

unproductive land in the parish. Draining, which then was little, if at all, practised, is going forward with great spirit, and will without doubt tend much to improve the quality of the soil, and promote its fertility. It does not appear to the writer that any better system of husbandry can be introduced, or the facilities of internal communication increased,—there being already excellent roads leading to and through every part of the parish. Could ardent spirits be altogether banished, or their consumption diminished tenfold, and those engaged in the public works led more generally to sanctify the Sabbath and attend upon public worship, these things would tend greatly to promote the best interests of the working-classes. It is likewise evident that there is much need for church extension,—the present accommodation being by no means adequate to the population.

January 1836.

**UNITED PARISHES OF
HOUSTON AND KILLALLAN.**

PRESBYTERY OF PAISLEY, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

THE REV. JOHN MONTEATH, D. D. MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THE parishes of Houston and Killallan were united in the year 1760.

Names.—Killallan is a corruption of Killfillan, *i. e.* Cella Fillani, the name of the tutelary saint of the parish. *Houston* may be supposed to be a corruption of Hew's town; perhaps from Hugo de Padvinan, who is said, by Mr Crawford, in his History of Renfrewshire, to have obtained a grant of the barony of Kelpeter, the ancient name of Houston parish, from Baldwin of Biggar, Sheriff of Landsk in the reign of Malcolm IV.

Boundaries, extent.—The united parish is bounded on the west by Kilmacolm; on the south by Kilbarchan; on the north and east by the parish of Erskine, which separates it from the Clyde. It is about 6 miles in length and 3 in breadth.

Hydrography.—The only considerable river is Gryfe, which

separates it from Kilbarchan on the south. This river has its source in the high moors and mountains that are situated between Kilmalcolm and the Largs on the coast of the Frith of Clyde. It is composed of several streams that unite near the mansion-house of Duchal. It runs rapidly over several precipices to the low country at Fulwood; after which, it moves slowly in a serpentine course, receiving the river Black Cart at Moss Walkinshaw, and White Cart at Inchinnan Bridge, and thence into the Clyde a little below Renfrew.

Geology.—In the highest districts of these parishes, granite prevails. In the lower districts, there are sandstone and limestone quarries, and coals.

Alluvial deposits, moss, or peat, in many places six feet deep, cover extensive fields of clay, in the low districts of Killallan, being the eastmost part of the parish, and on both sides of the water of Gryfe. Small pieces of land have been cleared of the moss, and produce good crops.

Zoology.—The woodlark, sometimes called the Scotch nightingale, from its pleasant and plaintive notes, and singing often after nightfall, was common here fifty years ago, but has quite disappeared since that time. Whether the introduction of foreign trees among the natural woods, such as larch and pines, or frequent liming of land, or some severe winter, have occasioned their disappearing,—the writer of this account will not venture to determine.

Botany.—The writer of this account has often examined the indigenous plants of these parishes by Linnæus's *Genera Plantarum*, but found none but such as are common in the west of Scotland.

There is an extensive natural wood on Houston barony, the property of Archibald Spiers, Esq. of Eldersly, consisting of oak, birch, plane, ash. There are also an extensive natural wood, consisting of the same kinds of trees, on the estate of Barochan, the property of William M. Fleming, Esq. of Barochan, and some thriving modern plantations on Barochan. But the most extensive plantations in these parishes are on the high-lands, in Killallan, and on the moor in the lower parts of Killallan, which Mr Spiers has planted with oak, larch, ash, beech, Scotch fir. Most of the trees thrive well on the high-land, particularly the larch. Those on the moor have a good appearance at a distance, but have not been narrowly inspected for some years by the writer of this article. During the severe drought this season, a very consi-

derable number of acres of planting on the moss, on the south side of the Gryfe, were by accident set on fire; the wind being from the east, the fire raged, and the flames rose to a great height. In some parts, the progress of the fire was arrested by a number of men cutting large trenches in the moss. To leave large avenues unplanted in modern plantations might, perhaps, prevent the spreading of fire. Proprietors of land may also, perhaps, find it their interest, when planting on high and exposed situations, to plant the pinaster or maritime pine along the skirts of their plantations, as an excellent defence against the storm; but it requires to be transplanted in the nursery, its tap-root shortened, and to stand eighteen months more in a nursery of rich ground. The Earl of Galloway, by following this plan, has obtained thriving plantations on every exposure; and in the west of Scotland Scotch firs planted on the south-west of the other trees are a great defence from our most frequent storms.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Land-owners.—The chief land-owners are, Archibald Spiers, Esq. of Eldersly, non-resident; William M. Fleming, Esq. of Barochan, resident; William M. Alexander, Esq. of Southbar, non-resident; William Cunningham, Esq. of Craigends, non-resident.

Family of Fleming of Barochan.—Barochan is a very ancient family. Peter Fleming of Barochan* and six of his sons fell in the fatal field of Flowden. Mr Fleming left a seventh son, who succeeded him. This same Peter Fleming was a celebrated falconer. His tersel beat the falcon of James IV., upon which the King unhooded his favourite hawk, and put the hood on the tersel. The hood was richly ornamented with precious stones. Most of them were stolen many years ago. One ruby remained of great value; but about thirteen years ago, it fell out, and, not being missed at the time, it was lost. A few seed pearls only remain. There is still at Barochan a pair of silver spurs which belonged to the same Peter Fleming. Barochan cross was described in the former Statistical Account. Its history is still obscure. But antiquarians may perhaps be enabled to throw some light on its original, by examining these fine stenographic figures of it which were lately furnished to the writer of this Account by W.

* This laird of Barochan had probably two proper names, and this may account for his being denominated William in the account given of his death, in the former Statistical Account.

M. Fleming, Esq. the present proprietor of Barochan, and which will be found in his possession.*

Parochial Registers.—There are three volumes of parochial registers; the earliest entry is 25th October 1696. The two oldest volumes have not been regularly kept; they are not even authenticated by the subscription of any clerk; and there are considerable gaps in them. Indeed, there never was any parochial schoolmaster or regular session-clerk in the parish of Killallan while disjoined from Houston; and no register, except one gratuitously kept by the late Rev. Mr Monteath, previous to 1799. The date of births was entirely omitted, and baptisms only inserted,—such perhaps might be the common practice at that time. But when this omission was discovered by the present minister, he considered it his duty to the public, to insist that births should be strictly and uniformly registered; and he had some difficulty in persuading the session-clerk that this was absolutely necessary, for exactly ascertaining the ages of the parishioners. Since that year, the register has been regularly kept.

III.—POPULATION.

In the year 1760, when these parishes were united, there were only about 300 examinable persons in each of them. The whole population in 1831 of the united parishes was 2745. The cause of this remarkable increase is evidently the introduction of public works.

Number of persons in villages, the country,	2140
Yearly average of births for the last seven years, marriages, do.	605 534 284
Number of persons under 15 years of age, betwixt 15 and 30, 30 and 50, 50 and 70, upwards of 70,	1216 681 465 295 68
Number of families in the parish, chiefly employed in agriculture, in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	590 100 363
Average number of children in each family.	24
Insane and fatuous persons,	4

William M. Fleming, Esq. of Barochan, is the only resident heritor, possessing a considerable landed estate; but there are several

* There was a plan of Houston parish, made at the desire of a former proprietor of the barony of Houston, which comprehends the whole of that parish, and part of Killallan; but the plan is now lost. The present minister of these parishes has a faint recollection of having seen, a great many years ago, but cannot remember in whose custody it was, a fine and apparently minute plan of Houston and the adjacent country, specifying the names of the farms; it was said to have been made under the influence of the French government, with a view to the invasion of this part of the country.

individuals and families of independent fortune resident in the parishes.

The number of proprietors of land, having L. 50 and upwards of yearly rent, resident and non-resident, about 9.

Character of the People.—The author of this article, in his Account of the parish of Neilston, inserted in the former work, ventured to state his opinion on the effects of some of the cotton mills, and other public works with which the parish abounded, upon the morals and health of the people.* The lapse of forty years has not induced the author to alter the opinion which he then expressed on this subject. Where a population is composed, like that of Houston and Killallan, of people from all quarters, and of all sentiments in religion and politics, it is difficult to delineate their character. He hopes, however, that they are not behind any of their neighbours, who are similarly situated, in intellectual, moral, and religious improvement.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—Draining and straightening of ridges have been practised for many years. The farm-houses are almost all slated and commodious. Leases generally for nineteen years.

Rent of Land.—Rent of arable land from L. 2 to L. 3, and in some situations L. 4 per acre. The valued rent of the parish is L. 4057, 8s. Scots; the real rent probably L. 9000 Sterling.

Recent Agricultural Improvements.—Mr Fleming of Barochan lately returned from India, where he was a District-Judge, and afterwards a Circuit-Judge for many years, when he had leisure from the important duties of his office, amused himself with agricultural and chemical experiments; and is now improving here his paternal estate to a considerable extent.† The scarcity and the consequent dearness of common manure is among the greatest obstacles to agricultural improvements in this part of the country. He has, therefore, lately made many experiments of oil mixed with moss as a manure,—which he has found answer well for top-dressing grass lands, and also for various crops; and if oil can be purchased at L. 18 Sterling per ton, he is of opinion it can be used profitably as a substitute for common manure. ‡

* Vide Volume second of former Statistical Account, parish of Neilston. The account of this parish was, with some others, translated into French, and transmitted by Sir John Sinclair to some of the foreign cabinets, as specimens of statistics.

† It is said, that Mr Fleming, when in India, made several new and valuable improvements in the collection and preparation of opium.

‡ An extensive use of oil compost might be useful to the fisheries, by increasing the demand for oil, which has decreased since the introduction of gas.

Cotton Mills—Bleachfield.—The cotton mills erected since the time of the former Statistical Account are, all but one, on the left bank of the water of Gryfe; they commence in Killallan, about two miles west from the church of Houston, continue in an eastern direction, and terminate in Houston parish. They are the following: the new mill occupied by Messrs J. and J. Findlay, near Bridge of Weir, in Killallan, built in 1792; it is 144 feet in length, 36 in width, height 3 stories and attics; it contains 6240 mule spindles, and the necessary preparations, and is driven by a water-wheel 13 feet diameter, by 11 in width; 12 horses power; 94 persons employed in it; amount of wages paid weekly, L. 32, 10s.

Gryfe Grove Mill, occupied by Mr Robert Barr, built in 1822, 46 feet long, 30 feet wide, of two stories and garret; contains 900 mule spindles, 480 water-twist spindles going, and machinery for preparation, driven by a water wheel of 12 feet diameter, and 6 feet wide, made of cast and malleable iron; 11 males and 20 females are employed in the mill, and 8 women in their own houses, 3 of whom are widowers, and two of them near eighty years of age. The wages paid to workers per week average about L. 10, or L. 520 a-year, exclusive of cartage and other out-door work. Adjacent to this mill, Mr Barr and a partner, Mr M'Gavin, erected a mill for carding wool and tow, for country people.

Another cotton mill, adjacent to the last mentioned, is building by Mr Shank, 46 feet long, 36 feet wide over the walls, consisting of a cotton cellar, two stories and garret; when finished, it will contain from 1300 to 1400 water-twist spindles, and all necessary machinery for preparation, driven by a water-wheel of 12 feet diameter, 6½ feet wide, made of cast and malleable iron.

Gryfe Mill, a little to the east from Bridge Weir, occupied by Messrs John Freeland and Company, was built in 1793, is upwards of 190 feet, within the walls, in length, 34 feet in width within the walls, 50 feet in height, contains 18,000 spindles, 35 spinners, with ample preparation, wrought with a water-wheel of iron 18½ feet in diameter, by 12 broad, lighted by gas, employs regularly upwards of 260 hands; wages paid every second Saturday, amounting to upwards of L. 200 Sterling.

Crosslie Mill, occupied by Messrs William Stevenson and Sons, built in 1793, length 190 feet, breadth 38 feet, and six stories high, driven by one of the largest cast iron wheels in the county, being 26 feet in diameter, and 12 feet broad, estimated at 70 horse



power; 300 persons employed in it; their average wages amount to L. 115 per week.

Houston Cotton Mill, on the burn of Houston, occupied by Mr Arrol, built about the year 1793. The present occupier has since added about one-third to the building, and filled it with machinery. It is 95 feet long within the walls, $33\frac{1}{2}$ wide, and 4 stories high, containing 9000 mule spindles, with preparations, driven by a water wheel 30 feet diameter, by 4 wide, reckoned at about 18 horse power. There is also an engine attached to this mill, which is employed in dry weather. The number of workers engaged is about 140; 17 of these are spinners from twenty-five to forty-five years of age, the rest are boys and girls from ten to twenty years of age. The occupier of this mill has not stated any thing respecting the wages of the work-people; but remarks, that there are several capital sites in the upper parts of the united parishes for collecting water in winter, which if held in lease by him, would supersede the fire-engine, but the rent asked for the land there was more than could be given. Several of the proprietors of mills upon the Gryfe have made similar remarks, stating their wish to have additional reservoirs of water, but that a higher rent for the land was asked than they could agree to pay.

Houston Bleachfield, on Houston Burn, occupied by Messrs J. and J. Carlisle, is mostly employed by the manufacturers of Glasgow and Paisley. About 50 people are engaged in the bleaching annually of about 4000 lbs. cotton yarn, and 60,000 lbs. linen yarn and thread, and in the whitening and drying of about 12000 lbs. of Chinese raw silk. The men are paid at the rate of 9s. to L. 1, and the females from 5s. to 7s. per week. They are mostly natives of Argyleshire.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Villages.—There are three villages. The nearest market-town is Paisley, seven miles distant from the church of Houston; but there is a market for a variety of articles also in the large and populous village of Johnstone, about three miles distant.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church was built in 1775, is conveniently situated, and accommodates above 800 people. Divine service is generally well attended. There are no Dissenting or Seceding chapels within the united parishes; but there are houses of worship for most of the different descriptions of Dissenters and Seceders, not distant, in several neighbouring parishes. The manse was built about thirty-two years ago. The glebe is

six acres in extent; the stipend 8 chalders of oatmeal and 8 chalders of barley.*

Education.—There is one parochial school,—the branches taught are, Latin, English, English grammar, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and geography; schoolmaster's salary L. 34, 4s. 4½d. Sterling; amount of school fees about L. 28; he has the legal accommodation. He has some additional income as clerk to the kirk-session. The general expense of education is very moderate,—only about 14s. Sterling per annum. There are four private schools, in which, excepting Latin and geography, the branches already stated are taught. The teachers are paid by those who employ them. Perhaps the most visible change in the people since the facilities of education were increased is, that they appear now to be all politicians.

Literature.—There is a library in the village of Houston; newspapers are common.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of poor receiving parochial aid, 28; average sum allotted to each per week 1s. 8½d. One insane pauper lodged in the asylum at Glasgow, costs the poors' funds about L. 20 Sterling yearly. There is only one small asylum in this very populous county of Renfrew,—about two miles below Greenock. The want of a much larger one, and in a more central place of the county, is felt very severely, and ought to be provided for.

Annual contributions for the poor, at an average,—at the doors of Houston church, L. 58; from annual proclamation of banns, and mortcloth money, L. 7, 4s.; interest of L. 190 of stock in the bank, at 2½ per cent. L. 4, 15s.; annual donations from the heritors and proprietors of public works for twenty years past, only L. 20; total, L. 89, 19s. But the parochial minister has repeatedly represented to the heritors and proprietors of the public

* The following statement may perhaps be of some interest to patrons and presbyteries. The present incumbent, after having been a minister in a Chapel of Ease, was unanimously admitted assistant minister and successor to his father in these united parishes, in June 1781; he was afterwards admitted minister of Neilston in March 1785; and after the decease of his father, he was again admitted minister in the united parishes here in September 1797. The Rev. Mr Forrest, late minister of Port-Glasgow, presided at both of these admissions at Houston. As it is a vice-patronage here, the late Mr Fleming of Barochan challenged Mr Spiers of Elderslie's right respecting the said second admission at Houston, alleging that Mr Spiers had exhausted his right by the first admission of the present incumbent; but the Court of Session decided unanimously in favour of Mr Spiers's right to present, and Mr Fleming acquiesced. Was this decision founded on the principle, that where there is no actual vacancy there can be no legal presentation?

works in Houston and Killallan, the absolute necessity, in these parishes, crowded with public works, and several rising villages, either to enlarge their contributions, or to assess the parish.

There seems to be no disposition among the poor to refrain from seeking parochial relief, or to consider it as degrading; the former independent spirit of the Scotch seems much on the decline in all the manufacturing districts; and what is perhaps still more to be regretted, many children neglect their parents in old age, and even parents desert their children.

Fairs.—Fairs are yearly in May, for milch cows, young cattle, and Highland cattle.

Inns.—These are numerous, and their effects obvious.

Fuel.—Coals are abundant at three miles distance, and peats at two miles; but the former are sold at a high price, owing to the great demand.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The state of the united parishes at present, crowded as they are with public works, and a population collected from all quarters, is very different from its state at the time of the former Statistical Account, when the people were principally employed in the pursuits of an agricultural and pastoral life, and when strangers had not much mingled with them.

Improvements in agriculture might still proceed, were leases for nineteen years granted, not at the price of grain during the last and long-continued war with France, but at the market price of grain for several years past, and were some other reasonable encouragements given.

With regard to what might promote the progress of industry, and the happiness and comfort of the labouring classes, the writer is humbly of opinion, that by such an increase of knowledge in religion, morals, history, and some of the most useful arts and sciences, as would induce them to persevere in habits of industry, sobriety, and economy, and to cherish the feeling of self-respect, and counteract the prevailing spirit of a reckless improvidence,—much misery might be prevented.*

The large moss in the parish of Killallan belongs partly to the estate of Barochan and partly to that of Fulwood. It was divided by a decree of the Court of Session about twenty-nine years

* It was from an earnest desire to promote these ends that the parochial minister frequently recommended attention to a library of valuable books, from the pulpit, and that he has from time to time contributed to the library of Houston and Killallan.

ago or thereabouts. Mr Spiers, the proprietor of Fulwood, has planted a great part of his portion with Scotch firs; but the trees have not thriven on this moss, probably in consequence of the moss being too wet. Little other improvement has been attempted, except near the edges, where the peat has been mostly removed, and there a few acres have been occasionally reclaimed. There is a good deal of bent land of the same description that might easily be brought into cultivation; but the greatest bar to improvement is the wetness and want of access. The first thing, then, to be done, is to lay it as dry as possible, and then to make a road through it, which would admit of the transit of peats, and facilitate the clearing of the moss, preparatory to improvement.

Moss can be made into a very good manure by being mixed with oil, and at a moderate expense, particularly when oil is cheap. The experiment lately tried by Mr Fleming perfectly succeeded. The proportions were 3 cwt. of oil to 60 cubic yards of moss. The moss was spread on the ground about one and a-half feet, and covered with long horse litter, weeds, &c. an inch or two thick, (a cart or two is sufficient for this quantity of moss.) Above this, another layer of moss was laid of one foot thick, and the three cwt. of oil poured over it as equally as possible. The whole was then covered up with eight inches or a foot of moss, and allowed to heat for three weeks, (the time, however, must depend on the weather.) When it had stood for this period it was turned over, and when again well heated for a fortnight, it was ready to be laid on turnip land,—the texture of the moss having been by this time completely altered, and become in appearance a black, greasy, rich mould.

The turnips were not sown until the middle of July with the moss manure, which was used in the proportion of 30 cubic yards per acre; and from being too late, and the season wet and bad, the crop was far from good, though quite as much so as those sown on the same land, at the same time, and with the same quantity of the best short cow dung; and this year the oats look as well on the land manured with the moss as on that of the same description which was manured with the dung at the same time. The cost of the compound was as follows, (the oil being very dear in 1830, at which period the experiment was made:;) coarse train oil 3 cwt., L. 3, 10s.; horse litter, 5s.; driving moss, 70 cubic yards, L. 1, 10s.; working and turning, 10s.; expense of 60 cubic

yards manure, at 1s. 11d. per cubic yard, L. 5, 15s. The oil in 1831 was so high in price that blubber was substituted by Mr Fleming, which cost L. 10 per ton, and double the quantity was used to the same number of cubic yards of moss. This did not, however, answer quite so well as the oil, it taking a longer time to heat and mix with the moss, that is, from two to three months, before it was ready; but the time it takes to heat depends very much on the season of the year and the state of the moss, which ought to be exposed to the air and frost, six or eight months before it is used, and ought not to be used in too wet a state. Six acres of barley were manured with this composition in 1831. The compound of oil and moss not having been long enough made, it did not become firm enough for turnips, and did not consequently answer for them; but the barley crop has been good, and the field looks well, having been sown down with grass seeds.

Revised January 1836.

PARISH OF KILMALCOLM.

PRESBYTERY OF GREENOCK, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

THE REV. ROBERT CAMERON, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Extent, Boundaries.—THE extent of the parish is about 6 miles square; it is bounded on the west by the parishes of Port-Glasgow, Greenock, Innerkip, and Largs; on the east by Killallan and Houston; on the south by Kilbarchan and Lochwinnoch; and on the north by Erskine and the river Clyde.

Topographical Appearances.—The general appearance of the parish partakes of the Highland character. The lands in general rise in gentle swells from the river; and in some places are rocky and moorish. Here and there, are clumps of planting, which give a beauty and variety to the surrounding scenery. This is particularly the case towards the south. The village is about 350 feet above the level of the sea, and few spots command a more