

James **CARNEY** (c.1800 Dumfries – 1873 Gatehouse) (1828 Gatehouse) Jean **NIXON** (c.1810 Gatehouse – 1896 Gatehouse)

Agnes (Nance) **CARNEY** b.1829  
 Mary Ann **CARNEY** b.1835  
 Jean **CARNEY** b.1837  
 James **CARNEY** b.1841  
 Elizabeth **CARNEY** b.1845  
 Ellen **CARNEY** b.1847

**CARNEY Family Descendants**

(1871 Stockport) William **SUNDERLAND** (1852 – 1907)

Jean **SUNDERLAND** b.18--  
 Elizabeth **SUNDERLAND** b.1874 d.1939  
 William **SUNDERLAND** b.1878  
 Agnes **SUNDERLAND** b.1880

(1900 Carlisle) Matthew **CAISLEY** (1868 – 1941 Co.Durham)

(1937 Stratford) Lancelot Gordon **CAISLEY** (1905 Co. Durham – 1993 Stratford upon Avon) Kathleen M **HAYWARD-BRADLEY** (1912 Stratford – 2002 Stratford)

(1961 Abingdon) 1. Helen J **CAISLEY** (b.1938 Birmingham) Geoffrey M **KEATING** (b.1937 Middlesborough)

(1975 Glastonbury) 2. Elizabeth S **CAISLEY** (b.1945 Wakefield) Laurence **THORNTON-GRIMES** (? ?)



2 Carney sisters outside "Carneys Cottage"

# Gatehouse of Fleet

## Two 'Carney' Portraits

Helen Keating is the current (2023) Provost of Gatehouse. She lives at Mosslade which is at the top of Ann Street, next to what was once Scott's Mill. Her father was Lancelot Gordon Caisley, the son of Matthew Caisley and Elizabeth Sunderland. Elizabeth was a child of Ellen Carney and William Sunderland, Ellen being the 6<sup>th</sup> and last child of James Carney and Jean Nixon - the original Carney family of Gatehouse.

Helen has recovered 2 documents which each tell a story about aspects of life in Gatehouse. The 1<sup>st</sup> document was written by her father and the 2<sup>nd</sup> is by her grandmother.

Helen has written an introduction to her fathers' story, whilst her father has written an introduction to his mothers' story. The introductions are typed in blue whilst the stories themselves are in black.

---

*Some of my friends who are interested in local history have suggested that it might be of interest to those similarly inclined to have the following two essays printed. They give a brief picture of a family that no longer exists by name but still survives in its descendants. The town has changed a little since my Grandmother's time: the by-pass has removed the traffic that plagued it since her death, returning it to a quieter thoroughfare, (well, a bit quieter?) and some buildings, such as the bobbin mill (now the Mill on the Fleet Visitor Centre) and Rusco Tower, (now a private house) have been restored. Some features, such as the carvings of Meg Merrilies on the hillside above Dirk Hatterick's Cave, have disappeared from view. The old tannery is now a Spar supermarket and many of the other industrial buildings have been converted into private houses. The lade system constructed to provide the mills with water power can still be seen, from Loch Whinyeon down to the town, and through the Cally woods past Scott's Mill at the top of Ann Street. The 'Cut', the new road out of the town, bisected the mill dam at the top of the town, and one half was filled in and is now the site of the Garage.*

*Alas, the painting of 'the Rose of Fleet', alias Nancy Carney, now resides near Oxford, in its owner's house, but with kind permission, she has appeared in local exhibitions of paintings by the Faed family. In the Lunky Hole bar of the Murray Arms there is an artist's impression of Burnside Cottage, with two ladies standing either side of the door, which has been taken from an old photograph. The Carney name is still remembered by some of the older inhabitants of the town, and, as my Father says, it has been immortalised, much to his great pleasure, in the name of the new development of houses in Memory Lane.*

*Helen Keating  
Mosslade, Ann Street, Gatehouse of Fleet*

## Memories of Lancelot Gordon Caisley

On a dyke, for no apparent reason, on the corner of the road leading to Gatehouse-of-Fleet cemetery, there is an official label indicating that this was Carney's Corner. In another fifty years' time, a visitor coming across the dyke might be inclined to ask, "Who were these Carneys and what were they doing here? There are no Carneys among the names of the famous in literature, music, politics, discovery, medicine or religion. Where, and how did they live here?"

If you find an old photograph of this corner you will find that the cottages now here have preserved the shape of the Girthon Public School which was originally on this site - it was called a Public school because it was the school for all the boys and girls in the area once they had reached the age of eleven.

The old photograph you are looking at may show a cottage next to this school. That is where the Carneys lived, and because the family lived there from the beginning of the nineteenth century, everybody called it 'Carney's Cottage.' Gatehouse-of-Fleet was then only about fifty years old itself.

Let us look at this cottage as I saw it at the beginning of this (*the 20<sup>th</sup>*) century. I was introduced to it because my mother and grandmother were born there. It was whitewashed and had only one entrance, a double door opening on to a wide passage. Opposite the doorway was a wooden staircase which led up to two garrets, one above each side of the passageway. On the ground floor, on each side, were two rooms, one larger than the other, the smaller being used as a bedroom. I understand that the cottage had originally two tenants, but the growth of the Carney family in the early nineteenth century must soon have made the use of both areas necessary. The rooms on the left were known as 'doon the hoose' and only the smaller room was used as a bedroom for visitors.

Before we go into the room on the right we must notice the display of homemade toffee on the table near the door. The assorted lumps, though all made of the same basic material, were varied in flavour and colour, so they were homemade but with a professional touch.

One of the earlier Carneys had paid £5 - - a large sum then - - for the recipes of an old woman who used to sell toffee outside Carlisle Station. Tom Faed, the Gatehouse artist, records that the celebrated Nancy Carney, who died in 1906, sold toffee from the house. Her younger sister Elizabeth carried on this method of raising a few shillings into the 1920s.

You should know that the 'mod. cons.' of this desirable residence were not of the usual kind. The main water supply was provided by a bum which flowed near the house, under a wooden bridge, through a deep cleft in the garden and into the River Fleet. The 'watercloset' in the garden needed no cistern, because the burn on its way to the sea flowed regularly underneath the wooden shed provided. Drinking water was carried to the house in pails filled from a tap outside the school further down the road. So there was no need for any of the paraphernalia which clutters up the modern kitchen.

There was, of course, the all-important fireplace. There may have been an oven at some time but I cannot remember one because it was never used. Scones in great variety were cooked on a flat girdle. An iron bar could be swung across the wood fire and, by a series of hooks, the cooking apparatus could be raised or lowered over the fire.

We rarely had bread which had to be bought at the baker's. We preferred scones: soda scones made with flour, baking soda and buttermilk, half a gallon of which could be obtained at the farm for a few coppers; treacle scones mixed with black treacle and 'tattie' scones made with flour and mashed potatoes - delicious when turned in the hot fat to accompany the eggs and bacon at breakfast time.

On the mantelshelf above the fireplace was a pendulum clock in a dark painted wooden case, with a picture of an Edinburgh street on the top half. A kilted porcelain shepherd looked across from his end of the shelf to a porcelain shepherdess on the other. Attached to the wall on the left above the mantelpiece, was a lamp with its globe ten inches high above a painted tin paraffin container which, with the fire, gave you a warm but dim light in the room. If you wanted to read anything you had to stand within a few inches of the lamp itself.

There was no unnecessary furniture in the room: to the left of the fireplace a homemade sofa of planks of wood covered with a mattress made of sacking stuffed with chaff. This, with the necessary blankets, was my bed when I was a boy. Above the head of this sofa was a small cupboard, and on the wall a painting of an old woodman. Above the door leading to the small room on the right was a stout shelf laden with jars of delicious homemade jam. Past the round table near the wall, in the corner of the room, was an old flat table piano, used as a repository for photographs and various ornaments. Aunt Elizabeth was disgusted with this piano because although she had paid ten shillings for it, she found when it was delivered that "it wouldna play!" From the delapidated keyboard and the rusty strings inside it, one could see that it had once been a piano and now would be valued as an antique.

On the other side of the room was a table used for meals, in front of the window through which there was a wonderful view of fields and hills beyond, with Kenlum on the left and in the far distance, the blue grey slopes of Caimsmore of Fleet.

The small room which led out of this living room was the bedroom, with a sash window, which gave a fairly close view of the dyke separating the house from the school playground next door. No doubt earlier

Cameys had been able to open this window, but some health expert had persuaded Aunt Elizabeth that fresh air was much overrated, so she had nailed down the window apparently to keep the fresh air out.

The garret above these two rooms was usually bare except for a few heaps of potatoes and sometimes a nest for a clocking hen. This led sometimes to strange sounds during the night when, presumably, the broody hen was sleeping and producing the poultry version of snoring.

The large room 'doon the hoose' was in my time never used, but the bedroom next to it was used when visitors were staying and it was in regular use by the local inhabitants - the rats. They had a hilarious time chasing each other round and round behind the rafters. Aunt Elizabeth, who probably felt that something should be done about them, must have, on occasion, offered them some potent poisons, for when a new apothecary came to the town he refused to provide the poison she asked for. When, however, he offered her a sample of the officially approved diet for such rodents, she scornfully turned to the apothecary and said, "that's nae guid for oor rats." The room, however, offered other attractions. Aunt Elizabeth had once been given a substantial volume of about a hundred wallpaper samples, each about 15 inches long and about 12 inches wide. These she had pasted all around the walls of the room. These walls were a frequent source of pleasure, especially when, with an understanding contemporary, the whole panoply could be surveyed and you could play the game: "Which ane am I thinkin' o' noo?"

But the pleasures of the house were nothing to the attractions outside in the garden. I have always been enthusiastic about gardens I don't have to cultivate myself but this garden was specially attractive.

First of all there was a pigsty in it and usually a pig in the sty. Between Aunt Elizabeth and the pig there grew, not exactly love but respect. The pig was never smelly because she washed it regularly and it must have appreciated the food she gave it - and well it might. Sometimes on our return, hungry, after a mushroom seeking expedition, we have found the 'swine's pot' on the fire, and knowing that it always had priority over everything else, we have had to sit round glowering at the fire and sniffing the appetising odours, - for only the best ingredients were fit for the pig - and realising as never before, how the Prodigal Son must have felt in similar circumstances. Aunt Elizabeth had a very practical attitude to all non-human inhabitants of the world. Whenever she was taken out fishing by any men of the house she played her part by grabbing by the tails the fish that had been caught, and banging their heads on the stones and saying "Puir things, puir things. But they were made for the use o' man," and adding another clout to make sure.

The pig was treated with more respect. One of her pigs developed a weakness in one of its legs, for which Aunt Elizabeth decided it needed exercise. So when she let it out of its sty, she ran round the garden and the pig ran after her. Whenever she rested on the garden seat, the pig sat down beside her. Such friendship never caused her any regret even when the pig's demise was near. She probably felt that she was fulfilling the Lord's desire and the pig had satisfied the purpose for which it had been created.

But the garden, even without the pig, was a magic place which I explored to the full when I was living there, having been sent to Gatehouse to recover from whooping cough. There were really two gardens: the 'rear gairden' and the 'far away gairden' - magic enough descriptions to increase the wonder of a six year old. In the near garden there were apples in abundance, pears, plums, damsons, raspberries, strawberries, red and black currants and a bewildering variety of gooseberries, small red, large yellow and deep green berries always referred to as 'green blobs'. These were delicious when eaten straight from the bush but when made into jam tasted more like castor oil. At the end of one season it was found that a whole row of 'green blob' jam had been left intact until it was discovered that Aunt Elizabeth's labelling had been a subterfuge to preserve jams of more delectable quality.

I used to wander through two rows of phlox to a rustic bridge over the burn, which at that time had a good supply of water as it tumbled to the Fleet, through a tangle of small trees and bushes. Once across the bridge you went along a narrow path with the burn on your right and, immediately on your left, the dyke of the school playground. When the dyke turned and you turned with it, you were in the faraway garden, a very large stretch of vegetable patches sloping steeply to the river. The place seemed immense to me as I heard the water of the burn being carried by the Fleet to the open sea.

My activities in the house were not so free. Aunt Elizabeth and my grandmother both felt that my education was in their hands but I managed to avoid learning anything except my part in a threesome reel. While Aunt Elizabeth 'deedled', that is sang the tune of the dance to 'Iah', we all performed the steps. Thus I was given one aspect of Scottish culture which I enjoyed. I also picked up a number of Scottish songs sung by Aunt Elizabeth but above all I absorbed the language of Burns and made possible a real appreciation of Scottish literature.

But we are coming to the end of the Cameys. Although members of the family, my grandmother and my Aunt Jean had all been born in the cottage and had regular holidays there, the only one still called 'Carney' was Aunt Elizabeth. She died in 1925 and a little over a year later the cottage was demolished, the garden became a mass of tangled vegetation, even the burn disappeared, and no doubt the rats themselves fled. So why after all this should the Carney name be placed on the dyke? We must go back to an earlier branch of the family, back to the early years of the nineteenth century.

James Camey, described as a labourer, as a joiner, a carpenter or a sawmill worker, married Jane Nickson. They must have settled in the house beside the burn early in the nineteenth century for their first child, a daughter was born in 1832. She was christened Agnes but was known by the family and later by folk in the town as Nance. A son, James, born in 1836 eventually went to America but for a while left his son, also called James, in Gatehouse. Jimmy, my Mother's favourite cousin joined his father in America while he was still a boy, but returned several times later after he had become very prosperous in the States. The rest of the Carney family were all girls: Mary Anne, Elizabeth and Ellen, my grandmother.

Much of what follows is based on what I remember from stories told by members of the family, but oral traditions, though not always scrupulously accurate in detail, often give greater understanding of human affairs.

James Camey was considered to be 'high up' among the local Freemasons but in spite of efforts from the women of the house they found out little more than that. He was reputed to get really tipsy only once a year on Burns Night, but that was only natural patriotism, and since on his way home he invariably sang: 'O' a' the airts the wind can blow, I dearly lo'e the we, For there the bonnie lassie lives, The lassie I lo'e best, There wild woods grow and rivers flow An' monie a hill between, But day and nicht, my fancy flight Is ever wi' my Jean," his indomitable Presbyterian wife received him with a certain amount of pride, because in the family, her name was Jean.

Otherwise she had very strong views. The Sabbath was to be kept very holy: only hymns were to be sung, no whistling was allowed at all and after three services at the Kirk the only reading matter allowed was either the Bible or The Pilgrim's Progress. Playing cards were 'the playthings o' the Devil' and banned from the 'hoose'. Dominoes were allowed on any day except Sunday.

Jean Carney brooked no interference in her own affairs. She once ordered out of her house no less than the Laird's wife who, she felt, was trying to exercise too much authority. Besides fulfilling her responsibilities to the Kirk, she had social responsibilities which she carried out faithfully herself. One of her self-imposed duties was to help people when they were ill. She was even called upon to cure such ailments as were considered curable by the application of leeches. She always kept a supply of these; my mother could remember leeches being kept in a jar on the mantelpiece. They were collected by placing a bare foot in a likely pond and pulling the leeches off as soon as they tried to fasten themselves onto it. The story was told in the family how she had been called in to deal with someone who had 'the black fever', whatever that was. This scared the folk round about because the patient's head was seriously swollen and the skin had turned black. Although most people were afraid to go near, Jean took her leeches with her and applied them; they cleared the blood and the patient recovered. In the limited medical knowledge of the time and the shortage of really qualified doctors in some country districts, this would have been the only remedy possible. After all the word Leech was still sometimes used for a Physician.

Although the lady of the house was unable to write her own name, she had obviously acquired a rich vocabulary from the Bible and, judging from reports of her quotations from it, she obviously enjoyed the sound and value of words. So she gave a controlled welcome to the reading, not only of the newspaper but of the novels of Dickens, some of which were being published in monthly instalments at that time. There seems to have been no shortage of readers in the family. Ellen, my grandmother, was a voracious reader from an early age. As a girl she attended the 'Lake School' which was provided by the Cally Estate for the children of its workers. The teacher in charge was the gentle Miss Botham for whom this young Carney had a great affection.

The audience for these readings included a number of young men who were probably attracted by the fact that the family included a number of attractive girls, one of them at least considered a great beauty. The attractive girls, one of them at least considered a great beauty. The family matriarch had done her duty in bringing them up to avoid the seven deadly sins, including Pride. Whenever she saw any of them looking in the mirror and showing any suggestion of satisfaction with what they saw, she remarked, "Ye needna gan gazin' at yersel in the glass: you're full beel an' worl' like, but there's nae beauty about ony o' ye."

The young men who came to listen to Dickens would certainly not have been agreed about this but the power of Dickens sometimes even distracted the young men from their sidelong glances at the girls. On one occasion, for instance, the reading from Nicholas Nickleby was dealing with Nicholas having wrested the whip from Squeers, who had been unmercifully beating Smike, and using it on Squeers himself. At this point one of the young men jumped up and shouted, "I declare to God, if he hadna done't, I'd ha' done't mesell"

Most Scottish folk of that period had a strong feeling for words, official and unofficial, and the Cameys were no exception. One of the family never paused when reading aloud from the newspaper and when she came across an unfamiliar word she replaced it by one of her own. When, for instance, she came across the phrase, "according to the technicalities of the law", she read without hesitation, "according to the 'tantleegeries' o' the law." 'Tantleegeries' was such a good word that it was immediately added to the Carney vocabulary for private use.

Great-grandfather James Carney died in 1873 and his wife in 1876, aged 89, old enough to be photographed with one of her grandchildren, my uncle Gordon. Probably one of the most generous of the Carneys, Mary Ann was born in 1837. She was the only one who could live with her sister Elizabeth without quarrelling. She never seemed to collect anything for herself. When my mother was leaving to go to her first teaching post in Twynholm, Aunt 'Panty' slipped two sovereigns into her hand and when mother, in great surprise, asked her where they had come from, her aunt said, "I saved them up in pennies, happenies and fardens."

The other three members of the family, Ellen, Elizabeth and John had one thing in common: they all found their way to Lancashire in search of employment. They are all recorded as weavers and must have started work in Gatehouse, but the early promise of industrial development in the town was not being fulfilled in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Which of the three went first to the developing cotton industry in Lancashire I do not know. John, who called himself Carnegie there, married a Lancashire mill girl in Ashton-under-Lyne. At the end of January 1886 he was in Gatehouse, living in Church Street, where his son, John, was born. Eight weeks later this baby died and Great-uncle John disappears from my ken.

Elizabeth and Ellen, now calling herself Helen, both worked in the mills in Ashton, and, while there, Helen met William Sunderland, a very young printer, and they were married in 1870. Her sister, Elizabeth, and a young regular soldier she had collected, both signed the register of her sister's marriage. The soldier was later stationed in India and used to write appealing letters to her but my great aunt continued on her way, more or less 'in maiden meditation, fancy free.' Elizabeth eventually returned to Gatehouse and lived with Mary Ann and her eldest sister, Agnes, who was known throughout the town as Nance.

She was probably the most well known Carney of her time. There is no doubt that she was regarded as a great beauty in Gatehouse. Her sisters and her two nieces, my mother and Aunt Jean, were very proud of her beauty and used to talk of how one of the Faeds, (possibly Tom) when he was in either Edinburgh or London, had been looking for a model who could be painted as a Grecian Queen and had failed to find anyone suitable until he returned to Gatehouse and saw Nancy Carney. Although this is family gossip and therefore prejudiced, it probably has some elements of truth in it. Tom Faed himself wrote about Nance, "She was called the Grecian Queen . . .and was one that set the young men of the country, far and near, mad." Certainly Susan Feed painted a very attractive portrait of her as a young woman. She was also the heroine of a poem, 'The Rose o' Dalma Linn' written by a local poet, George Sproat. This poem was preceded by a portrait of Nance Carney, by Sproat's friend, John Faed.

Troublesome times of Charles I and Archbishop Laud. His life and labour So it was probably Nance that led the authorities to identify this part of the town with the name of Carney. She was the only great-aunt I never met - she died in 1906, a year after I was born - but recollections of the rest are very strong. The last one, still bearing the family name was Elizabeth. She used to have frequent altercations with the tinkers who used to camp in front of her house. When one new arrival saw her coming, with battle in her eyes, he said, "Are you no' deid yet?" So, while there are still some of the Faeds' pictures of Nance left and the name on the dyke is still visible The Cameys are no' deid yet.

.....

## GATEHOUSE-OF-FLEET

*An essay written by my mother who was born in Burnside Cottage (better known as Carney's Cottage) Gatehouse, in 1874. Her mother, Helen Sunderland, nee Carney, was born in the same cottage 26 years earlier.*

*My mother was first a pupil then a pupil teacher in Girthon Public School, the schoolyard of which separated the school premises from the garden of the cottage.*

*I still wonder at the extraordinarily high quality of the education provided in the little school. Besides the usual subjects - English, history, geography etc. - their course included French, Latin, Needlework, Science and Mathematics, including Algebra and Geometry, not just Arithmetic as in most English elementary schools of the time.*

*The school produced several scholars more distinguished than she was, but her experience illustrates the sound quality of the training it gave. During the First World War, many of the Teachers' Training Colleges were almost emptied of their men students and the College authorities invited older uncertificated teachers to fill their places. So, in 1915, at the age of 41, my mother went to Sunderland Training College, where, in spite of her fears, she more than held her own with the young folk who had just finished a full grammar school training up to the age of 18. The Principal, however, told her that her success was, in no small measure, due to the excellent grounding she had received in her school days.*

*The following essay, set by her geography tutor as a Christmas holiday exercise, does not offer any new information about the town, but it gives a picture of Gatehouse as it was then and, above all, it expresses the love which this nook of Galloway roused in many of her sons and daughters and which they passed on to many outside.*

*She visited Gatehouse every year until, in the late twenties, Burnside Cottage was pulled down and the chapel in Cally House, where she was baptised, became part of an hotel.*

*I was glad on my recent visit to see that the large wall map at the new Information Centre shows the situation of the cottage and the large attractive garden through which the burn ran, under a rustic bridge and through a deep glen, into the Fleet. The house, the garden, and the glen, alas, have gone, but the view still remains, with Kenlum on the left, the hills rising to Dromore and, in the distance, the grey-blue shape of Cairnsmore of Fleet.*

*L.G.Caisley, Stratford upon Avon. 1986*

## GATEHOUSE-OF-FLEET

**my Native Place**

**by Elizabeth Caisley**

### **New Year's Eve 1916**

The old year is ebbing away and on its ebb tide my thoughts drift homewards. The smoke of the pit chimneys, the glare of the brick ovens, the never-ending hum of ceaseless activity - all my present surroundings - fade away, and instead I hear the rush of the waters through the glen, and see once more a peaceful little Scottish village, nestling among the hills of the Southern Highlands within sound of the Solway. Very beautiful is this little village - one of the most beautiful spots in the British Isles.

To the north, to the west, to the east, as far as the eye can see, rise the hills, rugged and grand, until away in the far distance, overtopping them all, the lonely peak of Cairnsmore, the haunt of the eagle, vanishes into the dim northern mists. In the south the valley opens out to the sea, shimmering and dancing in the light of the sun, cold, grey and treacherous when the mist creeps up the Solway, across the Sands of Dee.

Far out at sea the Isle of Man looms up dimly through the haze, while nearer the shore are the Isles of Fleet. Here no jarring discords mar the harmony of nature. The seaside pierrots and the hooting roundabouts of the popular resort are unknown. On this lonely shore, the sea rolls in in all its majesty, and only the wailing note of the seabirds and the voice of the fisherman, as he goes out with the ebb tide to the nets, blend with the music of the waves.

No factory smoke taints the air nor mars the beauty of this quiet nook. The district is purely agricultural; and through the midst of it flows the River Fleet, dividing in its course the parishes of Anwoth and Girthon.

There are no public works save an ancient bobbin mill which derives its motive power from the water of the river. At one time copper and iron mines were worked in its vicinity, but the mines have long since been shut down, altho' abundant evidence of the presence of minerals can be traced in the springs on the hill sides. The mouth of the Fleet has been deepened and widened to allow ships of small tonnage to come up with the tide to a small harbour. The coal supply comes by boat from the Cumberland ports, and indeed a great part of the transit of merchandise for the village is by sea.

The 'canal' is spanned by a drawbridge and opposite the drawbridge, high up on a rock, like some grim sentinel, stands the 'Auld Castle', its gaunt grey walls frowning down upon the sea. Between Gatehouse and Creetown are the twins of two castles of historic interest - Barholm and Carsluith.

Barholm Castle was at one time the refuge of John Knox, and here, it is said, Galgacus the king was buried in a tomb, which still exists, built of whinstone slabs. One Galloway writer claims that Galgacus was buried at Torhouse in Wigtonshire. At this place are three very large whinstones supposed to be the tomb, surrounded by nineteen very large stones.

Further along the road, still within sound of the sea, stands Carsluith Castle, one of the oldest fortresses in Galloway. It was originally surrounded by an exceedingly deep and wide foss crossed by a drawbridge. Legend has it that Edward I stormed the castle and took it in the thirteenth century. It was retaken by either Wallace or Bruce, with great slaughter of the 'southern loons'.

Nature, with her kindly fingers, has thrown a green mantle of moss and ivy over these old relics, softening their grim outlines and making them things of beauty. So may Memory throw a mantle of charity over the frailties and shortcomings of those who inhabited them in those troublous times, and say with the poet, of friends and foes alike,

"Their bones are dust,  
Their good swords rust,  
Their souls are with the Saints, we trust."

There are many old family mansions in the neighbourhood, the finest of which is Cally, an imposing granite pile built in the Grecian style and owned by 'the Laird.' To the Laird belongs all the land on which the village is built and all the surrounding farms. All land is leasehold and holders have to pay 'feu rent'.

The grounds belonging to Cally House are very extensive and very fine, and through the centre of them is an ancient 'right-o'-way.' The laird at one time attempted to close this path to the public and to that end barred the gates. The people of the village, quick to resent any attempt to encroach on their ancient privileges, marched in procession to the gates, with the Provost at their head, and armed with axes and crowbars. The Provost struck the first blow, the others followed suit, and the gates were levelled to the ground. A law case ensued in which the people were able to prove that the hearse always passed along that path to the old cemetery. As a hearse is not allowed on private roads the case was decided in favour of the villagers, and the old path is still a 'right-o'-way.'

To those who love the simple life, not the least of the charms of Gatehouse is its isolation. Six and a half miles from Dromore, the nearest station - eight miles from Kirkcudbright - it is indeed 'far from the madding crowd', and of the strife and clamour of the outside world only echoes reach it.

Dromore is on the Wigton and Portpatrick line and is surely the weirdest and wildest station in the whole system. Away up among the hills, nothing meets the eye for miles and miles but stretches of moorland and heather, while all over the surface are scattered boulders, some of immense size, relics of the glacier period. An old, disused, third-class railway carriage serves as a luggage office, and that, together with a tiny booking office and waiting room combined, constitutes all the station buildings. But the air is pure and sweet as only the air of the moorland and mountain can be, and the drive down into the valley is considered one of the finest in the kingdom.



On the Dromore Road, within three miles of Gatehouse, is old Rusko Castle, which was at one time the seat of the Lords of Kenmure, of whom Burns wrote:

“ There never was a coward o’ Kenmure’s bluid,  
Nor yet o’ Gordon’s line.”

In later times the castle passed to a younger branch of the family, the Gordons of Lochinvar, one of whom was ‘the young Lochinvar who came out of the west.’

On the road from Kirkcudbright to Gatehouse is Enrick, where Edward I is said to have encamped during his victorious march into Scotland after the siege and fall of Caerlaverock Castle about 1300. Traces of the foundation of the drawbridge across the moat which surrounded the building are, it is said, still to be seen.

In the district, too, are relics of interest to antiquarians. On Trusty’s Hill are the remains of a fort, and a slab containing some curious markings, while monoliths of large size and with strange sculpturings, the work of primitive races, and stone circles are to be found within easy distance.

Along the shore, from Gatehouse to Creetown was the scene of Sir Walter Scott’s novel ‘Guy Mannering’. Gatehouse itself is ‘Kippletringan’, Creetown (‘the ferry toon o’ Cree’) ‘Portanferry.’ Barholm Castle is supposed to be ‘Ellengowan AuId Place’, while the ‘Gordon Arms at Kippletringan’ is the Murray Arms of today. Down on the rocky shore near Ravenshall is ‘Dirt Hatterick’s Cave’ known locally as ‘Meg Merrilies Cave’, and on the cliffs, hewn out of the rock by some unknown sculptor, are the figures of Meg Merrilies and Dominie Sampson. The long arm of Meg is stretched out in a threatening attitude, while on the face of the Dominie is an expression denoting the liveliest dread of Meg and her uncanny ways.

In a room at the Murray Arms Burns wrote the first rough draft of ‘Scots wha hae’, the theme suggested to him by a tramp over the wild surrounding hills, in a terrific storm of thunder and rain.

Many famous men have wandered through this secluded nook of Galloway, men ‘who being dead, yet speak’, whose names will live through the ages - Scott, Burns, Campbell, Keats, Carlyle. Thomas Murray, LL.D., the friend of Carlyle, was educated at Girthon School.

But now my ‘labour of love’ is nearly ended. Over the Western hills behind Kenlum the sun is sinking, its last rays throwing into relief the March Dykes on the mountain slope, where the three lairds’ lands meet, and on Boreland Hill, clearly silhouetted against the evening sky, is the stately granite monument to the memory of Dr. Samuel Rutherford, that ‘Saint o’ the Covenant’ and eminent preacher and man of letters, who was for some years minister of Anwoth Presbyterian Kirk, in the troublesome years of Charles I and Archbishop Laud. His life and labour are part of the ecclesiastical and political history of Scotland. Summoned when on his death bed to answer a charge of high treason against Charles II he replied that, having received a summons from a Higher Tribunal, it behoved him to answer it first. He died in 1661 and was buried at St Andrews.

In no more fitting place could be raised a monument to the memory of a covenanter, for in no part of Scotland did the flame of zeal for ‘the Covenant’ burn brighter, nor the fire of persecution fiercer, than among the hills and glens of Galloway. And over behind Anwoth Hills in old Anwoth Churchyard many of the Covenanters, not so illustrious perhaps as Rutherford, but none the less faithful, sleep their last sleep among the moorlands where they held their conventicles under cover of the mists. No stately monument marks their resting place, but on quaint tombstones in rude rhymes, are chronicled the story of their martyrdom; these records, carefully preserved by the faithful labours of ‘Old Mortality’, are still decipherable. No more fitting resting place could there be for these martyrs than this lonely spot among the moorlands, where, over their graves, the wild winds from the mountains and the restless ocean breathe of that liberty for which these ‘men of the moss hags’ willingly laid down their lives.