

## NUMBER XLII.

PARISH OF GLASSARY,<sup>1</sup>

(COUNTY AND SYNOD OF ARGYLE, PRESBYTERY OF  
INVERARY.)

*By the Rev. Mr DUGALD CAMPBELL.*

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*Name, Extent, Surface, &c.*

**G**LASSARY seems evidently to be derived from the Gaelic *Glastra*, which signifies a Grayish Strath, and this is particularly descriptive of the lower end of the parish, when the crop is separated from the ground, which, for the distance of 3 miles, is a level country, exhibiting a grayish white surface. The parish is 22 miles in length, and 12, for the most part, in breadth; bounded by Glenaray and Lochfine upon the E.; by Dalavich and Lochon upon the N.; by Kilmartin and North Knapdale upon the W.; and by South Knapdale and Lochfine upon the S. Its form is nearly a parallel, contracting a little at both ends, and rising gradually from both sides, and in the height, forming an extensive tract of moor-land, neither very steep or rocky, interspersed with a few farms, which,  
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in former times, served as sheelings to some of the low grounds upon each side.

*Rivers.*—The Ad is the greatest; it has its source in a marsh in the north extremity of the parish, and in its course through the moor-lands, from the junction of several rivulets, forms a great body of water, by the time it comes to the low grounds; and in its windings and curves, it exhibits a beautiful object through the whole strath; but is very destructive by overflowing its banks in rainy seasons. It discharges itself at Crinan, and abounds with sea and moor trouts, salmon, flounder and eel. There is a salmon-fishing upon it, and the fish is sold at 2 d. the lb. English to the neighbouring inhabitants, but the quantity sold is inconsiderable. They fish during the summer months, and till September; and did the proprietors of the fishing attend more to the preservation of the fish, when they come up the river to spawn, it might turn out more beneficial; and this will be the case when there is a regular market for said article in the country, which period is fast approaching. There are several more inconsiderable rivers, all of which abound in trout; but the next in size I mention, is one that runs due N. which is not very common; it takes its rise from a lake in the glen of Glasfary, 3 miles S. from Lochow, where it discharges itself. There are several lakes in the moor, all abounding in trout. Into some of those that are now good trouting lochs, that species of fish has been introduced within our own memory.

*Soil and Climate.*—The soil in the parish is various. That upon the banks of the Ad consists partly of a deep rich light loam, partly of a deep clay, and some gravelish; upon the E. side of the parish, by Lochfine, it is all a light gravelish soil; and upon the N. side, it is generally a  
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black loam, lying upon limestone. The lands upon the banks of the Ad are all cultivated, and produce, for the most part, tolerable crops of oats, barley, and potatoes; but they are often injured from the overflowings of the river, occasioned by the wet seasons. The air is generally moist, and the climate rainy, which renders farming here very precarious, and often unprofitable; the low grounds otherwise might turn out to very good account, and are capable of raising any of the ordinary crops of this country by proper cultivation; but the spirit of the farmer sinks, when his industrious efforts, attended with a high expense, are repaid, with a crop laid level with the surface before it comes to the time of filling, and consequently never ripens, or arrives at any perfection; therefore, whatever crops the soil may be capable of producing, the climate is most adapted for green crops.

*Union of Farms.*—As the climate is unfavourable for any other than green crops, and the farms extensive, a few of the most adventurous of the inhabitants, about 25 years back, began each to take farms, which were formerly occupied by 4 tenants, and to turn their attention to the rearing and jobbing of black cattle; a short time thereafter, 2 of the heritors introduced a few low countrymen, who rented sheep-farms in their own country, and were brought up in the profession of shepherds; the gentlemen who introduced them were not very fortunate in their men, as I believe the most of them were real adventurers, and self fugitated from home; and the last war coming on soon after their entry, put a stop to their speculative plans, bankrupted them effectually, and hurt their landlords; but they left their art, which was the source of the great and rapid augmentation of grass-farms, within these 15 years; for, the more discerning natives, who soon ob-

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served the ease of managing, and advantage of keeping a sheep stock, took up the business, and consequently, since the commencement of last peace, including the farms taken up by the low countrymen, which, for the most part, continued, as left by them, under a sheep-stock, there have been several junction of farms in the parish, and indeed the farms stocked with sheep are more calculated for them than any other kind of stock. This no doubt tended to lessen the population of the parish when it took place; but I am apt to imagine, that upon the whole the decrease has been small, if any, these many years; as there are two villages in the parish inhabited by 284 souls at present: which, 40 years ago, consisted only of three or four families.

*Population.*—The return to Dr Webster, in 1755, was 2751 souls. The number of souls in the parish, (December 1792), stood as follows:

Under 10 years of age,	-	-	665
Between 10 and 20,	-	-	476
Between 20 and 30,	-	-	227
Between 30 and 50,	-	-	169
Between 50 and 70,	-	-	17
Widows or widowers,	-	-	132
Married,	-	-	882
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			2568

There were of the above number 5 between 90 and 100; 44 between 80 and 90.

*Occupations.*—There are 6 principal, and 11 small heritors; 3 of the former, and 4 of the latter reside constantly

ly in the parish. There are 2 tenants, who pay above L. 250 Sterling of yearly rent, 1 who pays L. 200 Sterling, 4 who pay from L. 120 Sterling to L. 130; 3 who pay from L. 90 Sterling to L. 100, 3 who pay from L. 70 Sterling to L. 80, 2 who pay from L. 50 Sterling to L. 60, 5 who pay from L. 40 Sterling to L. 50, 5 who pay from L. 30 Sterling to L. 40, 16 who pay about L. 30 Sterling, 200 and upwards, who pay from L. 30 Sterling, so low as L. 6 Sterling. There are 5 blacksmiths, 32 weavers, 6 shoemakers, constantly employed within the parish, besides a number of inferior shoemakers, who, during the winter months, and half of the spring, are employed by the small tenants, and afterward earn their subsistence at road-making, fence-building, ditching, or herring-fishing. There are 30 boats annually employed by the small tenantry living upon Lochfine side in the herring-fishing; each boat requires 4 hands, and from what I can learn, every one, on an average, clears from L. 20 to L. 25 Sterling, free of all charges. They fish from July to Christmas. About 40 more of the young men go to the north herring-fishing. There are 2 masons, 6 millers, 6 tailors, 3 boat carpenters, 3 joiners, 2 wheelwrights, 2 tide-waiters, and 2 surgeons, and the rest are employed in farming and herding\*.

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*Diseases.*

\* *Births, Marriages, &c.*—The number of births for the yearly average of the 10 years, ending 1st October 1793, as taken from the parish register is 92. The number of the marriages taken, as above, is 26. The burials cannot be ascertained, there being 6 different burying places in the parish; and owing to the frequent removal of tenants, there are great numbers buried in the different burial grounds, who were residents in other parishes, and, *vice versa*, which is the case through all the burial grounds in the county.

*Diseases.*—Coughs, and rheumatisms are frequent, particularly among the lower class of people when advanced in years; which is not surprising, when the huts in which they for the most part live, and the climate are considered. The small-pox in former times used to carry off a number of the children; but since inoculation generally prevailed, which has been the case for upwards of 20 years, the disease is neither much dreaded, nor very mortal. There are sometimes very bad fevers among the lower class, commencing generally in the spring months, which are spread and continued by their visits and intercourse with one another, and often prove very mortal.

*Rents.*—The valued rent of the parish is L. 2532 Scots; the real gross rent for the year 1793 about L. 5700 Sterling. There is only a small portion of the parish surveyed, so that the rent the acre cannot be ascertained. The heritors have been very active for the last 20 years in meliorating their property with march-walls, and enclosures, which have greatly enhanced their value; for the tenants pay without a grudge  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for any money expended in these improvements; which clearly point them to be the best mode of improving their country. I must do them the justice to say, that some of them have been very attentive to beautify the parish by planting, for there are several considerable belts, and clumps of various kinds of timber, planted on different parts thereof, which at present exhibit a beautiful and agreeable variety to the traveller, and will be a future fund of profit and advantage to the estates wherein this improvement was adopted\*.

*Crops.*

\* When I mention this with pleasure respecting some of the estates, I cannot but regret the effect of entails upon two of the principal properties,  
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*Crops.*—Oats, barley, and potatoes, are the general crops. Part of the farms occupied by the principal heritors is laid down with clover and rye-grass. Oats are sown from the middle of March to the end of April; barley from the 12th to the end of May. The oats, if a dry summer, are ripe by the 20th August, and barley by the 5th; but if a wet season, barley takes to the 20th August, and oats to the 1st September before they are ready. The oats and barley produced are inconsiderable in proportion to the extent of the parish, but there are great crops of potatoes: The two former are very inadequate to the consumption of the people; but with the aid of the latter, they subsist themselves for eight months of the year.

*Stock.*—There are 490 horses, 3200 black cattle, 12,000 sheep. I cannot ascertain the yearly sales with any precision; but so far as I can learn, the average prices of the horses reared in the parish, taking good and bad, for the six years ending 1792, were from L. 6 to L. 6, 6s. each; that of the black cattle from L. 2, 15s. to L. 3 Sterling; the lambs brought from 3s. to 5s. Sterling; the hogs from 7s. to 10s.; the aged widders from 10s. to 13s.; and the aged sheep, or black ewes, sold at the fall of the year from 5s. to 7s. Sterling. The kind kept is what  
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from which the best lands in the parish are left in their original state, without any improvement, and valuable woods neglected, and allowed to decay, particularly on one of them, as the proprietors never resided upon either; but from their neglected state they have been no object of desire to the grazier or jobber, who might otherwise monopolize a part of them, and therefore the small tenants have mostly hitherto remained unmolested, from which they are the most populous in the parish; and I have to remark with regard to the gentleman who is a proprietor of one of those estates since the 1783, that he has uniformly shown a predilection for small tenants, even to his hurt in a few instances; a worthy trait in his character

we call here the Galloway sheep; they are black faced and black legged, strong and hardy, but rather coarse in the wool. There are still a few of the small white-faced sheep, the original stock of this country, whose wool is far superior to the present stock; but their weight is so inferior, that they are much on the decrease, and only kept by some of the smaller tenants. The white wool sold for the six years preceding Whitfunday 1793, at 7 s. 6 d. the stone in whole-sale; the laid wool at 5 s.; but what was retailed (probably  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the whole) sold from 1 s. 6 d. to 2 s. higher the stone. Six, and often five fleeces of the laid wool make a stone; from eight to ten go to a stone of the white.

*Price of Labour.*—A male servant bred to common labour, and fed by his employer, draws from L. 5, 15 s. to L. 6, 6 s. yearly; a female servant bred and fed as above, from L. 3 Sterling to L. 3, 10 s. and scarcely to be had for the two years ending Whitfunday 1793 at these wages; a common labourer without victuals from 1 s. 2 d. to 1 s. 4 d. the day, from the middle of March to the 1st of November; a tailor and shoemaker from 8 d. to 10 d. with victuals; a joiner, when employed for a temporary job, and not by the piece, 2 s. the day; and a mason 2 s. 4 d. A married workman employed through the year by the farmer, gets a house, kail-yard, peats, two cows grass, potatoe land, a stone of meal a-week, and L. 1 Sterling, amounting in all, *communibus annis*, to L. 12 Sterling.

*Church, Stipend, School, &c.*—There are three places of worship, and but one church in the parish; the incumbent should be absent every third Sunday from the mother-church, at the distance of six and twelve miles alternately; but the climate, and want of churches, render his attendance, particularly

particularly in the winter season, very irregular\*. The manse was built in 1763; its situation is damp; and though reckoned a good one when built, (there being at the time few manses built in the country), it was neither substantially built nor finished, and now requires a repair. The living consists of 80 bolls of meal, 9 bolls small oats, L. 45 Sterling, with a manse and glebe, consisting of six acres arable Scotch measure, and a servitude of 8 founs grafs upon the adjacent farm; value, *communibus annis*, L. 120 Sterling. Mr Campbell of Knockbuy, one of the principal heritors, is patron.—There is a parochial school, which 30 or 40 years ago was good and respectable; but since private education became fashionable, it is on the decline. There is a catechist, with a salary from the Royal bounty, in the braes of this and the neighbouring parish; and in the lower end there is a sewing and knitting mistress, with a salary from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and the incumbent expects against May to have a school upon Lochfineside, with a salary from the Society, a place in which there was one formerly, and is still very necessary for the good of the parish.

*Poor.*—The poor have no other fund than the Sunday collections; a fund very inadequate to supply their wants,  
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\* Though the incumbent mentioned the attention of the heritors to the melioration, and beautifying of their estates, he cannot pay them the same compliment with regard to the church, for they seem to have absorbed every ecclesiastical consideration in improving their properties, and augmenting their annual income. The church when built was among the best in the county; but it has the fault of all old churches, that of being long and narrow, which renders it very inconvenient. It was twice partially repaired within these 30 years, and stands now in need of a thorough one, owing to the economy of the heritors upon these occasions.

not exceeding L. 15 Sterling yearly ; but people of all ranks, particularly the small tenants, are hospitable, humane, and charitable to the poor, according to their ability ; from them they experience real sympathy in their distress. There are 36 upon the list, who receive a supply once a-year conformed to their respective situations, so far as the fund will admit at the time, and the most needy get a small interim aid through the rest of the year.

*General Character.*—The people are generally active, humane, and hospitable, middle-sized, and capable of bearing cold, wet, and hunger to a great degree ; they are not given to drinking, though, from their social disposition, when a number of them occasionally meet, they are apt to take a fitting together.

*Language.*—The language mostly spoken is the Gaelic ; though, from the frequent intercourse of the people with the low country, and the advantage of a more general education, which has been the case for the last 20 years, the greatest number of them speak and understand a little English. The names of the places are all derived from the Gaelic, and are expressive of their local situation, surface, some particular object in, or near them.

*Antiquities.*—The only vestiges of antiquity are the remains of three kinds of forts, built upon the summit of three hills in the W. end of the parish, which, from their situation, seem evidently to be watch towers for alarming the country in case of an invasion, as they are so placed, that from the lowest, which commands the landing from the west coast, an alarm might be given to the second, and from the second to the third, and so to others, in the  
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neighbouring parish of Kilmartin, by which the alarm might be spread 20 miles into the country, in the course of a few minutes ; and, according to tradition, the natives assembled at the sight of the alarm signal, and rushed onward to the place from whence the first signal came, till they met the enemy ; and some very large stones erected on end, which tradition calls the tombs of heroes, with several cairns near the coast, in which tombs containing urns have been found, show that the low grounds of this and the neighbouring parish, have been keenly contested.

*Roads and Bridges.*—The roads in this parish, and through most of the county, were formerly wrought by the statute-labour ; but in this manner they were never properly executed, nor kept in any tolerable repair. About 20 years ago the heritors of the county awoke from their lethargy to this first and most material improvement, and got an act of Parliament passed, specifying the different public lines through the county, and imposing 1 s. in the pound valuation as road stent ; and to expedite the execution of these lines, the most of them advanced at once 15 years road stent. And I know that the principal heritors of this district not only showed their public spirit on this, but some of them borrowed a few hundreds upon their own security, to finish the lines within the parish, when the cash advanced was exhausted ; so that in the course of a few years, 12 miles of road, 24 feet wide, was sufficiently executed on the E. and S. E. side of the parish, making part of the line from Inverary to Campbelltown, and 6 miles from Lochgilphead up the country, by the W. and N. W. side, making part of the line that is to join the Lorn district. But the forcing of these roads so rapidly has so far mortgaged the funds, that the unaffected at present are not sufficient to keep the roads  
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in proper repair, though in the course of a few years these mortgages will be extinguished, the by roads finished, and both kept in high order.—The most of the bridges were executed in the same way, by the heritors advancing the payment to the undertakers, till such time as the funds admitted of their being reimbursed; but their trouble and outlays were in some measure compensated by the enjoyment of these roads, and the beneficial effects of them to the district, which they saw and experienced.

*Advantages and Disadvantages.*—The parish has been considerably meliorated by the roads. The fuel mostly used is peats, which, though plentiful in general, are very scarce in some places, and in others quite exhausted; so that the parish is much obliged, and will be highly benefited by the strenuous and spirited exertion of Mr Dundas in bringing about the repeal of the duty upon coals carried coastways. Were the duty upon salt also taken off, it would contribute to the general advantage. The tract of the intended canal between Lochgilp and Crinan runs a considerable way by the west skirt of the parish; whatever may be the advantages of this arduous undertaking to the public, it is probable, that during the execution of the work, this and the neighbouring parishes may reap some benefit.

END OF THE THIRTEENTH VOLUME.