

PARISH OF ERSKINE.

PRESBYTERY OF GREENOCK, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

THE REV. ROBERT WALTER STEWART, A.M., MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE name Erskine was in earlier times written Irskyn, and seems to claim a Celtic origin, being compounded of the words *Eris-skyne*, which signifies “on a knife.” Tradition tells that the founder of the ancient family of Erskine of that Ilk, now Erskine of Mar, having slain in the battle of Murthill, Enrique, one of the Danish generals, and having presented the bleeding head upon his dagger to King Malcolm II., with the exclamation “Eris-skyne,” was, on account of his valour, immediately surnamed Erskine by that monarch. Whether the castle and the lands derived their name from the surname thus imposed upon their proprietor, or whether, as other antiquarians seem to suppose, the proprietor derived his surname from his estates, is a matter of little consequence for the present purpose, as there seems no doubt that the church and parish derived their name from the Castle of Erskine, which stood on the south margin of the river Clyde, on the same site which the old mansion-house of Erskine now occupies.

Extent and Boundaries.—The parish stretches from east to west, inclining southward, in the form of an irregular oblong, the eastern being considerably broader than the western extremity. Its length, between the extreme points, is about $8\frac{1}{2}$, and its average breadth from 2 to 3 miles; and it is believed to contain about 20 square miles of surface.

It is bounded on the north, by the river Clyde; on the west, by the parish of Kilmalcolm, into which, indeed, its western extremity juts so far as to reach within a mile of the parish church; on the south, by the united parishes of Houstoun and Kilallan, and a narrow stripe of the parish of Kilbarchan; and on the east, by the parish of Inchinnan.

Topographical Appearances.—The surface in the east end of

the parish, towards the Clyde, presents much the same appearance, from its numerous diluvial rising grounds, as the neighbouring parish of Inchiunan. Between the new mansion-house at Erskine, and the West Ferry, opposite Dumbarton rock, along the banks of the Clyde, there is a considerable quantity of low-lying alluvial land, which has evidently been gained, in former times, from the river, by successive depositions of loam and mud left by the stream, and by means of dikes and jetties, which have been constructed for deepening and rendering navigable the Clyde,—a similar formation of alluvial land is now slowly going on. At the west end of the parish, however, there seems to have been little alluvial soil gained, the ground rises rapidly from the banks of the river until it joins that chain of hills which intersects the parishes of Kilmalcolm and Lochwinnoch.

The coup d'œil presented to a passenger sailing down the Clyde, between Erskine and Old Kilpatrick, has been very well described by the Rev. Mr Barclay in his account of the latter parish, to which the reader is referred. There are in this parish two points on the old post-road between Greenock and Glasgow, from which may be had most enchanting views of the far-famed lake and mountain scenery of the west of Scotland. From Crosshill, above Bishopton House, there is a view westward, down the Frith of Clyde, as far as the mouth of the Holy Loch, which is bounded by the chain of hills called from their peculiar shape, "*the Farrel of Cakes*," rising beyond Dunoon and Kilman, towards Loch Echt. In the foreground lies Dumbarton Castle, and further distant, on either side of the river, the towns of Port Glasgow, Greenock, and Gourock, the village of Cardross, and the town of Helensburgh, the view in the direction of the latter being bounded by that high and rugged chain of hills which rises abruptly from the shores of Loch Long and Loch Goil, and ends in Ben Ann, or "*the Cobbler*," as it is most usually called. The view from this spot northward is, however, the more interesting of the two. The beautiful and classic vale of Leven lies straight before the spectator, studded with the towns of Dumbarton, Alexandria, (where Smollet the historian was born), and Bonhill, and with villas innumerable; at the upper end of it, the waters of Lochlomond, from which the Leven takes its rise, are visible on a clear day, and the King of the Scottish hills, Benlomond, is distinctly seen surrounded by his humbler satellites.*

* At the spot from which this beautiful panorama is seen, stood formerly the inn,

The view from another point further west, called Undercraig, is still more extensive, because it not only embraces the mountains Ben Lomond, Ben Ledi, and Ben More, on the north, and the hills above Holy Loch and Loch Long on the west, but also a splendid view of Loch Gare and the peninsula of Roseneath, "*the Holy Isle*," as it was formerly called. On a summer evening, the sunset viewed from this point is most lovely and imposing; Campsaile Bay and the Gare Loch present the appearance of molten gold, until the sun sinks behind the horizon, when the long dark shadows of the neighbouring mountains become immediately visible on their placid waters.

Climate and Diseases.—The climate, as in the neighbouring parishes, is moist, but on the whole salubrious, for though rain falls in considerable quantity, it is immediately absorbed by the gravelly subsoil, and there are no marshes or stagnant pools in the parish to contaminate the air. It must, however, be confessed that, from the quantity of rain that falls, and more especially from the clouds of vapour which rise constantly from the Clyde, the atmosphere is not so light and elastic as it is further inland, and rheumatism is, consequently, of not unfrequent occurrence. There is no disease that can be called endemic. Typhus fever seldom makes its appearance, and when it does, from the immediate removal of the patient to the nearest hospital, it rarely spreads. The natural small-pox has more than once appeared in the parish, but last year, on account of the crowded state of the houses,* it prevailed to a great extent among persons of all ages. When vaccination had previously taken place, it was uniformly mild, but to infant children, and unvaccinated persons, it proved very fatal. Consumption is a very common disease, arising from neglect of colds, brought on by exposure to the weather, in following agricultural pursuits. When Asiatic cholera visited our country some years ago, there were two cases in this parish, both of which proved fatal.

Springs and Rivers.—There are abundance of strong and excellent springs in this parish; some of these in the western part are entirely devoid of any mineral taint; but the wells are gene-

called the Half-way House, at which, about forty years ago, travellers who left Greenock in the morning by coach were in the habit of dining, as they never reached Glasgow till late in the evening, twelve hours being the time allowed for twenty-four miles. Travellers now accomplish that distance by railway in less than one hour.

* The workmen on the Glasgow, Paisley, and Greenock Railway, to the amount of 1500, were lodged in the parish, much to the detriment of cleanliness and good morals.

rally more or less chalybeate, and there is one particularly on the farm of Drumcross, the mineral qualities of which are very strong.

The Clyde, opposite the mansion-house at Erskine, still retains its original appearance and beauty, whilst everywhere else it has been changed and narrowed by the walls, and embankments which the river trustees have made, under the advice of eminent engineers, for deepening the channel. What changes the Clyde Bill, now passing through Parliament, may make on the appearance of the river, and consequently on the amenity of Lord Blantyre's park and pleasure-grounds, it is impossible at present to say; but it is a fact worthy a place in such an account as the present, that the Bill has been rendered necessary by a complete change in the opinion of the engineers of the present day, with regard to the best manner of deepening the channel. For nearly a century past, but particularly for the last thirty years, the plan which the engineers recommended, and the trustees followed, was to narrow and deepen the channel, in the hope that the body of water at ebb-tide would effectually scour it,—jetties being, at the same time, run out from the shore, at convenient distances, to intercept the sand thus brought down; and all who recollect the former navigation of the Clyde can bear ample testimony to the success of this plan, from the certainty and rapidity with which the passage up or down the river can now be made. The engineers of the present day, however, have given their opinion very decidedly on the advantage to be derived from widening the river, and cutting off as much as possible the angles, or turnings on the banks, as well as deepening the channel, under the idea, that the greater the body of water, conjoined with the fewer resistances it has to contend with, will make the ebb-tide scour much more effectual.

Geology and Mineralogy.—The geology of this parish very much resembles that of the neighbouring parishes of Inchinnan and Old Kilpatrick. The diluvium is in many places found extending to the depth of six feet, consisting chiefly of loose gravel, though sometimes containing a considerable quantity of clay. It is interspersed with immense boulders of granite, graywacke, &c. which seem to have had their original habitat to the north-west, in the Argyleshire hills. The strata in the south-eastern part of the parish generally seem to belong to those rocks of the secondary kind which are known as carboniferous, or the coal formation. Some fine specimens of fossil plants and trees were found in them a few

years ago on Lord Blantyre's property, while quarrying the *material* for building the new mansion-house at Erskine. Towards the west end of the parish, these strata are superimposed by hills wholly composed of trap rock, of a porphyritic and amygdaloidal character, containing crystals of felspar, and amygdaloidal portions of calcareous spar, green earth, &c. While the workmen employed on the Glasgow and Greenock Railway were engaged in cutting through the West Ferry Hill, opposite Dumbarton Castle, they opened up some splendid basaltic columns, very regular in shape, and of immense size, which have since gratified the curiosity of many visitors. Many of the minerals of the zeolitic family have been found in the trap rocks on this side the Clyde, as well as in the Kilpatrick hills, which have long been famed for them. The species *Prehnite*, *Thomsonite*, *Mesotype*, and *Cubecite*, have all been found,—the first mentioned, in great abundance and remarkable beauty. Some of the specimens of mesotype, also, were exceedingly rich and beautiful, but their texture was so friable and delicate that few of the finest could be preserved. There have also been found some fine specimens of amethystine quartz,—a thin, but pure vein of dendritic native copper,—some nodules of fortification agate of inferior value, and great quantities of common calc-spar.

But the most interesting feature, under this head, is a new mineral, which has been discovered only a few months since by Lord Greenock, in the Bishoptoun sidge of porphyritic trap, and which, in honour of him, has been called *Greenockite*. It has been ascertained, by chemical examination, to be a protosulphuret of cadmium, and is therefore a species of a new genus, which stands next in order to the zinc blendes. The specimens which have hitherto been discovered are so small, that it is very difficult to ascertain its characters so correctly as one could desire. In the fifty-sixth number of the Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal, for April 1840, Professor Jameson describes the Greenockite as prismatic in form; but the following extract from a letter received from Lord Greenock, shows, that further experiments and examination have led to the conclusion that its form is *rhomboidal*. "The only addition it may be necessary for me to make to Professor Jameson's description is, to state, that Professor Forbes has since satisfactorily ascertained by his experiments, that the sulphuret of cadmium is a crystal with one axis, and therefore its primitive form is rhomboidal and not prismatic, as some persons

had previously been led to suppose." Its colour is between honey and orange yellow, rarely inclining towards brown, and the colour of the streak reddish orange. Its lustre is shining resinous, somewhat inclining to adamantine. It varies from semitransparent to semitranslucent. Its hardness is about 3.5; its specific gravity 4.842,—and, so far as is known, it is the only separate ore of cadmium hitherto discovered.

Soil.—The soil in this parish may be classified under the four following heads :

1. A light friable damp soil, incumbent on till, or hard stoney clay.
2. A light sharp dry soil, incumbent on whitestone rock or trap.
3. A wet heavy soil, incumbent on clay.
4. A peaty or vegetable soil.

Of these the two former are by far the most prevalent, and may occupy about $\frac{1}{2}$ ths of the whole surface in about equal portions; the third class may occupy about a $\frac{1}{8}$ th part; and the fourth class $\frac{1}{8}$ th part of the surface of the parish.

Zoology.—The fox, the hare, and the mole are the three greatest enemies the farmer has to contend with here, they are so abundant; and the rabbits have been increasing in number rapidly of late years. Pheasants are preserved by several of the landed proprietors, and are very plentiful. The roe-deer, from the Kilpatrick hills, have been known to swim across the Clyde to the park at Erskine; but they will not settle there, preferring the high grounds further inland. The grouse and woodcock are found occasionally in the parish; but the partridge, snipe, wild-duck, widgeon, water-hen, and plover are tolerably abundant. In the woods at Erskine, which overhang the Clyde, opposite the old Roman fortress of Dunglass, there is a large heronry, which has existed there for a great length of time, and which is the more interesting, as it is alleged, there are only one or two more to be found in Scotland. It is a fine sight to observe these noble birds fishing in the river at ebb-tide, and their success may be estimated from the fact, that the walks under their nests are often strewn with flounders and other fish, which they have not been able to use. There are also two large rookeries in the parish. The owl and the starling are found haunting about old mansion-houses and ruins, and the common varieties of singing-birds, from the black-bird to the wren, frequent the gardens in most destructive abundance.

Botany.—There are no plants which are indigenous, or if there ever were, they have disappeared as cultivation extended itself over the parish. The following herbs are commonly met with: *Myrrhis odorata*, *Gnaphalium dioicum*, *Menyanthes trifoliata*, *Arenaria peploides*, *Statice urmeria*, *Silene maritima*.

In the gardens at Erskine, vines, mulberry and fig trees may be seen growing on the open wall, and the fruit of the former, both as regards quality and size, is far superior to that which grows in the hot-houses. When this garden was made, about twelve years ago, the gardener, adopting Sir James Stuart of Allanton's plan for transplanting full-grown trees, removed with the most perfect success all the most valuable fruit-trees from the old garden, and one of these, a Mayduke cherry, is not only the pride of the gardener, but likewise the admiration of every visitor. The first ripe fruit is gathered from it about the second week of April, and it yields with annual regularity large supplies till the end of July, producing in the market an income from L. 20 to L. 25 yearly. In the pleasure-grounds, about the new house at Erskine, there are found growing in the richest profusion, not only the rhododendron, and other common evergreens, but also many valuable exotics, which need no protection even in the depth of winter. Among these is a tree of the *Magnolia tripetala*, which has been mentioned by Loudon in his *Arboretum Britannicum* as the largest specimen he had seen in Scotland,—the *Calmia latifolia*, the *Calmia glauca*, and the *Calmia angustifolia*, the *Passiflora cœrulea* or passion-flower, the *Acacia affinis*, the *Gum cistus*, the arbutus, and the tulip.

There are about 500 acres of land covered with woods and plantations, which consist chiefly of oak, elm, beech, ash, larch, Scotch spruce and silver firs, and horse-chestnuts, though there are also in the woods near Erskine some fine old walnut and sweet-chestnut trees, the latter producing in dry and favourable seasons fruit which may vie in quality, if not in size, with the famed chestnuts of Spain. In the immediate neighbourhood of Dargavel House, there stands a yew tree, which, from its size and circumference, seems to have been planted by some ancient representative of the family of Maxwell, and which is confessedly one of the greatest ornaments and antiquities of the parish.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Historical Notices.—This parish does not appear to have been at any time the scene of actions or events sufficiently memorable

to call for a separate history, if only we except the proceedings of the witches in the end of the seventeenth century, at Bargarran House, which have been published along with a narrative of their trial in a small duodecimo volume, entitled "The Witches of Renfrewshire." As the event referred to forms one of the only interesting antiquities connected with the parish, the leading particulars may be shortly mentioned, although they have been alluded to in the former Statistical Account. John Shaw of Bargarran had a daughter called Christian Shaw, who appears, from her earliest youth, to have been a person of a very delicate constitution, which naturally led to a state of irksome weakness and ill health, and as these did not readily give way to the common remedies, it was concluded in these times, when the mind was still considerably under the influence of superstition, that she was bewitched. The suspicion of bewitching her unhappily fell upon three men and four women who lived in the neighbourhood, one of whom, Margaret Lang, or "pinched Maggie,"* as she was called, lived at a hamlet called Cartimpen, the site of which is still marked out by three trees growing in a field next to the parish school-house, on the north side of the Greenock road. These unhappy creatures, (who seem by their own confession to have borne no good character,) were brought to trial at Paisley in the year 1697, and after a solemn inquest, they were found guilty of the crime of witchcraft, and sentenced to be burnt alive, which sentence was carried into effect at the Gallow Green of Paisley on Thursday the 10th June 1697, in the following manner: They were first hanged for a few minutes, and then cut down and put into a fire prepared for them, into which a barrel of tar was put, in order to consume them more rapidly.

Miss Shaw's case excited very general attention, and produced a deep sensation, more particularly in the vicinity of the place where she lived. Several ministers were sent for in succession to converse and pray with her; and the most influential persons in the county were either directed by government, or were invited to pay attention to the case. "A particular account, or journal," says Dr

* From a pinch said to have been administered by the devil to each of them, as they gave themselves up to his service, called in the course of the trial his "invisible mark." Her arm chair with initials is now in possession of the governor of the Glasgow jail, and stands in the entrance to the court-house.

The thread-mill and pirns used by Christian Shaw were preserved at Bargarran for upwards of a century, and have only fallen into complete decay within the last six years, and some bedsteads marked with the initials J. S., 1640, the last memorials of that family, were set up to the hammer last spring.

Young, "of the extraordinary circumstances of this case, was drawn up at the time it happened, every paragraph of which is affirmed to have been originally subscribed by witnesses, among whom we find the names of almost all the noblemen and gentlemen, and many of the ministers of the neighbourhood."

Miss Shaw is also celebrated as being the first person that introduced the manufacture of fine linen thread into this country. "Having acquired a remarkable dexterity in spinning fine yarn, she conceived the idea of manufacturing it into thread. Her first attempts in this way were necessarily on a small scale. She executed almost every part of the process with her own hands, and bleached her materials on a large slate in one of the windows of the house. She succeeded so well, however, in these essays, as to have sufficient encouragement to go on, and to take the assistance of her younger sisters and neighbours. The then Lady Blantyre carried a parcel of her thread to Bath, and disposed of it advantageously to some manufacturers of lace, and this was probably the first thread made in Scotland that had crossed the Tweed. About this time, a person who was connected with the family, happening to be in Holland, found means to learn the secrets of the thread manufacture, which was carried on to a great extent in that country, particularly the art of sorting and numbering the threads of different sizes, and packing them up for sale, and the construction and management of the twisting and twining machines. This knowledge he communicated, on his return, to his friends in Bargarran, and by means of it they were enabled to conduct their manufacture with more regularity and to a greater extent. The young women in the neighbourhood were taught to spin fine yarn, twining-mills were erected, correspondences were established, and a profitable business was carried on. Bargarran thread became extensively known, and, being ascertained by a stamp, bore a good price. From the instructions of the family of Bargarran, a few families in the same neighbourhood engaged in the business, and continued in it for a number of years. It was not to be expected, however, that a manufacture of that kind could be confined to so small a district, or would be allowed to remain in so few hands for a great length of time. The secrets of the business were gradually divulged by apprentices and assistants. A Mr Pollock in Paisley availed himself of these communications, and laid the foundation of the well established and extensive manufacture of thread, which has ever since been carried on in that

town."* Miss Shaw was afterwards married to Mr Miller, the minister of Kilmaurs, about the year 1718, but died at Bargarran, and was interred in the church-yard here, though it is to be regretted that no monument has been erected to indicate the precise locality.

Mr Maxwell, younger of Dargavel, has kindly furnished, from documents in possession of the family, the particulars of the last pass of arms which took place in the parish, arising from a quarrel between the lairds of Dargavel and Orbistoun. Dargavel, according to immemorial usage, claimed right to door, seat, and burial-place within the old church of Erskine; to this, Hamilton of Orbistoun, then laird of Erskine, objected. In 1692, the matter seems to have been referred to Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, who decided it in favour of Dargavel, and he accordingly employed workmen to strike out a door. Orbistoun then resorted to force, in consequence of which he was served with a criminal complaint by Sir William Lockhart, Solicitor-General, which, after stating the crime of invading a man's property in a military manner with armed men, drums, and trumpets, thus proceeds, "Nevertheless, it is of verity that Dargavel, naving a good and unquestionable right to ane door, and seatt, and a buriall-place in the east end of the kirk of Arskine, and whereof they and their predecessors had been in peacable possession past all memory of man, and since the first reform from Popery, by building, repairing, and sitting in the seatts, and by burruing the dead of their family in that place of the kirk, yet true it is that William Hamiltoun of Orbistoun; George Maxwell, baillie of Kilpatrick; Mr Adam Wilson, clerk; Robert Lang, miller in Duntocher; Shaw of Bargarran; Walkingshaw of that Ilk, (and a long list of other names,) shaking off all fear of God, respect to us, our authority and lawes, have presumed to comitt, and are guilty of the foresaid crymes, in so far as on the 25th day of Apryle last, or ane or oyer of the dayes of the said month, they did in a most treasonable manner, convocate themselves and several oyer their accomplices, to the number of ane hundred persons, all armed with guns, pistols, swords, baganets, and oyer weapons, and having appointed George Maxwell, Orbistoun's own baillie depute, to be their commander, and march upon their head, as their captain, they did come, marching in military manner, with drums beating and trumpets sounding, (and which can admit of no oyer construction than a downright defiance of our authority and lawes,) to the parish kirk of Erskine, and in a

* Former Statistical Account, article "Erskine."

most insolent and violent manner, did, at their own hand, and without any order of law, remove and take away Dargavell's seat and desk in the church, whereof he and his predecessors had been in immemorial possession, as said is, and did sacrilegiously remove and carry away stones that were lying upon the graves of his predecessors, and did strike and wound severall of his servants." The matter was ultimately settled in Dargavel's favour.

Parochial Registers.—The parish registers extend no farther back than the year 1703, and they are tolerably well kept, but those prior to this period are supposed to have been lost through decay, which is the more to be regretted, as many curious extracts might no doubt have been made from them, tending to throw light on the character of the witches and other suspected persons.

Land-owners with their respective valuations.—

The Lord Blantyre, - - -	L.2397	13	4
Lieutenant-General Darroch of Drums, - - -	821	19	4
W. C. C. Graham of Gartmore, - - -	393	6	8
Mrs Aytoun of Inchdarnie, - - -	243	6	8
William Maxwell of Dargavel, - - -	286	13	4
The Lord Douglas, - - -	188	6	8
Matthew Rodger of Wester Rossland, - - -	94	0	0
Messrs Orr, Allison, and Wood, - - -	46	4	0
Captain King of Millbank, - - -	30	16	0
John Holms, of Little Crosshill, - - -	14	0	0
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	L.4451	0	0

Family Descent.—The paternal ancestor of the family of Blantyre was Sir Thomas Stuart of Minto, in Roxburghshire, one of the younger sons of Sir William Stuart of Dalswinton and Garlies, (ancestor of the Earl of Galloway), in the reign of King James III. Lord Blantyre is representative of the Stuarts of Minto, which family failed in the direct line in the person of Sir John Stuart of Minto, who died in the expedition to Darien, about the year 1669.

His Lordship derives his title from the priory of Blantyre, in Lanarkshire, which was about the year 1580, bestowed "in commendam," by King James VI., upon Walter Stuart, son of Sir John Stuart of Minto, by Margarët, his wife, daughter of James Stuart of Cardonald, and was afterwards erected into a temporal barony.

This Walter Stuart was, in 1582, appointed one of the Privy-Council to King James VI., and keeper of the privy-seal, and subsequently an extraordinary Lord of Session, and one of the eight Commissioners of the Treasury and Exchequer, called from

their number Octavians. He was afterwards promoted to the office of Lord High Treasurer, and was one of the commissioners for a treaty of union with England in 1604, (which did not take effect), and in 1606 was created a Peer of Parliament by the title of Lord Blantyre. He was grandfather of Frances Teresa Stuart, wife of Charles, Duke of Richmond and Lennox, (the last male descendant of the ancient Dukes of that title), and also of Sophia, Stuart, who, by her husband, the Honourable Henry Bulkeley, (fourth son of Thomas Viscount Bulkeley), was mother of Anne, second wife of James, Duke of Berwick, from whom, by this lady, is descended the Ducal house of Fitzjames in France. The Duchess of Richmond and Lennox survived her husband, and, dying in 1702, bequeathed her fortune to Walter, eldest son of Alexander fifth Lord Blantyre, under an injunction that the lands to be bought with it should be called "Lennoxlove," which was accordingly carried into effect with respect to the lands and castle of Lethington (or Leddington), in the county of Haddington, which formerly belonged to the Lauderdale family.

The late Robert Walter, Lord Blantyre, was accidentally shot during the Revolution at Brussels, in September 1830. He was Major-General in the British army, and served in Egypt, and in the expeditions to Holland and Copenhagen, and commanded the second battalion of the 42d Regiment for several years, during the campaigns in Portugal and Spain, under the Duke of Wellington. He was Lord Lieutenant of Renfrewshire, and was so highly esteemed by the gentlemen of that county, that, shortly after his death, they erected, on a conspicuous situation on his estate of Erskine, an elegant column in the form of an obelisk, as a tribute of respect to his memory.

His son, Charles, the present Lord Blantyre, has lately come of age; and, after having served for a few years in the Grenadier Guards, has retired from the army, and is residing upon his estate.

Lieutenant-General Darroch of Drums is representative of the family of Darrochs of Gourock, whose early patronymic was M'Ilriach. When the estate of Drums was offered for sale on the death of the late Thomas King, Esq. of Millbank and Drums, it was bought for the father of the present proprietor, and immediately entailed, as was also the estate of Barscube, formerly belonging to Mrs Aytoun of Inchdarnie. The mansion-house at Drums

is in good repair, and is occupied by Captain Darroch, his eldest son, and next heir to the estates of Gourrock and Drums.

Mr Cuninghame Graham of Gartmore is now proprietor of the estates of the ancient Earls of Glencairn, (originally Cuninghames of Kilmaurs), being their lineal descendant and representative. Mr Bontine of Ardoch, his eldest son, occasionally resides at Finlaystone.

The present mansion-house is of modern date, but is built on the site of the ancient castle of Finlaystone, where, under the patronage of Alexander, Earl of Glencairn, the famous John Knox administered, for the first time, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper after the Reformation. The cups which were used on that occasion were carefully kept by the family, and were lent on sacramental occasions for the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the parish church of Kilmalcolm. Whether these valuable relics are still extant, and if so, in whose possession they now are, is not well-known; report, however, says, that the last Lady Glencairn on leaving Scotland took them with her to England.

Mrs Aytoun of Inchdarnie, only daughter of Dr James Jeffray, Professor of Anatomy in the University of Glasgow, and Mary Brisbane, his first wife, is the representative of the family of Patersons of Craigton, having succeeded to the property in 1817, on the death of her aunt, Miss Anne Paterson, at the advanced age of ninety-seven.

Mr Maxwell of Dargavel is the representative of two very ancient families in Renfrewshire, the Maxwells of Dargavel, and the Halls of Fulbar. The family of Hall obtained possession of Fulbar by charter, from James, High Steward of Scotland, the grandfather of King Robert II., which was confirmed by a corroborative charter from Robert II. in 1370; and one of its descendants followed King James IV. to the ill-fated battle of Flodden, and fell there. The family of Maxwell was a cadet, but now represents the house of Newark. The eldest son of Patrick Maxwell of Newark, by his second wife, obtained a charter of the lands of Dargavel, along with those of Rashilee and Haltonridge, in the neighbouring parishes of Inchinnan and Kilmalcolm, from his father in 1516. One of his descendants was slain, in the desperate conflict which took place at Lockerby, between the rival clans of Maxwell and Johnstone. John Maxwell, the proprietor of Dargavel, at the beginning of last century, entailed that estate, but, as both he and his brother, William Maxwell of Freeland, died without

issue, the next heir of entail, John Hall, second son of Robert Hall of Fulbar, and Margaret Maxwell, his wife, the sister of the entailer, succeeded under the title of Maxwell of Dargavel, and eventually he became, by the death of his elder brother, the proprietor and male representative of the house of Fulbar. The present proprietor married the eldest daughter of John Campbell, Esq. of Possil, Dumbartonshire, by whom he has a numerous family.

The present house of Dargavel was built in the year 1584, as appears from a stone in the front wall bearing that date, with the name and arms of the family. It is an excellent specimen of the style of French architecture, which was introduced into Scotland in the reign of Queen Mary, by which the old square keep was supplanted; and having undergone little alteration, it affords a good idea of the dwellings of the Scottish gentry towards the end of the sixteenth century. The lower storey is strongly vaulted, and the flanking towers are loop-holed for musketry, so as to command a range both of the sides and gables.

Lord Douglas is the descendant and representative of the house of Douglas, so well known and highly famed in Scottish history. His Lordship has no mansion-house on his property in this parish.

Mr Rodger of Wester Rossland is the representative of a family of that name, which obtained a charter or title to the property of Wester Rossland, or Fergushill's Rossland, so far back as the year 1599, and which also, about a hundred years since, increased it considerably by the purchase of the lands of Hay Hill, Long Meadows, and Gladstone, formerly belonging to the Brisbanes of Bishoptoun. On this property there was discovered accidentally, a few years ago, a shilling of the reign of Philip and Mary, coined in 1553, but no other relics have since been discovered which could in any way account for its being there.

Captain King of Millbank is the son of the late Thomas King, Esq. of Millbank and Drums, at whose decease the property of Drums, being unentailed, was sold, leaving only the entailed estate of Millbank in possession of the family. Captain King is not a resident heritor, being at present with his regiment in England.

The family of Sempill claims also a passing notice under this head as having been at no very remote period possessed of considerable property in this parish, viz. a large portion of the estate of Northbarr, and the entire estate of Bishoptoun, the latter of which, Miss Dunlop, heiress of that property, and mother of Hugh,

thirteenth Lord Sempill, brought into that family. That nobleman sold both these properties, and left the family of which he was the representative, once the most powerful in Renfrewshire, without a rood of land in it. This Hugh Lord Sempill is represented, in the account of Lochwinnoch, as the last of the family. This statement, however, is incorrect, as Hugh Lord Sempill, who sold Castle Sempill, was succeeded by his eldest and only surviving son, Selkirk, fifteenth Lord Sempill, who died on the 4th of May 1835, when the title devolved upon his eldest sister, Maria Janet, present Baroness Sempill, who married Edward Candler, Esq. of Morton Pinkney, in Northamptonshire, Deputy-Lieutenant of that county, son of Henry Candler, Esq., who was paternally descended from the Irish family of Candler of Callan Castle, in the county of Kilkenny, and maternally from the eminent Yorkshire family of Vavasour, now extinct in the male line.

Eminent Men.—The two last incumbents of Erskine have both acquired considerable celebrity, though in different ways. Dr Walter Young was famed as the most splendid private musician of his day; he performed with equal grace and effect on the piano, the violin, and the flute, and it is said that the Church of Scotland is indebted to him for the arrangement of some of its most beautiful Psalm tunes. Dr Andrew Stewart is famed as being the author of the bracing, or antiphlogistic mode of treatment in pulmonary and consumptive complaints, which is known by his name, and is now almost universally adopted, as the most successful in diseases of the breast, though it was keenly opposed by the leading medical practitioners, both in Scotland and England, at the beginning of this century.

Modern Buildings.—Happily for the peace and morality of the people, no mills nor manufactories can be numbered among the modern erections. The chief of these are, the church, a handsome modern Gothic building, erected in 1813, which has since served as a model for several new churches in different parts of the country;—a new parish school, built in 1839, which is larger and more commodious than any yet built in this county, and bears testimony at once to the liberality of the heritors, in increasing the schoolmaster's accommodation, and to their regard for the health and comfort, as well as the education of the children of the lower orders;—and a column, in form of an obelisk, 80 feet high, already referred to, as raised by the gentlemen of the county, in memory of the late Lord Blantyre, about the year 1833.

But the most attractive building of which the parish can boast is the new mansion-house of Erskine, erected by the late Lord Blantyre, from a plan furnished by Sir Robert Smirke of London. "This building," says a modern publication, "is erected in the manorial or domestic Gothic of Queen Elizabeth's reign, with perpendicular windows, many of them large, and of great beauty. The splendid irregularity of this style of building has been seldom displayed, in modern times, to greater advantage than at Erskine House, and particularly when seen from the water, its effect is rich and striking. The house is of great size, extending in front 185 feet in length, besides its kitchen, court, and nursery wing; the principal part rising in height to two storeys, is terminated by rich cornices and decorated pinnacles. The internal arrangements are exceedingly magnificent. The house contains upwards of seventy-five rooms, of which seven are public rooms of large size and beautiful proportions. The picture gallery is 118 feet in length. The vestibule, hall, and gallery open from one into the other with folding doors; and the whole of their extent can be seen at once from the grand entrance, presenting a splendid perspective of 196 feet."

III.—POPULATION.

In 1750, the parish is said to have contained	929
1771,	870
1792, when the last Statistical Account was written,	908
1801,	847
1811,	963
1821,	978
1831,	978

It is a curious circumstance, and one well worthy of remark, that this parish is the only one in Scotland in which the number of inhabitants has undergone no change between the census of 1821 and that of 1831. The census of 1841 will probably show a very great increase in the population of this parish, as the Glasgow and Greenock Railway, which has brought an immense influx of labourers into it, will not, in all probability, be finished before that time.*

The following table will show the average amount of births, marriages, and deaths, which annually occur here :

Average number of births for the last seven years,	20
marriages,	11
deaths,	15

The register of births, however, is not absolutely correct, owing

* By the census of 1841, the population was found to amount to 1407.

to the occasional neglect of parents in registering them; the above-mentioned number, therefore, may be reckoned a little below the truth. A register of deaths seems never to have been kept in this parish, and the number mentioned has been supplied by the sexton.

The average number of persons below the specified ages are, as nearly as can be ascertained, the following:

Number below the age of 15,	309
between the age of 15 and 30,	286
30 and 50,	258
50 and 70,	99
above the age of 70,	22

The average number of families in the parish is 195, of which there are 38 resident in the small villages of Blackstoun and Rossland, and 157 in the country districts, living at considerable distances from one another.

The average number of children in each family is	3
unmarried men, both widowers and bachelors, above 50,	21
females above 45,	30
Number of fatuous persons,	1
houses inhabited,	170
uninhabited,	0

The excess of families above the number of houses is easily accounted for, from the circumstance, that one house often accommodates two, and even three families.

Character of the People, Customs and Habits, &c.—There is nothing remarkable in the character of the people, except it may be the preservation of their simple, kindly, and respectful manners, notwithstanding their proximity to the large manufacturing towns of Paisley and Johnstone. They are very regular in their attendance on divine ordinances, and are, for the most part, steady and sober.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture and Rural Economy:—

	A.	R.	F.
The extent of the parish in standard imperial acres, is	7108	3	39
Number of acres arable land,	5121	2	24
waste land, pasture, moss, &c.	1431	1	28
wood,	554	0	27

There are only a few acres of natural copse-wood, which, though picturesque in appearance, is of little value. Great attention is paid by all the proprietors to the management of their woods, both in the way of pruning and thinning them.

There is not much land still in a waste and unproductive state, if we except about 200 acres of moss land, which the proprietors,

Lord Douglas and Mr Maxwell of Dargavel, are gradually clearing away, and about 400 acres of shore ground on Lord Blantyre's and General Darroch's estates.

Rent of Land.—Grain rents are still common in the parish, and these are regulated by the *fiar* prices; but money rents have also been introduced, and seem to be preferred both by tenant and landlord as more certain. The average rent of arable land is about L.1, 13s. per Scotch, or L.1, per imperial acre.

Rent of Grazing.—The average rent charged for grazing is as follows—for a cow, summer-grazing, L.4, winter do. L.6, 10s.; per annum, L.10, 10s. Black-faced sheep per annum, 10s. 6d.; white-faced pets per do. L.1, 7s.

Rate of Wages.—The rate of wages for labourers, ploughmen, &c., is the same as in the parish of Inchinnan. Ploughmen with bed, board and washing, per half year, L.9; married do. with a house and garden per half year, L.12, 10s.; female servants per do. L.4 to L.5; labourers per week, 10s. to 11s.; women, 1s. per day, but in harvest from 1s. 6d. to 2s.; per week, 6s. to 12s.; quarriers per week, 13s.; wrights per do., 16s.; masons per do., 18s.; but at present, owing to the demand for masons on the railway, their wages are as high as L.1 per week. Mason-work, however, is more frequently executed by contract at the following prices—rubble-work per rood, L.7, 10s.; coursed-work per do., L.11; ashlar-work per do., L.16. Many of the young women are kept in constant employment by sewing muslins and embroidering crape shawls for manufacturers in Paisley, by which they make from 10d. to 1s. 3d. per day, according to the demand for the following articles: Victoria stitch upon cotton muslin, averaging per day 1s. 3d.; French opening stitch on do. 1s. 3d.; French veining on do. 1s.; sewed silk shawls with satin boards, 1s.; Thibet wool shawls sewed with twined silk, 1s.

Husbandry.—The first innovations on the old system of farming in this parish were made about the year 1775, by Alexander the tenth Lord Blantyre, and have been very accurately described by Dr Young in the former Statistical Account. The system of a rotation in crops, introduced by that nobleman, was in particular, a source of great annoyance to the farmers, who could not at first appreciate the value of such a change. Now, however, that system is observed, not only on Lord Blantyre's property, but likewise by the tenants on the other estates. The following is the rotation of crops which is followed on the best managed farms:

1st year, oats after lea; 2. potatoes or turnips; 3. wheat, barley, or oats; 4. hay; 5. and 6. pasture: and lately, on some of Lord Blantyre's farms, an eight-shift course, as it is called, adding two years more of pasture, has been adopted, with every prospect of success. The nature of the soil will not admit of repeated cropping without a falling off in the produce, and a considerable rest in grass seems requisite, in order to preserve fertility, except on the heavy land, which forms too small a proportion of the whole parish to affect its general features. The propriety of persisting in making wheat a general crop seems very doubtful,—neither the soil nor the climate being adapted for bringing this valuable article to maturity; in addition to which the wheat crop seems to be by no means a good nurse for the young grasses sown down with it. Barley is not a general crop, but might take the place of wheat with advantage, as it is much better adapted to the soil and climate, and produces no bad effects upon the young grasses sown down with it.

The greatest improvement introduced into the parish, of late years, is the tile-draining on the parallel or furrow system; and, as all the soils of the first, second, and fourth classes, above-mentioned, require to be freed from superfluous moisture attendant on an impervious subsoil, much yet remains to be done in this department. From the interest taken, both by landlord and tenant, in this system, it is to be expected that a great change will have taken place in the course of ten or twelve years, both in the aspect and produce of the parish. On the Erskine estate the landlord provides the tiles, and is at the expense of draining in the first instance, the tenants paying five per cent. interest on the outlay during the continuance of their leases, and the same plan has been adopted by the other proprietors. Two tile-works have been lately erected in the parish,—one by Lord Blantyre on the lands of Glenshinnoch, and the other by Mr Rodger on the lands of Gledestane, on both of which there is found abundance of excellent clay for the manufacture of tiles. The subsoil plough, which has been introduced into East Lothian with great success for the purpose of turning up the subsoil, and mixing it with the surface soil, is to be introduced, during the course of this year, into this parish for the same purpose; and, meanwhile, deep ploughing after draining has been successfully practised, with that end in view.

The leases of farms vary from fifteen to nineteen years, a number of the more recent being of the former period. There are

also some farms let on a lease of seven years. A lease of fifteen or nineteen years must, in general, be reckoned favourable to the occupier, except where the farm has been taken at too high a rate, and where there is a deficiency of capital on the part of the tenant; but, in such cases, it is neither the interest nor inclination of landlords to keep a tenant against his will. A lease is beneficial both to landlord and tenant,—the former is not exposed to the risk of losing a good tenant on every occasion, and the tenant has a somewhat permanent interest in this farm which stimulates his exertions to improve it, and certainly, without leases, one-half of the improvements lately effected would not have been undertaken.

The farm-houses are, for the most part, commodious and good, and the few uncomfortable old-fashioned structures which still remain, are gradually giving place to neat and comfortable dwellings. The enclosures are generally formed by hedges of hawthorn, privet, or beech, or by dry-stone walls of five feet in height.

Live-Stock.—There are not many horses reared in the parish, and those employed in agricultural labour are generally of the Clydesdale breed. The average number of farm-horses is 135. The cows are generally of the Ayrshire breed, though some of the farmers prefer a cross breed between the Guernsey and the Ayrshire, as securing the good qualities of both. The average number of milk cows usually kept in the parish is 355, in addition to which there are of young cows and black-faced cattle about 445.

Produce.—The produce of the parish may be estimated annually as follows :

Grain of all kinds,	-	-	-	L.7596	0	0
Potatoes, turnips, &c.	-	-	-	6862	0	0
Hay,	-	-	-	3165	0	0
Dairy produce,	-	-	-	6074	0	0
Pasturage,	-	-	-	2500	0	0
Tile manufacture,	-	-	-	1000	0	0
Thinnings of wood,	-	-	-	500	0	0
Peats,	-	-	-	100	0	0
				<hr/>		
				L.27,797	0	0

If this estimate of produce is compared with that which is given by Mr Lockhart in his account of Inchinnan, it will be found that there is a considerable difference in the proportion of grain to green crop and pasture in these contiguous districts; but it must be remembered, that Inchinnan is much more a corn-growing parish than Erskine, the latter being chiefly devoted to green crops and pasture.

Quarries.—There are two freestone quarries about a mile east

from the church, on Lord Blantyre's property, which have afforded building materials for the new mansion-house at Erskine, for the church, and an addition made to the manse in 1816. There is also a freestone quarry on Mr Rodger's property, and several whinstone quarries throughout the parish, which are chiefly wrought to obtain metal for the parish roads.

Fisheries.—There are two or three salmon-fisheries on the banks of the Clyde, as it passes along this parish, but they are not taken by any of the inhabitants; indeed, the produce of these is so small as scarcely to repay the expense of the necessary fishing apparatus. The right of all the salmon-fishings on the Clyde belongs by ancient royal charter to the town of Renfrew; and the magistrates of that burgh, or friends authorized by them, occasionally amuse themselves by a day's fishing at the different stations. Spirlings or smelts are now very rarely found, and the large red trout and shrimps, which Dr Young mentions as being formerly caught here, are now unknown. The salmon when caught is sent to the Glasgow market, and sells from 6d. to 1s. 2d. per pound.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Markets.—The nearest market-town is Paisley, which lies about six miles distant from the east end of the parish. The inhabitants of the west end usually frequent the markets of Port-Glasgow or Greenock, which are respectively three and six miles distant from them.

Villages.—There are only two villages in the parish, both of them on the Rossland estate, one called Blackstown, in honour of the mother of the present proprietor, and the other called Easter Rossland, which scarcely, indeed, deserves the name of a village, as it consists of five houses, containing in all twelve families. They are both situated on the line of the new Greenock road.

Means of Communication.—At the post-office of Bishoptoun there are three arrivals and three departures of mails daily, viz. arrivals, from Glasgow, 6 morning, Paisley, 2 P. M., Greenock, 3 P. M.; departures, to Greenock, 6 P. M., Glasgow, 8 P. M., Paisley, 8 P. M. In addition to this post-office, Lord Blantyre and his factor, the minister, and several of the inhabitants in the eastern part of the parish, get their letters at the post-office at Old Kilpatrick, on the north side of the Clyde, as this arrangement in many respects proves most convenient to them. The mail is conveyed by gigs.

The public road from Glasgow to Greenock passes through the whole length of the parish, and there are other parish roads kept in good repair by the statute labour trust, which lead to Inchinnan, Houston, and Kilmalcolm. The communication with Glasgow and Greenock is now carried on chiefly by the steam-boats, which put out and take in passengers at Erskine Ferry, every half hour, in their passage up and down the river, and no week passes without some of the farmers taking advantage of this mode of conveyance on their way to market. The steam-boats have long since put an end to posting and running of coaches between Glasgow and Greenock, and in all probability they will in a great measure be superseded in their turn by the Glasgow, Greenock, and Paisley Railway. The determination lately come to by the directors of that Railway to prevent all travelling along it on Sabbath, is such as warmly to recommend it to the patronage of all connected with this parish, which, from its beauty, and its vicinity to Glasgow and Paisley, would, but for that determination, have been overrun every Sabbath with visitors little likely to improve either the temporal or spiritual interests of the people.*

There are two ferries in the parish, both belonging to Lord Blantyre; the one called Erskine Ferry forms the mean of communication with the parish and village of Old Kilpatrick; the one called the West Ferry, affords a communication with the castle and town of Dumbarton. The former is under the management of an excellent and careful tenant, and the inn connected with it has, from its neatness and comfort, become a favourite resort for dinner parties from Glasgow. At present, this is the lowest ferry on the river at which carriages and horses can cross from Renfrewshire to Dumbartonshire and the Western Highlands, and, on that account, there is always a considerable traffic going on. The following is a table of the freights charged:—A four-wheeled chaise, with two horses, 2s. 6d.; a gig, with one horse, 1s. 6d.; a cart going and returning with one load, 1s. 2d.; a horse, 4d.; a cow, 2d.; sheep per score, 1s.; passengers crossing, 1d.; passengers going on board steamers, 2d. The West Ferry has hitherto been ill kept and little used; but the Glasgow and Greenock Railway Company have recently been empowered to purchase it from Lord Blantyre, and have got an act of Parliament for erecting quays and other works, in order to make a communication with Dumbarton, the

* The rates for luggage on the Railway are so moderate, that the farmers now generally prefer it to any other mode of conveyance for heavy goods. 1842.

public works on the river Leven, and the Highlands generally, by means of a steam ferry-boat. As this will afford a passage for carriages six miles further down the river than the Erskine Ferry, it must diminish considerably the traffic now carried on there, though it will prove a great convenience to the public generally.

Ecclesiastical State.—There can be no doubt that Erskine was originally erected into a separate parish in the days of Popery, as we find mention made of the Popish vicars and parsons who held the living, such as “Robert Sempill, Vicar of Erskine,” mentioned in Hamilton’s History of Renfrewshire, and “David Stewart, parson of Erskine,” mentioned by M’Lure in his History of Glasgow, published in 1739. In this treatise, which is a very curious one, the author informs us, that “the incumbent of Erskine, previous to the Reformation, was one of the thirty-two prebendaries who constituted the chapter of the archbishopric of Glasgow, whose office it was to be electors of the archbishops and council for the administration of the offices of their function, both with respect to the temporality and spirituality thereof, for the prebendaries of the Episcopal see had a vote in the chapter, and a stall in the choir, and had vicars under them, who served the cure in their several parsonages and paroch churches, or parsons who had their full tithes.” Bishop Cameron, who was appointed to the see of Glasgow in 1426, compelled the thirty-two canons of the metropolitan church to build manors in the vicinity of his own castle, and it is in giving an account of these that we find the author already mentioned adding, “The prebend of Erskine had his house at the foot of the Rotten Row, which belonged afterwards to James Fleming by purchase of Mr David Stewart, parson of Erskine, before the Reformation. The lands of Blythswood belonged to the parsons of Erskine, as a charter still extant bears, granted by Queen Mary to David Stewart, parson of Erskine, and sold to George Elphinstone, son of a burgher in Glasgow of the same name, and to this day the minister of Erskine receives the feu-duty of the lands, though the proprietor be a vassal of the Crown.” This feu-duty, amounting to the annual sum of 5s. Sterling, was paid at stated intervals to Dr Young, the incumbent before the last, till about the year 1799; and the late incumbent having allowed upwards of twenty years to pass after his induction here without claiming it, during which time, the persons employed by Dr Young to collect it died, the proprietor of Blythswood, through his agent, has lately refused to acknowledge the claim of the mi-

nister to draw this feu-duty. The sum, indeed, is sufficiently trifling, yet, it is to be regretted, that any thing belonging to the cure, and tending to establish its antiquity, should, through carelessness, have been lost. The stipend paid to the minister, previous to 1831, was 15 chalders, half meal, half barley; at that time, however, it was raised to 17 chalders, with L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements.

There has been no regular register kept of the incumbents of Erskine, and it is therefore impossible to say whether the following list includes all who have served the cure since 1600: "Robert Sempill, vicar of Erskine, deceist in the moneth of December in the zier of God 1600." He seems to have been succeeded in 1602 by William Brisbane, parson of Erskine, a son of John Brisbane, laird of Bishopton, the first Protestant minister. In 1642, he was succeeded by his son, Matthew Brisbane, a man of great worth and abilities. In 1649, Thomas Hall, from Ireland, was appointed minister, and after him William Thomson, though in what year is uncertain. William Houston was appointed in 1660, and was ejected two years afterwards in 1662. In 1692, William Turner was appointed; but was translated to Greenock in 1704. Walter Menzies succeeded in 1705, and died in 1741. In 1742, James Lundie was presented, and in 1772, he was succeeded by Walter Young, D.D., who died in 1814. His place was supplied by Andrew Stewart, M. D., who was translated from Bolton in 1815, and died in December 1836. The present incumbent was ordained assistant and successor to his father on the 16th March 1837.

The old church, which was supposed to have been built in Popish times, having become ruinous, was pulled down in 1813, and the *benetier*, which held the holy water at the principal entrance, is still to be seen lying in the church-yard. It was situated in the middle of the church-yard; but the new one has been built at a little distance from it, on a site granted by Lord Blantyre. It is to be regretted, that, when a new church was about to be built, the heritors had not fixed on a more central situation for it, and one which would have proved more convenient to the majority of the parishioners,—for, situated as it is, at a distance of one mile from the eastern, and seven from the western extremity of the parish, the inhabitants of the last-mentioned quarter cannot usually attend their own parish church in winter, and have to seek accommodation in the parish church and Cameronian chapel at Kilmal-

colm. The number of sittings in the church is 500, and the sittings at the communion table are appropriated to the poor. No seat-rents are exacted either by the heritors or kirk-session.

There are twelve elders at present in the kirk-session, to each of whom a separate district has been allotted, which he stately visits twice a year, and reports diligence to the session. The number of communicants is about 320; and the roll of male heads of families, made up in terms of the regulations of the veto act, contains 93. The average amount of collections for the poor annually is L.35, 14s. 8d., in addition to which the collections for the Assembly's schemes amount annually to the average sum of L.20. The relative number of persons belonging to the Establishment and to the different bodies of Dissenters is as follows: Establishment, 957; Cameronians, 3; United Secession, 3; Relief, 4; Episcopalians, 2; Papists, 4.

The manse was built about sixty years ago; but a large addition was made to it by the heritors on the appointment of the last incumbent in 1815, and some small additions were also made to it lately, which render it a commodious dwelling. The glebe is small, containing only five acres of arable land.

Education.—There are two schools in this parish, the parochial school, a handsome building, which has only been a few months completed, and a subscription school, which was built about thirty years ago, in the western district of the parish, but which, being now ruinous, is about to be replaced immediately by a larger and more comfortable edifice. The parochial schoolmaster has a good house, containing six apartments, and the legal amount of ground for a garden, but he only receives the medium rate of salary, amounting to L. 30 a year, which is too small a remuneration for an efficient teacher such as this parish at present happily enjoys. In addition to the ordinary branches, he is qualified to teach Latin, Greek, and practical mathematics, and the fees vary from 3s. to 7s. per quarter, according to the branches taught. As the people generally seem alive to the great importance of education, there are no children above-nine or ten years old unable to read, and, generally speaking, all can write. The children of the poor are educated gratis. The two last parochial schoolmasters here are now clergymen in the Church of Scotland, viz. the Rev. Archibald Macnechey of Bunkle, in East Lothian, and the Rev. James Allan of Paramatta, New South Wales. There is also a

Sabbath school in the parish taught by the minister, schoolmaster and elders.

Library.—A parochial library was instituted about four years ago by the late incumbent, which already contains between 300 and 400 volumes. The inhabitants of the parish become members by paying 2s. 6d. at entrance, and an annual subscription of 1s. thereafter. The interest in it seems unfortunately already in great measure to have died away.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The number of persons at present on the poor's roll is six, but the average may be taken at eight. The allowance given to each pauper varies according to circumstances; the highest rate now paid is 14s. a month, and the lowest 4s. The funds requisite for the support of the poor are provided partly by the collections at the church door, which amount on an average to L. 35, 14s. 3d. yearly, and partly by a voluntary contribution, to which the heritors agree, the minister and heritors being alike opposed to a legal assessment, the invariable tendency of which is to increase the number of paupers, and to banish that spirit of independence for which the Scotch were once so remarkable.

Friendly Societies.—A Friendly Society was instituted in the parish about twelve years ago, for the purpose of assisting those members who should be unable from illness to support themselves, without having recourse to parochial aid. The number of members is limited to sixty, each of whom pays 5s. as entrance money, and 1s. 6d. every quarter. The amount of charity bestowed is as follows: 5s. a week, provided the invalid member be confined to bed, and if not, 3s. a week. This society has been of considerable use in imparting well-timed pecuniary assistance, and deserves the encouragement and support both of the heritors and people.

Savings Banks.—One of these useful institutions, in connection with the Paisley National Security Savings Bank, was begun in May 1838, and the result has proved more successful than could have been imagined, considering the population of the parish. It were an act of injustice not to mention, that much of its success is attributable to the kind attention of Mr Duff, the schoolmaster, who acts as secretary and treasurer, and willingly receives depositors at any time they are disposed to come, instead of fixing them down to particular days and hours. There are 38 depositors at present, eight of whom only are strangers connected with the railway. The amount deposited is as follows:

From May 1838 to May 1839,	L. 325 15 0
Do. 1839 do. 1840,	302 0 0
Do. 1840 to July 1840,	52 16 0
	<hr/>
	L. 680 11 0
Amount withdrawn from May 1838 to July 1840,	170 0 0
	<hr/>
Leaving in the bank,	L. 510 11 0

Ale-houses.—There is a nice inn in the parish, kept by the ferryman at Erskine ferry, and, in addition, there are no less than five public-houses in the parish, one or two of which are by no means well conducted. In a country parish such as this, the practice of licensing any one who applies to the quarter sessions, with a certificate from a justice of peace, without requiring from the kirk-session a certificate of moral character, is felt to be an intolerable nuisance.

Fuel.—The fuel chiefly used is coal and peat. The latter is cut in this and the neighbouring parish of Inchinnan, in the moss belonging to Messrs Maxwell of Dargavel, and Alexander of Southbar, and is partially used both by cottars and others; but coal is also used in every house, however poor, and is sold at 9d. per cwt. There is no coal fit for use to be had nearer than Paisley, but, as the Glasgow coal is equally cheap and of a better quality, it is generally preferred.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the last Statistical Account was written, there has been a decrease in the number of public-houses to the amount of three, and there is certainly much less drinking now among the inhabitants than formerly. Since then, however, it is matter of deep regret, that family worship, formerly almost universal in the parish, has been very much neglected, or discontinued, and that the number of illegitimate births has been on the increase, while the pledge of marriage usually given in such cases is rarely redeemed. The scenes of drunkenness, Sabbath profanation, and horrid blasphemy, with which an unsophisticated country population has been familiarized, by a residence among them of the very worst description of English, Irish, and Highlanders, to the amount of 1500 or 2000 persons employed on the railway, for the last two years, have been productive of the most blighting and pernicious effects, both on old and young, which it is to be feared, in many cases, will never be fully eradicated.

August 1840.

Revised April 1842.