

are not on the monthly roll of paupers. The annual amount of collections made at the church for behoof of the poor, is about L. 26 : the poor have also the interest of L. 100, left by the late Mrs Fullerton of Rosemount.

When the funds for the support of the poor have been expended, the heritors voluntarily subscribe, according to their respective valuations, for what may be required for that purpose.

Inns, &c.—There are six houses in the parish where spirits and ales are sold ; three of these are in the village, the other three are on the Glasgow and Portpatrick road, where the stage-coaches and mails change horses.

Fuel.—Coal is the only kind of fuel used in this parish : it is procured from Fairlie, Gatehead, and Caprington coal-pits, in the adjoining parishes of Dundonald and Riccarton.

March 1839.

PARISH OF BEITH.

PRESBYTERY OF IRVINE, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

THE REV. GEORGE COLVILLE, MINISTER.*

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE name of the parish, according to Chalmers, is Celtic, signifying *birch*. There is reason to believe that the whole of the district was once covered with wood. Many names of places indicate their derivation from this circumstance, as *Woodside*, *Threepwood*, *Fulwoodhead*, *Roughwood*, &c. &c.

Extent, Boundaries, &c.—The town lies in latitude $55^{\circ} 47'$ north, and in longitude $4^{\circ} 39'$ west. It consisted, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, of a few houses set down at the kirk, but now contains upwards of 300. The parish lies in the form of a triangle. Its greatest length is from south-east to south-west, which is 4 miles. A small part of it, in the south-east, lies in Renfrewshire, having been disjoined from Neilston and annexed to Beith. This was done about 1649, at which time the bounds of the different presbyteries in the synod of Glasgow were carefully perambulated, with the view of forming new parishes where required, and of annexing or disjoining lands, to suit the conve-

* This Account has been furnished by James Dobie, Esq. of Crummock.

nience of the people. The parish contains 11,060 acres Scots measure, of which 500 are in Renfrewshire. It is bounded on the north, by the parish of Lochwinnoch; on the east, by Neilston and Dunlop; on the south, by Kilwinning and Dalry; and on the west, by Kilbirnie Loch.

Topographical Appearance.—The surface is slightly undulated throughout, and consequently does not present the varied features of hill and dale, nor any of the picturesque beauties generally to be met with in districts of a more broken and diversified aspect. The highest land is in the north-east quarter of the parish, from which it gently slopes to the west and south-west, and the least elevated portion of it is that bounded by Kilbirnie Loch. The parish may be said to occupy the eastern summit of the land bounding the valley, which extends between the River Clyde and the coast of Ayrshire. Along this strath a stream runs from Kilbirnie Loch northward, through Lochwinnoch to the Clyde, and the Garnock, after approaching within half a mile of Kilbirnie Loch, turns to the south and falls into the sea at Irvine. It is through this valley that the Ardrossan Canal was to have been formed; and, as Kilbirnie Loch was its summit level, and being only about ninety feet above the sea, the line presented great facilities for such an undertaking. In 1805, an act of Parliament was passed, authorizing the canal to be made; but this undertaking having proved far more expensive than had been anticipated, was completed only between Glasgow and Johnstone. In 1825, an act was passed to form a railway in its stead; but this was not done; and, in 1837, an act was passed for forming a great line of railway through the same valley, from Glasgow by Paisley and Irvine to Ayr, with a branch to Kilmarnock,—which undertaking has recently been commenced. It has been proposed to form a line of railway from Kilmarnock, by Cumnock, Dumfries, and Carlisle, to join the Liverpool railway at Preston, which, if carried into effect, would make this the great line of communication from London to Glasgow and the west coast. As already stated, the lowest elevation of the parish is about 90 feet; its highest is on Cuff Hill, which is 652 feet. From this hill, which will be more particularly noticed afterwards, and from several of the adjoining uplands, the prospect is unrivalled in the district for extent, variety, and magnificence. To the south and west are visible the mountain ranges of Galloway and Carrick, the spacious estuary of the Clyde, the Craigs of Ailsa, and the lofty peaks of Arran; while, northward the

horizon is bounded by the serrated ridges of Cowal and the wavy outline of the far receding hills of Perthshire, in advance of which, in proud pre-eminence, stands Ben Lomond, the monarch of the scene. The scenery inclosed by so noble a frame-work, especially when its varied features are boldly relieved by the rays of the declining sun, is well calculated to gladden the eye and exhilarate the heart of the spectator. It may not inaptly be briefly characterized in more appropriate terms, than we can command, as being composed of

“ Hills and dales, and woods and lawns and spires,
And glittering towns, and gilded streams.”

There are within the parish twenty-four miles of turnpike and forty miles of parish roads, which occupy 224 acres; and there are four corn and four lint-mills within its bounds. The parish was accurately surveyed by Mr Robert Aitken, land-surveyor, Beith, who, in 1829, published an atlas of the different parishes in Cunninghame.

Hydrography.—The river Lugton takes its rise from Lochlibo, and runs south-west through the parish for about three miles, and, after passing through the parish of Kilwinning, joins the Garnock below Eglinton Castle. The Dusk rises at Threepwood, and falls into the Garnock at Dalgarnvan, below Dalry. There are no other streams in the parish which merit particular notice. At Blaeloch-head there is a small lake, which is thus noticed by Pont, the early topographer of Cunninghame: “Blaa Loche, ed est, lacus pallidus, so named because qwhen the firmament is most serene and cleir then is it palide and dead-coloured, contrair to all other incorrupt and sueit vatters.” This loch has been partially drained. There was in the days of Pont a lake in front of Hazlehead Castle, but this has been entirely drained, so has the loch of Boghall, as will be more particularly noticed afterwards.

Geology and Mineralogy.—No granite nor other primitive rock has been found in this parish. The greatest portion of it is formed of what is sometimes called the great coal formation, and by Werner, the independent coal formation, and is classed by several authors as constituting the upper series of the transition or intermediate rocks. A considerable extent consists of trap rocks, especially on the west and south-west parts of the parish; and in some places, they rise into considerable hills.

The coal measures extend along the whole of the west boundary of the parish, for some miles to the south. On the east part of the boundary, on the estate of Woodside, William Patrick, Esq, the proprietor of that estate, has found extensive beds of limestone,

and he has also there found good brick clay, and established a manufactory of draining tiles. To the west of this estate, there are appearances of coal in the lands of Willowyard, belonging to Alexander Shedden, Esq.; and in the adjoining lands of Crawfield, belonging to Lady Montgomerie, a three and a half feet coal has been discovered by boring, and is now being wrought. The only other coal known in the parish was, for some years, wrought at Balgray, but has been relinquished on account of its rapid dip and rise.

From Kilbirnie loch southward, the surface rises, in the distance of about two miles, to an elevation of 330 feet above the tideway on the Clyde. The surface is somewhat undulatory and irregular, and so are the strata underneath, so far as they have been exposed; but the changes in the surface do not correspond to those of the stratification below, the dip of the strata being in general to the south-west.

At a mean elevation of about 330 feet, an extensive field of limestone occupies, with very few interruptions, several square miles in extent. This limestone has been wrought extensively for many years in the lands of Broadstone, belonging to Hugh Brown, Esq. and in those of Hazlehead, Trearne, and Broadstone, belonging to John Shedden Patrick, Esq. and it is of such good quality, and wrought with so great facility, that the sale extends to Paisley, Greenock, and other places equally distant, and amounts to about 7000 chalders yearly, each chalders consisting of sixteen bolls of slacked lime, of four Winchester bushels per boll. The formation of the Glasgow and Ayr railroad must extend the sales both to the east and west.

The limestone, which has usually been wrought, varies from 18 to 20 feet in thickness, and rests upon a coal of 20 inches, separated from the limestone by a few inches of shale. In many places, this bed of limestone approaches the surface, and is wrought with small expense; to the dip it is overlaid by (or takes on, as the miners express it,) in succession, the following strata: 1st, Shale, 2 feet; 2d, Coal, 1 foot, 1 inch; 3d, Clay, containing a thin bed of limestone, 6 feet; 4th, A large body of limestone, of various thickness, from 12 to upwards of 50 feet, and rising into considerable hills. The price of lime at the kilns varies from 9s. to 12s. per chalders, and may average about 10s. 6d. To burn a chalders of lime will require about 12 hundred weight of coals, which, including the cartage, will cost between 5s. and 6s. per chalders. The quarrying and breaking

the stones, leading them to the kiln-head, and filling the kiln, will cost about 3s. 6d. per chalder, and the lordship or rent to the proprietor of the lime rock is about 1s. per chalder, so that the profit to the tacksmen is very small. Eight bolls of lime-shells are sold at the kiln as a chalder of lime, and will form two good cart-loads. The 8 bolls of shells, if well burned, will produce 20 bolls of slacked lime, so that the 8 bolls of shells are better than 16 bolls of slacked lime. The whole of this important field of lime rock is of the best quality, and is found on analysis to contain from 90 to 95 per cent. of pure carbonate of lime. It consists chiefly of organic remains, the upper portions being almost entirely composed of encrinites, with a mixture of bivalve shells. The whole is sufficiently hard to receive a high polish as marble, and has been wrought into chimney-pieces, tables, &c. to a considerable extent. The field of limestone crops out on the north, for about two miles, along the south bank of the Powgree-burn, which separates the baronies of Broadstone and Hazlehead from the barony of Beith, and it appears near Giffen Castle, and in various other places for some miles to the southward, and may afford for ages to come a plentiful supply both for agricultural and architectural purposes to the whole country, extending from Glasgow to the west coast.

Below this limestone is a body of white clay, into which bores have been inserted in several places, one of them to the depth of 27 fathoms, without discovering any change of material.

Clay ironstone, a mineral of great importance, especially when associated with coal and limestone, has been found in various parts of the parish, from the north to the south extremity, particularly along the banks of the waters of Dusk and Powgree, and appears to exist in great abundance.

On the lands of Duskrigg and Laverock Hall, the property of John S. Patrick Esq. and, on the lands of Roughwood, and other contiguous lands belonging to William Patrick, Esq. and on the lands of Craighouse, belonging to Robert Montgomerie, Esq., various beds of ironstone, favourably situated for being wrought, have been discovered; one on the bank of the Dusk is 18 inches in thickness, and another 4 inches, the two beds being almost in contact. On the Powgree burn, a bed of 8 inches, and another of 6 inches, are favourably situated for being wrought. Many others, and various strata containing nodules of iron-ore, exist in other localities, some of which yield, upon analysis, 30 per cent. of

pure iron. The average of the whole specimens collected, amounting to upwards of twenty in number, as analysed by Dr Fyfe of Edinburgh, was found to yield nearly 29 per cent. of iron, being somewhat more than is afforded by the analysis of the South Wales ironstone, as reported in the Transactions of the Natural History Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Freestone is also found in the parish, and a freestone pavement quarry is wrought in the lands of Willowyard, near the line of the Glasgow and Ayr Railway.

The trap rocks, comprehending whinstone and basaltic dikes, which in some places rise above the surface, afford excellent materials for keeping the public roads in repair. There are several dikes of basalt which run across the whole strata, in the line of dip, being from south-east to north-west.*

Climate, &c.—The prevailing winds are from the south-west and north-east, which bring heavy rains. The people are on the whole as healthy as in any other parish in the district. In the mortality bills between 1825 and 1833, there were several persons in each year, except in 1830, who died between 85 and 90. In the same period, there were 7 between 90 and 95, and 7 above 95.

This place was twice visited by the cholera. In 1831, when the disease made its appearance at Sunderland, and was making progress to the north, a board of health was instituted here, and all sanitary means adopted which skill and prudence could suggest. In the summer of 1832, four fatal cases occurred, and it was with difficulty people could be persuaded to attend the funerals. This visitation passed over thus slightly, but in 1834 it was most severe. The first death occurred on 5th September, and until 20th October, the disease raged with fearful sway. There were 208 cases, and 105 deaths, some of which were awfully sudden. The minds of the people became more composed than on the previous occasion, and the funerals were conducted with the usual decorum. Liberal subscriptions in aid of the sufferers were made, and much sympathy evinced towards those who were so unexpectedly bereaved of their parents and relatives.

Botany.—This parish is rich in its vegetable productions as well as in its mineral, and cannot fail to be interesting to the botanist. A great variety of plants are to be found within a small compass.

* This department has been furnished by James Adam, Esq. W. S., and that on Botany, by Alexander Spiers, Esq. Surgeon in Beith.

This is chiefly owing to the sudden elevation of the ground: the lowest part of the parish being only 95 feet above the level of the sea, while the highest is 652, being a difference of 557 feet in the short distance of two miles and a half,—thus presenting a diversified surface, and a variety of soil and climate, giving origin to numerous genera and species. The following list, beginning at the lowest part of the parish, enumerates the rarest of the plants.

Lobelia Dortmanna, habitat west end of	Echium vulgare, Bigholm-hill
Kilbirnie Loch	Gentiana campestris, Do.
Littorella lacustris, Do.	Knautia arvensis, Do.
Cardamine amara, Do.	Drosera rotundifolia, Barkip Moss
Plantago maritima, Do.	Pinguicula vulgaris, Do.
Galium Witheringii, Do.	Borago officinalis, Coldstream Mill
Circea alpina, Kersland Bank	Nymphaea alba, lakes at Brown Muir
Rubus saxatilis, Do.	Nuphar lutea, Do.
Oxalis acetosella, Do.	Melampyrum pratense, Barr Craiga
Lysimachia nemorum, Do.	Saxifraga umbrosa, Do.
Inula Helenium, Laigh Mains	Orobus tuberosus, Do.
Arundo phragmites, Bath Meadow	Linum catharticum, Cuff-hill
Scutellaria galericulata, Mains-hill	Botrychium lunaria, Do.
Agrimonia Eupatoria, Woodside Burn	Sedum album, Do.
Trollius Europæus, Bigholm Meadow.	Hippuris vulgaris, Cuff Pond
This is the lucken gowan of Burns.	Veronica scutellata Do.
Menyanthes trifoliata, Bigholm Meadow	Pyrola rotundifolia, Caldwell Woods.

There is, generally speaking, a want of ornamental trees and of plantations in this parish. Some exceptions, however, must be made to this general remark. Caldwell House is situated in a large park, richly clothed with wood; and many of the trees are of great size and beauty. Hazlehead presents several avenues of fine old beeches, and on some other places of Mr S. Patrick's property there are young thriving plantations. Mr Pratt of Brown Muir planted, about four years ago, Brown Muir Hill, consisting of from twenty to thirty Scotch acres, which, a few years hence, will add greatly to the beauty of the parish.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Antiquities, &c.—Of old, the parish consisted of two grand divisions, the Barony of Beith, and the Lordship of Giffen, of which the lordship of Giffen was the most extensive. They are divided by the stream called the Powgree, which falls into the Garnock near the west end of Kilbirnie Loch. The barony of Beith was gifted by Richard de Moreville, the son and successor of Hugh de Moreville, constable of Scotland, and Lord of Cunningham, to the Abbey of Kilwinning. Avicia de Lancaster, the wife of Richard de Moreville, gave the lands of Beith, Bath, and Threepwood to the monastery, *in puram et perpetuam eleemosynam*, and, though from the loss of the chartulary of Kilwinning, the exact date of

the grant cannot be ascertained, it must have been prior to 1189 and 1191, in which years the Lady Avicia and her husband died.

Long prior to these dates, Beith was the occasional residence of St Inan, a confessor of some celebrity, whose principal place of abode was at Irvine. He flourished about 839. On the Cuff Hill, in the parish of Beith, there is a cleft in the rock, which is still called St Inan's Chair; and at a short distance from it, a well of excellent water, called St Inan's Well. From the Callendar of Scots Saints, we find that the festival of this saint was celebrated on the 18th of August; and to this day, there is a fair at Beith held on the corresponding day, old style. Tradition still bears that this fair used to be held on the Cuff Hill. It was removed to Beith after the town had increased in population, and became a more suitable place for a market. It is one of the principal fairs in the county. The fair is vulgarly pronounced *Tenant's Day*; but this is evidently a corruption arising from the final letter of Saint, being sounded with the name Inan. Similar corruptions occur in Tantony, which is a corruption of St Antony; and Taudrey, which is a corruption of St Audrey. It is worthy of notice that this corruption, and the fact of the celebration of St Inan's festival at Beith, have been overlooked by the learned author of Caledonia, who supposes the corruption to be that of St Tennant's day, or St Thenna's day.

But the Cuff Hill has antiquities much earlier than the days of St Inan. On the north declivity of the hill, there is a rocking-stone of considerable size, which can be set in motion by the slightest touch.

Behold yon huge
And unbewn sphere of living adamant,
Which, poised by magic, rests its central weight
On yonder pointed rock: firm as it seems,
Such is its strange and virtuous property,
It moves obsequious to the gentlest touch
Of him whose heart is pure; but to a traitor,
Though even a giant's prowess moved his arm,
It stands as firm as Snowden.

Mason's Caractacus.

This stone is of common trap. Its specific gravity is 2.890; its figure an oblong spheroid; its contents 141 cubic feet; and weight 11 tons 7 cwts. On the south side of the hill, on the lands of Cuff, belonging to Robert Spiers, Esq. writer in Beith, there stood four stones. In the space between them were found calcined bones and earth, having the appearance of being formed from the decay of animal substance. This is supposed to have been a place of sacrifice.

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At the bottom of the hill, north of the rocking-stone, there are the remains of a circular trench, and of some building. The place is called *Kirkbie Green*. On a plain at the south bottom of the hill, about twenty-five years ago, were discovered several stone coffins under a large cairn of stones. The total length of the cairn is 72 feet; its breadth 36 feet; its height 10 feet. In one of them were found some fragments of human bones, with a small bead of burned clay, and a piece of copper like a defaced coin; but there was no appearance of the urn. The usual indication of Christian burial was wanting, as the coffins did not lie east and west. The cairn which contained these coffins, and a considerable part of which is still left entire, has been enclosed and surrounded with a plantation by Dr Robert Patrick of Hazlehead, the late proprietor. On a field in the adjoining lands of Townend of Threepwood, about thirty-five years ago, there was found a large vase of burned clay, of a size capable of containing about six gallons. In it there was a considerable quantity of burned bones. The vase broke on being handled and exposed to the air, and soon crumbled into dust. Within it there was found a small open urn of hard burned clay, and at a short distance from it, another small urn was found by itself; probably the larger one in which this last had been placed was destroyed without being noticed. They indicated no knowledge of art, and seemed as if formed with the finger and thumb. The small urns were doubtless for receiving the ashes of the brain and heart, while those of the body were lodged in the larger vessel. In one of them were two perforations, as if for fixing it to some other body; probably to the larger urn, in which it was found, or for receiving wires for its own lid or cover. These are antiquities, which, as Sir Thomas Brown says, Time antiquates; for we have no floating tradition as to their origin on this hill or its vicinity.

The two modes of sepulture here exemplified, the stone coffin in one place, and the cinereal urn in another, probably indicate different ages; and the one first used may have been as much unknown to those who adopted the last as both are to ourselves.

Some are of opinion that these funereal remains prove that a battle was fought on this spot, and that the tumuli contain the remains of the chiefs who fell in the conflict. There is a hill at a little distance southwards, called *Gillies Hill*, and this is supposed to be the place where the followers of the army appeared. We know that it was common in the warfare of such remote periods, for the

women and children to be placed in the rear, and to use every method in their power to encourage those engaged in the combat; but this notion of a battle is purely fanciful, and who fought, fell, fled, or conquered at this "famous victory," must remain for ever undescribed by poet or historian. But if we view this hill as a seat of Druidism, we have a dawning of light. Dr Jamieson is of opinion that Druidism was not extinct in Scotland in the age of Columba, 563-597, and there is reason for believing that it was restored by the Saxons, after it had been abolished by the Roman emperors. If so, it must have been the religion of this part of the country, a short time previous to the age of St Inan. Holding this hill as a seat of Druidism, we have a corroborative testimony in the etymology of the name. It is called *Cuff* Hill. Now we learn from Bede, that the chief-priest of the Druids was called *Coifi*, *Cuifi*, or *Cuivi*. Either of these names can be easily corrupted into *Cuffi* or *Cuff*, and thus the hill may have received its appellation from being the seat of the Druidical worship. Besides, the word *Cuffoeth*, in the ancient British language, signifies the *Holy Place*, "*Cor Kyveoth*," which is pronounced *Cuffoeth*, is the name of Stonehenge in that language. This opinion is supported by that of Dr Macpherson, in his *Critical Dissertations*, who thinks *Coifi* was the common title of every Druidical superintendant of spiritual affairs. It is now stated as a plausible guess at the origin of the name of the hill. There are other places of similar name, and which probably had the same origin. Thus, in the *Acta Dominorum Concilii*, under date 6th March 1491, there is a case, where Gilbert Kennedy of the *Coiff* is defender, and Fergus Kennedy of Cardonald is pursuer; and, in Pitcairn's *Trials*, Thomas Kennedy of *Coiff*, is one of a long list of that name, dilated of a cruel slaughter in 1528. These places are in different parts of the country, and are noticed only as tracing the corruption of the word *Coifi*, which is not so marked as the substitution of *Tenant* for *St Inan*.

On the lands of Hill of Beith, there is one of those moothills on which our ancestors received the award of their judges. We have good evidence of such places being used as the seat of legislation as well as judicature, but when the custom ceased, it is difficult to say, for, like many other customs, it disappeared gradually, and the change is not noticed by historians. The moothill of Beith being in a barony belonging to the church, was of course the place of judgment from which the Abbot of Kilwinning ad-

ministered justice to his vassals and tenants. The hill itself is smaller than others in the district. There is a finer specimen at the town of Dalry, which is still denominated the *Courthill*, and there is another near the mansion-house of Lainshaw. The lands on which the one in Beith stands, are, from this circumstance, called the *hill* of Beith. They were early feued by the Abbot of Kilwinning, and for several generations belonged to a branch of the family of the Cunninghames, the same being sometimes designated of *Hill*, and sometimes of "Hill of Beith." The residence of the Cunninghames was a square tower which stood not far from the moothill. It was removed about the middle of the last century. In Pont's *Cunninghame Typographized*, it is styled a "pretty building, veill planted, belonging to John Cunninghame." It is now the property of Hugh Brown, Esq. of Broadstone.

Adjoining these lands is the farm of Boghall, which affords another article in the antiquities of this parish. In the map of *Cunninghame* in *Blau's Atlas*, published in 1654, there is laid down a piece of water called the Loch of Boghall. This loch belonged to the Monastery of Kilwinning, and was of old called Loch Brand. In the *Acta Dominorum Concilii*, there is mention made of a case, 10th December 1482, at the instance of the Abbot and Convent of Kilwinning against Robert Montgomery, son and heir to umquhile Robert Montgomery of Giffen, Knight, John Montgomery, his brother, Alexander Montgomery, William Montgomery and James Kerr, who were accused of the dangerous destruction, and down-casting of the fosses and dikes of the loch called Loch Brand. The cause was continued, but the record does not state what was the result. The Abbot of Kilwinning here mentioned must have been William Boyd, second son of Sir Thomas Boyd, of Kilmarnock; by Joannah Montgomery, daughter of Sir John Montgomery of Ardrossan. The lands of Boghall passed from the Montgomerys of Braidstane about 150 years ago. The loch was drained about 60 years ago, when firm stakes of oak and elm were found in the soil, and which had been used for fixing the nets for fishing.

In the map of *Cunninghame* in *Blau's Atlas*, already mentioned, there is exhibited a cross on the northern boundary of the barony of Beith. The lands adjoining to the barony of Beith on the east and north belonged to the Abbey of Paisley, and lay in the county of Renfrew, so that the cross was probably fixed as the boundary by consent of both of these religious houses. Their

estates were divided by a stream called Muirburn, which falls into the loch of Lochwinnoch to the eastward of Kilbirnie loch. Crosses were at an early period used in marking the boundaries of lordships and parishes, or lands given to monasteries. These were sometimes framed of wood, but were more commonly of stone, as being more durable, and less easy of being removed. Crosses for landmarks are mentioned as early as 528, and afterwards became common. Kings and lords used them as tokens of dominion, and they were special landmarks of the templars and hospitalers. The form of the cross was used that no man for conscience sake should remove them. As already mentioned, the barony of Beith was the property of the monastery of Kilwinning, and was the largest and most valuable of their possessions; and as the northern mark was not only the boundary of their property, but that of the parish and county, the cross must have been a serviceable landmark. Of its existence, there is now no trace, nor is its history or fate remembered in the floating annals of tradition.

In the barony of Giffen we have antiquities of another kind. One of the most powerful of the English families which settled in Scotland during the reign of David I., was that of De Moreville. The first of them was Hugh, to whom the King made a grant of the whole lands of Cunninghame, and created him constable of Scotland, which office remained with his descendants for some generations. In the reign of William the Lion, the family of the De Morevilles gave the lands or lordship of Giffeyn to Walter De Mulcaster. This lordship comprehended the whole of that part of the parish which lies to the south and westward of the stream called the Powgree, and forms fully one-half in extent and value of the present parish. The rest of the parish consists of the barony of Beith, which, as before-mentioned, was given by the De Morevilles to the monastery of Kilwinning. Giffen was given by Walter De Mulcaster to Alexander De Nenham as his subvassal. He granted to the monastery of Dryburgh a half caracute or 50 acres of land in the lordship of Giffen, at which a chapel to St Bridget had previously been founded by the monastery of Kilwinning, the ruins of which still exist, situated on a hill which had been used as a burying-ground, with an uncommonly fine spring-well, called St Bridget's Well, at the bottom. The chapel must have fallen to ruins about the Reformation. This grant was part of the lands of Trearne, and was so minutely described by its natural boundaries, that the marches can still be traced. The mor-

tification was for the benefit of the souls of Richard De Moreville, William De Moreville, Rolland of Galloway, and Elene De Moreville, his spouse. It was confirmed by Walter De Mulcaster the over lord, and his charter was also ratified by Allan, son of Rolland, Constable of Scotland. The charter is in the Chartulary of Dryburgh. It bears no date, as was customary in those days; but from the names of the parties, it must have been granted between 1209 and 1223. The lands of Trearne now belong to Mr Patrick of Hazlehead. About this period the lands of Roughwood, being a sub-barony of Giffen, belonged to a very ancient family of the name of Hammill, which is now represented by Robert Montgomery of Craighouse, through female descent.

The daughter and heiress of Richard De Moreville was married to Rolland, Lord of Galloway. Their son Allan, Lord of Galloway, succeeded to the estates of the De Morevilles, and became thus Lord of Cunninghame and Constable of Scotland. He had several daughters, but no son, and his estates were divided among his daughters. One of them was married to John Baliol; another to an English nobleman of the name of De la Zouche, and another to one of the Comyns. These families having all taken part with their near relation, John Baliol, in the contest with Bruce for the throne, their estates were forfeited by Bruce, and divided among his own followers, as the Stewarts, Flemings, Boyds Sempills, &c. In this way, the estate of Giffen reverted to the Crown. In 1370, the first year of the reign of Robert II., a charter passed under the Great Seal, bestowing the lands of Giffen on Sir Hugh De Eglinton, who was married to Egedia, sister of the King, and widow of Sir James Lindsay of Crawford. Sir Hugh possessed great influence at court, and held several important offices. In 1361, he was Justiciary of Lothian, and in 1367, was appointed one of the Commissioners for a treaty with England. He left an only daughter, Elizabeth, who married John Montgomery of Eaglesham, whose descendants became Earls of Eglinton. The estate of Giffen remained with this potent family for several centuries, being given as the messuage of the heir-apparent or master of Eglinton. It appears that, in 1452, John De Lyddale had right to the lands of Braidstane, a sub-barony of Giffen, but the right had reverted to the family of Eglinton, as about that time Braidstane and the lands of Hazlehead, another sub-barony of Giffen, were given off to younger sons of the Earl of Eglinton, and formed two distinct families, which continued to hold their respective proper-

ties for several generations, and produced some distinguished men, whose history might form an interesting narrative. Another part of the lordship of Giffen was about the same period granted to the family of Mure of Caldwell, and forms that part of their estate situated in the parish of Beith. The lands of Roughwood, which had been granted to the family of Hammill in the time of the De Morevilles, still belonged to them, and were retained by them until 1690, when they were acquired by Robert Shedden, merchant in Beith. They now belong to William Patrick, Esq. In 1663, Alexander, sixth Earl of Eglinton, broke up the estate of Giffen, and feued out the greater part of it in farms. The portion which remained was the estate of Francis Montgomerie, second son of Earl Alexander. He was a leading person in the political transactions of his time, having sat as one of the representatives of Ayrshire in several Scottish Parliaments. He was one of the Commissioners for the Union with England, and was active and zealous in promoting that measure, and was member for Ayrshire in the first British Parliament after the Union in 1708. His son, John Montgomerie, was member for Ayrshire in four successive Parliaments between 1710 and 1722. He was an officer of the Guards, and afterwards Governor of New York, where he died. He married a daughter of the Earl of Hyndford, but left no issue. Being of expensive habits, he contracted debt, for the liquidation of which the remainder of this fine estate was sold. The Castle of Giffen being a square tower of 40 feet in height, stood on an eminence of 180 feet above the adjoining valley, and was long a conspicuous landmark to the district. It fell on 12th April 1836.

Land-owners.—As already noticed, the property in this parish is greatly subdivided.

The valued rent of the Lordship of Giffen is	L. 4150 16 2
barony of Beith is	1964 18 0
Making in Ayrshire,	L. 6115 14 2
And in Renfrewshire,	163 13 4
	L. 6279 7 6

This valued rent is subdivided among upwards of 150 heritors, of these there are only 4 who have upwards of L. 200 Scots, viz. J. S. Patrick of Trearne and Hazlehead; William Mure of Caldwell; William Patrick of Roughwood and Woodside, and Lady Montgomery. There are 6 heritors whose valued rent is under L. 200, and not under L. 100 Scots; 22 under L. 100, and not under L. 50; 21 under L. 50, and not under L. 30; 21 under

L. 30, and not under L. 20; 29 under L. 20, and not under L. 10; 21 under L. 10, and not under L. 5; and upwards of 30 whose valued rent is under L. 5 Scots. This last list consists chiefly of the feuars of the old glebe, on whom the valued rent of the farm of Mainshill was apportioned when it was exchanged for the glebe. Within the last thirty years, one-half of the whole lands of the parish has changed owners.

Family of Mure of Caldwell.—The most ancient family in the parish is that of the Mures of Caldwell. They are immediately descended from Sir Reginald More or Mure of Abercorn, who was Lord High Chamberlain of Scotland in 1329. Gilchrist, second son of Sir Reginald, acquired the estate of Caldwell by marrying the heiress of Caldwell of that ilk. His son John is the first of the name who appears designed "of Caldwell" in 1409. A younger branch of the male line of Caldwell of that ilk retained possession of a portion of the estate called Wester or Little Caldwell, and continued to be a respectable Renfrewshire family, until about the end of the seventeenth century, when it failed in the person of John Caldwell, who was one of the Commissioners for Renfrewshire to the Scottish Parliament after the Revolution. The estate passed to the Earl of Dundonald, afterwards to the Duke of Hamilton, from whom it was purchased by Baron Mure, and now forms part of the Caldwell property. In 1655, William Mure of Caldwell married Barbara, daughter of Sir William Cunninghame of Cunninghamhead. In 1666, he and some other gentlemen of the neighbourhood, having met at Shitterflat in this parish, resolved to aid the people in the cause of civil and religious liberty, and formed a troop of horse which marched under the command of the Laird of Caldwell, to join the Covenanters. Intelligence having been received that the Whigs had been defeated at Pentland, this company dispersed. For this patriotic act the Laird of Caldwell was attainted, fled to Holland and died in exile. His estates were forfeited and bestowed on General Dalziel. His lady and eldest daughter were imprisoned in Blackness, and subjected to great sufferings and privations, as detailed by Wodrow and other historians of the times. After the Revolution the estate was restored to the eldest surviving daughter, who married John Fairlie of that ilk, but she having died without issue, was succeeded by her cousin, William Mure of Glanderston, the heir-male of the family. He was succeeded by his nephew, of whom the present owner, William Mure, Esq. is the lineal descendant. Mr Mure married

in 1825, Laura, second daughter of William Markham, Esq. of Becca Hall, and grand-daughter of Dr William Markham, Archbishop of York. The mansion-house of Caldwell is a large and commodious building. It was designed by the celebrated architect Adam, and is placed in an angle of the parish of Beith, being part of the feu from the lordship of Giffen, so acute that the adjoining offices at a few yards distance are in another parish and county.

Family of Ralston.—The ancient family of Ralston, of that ilk, whose estate of Ralston lay near Paisley, and of whom there is distinct notice in the thirteenth century, held for upwards of 200 years the estate of Woodside in this parish, being part of the barony of Beith; but it was sold in 1772 by the late Gavin Ralston, on whose death, in 1819, the male line of the family failed. There are still several families in the district connected with them by collateral descent, and the estate of Woodside was in 1834 purchased by William Patrick, Esq. of Roughwood, whose maternal grandmother was eldest daughter of Gavin Ralston of that ilk.

Other Families.—The ancestors of Mr Patrick of Hazlehead have held lands in the parish since 1663, and long previous thereto held lands in the parish of Kilwinning; the family of Love of Threepwood since 1633; the family of Montgomery of Bogston, since 1663; and the family of Shedden of Roughwood since 1690.

Eminent Men.—This parish was the birth-place of Alexander Montgomerie, one of our more early and most celebrated Scottish poets. He was born at Hazlehead Castle. The estate of Hazlehead, as has already been mentioned, was a part of the lordship of Giffen, and was given to a younger branch of the family of Eglinton. In Pont's Cuninghame Typographized, it is said that "Hazlehead Castell is a strong old building environed with lairge ditches, seatted on a loch, veill planted and comodiously beautified, the heritage of Robert Montgomery, Laird thereof; famous it is for ye birth of yat renoned poet, Alexander Montgomery." This account was written about 1608, recently after the death of the poet, and gives authenticity to the statement as to the place of his birth. The fame of Montgomerie rests chiefly upon "The Cherry and the Slae," his longest poem; though in some of his minor pieces, there is a higher degree of refined sentiment and poetical feeling.

Hugh Montgomerie of Braidstane, a cadet of the family of Eglinton, was a person of much sagacity, and, by an occurrence ab-

together unconnected with his previous history, was raised to high rank in Ireland. The transaction has only recently been brought to notice by the publication of the *Montgomery Manuscripts* at Belfast in 1830, and by Dr Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, to which works reference is here made.

Montgomery was knighted by King James, who gave him the precedence of his rival, James Hamilton, afterwards Lord Clандebo. He was afterwards created Viscount Montgomery of Ards, and his son was created Earl Mount Alexander. Hugh Montgomery took with him from this parish several families, who settled upon his Irish estate, and whose descendants remain in that district of the country, many of them being highly respectable. The last Earl Mount Alexander having died without issue, the title became extinct, the estates passed from the family, and a great part of them now belongs to the Marquis of Londonderry.

We have formerly noticed the patriotism of William Mure, who took the command of a small party of Covenanters after the meeting at Shitterflatt, and marched to join their countrymen, then in the field near Edinburgh, and of his forfeiture and personal sufferings. We refer for the particulars to the histories of that interesting period. His collateral descendant, William Mure of Glanderston, who succeeded to Caldwell, was also a sufferer in the public cause in 1683, as mentioned by Wodrow. His grand-nephew, Baron William Mure of Caldwell, was educated under charge of the Rev. William Leechman, afterwards minister of Beith, and subsequently Professor of Divinity, and Principal of the University of Glasgow. Mr Leechman paid great attention to the formation of the character of his pupil, and had the gratifying pleasure of seeing his labours rewarded. Mr Mure was acknowledged to be a man of high talents for business, and of most honourable principle. Soon after he reached majority, he was chosen representative for Renfrewshire, and kept his seat for twenty years, having been thrice returned without opposition. He was held in high esteem by the Government, and was entrusted with the management of much of the public affairs of Scotland, and was in habits of familiar correspondence with Hume, Robertson, and many other eminent literary men. In 1761, he was appointed one of the Barons of Exchequer, which office he held until his death in 1776. He married Katherine, daughter of the Honourable James Graham, Lord Easdale, one of the Judges of the Court of Session. His eldest son, the late

William Mure of Caldwell, entered the army in early life as a cornet in the Blues. He afterwards commanded a company in the 82d Foot,—was in the American war under Lord Cornwallis,—was wounded, and taken prisoner in 1780. After being exchanged, he was with Lord Cornwallis at the capitulation of the British at Yorktown in October 1781. On his return to Scotland, he was appointed to the command of the West Lowland Fencibles and Renfrewshire Militia. For many years prior to his death, which happened on February 1831, he was Vice-Lieutenant of Renfrewshire, and was active and zealous in the discharge of his public duties. His son, the present William Mure of Caldwell, is well known as an eminent classical scholar. He has written "Brief Remarks on the Chronology of the Egyptian Dynasties," and "A Dissertation on the Calendar and Zodiac of Ancient Egypt," works of erudition and research.

Humphrey Fulton, who introduced to Paisley the silk manufactory, was a native of this parish. His ancestors were proprietors of the lands of Midtown of Threepwood in 1634, at which place he was born, 16th April 1713. He married Mary Cochran, a native of the parish, and removed to Paisley. He introduced there the manufacture of silk, and, in 1777, established a warehouse in Beith, from which near 300 weavers were employed. This brought for many years upwards of L. 100 per week to the place, and greatly increased its trade and population. Mr Fulton died in 1779; and the epitaph which was written at the time is a just tribute to his memory.

The business was carried on for some years by his sons, Robert and William, men of highly respectable character. Robert purchased the estate of Hartfield, which is now inherited by his son, Colonel Robert Fulton, and William purchased the estate of Park of Inchinnan, which has recently been sold.*

Robert Shedden, of Gower Street, London, Esq., was born in

* In a more humble sphere was James M'Connell, drummer in Beith, the redoubted champion of orthodoxy, whom it would be unfair to omit in this report. He was a native of Wigton, where he was born in 1706. Having enlisted into the 43d Regiment of foot, he was for a considerable period on foreign service. On the return of the regiment, the company to which he belonged was quartered in Beith, where James married Jean Love, a native of the place. After obtaining his discharge he returned to Beith and settled as a teacher. He was afterwards made constable, sheriff-officer, and town drummer. Having a turn for polemical divinity, he attacked Mr James Ferguson, minister of Kilwinning, as unsound in his doctrine, and libelled him before the Presbytery of Irvine. The case remained in the Church Courts for some years, and Mr Ferguson died before it was finally disposed of. The drummer published two pamphlets on this subject, which are now become scarce. They shew some talent, and much zeal in the cause.

this parish. He was eldest son of William Shedden, who was second son of Robert Shedden of Roughwood, by Beatrice, daughter of Robert Dobie, Chamberlain of Giffen. In early life he went to America, and settled as a merchant at Norfolk in Virginia. At the commencement of the American war he left Virginia, and, after living some time in Bermuda and New York, returned to England in 1783, and settled in London as an underwriter and general merchant. His unwearied attention and correct and honourable principles soon acquired an extensive business, which in due time brought him great wealth. He proved a distinguished benefactor to the place of his nativity. In particular, he purchased the lands of Gatend, in this parish, which he burdened with a perpetual annuity of L.50, which he vested in trustees, who were directed to apportion the same among persons of respectable character, and who had resided three years in the parish, in annuities not exceeding L.10, nor less than L.5 to each. This grant has been of great benefit to the receivers, and the same has hitherto been awarded by the trustees in the most judicious manner. Mr Shedden died in London, 29th September 1826, aged 85. He was married to Agatha, daughter of John Godrich, Esq. She died at the Isle of Wight, 31st January 1838.

Among other eminent individuals connected with this parish, must be noticed William Wilson of Cumnock. He was one of the original partners of the house of Messrs John Gilmore and Company of Calcutta, and returning to this country in 1814, he purchased the property of Cumnock, where he resided until his death in 1836, at the age of 84. He was unwearied in well-doing, giving liberally to all the public and private subscriptions of the place. In 1832, he purchased the estate of Willowyards, which had belonged to his maternal ancestors. In his deed of settlement he left L.100 to be laid out in paying house-rents, or purchasing clothes for aged people residing in the parish.

Dr Robert Patrick of Trearne entered the army in early life, and was for upwards of ten years employed in foreign service. Upon his return home after the peace, he was appointed Inspector of Hospitals for a district in England, and afterwards was promoted to be an Inspector General. He devoted much of his time to rural affairs, and to his duties as a magistrate, and was deservedly held in high esteem in the parish. He died in Edinburgh, 24th March 1838, and left L. 100 for charitable purposes, and L. 20

for forming a Society for furnishing clothing for old men in decayed circumstances.

III.—POPULATION.

The following table shews the progressive increase during the last eighty years :—

In 1755 the population was	-	2064
1792,	-	2872
1801,	-	3103
1811,	-	3755
1821,	-	4472
1831,	-	5113

From a late inquiry it appears that the number is on the increase, and that the religious statistics may be classified thus :—

Belonging to the Established Church,	-	3457
The Relief,	-	969
United Secession,	-	388
Reformed Presbytery,	-	75
Roman Catholics,	-	43
Old Light Seceders,	-	20
Independents,	-	4
Methodists,	-	9
Baptists,	-	6
Episcopalians,	-	6
To no Church,	-	302
		<hr/> 5279

The following table is a pretty accurate enumeration of the various trades, &c.

Weavers, 430; licensed public-houses, 44; masons, 43; shoemakers, 34; grocers, 34; joiners, 26; tailors, 21; blacksmiths, 13; bakers, 7; drapers, 6; tinsmiths, 4; saddlers, 4; nailers, 4; coopers, 2; iron-mongers, 2; hair-dressers, 2; writers, 2; surgeons, 6; law-officers, 4; printers, 3; stationers, 5; watch-makers, 2; butchers, 3.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture and Rural Economy.—From the table given of the different trades, it will be seen how that part of the population is employed. The landward part of the parish is very well peopled, there being a considerable part of the land in small farms, occupied by the owners whose valued rent is from L. 10 to L. 70 Scots. According to the usual routine of this district, the tenant is allowed to take two crops of grain, then sow grass, and thereafter the land to lie in pasture for five years, so that he goes through an arable farm in eight years, but he has an option of taking a green crop between the two grain crops if he chooses. The lands are manured with

lime or dung during each rotation. There are few sheep kept. The pasture lands are occupied by milk cows of the best Ayrshire breed. Their produce is disposed of partly in butter, but chiefly in cheese, which may be considered as the staple article, from which at least two-thirds of the rents are raised; great attention is therefore paid to the dairy. The cheese is considered equal to the best Dunlop, and bears the highest price as such in the Glasgow market. The tenants seldom carry their cheese to the Glasgow market themselves. They dispose of it to a class of cheese-merchants or middlemen, who purchase from the tenants, and attend the disposal of it in the markets. Many of these cheese-merchants have made considerable fortunes. Mr James Findlay, a well-known dealer, has erected a large storehouse at Easter Highgate in which he has often 12,000 stones of cheese, and 1000 bolls of oatmeal. He carries a very large quantity to the Glasgow market yearly. The number of milk cows, pastured in the parish, may amount to 900, besides young cattle; and as the greater part of the produce of the cows is made into cheese, it may be estimated to average from 12 to 16 stone tron, being 18 or 24 stone English each cow. A considerable quantity of milk is also carted into the adjoining villages, which is found a more profitable mode of disposing of it, when the distance is great, than by making cheese or butter. Rye-grass is extensively grown for sale, and in the town and parish there are seed-merchants who make very considerable purchases, and make large shipments to England. The fur drainage has lately been carried on very extensively in the parish. It was first attempted by Mr Cunninghame of Lainshaw, with stones. The tile-drainage was then introduced by the Duke of Portland, who carried it to a very great extent. There was at first a prejudice against tiles in this neighbourhood, in which there is abundance of stones, and the fur drains were for some time made exclusively with stones. The prejudice has now given way, and two tile-works have lately been erected in the parish, which have not hitherto been able to supply the demand. On the drained lands, wheat and beans are now partially reared, and the fur drainage has greatly improved the quality of the pasturage. The stock of cattle has also much improved; and the late Dr Patrick of Trearne, Mr Patrick of Roughwood, and Captain Patrick of Drumbowie, for many years have given premiums to their tenants for the best cattle kept and reared by them, as shown at an annual exhibition. This has been productive of much benefit, and is an example worthy of imitation by

other landed proprietors. The real rental of the landward part of the parish may be stated at L. 10,000 Sterling, being at the rate of about L. 1, 10s. per Scots acre of the whole parish.

Rate of Wages.—The wages of farm-servants are males, L. 8; females, from L. 3 to L. 4, in the half-year. The wages of labourers are 2s. per day without victuals.

Manufactures.—There is a considerable quantity of thread made annually, by which about 200 persons are employed; and a mill for spinning flax has recently been erected at North-bar, two miles from the town, which employs upwards of 80 people. The sole proprietor of this work is Mr James Crawford, manufacturer in Beith, who has set down several houses for the accommodation of his workers, and has begun to feu, so that in a few years a village will be formed at this establishment. There is at Roughbank, on the march of the parish, to the north, a thriving similar establishment, but on a less scale, belonging to William Patrick, Esq. and occupied by Mr Thomas Caldwell. There is at this place a mill for making potatoe flour, which employs about 14 individuals. The tanning and currying of leather is carried on to a great extent in Beith by Messrs John Muir, Robert Ramsay, and Bryce Muir, under the firms of "John Muir and Company," and "Muir and Ramsay." The works are well conducted, and employ 35 persons. At Threepwood, in the north-east of the parish, there are two bleachfields, one belonging to Mr Hugh Stevenson, the other to Messrs John Stevenson and Son, at both of which considerable business is done. Mr James Stevenson of Threepwood has erected at Knows, in the neighbourhood, an establishment of 38 steam looms, which employs about 30 individuals. The machinery is of the newest construction, and has been chiefly formed by one of his sons, a young man of considerable skill in mechanics. In the town and parish, there are several merchants who deal very extensively in grain; and while it is difficult to say what forms the staple article of the commerce of Beith, it is not difficult to add, that the spirit of enterprise in the place is considerable, and is on the increase, embracing a share of all sorts of merchandise. The town is well lighted with gas. The Gas Company was instituted in 1831, and the stock is held in L. 10 shares. The capital is L. 1600, on which the dividends have rated from 5 to 8 per cent. annually.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Markets, &c.—There has been, for a long period, a weekly market in Beith. It used to be held on Saturday; but after the Scots

Statute 1695, prohibiting Saturday markets, it was changed to Friday, upon which day it still remains. On this day, there is no exposing of articles on the street for sale, but country people attend to transact business, and fairs are always held on this day, except such as are fixed on a particular day of the month, such as the festival of St Inan, vulgarly called Tenants day, which is held on 18th August, old style. This fair is celebrated for its show and sale of horses, and is attended by a great concourse of people. The other more particular fairs are New Years-day Friday, Candlemas Friday, May Cow Fair, and Martinmas Friday, all of which are held on the first Fridays of the respective months of January, February, May, and November, old style. There used formerly to be a fair in June, called the Trades Race, in which the trades assembled and went in procession through the town with music and flags, but this has long been given up. On the day after the Trades Race, the merchants of the town used to meet and walk in procession, and afterwards dine together. The procession has also been given up for many years, but the convivial part of the ceremony is still retained, and the annual dinner continues to be respectably attended. This society is of some standing. They have a regular minute-book, from which it appears that they were constituted as a society prior to 1727, and it is said, that at their first institution they held a charter from the Earl of Eglinton. They have a set of useful rules which are in verse, and are read over to the new members at their initiation. The president is annually elected, and during the festival is styled "my Lord." This society comprehends all the merchants in town. All those who commence business are called upon at the return of the festival, and in some degree compelled to enter. Founding upon the long continuance of the custom, the office-bearers have considered themselves entitled to use compulsory means to make the new merchant join their society, and failing his doing so, to seize *brevi manu* his goods to the value of the entry money. On a principle of this kind, it was decided by the Court of Session in the case of Callender, 11th July 1672, M. D. 10892, that "forty years possession gave a Sheriff right to ride a fair, and exact so much for gloves, and for the best staig in the fair," although there was no special grant on which the exaction was founded; but it has not been necessary of late to resort to compulsory measures with the Beith merchants, to make them become members of this society, as the doing so and attending the annual meeting is considered a matter of amusement and

conviviality. There is still a fair in July called the Cadgers' Race, in which the carters ride in procession through the town. In the van the oldest cadger or carter rides, having a string of bells round the horse's neck. The horse which gains the race has the honour of returning from the race course bearing the bells, and its owner retains the custody of them till next year. For some years, the farmers of the parish joined in this procession, on which occasions there was an imposing exhibition of excellent horses; but they have not done so for many years, and this remnant of ancient custom has dwindled away to comparative insignificance.

Villages.—Above a mile to the east of the town, there is a village called Gateside, where there are 150 inhabitants; and at Northbar and Burnhouse, on the road to Kilmarnock, two villages are now forming.

Means of Communication.—There is a daily coach from Ardrossan to Glasgow, which passes through Beith in the morning and returns in the evening. There are two carriers three times a-week to Paisley; two twice a-week to Glasgow; two weekly to Kilmarnock; two to Greenock; one to Saltcoats; and one to Largs. The post-office communications are very advantageous. There are two arrivals and departures daily, and a free delivery of letters twice a-day, and a penny-post daily to the neighbouring towns of Dalry, Kilbirnie, and Lochwinnoch.

Banks.—There are four branches of Banks, the Commercial Bank of Scotland, the Glasgow Union, the British Linen Company, and the Paisley Commercial.

Ecclesiastical History.—The church of Beith was originally a chapel planted by the monastery of Kilwinning. The monks enjoyed the tithes and revenues, and found a curate to do the duty. At the Reformation the tithes of Beith produced yearly 169 bolls and 2 pecks of meal, 9 bolls, 3 firlots, and 2 pecks of bear, and L. 43, 5s. Scots in money, for a part of the tithes which had been let on lease. About the period of the Reformation, the Abbot and Chapter feued out the lands in the barony for small feu-duties. These passed with the other temporalities of the Church to Hugh fifth Earl of Eglinton, who was created Lord of Election of the monastery.

The first minister of whom we have any notice after the Reformation, is Thomas Boyd, who was Reader there in 1573. His stipend was first L. 20, afterwards L. 25, "with the kirk-land, to be payit out of the third of Kilwynnyng for payment thair of

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j. chalder iiij. bolls meill." Readers were an inferior order of ministers, whose duty it was to read the Scriptures and common prayers to the people. After they advanced in knowledge, they were authorized to add short exhortations, and were then called Exhorters. The readers having taken upon them to solemnize marriage, and administer the sacraments, were prohibited from the exercise of these duties by the General Assembly,—an example of which is given by Calderwood, who states that in 1574, "the reader of Dalry was complained upon by Mr David Lindsay, Commissioner of Kyle, Carrick, and Cunninghame, for that being discharged of all ministration of the Lord's Supper, he notwithstanding ministered the same after his manner, in the place of Kilburnie, in the last Easter. The Assembly ordained him to make his public repentance two several Sabbaths, upon the one in Kilburnie and upon the other in Dalry; and if he commit the like, that he be deposed, and that this act strike upon all readers that shall be found guiltie of the like." These enactments were renewed, but being transgressed, the order was in 1581 suppressed, the office being concluded, "to be no ordinar office in the kirk of God."

After Mr Boyd, Mr John Young was minister of Beith. He obtained from the King a grant during his own lifetime of the whole tithes of the parish, and which grant was afterwards ratified by Mr William Melville, commendator of Tunland (who acquired right to the temporalities of Kilwinning,) on Mr Young's paying him L. 5 Scots yearly. Mr Young, with several of his brethren, was called before the Lords of the Secret Council on a charge of serious import. Various statutes had been passed prohibiting intercourse with Catholic priests, and imposing severe penalties on those who should harbour them. These enactments had not been successful; and in 1609 an act was passed renewing the former statutes, and giving power to the Secret Council to call those who should contravene the law before them and inflict punishment. On 31st January 1610, The records of the Secret Council bear, that "For samekle as althocht the receipt, supplie, and intercomoning, with Jesuits, seminarie priestes, and trafficquing Papistis be prohibite and forbidden be diverss actis of Parliament and Secrit Counsell, nochtwithstanding it is of truth that Johnne Campbell, alias fader Chrisostome, ane knowne trafficquing priest, returning laithie within this realme, of purpois and intention to haif seduceit simple and ignorant people frome acknowlegeing of the treuth, and to hafe

maid schipwrak of the faith, he during the tyme of his abode heir, had his most frequent and commone resorte, residence, and remaining within the boundis of the Presbyterie of Irwing, quhair he was resset, suppleit, and comfortit in all his necessities be Mr Johne Harpar, minister at Kilbryd, and Johnne Fullarton, minister at Dreghorne, Mr Alexander Scrimgeour, minister at Irwing, Mr Johnne Young, minister at Beath, and Mr Alexander Campbell, minister at Stevensoun, minesteris of the said Presbeterie, quha nocht onlie keipit cumpany and societie with him in all friendly and familiar discourseis, but interteyned him in their houses, ministering unto him all suche comforte, countenance, favor, and assistance, as gif he had bene a lauchfull subject, heichlie to the disgrace of thair professioun and calling, misregard of his Matris auctoritie and lawis, and evill example to utheris simple personis to do the lyke, without remeid be providit: Thairfore, the Lordis of Secret Counsalls ordanis lettres to be direct, charging the saidis personis to compeir personalie before the saidis Lordis, upon the fyftene day of Februaire nixt to cum, to answer to the premissis, and to underlye suche ordoure as sal be tane thairanent, under the pane of rebelloun, &c. with confiscation," &c. The result is not known, though probably Fader Chrisostome would leave the country, and his entertainers suffer rebuke.

Mr Young was succeeded by Mr James Fullarton. His stipend was at first 3 chalders meal, and 300 merks of money. Having brought a process of augmentation in 1635, the Commissioners increased the same to 5 chalders victual, 300 merks of money, and 40 merks for communion elements. This continued the stipend of the parish till 1806. During Mr Fullarton's incumbency, it was proposed to remove the Kirk of Beith to a more central part of the parish. An act of the Scots Parliament was passed for this purpose in 1633, the preamble of which is curious:— "Our Sovereign Lord and his States of this present Parliament, being certainlie informit that the Kirk of Beith, lyand within the presbyterie of Irvine, and bailliarie of Cunynghame, quhair the same was of old situat, and now presentlie stands, is most remote and far distant from the moste pairt of the haill parichioners and parochine of Beythe, situate upon the north and north-west pairts of the said parochine of Beithe, neir approaching to the parochine of Loquhinzeche, the parichioners quhairof sua incroatches, and takes up the places and stallis of the ordinar parichioners of Beythe, that in the summer seasons they cannot convenientlie come and ad-

dress themselves to sermones and sacraments to thair said paroch kirk; and in the winter seaseone thairis difficultie in ryding vpon horse and walking vpon feete; that the most pairt of the saids parichioners of Beithe being distant from thair said paroch kirk be the space of three or four myllis or thairby, cannot goodlie address and convene thameselffs thairto be reassoun of the stormes of weather, and of the deip and evil wayes adjacent thairto." The statute then proceeds to enact, that there be ane new kirk planted in a more commodious part of the parish, and that there be a new manse and glebe, conform to law,—the new kirk, manse, and glebe to be built at the expense of the heritors, who were to have power to apply the old buildings, glebe, and glebe lands for that purpose; but the proposal was not put into execution.

Mr Fullarton was succeeded by Mr Patrick Colville, a man of talent, who was frequently employed in committees on public affairs, during the troublesome times of his incumbency. At the indulgence, Mr William Maitland from Whithorn was appointed by an act of the Privy-Council in 1669, and in 1672. Under the second indulgence, Mr William Creighton was conjoined with him, though it is doubtful if he ever accepted.

It is well-known that the indulged ministers had great difficulty in recovering their stipends, and it appears that Mr Maitland had been in that predicament. The records of the privy-council, 1st March 1677, have the following entry, "anent a petition presented by Mr William Maitland, minister at Beith, showing that the petitioner had served the cure at the said kirk, the two byegone years, 1675 and 1676, without receiving any stipend; albeit he hath himself and a numerous family to manteane, which he will not be longer able to undergo unless the Lords of Counsel be pleased to allow him the said stipend for the said two years service; and therefore humbly supplicating that an order and warrant might be granted for that effect, in manner under-written; the Lords of His Maj. Privie Counsel having heard and considered the foresaid petition, do hereby grant order and warrant to the heritors and others liable in payment of the stipend of the said paroch of Beith, to make payment to the petitioner, and that for ilk one of said crops and years of God, 1675 and 1676, and ordains letters of horning and others to be direct thereupon in form, as effeirs."

Mr Maitland was succeeded in 1681 by Mr Robison, a curate, whose appointment is said to have been very unpopular. After the Revolution Mr Alexander Orr was admitted in 1690. In 1700,

he was translated to St Quivox, when Mr Robert Cameron was appointed to Beith. In his time the minister, with consent of the presbytery and heritors, entered into a contract of excambion with Alexander Earl of Eglinton, by which his Lordship gave the farm of Mainshill for the old glebe. This farm contains about 45 acres, and has added considerably to the value of the living. Mr Cameron died in 1735, and was succeeded by Mr William Leechman, who was translated to Glasgow, where he was first admitted Professor of Divinity, and afterwards chosen Principal of the University. He was succeeded in Beith by Mr John Witherspoon, a man of strong natural talents and decision of character, which he probably inherited from our Reformer, John Knox, of whom he was a lineal descendant. He was a native of Yester, in East Lothian, of which parish his father was minister. Soon after his ordination at Beith, the Rebellion broke out, and he was active in seconding the wishes of his parishioners, who raised a company of militia "in defence of our only rightful and lawful Sovereign, King George, against his enemies engaged in the present Rebellion." At the head of this patriotic band, Mr Witherspoon marched to Glasgow to join the King's army against the Pretender. When they arrived there, they received orders to return, and with this the company complied; but the reverend commander went forward, was at the Battle of Falkirk, where the rebels were victorious, and where he was taken prisoner. He was carried to Doune Castle, and kept for some time. Along with him was the Rev. Andrew M'Vey, afterwards minister of Dreghorn, who got out of the state prison in the disguise of a female carrying a tea-kettle. Several parishes in this district sent out parties of volunteers in aid of the Government, and to this they were encouraged by a resolution of the Presbytery of Irvine, 7th January 1746. Mr Witherspoon married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Montgomery of Craighouse, in this parish. He was translated to Paisley, and went afterwards to America, where he was appointed President of the College of Princeton in New Jersey. He introduced into the system of education there all the improvements of this country, and the cause of education, and science in America was greatly promoted by his exertions. He was repeatedly sent to Congress, and was one of the subscribers to the declaration of American Independence. His political conduct showed that he considered it his duty to be a faithful subject to the Government under which he lived, whatever the form of that government might be. Immediately after the peace of 1763,

he paid a visit to his native country, where he spent some days among his friends in Beith, and preached in the church. He died on 15th November 1794, in the 73d year of his age. His family and descendants are numerous and respectable. His fame did not die with him, as his theological writings, particularly his celebrated "Essay on Regeneration," are quoted as works of great merit. His whole works were published at Edinburgh 1804, in nine volumes, octavo, and some of them have reached several editions. He was succeeded in Beith by Mr David M'Lellan, a man of whom it was said that he united in his character the gentleman, scholar, and Christian. He died 22d October 1796, and was succeeded by Mr Robert M'Vey. In his time, the stipend, which had remained for 170 years without any increase, was augmented to 8 chalders meal, L. 400 Scots of money, and L. 100 Scots for communion elements. A new manse was built in 1796, and a new church was begun 20th March 1807, and opened for divine service on 19th August 1810. The church is set down on the lands of Knockbuckle, and stands high; its site is 343 feet above the level of the sea. When the church was removed a small part of the old building was allowed to remain, to preserve the clock and bell for the use of the town.

Mr M'Vey died 3d July 1811, and was succeeded by Mr James Muir. During his incumbency, the stipend was augmented to 16 chalders of victual, half meal, half barley, with L. 15 Sterling for communion elements. Mr Muir died in 1831, and was succeeded by the present incumbent, who was translated from Kilwinning, to which parish he was ordained in 1824.

The church, as is before-mentioned, was opened for public worship in August 1810. It is seated for 1254 persons, giving 18 inches for each sitting. At the division, the heritors set apart 183 sittings for the use of the inhabitants of the town. They are let annually for the benefit of the poor's fund. The remainder of the church was divided among the heritors, which gave them a sitting for L. 6, 10s. Scots of valued rent. The church and tower cost L. 2790. The bell in the tower, one of the finest toned in the west country, was the gift of Robert Shedden, Esq. Gower Street, London, a native of the parish, of whom some notice is taken elsewhere. The church, manse, and offices are all in a good state of repair.

Education.—There was a school early established in this parish. In a charter dated 14th November 1644, there occurs the

name of Mr John Maxwell, schoolmaster at the kirk of Beith, as a witness. The session record, of date 9th November 1693, bears, that after sermon the minister, heritors, and elders met, and agreed with Mr Chapman to be their schoolmaster. This was three years before the statute 1696 of William III. ordaining a school to be settled in every parish. Since that date there has been a regular succession of parish schoolmasters. The salary was 100 merks Scots until the passing of the statute in 1803, when it was fixed at the minimum of 300 merks, with a house and an allowance for a garden. At the expiry of the first twenty-five years the salary was made L. 26 Sterling, being at the rate of one penny Sterling on each pound Scots of valued rent. The schoolmaster receives the statutory value for a garden, but it is in contemplation by the heritors to build a new school-house, and inclose garden ground in terms of law.

The present parish schoolmaster, Mr James Reid, who was elected in May 1832, holds the office of session-clerk; but the offices of precentor and kirk-treasurer, though sometimes united, are held by different individuals. Besides the parish school, there are five other schools in the town, and three in the landward part of the parish. The total number of scholars is 500, being nearly the tenth part of the population. There are also several Sabbath evening schools, which are well attended. They are all taught gratuitously; and the long-continued labours of Mr William Clark, merchant, in this department, have been most creditable to himself and beneficial to his pupils. The Sabbath evening school which meets in the parish church is superintended by the minister and Mr Reid, the parochial schoolmaster. It is taught by about sixteen teachers, and attended by about 200 children. In connexion with this school, Mr Reid, with the assistance of two or three benevolent individuals, teaches gratuitously a school two evenings in the week, which is of great benefit to a numerous portion of the poorer children, whose necessary employment prevents them from attending the day school.

Dissenters.—There is a congregation of the Associate Synod, which was formed in 1761. Their first ordained minister was Mr John Laidlaw, who remained only about two years, and withdrew from their communion. He was succeeded by the Reverend Andrew Mitchell, a man of sincere piety, who was respected by people of all denominations. He died in 1812. His eldest son, the Reverend John Mitchell, D. D., Glasgow, is one of the Pro-

fessors of Divinity of the United Associate Synod. Mr Mitchell was succeeded by the Reverend James Meikle, who was ordained in September 1812, and is now minister. Their church was rebuilt in 1816, and is capable of holding 500 people. They have a good substantial dwelling-house, and suitable offices and garden for their minister.

There is also a congregation of Relief, which was formed in 1784. Their first ordained minister was the Reverend John Harriot; their second the Reverend William Thomson, who was placed in 1788, and was translated in 1800 to Hutchisontoun, Glasgow, where he now officiates. He was succeeded in 1802 by the Reverend James Anderson, the present minister. The Relief society have also a good manse, offices, and garden, with some acres of land adjoining, which they have recently commenced to feu. The church is seated for 849 persons. There is a school belonging to the society, which has a small endowment arising from the bequest of one of the heritors.

Parochial Registers.—Few parish registers in the Presbytery are of older date than the Revolution. The earliest volume of the Beith register commences in 1659, and ends in 1758. It is imperfect, and for some years no entries are made; sometimes births, baptisms, and marriages, are entered promiscuously. Baptism was generally administered "in presence of the hail congregation," but it was also done at the houses of the parents, on which occasions the names of two of the witnesses present at the ceremony are entered in the record. The more frequent way was to administer this ordinance in presence of the congregation, as directed by the Act of Assembly, 7th February 1645. It appears that baptism was administered very soon after the birth of the child, sometimes on the same day. The laws against disorderly baptism were severe, and by the statute 22d Charles II. 1672, those who delayed the baptism of their children beyond thirty days, were subjected in very heavy penalties. Besides, it was the popular belief, that infants perished who died unbaptised, and until baptism that they were more readily subject to the power of witchcraft. Of late years, the register has been kept with greater accuracy and care, but there are comparatively few births registered.

While on this subject it may be remarked, that the mode of conducting funerals has of late years undergone considerable change. Formerly large companies were invited, there being fre-

quently from two to three hundred individuals asked to a funeral, the greater number of whom attended. Now the parties are smaller, and the custom of having an entertainment seems gradually to be giving way. Funerals are thus less expensive, and occupy less time; but many are of opinion that it lessens the solemnity when there is no religious exercise; and it is well known that the hearts of individuals have been affected by prayers at a funeral, which have resisted or neglected more ordinary appeals. It has been suggested, that a prayer might be offered immediately after the body is laid in the grave, and, doubtless, the place and circumstances are well calculated to impress serious thoughts on the mind; but the weather is not always favourable for this exercise, and it is a subject on which it would be easy to excite prejudice and misconception, and, so far as is known, the experiment has not been tried.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The kirk-session hold two small farms in the parish, which were purchased by sums mortified for behoof of the poor. The rents of both are at present L. 78 yearly. The average collections at the church-door are L. 70. Hearse hires and mortcloth dues yield L. 10; and fees for proclamations, &c. about L. 5. The seats in the church, set apart for the population of the town, and let annually, yield L. 14. These produce L. 177. The expenditure for the poor is somewhat above this, and the surplus is provided for by occasional assessments in the parish. The allowance to the poor on the ordinary roll is from 4s. to 6s. monthly. The number on the roll at present is 30.

Town-House.—In 1817, this house was built by subscription. The lower part consists of two shops, the rents of which are applied for public purposes, without any return to the subscribers. The upper story is a large hall, in which are held the Justice of Peace Courts, the Sheriff Small Debt Circuit Courts, meetings of the road trustees, &c. It is also used as a public reading-room. There is in the lower part of the building a lock-up, in which criminals are confined, preparatory to their being sent to Ayr, or in *modum pænæ* of minor offences.

It was stipulated that the management of this house, and the affairs connected therewith, should for the first twenty years after July 1818 remain with the subscribers, and after that period should be transferred to the four following classes of persons:—1. All the Justices of the Peace in the parishes of Beith, Dalry, and Kilbirnie, being the parishes forming the district of Beith; 2. Heli-

tors of the parishes whose valued rent is L. 50 Scots and upwards; 3. Proprietors of houses in the town of Beith, or within half a mile of the cross, of L. 7 of yearly rent or value; and, 4. The tenants of such houses. The twenty years expired in July 1838, and the management has now been taken up by the new constituency.

Benevolent Societies.—Many years ago, several societies were instituted for affording relief to aged and indigent members. But as nothing was contributed after the original subscription, and as there was thus no annual supply, the funds could not stand the demands when the members became old and required aid. The consequence was, that they were consumed, and the societies ceased. No attempt has been made to form one on the basis recommended by the Highland Society of Scotland, of making the entrance-money on a scale corresponding to the age of the members, which has been proved the sure foundation of permanency and efficiency. This is much to be regretted, as there is nothing so gratifying to the independent minded man as the reflection of having laid aside, in the day of comparative prosperity, for the day of his adversity, to which all are more or less liable. Of late, a sort of substitute for the friendly society has been adopted in what is called a *Menage*. This is a common fund contributed equally at so much a-week; and at a time fixed, each person draws his share by lot. He thus gets L. 1 or L. 1, 10s. at one time, which aids him in paying his house rent, but it is only drawing out *in cumulo* what he contributed periodically, and is no better than the old custom of the *Pinner-Pig*, only the money is put beyond reach until the date of drawing it out. There was a Savings Bank for several years, which was broken up, and a new one formed in 1834. The following table gives a *vidimus* of the operations of this society.

Year ending	Amount of Deposits.	No. of Deposits.	No. of Depositors.	Amount of Drawings.	No. of Drawings.
3d March 1835,	L. 524 4 4	901	124	L. 202 6 2	49
1st March 1836,	481 9 4	668	171	252 1 11	60
7th March 1837,	599 14 8	828	225	421 7 9	86
Proportion of years to 10th Feb. 1838,	445 14 3	583	270	514 1 10	124

Mr John Kerr of Nettlehirst left L. 20 to found a society for purchasing clothing, blankets, and fire, for poor persons resident in the town and parish. The society was instituted in 1817, the year in which Mr Kerr died, and has been very well supported. The average expenditure is about L. 20.

The late Dr Patrick of Hazlehead left L. 20 to form a society for procuring clothing to old men in decayed circumstances, and resident in the parish. A society has in consequence been recently instituted for this benevolent purpose, and it is to be hoped will meet with similar support.

Public Libraries.—There is a subscription library in the town, which contains 400 volumes, but it has not been well supported. There are also two circulating libraries.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the last Statistical Account was written, very considerable improvements have taken place in this parish. The roads, both turnpike and parochial, are in better order, though in this matter there is certainly much room for farther improvement. The houses of the wealthier inhabitants are, with few exceptions, more commodious and comfortable, but many of the weavers and labourers, and even farmers, are meanly lodged. In the town, there are many thriving respectable merchants and traders; and Beith is distinguished above most places of the kind by the wealth of not a few of its inhabitants. All sorts of cloths, groceries, and butcher-meat can be got here as good as in Glasgow, and the number of shops for retailing these articles shews that the demand is great. That the morals of the people are improved in proportion to their means and opportunity, it would perhaps be hazardous to assert. Certainly there is no longer that reckless daring of the law which was characteristic of the place when it was a seat of smuggling; yet offences are too frequent, which are generally the results of excessive drinking,—a prevailing vice in this place as in most others at the present day, and it is melancholy to see the idleness, profanity, and wretchedness to which it leads. Here the people have many strong and encouraging proofs that industry and sobriety can raise not only to independence, but to wealth, for here there are men who began the world, after having got only the most ordinary education, and without any earthly means to assist them, but their own health and prudence, and who now are living with their families in affluence, respected by all, and relieving the necessities of many who commenced with equal means of success. There has always been a due share of valour and patriotism in this place. At the Revolution, a company of volunteers was raised in defence of the King and constitution, and we have already noticed the company raised by Mr Wotherspoon in 1745. During the war with Buonaparte, the Beith volunteers and local militia were always

prompt and respectable ; and individuals belonging to the place have fought with Abercromby in Egypt, with Nelson at Trafalgar, and with Wellington at Waterloo. There is a generous feeling in the better classes towards their inferiors, which has been evinced in liberal subscriptions and exertions for them during periods of public distress. Were there more morality and sobriety, there would be less poverty and want, and the indigent would be more cheerfully and liberally supplied, having the claims of character to plead on their behalf, and giving the assurance that they would use prudently and beneficially the alms they received. There is generally speaking a good attendance on public worship, yet it is to be regretted that this divine and merciful ordinance is most neglected by the operative and poorer classes, who, being less enlightened by education, and having a greater struggle with the world, and being more exposed to the snares and temptations of sin, stand in the greater need of the instructions and warnings, aids, and consolations of the Gospel preached. And it is painful to conclude, that, amid many favourable symptoms, there is mingled much carelessness about religion, and much profanation of the Sabbath ; while many are given to intemperance and vice, bringing on themselves, and entailing on their helpless families, wretchedness and misery, and gradually undermining those habits of industry, and that spirit of independence, which were so long characteristic of the people of Scotland.

May 1839.