



Excerpt from No. VII in Mason, William Shaw. *A Statistical Account or Parochial Survey of Ireland*, Dublin, 1819.

Parish of Holywood (County and Diocese of Down)
by the Rev. William Holmes, Incumbent

I. Name of the Parish, Situation, Extent, &c.

... Holywood is situated in the county of Down, and in the barony of Castlereagh. The map of the parish here given is taken from the county map by Williamson of Belfast [see below, page 17]. It is constructed on a scale double that of the original, and has been corrected by partial surveys, and by the writer's particular observation. It appears from inspection thereof, that Holywood lies in a strip along the south-eastern shore of Belfast lough. The figure is irregular, being about six miles and one-eighth in length, two miles and one-eighth at its greatest breadth, and half a mile at its least. It contains about six square miles, and is bounded on the north and west by the Belfast lough, and by a part of the Knock-Breda Union; on the south by Knock-Breda and Dundonald parishes; and on the south-east and east by those of Newtown Ards and Bangor. For the division, see map [Page 17] and table of townlands [page 16], in the appendix.

The air is much colder and more moist in this part of the country, than in the more southern districts. The difference of temperature in the atmosphere, even at the distance of a degree, is sensible to every observer. The vicinity of the county of Antrim mountains, which are ranged on the opposite shore of the Belfast lough, with Lough Neagh in their rear, upon the one side, and Strangford lough, which lies at the distance of about five miles, on the opposite, may cause it to be more moist and inclement than its latitude would otherwise indicate. The summers are tempered by cool refreshing breezes, which render the air peculiarly salubrious at that season; but the whole line of country on this aide of the lough, lying exposed to the north-west winds, so prevalent here in winter and spring, the temperature at those seasons is more strikingly severe, and is hurtful to vegetation. The inhabitants, nevertheless, do not give any proofs of its insalubrity, being generally healthy and robust.

The surface of this parish, between hill, valley, and plain, is greatly diversified, and consequently the soil is of various descriptions. In the hilly country the bottom or sub-soil is cold and gravelly; In the south-western end, it is a dead ruddy sand, and in the remainder, it is a heavy red clay. The two latter, under proper cultivation, form a fruitful soil, especially the argillaceous. The bills are occupied by tillage, nearly to the top, so that about one-sixth of the whole parish is left to pasture; about as much more is under meadow, and principally consists of what is comprised in gentlemen's demesnes.

The Holywood hills extend in a continued chain from the townlands of Strandtown and Ballycloghan, to that of Ballydavy, their direction being from south-west to north-east; the two highest are called Barbadoes and Standard-hill; the former of them is very steep, and almost entitled to the appellation of mountain. It is said to have derived its name from a supposed resemblance to a hill in the island of Barbadoes; but it is by no means certain that this is the true origin. The rest generally take their names from the townlands in which they are situated, except Bunker's-hill in Strandtown. This last, it appears, received the appellation during the former American war. The owner of that farm, a merchant in Belfast, was, it seems, greatly disposed to favour the cause of American independence.

Although there are many plantations of forest trees throughout the parish, there are but two which deserve the name of woods, those of Holywood and Cultra. The former is on Barbadoes-hill, and is principally composed of fir and beech, overhanging Holywood-house and demesne, and covering an hundred acres and upwards; the latter is on the hills which overhang Cultra, and cover about half that space of ground; the former, though a more extensive wood, being laid out in straight lines, is a much less picturesque object than the latter.

There is but one bog that affords fuel. It is situated in the townland of Ballycloghan, contains about three acres, and is commonly called the Castle-hill-moss, as it belongs to the owner of that farm. The Holywood-moss is a worn out bog, containing about fifty acres. It lies on the southern side of Barbadoes-hill, adjoining the townland of Ballykeel. It is at present nearly covered with water, and has a rocky or gravelly bottom, so that even were it drained, (which is at present in contemplation,) little hopes are entertained of its becoming serviceable.

A few streams from the hills empty themselves into the lough. What approaches nearest to the character of a river is Conn's Brook, which takes its name from the celebrated Conn O'Neill, to whom all the surrounding tract of country once belonged. (Conn O'Neill had his residence at Castlereagh. He was imprisoned by Sir Arthur Chichester in the reign of Elizabeth, and restored to part of his estates in the reign of James I.)

The Belfast Lough, or Carrickfergus Bay, along whose shore the parish extends, runs north-east from the town of Belfast, into the Northern Channel, over against Wigton in Scotland. In it, and opposite to the north-eastern extremity of the parish, there is mooring for ships of war of from 30 to 40 guns. Over against the village of Holywood are situated the Carmoyle or Germayle roads, where ships drawing 17 feet of water find anchorage. Here the larger vessels lighten their burden before they proceed up to Belfast. On this side of the Lough, extending four miles and upwards from Belfast, there is a bank of heavy slate-coloured sand and mud, beyond which the shore is composed of continued strata of stone of different descriptions, interspersed with abrupt and shelving rocks, whence several places adjacent have their names, as Rockport, Craig-a-vad, &c.

On the shore there are several places near the village of Holywood where ships from 40 to 100 tons harden can float at high water, but lower down at Cultra, Rockport, and Effy's-port, vessels from 2 to 300 tons find anchorage. The first of these is the largest. It has been built during last-summer by Hugh Kennedy, Esq. of Cultra, and it bids fair for being highly serviceable to the inhabitants, as it affords them cheaper and more expeditious means of obtaining coals, and enables them, when they cannot otherwise find a market, to export their produce.

II. Mines, Minerals, etc.

The mineralogy of this parish is not devoid of interest to the lovers of that science. The magnesian lime is found on the Cultra shore: it is of a buff colour, and is burnt in kilns for the use of the farmers, when it becomes of an ashy hue. As a manure there are various opinions concerning its value. The quarries being found under the high water mark, and therefore not easily worked, the practical farmers find it as expensive as the white lime, which is brought over in small craft from the county of Antrim shore. This last they esteem more highly as a manure, but it is not impossible that they may not as yet have discovered the proper use of the magnesian lime. At present they spread it out in autumn upon lea ground, and turn it up in the spring following. The complaint against it is that it is productive of weeds, and does not give as great a number of crops as the white lime. Near it is found another species, the schistose, containing, however, but a small proportion of lime. On the Ballymena and Cultra shore, there are continued strata of red sandstone. Though these stones are generally red, there are some of a chocolate colour, others of a yellow, and even some inclining to slate colour. In a few instances we find them containing concretions of quartz, from the smallest size to that of a marble or walnut. It is with these the inhabitants principally build, though the quarries are liable to the inconvenience of being overflowed at high water. Between Cultra and Crawford's-burn, in the parish of Bangor, there are several whin-dykes, adjacent to which a quantity of whin-stone lies loosely scattered on the shore.

The hills are formed of various rocks of the schistose kind; the denominations of these stones are killas, gray-wache, gray-wache slate, according to the German, or according to the British mineralogists, transition slate. Some of them contain mica. Those which are found nearest to the shore are not well suited to architectural purposes. The slate, which rises in large lamina from three to four feet in length, is found at the summits of the hills, and is a better kind of building stone. It is not much used, however, on account of the distance and difficulty of draft. Some of the hills are composed of a rotten rock, the stone being of the same description, that is, schistose. This is used as gravel for the purpose of making roads, and in dry weather it binds so hard as to appear almost like a solid flag. It is called black gravel, though in many instances its bottom is of a reddish brown, when it appears to contain a large proportion of ochre. Marl has been found in Cultra, Ballycloghan, and Holywood, but the pits have been worn out. It is probable that a great quantity would still be found if proper means were used for discovering and working the pits.

A few chalybeate [containing salts of iron] springs have been discovered in the vicinity of Holywood, Cultra, and Ballymahon. They are all nearly of the same description. The water contains iron in a large proportion, fixed air, and marine acid.

There are no mines of any description in the parish. The old inhabitants report, that there was once a coal mine in the hills above Holywood: these hills, however, have not been supposed by mineralogists to give any indication of coal. We are therefore inclined to think that it might have been a mine of some other description. According to the traditional account, it was destroyed in the rebellion of 1641, and they show the place where the framework of the shaft was remembered to have been seen. This is not mentioned as entitled to much credit, but in any search or survey which hereafter may be made with a view to discover such valuable productions of nature, that circumstances ought not to be wholly overlooked.

In a former article we noticed the lime and marl which have been used in manuring. In addition to these we have the alga marina or sea-weed in great quantities, which is thrown up with every in-blowing wind upon the shores of the lough, and with which the farmers manure very extensively. It is quite strong enough, even when used without any preparation, to give crops of potatoes and wheat alternately: they frequently however gather it into middens, and mix it with stable manure, and leave it to ferment for a season, in which case it becomes very rich and valuable. The species which is gathered here in greatest abundance, is that which commonly goes by the name of the ribbon-rack.

In botany also, this parish affords some objects of interest. The arundo phragmites [the common reed] grows in the fences and flat marshy grounds near the sea, between Bunker's-hill and West-brook, and is found to be serviceable to weavers. The sambucus ebulus, or dwarf elder, is found near Cultra. Some time ago, a beautiful bed of wild roses, which grew to near an acre in extent, beneath the road to Richmond-lodge, was more accurately observed, and it was found that the rose was a non-descript. It is now called the Rosa Hibernica, and a description is given of it in the Transactions of the Dublin Society. In this parish it has been observed that the digitalis purpureus, or common fox glove, is not found as a native, although there is abundance of those plants in the adjoining ones. Such are the most distinguished botanical facts which this parish affords.

In natural history there are few objects to excite attention. The game, quadrupeds, fish, insects, &c. are similar to those of the neighbouring country. Amongst the water fowl, the barnacle, as it is generally called, though it answers best to the description of the brent-goose, is perhaps most worthy of note. These fowl come up the lough in September, in immense numbers, and leave it in May, and are esteemed a great delicacy. Amongst the various tribes of fish which are taken on the coast, that which most deserves notice is the muscle, rather, however, on account of its great numbers, than any distinguishing properties. They cover the Holywood-bank, and from the month of March to that of July, they afford food and employment to the poor of the village, a muscle gatherer being enabled to earn from fifteen pence to two shillings a day. The bed is quite inexhaustible, for though almost stripped at one time, it is quite as well covered after the succeeding tide. Besides these, oysters, remarkably large and well-flavoured, are found on the bank, and along the shore; as also various kinds of flat fish, turbot, sole and plaice [sic], &c. It appears, however, from the information to be gathered, both from the inhabitants and the fishermen, that the quantity of these last, as well as of the gurnet, formerly in abundance, is greatly diminished of late years, and on inquiry into the cause, it is generally attributed to the practice of drudging for oysters, by which the spawn at the bottom is disturbed, before the process of incubation is perfected.

III. Modern Buildings, &c.

Strandtown and Holywood are the only villages in the parish. The former contains 13 houses, and is distant one mile and a quarter from Belfast on the Bangor road: the latter is four miles and a quarter distant on the same road. It consists of 158 houses, besides places of worship, and contains a population of 600 persons. This village is remarkable for being much superior in neatness to the generality of Irish villages, and its situation is extremely beautiful. It is much frequented as a bathing-place in summer, being situated close to the sea-shore; and it is

full of small lodges, which are filled with strangers at that season, but which of course are unoccupied in winter.

The gentlemen's seats are, Conn's Brook, the residence of Mr. Martin, merchant, of Belfast, one mile and a half distant from that town, on the north-western side of the Bangor road. Ballymeechan, lately built, a villa of Alexander Gordon, Esq. two miles and a quarter distant from Belfast, south-east of the same road. Richmond Lodge, the seat of Francis Turnly, Esq. The grounds of this place are well planted, and very tastefully laid out: It is three miles distant from Belfast, on the south. Clifton, the seat of Dr. Haliday, three miles and a quarter distant from Belfast, south side. Westbrook, lately built, the villa of the Rev. Edward May, vicar of Belfast, south side. Holywood-house, built by the late Simon Isaac, Esq. then proprietor of the Holywood estate, a gentleman whose memory is much revered by the inhabitants. The external appearance of this mansion is formal and old-fashioned, but great attention and expense have been bestowed on it. It is at present the property of William Kennedy, Esq. now resident in the East Indies, by whom the estate has been lately purchased. It is about four miles distant from Belfast, south side. Ballymena, the residence of Cunningham Greg, Esq. a large and modern structure. The offices are remarkably extensive, and the shrubbery is said to excel anything of the kind in the north of Ireland. It is four miles and a half distant from Belfast, south side. Cultra, the seat and family residence of Hugh Kennedy, Esq. proprietor of the Cultra estate. The tasteful display of planting, both young and old, as well as the natural advantages of the situation (being not far distant from the lough) render this a very beautiful place. The house is an old structure, but the present proprietor is now adding to and improving it after the Gothic fashion. It is five miles and a half from Belfast, north side. Craig-a-vad, the seat of Arthur Forbes, Esq. is six miles distant from Belfast, north side. Rockport, the seat of John Turnly, Esq. The house is modern, built by its present proprietor. Its situation is close to the lough, and near a small harbour from which it derives its name. It is nearly seven miles distant from Belfast, north side. All these seats are on the Bangor road. Castlehill, the seat of Joseph Garner, Esq. is three miles and a half distant from Belfast, and is situated on the northern side of the Newtown-Ard's road. Belmont, the seat of James Orr, Esq. is immediately adjacent to the former. Greenville, the seat of John H. Houston, Esq. situated on the south side of the Beer's-bridge road, lies one mile and a quarter distant from Belfast. Bloomfield, the seat of Arthur Crawford, Esq. on the south side of the road leading to Orangefield, is nearly two miles from Belfast. There are besides these some small lodges, cottages, &c. which it may not be necessary to notice.

There are ten houses of the description of public-houses; four in the village of Holywood, the remainder dispersed throughout the parish; one of them has good accommodation as an inn. But four bridges in this parish deserve any notice; one of three arches built over Conn's-brook, called the new bridge; a second over the same called Beer's bridge; another in the village of Holywood; and a fourth in the townland of Cultra. The two last are built on small streams that take their rise in the Holywood hills. These and two presbyterian meeting-houses, which are of very plain structure, are the only modern buildings of a public nature existing amongst us, unless the glebe-house, which has been lately erected, be reckoned of that description.

The principal roads are those which lead from Belfast through Newtown-Ards and Bangor. The former is a mail coach road, the latter runs along the shores of the lough and passes through the village of Holywood, whence it is generally called the Holywood road. There are besides these several other county roads, two leading from the village of Holywood in a

southern direction, one to Newtown-Ards, the other to Dundonald. The situation of the rest, which are of inferior note, and which it might be difficult to describe minutely, may be best known by consulting the map.

The scenery of the country is beautiful. The parish, as has been observed already in sect. I. lies in a stripe along the Belfast lough. Towards the inland side, a chain of high hills extends from nearly the one extremity to the other. The sloping country between these and the Belfast lough is beautifully diversified, and being richly cultivated, planted and adorned with gentlemen's seats, has a most picturesque effect. This effect is greatly heightened by the prospect of the lough, terminated by the town of Belfast at its upper extremity, and bounded on the opposite side by the magnificent chain of the county Antrim mountains. These extend along the shore from Carrickfergus to Belfast, and fade from the eye in the internal country.

IV Ancient Buildings, &c.

The only ancient building existing here, is the parish church. It is small, but is reckoned one of the oldest in the diocese. The area is ...

V Present & Former State of Population, Food, Fuel, &c.

There are no records by means of which an estimate can be made concerning the former state of the population of this parish. A report of its present state will be found in a table annexed in the Appendix [Page 14 below].

The diet of the inhabitants differs little from that which is generally used through the province of Ulster. Oatmeal and potatoes are their principal viands. Fish, especially the muscle, is used in the season. Bacon and cheese are prepared by the farmers for their family consumption. Their luxuries are tea and whiskey. The gentry depend in general upon the Belfast market to furnish their tables. English and Scotch coals are the only fuel to be procured in any quantity. At different seasons of the year, their prices vary from a guinea to a guinea and half per ton. The supply from lighters and vessels of small burthen which discharge upon this shore, is uncertain, so that the expense of carriage from Belfast, that is from two to six miles, is often to be added to the price of that article. Since the building of the Cultra quay, however, it is expected that the supply will be less expensive. The turf which is used here is brought from a bog near Donaghadee, a distance of eight or ten miles; it is still more expensive than coal.

The inhabitants in their general appearance are not remarkable for strength or comeliness, but in their dress, the peasantry are much more decent than in many other parts of Ireland. Instead of the great lapping coat of frize, used in the southern and western districts, they wear surtouts or body-coats of bearskin or forest cloth, and the women make no despicable figure, especially in their Sunday dress, being attired in cloth pelises or light coloured calicoes, with modern bonnets, &c. having the hair fastened up with a comb.

The natives of this parish live principally by tillage. There are a few weavers and hosiers amongst them, but their employments seem to take up their time only when they cannot employ themselves in agricultural pursuits. Almost every weaver, except those who live in

the village, has a piece of ground sufficient to furnish his family with potatoes, oatmeal and milk. This plan of intermixing avocations, although it may not tend to the improvement of trades or agriculture, appears to be highly serviceable to the interest of the individual, both in point of health and general comfort. Nothing can be more distressing than to see the pale meagre appearance of the town or city artizan, whose constitution is undermined by the sedentary life which he leads, as well as the confined air which he is obliged to breathe, and whose mind is as relaxed as his body, by the dull monotonous exercise of his calling; but when he is transplanted to the country, and employs himself occasionally in cultivating a piece of ground, the exercise and interest he feels in his occupations, give new vigour to his frame, and elasticity to his mind.

The farmers are in general a wealthy class of people; the bad seasons which have prevailed of late, and their vicinity to the Belfast market, have contributed to enrich them. Some of them, however, who have their farms at high rates, are beginning to feel the effects of reduced prices. The extent of farms is from 80 to 10 acres; the greater number are from 20 to 40. As they are principally laid out in tillage, the stock of cattle is not considerable. The farmers seldom keep more than from two to six cows, and from two to five horses. The wealth of the inhabitants of the village consists principally in the accommodations which they lay out for lodgers in the summer season; they have either small houses fitted up for the purpose, which are let at a good profit, or apartments prepared in their own dwellings.

Mendicity is practised by a very few individuals, but strolling beggars are frequently to be met with in the summer of 1812, during the great dearth of provisions, a vestry being called for the purpose, pains were taken to ascertain the exact amount of the poor requiring relief, (putting all labourers in work and artizans out of the account) and the return was as follows:

Craig-a-vad and Ballygunn	0 Families
Strandtown and Ballymahon	9
Hollywood and Ballymena ...	31
Knocknagoney	4
Ballykeel	4
Ballycloghan and Ballyhackamore	21
Ballydavy and Ballyrobert ...	1
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Total	70 Families.

Many of the persons returned were widows and those who received pensions from church collections. When it is recollected that the price of the most common food, viz. potatoes, was from six to eight shillings per hundred, the number requiring assistance at that period of distress will appear extremely small.

It has been remarked of late that wandering beggars are more frequently met with than formerly. The cause of this may perhaps be traced to the efforts which have been made in the town of Belfast to abolish that disgraceful calling. When the writer of this article was

officiating curate in that town, an institution was established for that purpose. As there was already erected there a poor house, where persons incapable of labour were supported, and as the beggars who inhabited the town were not proper objects of that charity, not being totally incapable of exertion, the intention of this institution was to supply work of various kinds, instruments and materials for the purpose of employing them, as also to pay them, at the close of each day, the full amount of their earnings; but in case these earnings were not sufficient to procure for them a moderate livelihood, it was proposed that adequate additions should be made thereto, in coals, soup, potatoes, meal, clothing, &c. as the individuals might require; that the proportions of these, however, should be such, as that the whole amount should be less than the ordinary price of labour. In the year 1808, the writer printed a small tract, stating to the inhabitants the advantages likely to result from such an institution, vis. that society must derive a benefit from so much labour otherwise lost; that the industry thereby produced would be beneficial to the morals of the poor; that the relief given would be less expensive and more equally administered; and, finally, that they would themselves be freed from a most distressing annoyance. The idea was at once adopted, and in due time the institution itself was brought to maturity. It is supported by donations and by an occasional charity sermon, and for eight years, the time it has been in existence, the results have been most beneficial, that town being remarked by strangers as well as natives for its exemption from the disgrace of overflowing mendicity, a disgrace which attached to it in common with the other towns of Ireland. The sturdy and indolent beggars, however, who before infested the streets, and who will not partake of the benefits of the house of industry, as it is called, have fled to the country to levy contributions, and thus we find that the number of strollers have increased. It becomes a matter of importance, therefore, in country places adjacent, to consider of a remedy for this evil, and happily such an one may be easily found, if the inhabitants will act in concert, and erect similar institutions in their respective parishes.

If every county, taking advantage of the statute of the 11th and 12th of his present Majesty, were to erect corporations for the relief of the poor, &c. and establish subordinate institutions of this nature upon a small scale in each parish, or in unions of parishes, according to circumstances, the result might be glorious to humanity.

VI. *The Genius & Disposition of the Poorer Classes, &c..*

The lower classes of the people are remarkable for their intelligence and industry: a farmer here, generally speaking, is as well informed as any of his station to be met with in almost any country, and in attention to business and worldly interest is indefatigable. The peasantry, however, are not without the vices generally attendant on this character. If they are provident and industrious, they are not over scrupulous as to the means they use to arrive at competence. Hence it is, that although they hold stealing in abhorrence, the habit of which amongst the very lowest consigns the individual to infamy, they do not manifest a just abhorrence to over-reaching in bargains or extortion. They are remarkable also for independence of spirit, but as every virtue of the human character, especially amongst the mass, is attended by its alloy, this excellence also is apt to degenerate into insubordination and want of respect to their superior. Great wealth is the only qualification in an individual which commands implicit respect; no other merit in their estimation appears entitled to any.

The lower class, though not greatly addicted to drunkenness, have, nevertheless, but little abhorrence of that vice; almost all of them, especially the men, occasionally fall into it. The women, though not greatly defective in chastity, do not appear to have a sufficient detestation of an error against its laws. When an unmarried woman commits a fault of this nature, the phrase made use of is, that she has met with a misfortune, an expression which is calculated to gloss over the immorality, and rather to excite compassion; and if she brings up her illegitimate offspring by her own industry, without rendering it a burden upon the father, she is considered as not having forfeited estimation in society, and perhaps afterwards marries to advantage.

Nothing could so much tend to cultivate the virtues, and remedy the defects of their moral character, as the establishment of schools; the object of which should be, not merely to give them knowledge, but principally to produce habits of subordination by the strictness of the discipline. Were schools of this kind founded, with proper funds for their support, at the head of which the clergyman of the parish should be placed as visitor and inspector, with authority to hold public examinations, and dispense both censures and rewards, the effects might be very beneficial. Erasmus Smith's schools, though greatly serviceable, do not altogether accord with a perfect plan of national education.

The language in use here is English strangely tinged with the Scottish idiom and accent. Indeed there is little difference between it and that used by the inhabitants of the opposite coast. The Irish is unknown except to a few individuals, and these not natives of the parish. It is evident from the derivations of the names of places, that, before the settlement of the Scotch colonies, the Irish must have been the language in use. Craig-a-vad, or Carrigavadra, signifies the dog-rock, and the townland is said to have been so called on account of the seals having been heard to bark on the adjacent rocky shore. Ballyclochan, from Clochan, Stonyford, seems to be a descriptive name for that townland, which is remarkable for having small rocks interspersed through the ground in different farms. And doubtless one versed in the Irish might discover in that tongue the etymology of the remainder.

In their manners a stranger would suppose them to be rough and untraceable, but amongst themselves they manifest as much courtesy as is to be met with elsewhere. There is little to distinguish them, in respect to customs, from the remainder of the province of Ulster. At wakes it appears that merriment does not prevail as in Roman Catholic parishes; and as to their weddings, these are honoured by hoisting a flag or pendant to the top of a large Maypole which stands in the centre of the village.

The young people of both sexes are fond of dancing, and have frequent meetings in the village, or in the farm-houses, where, in imitation of their superiors, they keep up the revel from eight or nine in the evening till day-break. Amongst their other amusements, the game of shinny, as it is called by some, and common by others, is worthy of note. Common is derived from a Celtic word "com," which signified "crooked," as it is played with a stick bent at its lower extremity somewhat like a reaping-hook. The ball, which is struck to and fro, in which the whole amusement consists, is called nag, or in Irish brig. It resembles the game called golf in Edinburgh. Christmas is the season when it is most generally played. It prevails all through Ireland, and in the Highlands of Scotland. Nor is it confined to any sect, as Dissenters and Romanists seem to be squally attached to it.

The trundling of eggs, as it is called, is another amusement, which is common at Easter. For this purpose the eggs are boiled hard, and dyed of different colours, and when they are thus prepared, the sport consists in throwing or trundling them along the ground, especially down a declivity, and gathering up the broken fragments to eat them. Formerly it was usual with the women and children to collect in large bodies for this purpose, though nothing can be, to all appearance, more unmeaning than the amusement; and they yet pursue it in the vicinity of Belfast. Here it is generally confined to the younger classes. It is a curious circumstance, that this sport is practised only by the presbyterians, though it is admitted that it is a very ancient usage, and was spread over the Russian Empire and Greek Islands long before the Reformation.

Notwithstanding the superior information of the lower classes, superstition is not without a considerable hold over their minds; the belief in witches and fairies is as firm as any article of their creed. When any person dies of a disease not generally known, it is attributed to the influence of the former; and the latter imaginary personages are held in such reverence, that their supposed places of haunt are guarded with the most sacred care. The fairy thorn, for instance, is often seen with an entrenchment, or barricade of stones erected around it, lest any persons, or even cattle, should injure this favoured spot of fayish revel.

VII. The Education and Employment of Children, &c

There are in this parish one licensed and four other schools, all kept by masters who are protestants, though not of the established church. The number of scholars fluctuates in winter and summer, but they are, generally speaking, well attended. The salary for tuition is from 6s. to 4s. per quarter, according to the classes. These schools are attended by male and female children promiscuously; but there are two kept by mistresses for females alone, one of which is supported by donations. The books in use are principally the Old and New Testament, and the smaller catechism of the church of Scotland, vulgarly called the Questions. In some schools, by way of improvement, the Speaker, and other books on elocution, have been introduced, and chiefly Murray's Reader. When boys remain at school until they have mastered this common course, the English translation of Telemachus is put into their hands; this however rarely occurs. The parents in general appear anxious for the education of their children. When they employ them at home, it is usually in assisting them at husbandry or domestic business.

VIII. State of Religious Establishment, Tythes, &c.

Holywood is an impropriate cure, consequently there is no tythe, the curate or vicar receiving a salary of £40 per annum from the patron, Lord Dungannon, who resides in Denbighshire, which is augmented in the usual way, by the trustees of First Fruits, to £100, deducting a rent for the glebe. The glebe consists of 12 acres; upon it the writer of this article has lately erected a glebe-house, the site of which is very convenient, being scarcely a quarter of a mile from the church and village. It stands on an eminence south-east of Holywood, and commands a very beautiful prospect of the Belfast lough and the adjacent country.

There are two presbyterian meeting-houses in the parish, one belonging to the sect denominated old light presbyterians, the other to those of the new light. The difference of

these sects consists in this, that the ministers of the former subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and are calvinists; whereas those of the latter deny the expediency of subscription, and conceive themselves entitled to greater latitude in the interpretation of the Scriptures. In consequence there are amongst them, Arminians, Arians, and even Socinians. Their ministers, in addition to the stipends or voluntary subscriptions, each enjoy the salary from government denominated the Regium Donum: the former, whose congregation is the most numerous, £70 per annum, the latter £50. These subscriptions of their respective congregations are supposed to be, for the former £50, and for the latter £30 per annum.

It appears by the vestry book, that, from the year 1768 to 1810, the year when the present incumbent took possession, there have been 12 incumbents, so that the period of the incumbency of each of their ministers averages three years and six months. Their names are as follow:—

Edw. Winder,	A. Johnston,
George McCartney,	Nathaniel Smith,
James Fetherston,	Richard Wolsely,
Robert Heyland,	Henry Leslie,
G. M. Portis,	William Pratt,
Jacob Stewart,	Edw. Groves.

IX. Modes of Agriculture, Crops, &c

The extent of farms in this parish is from 80 acres to 10; the greatest number is from 40 to 20. As before observed, there is very little ground laid out in pasture. The farmers have found tillage so much more profitable, that they have adopted the practice generally, and appear likely to continue it. In the town grounds between the hills and the lough, they manure a good deal with sea-weed, which gives them crops of potatoes and wheat in succession. By adding to the sea weed a little stable manure, it becomes strong enough to afford the four-fold rotation of crops, viz potatoes, wheat, rye grass, and oats, which certainly is most beneficial and suitable for our clay subsoil. Beyond the hills where the soil is poorer, and more gravelly, the farmers use lime; and although the magnesian lime is near at hand, they generally prefer the white lime brought from the county of Antrim shore. This circumstance, as well as the reasons given by the practical farmer for this preference, has been already mentioned under the article “Minerals.” In these exposed situations they alternate flax and oats with the potatoe crop. The map which marks out the hilly part of the parish, will give the best idea of the situation of these inferior kinds of land. When fallow crops are taken, they often make use of the drill; and it is generally acknowledged, that although a smaller quantity of manure is incorporated in the ground by this process, the succeeding crops of wheat or oats are more abundant, than when they adopt the lazy-bed method; the cause of this is, that in drilling, the soil is kept more effectually open, and weeds of every kind more completely destroyed.

Most of the gentlemen who have villas and farms on this shore, as well as some of the farmers, cultivate field turnips, for the purpose of feeding cattle, and sometimes, though but seldom, field peas and beans. The uncertainty, however, of these latter, in this exposed situation, renders them an improper kind of crop to be dealt in, by the common class of farmers. In this neighbourhood, the black cattle are of the Irish breed, which is not

remarkable for excellence; by the exertions of some of the neighbouring gentry however, it unlikely to improve.

The implements of agriculture now used, are of the very best description. The Scotch plough is every where to be met with, and is preferred to any other. Almost every farmer, even those who have not more than 20 or 30 acres, is also furnished with one or more carts, so that the Irish plough and car are, both together, especially the former, fallen into disuse. The roller also, an implement of great service in agriculture, is very generally used. In the village of Holywood, there are no less than three professed cart and plough makers, each of whom finds sufficient employment for an establishment of workmen. Their work is scarcely inferior to that imported from Glasgow. The list of proprietors may be seen in the appendix.

The rent of land set within the last three or four years, may be reckoned at from thirty shilling's to five pounds per acre; that of middling quality might be averaged at £2 10. To give the best idea of the rise of land in this country, the writer has, by his permission, made inquiry into the circumstances of the estate of Hugh Kennedy, of Cultra, Esq. with a view to ascertain the different values which have been set upon it at different periods. It comprises the townlands of Ballyrobert, Ballydavy, Craig-a-vad, Ballygrainy, Bally-caltra in the parish of Holywood, and Carrowreagh, and Ballybun, in the parish of Dundonald, amounting in all to 4000 acres, not including the demesne. In the year 1705, all these lands were let to tenants upon leases of three lives and 31 years, for the sum of £297 16s. 5d. In the year 1802, they had risen to £1850 per annum. In 1814, the greater number of leases having been made from the year 1741 to that of 1755, the rent roll was £5,300 per annum; and if the whole were to be set at present in proportion to the last granted leases, it is computed that it would give £9000 per annum and upwards. To prove that this computation rather falls short of the truth, we shall state the circumstance of a single farm. Woodsides farm, 46 acres, which is neither the best nor worst kind of land, but is nearly equidistant from both, in 1741, let for 2s. 6d. per acre; but in 1809, it let for £1 14 2s. which is at the rate of about £2 10s. per acre.

Labourers' wages average at present 8s. 6d. per week; a horse, car and man, at 3s. 9½d. per day. In the year 1741, 8d. a day was the rate of wages for a man and horse, that sum being reserved in leases of that date as duty in default of actual service. In 1705, in lieu of a fat hen, the sum of 4d, was reserved; in 1741, 6d.; at present that article would be valued at 2s. sterling.

A new fair, which is as yet but badly attended, is held quarterly in the village of Holywood.

X. Trade, Manufactures, Commerce, &c.

Agriculture being the principal employment of the inhabitants, the parish is not remarkable for any kinds of trade or manufacture. There is not a single bleach-green in it, though the neighbourhood of Belfast in general, abounds with them. We have a few calico and muslin looms employed by the Belfast manufacturers. Stocking weaving, however, seems to be a more favourite pursuit. The hosiers' looms in the village and its vicinity, are at least 20 in number. It is said that the first flax mill erected in Ireland, was in this parish. The writer has conversed with a person who remembers to have seen it, and informed him that the wheel was horizontal, but he cannot vouch for the correctness of his description.

There are four wind-mills, and five water-mills in the parish. One of the water-mills is now used for the manufacture of flour, and another is a flaxmill; the remainder are what are called common grist-mills.

With respect to shipping and navigation, the reader is referred to section I. under the head topographical description.

XL. Natural Curiosities, Remarkable Occurrences, &c.

There is a very remarkable tree in the lawn at Castle Hill, the seat of Joseph Garner, Esq. It is a flowering lime, the age of which is unknown, but it covers with its branches an extent of ground 75 feet in diameter, 235 in circumference. The branches are nearly touching the earth on all sides. The trunk is 4 feet in diameter. It was somewhat mutilated by a storm a few years ago, having lost one of its arms, but it has, in a great degree, recovered its former flourishing appearance.

XII. Suggestions for Improvement, and means /of ameliorating the condition of the People.

A great accession of land might be obtained, by taking in a part of the bank extending from the new bridge to the rabbit warren, which is close by the village of Holywood. A work of this kind, skilfully executed, might rescue many hundred acres from being as at present useless; and as the subsoil is in general clay, it might be rendered most productive. If the affair were taken up by a company possessed of sufficient capital, they might gain an handsome profit on their outlay, and confer a great benefit on society. Holland affords numerous examples of works of this nature, why should we be less enterprising and industrious? The other suggestions for improvement which have occurred, are given under the several heads of this report.

Appendices follow on the next few pages.

Appendix No.5 – Holywood parish map with gentlemen’s residences – page 17.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

PARISH REGISTER.

Year.	Marriages.	Baptisms.		Deaths.
		Males.	Females.	
1811	2	8	5	3
1812	0	10	6	2
1813	0	7	7	5
1814	1	11	10	3
Total	3	36	28	13

This Return is only of the parishioners of the established church, a very small part of the whole population. It begins from the writer's incumbency.

No. 2.

AVERAGE VALUE OF STOCK.

Species of Stock.	No.	Average value of one.	Total Value.
Best Horses.....	120	£35 0 0	£3,000 0 0
Inferior Horses	460	18 0 0	5,520 0 0
Best Black Cattle	300	10 0 0	3,000 0 0
Inferior do.	750	7 0 0	3,250 0 0
Best Sheep	250	2 10 0	625 0 0
Inferior Sheep	300	1 10 0	450 0 0
Hogs.....	1200	5 0 0	6,000 0 0

No. 3.

PRICES OF PROVISIONS.

	From	To	Per		From	To	Per
Beef....	5d.	8d.	lb.	Flour	14s.	28s.	cwt.
Mutton..	7d.	9d.	lb.	Oatmeal	13s.	14s.	cwt.
Pork....	43s.	50s.	cwt.	Potatoes	2s.	3s. 4d.	cwt.
Bacon ..	5d.	7d.	lb.	Milk, sweet,	3d.		quart.
Fowl	1s.	2s.	Each.	Buttermilk ..	½d.		quart.
Grease ..	3s.	4s.	Each.				
Turkeys	3s. 9d.	4s. 4d.	Each.				

No. 4.

TOWNLANDS, &c. IN HOLYWOOD.

No.	Name of Townlands.	Ancient Names and Derivation.	Chief Proprietors.	Acres.	Houses.	Families.	Males.	Females.	Total.
1	Holywood,		Wm. Kennedy, Esq.	846	250	280	620	635	1255
2	Ballymend,	Balla-na-nocke,	Cunningham Greg, Esq.	420	25	25	60	65	125
3	Bally-cultya,	Balla-calticks or Balla-drugath,	Hugh Kennedy, Esq.	380	36	35	90	80	170
4	Ballykeel,	Ballekvyll or Ballecree,	Ditto.	490	33	33	84	85	169
5	Craig-a-vad,	Craig-a-vad; the dog's rock,	Ditto.	192	13	13	29	34	63
6	Rallygraney,		Ditto.	300	24	24	51	50	101
7	Ballydavy,		Ditto.	420	26	26	62	64	126
8	Ballyrobert,	Ballaek derrye	Ditto.	320	16	17	49	41	90
9	Ballyclocher,		Lord Bangor.	460	39	40	100	99	199
10	Knocknagoney,		Wm. Kennedy, Esq.	509	40	42	105	103	207
11	Ballymaghan,	Ballaer Knocknagoney,	Hon. Vesey Knox.	409	31	30	76	70	146
12	Strahdlova and Ballymasad		David Keef, Esq.	490	50	56	130	145	275
13	Ballybackmore		Rev. John Cleland.	309	24	24	56	68	114

No. 5.

References to the Gentlemen's Seats in the Map of Holywood Parish

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| <p>A. Rockport, John Turnly, Esq.</p> <p>B. Craig-a-vad, Arthur Forbes, Esq.</p> <p>C. Cultra, Hugh Kennedy, Esq.</p> <p>D. Farm-hill.</p> <p>E. Ballymena, Cunningham Greg, Esq.</p> <p>F. Glebe, Rev. Wm. Holmes.</p> <p>G. Holywood House, Wm. Kennedy, Esq.</p> <p>H. Westbrook, Rev. Edward Hay.</p> <p>I. Clifton, Dr. Haliday.</p> | <p>K. Richmond, Francis Turnly, Esq.</p> <p>L. Ballymaghan, Alexander Gordon, Esq.</p> <p>M. Bunker's Hill, Untenanted.</p> <p>N. Conn's Brook, — Martin, Esq.</p> <p>O. A Farm-house.</p> <p>P. Belmont, James Orr, Esq.
formerly W. Bateman.</p> <p>Q. Castle-hill, Joseph Garner, Esq.</p> <p>R. Bloomfield, Arthur Crawford, Esq.</p> |
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