Orr, Mrs William ..... 77  
 Osborne, Walter (Gardrum Mill). 46  
  
 Parish Church ..... 14, 31, 59  
 — history of ..... 52-3  
 Parkhead Farm ..... 48  
 Paudhouse Farm ..... 48  
 Petition—Maynooth ..... 63  
 — to Parliament ..... 47  
 Picken, Alexander; weaver ..... 74  
 Picken, Andrew (Glassock) ... 37, 82  
 Picken, James (Crofthead) ... 49, 73  
 Picken, James (Hillhouse Cottage) ..... 72  
 Picken, James (Parkhead) ..... 49  
 Picken, John (Glassock) ..... 48  
 Picken, John; labourer ..... 63  
 Picken, Quentin ..... 79  
 Ploughing matches—  
     Crawfordland ..... 46  
     Dalmusternock ..... 28  
     Mucklewood ..... 69  
     Rowallan ..... 60, 76  
 Politics in Fenwick ..... 16  
 Polkellyhall Farm ..... 48, 81  
 Pollock, Robert; author ..... 47  
 Poor Rate assessment ..... 67  
 Post Office ..... 79  
 Potato famine (1845) ..... 65  
     — (1846) ..... 73  
 Prieskin Farm ..... 49, 64  
  
 Quoiting ..... 64  
  
 Radicals' meeting ..... 55  
 Raeburn, Elizabeth ..... 46  
 Raithburn Farm ..... 46, 48, 83  
 Raithhill Farm ..... 48  
 Raithmoor Farm ..... 37  
 Ramsay, Anne (Cauldstanes) ... 46  
 Ramsay, Ellen (Cauldstanes) ... 81  
 Ramsay, James (Cauldstanes) ... 48  
 Ramsay, Mary—Mrs Brown ..... 57  
 Reed, David (Wyllieland) ..... 46  
 Reid, James (Rowallan Mill) ... 48  
 Reid, Margaret ..... 77  
 Reid, Mary ..... 68  
 Reid, Robert (Fenwick Town) ... 83  
 Reid, Rev. William (Collesie) .. 61

- Religion in Fenwick ..... 14, 35  
 Righiel Farm ..... 48  
 Ritchie, Mrs Mysie ..... 84  
 Ritchie, Samuel ..... 54  
 Robertson, Jean (Dalmuster-  
 nock) ..... 32  
 Robertson, John (Dalmuster-  
 nock) ..... 48, 56  
 "Rose in the Heather"—poem ... 21  
 Rowallan Mill ..... 48
- Sabbath Day in Fenwick ..... 12  
 Schouler, John (Gardrum Mill) . 48  
 Secession (U.P.) Church ... 14, 35, 58,  
 63, 74, 82, 83, 100  
 — Library ..... 68, 86  
 Seddon, Richard John; P.M. of  
 N.Z. .... 97  
 Shedden, J. B., of Illinois ..... 85  
 Sheddon, John (East Broad-  
 moss) ..... 48  
 Sheddon, Robert (Gardrum  
 Mill) ..... 30, 85  
 Sheddon, Thomas (Clonherb) ... 48  
 Shields, Robert (Thrashes) ..... 79  
 Shoemaking ..... 10  
 Sillers, Robert (Craighall) ... 67, 76  
 Sim, Jean ..... 61  
 Sim, Thomas (Benbough) ..... 54  
 Sim, William ..... 61  
 Skernieland Farm ..... 87  
 Smith, James (Gardrumhill) ... 48  
 Smith, John (Grassyards) ..... 70  
 "Solitary Musings" (J.T.) ..... 11  
 Statistics of Fenwick ..... 78  
 Steam engine at Waterside ..... 82  
 Steel, John (Clench) ..... 76  
 Steel, John (Low Church) ..... 48  
 Steel, William; cadger ..... 46  
 Steven, John (West Broadmoss) . 48  
 Stevenson, James (Darclubock) . 48  
 Stevenson, John (Aitkenhead) ... 46  
 Stevenson, William (Darclubock). 81  
 Stevenson, Mrs (Darclubock) ... 83  
 Stewart, Henry (Colomrie) ... 34, 48  
 Stewart, James (Colomrie) ..... 34  
 Stewart, John (Langdyke) ... 48, 51  
 Stewart, Thomas (Raithmoor) ... 37  
 Sunbed Farm ..... 82
- Tailoring ..... 10  
 Tannacrieff Farm ... 28, 49, 54, 65,  
 78, 80, 86  
 Tannahill, Janet—Mrs Gemmill . 69  
 Tannahill, Nanny—Mrs Howat . 38  
 Tannahill, Robert; baker ..... 60  
 Tannahill Farm ..... 48, 60, 85  
 Tayburn (N.Z.) ..... 95
- Tayburn Farm ..... 77, 79, 92  
 Taylor, Doctor ..... 61  
 Taylor, Alexander (Burnhead) . 46  
 Taylor, Anna—daughter of J.T. 79  
 Taylor, David—son of J.T. .... 79  
 Taylor, Elizabeth—sister of J.T. 62  
 TAYLOR, JAMES — author of  
 "Annals"  
 — dates ..... 6  
 — love letters to J.D. .... 22-5  
 — at Burns Supper ..... 38  
 — marriage ..... 64  
 — benefit concert ..... 83-4  
 — death ..... 84  
 Taylor, James—son of J.T. .... 79  
 Taylor, James, sr. .... 67  
 Taylor, John ..... 63  
 Taylor, Margaret ..... 82  
 Taylor, Robert ..... 61  
 Taylor, Robert—father of J.T. 6, 79  
 Taylor, Robert Mitchell—son of  
 J.T. .... 6, 75, 76, 84  
 Taylor, Thomas; weaver ..... 29, 77  
 Taylor, William, jr. .... 63  
 Templeton, John (Mucklewood). 48  
 Thomson, —; dancing master ... 57  
 Thomson, Alexander (Meadow-  
 head) ..... 73  
 Thomson, Alexander; stocking  
 farmer ..... 79  
 Thomson, Andrewanna ..... 57  
 Thomson, Daniel (North Craig) . 48  
 Thomson, Hugh; innkeeper ... 38, 75,  
 81  
 Thomson, Robert (Meadow-  
 head) ..... 82  
 Thorn Farm ..... 32, 48, 81, 82  
 Thrashes Farm ..... 79  
 Tod, Matthew (Mooryet) ..... 48  
 Todd, John (Mooryet) ..... 80  
 Todd, William ..... 80  
 Todhill Farm ..... 28, 48, 49, 64  
 Townend Farm ..... 48  
 Townhead of Gree Farm ..... 48
- Vallance, John (Blair) ..... 48  
 Vallance, John (Blaircraig) ..... 48  
 "Village Lyre, The"—poem ..... 17
- Walker, David ..... 34  
 Walker, David (Prieskin) ..... 49  
 Walker, Hugh; shoemaker ..... 66  
 Walker, Janet ..... 62  
 Walker, Janet—Mrs Clarkson ... 66  
 Wallace, David (Lagh Tod-  
 hill) ..... 49, 60  
 Wallace, George (Hairshaw  
 Mill) ..... 48

|  |        |  |                |
|--|--------|--|----------------|
| Wallace, John; blacksmith .....            | 51     | Wright, James (Warnockland) ...                        | 48             |
| Wallace, Dr. John, of Water-<br>side ..... | 28, 30 | Wyllie, Hugh .....                                     | 32             |
| Wallace, Mary .....                        | 72     | Wyllie, Hugh (Paudhouse) ...                           | 48, 78         |
| Wallace, Robert; M.P. ....                 | 47     | Wyllie, James (Little Fenwick) .                       | 48             |
| Wallace, Stephen .....                     | 36     | Wyllie, Janet .....                                    | 56             |
| Wallace, William (Drumhead). 48,           | 81     | Wyllie, John (Burnfoot) .....                          | 48             |
| Wallace, William (Oldhall) .....           | 48     | Wyllie, Mary (Kirktown) .....                          | 81             |
| Wardrop, Janet .....                       | 79     | Wyllie, Mrs (Little Fenwick) ...                       | 73             |
| Wardrop, John (West Polkelly). 48          |        | Wyllieland Farm .....                                  | 33, 64, 65, 68 |
| Warnockland Farm .....                     | 48     |  |                |
| Waterside Mill .....                       | 82     |  |                |
| Waterslap Farm .....                       | 87     | Young, James (Hairshaw) .....                          | 48             |
| Watt, Alexander (Gainlech) 59, 72,         | 78     | Young, James; carrier .....                            | 57, 59         |
| Watt, Andrew .....                         | 88     | Young, James; mason .....                              | 95             |
| Watt, Ellen Doe (Gainlech) .....           | 59     | Young, Jeanie—Mrs Dickie ...                           | 95             |
| Watt, Robert (Greelaw) .....               | 48, 76 | Young, John (Midtown) ...                              | 55, 76         |
| Weaving .....                              | 10     | Young, John (Moorshields) .....                        | 82             |
| Welch, Mary .....                          | 78     | Young, Margaret—Mrs Sneddon,<br>then Mrs Stewart ..... | 51             |
| West Broadmoss Farm .....                  | 48     | Young, Margaret—"Wee Peggy".                           | 60             |
| West Polkelly Farm .....                   | 48     | Young, Robert (Mossie) ...                             | 28, 48,        |
| Wilson, James (Glassock) ...               | 48, 71 |  | 60, 69         |
| Wilson, Mary—Mrs Gordon ...                | 47     | Young, Robert; carrier .....                           | 70             |
| Wilson, Mary—Mrs Howie .....               | 53     | Young, Thomas (Mossie) .....                           | 76             |
| Wilson, William; weaver .....              | 82     | Young, William (Sunbed) .....                          | 82             |
| Windyhill Farm .....                       | 51     | Young, William; joiner, Water-<br>side .....           | 95             |
| Woodburn, Hugh .....                       | 82     |  |                |
| Woodburn, Robert .....                     | 82     |  |                |

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