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PREFACE.

THE "sure and certain victory" which we never for a moment doubted during the trying period of heroic effort to thrust back the savage hordes which threatened the liberties of the world is now an accomplished fact, conveying firmest assurance that Peace, just and lasting, is a certainty of the near future. Meanwhile the Allies stand to arms, for never again can we trust

" Wretches of human kind,
Studied in arts of Hell, in wickedness refined."

We have again done our best for the present issue of the *Chronicle*, in confident expectation of better things when the Clubs resume their wonted activity. When the Boys come home again, joy will lighten sorrow, and Time heal all wounds.

Our thanks are again due to all who have assisted us in keeping the flag flying during the dark years of the war.

D. McNAUGHT.

BENRIG, KILMAURS,
January 1st, 1919.

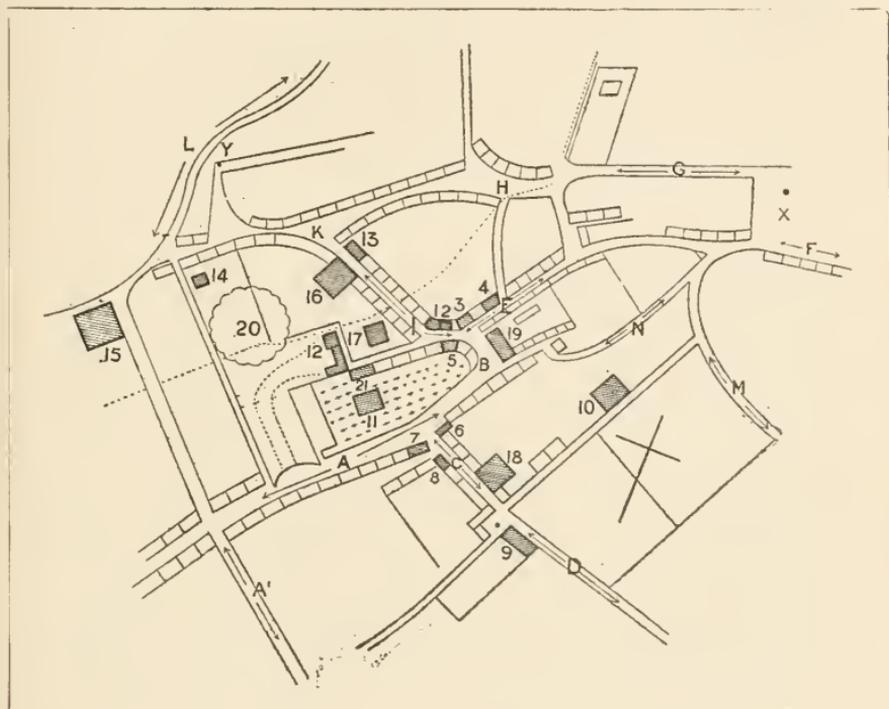
MAUCHLINE IN BURNS'S TIME.

THERE is no record of Burns's first visit to Mauchline, though it is highly probable that he may have attended a Mauchline Fair from Lochlea, to which he had removed with his father in 1777, and which was only a matter of three miles distant. We are told that at a Mason's meeting at Tarbolton he had met with Gavin Hamilton (his worthy friend and patron), Dr Dugald Stewart, and other Mauchline men, before the removal to Mossgiel.

What like Mauchline was at that time we cannot exactly say. But from what we have learned from the old people, with whom we have been for long in touch, and from our own personal observation, the town was not by any means so extensive as it presently is. The accompanying sketch map may perhaps give some idea, if compared with the map which will be found in the opening page of my brochure, *Mauchline Town and District*, published in 1911.

It should be noted that in Burns's day there was no New or Kilmarnock Road, and no Earl Grey Street, these having taken the place of the Backeauseway and the Cowgate, then the principal streets leading north and south. There were no houses then on what is now called the Barskimming Road, and below the Loudoun Street entrance to Netherplace (along what is sometimes called the New Street or Ayr Road) perhaps not more than one or two dwellings. The Auld Kirk was then standing, as also the Auld Manse ("Daddy Auld's"). The former was supplanted by the present building about ninety years ago, at which time the Kirkyaird must have been greatly curtailed, though the houses built on it to the north were at that time pulled down, their site being added to the burying-ground. As for the old Manse, it stood in its own grounds, and was approached by a road leading off the Cowgate, and also,

very probably, by way of the Bellman's Vennel and the country road to Welton.



PLAN OF MAUCHLINE.

REFERENCES.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Burns's House. | A Loudoun Street. |
| 2 Dr Mackenzie's House | B The Cross. |
| 3 "Jeems" Smith's House. | C The Cowgate. |
| 4 John Richmond's House. | D Cunnock Road. |
| 5 Nancee Tinnock's. | E High Street |
| 6 Poosie Nancy's. | F The Loan. |
| 7 Whiteford Arms. | G Edinburgh Road. |
| 8 Armour's House. | H The Burnside. |
| 9 Morison's House. | I The Backcauseway. |
| 10 Parish Manse. | K The Knowe. |
| 11 Parish Kirk. | L Kilmarnock Road. |
| 12 The Castle. | M Welton Road. |
| 13 Brownlea House. | N Bellman's Vennel. |
| 14 Elbow Tavern. | O Course of Mauchline Burn. |
| 15 Netherplace. | X Martyr's Monument on Public |
| 16 Clinkum's Square. | Green. |
| 17 "Blackhorse" Quarters. | Y St. Michael's Well. |
| 18 Tweedly's Square. | Z Barskimming Road. |
| 19 The Place. | |
| 20 The Bleaching Green. | |
| 21 Ronald's Ballroom. | |

The Cowgate, with its Tweedly's Square; round the Cross; the Backcauseway; the Knowe; the Burnside; and the High Street, would seem by all accounts to have

been the streets where the bulk of the people lived. As to the general appearance of the houses at that time, a few old buildings here and there, particularly in the Back-causeway and the Knowe, give a fairly good idea. Nor must we forget that some few remain, somewhat altered no doubt, but still preserving their original lines: Poesie Nancy's; Nance Tinnock's; the house where the Poet began housekeeping with his Bonnie Jean; Dr Mackenzie's; John Richmond's, the house at the top of the Cowgate where, tradition says, "The Haggis" was begotten; the Castle, and the residential part of it adjoining; the Place, and the old Archway in the High Street.

As for the inhabitants of Mauchline—how they lived, and their probable number, it is somewhat difficult to say. As to their occupation, most probably they were mostly weavers; though we are told on good authority that besides the usual joiners, wheelwrights, sawyers, masons, and blacksmiths there was a fair sprinkling of nailers, coopers, maltsters, tanners, and curriers—Mauchline being a town of more than ordinary importance in these early years as the trading centre of a wide district. The fact of there being no fewer than thirteen fairs (horse and cattle), and an annual "race," bespeaks an important place in the social economy of a people.

As to the population of "The old Burgh of Barony" at the middle and latter end of the eighteenth century, it is difficult to put a figure upon it. Everything, however, tends to the conclusion that it was smaller than at the present time.

There was a decided increase in the middle of last century owing to railway building, but stress of circumstances was responsible for a large exodus about thirty years ago. Indeed, it almost looked as if Mauchline was going to the wall, her young men and women leaving by the dozen. The development of the quarries no doubt helped to stay the emigration (meanwhile they are closed); but the fact that there is at the present time only one box-work, employing about forty hands, as against three

boxworks formerly, employing say 200, shows distinctly that Mauchline has gone back in population. In this connection the following note speaks for itself:—Fifteen years ago there were upwards of 500 scholars on the roll of attendance at the Public School, while at the present time, I am informed, there are just about 400.

However, time promises an improvement; the opening of coal pits in the locality at an early date may work wonders.

What of the families of those who walked the streets of Mauchline in Burns's day? A glance at the voters' roll of this present year, and a walk through the Kirkyaird, show a great change. Where are the Nisbets, the Richmonds, the Hamiltons, the Armours, the Tinnocks, the Gibsons, the Browns, the Howats, the Mackenzies, the Lees, the Humphreys, the Doves, the Smiths, and many more? Left, or "dee'd oot"—their names a memory! We have still with us the Lambies, the Wilsons, and Campbells. Mauchline has completely changed, as far as family names are concerned, in the closing years of the eighteenth and the opening years of the nineteenth century.

What, more particularly, of the Poet's personal friends in Mauchline—"Jeems" Smith, John Richmond, Hunter, and Gavin Hamilton of the Castle? All forgotten but for the immortality conferred on them by Rab Mossgiel.

Of his houses of public entertainment, little authentic can be said. No doubt Burns was fond of sociality; but there is no tradition whatever that would lead anyone to suppose that he gave way to indulgence in Tarbolton or Mauchline. True, he says something about "nine times a week" drinking Lapraik's health in Nance Tinnock's; but how much of that is due to poetic license? The statement that he was in Poesie Nancy's on the occasion which inspired "The Jolly Beggars" is not given correctly. That house was not a public-house in the proper sense of the word, but a "foregathering" place, a howff, or lodging-house for gangrel bodies—not an alehouse for general refreshment.

There is every reason to believe that the Whitefoord Arms was Burns's principal house of call. There, we know, "the Coort" was held, and from its back windows he signalled to his Jean, who lived across the street. It was there that he stayed overnight when he came back from Edinburgh—the acknowledged Bard of Scotia. This staying overnight in "Johnnie Doo's," with Mossiel and his mother and sisters and brothers not a mile away, does seem strange: but he perhaps arrived late, and he had much business to attend to before returning to Edinburgh.

That he was a hard worker, both on farm and in study, during these years in Mossiel, his own brother Gilbert tells us. In short, whatever charges of irregularity have been brought against him by his detractors, it is certain that he was, in his early manhood at Mossiel, an industrious and abstemious man.

It may be of interest to know how much time he spent in Mauchline after he took up house in the Back-causeway with his Bonnie Jean, that is, from May till November, 1788, when he removed to Ellisland—six months, twenty-six weeks, or one hundred and eighty-two days all told. I am inclined to think that he spent less than fifty days and nights at his house in Mauchline—the bulk of his time being taken up with his duties at Ellisland. Travelling to and from Mauchline would take, most probably, the most of two days going and coming, the distance between Ellisland and Mauchline being little short of forty-five miles, which is too great a distance for a farm horse in a single day.

He does not appear, as far as the records go, to have visited Mauchline even once after his removal with his wife and family to Ellisland in November, 1788.

We know that the world did not altogether go well with him after he left Ayrshire, there being much in his subsequent life which betokens sourness and disappointment. But that he had aye a warm place in his heart for the memory of early days—the lang synce of Lochlea and

Tarbolton, Mossgiel and Mauchline—cannot be doubted. Nor has Mauchline, the town of his acquaintance for full four years, and where he got his wife—a Mauchline belle—forgot either him or her. Witness the house in the Backcauseway, where they began housekeeping, being now the residence of decent old people, through the efforts of the Glasgow and District Burns Clubs Association; and perhaps before the close of 1918 the house of Doctor Mackenzie, where Jean found refuge when under storm-clouds, may become, like the other, a “cosy bield” in which many of the aged and infirm may pass their eventide. And what of the Burns National Memorial and Cottage Homes, erected near-by Mossgiel, twenty years ago, by the Glasgow Mauchline Society. They stand for Robert Burns, and speak eloquently of the secret of his fame—his world-embracing sympathy.

J. TAYLOR GIBB.

