

NUMBER XII.

PARISH OF KILMORY,

(ISLE OF ARRAN, COUNTY OF BUTE, SYNOD OF ARGYLE, PRESBYTERY OF KINTYRE.)

By the Rev. Mr JOHN HAMILTON.

Origin of the Names Arran, Kilmory, &c.

TRADITION says, that the name *Arran* is derived from a plat of ground in the north end of the island, where a battle was fought by Fin or Fingal, (the chief of the giants,) who inhabited this island, with Manus, the King of Swedland's son, where was a great slaughter. Fingal being conqueror, the plat of ground was called in Gaelic by a name which literally signifies, "Fin's slaughter." *Ar* and *Fin* being joined, make the name in Gaelic to be, in the genitive, *Ar-fhin*, or the "Slaughter of Fin," which by degrees was written *Arran*.—*Kilmory* signifies, in Gaelic, "St Mary's Chapel," or in Gaelic itself, *Cill Mhuire*. The island of Arran contains only two parishes, Kilmory and Kilbride. Kilmory parish extends 30 miles in a semicircular form, from Dippin on the south

south-east, to Lochrannza, in the north extreme of Arran. It is bounded on the S. E. S. W. and N. W. by the sea; and in the narrowest place is only 6 miles from Kintyre; on the N. E. by a spacious central common moor, where the horses and sheep of the island range promiscuously in summer.—The surface of the parish is uneven and hilly; the soil is various, partly gravelly, clay, and mossy, and is capable of producing light crops of barley, oats, (in some places,) pease, and flax only for private use; but potatoes are planted in every farm, and are the general food of the people.

Diseases.—The diseases here, are cancers, rheums, fevers brought from other countries, and a great death of newborn infants, by the falling down of the jaws; and some women die in childbed, both which last two are attributed to the unskilfulness of midwives, who venture upon the practice from natural courage, without necessary and proper knowledge, there being none duly qualified in the island. The oldest man now living in the parish is 88, a few more have turned 80, and there has been an instance of 1 who reached 95.

Rivers, Lochs or Lakes.—The burns here, which scarce deserve the name of rivers, have, some of them, their source from lochs or lakes in the mountains, and some from numberless springs; after a short and rapid course they empty themselves into the sea; they abound with fine trouts, and some salmon. There are 3 lochs or lakes; the principal of which is Earlsay loch, in the west of the island, which abounds with trouts of different sizes, and fine salmon, which are caught by cruives and draught-lines.

Caves.—

Caves.—There are several natural caves, the principal, and which highly excites the curiosity of strangers of all ranks, is one in the west of the island, opposite to Campbelltown, called the King's Cove, because, as tradition affirms, King Robert de Bruce and his retinue lodged in it for some time, when taking shelter in retired places, before his defeat of John Baliol, and accession to the throne of Scotland. It is 40 yards long, 16 broad, and about 20 high, in which are several engravings and antique figures; seemingly a coat of arms, and forms of weapons are cut in the rock; a little within the entry are the letters M. D. R. The cave is so spacious, that sermons have been preached in it to some hundreds of hearers at different times. About 3 miles south from it is another cave, which could contain 200 persons; but nothing else remarkable in it.

Hills and Sea Coast.—The highest hill is *Beinnbharfionn*, or the "Mountain of the white top," so called, from its being covered a great part of the year with snow; it stands in the N. W. part of the island, and is supposed to be 2 miles high; but the adjacent mountain called *Goatfield*, though not quite so high, is yet more remarkable, as it produces brilliant stones. The sea-coast, especially in the E. and S. part of the parish, is a proud and very unhospitalable shore; but towards the W. and N. somewhat less so, excepting a large sunken rock in the W. S. W. part of the parish, almost opposite to Campbelltown, called the Iron Rock; it lies considerably off the land, and has proved detrimental to many vessels.

Light House.—In the isle Pladday, a mile off the land, in the east part of the parish, a light house has lately been erected, with two different lights, to distinguish it in the
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night from those on the Mulls of Kintyre, Galloway, and Cumbray.

Fish.—The sea-coast abounds with fish of different kinds, such as herring, salmon, skate, cod, ling, lythe, flounder, haddock, whiting, &c. but the inhabitants have not acquired the art of being very beneficial to themselves in fishing any of these but herring. There is also in these seas a hugh fish, called Sail-fish, which is caught by sticking them with sharp-edged instruments, of the harpoon kind; they are productive of good quantities of oil; but the fishermen must be dexterous when about to stick the fish, as the attempt is sometimes dangerous.

Church, Stipend, School, Poor.—In this parish are two places of worship, exclusive of that occupied by the catechist in the north-end of the island. The principal parochial kirk is at Kilmory, in the south end of the island, rebuilt in 1785, with Gothic windows, and 1 gallery. The other place, called Shuken, is 6 computed miles westward. The Duke of Hamilton is patron, and sole proprietor, excepting two farms. The stipend is L. 70, exclusive of a manse and glebe.—There are two parochial schools. The salary allowed to the principal is L. 50 Scots, the half of which is paid by the Duke of Hamilton, and the other by the tenants of the district. To the other school is allowed L. 40 Scots, paid also in halves, as aforesaid. The parish is divided into 2 parochial districts; each of the school-masters has in his own district, 1 s. for marriage, 6 d. for baptism, and L. 6 Scots each for session-clerkship; their number of scholars may be 50 each, more or less; but there are also many petty schools. The wages are invariably 1 s. the quarter for reading, 1 s. 6 d. for writing, and 2 s. 6 d. for arithmetic.

The number of poor on the parish-roll is 40, who are supplied by the weekly collections as often as the fund admits; but which is quite inadequate to their need. Such therefore of them as can go about, receive alms from the country people; and those who are decrepit or confined to bed, are, in addition to the surplus received from the session, supported by country charity sent to them; for the people, according to their abilities, are very charitable, and attentive to real indigence.

Exports.—Several hundreds of black cattle are annually exported to Ayrshire; they are bought up by different persons, and ferried in every month from May to December; so that their number cannot easily be ascertained. A considerable quantity of barley is also exported to Greenock, Saltcoats, Irvine, Ayr, and Campbeltown; but 3 licensed distillers have lately been erected in the island, which will exhaust a great part of the barley that can henceforth be spared. Also kelp is manufactured here, and exported, perhaps 60 tons in the year. They also export small quantities of mutton, and linen yarn, by all which commodities, they are enabled, in addition to industry and œconomy, to pay their rent, and answer the other exigencies of their families. But as the island breeds no horses, the people are obliged to buy at dear rates, in Argyleshire, and other places; they also frequently buy sheep for breed in Ayrshire, as in stormy snowy winters many of their sheep die.

Advantages and Disadvantages.—The chief advantages are good water and pure air; which are counterbalanced by many disadvantages. There are in this parish no safe harbours, by which many real losses are sustained; expense, loss of time, and sometimes loss of lives and property, attend the unavoidable necessity of having recourse to extramaritime
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markets, both to sell what they can spare, and buy the many things they need.

Language.—The mother tongue is the Gaelic, which is universally spoken; yet persons advanced in years understand the English language tolerably; they acquire it by intercourse with other countries, and are greatly assisted by having the organs of speech formed in their youth, it being the first language they are taught to read.

Migratory Birds, and Amphibious Animals.—We have transient visits of the swan in winter, the fieldfare in time of snow, and the green plover in May and June, &c.—The otter, an agile animal, and of the canine form, often resorts here; its skin fetches a good price, and notwithstanding his vigilance, he sometimes falls a prey to the marksman; also the seal, although seldom; its skin is likewise valuable.

Agriculture, &c.—There are in this parish 440 horses, 1388 cows, 2085 sheep, 102 goats. There are sown 1320 bolls oats, 190 bolls barley, 330 bolls potatoes, 18 bolls pease, 9 bolls flax-feed. The old Scotch plough is generally used here, drawn by 4 horses. The nature of the soil is such, that they cannot begin early to till, and can have time only to till, at an average, at the rate of about 14 bolls the plough.—The rent of the parish is L. 2398 a-year.

Population.—According to Dr Webster's report, the numbers then were 2277, at present there are in the whole of Kilnory 3259; but these are not all supported by the produce and internal industry of the parish, many of the young people go to service to the neighbouring countries, especially Ayrshire; many of the young men are employ-
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ed in the fisheries; some in the Revenue cutters, and Excise yachts; and in time of war many are employed in the Royal navy, and a great number in all the different branches of British trade.—From Dippin to Earfay, (exclusive of what is from Earfay to Lochranza, and which is under the charge of a chatechist,) there have been in the course of the year 1791, 71 baptisms, and 21 marriages. Dippin is 16 miles from Earfay; Earfay 14 from Lochranza. No bill of mortality kept.

N U M.