

NUMBER XIV.

PARISH OF KILFINAN.

(COUNTY AND SYNOD OF ARGYLL, PRESBYTERY OF  
DUNOON.)

*By the Rev. Mr. ALEXANDER M'FARLANE.*

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*Name, Situation, and Extent.*

THE parish of Kilfinan derives its name from St. Finan, a saint of the 7th century, and a disciple of the great Columba, abbot of St. Iona or I, near the island of Mull, and signifies, the church and burying-place dedicated to St Finan. It is 15 miles long, by 3, 4, 5, and, in some places, near 6 miles broad. It is bounded on the W. and N. W. by Lochfine, on the S. by the sea, which separates it from the island of Arran, supposed to be from 5 to 6 leagues over. The parish is divided by a small water that runs past the church, on the S. side of it, into Lochfine, into 2 unequal parts. The southern division is called Kerriff or Kerry, which is a Gaelic word, that signifies a quarter or fourth part of  
any

any thing ; and as it is by far the most extensive division, and the church standing upon it, the whole parish often goes by the name of the parish of the Kerry, and is fully as well known in the neighbourhood by that name, as by its real one ; but it is never written so. The northern division is called Otter, which is also a Gaelic word, descriptive of a shallow place, over which runs a gentle current ; and accordingly this division of the parish is so called from a most beautiful sand bank, which juts out into Lochfine, in a serpentine form, near the seat of Mr. Campbell of Otter, proprietor of the whole division but one farm. This bank is 1800 yards long, from water-mark to its remotest extremity at low water, and forms, with the land on the S side, an oblique, and on the N. an obtuse angle. In time of spring tides, it is entirely covered at high-water, and about 3 hours after the turn of the tide, the whole appears to within a few yards of its extremity ; and from its length, narrowness, and form, makes a very uncommon and pleasant appearance. It seems to be an encroachment of the sea upon the land, which, from its nature, could give it little opposition, being low, level, and channelly. On the N. side of the bank, where seems to have been the ancient channel of the loch, the water is very deep : on the S. side, where, according to conjecture, the surface has been peeled off by the united force of storms, and a strong current, it is very shallow ; ebbs a great way out in time of spring tides, and gives opportunity to the inhabitants in the neighbourhood to gather oysters, spout fish, mussels, and other various kinds of shell fish, which are there to be found in great perfection and abundance.

*Soil*

*Soil and Surface.*—Any variety that is to be found in the soil of this parish, is evidently the natural consequence of different situations. In some few flats, out of the reach of running waters, and not far distant from the sea, yet so far as not to have ever been overflowed by it, is to be seen a fine black mould lying upon a gravel bed, not deep, but abundantly fertile, and when properly laid out, produces excellent grass. In some low flats, near the level of the sea, and in all flat valleys, where running waters have, in the progress of time, traversed the ground by shifting their course (which in this country they continually do where they run through arable land), the soil is light and channelly, requires manure very frequently, but gives a sure and fertile, though not a very heavy crop. Near the S. point of the parish is to be found, in a few places, a thin stratum of black clay covering a gravelly bottom, and gives a crop light or heavy, according as it is deep and dry, or light and sour, but never ripens early. All the inland farms are cold and bleak, not so fit either for pasturage or tillage as those upon the coast. The crops upon them are generally as heavy, but not near so fertile, and are always considerably later in ripening than those upon the low grounds. All ground upon a declivity (or what is commonly called hanging ground), is very poor soil, the substance being washed out of it by the rains.

The surface is rugged, and the shore equally so, being all rocky, a few bays excepted; yet it produces little sea-weed for kelp. The only kelp which the present incumbent ever heard of being made in the parish, is a little that is yearly manufactured about the S. point,  
near

near the present seat of the family of Lamont, and upon the Kyles of Bute.

*Hills, Lakes, Rivers, Woods, &c.*—Although there are many hills in this parish, there are none of remarkable height; the most considerable are those which divide this from the parish of Glendarual. They are all mossy, and consequently barren. Heath and fog being their principal produce, is, in general, withered and weather-beaten. The most of them, however, produce one species of grass, though not in great abundance, which is very useful for cattle in the latter end of the season, particularly in spring, when provender generally turns scarce; I mean moor-bent, which is so hard and durable in its nature, that the severest winter has scarcely any other effect upon it, than to discolour it a little. Sheep are very fond of it in spring, and especially winterers, that is, cattle which are not housed at all, but are fed without in closes all the season over; and it is supposed to give them strength and vigour, sooner than the finest grass upon the low ground.

There are several small lakes, the largest of them not much exceeding half a mile long; and all abound in yellow trout of no great size. There are 4 waters, and as many beautiful bays; but those to which nature seems to have been most partial, are the bays of Kilfinan and Achlick, more especially the former, supposed by many to be one of the prettiest situations upon Lochfine. Upon these waters, there is, in times of rain, plenty of yellow trout, weighing from 1 to 6 lb. weight. It is said, that, some years ago, salmon of 16 lb. weight was often killed upon the waters of Kilfinan, and grilse very frequently, *i. e.* salmon that is supposed to want a year

or

or two of coming to its full growth. None of these kinds have been seen upon it of late years, however; at least for 12 years past, so far as we could hear of: and what made them disappear, or makes them so shy as to forsake their usual haunt, we are not able to account for, unless it be, that the ancient art of exaggerating is losing ground, and not to be found in such perfection now a-days, among the rising generation, as it was possessed by their fathers.

There is a considerable quantity of natural woods in the parish. They consist mostly of oak, ash, birch, elder, hazle, &c. But the natural plant of the soil seems to be ash; for both the planted and the spontaneous growth of it comes to a degree of perfection and size, that no other tree does; and its quality is, by those who manufacture it in towns for the purposes of fine workmanship, allowed to be superior to any thing of the kind that grows in the Low Country. This, however, may be a sign of the poverty of the soil, and the coldness of the climate; it being a well known fact, that slow growth makes timber fine in the reed, and hard and durable in its nature. In the interior part of the parish, plantations thrive pretty well, and also in the N. district of it, which lies upon Lochfine; as appears by that beautiful grove which surrounds the mansion-house of Mr. Campbell of Otter: but, on the S. point of the parish, where the experiment has been of late fairly tried by Mr. Lamont of Lamont, they do not promise so well, owing, no doubt, to the saline drift that is conveyed by the storms to every part of that neck of land, from the ocean which embraces it.

*Climate and Diseases.*—In this country, we have abundance  
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dance of rain, and very changeable weather, as much, perhaps, as in any part of Scotland whatever, more especially for several years past. This, we believe, is owing to the high hills of Arran, those of Sliabh Goil, and many others, with which we are surrounded, although at some distance, which break the clouds, and bring down the rain upon us. These rains generally come with a S. wind, a S. E., or a S. W. wind. With a W. wind, we have generally heavy and frequent showers, but no constant rain. An easterly wind is generally dry, and so is a northerly; and it is rare to see any rain at all with a N. E. wind. The rains often fall very copiously in the months of August and September, and do material injury to our crops, which consist mostly in oats, barley, hay, and potatoes\*.

*Instances*

\* Few epidemical diseases are known among us, excepting the small-pox, measles, and hooping cough. Fevers were, some time ago, very frequent and mortal in this parish, but much less so for several years past. The happy cause of this seems to be, that the people have, in a great measure, discontinued the foolish practice of visiting the sick in great crowds, especially upon Sundays, which, in the last age, was, in this country, considered as the particular business of the day. The intention, no doubt, was good, it being their design to administer comfort to the distressed; but, instead of alleviating, they seldom failed to add to his sufferings: by thronging the house, and corrupting the air, they fed the disorder, and weakened the patient: And what was also very natural to look for, when they retired, it frequently happened, that some of the company carried the contagion along with them. In those days, the universal belief of the lower ranks of people, appears to have been, that there was a fatality in all circumstances in life, that the most trivial circumstances had been foreordained, and that consequently, no person could either accelerate, or escape his fated death. In proportion as they have dropped that idea, and begin to be sensible, that man is left, at least in many things, to the freedom of his own will, and that, as a free agent, he may be instrumental in promoting his own temporal happiness, or multiplying

*Instances of Longevity.*—Few instances of longevity are recorded in this parish; but this cannot be attributed to the climate, which is abundantly wholesome. It requires no great penetration, however, to find out, at least a very supposable cause, which is, that the last generation have been exceedingly addicted to drinking, owing to their having carried on a ruinous contraband trade with the Isle of Man, to an astonishing extent; the bad effects of which are discoverable in the parish to this day. It was only in the southern district of the parish, viz. the Kerry, that this trade was carried on, and consequently they were then more wealthy, in general, than their neighbours in the northern division; but

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since

multiplying his misfortunes, they become more cautious in approaching any contagion which seems to them to be connected with danger.

In the course of 40 years back, epidemical stiches made their appearance 3 several times in the parish, and carried off a great number of people. The second visit of this disorder, was about the year 1776, and was very general and deadly over the whole country. The last was in the year 1784, when the disorder entered at the north end of the parish; and being very mortal, continued its progress through almost every farm of that division, called Otter, but did not cross the water at Kilfinan. By all accounts, the disorder was exactly the same at both these last periods, and was so very violent, that, in general, the patient was either carried off, or recovered within 48 hours, after his being seized. People of a plethoric habit, and especially young people, were most frequently attacked.

The blessed discovery of inoculation has been early practised in this parish, and, at all times, with great success; yet, it is much to be regretted, that few of the lower ranks can be persuaded to take the benefit of it. From 3 to 7 years is generally the longest interval between the visits of the measles in this parish. The last was in the year 1789, when a very remarkable circumstance attended it; upwards of 30 adult people, males and females, from 20 to 60 years of age, have been seized with the disorder, while the greatest number of the young children have escaped, some of them even in the very houses, and lying in the bosom of their parents when confined;

since that period, of the inhabitants of the Kerry, the greatest number have been bankrupt by misfortunes; others, by the habits they acquired, came to poverty; and being obliged to quit their farms, are succeeded by a complete set of new tenants from the neighbouring parishes; while the most of the inhabitants of the northern division, occupy the same lands upon which their forefathers lived comfortably for many generations before them.

A few instances of longevity, however, might be mentioned: Archibald M'Laughlane, a native of Otter, and who died in the Kerry, near 30 years ago, was 118 years of age; and in the harvest immediately before he died, was reckoned the best hay cutter upon the farm of Kilfinan, of which he occupied a part. When young, he was a man of such known bodily strength, that, although he was not quarrelsome himself, whenever a squabble ensued near him, which at that time was frequently the case in the churchyard of Kilfinan, at marriages and funerals, whenever he got notice, he immediately repaired to the spot, and his presence never failed to strike such terror, that both parties were very glad to cease from the strife. On this account, he was often called, as a by-name, Craobh na siochaidh, i. e. the peace-maker. Donald M'Intyre, who died in November 1792, was a native of the parish of Dalayich, in the presbytery of Lorn, and 96 years of age; and although he had no education, was a very intelligent conversible man, of uncommon memory, knew more of the history of Scotland, than many who had a regular education; could repeat a very great number of the poems of Ossian, Ullin, Oran, with a great part of the history of those heroes very correctly. He retained his faculties unimpaired, till the very last: and, within 6 days before he died, declared, he never was confined for half an hour  
by

by any kind of complaint, and that he did not know what it was to have a headach. He even escaped the small pox, measles, and hooping cough. He was a remarkable instance of industry and sobriety.

*Number of Proprietors.*—There are 9 proprietors, 6 of whom reside in the parish. The principal heritor is Mr. Lamont of Lamont, who possessed property in Argyllshire for a long period of years. The family resided in the parish of Dunoon, in view of the Clyde, and opposite the burgh of Rothsay, in Bute, until the reign of Charles I., when the then proprietor, Sir James Lamont of Lamont, supported the cause of that unhappy monarch, for which his family seat, the castle of Towart, was taken and destroyed by the Marquis of Argyll\*.

*Mode of Cultivation.*—The tenants in this parish are so much attached to the ancient mode of cultivation, that modern improvements in husbandry can scarcely be said to have found their way to our latitude. The soil seems much better calculated for pasturage than tillage: Hence it is the interest of the tenant to plough his ground very sparingly; and yet, in general, they adopt just the opposite rule, for without allowing it time enough to recover itself after much fatigue, they always plough more than double the quantity they are able properly to manure. Few of the tenants, indeed, understand farming, so as to do justice to their ground; and by far the greatest

\* There is in this parish the ruins of an old castle, called Afgog. It was, at the above period, in the possession of a cadet of that family, who, taking the same side with his chief, had his castle also destroyed, by order of the Marquis. The taking and destroying of these castles, composed part of the indictment, upon which the Marquis was tried and convicted, as appears by the State Trials.

est number, if they should be experienced farmers, want the means of doing it; as they are, in general, poor. There is plenty of excellent limestone in the parish, and convenient enough for the most of them; yet it is rare to see a kiln burnt for the use of the ground. It may be said, indeed, that the inconveniency of peats, and the oppressive tax, until of late, upon coals, is the cause of this; but allowing this to be a good reason, why is not every farm covered with shell-sand, which is found upon the coast in great abundance, and of the very best quality? All the farmers in the parish allow it to be far preferable to lime, yet very few make use of it. The very sea-weed, which is thrown in by the storm upon the shore, is often allowed to rot, where the tide has left it, although it is found to be as good manure for barley, as any that can be made use of. Of late years, indeed, there is one kind of improvement begun, and likely to become very general; I mean, reducing the number of horses in their ploughs, and using carts instead of cars. Formerly they had 4 horses in each plough, the most of them now plough by 3, and many by 2; and it is certain, besides the saving, that the ploughing is much better than it used to be. The only green crops that are raised in the parish, are a few pease, and potatoes in abundance. Summer fallowing is entirely unknown to them. As to these matters, it is thought they judge very right, for the soil is so weak, as not to bear summer fallowing, and the climate is no way favourable to green crops. The only trial that is known to have been made of raising wheat, was by Mr. Lamont of Lamont, who sowed about 3 firlots these two last seasons past, and it answered pretty well. There is not the smallest reason to doubt, that in many parts in this parish,

rich, the soil is capable of carrying wheat, if we knew how to prepare the ground.

*Implements of Husbandry.*—The Scotch plough is mostly used in this parish, and, in some few places, must continue to be used, where the ground happens to be very unlevel, and full of large stones under the surface. The tenants have no idea of the advantage of clearing away these stones out of their ground; nay, some of them assert, that there is an advantage in having them in it, because they give heat to the ground, and so contribute to manure it. They choose, therefore, to run the risk of breaking their ploughs several times in a season, and have the toil of digging yearly about a stone, where their plough does not reach, rather than remove it once for all, which, in most cases, would not be a very laborious operation. A few, however, make use of the English plough; and it is to be hoped, that the rest will soon follow their example. It is, indeed, surprising, that any farmer should want it, as it is plain to a demonstration, that it lays the ground infinitely better, and ploughs with much more ease to man and horse, than what the Scotch plough does; and the greatest part by far of the ground in this parish, is so smooth and level, that it suits it extremely well\*.

*Manures,*

\* Until of late, all the peats, manure, corn, &c. were carried upon cars or sledges, but now most of those who can afford it, have got carts, although, indeed, few have got cart roads to the peats. These are upon the whole, however, a great improvement, and one principal cause of their being able to reduce the number of their horses.

Number of ploughs in the parish,	-	-	86
----- of harrows,	-	-	262
----- of carts,	-	-	58

N. B. Of the ploughs, 8 only are made after the English construction.

*Manures, Obstacles to Improvement, &c.*—The principal part of the manure that is made use of in the parish, is what comes from the byre and stable, and is of various kinds, as all the cattle are houfed, summer and winter, excepting with a few graziers and shepherds, who never house any but their milch cows, and in winter their work horses. The summer dung, the farmers generally mix in August, with some rich earth, or moss, and perhaps a few ferns, and, where it may be conveniently had, some sea-weed; and laying these ingredients upon one another, stratum above stratum, each in its turn, they make up a mound which forms a compost midding or dunghill. In November, this composition is carted away to some ley ground, which is ploughed in January or February, and a second time in May; and being sown with barley, produces a good crop. All the rest of the dung gathered throughout the year, is divided between bear land and potatoes; which last article is generally a sure crop in this country, and, together with a store of herrings, which they provide in harvest, is the principal part of the people's subsistence throughout the year. The potatoes here are thought to be of a superior quality to those which grow in the Low Country, especially such as are to be seen about towns. It is difficult to say, whether the poverty of the tenants, the shortness of their leases, ignorance of farming, or a strong attachment to a sea-faring life, particularly to the herring fishing trade, operate most powerfully to the detriment of agriculture. But one thing is evident, that all these causes contribute, each of them their share, to produce this bad effect; and they are all the natural consequence of one cause, viz. a vain attempt of grasping, at the same time, at the profits of husbandry, and the gains of a sea-faring

faring trade. It is asserted by the farmers, that, without the money they make by fishing, and other shifts, they would not be able to pay the rent of their lands; that the produce of the farms is not nearly equal to the purpose. This may, indeed, be true, in the way they manage them; for, having two objects in view, they are not able to pay proper attention to either; consequently neither the one nor the other succeeds with them according to expectation; but it is equally certain, were they to apply totally to either, whether farming or fishing be their choice, that they would succeed better. Experience proves the fact: for all those who attend properly to their farms, and depend upon them alone for livelihood, are the most wealthy tenants in the parish. The tenants, in general, are poor; and the principal causes of their poverty, besides those that have been mentioned, are, 1st, That too many families are often crowded into one small farm, and possess it in common; 2dly, That they generally overstock their farms; i. e. they keep upon a farm a great many more cattle than it is well able to support, which is a very common, and a very great error; for it reduces the breed to a diminutive size; and, being ill fed, they are, in a manner, useless to the proprietors; 3dly, They plough much more of their ground than they are able properly to manure. It is not at all rare to see 5 or 6 tenants living upon the same small farm, and possessing it in the old mode of run-ridge; each of these keeps a cottager; and there are, perhaps, as many other small tenants, who have each a few acres of arable land, with grass for 2, 3, or 4 cows, cut out for himself, without any enclosure but a nominal line of march drawn between himself and the rest of the farm; and these small farms, so cut off, are here

called butts; in other places, they are termed crosses. Thus, very commonly from 8 to 15 families live upon one small farm, so that they must, by consequence, live very poorly themselves, although they pay but a very moderate rent to the landlord. The landlords, however, seem now clear to adopt a very different mode of letting their lands, which is, to conjoin 2 or 3 farms together, and let them as one possession to one tenant; by which means, they will receive a much greater rent, and the tenants will live more comfortably. Although the generality of tenants are thus small, yet there is in the parish 1 tenant who possesses 3 farms, 2 who possess 1 each, and 2 who possess 2 each.

*Seed Time and Harvest, &c.*—The farmers begin to sow oats in this parish in the beginning of April. When they have done with their oats, which is generally before the end of the month, they begin to plant their potatoes; and as this is an operation that seldom consumes much time, for they are all planted with the plough, they begin the sowing of barley in the beginning of May, and it is always the end of that month, or perhaps the beginning of June, before they have done. Next comes on the making of peats, which, together with leading the same, (a very troublesome and tedious job), consumes the most of the remaining part of summer. Barley harvest commonly begins about the middle of August, and oats are mostly cut in September and October. In wet late seasons, the harvest may not perhaps be entirely finished until the 12th of November. In the year 1787, it was still later. The soil of this parish, as well as that of Glendarual, seems peculiarly adapted for producing flax; and the farmers also seem inclined to

pay.

pay some attention to the raising of such a crop, but are discouraged from it, for the want of a lint-mill. Besides this, some of the proprietors restrict their tenants to a small quantity; as they think (and I believe justly) that flax, more than any other crop, scourges the ground.

The average produce of oats is thought rather better than 3 feeds, but not equal to 4.

That of barley from 6 to 7, and

— of potatoes 20 feeds.

*Seed sown in the parish yearly.*

	<i>Oats.</i>	<i>Barley.</i>	<i>Potatoes.</i>	<i>Pease</i>
Bolls	765	111½	174	5

According to the above averages, there appears to be in the parish for consumption, after deducting the seed for the next season, yearly; oats 1530; barley between 666 and 777; potatoes 3306 bolls.

The valued rent of the parish is 345l. 1s. 1½d. The real rent has considerably increased since the valuation. The real rent, it is expected, will, in a few years, be greatly raised, as one-third of the parish, which was formerly under pretty long leases, is to be let, and a considerable augmentation is expected.

*Prices of Grain and Provisions.*—The prices of all kinds of grain are, in this parish, at all times ruled by the prices in Greenock, one of the dearest markets in the west of Scotland. The price of oat meal is seldom below 13s. 4d. Sterling, or above one guinea the boll. The barley is mostly sold to the distiller to be manufactured into whisky, and brings generally, in the Kerry or S. division, from 19s. to 21s. Sterling; and in Otter, from 20s. to 24s. the boll. In the Kerry, the grain is inferior,

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inferior,

inferior, and the measure less than that of Otter. In the Kerry the Bute measure is made use of, and in Otter the Kintyre or Campbelton measure. The one is to the other as 17 to 16, *i. e.* the 16 pecks in Otter are equal to 17 pecks in Kerry; and the 3 firlots, or 12 pecks, in Otter, are equal to the Linlithgow boll\*.

### *Manufacture*

\* The parish was very seldom, if ever, known to produce grain sufficient for its own consumption; but as the quantity imported yearly must necessarily differ, in proportion to the favourableness or unfavourableness of the season, and the fertility of the crops, it is impossible to say, with accuracy, what the real amount of the imported grain may be, much less to guess at the average. In some remarkable good seasons, very little is required; in very bad ones, a great deal is necessary. The deficiency is supplied by Irish meal, imported first to Clyde, and from thence by the packets to this parish, or by Dumfries meal carried coastwise to the same place, and by the conveyance above mentioned, hither. These packets, which go irregularly from this parish to Greenock, are, upon the whole, much against the interest of the country. In the first place, they are a temptation to all ranks and degrees of people, to purchase many useless articles, which they could very conveniently dispense with; and thus they are daily draining the country of its cash. In the next place, they are the means of raising the price of every article for the use of the table, such as veal, lamb, hens, eggs, &c.; all which things are sent from here to Greenock, being always a high and ready market. This is particularly against tradesmen, and all others whose tables depend entirely upon the markets, having no farms of their own to supply them. To dispose of these articles is a sufficient excuse, and the conveniency of the packet a strong enough inducement to a number of young persons of too much curiosity to pay frequent visits to Greenock and Port-Glasgow, idle away their time, sometimes fall into bad company, and often spend more money before they return, than the value of the cargo they carried abroad with them. At best, they do but exchange the useful commodities they had to dispose of for things trifling and superfluous, which serve to keep up the extravagance of dress, and are of no real advantage. Had the parish been, indeed, a place of trade, or manufacture, packets would certainly be useful, and even necessary; but this not being the case, neither likely to be so, either less or more, it is difficult to say what good end they serve; and their hurt to the country is visible in many respects.

### *Wages*

*Manufacture and Fisheries.*—There is a small quantity of kelp made yearly in the S. end of the parish, upon the estate, and near the seat of the family of Lamont of Lamont, for which the proprietor gets a yearly rent. Few hands are employed to make so small a quantity. The herring-fishing takes up a great part of the time, and employs almost all the young men, and many of the married men, in this parish, during the season of it; which commonly begins in July and ends about Christmas. There are 21 open boats belonging to the parish, each manned with 4 hands, and constantly employed in catching herrings, in Lochfine, on the E. coast of Kintyre, or the coast of Arran, in Clyde, Lochlong, or wherever else they may appear upon the coast; and for several seasons past have been pretty successful. Their common haunt is the E. coast of Kintyre and Lochfine, but they are to be found occasionally in the other lochs mentioned. They<sup>r</sup> generally make in a season from 50l. to 100l. each boat; and some of the most successful ones, perhaps, above 120l.; so that they have  
from

*Wages and Price of Labour.*—Servants wages are high. A man servant gets from 2l. 10s. to 4l. 4s. in the half year, with victuals and shoes. A maid servant from 1l. 1s. to 2l. 2s., with victuals, shoes, and some other perquisites, the half year. A day-labourer gets from 6d. to 8d., with victuals, the day; from 1s. to 14d., without victuals. A woman working by the day gets from 4d. to 6d. and victuals, and from 6d. to 8d. without victuals. A tailor gets 8d. the day, with victuals; a shoemaker 8d. for the pair shoes, and victuals; a wright 1s. and victuals; a carpenter and a sawer the same. Weavers, as in all other places, are paid by the yard, and according to the fineness of the cloth. Besides wages being so high, labourers are remarkably scarce, especially in harvest; and this is owing to the herring-fishing, which is at that season at its height, and which the people here always prefer to any other kind of work, being less toil, and more gain—Services are not abolished in the parish by any of the residing heritors. They are seldom, however, exacted with such rigour as to do material injury to the tenants.

from 1cl. to 24l. to the share, the boat having an equal dividend with each of the hands. These are only the most successful, and who attend the fishing closely from the beginning to the end of the season. There are many others who follow the trade, but having also a small share of a farm or a butt, give only a partial attendance; and the shares of these are generally found at the end of the season to be very inconsiderable. Besides the number of hands thus employed at home in this trade, there is a great number, of both married and unmarried men, who go to the North Highlands aboard of the bounty vessels, and their wages in general are from 1l. 5s. to 1l. 16s. a month, with a barrel or half a barrel of herrings, according to the time they are out. The vessels they go aboard of, are those which sail from Greenock, Port-Glasgow, and Rothfay.

*Inns.*—There are 11 inns or public-houses in the parish. Two of them are slated, but all of them in very bad repair, and so exceedingly ill kept, that a traveller can scarcely get a decent bed, or a comfortable breakfast, in the best of them.

*Roads and Bridges.*—There are only 3 small bridges in the parish, and the roads are exceeding bad; notwithstanding a good deal of money has been from time to time expended upon them, they are in some places even impassable. This is partly owing to the very great length of the line, and the extreme difficulty of making it, and partly to the employing hitherto of country people for making them, who did not understand the business. By these ignorant undertakers, a great deal has been blocked out, and no part properly finished;

and when those parts which were thought to be made, were neglected for a few years, and allowed to fall into disrepair, they became the worst of the whole, at least, softer than what has remained untouched. The length of the principal line, from the public road at the head of Lochfine, to the S. point of this parish at Aird Lamont, may, at a moderate computation, be reckoned above 40 miles. Of that more than the half is now completely finished through the parish of Kilmorich and the united parishes of Strachur and Stralachlan, and they are now working towards the borders of this parish; as there is a proper undertaker now employed, we hope the remaining part will be finished next season. It is also intended to look out for an undertaker to contract for the bridges, which will be many in number, but none of any great size; without which the roads, however good, would be entirely useless, as there are many small waters impassable to wheeled machines. Besides this great line, there is another cross road through this parish, which is now nearly finished. It comes off from the great line from Inverary to Campbeltown near Lochgilphead, crosses Lochfine at the ferry of Otter, traverses this parish near the N. end; that of Glendarual at the low or S. part of it; enters the parish of Inverchaolan at Lochstravon-head, and comes to the Clyde at Dunoon, a village on the Cowal side, about 6 miles from Greenock.

*Harbours.*—There are no real harbours on the coast of this parish. The best anchorage places are in the Kyles of Bute, which, as was already observed, is a narrow sound that divides this parish from that island. In a variety of places upon either side of that sound, a  
vessel

vessel of almost any burden may ride safe enough at anchor from any wind that blows. There is pretty good anchorage also at the ferry of Otter, already mentioned, although not so well sheltered as the Kyles of Bute.

*Ferries.*—There are 3 ferries; one, already mentioned, at Otter, near the N. end of the parish, across Lochfine to the parish of Kilmichael, in the district of Argyll. At this ferry, the loch is supposed to be near a league broad, and the fare is 3d. Sterling each man; 9d. each horse. It is badly attended on either side as to hands and boats; and at the inns very ordinary accommodation is to be had, when the traveller happens to be storm-staid. This is very surprising, and much to be regretted, as it is very much frequented, being on the very public line of road from all that part of Argyllshire lying on the N. W. side of Lochfine, to Cowal, Greenock, Port-Glasgow, and all the adjacent parts of the Low Country. The other 2 ferries, are one from Bute to this parish, across the Kyles, and the other from this parish across Lochfine on the line of road from Rothfay, in Bute, to Tarbert, a village on the W. of Lochfine, about half way from Inverary to Campbleton. This line is not near so publick as that through the N. end of the parish; and the state of the ferries is much the same, only the houses are rather worse.

*Church, Stipend, &c.*—The church was repaired, or almost rebuilt in the year 1759, and is now little more than half-seated; but had it been entirely and properly finished within, it would only accommodate two-thirds of the congregation, even in summer, when they come out in the greatest numbers. In winter there is room enough,

as it is, for all that can attend; owing to the parish being so long and narrow, and the roads so bad, all the people in the extremities, and the old and feeble throughout the whole, must be content to stay at home. When we consider, that, some time ago, the parish was much more populous, and the church scarcely so well seated, it is difficult to guess how the congregation could be at all accommodated; unless we suppose, they did not then assemble so regularly as now. Indeed, if we judge from the proportion which the collections of these times bear to those of our own time, it favours much the supposition; besides that we have the testimony of many old men to confirm the same. The church stands in need now of a second repair, which it is to be hoped it will soon have. The living is 5 chalders oat meal, Dutch weight, 8 stone to the boll; 1 chalder barley, Linlithgow measure; with 27l. 15s. 8½d. Sterling in money, including the allowance for communion elements. Mr. Lamont of Lamont is patron. The manse was built in the year 1746, and has never been a sufficient house. It has got a partial repair in the year 1781, and stands now very much in need of another; although it is to be hoped the heritors will rather build a new one, than repair so bad a house. The glebe, including the garden, area of the manse and office-houses, is 3 acres, 2 roods, and 12 perches. Three-fourths of an acre of that are mofs, which the present incumbent has attempted to drain and improve at considerable expence, but which he despairs of ever seeing arable\*.

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I i

Poor

\* The grafs having never hitherto been designed, the minister has a servitude of 2 cows grafs, and a horse grafs, on the farm of Kilfinan, whereon stands his manse, church, and glebe. It would have been much  
more

*Poor and Schools*—The number of poor upon the session-roll at present is 29. But there are a great many others, who, although they are not considered so very indigent as to have a claim upon the funds, yet go about begging among the tenants as often as the rest, and are as liberally supplied. The only permanent fund in the parish, for their supply, is 10s. Sterling, being the yearly interest of money mortified for their behoof, in the year 1737, by a Mr. Lamont of Kilfinan, who granted his bond to the session for payment of the above sum, yearly, in all time coming; together with the various collections made at church on Sundays, at marriages and baptisms, with small dues for proclamations, fornication fines, and fees paid for the mort-cloth. But their principal support is begging: and if the late excellent regulation that required all poor to keep within their own parishes, had been properly adhered to, and strangers kept off, our own poor might be tolerably well provided for. The funds have been hitherto in the management of the session; but it is uncertain how long they will continue so, as the session seems now very desirous to devolve this trouble upon the heritors; which is indeed but reasonable, as they are the persons who are liable for the maintenance of the poor\*.

The

more for the interest of the proprietor of the farm and the minister both, that the grass had been designed, contiguous to the arable part of the glebe; as, in that case, the one might let his farm to much better advantage, when freed from the disagreeable burden to which it is now subjected; and the other, having his whole ground together, might enclose and improve it to better purpose.

\* The session has been in the use of meeting regularly once a year, to settle with the treasurer, and to distribute among the poor out of their capital, in such proportions as they could judge most proper, according

to

The parochial school is taught at the church. The salary is 4l. 6s. 3d. There is besides 4l. 15s. 6½d. interest of money mortified for the benefit of the school of Kilfinan, partly by the Mr. Lamont who left the mortification for the poor of the parish, as already mentioned, and partly by a lady whose name is unknown\*.

*Population.*—The return to Dr. Webster in 1755 was  
 I i 2 1793

to the various necessities of the indigent. In case of sickness or accidental misfortunes happening to any of them, that might disable them from going about in quest of subsistence, they are considered of from time to time, the treasurer being appointed to give them such small donations, as will be a temporary relief; and the expenses of their funeral, to a certain extent, are always defrayed out of the funds, when they happen to die without leaving a subject of their own adequate to the purpose. The present incumbent, soon after his admission, observing there was very little cash in the treasury, and considering, that 10s., with any collections, &c. that could be expected, was too precarious a fund for such a number of poor as the roll exhibited, suggested to the session a plan of augmenting the trifling sum which they then had in the treasury, by such yearly savings as might be found convenient, until the capital should amount to 100l. The session having readily adopted this plan, the object is now nearly accomplished; and, after the first general meeting of the session, the poor may receive near double the sum they were in use of getting. These savings were made only in good and plentiful seasons; and when there happens a scarcity, or when the price of meal is very high, as it is this present year, there is a meeting extraordinary held to distribute among the poor according to their need.

\* The average number of scholars, for ten years past, reckoning from 1783, inclusive, is,

For the winter quarter,	-	-	55 scholars.
For the spring ditto,	-	-	43 ditto.
For the summer ditto,	-	-	28 ditto.

In summer last, viz. in 1793, there have been only 4 scholars.

There is another school that has been planted in the parish several years ago, by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; but as the schoolmaster does not receive the accommodation and perquisites required by the Society, and in consideration that the number of scholars is but small, the Society are now talking of taking it away.

1793 souls. The present incumbent could find no record in the parish to show its ancient state of population at any period whatever; not even a catalogue either of communicants or examinable persons \*. It is certain, however, from the testimony of people now living, that the parish has been more populous than it now is. The evident causes of its decrease, in point of population, are, The introduction of pasturage, instead of farming, and conjoining 2 or 3 farms together into one possession. By this union of farms, there are possessions in the parish whereon resided formerly from 12 to 16 families, now inhabited only by 1 or 2. The smuggling business being at an end, contributed also to depopulate this parish; the most of those who dealt in it being bankrupt, were obliged to leave the place in order to push their fortune somewhere else.

If the prices of cattle had continued as high as they have been for some years past, there is reason to believe, that the whole of this parish would soon be converted into such pastures as those above mentioned; but the prices having this year fallen considerably, and without any prospect of rising very suddenly, owing to the present stagnation in trade, and the banks having given up discounting bills, it is highly probable, that the rapid progress of depopulation will also receive a proportionable check; and that the proprietors will find it  
 their

\* The cause of this seems to be, that his immediate predecessor, who was minister of the parish upwards of 4 years, was in such a bad state of health, as not to be able to examine the people, nor administer the sacrament all that time; and the last minister of the parish, prior to that period, also, was so superannuated, and fell into such bad health, that he was obliged to leave his charge to an assistant, some years before his death. So that during 9 years prior to the admission of the present incumbent, the sacrament was administered only once in the parish.

their interest to let their farms to farmers, instead of drovers and shepherds.

According to an exact survey taken in April 1793, the number of inhabitants in the parish of Kilfinan, was as follows .

Families,	-	310	Farmers,	-	-	98
Souls,	-	1417	Sailors and fishers,	-	-	112
Of these under 10 years,	-	342	Wrights,	-	-	7
From 10 to 20 years,	-	282	Weavers,	-	-	38
— 20 to 30,	-	200	Tailors,	-	-	22
— 30 to 40,	-	119	Shoemakers,	-	-	11
— 40 to 50,	-	162	Innkeepers,	-	-	11
— 50 to 60,	-	100	Millers,	-	-	3
— 60 to 70,	-	107	Cowans,	-	-	12
— 70 to 80,	-	78	Cottagers,	-	-	212
— 80 to 90,	-	25	Smiths,	-	-	3
— 90 to 100	-	3	Flaxdresser,	-	-	1
Communicants,	-	518	Distiller,	-	-	1
Average in families,	4	74-3	10th.	Dyer, and Waulk Miller,	-	1
All belonging to the Established Church.				Writer,	-	1
				Kelper,	-	1
				Justices of the Peace,	-	2
Divided by their professions.				Bachelors above 50,	-	10
Heritors residing,	-	6	Old Maids above 40,	-	-	31
Minister,	-	1	Widowers,	-	-	8
Elders and deacons,	-	12	Widows,	-	-	44

Average of births and marriages for 10 years, preceding October 1792, viz.

Births or Baptisms,	-	-	47	3-10ths.
Marriages,	-	-	10	3-10ths.

In the above account of tradesmen, it is proper to observe, that masters, journeymen, and apprentices, are all taken into the number, and perhaps some of them, who work at times at different trades, may be twice reckoned, especially among the fishers, as many of them have other trades, at which they work occasionally, and some

some have farms, and so may be reckoned among the farmers.

*Horses, Cows, and Sheep.*—The horses are of various kinds; some of a Low Country breed, some of the real Highland kind, and many of a cross breed between the two. There were some Arabian stone horses brought to the neighbourhood, and one of them to this parish, some years ago, which hurt the breed very much; for, being of a delicate kind, they do not answer either the climate or the keeping, so well as other horses. By far the greatest number, and those that suit the country best, are real Highlanders; but they are here rather smaller in general than the ordinary size, owing to the bad keeping. Scarcely the half of the number of horses needed in the parish are reared in it, but bought at the markets on the N. side of Lochfine, by jockies, and sold here to the farmers. Their prices are various, from 5*l.* to 15*l.*

The cows are neither so large nor so handsome as they are in most of the neighbouring parishes, especially on the N. side of Lochfine; and this is also owing to overstocking the farms, and housing them at night: for they are all in the house at night, young and old, I mean with the common tenants. Some also keep a few Low Country cows, believing that they give more milk; and this too hurts the breed. The average value of tidy cows may be about 3*l.* 10*s.*; of dry cows about 2*l.* 10*s.*

The sheep are almost all of the black faced kind, and are rather diminutive too, owing to the same cause that was assigned for black cattle being underfized. Of them, however, there is not a very principal stock in the parish, as all pastures here are mixed pastures; the graziers

ziers keeping a number of horses, black cattle, and sheep, together. The small white faced Highland kinds are all gone, which some think is to be regretted, as they were undoubtedly better mutton, and their wool infinitely finer than that of others. They were not found, however, so profitable, it seems, as they did not draw such long prices when brought to market.

Number of working horses in the parish,	272
———— of black cattle come to full growth,	1965
———— of sheep ditto,	5476
———— of swine,	65

Few of the swine are reared in this parish, but bought in from other parishes in summer or beginning of harvest; and they are seldom kept longer than till winter, when they are fattened mostly upon potatoes, and killed.

*Coal and Fuel.*—The fuel made use of in this parish by all the common people, and mostly by the better sort, is peats; which, as they lie generally at an exceeding great distance, and the roads to the mosses bad, are remarkably troublesome and expensive. The mode of carrying them home is, by many, in bags in back loads, by some in creels upon cars or sledges; and by a few, where the ground is more level, or where the roads happen to be better attended to, upon carts. The making, preparing, and leading of these peats consumes the greatest part of the people's time in summer; and too often, in spite of all their labour and attention, they lose the most of them, from the wetness of the climate, and the softness of the roads. The lairds, and others who can afford it, have generally some coals besides their peats, and some burn very little but coals.

coals

coals are carried by water from Glasgow or Irvine ; and notwithstanding the freight being very high, they are reckoned, upon the whole, especially now that the duty is taken off them, cheaper than peats ; and it would undoubtedly be the interest of the tenants, who have mostly boats of their own, to carry coals from Glasgow, rather than lose their time, and spoil their horses working at peats. The freight from Glasgow is generally between 2s. and 2s. 6d. the single cart ; but those who take a great cargo, and employ gaberts, get them a little cheaper.

*Antiquities.*—There is nothing remarkable of this kind to be seen in this parish, excepting cairns, duns, and borradhs. These cairns, of which there are but few in this parish, are large piles of stones heaped together, where battles are supposed to have been fought, and where heroes fell, and are buried. In many parts of the Highlands, where they are to be seen, tradition is very distinct concerning them, and generally the name of the person or persons put to death sticks to the cairn.

Duns are very numerous, not only in this, but in all parishes in the Highlands. They are a row of large stones put together, generally in a circular form, on the top of conspicuous hills, not far from, and always in sight of one another. In this parish, where as many of them are to be seen, in proportion to the extent of the place, as any where we know ; they are generally on hills of a conical figure. They are supposed to have been places for kindling fires on, for the purpose of warning the country, and summoning the people to assemble for the common defence, on the sudden appearance of an enemy.

Borra

Borra or borrhadh, is also a pile of stones, but differs from a cairn in many respects, viz. in external figure, being always oblong in internal construction, and in its size and design. There are 2 vestiges of them in this parish, which, although they are mostly now dilapidated for building of houses and walls, yet so much remain of each, as to show distinctly what they once were. The one of them, which is the largest, is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile N. from the parish church, a little above the great line of road, on the top of an eminence, near a moss. This immense pile of stones was, till last summer, near 40 yards long, of considerable breadth, and amazing depth. At the bottom, from the one end to the other, there was a number of small apartments or cells, end to end, each made up of 5 or 7 large flags. Each cell was about 6 feet long, 4 broad; and such of them as remained to be seen in our time, about 5 feet high. One large flag made up each side; and another, which was generally of a curved figure, to throw off the water, covered it for a roof: the end sometimes was made up of 2, and an open between them wide enough for a man to squeeze himself through: sometimes there was only 1 flag in the end, and only half as high as the side flags, so that the entry was over it; and in these there were only 5 flags. They were generally built on an eminence, where the fall of the water was from thence on either side; and when that was not the case, the cells were at some distance from the bottom of the pile or borrhadh. The cells were not always in a straight line from end to end, but they were always so regular, as that the same communication pervaded the whole\*.

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About

\* There are various conjectures about their use and design. Some think they were burying places for the ashes of heroes and great warriors,

About 3 miles S. from the church, and not far from the sea, is to be seen the foundation, and a small part of the wall of a chapel, surrounded by a church-yard, on a small field called Ardmarnock, *i. e.* St. Marnock's Field. In this church-yard was found, some years ago, a stone very prettily cut, and a long inscription on it, as the people who saw, think, in Latin: but they were so senseless as to make use of the stone in building a house on the farm. About 300 yards above this chapel, on an eminence, a cell, and part of another, appears in the end of a pile of stones or borradh, exactly similar to, but much smaller than the one I have been describing. From what remains of this cairn or borradh, it seems to

riors, and human bones have been often found in them. Others believe them to have been concealed beds or skulking places for robbers and plunderers. The objection to this is, the confinement in such small apartments, and the probability of their being found out by the smoke of their fire, and, in case of being found, the certainty of being put to death, as there could be no possibility of escape. Another opinion, fully as likely, is, that they were places of defence for herds, who were sent at a distance with the cattle, for the sake of clean grass, to defend them at night from wolves, and other wild beasts, which at that time overran the country. For my own part, I must acknowledge, that I am not satisfied with any of these conjectures, but think it much more probable, that they were places of concealment, not for plunderers, but for booty. It is a well known fact, that it was a very general custom among the inhabitants of the Highlands, and that too at no very remote period, that a party of one clan should arm themselves, and repair to a distant country, plunder and carry off the effects and cattle of some other clan; and if they were fortunate enough to escape the pursuit, and to bring them to their own country in safety, they immediately slaughtered them, salted them in their own hides, and concealed them the best way they could. Is it not likely enough that the places above mentioned were contrived for this purpose? Indeed, any person who has seen them, must, I think, allow they were as suitable for this design as could well be imagined; for being surrounded with wood, as they all were, and covered over with heath or grass, they appeared such a natural protuberance, that they could not be suspected as artificial.

to have been only about 20 yards long; and the cells, from the sample that is to be seen, were also smaller than those in the other mentioned\*.

There are a few Druidical stones to be seen in the parish, with some traces of those circular rings of stones supposed to have been their places of worship. It is unnecessary to mention, that these Druidical stones are mostly very long, and standing perpendicular. One of those in this parish is among the highest, perhaps, in the country:

On a rocky point, on the coast of Lochfine, about a mile below the church, is to be seen the vestige of a building called *Gaisleal Mhic Eobhuin*, i. e. M'Ewen's Castle. It was a wide, but irregular building, neither square nor circular, perhaps nearer a pentagon than any other plan: it does not appear to have been built with any kind of mortar; but, from the quantity of rubbish, it must have been of a considerable height. This M'Ewen was the chief of a clan, and proprietor of the northern division of the parish, called Otter. His possession of it must have been of very remote antiquity; for there is

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\* There is a tradition in the country, which has wonderfully obtained universal credit; that the entire cell that is to be seen in this borradh was the place where St. Marnock used to retire for the purposes of devotion, fasting, and penance, and likewise where he heard confessions; which very much excited my curiosity, as well as that of many others, to see it. But upon visiting the place, and viewing the cell, I could not but wonder at the unaccountable credulity of those who could believe such an unlikely story. For the very size of it is such, that St. Marnock must have been a very little man, as well as the person confessing, to find room in it, unless in a very awkward posture. It is therefore most likely, that the idea had been adopted from its vicinity to the chapel above mentioned, dedicated to St. Marnock. For my own part, I am much more disposed to think, that, instead of its being the cell of a saint, it is more likely to have been the den of a thief; I mean a place contrived by plunderers, as I have said above, for concealing their booty.

no record nor tradition that says who possessed the property before them. Many of the clan still reside upon the estate.

*Miscellaneous Observations.*—All the lands in this parish are thirled to certain mills, to the extent of the 16th part of the oats, the 11th part of the barley. They are also obliged to have their smith-work done by certain smiths; which has a bad effect, as it tends to make these tradesmen lazy and inattentive; indifferent whether they do their work sufficient or otherwise, being sure, that the people cannot employ any but themselves. In the northern district, they are obliged to pay full multure to the miller, even for the barley they sell to distillers out of the parish; which is a very great hardship to the farmer, when there is not one in the lands perhaps to buy it. There are no manufactures carried on in this parish, and probably never will, on account of the scarcity of the fuel, which is one of the greatest disadvantages the inhabitants lie under. Another disadvantage is the want of a regular post and post-office in the neighbourhood, having none nearer than Inverary, which is near 30 miles from some parts of this parish. This puts us to the expense of employing a runner once a-week; and the neighbouring parish of Glendarual is in the same situation. Glendarual is a very central place for a post-office, for the whole of the low part of Cowal, and in the middle of a straight line of road between Inverary and Rothsay. It would be a very general good to plant a post-office there, and the commerce between the two places could afford not only to pay the post, but would probably return some revenue to government.—Superstition is losing ground  
in

in this parish pretty fast, although not in the same proportion, perhaps, as it has done on the N. side of Lochfine. We cannot ascribe this to a more likely cause, than that formerly it may have prevailed more in these parts, and that the clergy have on that account thought it necessary to be at great pains in rooting it out. There is one pernicious practice that prevails much in this parish, which took its rise from this source, which is, that of carrying their children out to baptism the first or second day after birth. Many of them, although they had it in their option to have their children baptized in their own houses, by waiting one day, prefer carrying them 7 or 8 miles to church, in the worst weather in December or January, by which folly they too often sacrifice the lives of their infants to the phantom of superstition. It is not recorded, that any native of this parish has been executed for any crime whatever. There have been 2 suicides about 20 years ago. The language most commonly spoken in this parish is the Gaelic, although not in that degree of purity and perfection as on the N. side of Lochfine. Almost all the names of places are derived from it, and are, in general, descriptive of their appearance and situation. The people in general are of a middle stature, rather thicker in proportion to their height than the inhabitants of the Low Country. They are more attached to a seafaring life than to husbandry; and although pretty often at sea, they are in general sober. There is plenty of fish of various kinds to be found in Lochfine; such as cod, from 1 to 5 lb. weight; whittings from 1 to 3 lb.; haddock from 1 to 4 lb.; plenty of sea-th of different sizes, and skate in abundance. About the S. point of the parish, plenty of lobsters and partens or crabs; mackerel is  
sometimes,

sometimes, but seldom, to be found upon the coast. There is a good deal of salmon in the loch ; but there is no salmon draught in this parish. All the kinds of sea-fowl common to the Highlands, and of the moorfowl also, excepting tarmagans, frequent this parish. The tarmagan is a bird, although very tame, or rather stupid, yet is never to be found but in very high hills, and where the grass is pretty clean. He has a wonderful aversion to sheep walks. There are various kinds of migratory birds, such as the scale drake, widgeon, solon goose or gannet, barnacle, swan, wild goose, sterling, teal, king's fisher, fieldfare, stone-chatter, green plover, lapwing, cuckoo, swallow, woodcock, snipe, with a great variety of other sea-fowl, such as allan, hawk, scarts, cormorants, and many kinds of duckers.

All the slated houses in the parish habited and uninhabited, are 15.

NUMBER