

chalders; the glebe is  $4\frac{3}{4}$  imperial acres in extent. The manse was built in 1771, and is in a good habitable condition.

*Education.*—There are six schools in the parish, including one female school kept in the village of Kirkoswald. Salary of the parochial schoolmaster, L. 30; average yearly amount of school fees, L. 45. The Kilkerran family has endowed one of the schools with accommodations, and a salary of L. 12 per annum to the teacher.

*Poor.*—The average number of poor is 46; and the average allowance to each 1s. per week. The heritors contribute for their behoof about L. 110 per annum; and about L. 40 per annum is derived from church collections.

February 1842.

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## PARISH OF LARGS.\*

PRESBYTERY OF GREENOCK, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

THE REV. JOHN DOW, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE learned author of Caledonia says that the name of this parish is derived from the Scoto-Irish *Iearg*, signifying a plain, and that the same word appears in various other names of places in North Britain. The final *s*, the sign of the English plural, has been added in consequence of two places bearing the same name. This derivation is not, like the generality of Celtic names, very accurately descriptive, for there is no extent of ground in the parish which can be called a plain. Some have supposed that the word also signifies *fields*, and that, as it was the field or scene of the celebrated battle with the Norwegians, the place has consequently been called the Largs. This is, however, purely fanciful, and is not consistent with fact, for the place bore the name of Largs long prior to the event alluded to.

*Boundaries and Extent.*—The town of Largs lies in latitude  $55^{\circ} 49' 30''$  north, longitude  $4^{\circ} 52'$  west. The parish contains about  $37\frac{3}{4}$  square miles, or 24,160 acres. It lies along the coast of the Firth of Clyde for nine miles. On the north it is bounded by

\* Furnished by James Dobie, Esq. Beith.

the parishes of Innerkip and Greenock; on the east, by Kilmalcolm, Lochwinnoch, and Kilbirnie; on the south, by Dalry and West Kilbride; and on the west, by the Frith of Clyde. Its breadth is not much more than four miles.

*Topographical Appearances.*—We cannot give a better or more accurate general account than that which is to be found in the second Statistical Account of this parish in the former work, Vol. xvii. p. 503. “No parish in the west of Scotland, and few in the Highlands, can afford such a variety of beautiful and romantic scenes. The hills, which begin to rise in the neighbouring parishes of Greenock, Kilmalcolm, Lochwinnoch, Kilbirnie, and Dalry, meet in a kind of general summit at the eastern boundary of Largs, from which they gradually descend as they approach the shore, till they terminate at last in a variety of abrupt declivities, some of which are almost perpendicular, as if part of their base had been torn away by force. Notwithstanding the vast height of these hills, they are covered during the greater part of the year with verdure, and afford such excellent pasture for sheep, and some of them for larger cattle, as can hardly be found elsewhere in similar situations.

“The quantity of heath, even on the highest hills, is comparatively small; and, from indisputable marks, it appears that some of them have once been cultivated.”

Along the coast from West Kilbride to Kellyburn, there is a tract of rich land, the mean breadth of which is about a quarter of a mile. The tract narrows towards the north. To the east the ground rises abruptly to a very great height. The hill of Stake, which is the extreme boundary on the east, is 1691 feet above the level of the sea; and to the south of that mountain Irishlaw stands 1576, and Knockside hill, 1419 feet above the same level. The half of the whole land in the parish is hill pasture, and occupied as such. The temperature of the town of Largs, which is protected from the east winds by a range of high ground, is considered mild and salubrious; and the situation has become a favourite and fashionable watering-place. The high grounds above Largs afford very delightful prospects. The admirers of nature need not travel out of this district in search of fine scenery, as few scenes can equal in rich variety what the enraptured eye of the beholder can witness from the grounds above Kelburn. There may be enjoyed

the boundless store  
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields,

The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,  
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields.

*Climate and Diseases.* \*—The quantity of rain which falls at Largs has never been ascertained, but there is no doubt that it is considerable. A rain-gauge was kept for some time at the Brisbane Observatory, two miles from Largs, from which it appeared that the quantity which fell at Brisbane was very great. There is reason to believe, however, from the situation of the observatory, that showers frequently fall there, which do not reach the plain of Largs. The town of Largs is pretty much exposed to wind from all points, but it suffers only from the east and north-west. The former comes down the Brisbane and Gogo glens, frequently with great violence, yet it is not found that these winds produce those pernicious effects on the health which are ascribed to them on the east coast of Scotland, the wind being dry and clear. Largs is, generally speaking, a very healthy place, the mortality in ordinary years varying from 1 in 50, to 1 in 65 of the whole population, exclusive of strangers. To this rule there have been some exceptions. In 1828, an epidemic dysentery prevailed throughout the whole of the west of Scotland, and added ten or twelve to our bill of mortality for that year; and also in 1836 and 1837, an epidemic erysipelas, of a peculiarly intractable character, prevailed, and proved fatal in a considerable number of cases. In 1832, cholera appeared in three houses; the number of deaths was five. To two of the houses it was brought by persons arriving from Glasgow, in the third instance it appeared spontaneously. In no case did it spread to the neighbouring houses. Typhus fever appears in Largs occasionally, seldom spreading to any great extent, and for the most part confined to the poorer and worst lodged part of our population. Poverty, filth, and intemperance, will produce their usual effects on the physical and moral health in the healthiest locality. The writer has long been impressed with the necessity of having a separate building for the reception and treatment of contagious diseases in Largs, and in all considerable towns and villages, where the patients would enjoy the benefit of thorough cleanliness and ventilation, and where the sick would be separated from the healthy. In this way, he thinks, many valuable lives might be saved, and much misery prevented.

The agricultural portion of the inhabitants are remarkably

\* This department has been furnished by Dr John Campbell, Largs.

healthy. Those who reside in the town being generally weavers, and the females chiefly engaged in sewing muslin, and other sedentary employments, are liable to the complaints and deterioration of health incident to such occupations. These are, however, partly counteracted by cultivating patches of potato ground, sailing, fishing, &c. in which many of them occasionally engage.

Largs has long been in high repute as a watering-place. From the end of May till the middle of October, there is an additional population, varying from 300 or 400 to upwards of 1000. Few places afford greater facilities for sea-bathing, it being easily practicable to bathe at all times of the tide, and to obtain a proper depth by wading a few yards. The whole coast is perfectly safe. The sea-breezes are of a peculiarly bracing and invigorating character, and their salutary effects evident on crowds of annual visitors from the densely peopled towns of the interior. Although showers often fall, the whole plain on which Largs stands is singularly dry, from the pure gravel which forms the subsoil speedily absorbing the water, and rendering our roads and walks dry and pleasant a few hours after the heaviest rain.

From the keenness of the easterly winds in winter and spring, it may be doubted whether the climate of Largs is well adapted for patients liable to spitting of blood, or inflammatory affections of the lungs. In such cases, Rothsay is preferable. Yet phthisis is not a disease of frequent occurrence in Largs, the deaths from it seldom exceeding three or four annually. In some consumptive cases, when there is little tendency to inflammation or hemorrhage, the writer of this has seen decided amendment from a residence in Largs. Croup in some seasons has prevailed to some extent; but for several years past, it has been of rare occurrence.

No instance of wonderful longevity exists at present in the parish, but the number of persons betwixt the ages of seventy and ninety-three is very considerable.

*Hydrography.*—There are only two rivers in the parish which call for notice, the Gogo and the Noddle. The former rises in the south-east part of the parish, and falls into the sea at the town of Largs. The word is said to be Celtic, and signifies a branching river. It has accordingly various branches and tributaries, and its water is considerably augmented by that of the Greeto, which joins it about the middle of its course. The Noddle takes its rise in the north-east of the parish, and, after winding its way through the vale of Brisbane, falls into the sea about half a mile

to the north of Gogo.\* Both of these rivers are noticed by Pont. Of the former he says, "Gogo fluvius, a small river running by the church of the Largs," and of the other he merely says, "Nodde fluvius."

The water of Rye takes its origin in this parish, near the source of the Gogo, but runs to the south through the parish of Dalry, and joins the Garnock at Ryesholm. A small streamlet runs to the west through the grounds at Kelburn, from which it takes its name, and on the south boundary of the parish another stream, called Fairlyburn, rises in the high grounds, and runs for about a mile, when it joins its waters to the Frith of Clyde, forming the boundary of the parishes of Largs and West Kilbride. To the north of Fairly, is a small stream called Kepping burn.

The north-east of the parish is bounded by Routenburn, which rises at the Hill of Stake, and runs to the north. It is called by Pont "Rottin burne." Some fanciful etymologists have derived its name from the routing or defeating of the Danes, as if it had been written rout-Dane burn, but this is not deserving of any serious consideration. It is obvious that the name is descriptive of the noise which the water makes, when roaring through its rocky bed, especially after heavy rains. The northern boundary of the parish is Kellyburn, which takes its rise in what was of old called "the Forret of Kyith," and which was latterly called "the back of the world." It runs for near two miles, and falls into the sea at Kelly bridge, to the north of the grounds of Skelmorlie.

There was formerly a small island opposite the harbour of Fairlie. It is laid down in Bleau's map of Cunninghame; but, owing to the receding of the water, the island is no more visible. At low water, there is a large extent of the channel laid bare between Fairlie and Hunterstone, and it has been thought that this land could, by a strong embankment, be entirely gained from the sea; but, as this would not be a productive enterprise to the undertakers, it is not likely to be attempted.

*Geology.*—The geology of this parish is not interesting. The lowest rock, visible *in situ*, is old red sandstone, or old red sandstone conglomerate, visible about Quarter on the one hand, and Fairly on the other. Upon this old red sandstone, or sandstone conglomerate, is superimposed secondary trap, which forms the summit of the highest hills towards the sources of the Greeto, the

\* The bridge over Nodde being narrow, and high in the arch, was taken down, widened, lowered, and rebuilt in 1824.

Gogo, and the Noddle. The old red sandstone, in no instance, rises in this parish to nearly the elevation of the sources of these streams. The bed of secondary trap, here alluded to, may be traced from the German Ocean, throughout Scotland, to the island of Little Cumbrae, Arran, &c. In Little Cumbrae it is distinctly stratified, as may be seen from our side of the Frith, with an inclination of about  $10^{\circ}$  to the west or south-west. The same stratification of trap, on the large scale, may be seen on the Clyde near Kilpatrick. Near Quarter, in this parish, is a small miniature coal-field, but not conformable, inserted in the old red sandstone. This field is exposed on the beach. It consists of limestone and shale. The old red sandstone is here and there cut by dikes of greenstone, which pass into the superincumbent trap. Their direction is most frequently from north to south, or from north-west to south-east. But to this there are exceptions, as at Fairly Brae, &c. Few, if any, organic remains have as yet been discovered in the old red sandstone, and none in the trap. The other formations in the parish are either diluvium or alluvium. The higher parts of the Noddle may be given as a locality for the first. The site of Largs itself for the second. The first is nowhere distinguished for fertility, but the second forms very fertile land; while the soil, mostly formed from the disintegration of old red sandstone, is generally very barren.

Coals have been looked for in the parish; hitherto without success. The basis of our rocks are under the coal formation, properly so called, and the superimposed trap only forms the rough basin in or on which the coal formation rests.

One of the most interesting geological phenomenon to be observed in this parish, is the subsidence of the water of the Frith, or the elevation of the land. The one or other has been the case. The cliffs near Quarter leave no doubt on this subject, as an inspection of them will testify. A line of old beach rock, forty feet above the present high-water mark, shows that we must come to the one or other conclusion. The hill on Gogo, too, which marks one of the points of a meridian line, leads nearly to the same conclusion, having most probably been deposited in still water by the stream when it was at least a quarter of a mile shorter, or, in other words, when the Clyde washed the base of the trap rocks near this place. Others may settle this point; but the matter referred to is well deserving examination.\*

\* The department of this report on Geology has been furnished by William Mont-

*Conchology.*—There is at Largs a post-tertiary deposit, rich in subfossil shells, which the Misses Muir of Warriston have explored with great zeal. The number of species already found in it (though it was but lately discovered by Mr Landsborough of Stevenston), amounts to sixty-eight. These are all scientifically arranged, and, with a few exceptions, named, in the cabinet of the Misses Muir. Some of the rarest were sent to London to James Smith, Esq. of Jordanhill, who is very distinguished in this department of science; and he and other metropolitan geologists and conchologists say, that two of them are new—hitherto unknown. They are Rissoæ, one of them resembling the *Rissoa Harveyii* of W. Thompson, Belfast. The whole list would occupy too much space, so that we shall give only a part of it:

Mya truncata	Nucula margaritacea	Rissoa striatula
----- suborbicularis	Pecten opercularis	----- cimex
Tellina crassa	----- varius	----- striata
Lucina radula	Patella virginea	----- labiosa
----- flexuosa	Trochus magus	Terebra reticulata
Cyprina Islandica	Natica Montaguï	----- perversa
Venerupis virginea	Rissoa ulvæ	Fusus nebula
Cardium serratum	----- parva	----- linearis
----- lævigatum	----- costata	Cypræa Europea
----- nodosum	----- semi-costata	Hiatella Arctica
----- exiguum	----- subumbilicata	Phasianella subulata
Pectunculus pilosus	----- calathisca	Bulla truncata, &c.

There is a post-tertiary deposit at Fairlie, which is seen in the bank of the burn nearly as high up as the old castle. It has not been explored, but the shells which appear in the section of the bank are all of the common littoral kinds.

*Land and Fresh-water Mollusca.*—

Clausilia nigricans	Helix nemoralis	Limnæa limosa
Balea fragilis	Helix hortensis	Cyclas corneus
Helix rotundata	Pupa muscorum	Pisidium obtusale, &c.
----- aspersa	----- edentula	

*Marine.*—

Lutraria elliptica	Mytilus edulis	Trochus cinerarius
Mya arenaria	Cardium edule	----- umbilicatus
----- truncata	----- echinatum	Turbo rudis
Lucina radula	Fusus antiquus	Nerita littoralis
Tellina Ferroensis	----- corneus	Solen siliqua
Venerupis pullastra	Buccinum undatum	----- ensis
Astarte compressa	Turbo littoreus	Patella vulgata
Modiola vulgaris	Purpura lapillus	----- pellucida
----- discors	Bulla minuta	----- carulea, &c.

*Botany.*—There are some magnificent trees at Kelburn, Brisbane, Haylie, Fairlie, Southannan, &c.

gomery, Esq. of Cloak. Those on Conchology, Botany, and Zoology by the Rev. David Landsborough of Stevenston. The information under Parochial Economy and Industry was communicated by James Wilson, Esq. of Haylie.

*Herbaceous Flowering Plants.—*

*Asperula odorata*  
*Lithospermum maritimum*  
*Eryngium maritimum*  
*Solanum Dulcamara*  
*Convolvulus sepium*

*Parnassia palustris*  
*Glaucium luteum*  
*Teucrium chamædrys*  
*Limosella aquatica*

*Raphanus maritimus*  
*Geranium lucidum*  
*Hypericum androsæmum,*  
 &c.

*Ferns.—*

*Asplenium trichomanes*  
 -----  
*adiantum-nigrum*

*Osmunda regalis*

*Scolopendrium vulgare, &c.*

*Mosses.—*

*Bryum ligulatum*  
 -----  
*rostratum*  
*Tortula fallax*  
*Dicranum heteromallum*  
 -----  
*pellucidum*  
 -----  
*taxifolium*  
 -----  
*bryoides*

*Dicranum adiantoides*  
*Polytrichum urnigerum*  
 -----  
*aloides*  
*Hypnum splendens*  
 -----  
*alopecurum*  
 -----  
*dendroides*

*Hypnum loreum*  
 -----  
*triquetrum*  
 -----  
*molluscum*  
 -----  
*purum*  
*Bartramia fontana*  
*Fontinales antipyretica, &c.*

*Algæ.—*

*Delesseria sanguinea*  
 -----  
*sinuosa*  
*Odanthalia dentata*  
*Iridæa edulis*  
*Dumantia filiformis*

*Chondrus crispus*  
 -----  
*mammillosus*  
*Himanthalia lorea*  
*Ulva linza*

*Enteromorpha compressa*  
 -----  
*intestinalis*  
*Porphyra vulgaris*  
*Draparnaldia glomerata, &c.*

*Zoophytes.—*

*Sertularia polyzonias*  
 -----  
*pumila*  
*Lepralia coccinea*  
 -----  
*immersa*  
 -----  
*nitida*

*Lepralia hyalina*  
*Flustra membranacea*  
*Membranipora pilosa*  
 -----  
*stellata*  
*Flustra tuberculata*

*Flustra lineata*  
*Crisia eburnea*  
*Laomedes geniculata*  
*Cellepora pumicosa*  
*Cellularia reptans,*

*Zoology.—Mammalia.*—There is nothing rare in this department. The following, however, may be mentioned: the fox, the polecat, the badger, the weasel, the ermine, the common seal, the otter, the hedge-hog, and martin.

*Ornithology.*—Among the birds found are, the heron, the wild-duck, the common snipe, the jack-snipe, the curlew, the whimbrel, the woodcock, the common tern, the roseate tern, the lapwing, the buzzard, the kestrel, the merlin, the sparrow-hawk, the long-eared owl, the solan-goose, the cuckoo, the blackbird, the thrush, the missel-thrush, the sky-lark, the red-wing, the goldfinch, the gray-linnet, the rose-linnet, the green-linnet, the robin-red-breast, the wren, the gray wagtail, the yellow wagtail, the chaffinch, the yellow-hammer, the ox-eye, the blue tit-mouse,—besides grouse, blackcocks, partridges, pheasants, &c.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

It appears that Cunninghame was anciently formed of two distinct territories. The southern and larger one was called Cunninghame, and the northern and smaller one was called Largs. King Malcolm IV. created Sir Richard Morville Great Constable of Scotland, and Lord of Cunninghame, Largs, and Lauderdale.

The title and dignities of the De Morvilles passed in 1196, by a female heir, to Roland, Lord of Galloway. On the death of Allan, Lord of Galloway, in 1234, the Lordship of Largs was inherited by his daughter Dervorgill, who married John de Baliol, the father of John, the competitor for the Crown. She survived her husband, and during her widowhood granted to Robert, Bishop of Glasgow, the lands and pasture of Cunninghame, and the lands and pasture of Rysdale, with the pertinents, and twenty-four acres of land, which were commonly called Balolfslands, in her lordship of Largs, and a bovat of land, with the pertinents, in her tenement of Largs. This grant was confirmed by Alexander III.\*

The most remarkable circumstance in the history of this place is its having been the scene of the battle between the Norwegians and the Scots, which took place on 3d October 1263. It is foreign to the object of this work to enter into the details of this conflict, nor is it now necessary, after the plain and authentic narrative given by Tytler in the first volume of his interesting and most valuable history. It is there cleared from all the exaggerations of the early historians and chroniclers. Instead of the 24,000 Danes and 5000 Scotch which, according to Boece, were slain at this battle, it appears that the whole force of the Norwegians that landed did not consist of more than 900, and that the Scotch army consisted of 1500. These were chiefly troops collected by the neighbouring barons, whose possessions were in more immediate danger of devastation from the enemy. The Scotch army is said to have been composed of the chief men of the west, yet it is singular that not one of the leaders should have had his name recorded and sent down to posterity, but Peter de Currie, who boldly riding up, challenged the Norwegians to single combat, and was immediately killed by Nicolson, a Norwegian chief. The discomfiture of the Norwegians was aided by the inclemency of the weather, which King Haco attributed to witchcraft, and for the appeasing of which he had mass celebrated at Cumbray. The Norwegians seem to have fought with great bravery, and on the second day had put the Scotch to flight. They were afraid, however, of the arrival of fresh troops and renewed vigour, and betook themselves to their ships and boats, leaving the shore strewed with their dead, and with the wreck of their proud armament. King Haco died at Kirkwall, on his return to Norway. All subsequent con-

\* Chart. Glasgow, p. 457.

tentions between his people and the Scotch were terminated soon after by the marriage of one of Alexander's daughters to Eric, the son and successor of Haco.

An ingenious paper was drawn up on the subject of this battle and its localities, by the late John Dillon, Esq. a man of high talent for research, and to whom the country is indebted for labours which have not been appreciated as they ought. It is published in the seventh volume of the Transactions of the Society of Scotch Antiquaries. He shows with plausibility that the landing of the Norwegians must have taken place between the south end of Brisbane Crescent and Fairlie burn, and that the conflict took place immediately below Haylee. We refer those who are desirous of studying the minutiae of this enterprize to Mr Dillon's paper, and to Mr Tytler's History.

On the death of Dervorgill, the lordship of Largs fell to her son John Baliol, who forfeited the same upon the accession of Bruce, who conferred this Lordship on his son-in-law, Walter, the steward of Scotland. Largs and Cunninghame continued separate districts, and are mentioned as distinct baronies in the charter of Robert II., settling the privileges of the burgh of Irvine, 8th April 1372. To this charter Hugo de Eglynton is a witness. It was during this reign that these baronies were placed under the charge of one bailie, and were subsequently called the Bailiary of Cunninghame, which has since formed the northern division of Ayrshire. The barony of Largs was afterwards parcelled out among the vassals of the Stewarts. The church and parish of Largs formed a rectory, the patronage of which belonged to the lordship of Largs.

On the 30th of January 1318-19, Walter the Stewart, for the safety of his own soul and that of his late spouse, Marjory Bruce, granted the church of Largs in pure and perpetual alms to the Monastery of Paisley. The village of Largs was formed in the immediate vicinity of the church, and soon increased in population.

In the reign of James I., a dispute arose between the Abbot of Paisley and Robert Boyd of Tinwald, who laid claim to the fruits of the church of Largs. The following letter passed under the privy-seal on this occasion, and proved the means of settling the dispute; "James, be the grace of God, Kyng of Scottis, till our lovid Robert Boid of Tynwald gretynge: Foralsmekill as we are informit the yhe adres yhou to be at the Kyrk of Largyss on Fri-

day nextocum, with a multitude of our liegess in feyre of were, in hurtyn and scath of our devote oratours, the Abbot and Covent of Passelay, brekyn of our crya and offens of our maiestie. Our will is, and straitly we charge yhou, gif it sud be, that ye desist tharof, and mak na syk gaderin, undyr all the hiest payne and charge ye may inryne agane oure maiestie, and gif ye haif achūt aganes our said oratours folond thame as law wills. Gifwyn vndyr our pryve seill at Edinburgh the xxiiii day of Aprile, and of our regne xiiii yhers.”—Chart. Pais. p. 245.

Nothing remarkable occurs in the history of the place until 1647, when it was visited by the plague, under which it suffered very severely. Its appearance there is first noticed in the records of the Presbytery of Irvine, under date 29th June 1647, when “the referres of Largs were continued because of the sickness there;” and, on the 17th of August, this sickness is said to be the plague. The minister was carried off by this disease; and the state of the parish is thus noticed at the meeting of the 28th of September: “The Presbiterie, laying to heart the lamentable and calamitous condition of the paroch of Largs, partly by reason of the hand of God that is lying heavy upon them, and partly by reason of the removal of their minister by death, thinks it expedient that Mr Wm. Lindsay be sent to visit them, and to take notice of their desires, and to enquire ane overture of themselves how they may be gotten helpit and supplied; and the said Mr Wm. to make report of his diligence.” On the 26th of October, the minutes of Presbytery bear, “The laird of Bishopton having remonstrate the calamitous condition of the paroch of Largs, and the present necessity that the town of Largs was in, and that if it were not tymouslie removit and helpit, the people wald be forcit to break out athort the countrie. The Presbiterie, after hearing, ordains that these bretheren of the Presbiterie, who, upon the report of their present necessity, had already gathered something for supply of the same, should presentlie apply themselves for their relief, either in money or in victuall, as suld be thought most expedient, and that the rest of the bretheren sould use all possible diligence in collecting a contribution to be sent to them to refresh them in their necessity.”

The aid of the neighbouring parishes being called for, it appeared that the following sums had been contributed for relief of the calamity at Largs:—“From Newmynnes, L.vij lib. viijs. iiijd.; from Irvin, 200 merkes; from Kilmaurs, 1 hundrith two

merks from Stewartoune, 1 hundrith eleven pundis ; from Kilwinning, 1 hundrith pound ; from Perston, 40lb. viij merkes."

Other assistance was procured, and the distress of the people alleviated ; but the effect of this visitation was felt for a considerable period.

The population of the parish, at the date of this calamity, seems to have been greater than what it is now, as the number of communicants is stated to have been 2000. The population decreased considerably. Besides those who were carried off, the alarm and excitement must have caused many families to leave the place ; and it was not until a comparatively recent period, that the tide of popular favour turned, and caused a gradual increase until the present day. Yet even now, with all the advantages, the resident number of communicants is not near the amount it had attained previous to the devastation.

There was a proposal to remove the church from the village to the south part of the parish, and, as the proceedings to accomplish this are not uninteresting, an abstract of them is lodged along with the MS. of this Account.

The record proceeds, on 1st November 1649, to state, " concerning the accomodation of the Largs, which is a wyd and spatiuous congregation, the perambulators did judge it expedient that the lands of Southanan, belonging to my Lord Semple, the lands of Corsbie, belonging to Auchinnames, sould be annexit to Kilbryde, because of their neirness to that kirk and farness from their own ; 2dly, Because of the impossibilitie of building a new kirk within that paroch, be reason of the desolation of these partes ; and, 3dly, Because of ane impassable water betwixt them and Largs."

The annexation of these lands took place ; but the idea of transporting the kirk to the south of the impassable river Gogo was given up, and, a few years ago, a chapel, in connection with the Establishment, was built at Fairlie, near the place where it had been contemplated to erect the parish church. The difficulties of passing rivers no longer exist,—substantial bridges being now erected over every stream which crosses the highway. The bridge over the troublesome Gogo was carried away by a heavy flood in 1831 ; but a large and commodious one was speedily erected, and is likely to resist the power of the river for a long series of years.

*Land-owners—Rent.*—The valued rent of the parish is L.3802, which is divided among the different proprietors as follows :—

Kelburn and others, the Earl of Glasgow,	L.1274	11	8
Brisbane, Sir Thomas Macdougall Brisbane,	805	3	8
Skelmorlie, the Earl of Eglinton and Winton,	381	13	4
Hawkhill, &c. Charles C. Scott,	374	6	8
Knock, John Wilson,	200	0	0
Haylee, &c. James Wilson,	162	0	0
Black House, William Stewart,	112	0	0
Hangingheugh and Burnside, Dr and William Lang,	80	0	0
Routin burn, &c. John Lang,	74	8	0
Noddale, John Lade,	62	0	0
Kilburn, &c. Thomas Crawford,	47	6	8
Part of Constable Wood and Grass-yards, James Greig and John Boyd,	35	0	0
Auchendarroch, Robert Wallace, M.P.	30	0	0
South Reillies, William Crawford,	29	0	0
Harplaw, Alexander Crawford,	29	0	0
Part of Whittle-burn, Robert Crawford,	28	10	0
East Grass-yards, John Hare and James Scott,	36	0	0
Middleton, James Greg,	25	0	0
Gallowgate, Captain Morris,	16	0	0
	<hr/>		
	L.3802	0	0

The real rental of the parish is L.7500 Sterling.

*Ancient Families.—Fairlie of that Ilk.*—On the south of the parish lies the ancient barony of Fairlie, which belonged for upwards of 400 years to a family of that name. In 1335, William de Fairlie is included in the list of twenty Scotchmen who received letters of pardon from Edward III. for all the crimes they had committed in war with England, (Rot. Scot. Vol. i. p. 381). The family continued in possession of the estate until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when it was sold to David, Earl of Glasgow, with whose descendants it still remains. The castle or square tower is now in ruins. It is noticed by Pont in the following manner: "Fairlie Castell is a stronge toure, and very ancient, beautified with orchardes and gardins. It belongs to Fairlie de eodem, cheiffe of ther name."

*Boyle of Kelburn.*—Richard Boyle, Dominus de Kaulburn, is mentioned in a transaction with Walter Cumyn, in the reign of Alexander III.; and Robert de Boyville of Kelburn, and Richard de Boyville of Ryesholm, were subscribers of the Ragman Roll in 1296. Both of these properties have remained in the family since these dates. Kelburn Castle was originally a square tower; but an addition was made to it by David, Earl of Glasgow. It is thus noticed by Pont: "Kelburne Castell, a goodly building, veill planted, having werrey beutifull orchards and gardens, and in one of them a spatious rome adorned with a christalin fontane, cutte all out of the living rocke. It belongs heritably to John Boll, Laird thereof."

*Brisbane of that Ilk.*—This family is acknowledged the chief of

their name. In the fourteenth century, Donald Earl of Lennox granted a charter of the lands of Mucherach and Holmedalmar-tyne, in the Lennox, to "Alano dicto Brisbane, filio quondam Williemi Brisbane." Chart de Levenax, p. 61.\* Thomas and Alexander Brisbane are witnesses to a charter, in the thirty-second year of David II., 1361, granted at Kyndromy, by Thomas Earl of Mar, and which is confirmed by the King. Thomas Brisbane is witness to a charter by Robert Duke of Albany, dated at Perth, 22d September 1409. The earliest estate which seems to have belonged to this family was that of Bishopton, in Renfrewshire, which they held prior to 1400; and they had then acquired the L.10 land of Killincraig and Gogo in this parish. To these several additions were made; and in 1595 the whole were erected into the barony of Gogoside. Other possessions having been acquired by the family, the whole were, in 1650, erected into the barony of Noddle. Soon after this, having acquired the property of Overkelsoland, which long had belonged to the family of Kelso, the whole estate was, in 1695, by a Crown charter, erected into the barony of Brisbane. The House of Brisbane is situated in the vale of that name, and is of considerable antiquity, and surrounded with some fine old trees. The present proprietor, Sir Thomas Macdougall Brisbane is a man of high celebrity, as well for his valour in the field, as for his labours in the cause of science. He married the heiress of Makerston, in consequence of which he unites the name, honours, and estate of that family with his own.

*Frazer of Knock.*—This family was a cadet of the Frazers of Lovat, and acquired the estate by the marriage of the heiress about 1400. They continued to flourish for about 250 years; after which they declined, and the estate was broken up and passed into other hands. Pont says that "Knock is a pretty dwelling, seated on the mane oceane, and veill planted." The ruins of the house still remain. The property now belongs to John Wilson, Esq. who, with laudable zeal, has recently adopted means to prevent the ravages of the climate on the venerable remains of what was once the "pretty dwelling" of the Frazers.

*Montgomery of Skelmurly.*—The lands of Skelmurly in this parish were, with other lands, given by Alexander, first Lord Montgomery, in 1461, to his second son, George, who married Ann, daughter of Sir John Houston of that ilk. The house is pleasantly situated on an eminence commanding a prospect of great beauty and extent. It is thus noticed by Pont: "North Skel-

\* Contribution of Alexander Campbell, Esq. to the Maitland Club.

murly is a fair veill built house, and pleasantly seatted, decorred with orchards and woodes, the inheritance of Robert Montgomery, laird thereof, quho holds it of ye Earls of Glencairn." The estate reverted by succession to the house of Eglinton; and now belongs to Archibald William, Earl of Eglinton and Winton.

*Wilson of Haylie.*—This family has existed since 1483, and the property has passed in regular male succession from that date to the present owner, James Wilson of Haylie and Quarter, &c.

*Parochial Registers.*—There is no regular record of births and baptisms prior to the Revolution, and long after that epoch the record was very imperfect. It has of late been better kept.

*Antiquities.*—We have in course of this report taken notice incidentally of several of the most ancient buildings in the parish. The principal remains of antiquity are those connected with the battle of Largs, in 1263. Immediately above Haylie, to the east, there is a small hill on which there are still visible the remains of an encampment. It bears the name of Castle Hill. At the back of the mansion-house of Haylie there are the remains of a tumulus, which was doubtless erected over the bodies of those who fell in that conflict. It was called Margaret's Law; but this was probably the corruption of some other name. The only other vestige which has withstood the changes of modern times, is the barrow close by the west wall of the burying-ground, which corroborates the Norwegian account of their dead having been interred at the church. Near the spot now inclosed as the garden of Dr Cairnie, there stood a rude stone pillar, which was reputed as commemorative of the place where Haco, the Norwegian commander, fell. The stone has been built by Dr Cairnie in his garden wall, and now bears the following appropriate inscription :

Substit. Hic Gothi Furor.  
Conditur hic Haco Steniensis, et undique, circum  
Norvegios fidos terra tegit Socios:  
Huc regnum venere petentes; Scotia victor  
Hostibus hic tumulos, praeemia justa dedit.  
Quarto ante nonas Octobris, A. D. 1263.

Largis  
Ipsis Calendis Junii, A. D. 1823.  
Me posuit Joannes Cairnius illam  
Rem memorare tibi. Tu memores aliiis.

There is a small piece of land which was originally lying runrig in seven different parts called Breedsorrow. Pont gives the origin of the name thus, "Breedsorrow is the possession of the laird of Blare, and being a small hamlet, it is so named, because of grate sorrow it bred amongst neighbours debettaing and contesting for ye heri-

table right thereof." This place was also called Kempisland. Thus we find that, on 8th May 1610, John Birsbane of Bishopton, was served heir of his father, Robert Birsbane, in the six shilling eight penny land of old extent of Breedsorrow, alias Kempisland; and in 1639, Sir Bryce Blair of Blair was served heir-male to his father, Bryce Blair, in the same subject. This change of property proves that Pont's account must have been written between these two dates, as is generally supposed. Similar names occur in different parts of Scotland, having the same apparent origin, where there had been kemping, striving, contending, or fighting, such as Kemp's fold, in Caputh parish, Kemp's Castle near Forfar. See Jam. Dict. voce Kemp.

The Skelmorly aisle of the old church, with the monument erected by Sir Robert Montgomery, and the painted adornments of the ceiling, are still nearly in the same condition as they were in 1793. It is an object which attracts and well merits the attention of the curious in the progress of art in this country. It is entitled to careful preservation, being unquestionably the most magnificent sepulchral design at present extant in the west of Scotland.

### III.—POPULATION.

The following table shows the progressive increase since 1755, but the contrast with the population of the early part of the seventeenth century, as elsewhere noticed, is remarkable.

In 1755, the population was	1164
1790,	1139
1801,	1381
1811,	1801
1821,	2479
1831,	2848
1841,	3554

The enumeration under the plan of the late census was 4054, but of these 550 were strangers. The population attached to the district or *quoad sacra* parish of Fairlie, is 450, which is included in the return for 1841, as above stated.

From the inquiries made for the Church Commission, it appears that the religious statistics may be thus classified:

Belonging to the United Secession,	600
Roman Catholics,	140
Relief,	100
	<hr/>
	840
Leaving to the Establishment and for those who do not belong to any church,	2214
	<hr/>
	3054

The following is a pretty accurate enumeration of the various trades in Largs and Fairlie.

Weavers,	246	Sawers,	6
Masons,	39	Carters,	16
Shoemakers,	35	Dyer,	1
Joiners,	30	Grocers,	23
Cabinet-makers,	5	Licensed public houses,	30
Tailors,	17	Writers,	3
Blacksmiths,	16	Surgeons,	2
Bakers,	8	Stationers,	8
Drapers,	6	Fleshers,	8
Tinsmith,	1	Fishers,	32
Saddlers,	2	Gasman,	1
Nailers,	2	Slaters,	3
Coopers,	3	Ship-carpenters,	10
Ironmongers,	2	Painters,	3
Hair-dressers,	2	Plasterers,	2
Watch-makers,	1		

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

The lands of the parish, although stated to amount to 37½ square miles, and of course 24,160 acres, yet the actual survey of the parish only amounts to 19,143 acres, which may be divided as follows, viz.

In tillage,	-	-	-	1145 acres.
In pasture and meadow,	-	-	-	3900
Green pasture,	-	-	-	5500
Woodlands and Gardens,	-	-	-	600
Moorlands and heath,	-	-	-	8598
				<hr/>
				19143
Deduct from this Blair park, belonging to Blair of Blair, now said to be in Dalry parish, although in all former Statistical Accounts, and agreeable to the original boundaries, stated and laid down as belonging to Largs parish,	-	-	-	1400
				<hr/>
				Total of Largs, 17743

*Husbandry.*—The rotation of crops upon the lands in tillage, including the hay crop, is commonly a six years rotation, 1st year, oats; 2d, green crop; 3d, oats, wheat, or barley, according to the nature of the soil; 4th, hay; 5th and 6th, pasture. Wheat of late has not been much sown, and that only on heavy lands. The rotation of the lands lying near Largs and Fairlie is generally a four years shift, owing to the nearness of manure. Flax is now so little cultivated, that two flax-mills in the parish, one at Constable wood, the other at Gogoside, have been allowed to fall into ruin.

The number of milk cows kept in the parish is about 604, all of the very best Ayrshire breed. The farmers at a distance from the town make cheese with all the cream or skim-milk cheese and butter, while those near the town either sell all their milk to the inhabitants, or churn all their milk, make butter, and supply the town with butter-milk. The young cows reared yearly amount

to about 300; cattle fattened about 484: sheep kept upon the high lands, about 4680, besides a few English sheep on some of the low lands: the number of horses about 130, and of horses rearing about 30; the old practice of hiring horses is now almost exploded. Swine are very generally kept.

Great improvements have been made, and are in progress upon the different estates and farms in the parish, within these few years. Upon Kelburn estate, Mr Johnstone, the active and intelligent factor of the Earl of Glasgow, has more than doubled the value of many of the parks; he has also added much to the beauty of the estate, by plantations, laid off to great advantage. Upon Brisbane estate, much also has been done about the mansion-house, in extending the lawn, by removing the old garden, and in making a new approach. The tenants have also been doing a great deal in draining and bringing in waste lands, particularly the tenants of Bankhead and South Whittleburn. The tenant of south Constable wood has done much in that way; the tenant of Quarter has also, within the last year, drained twelve acres upon the most approved plan. The proprietor cuts the drains and quarries the stones, the tenant carts the stones and fills the drains. The drains when furrow, and at the distance of 12 feet, are, at the surface, 20 inches,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, and 10 inches at the bottom; the stones thin, and all set upon their edges, and covered with broken metal to within 9 inches of the surface. The leading or principal drains are never less than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, 2 feet wide at the surface, and 14 inches at the bottom, when set; when piped, not less than 20 inches at the bottom; the depth of the leading drains depends upon the nature of the soil. Mr Wilson of Knock, by laying out a very considerable sum in bringing in waste lands, draining, liming, planting, making roads and bridges, has not only beautified that estate, but more than doubled its value. Captain Alexander Montgomery, R. N., well known in the district for his laudable zeal in all institutions calculated to advance the comfort and improve the condition of the farmer, has much improved the lands of Bridgend, upon the estate of Skelmorlie. Mr Stewart has also improved his lands of Blackhouse, and Mr Lang, his lands of Routenburn. The tenant of Auchengarth upon the Third-part estate has also done much in liming and draining.

*Quarries.*—In the grounds of Haylee, there was a quarry of excellent sandstone, from which the greater part of the newly erected houses were built; but, being exhausted, a new quarry has

been opened on the Earl of Glasgow's grounds to the south, which affords the present supply.

*Manufactures.*—The only public work is that recently erected at Bankhouse, by Mr. George Henderson.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Since the commencement of the present century, no town in the county has been so completely enlarged and remodelled, nor its environs so much beautified with villas, the most of which are in a superior style of architecture. A few of the old tenements still remain, and exhibit a very humble appearance when compared with those of modern construction. The only building of a public character is the Baths, which contain, besides hot and cold baths, a spacious billiard and reading-room.

*Villages.*—The only village in the parish is that of Fairlie, which is pleasantly situated on the coast, at the south end of the parish. There are several handsome villas set down, and the spot is so attractive and retired, that many prefer it to Largs. Both are most desirable places, having all the charms of nature in her pleasing variety :—

“ Where smiling spring its early visit pays,  
And parting summer's lingering bloom delays.”

*Means of Communication.*—Since the last Statistical Account of the parish was written, an excellent new turnpike road, across the moor, from Largs to Kilbirnie and Dalry, has been made, which has been of the utmost benefit to Largs.

Lime to any extent can be had at Hourat lime-work, a distance of about seven miles, for 10s. the chaldron ; and the landed proprietors and tenants have not failed to take advantage of it. Coals are also brought from the pits in these parishes, a distance of about eight miles ; the price at the pit is 3s. 4d. for fourteen hundred-weight. A parish road has also been made through the Vale of Brisbane to the boundary of the parish, near Loch Thom, which joins the Greenock parish road. This road is of much benefit to the farmers on the line, and general traveller, as it shortens the distance from Largs to Greenock about two miles. There are in all thirteen miles of turnpike, and eleven miles of parish roads.

*Harbour.*—When steam-boats began to ply between Glasgow and Largs, the want of a harbour was much felt in the landing of passengers and goods. Upon application to Sir Thomas Macdougall Brisbane, Bart., he agreed to give the ground for a pier, to take shares for the price, and to extend the boundaries of the harbour from Haylie to Noddleburn ; a subscription was entered

into; an act of Parliament applied for, and obtained in May 1832; the foundation stone laid with masonic honours, 10th January 1833, after the work was in considerable progress. It was first used, 1st December 1834. The cost was L.4275, which is held in L.50 shares. The number of shareholders is 31. The average revenue, for the last six years, has been six per cent. The benefit it affords, in landing and shipping passengers and goods, &c. is very great.

*Ecclesiastical History.*—The church of Largs was dedicated to St Columba, the celebrated Abbot of Iona, and was a rectory, the patronage of which belonged to the lordship of Largs. We have evidence that this church existed long prior to the battle of Largs, in 1263; and in the Norwegian account of that expedition, we are told that a number of the dead were buried at the church. On 30th January 1318–19, as has been previously mentioned, Walter the Stewart, for the safety of his soul, and that of his spouse, Marjory Brus, granted to the monks of Paisley the church of Largs, in pure and perpetual alms, with all the tithes thereto pertaining. This grant was to take place at the death, or resignation, or promotion, of Sir William de Lindsay, the rector of the said church. On the 3d of February following, the chapter of Glasgow, during the vacancy of that see, gave to the monks of Paisley, formal possession of the church of Largs, and the chapter of Glasgow granted a charter of confirmation to the monks of their title to the church of Largs, from Walter the Stewart. John Wishart, who was made Bishop of Glasgow in 1319, granted and confirmed, to the monks of Paisley, the church of Largs, and the chapel of Cumbray, with all their pertinents. This chapel was in the island of Great Cumbray, opposite to the southern part of the parish of Largs, but in the shire of Bute. The church of Largs continued to belong to the monastery of Paisley after the Reformation. At that epoch, the tithes of the church of Largs, with those of the churches of Inverkip and Lochwinnoch, in Renfrewshire, in all produced to the monks of Paisley, L.460 a-year, having been let in lease for payment of that sum. In 1587, Lord Claud Hamilton, the commendator of Paisley, obtained a grant of the patronage and tithes of the church of Largs, with the other revenues of the monks of Paisley, the whole of which was then created a temporal lordship, for him and his heirs, with the title of Lord Paisley. He was succeeded, in 1621, in all those estates, revenues, and titles, by his grandson, James Earl of Aber-

corn. In Charles I.'s reign, the patronage and tithes of the church of Largs passed from the Earl of Abercorn to Sir Robert Montgomery of Skelmorlie, who, in 1636, erected, in an aisle on the north side of the church, a handsome burial-place and monument, of which some notice is elsewhere taken. Lilius Montgomery, who became the heiress of Skelmorlie, by marriage, in 1735, carried the patronage and tithes of the church of Largs to Alexander Montgomery of Coylsfield. Their son and heir, Colonel Hugh Montgomery of Coylsfield, succeeded to the Earldom of Eglinton in 1796; and his grandson, Archibald William Earl of Eglinton and Winton, is now patron of the church of Largs.

Immediately after the Reformation, we find that in 1567 David Neil was exhorter at Largs, with 40 merks of stipend, and in 1576, Alexander Callendar was minister, his stipend being L. 134, 6s. 8d. Scots, with the kirk land of Kilbryde, and that David Neil was then reidare, his stipend L. 16, with the kirk land, &c. In 1598, William Cole was minister. He appears as one of the subscribers to the letter of admission in favour of Alexander Campbell to the kirk of Ardrossan. Mr Cole was succeeded by Thomas Craig, who was minister in 1635, as appears from a decree of locality of stipend obtained at his instance, in that year. The next minister of whom we have notice is William Smith, who died of the plague. He was buried in a sequestered spot near Brisbane House. Over his grave is a flat stone with this inscription, "Here layeth William Smith, minister of Largs, a faithful minister of the gospel, removed by the pestilence in 1646." The inscription was renewed in 1710, and again in 1760. In 1672, John Wallace was appointed along with Alexander Gordon, under the second Indulgence; but, having been charged with transgressing the rules, he was called before the council, and treated with more than usual severity.\* Mr Wallace was a man of some means.

\* The following account is given by Wodrow, Burns' edition, Vol. iii. p. 5. "Last year, in November, Mr John Wallace indulged at the Largs, and Mr Patrick Simpson indulged at Kilmalcom, had been cited before the council for breaking their confinement. Mr John Wallace appeared, and was remitted to the committee for public affairs. And this year, February 15th, I find the council again call Mr Simpson, and upon his non-compearance they order him to be denounced. What kept him from compearing I know not, but it hath been some necessary excuse, for I know he continued several years after this in the peaceable exercise of his ministry in that place. Mr John Wallace is called before the council, February 18th, and no probation being adduced as to his breach of his confinement, he deponed upon the verity of his libel, and frankly told them how matters stood, as to that practice common to him and his brethren. It was but few of the council were for depriving him of his indulgence upon this score, and so other occasions against him were sought; and being called in after he had been removed, the council interrogated him, as they say, for the further clearing of his deposition, though, as far as I can find, his depo-

In 1666, he acquired the lands of Monkcastle and Craigmill from John Hay, and transmitted them to his family, who sold them in 1703 to Mr Adam Cunninghame, advocate. He was succeeded in Largs by Mr Charles Littlejohn. Fountainhall, states that, "on his pursuing Montgumerie of Skelmurlie for his stipend, the chancellor had this expression, that the ministers were the persons in the kingdom that deserved worst at his Majesty's hands." Mr Littlejohn was succeeded by Mr John Wilson, who was ordained 26th December 1697. He had been previously settled in Ireland, and received a call to Kilmarnock, but declined to accept. He was succeeded by Andrew Cuming, who was ordained 27th September 1701. He remained in the charge until his death in 1762. Patrick Wallace was ordained his assistant and successor on 10th August 1748, but, having predeceased him, Gilbert Lang was ordained to the office on 3d August 1756. He died in 1791, and was succeeded by Stephen Rowan, who was ordained 15th May 1792, and died 4th June 1801. His successor was John Mitchell, M. D., who was ordained 22d April 1802. In 1826, he was appointed Professor of Divinity in the University of St Andrews, and on his removal, was succeeded by Jacob Richardson, who was ordained 28th September 1826, and having died 6th October 1830, was succeeded by the present incumbent, who was ordained 28th April 1831.

By the decree of locality at Mr Craig's instance in 1635, it appears that the lands of Southanan, Whiteside, and Corsby, were in the parish of Largs, and after their disjunction and annexation to Kilbride, the stipend of the parish was 8 chalders and 8 bolls victual, for stipend and communion elements. This stipend continued until after the death of Mr Rowan, when Dr Mitchell got an augmentation in 1807, of 43 bolls meal, and 43 bolls barley, with L.8, 6s. 8d. of communion elements, so that the whole stipend was 13 chalders, and 14 bolls of victual, and L.8, 6s. 8d. of money. The stipend is now 128 bolls meal, 128 bolls barley, and L.10 money, to which it was modified 7th July 1830.

The church and parish were in the Presbytery of Irvine until 1834, when they were transferred to the newly formed Presbytery

sition had no connection with this 'whether he would for the future refuse to give baptism to the children of such parents as took the bond for public peace?' This being new to him, and what he did not understand the design of, craved that he might be spared as to such things as related to the discharge of his ministerial office. He is presently removed, and the council decern him to have lost the benefit of his indulgence at the Largs, or any where else; and appoint their sentence to be intimated to the parishioners, that they may pay him no more stipend. I do not find the indulged ministers were before challenged upon this score."

of Greenock. At Fairlie, a chapel in connexion with the Establishment was erected by private subscription in 1833, opened in 1834, and erected as a *quoad sacra* parish in 1835. It contains 300 sitters, and affords great accommodation to the inhabitants of that district of the parish. The first minister of this congregation was James Gardiner, who died in 1835, and was succeeded by the Reverend John Gemmill, A.M., the present minister.

The church was removed from the burying-ground situated in the centre of the village, and a new one built, in a more open and eligible situation in 1812. It was seated for 900, but, being found too small, particularly for the extra population of the summer, cross aisles were added to its eastern extremity in 1832, which accommodate 432 additional sitters. This addition was made from funds belonging to the poor, and the seats are annually let out, and the rents yield a good return, which adds to the ordinary funds expended by the kirk-session.

The manse stood formerly in the immediate vicinity of the old church, and near the site of the Brisbane Arms Inn, now belonging to Mrs Strachan. It was sold by the minister and heritors in 1764, when the present manse and offices were built on part of the glebe. The house has been recently repaired, and is a comfortable and commodious residence. The glebe consists of seven acres.

*Dissenters.*—A congregation of the United Associate Synod was formed here about 1780. Their first minister was William Watson, who was ordained 15th January 1783. He was translated to Old Kilpatrick in 1789. In December 1791, John Leech was ordained as his successor, who demitted, and died in Glasgow in 1822, being succeeded by Daniel Maclean, who was ordained 22d October 1823, and deposed 29th November 1829. He was succeeded by the present minister, William Steven, who was ordained 31st August 1830. The church was rebuilt in 1826, and is seated for nearly 700 sitters. There is also a comfortable manse for the minister.

A congregation of Relief is now being formed. A small meeting-house has been erected, capable of containing 450 sitters; but hitherto no minister has been ordained.

*Education.*—There was a parochial school in 1696, with a salary of 100 merks, but no school-house. In 1809, a comfortable school and schoolmaster's house were built by the heritors. The present schoolmaster is Alexander Jack, who has under his charge 115 scholars. Sir Thomas M. Brisbane has recently, at the ex-

pense of L. 850, built a commodious school and schoolmaster's house, and has endowed the school to the extent of L.30 yearly, vesting the nomination of the teacher, and the general management and superintendence of the institution in the family of Brisbane, and the minister and kirk-session of Largs. His sole object is to secure to the children of the working-classes, education in the common branches of learning, at a reasonable rate. This adds a fresh laurel to the well-earned fame of the honourable founder, and it is hoped will prove a grateful monument to his memory for many ages. The school is well attended, and gives fair promise of utility. There are in the parish three other schools, besides one at Fairlie, and a female school, which are well taught. The total number of scholars is 428.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The funds for support of the poor arise from the collections at the church door, the seat rents of the addition made to the church, and fees of proclamations. The average amount is about L.247. The number of paupers on the permanent roll is 40, besides 13 orphans. The highest allowance is 10s., the lowest 5s. monthly. There are others who receive occasional supply.

*Libraries.*—There are two circulating libraries, which contain the standard histories, and the popular works of the day. There is also a congregational library attached to the church, and a society for the distribution of religious tracts.

*Gas-Work.*—A gas-work was erected in 1838, the capital being formed of shares of L.5 each. The streets and houses were first lighted in 1839, and the parish church has recently been fitted up, and gas is now used at all evening exercises held there.

*Banks.*—There is a branch of the Western Bank of Scotland, and one of the Paisley Commercial Banking Company, which have been found of great utility, as, previous to their being established, the inhabitants were obliged to travel to Greenock or to Beith with all their bank transactions.

*Fairs.*—As previously mentioned, the ancient church of Largs was dedicated to St Columba, whose festival was commemorated on the 9th June. This fair is still held here on the second Tuesday of June, O.S., and is vulgarly called Combsday. It used to be famous all over the West of Scotland, and multitudes came to it, especially from the Western Highlands. The night previous to the fair was spent in frivolous amusement, which frequently ended in riot. This is no longer the case. The attendance has greatly fallen

off in consequence of the general diffusion of merchandise by steam-boats, which carry to the islands of the west the comforts of civilized life at all periods of the year. The fair is still of considerable importance as a market for young cattle, which are brought from the Highlands, and bought by farmers and graziers.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

After the plague broke out, Largs suffered most severely, and the common people were reduced to great distress. Soon afterwards, some cases of reputed witchcraft occurred in the parish; but, on enquiry, the charge was found groundless, and the accusation passed away. The following remarkable incident is given by the celebrated gossip, Law, in his Memorials, p. 245: "Aprile 1683. At the Largs, in the west of Scotland, a man at his plough knocks down his servant man, taying the horse, immediately goes home, his wife asking for the servant man, he gives her a rough answer. She goes out to look after him; ere she returned he hanged himself. She coming in with a child in her arms, seeing her husband hanging, fell down on the ground and the child in her arms, with the fall broke its neck,—a sad spectacle."

In the early part of the last century, Largs gradually recovered from its depression; but the population were generally averse to strangers, *incomers* being looked upon in an unfavourable light. After the place became the resort of summer visitors, a new population was engrafted on the old stock, and the extension of the town and the building of villas in its vicinity produced a great improvement. Largs now vies with its neighbours in all the duties of hospitality and good neighbourhood, and the society is cheerful and friendly among themselves. The better classes are attentive to the poor, and, in seasons of distress and privation, are always ready to give relief.

The gentlemen of Largs and their visitors have been much indebted to Mr Cairnie of Curling Hall, for the sport they enjoy in summer at bowling upon his beautiful bowling-green, and in winter for the national, manly, and exhilarating game of curling upon his curling-pond, designed and constructed by himself on a new and scientific principle, by which ice is formed fit for use in one night, when the thermometer stands at 32° of Fahrenheit, at 14 feet of elevation above the surface of the ground. Hence this sport can be enjoyed here earlier and more frequently than in the usual places of resort for this pastime. The game of billiards is another source of amusement, while, to those who prefer the enjoyment of

nature, the walks in the neighbourhood, either along the beach or through the adjoining groves and plantations, afford an unceasing source of pleasure. In these respects it must be admitted, that this favourite place of resort is unrivalled in the west of Scotland.

April 1842.

## PARISH OF KILWINNING.

PRESBYTERY OF IRVINE, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

THE REV. ARCHIBALD BLAIR CAMPBELL, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Extent, &c.*—KILWINNING takes its name from St Winnin, a Scottish saint of the eighth century, to whom the ancient church of this place was dedicated. The greatest length of this parish, between the borders of Beith and Stevenston, is about 7 miles, and its greatest breadth, between the borders of Ardrossan and Irvine, is about 5 miles. According to Aitken's map, published in 1828, it contains  $17\frac{1}{2}$  square miles, or 11,200 acres. It is situate in Cunninghame, the northern district of the county of Ayr, and is bounded on the west by Stevenston and Ardrossan; on the east, by Dunlop, Stewarton, and Irvine; on the south, by Irvine and Stevenston; and on the north, by Dalry and Beith.

The figure of the parish is very irregular. Its surface gradually slopes upwards from the south-west to the north-east, and is varied by gentle undulations, but nowhere rises to any considerable elevation. It is intersected by the valleys of the Garnock and Lugton; the former, open and cultivated; the latter, more narrow and woody. The view from the upland district is extensive and beautiful, sweeping down the vale of the Garnock, on the one hand, and on the other, over the woods of Mountgreenan and Eglinton to the sea, and embracing the towns of Saltcoats, Stevenston, Kilwinning, and Irvine, the bay and headlands of Ayr, the rock of Ailsa, the Mull of Cantyre, and the serrated range of the Arran mountains.

*Soil.*—The soil in the higher and central parts of the parish, is