

THE NEW  
STATISTICAL ACCOUNT  
OF  
SCOTLAND.

BY  
THE MINISTERS OF THE RESPECTIVE PARISHES, UNDER THE  
SUPERINTENDENCE OF A COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY  
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SONS AND  
DAUGHTERS OF THE CLERGY.

VOL. XIV.

INVERNESS—BOSS AND CROMARTY.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.  
MDCCCXLV.

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## PARISH OF KILMALIE.\*

PRESBYTERY OF ABERTARPH, SYNOD OF GLENELG.

### L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE parishes of Kilmalie and Kilmonivaig were anciently united, and called the parish of Lochaber; but they were disjoined upwards of two hundred years ago. The name Kilmalie is evidently derived from a burying-ground consecrated to the Virgin Mary,—*Kile* signifying a burying-ground, and *Malie* being a diminutive for *Mary*.

*Extent.*—The length from north-west to south-east is about 60 miles; the greatest breadth 30 miles. It is bounded on the east and south-east by the parish of Kilmonivaig; on the south-east by Rannoch, in Perthshire; on the south and south-west by the parish of Appin; on the west by the parishes of Morven and Ardnamurchan; on the north by Glenelg. It lies partly in Inverness-shire, and partly in Argyllshire.

*Mountains.*—The mountains are very numerous, but none of them deserves particular notice except *Benevis*, which is the highest mountain in Britain. It is situated near Fort William. Its height is 4370 feet above the level of the sea, which lies within three-quarters of a mile from the base of this stupendous mass. The etymology of this mountain has afforded a large field of conjecture; but the writer is satisfied that the following is the true one; *Beinn* in Gaelic signifies mountain; *nèamh*, the heavens or clouds; and *Bathais*, that part of the human head which is between the forehead and the crown of the head. The compound word written in Gaelic would be *Beinn-nèamh-bhathais*. It is naturally enough contracted to *Benevis*,—the *mountain with its summit in the clouds*, or, as in Pope's Homer, "*cloud kissing hill*."

The view from the top of Benevis is very extensive; but it is a Herculean labour to reach its top, and the attempt should not be made but by able bodied and healthy persons, with a proper guide.

There are, in this parish, about sixty-seven miles of sea coast,

\* Drawn up by the late incumbent, the Rev. Donald M'Gillivray.

along which there are several spots of sandy arable land ; but not of any great extent. Wherever the mountains are high, the valleys are narrow and the acclivity very steep. Where the mountains are not very high, the acclivity is more gentle, and the arable land extends farther from the shore ; one-third at least of the very high hills are quite barren, and appear white at a distance. This is particularly the case with respect to Benevis and the range of mountains to the east and west of it. Benevis differs from them all, not only by its height, but also by its round massy top. The deep clefts on the north-east side of Benevis are never without snow. For two seasons when ice failed, the snow gathered and condensed into ice in these clefts, was of great service to the salmon-curers. The country peasants with their small hardy horses carried it down in panniers on horseback.

*Meteorology.*—The atmosphere in general is moist, but not cold. The high mountains attract the clouds, which pour down torrents of rain in our valleys at all seasons ; hence the difficulty of raising a corn crop in this climate. It requires the utmost skill and activity to secure crops in this country, particularly in late harvests. The wind blows in general from south and south-west. When it comes round to the west and north, it is an indication of the approach of fair weather ; with the south wind we have rain in general. In some seasons, there is a continuation of cold easterly wind for six or seven weeks, the effects of which are severely felt. The climate, upon the whole, is healthy. Rheumatism is a prevailing disease. There are persons at present in this parish bordering on a hundred years old.

*Hydrography.*—There are three arms of the sea in this parish. The first and farthest south is *Lochleven*, which branches out from Linne Loch ten miles below Fort William, and penetrates between the lofty mountains of Glenco and Lochaber for ten or twelve miles towards Rannoch. It has two currents, one at Balachulish Ferry, the other about three miles farther up at *Caolus-na-con*. Linne Loch terminates at Fort William ; and then Locheil commences, being a continuation of Linne Loch, bending to the north-west at Fort William, and extending ten miles towards Arisaig and Skye. It has a current at Annat. Linne Loch has a strong current at Corran Ardgour Ferry. There is an excellent bay at Corran Ardgour, and another at Camus-na-gaul, near the south entrance of the Caledonian Canal, directly opposite to Fort William.

*Lakes and Rivers.*—Locharkaig, which is sixteen miles long, and

one broad, is the only fresh water lake of any consequence in this parish. Loch Lochy is chiefly in the parish of Kilmonivaig; but about nine miles of its coast are in the parish of Kilmalie. It is on the line of the Caledonian Canal. The distance between it and Locharkaig is about a mile and a-half. The top of Achnacarry House, the seat of Locheil, is seen from Loch Lochy. There is a most beautiful valley between the two lakes, called in Gaelic *a' mìle dorch*, or dark mile, being about a Scotch mile in length. It resembles the Trosachs between Loch Catherine and Loch Auchray in Perthshire, but far surpasses the Trosachs in extent and in the beauty of the scenery. The *dark mile* commences at the farmhouse of Clunes, and ends at Locharkaig. There is an excellent road through this truly picturesque valley. The river Lochy comes out of Loch Lochy, by a new channel cut out for it about 600 yards to the south of the line of the Caledonian Canal. It falls into the river Spean at Mucomre Bridge, and for a quarter of a mile it is called the Spean, but resumes its own name the Lochy, when it and the Spean fall into the old channel at Gearlochy. It runs eight miles, separating the parishes of Kilmalie and Kilmonivaig, and then falls into the sea at Fort William, where the water of Nevis also meets it. There is a ferry on this river about two miles from Fort William, having a good quay on either side, which is of very great use; but since the roads are so good on both sides, and the intercourse increasing, the want of a substantial stone bridge is severely felt by travellers and cattle-dealers. It is to be hoped that the day is not distant when this want will be supplied. Steam-boat travellers would find great benefit from a bridge at Lochy Ferry, on account of the intercourse between Banvie Locks and Fort William.

*Geology.*—The predominating rocks in this parish are gneiss and mica slate; and subordinate to these are beds of quartz rock, hornblende rock, &c. These various primitive rocks are traversed by rocks of granite, syenite, and porphyry. Rocks considered as belonging to the transition class also occur. The great Benevis is worthy the particular attention of the geologist, and, even in fine weather, will afford him many days of delightful and instructive employment. The lower part of the mountain is composed of mica slate and gneiss, higher up we meet with syenite, at a greater elevation granite; the upper parts are composed of different varieties of porphyry. Many years ago Professor Jameson read an account of the geology of the mountain to the Wernerian Society;



afterwards, an eloquent writer, the present Dr Macknight of Edinburgh, wrote a description of its scenery and geology, which was published in the *Memoirs of the Wernerian Natural History Society*. Some years afterwards, Dr Macculloch, who set at nought every thing done by his predecessors, attempted, but unsuccessfully, to make geologists believe that the mountain was unknown geologically till he set foot on it. Several foreign geologists also have published remarks on this, the highest mountain in Great Britain.

*Zoology*.—Much attention is paid to the management of sheep farms in this parish, as well as in the neighbouring Highland parishes. Wedders from extensive farms here, are considered in the south country markets, second only to wedders reared on the farm of Auch in Glenorchy, on the Marquis of Breadalbane's property. Goats are scarcely known now in this parish. They are very destructive to oak wood.

Salmon, herrings, red-cod, lythe, skate, flounders, whittings are found in the salt water lakes. Formerly, salmon were found in Locharkaig; but a cascade at Mucomre Bridge has cut up the communication between the sea and Locharkaig, so that no salmon is now to be found where they abounded of old. This is one disadvantage which has followed the making of the Caledonian Canal.

*Woods and Plantations*.—There was a very extensive and excellent wood on Mr Cameron of Lochiel's property; but much of it was cut down about twenty years ago. There is still remaining, on the south side of Locharkaig, a considerable quantity of excellent fir, and of great size. On Lochiel and Ardgour's properties there is a good deal of oak wood, and kept in the best order, particularly by Colonel M'Lean of Ardgour, who is enthusiastically fond of wood. He has several spots planted with fir, well enclosed, which no doubt will be profitable hereafter. In the meantime, it is a great ornament to the country.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

This parish was a nursery for the army, particularly in the late war.\* There is a good deal of tradition relative to events which

\* There is an obelisk erected in this parish. It has the following inscription, which is given at length, as it indicates the character and achievements of an eminent individual connected with this parish:—"Sacred to the memory of Colonel John Cameron, eldest son of Sir Ewen Cameron of Fassfern, Baronet, whose mortal remains transported from the field of glory, where he died, rest here with those of his forefathers. During twenty years of active military service, with a spirit which knew no fear, and shunned no danger, he accompanied or led, in marches, sieges, and battles, the gallant 92d Regiment of Scottish Highlanders, always to honour, almost always to vic-

took place in this parish during the rebellion of 1745. Lochiel having joined Prince Charles, Clan Cameron followed their chief, a measure of which they had sufficient cause to repent. The royal army, after the Prince was finally defeated at Culloden, pitched their camp at Fort Augustus, and sent plundering parties to Lochaber, who drove away all the cattle in the country, burnt the houses, and drove the miserable inhabitants, old and young, without food or clothing, to the hills. They killed several persons in cold blood. About 400 of the royal army, passing up Locharkaig side, found a young man of the name of Cameron, having a gun in his possession. Without civil or military trial, the unfortunate youth was posted up and shot, by an order from Grant of Knoc-ceanach, who commanded a party of the Ross-shire militia. Dugal Roy Cameron, the incensed father of the slain youth, watched the party as they were returning with their plunder. Grant of Knoc-ceanach, whether designedly or not, gave his horse to Major Munro of Culcairn; and Dugal, mistaking his man, shot the amiable major. Dugal escaped, after throwing away the discharged musket. He got again before the party, and took his stand in a narrow pass, with the view of doing more execution; but the party were so long detained, that they escaped without meeting their incensed enemy again;—but he taught them not to come back on a similar expedition. There was no more burning or plundering in Lochaber, though a party of the royal army were quartered for years at the head of Locharkaig. Dugal Roy Cameron was never discovered. He served afterwards as a private in the royal army. Many of his connections are still in this country.\*

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners in this parish are, Mr Cameron of Lochiel; Colonel M'Lean of Ardgour; Sir Duncan Cameron of Fassfern, Bart.; Mr Patrick Cameron of Glenevis; and Mr John Cameron of Berbice.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parish register commences in 1772,

tory; and at length in the 42d year of his age, upon the memorable 16th day of June A. D. 1815, was slain in the command of that corps, while actively contributing to achieve the decisive victory of Waterloo, which gave peace to Europe. Thus closing his military career with the long and eventful struggle in which his services had been so often distinguished, he died, lamented by that unrivalled General to whose long train of success he had so often contributed; by his country, from which he had repeatedly received marks of the highest consideration; and by his Sovereign, who graced his surviving family with those marks of honour which could not follow to this place, him whose merit they were designed to commemorate. Reader, call not his fate untimely, who, thus honoured and lamented, closed a life of fame by a death of glory."

\* Samuel Cameron, who, by his Lochaber axe, killed the pious and brave Colonel Gardiner at Prestonpans, was a native of this parish. His grandson is one of the elders of this parish at present. He used to say, that he and his comrade acted in self-defence, for that the Colonel galloped up to them and attacked them.



but has been very irregularly kept,—partly owing to the scattered state of the parish, and partly owing to the number of Episcopalians and Roman Catholics in the parish, who do not record the names of their children in the parish register.

*Modern Buildings.*—The only modern building of consequence in this parish is Lochiel's mansion-house at Achnacarry, the ancient family seat. The house is a large, handsome, and substantial building, but it is not yet finished. Colonel M'Lean of Ard-gour's house was burnt some years ago, and has been since rebuilt and enlarged. It is situate near Corran Ferry, and surrounded with planting and shrubbery laid out with great taste.

### III.—POPULATION.

In 1755, the population was	3093
1792, . . . . .	4225
1801, . . . . .	4600
1811, . . . . .	5000
1821, . . . . .	5527
1831, . . . . .	4210

The people employed on the Caledonian Canal are included in the census of 1811 and 1821; but if the census of 1831 had been correctly taken, the population would certainly have been found to be more than 4210, notwithstanding of the number that left the country when the Canal was finished.

In 1831, there was in the Inverness part of the parish,	2745 souls.
in Argyleshire, . . . . .	1465
families in Inverness-shire, . . . . .	457
in Argyleshire, . . . . .	230
males in Inverness-shire, 1340, females in ditto, 1405.	
males in Argyleshire, 725, females in ditto, 740.	

About 1200 reside in the village of Fort William, which is situated in Inverness-shire. The yearly average of births cannot be ascertained on account of the number of Episcopalians and Roman Catholics in the parish. There is no register of burials kept. The yearly average of marriages for seven years may be about 30. The number of children in each family at an average is  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . There are 610 inhabited houses.

*Language, &c.*—The prevailing language is the Gaelic, but the English is gaining ground. The people are very desirous to acquire the English language. When one person wishes evil to another, it is not uncommon to hear a Highlander say, "*Don beurla orta,*" i. e. may you never speak properly in English. The intercourse with the south country by steam-boats, and the number of schools in particular, have tended to spread the English language among the inhabitants; but they prefer to receive religious in-



struction in Gaelic; indeed, many of them who can speak in common conversation in English cannot follow an English discourse.

The rising generation imitate their equals in the south country in their dress. Tartan among men, and cotton cloth among women, are the common costume.

The common diet of the peasants is potatoes, with herrings or milk. Such as are in better circumstances may have a little meal and mutton; but potatoes is their principal food for three-fourths of the year.

Smuggling and poaching are still carried on secretly, but not to any great extent. When the proprietors are absent from the country for any length of time, idle persons use liberty with the game on their property.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

There is not much arable land in this parish, so that the people are employed chiefly as fishers or shepherds; neither is there any cotton or woollen manufactory. There is one bank agent at Fort William; and about twenty merchants between Fort William and Corpach. There are three medical gentlemen at Fort William, four lawyers, and a Sheriff-substitute. There is a sufficient number of carpenters, masons, shoemakers, and tailors, between Fort William and Corpach, to supply the wants of the parish and adjacent country.

*Agriculture.*—There is not one acre out of 300 cultivated or capable of cultivation in this parish. Considerable exertions have been made by some of the proprietors to drain and improve portions of land near their own residence; and wherever the attempt has been made, the returns have fully repaid the expenses.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of arable land is about L. 1, 10s. per acre; the average rent for grazing a cow is L. 2 per annum; the rate per ewe is from 2s. to 3s. per annum.

*Quarries.*—There is a slate quarry on Lochiel's property at north Balachulish; but it has not been much wrought hitherto. There is also a stone quarry at Fassfern, which was of great advantage at the time of making the Caledonian Canal, and lately in building a quay at Fort William.

*Fisheries.*—Salmon and herring are the principal fisheries in this parish. The river Lochy is famed for the excellency of its salmon. There are stake-nets in several places along the coast, and extraordinary exertions are making to improve the salmon-fishing. Time will tell how the present speculation will pay the adventurers, but

no expense is spared to insure success. The herring-fishing is the great source of support to the country people; but when it fails, they are destitute, particularly in the village of Fort-William.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Fort William is a market-town; but the market-day is scarcely distinguished from another day, so little business is doing. The village of Corpach, at the south end of the Caledonian Canal, is the only other village in the parish. There are no houses of any value in Corpach, and there is no appearance at present of any improvement.

*Means of Communication.*—There is a regular communication with Inverness and Glasgow by steam in summer twice a-week, and in winter once a-week, besides a daily post from the south and from Inverness; also three times a week to and from Arisaig. There is a penny post-office established lately at Corpach.

*Caledonian Canal.*—The south end of this stupendous work begins at Corpach in this parish, and runs eight miles through it along the river Lochy to Loch Lochy. It was a work long in contemplation before it was begun. It occupied about twenty years from its commencement to its completion, and it cost nearly a million of money to the nation. No one can yet say how useful it may prove; but already it has attracted thousands of travellers, British and foreign. The number is increasing every year; and the steam navigation is improving and increasing in proportion, to meet the wishes of travellers and traders. All admire the magnificent scenery along its banks for sixty miles, but particularly at the south entrance, from whence the traveller has a full view of Benevis. The only disappointment to which the traveller can be exposed is, that the *monarch mountain* may be in a mournful mood,—half covered with mist. To escape this disappointment, travellers should visit the scenery in the months of June, July, and August, when they have every chance of seeing the mountain free of clouds and mist, but never free of snow.

Every encouragement should be given by the Honourable Commissioners to the navigation of the Caledonian Canal. At present, the Greenock merchants complain of the high dues, notwithstanding that these dues have been reduced one-half from what they were at first. The consequence is, that vessels which would otherwise pass through the canal, are sent round the north coast. The steam-boats, in particular, ought to be encouraged; and were a *tug* boat allowed to pass *free*, in order to expedite the navigation on

the canal, there is reason to expect that more dues would be drawn. The same number of men are employed waiting the locks as if there were vessels passing every hour of the day; since these men are in Government pay, and since overseers, &c. are also in Government pay, every facility and encouragement should be given to steam-boats and other vessels to pass through the canal.

The only harbour of consequence in this parish is at Fort William. A quay has been recently built there, partly by the Fishery Commissioners and partly by private subscription. It is expected to be of some benefit to the place, if indeed any thing can benefit a place without any public or private employment for a poor and numerous population. There is a very safe anchorage at Camusnagaul, between Corpach and Fort William.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is at Corpach, at the south entrance of the Caledonian Canal, which is the most central spot in the whole parish. There is a population of from 500 to 600 souls within three miles of the church. It is distant about thirty-six miles from the extremity of the parish, and was built in 1783 for L. 440. It will accommodate about 900 or 1000 sitters. All the seats are free, which is an immense advantage to a poor population. It removes a common excuse for absence from church. The manse and its appendages of garden and office-houses were built about seventeen years ago, and cost the heritors triple of what the church cost them in 1783. The glebe is large, partly arable and partly pasture, but not valuable, on account of its unprotected and fenceless state, in the immediate neighbourhood of many poor cottagers. The stipend is not fixed, as there is only an interim decret. The living, upon the whole, is considered respectable.

There is a missionary at Fort William; and a church that can accommodate 300. The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian knowledge allow L. 50 per annum to the missionary; and the Duke of Gordon, while proprietor of Fort William and neighbouring land, allowed L. 10 per annum for house rent. The place is at present vacant.

There are two Government churches in this parish, one on each side of Linne Loch near Corran Ferry: one minister preaching every alternate Sabbath in each supplies both. There is a population of upwards of 1100 souls connected with his charge; and the place was very destitute before the Government church was erected. There was a missionary for some time officiating between



Locharkaig in this parish, and Brae Roy, in the parish of Kilmonivaig; but he was obliged to resign on account of bad health. He had not a place of residence within the bounds of his charge. The preaching stations (four in number) assigned to him were so distant from one another, and some of them so difficult of access, as to make his labours difficult for himself, and of less value to the people. This mission is at present vacant. There is a population of 220 souls in the district of Locharkaig. The nearest part of this district is eleven miles, and the remotest part thirty-six miles from the parish church.

There is an Episcopalian and a Roman Catholic chapel at Fort William, each having an officiating ecclesiastic. The number of Episcopalians in the whole parish is about 400, and of Roman Catholics about 200. The Established Churches at Kilmalie and at Fort William are so crowded every Sabbath day, that, from the aspect of the congregation, a stranger would conclude there could be no other sect in the parish, but that the whole body of the people belonged to the Established Church. The average number of communicants in the Established Church is about 800.

There is a Bible Society at Fort William, and a Religious Association at Kilmalie. The probable average amount of the contribution yearly for both may be about L. 20 or L. 24.

*Education.*—There are eleven schools in the whole parish: one, a parochial school, at Fort William,—the salary the maximum; six schools supported by different societies, of which three are supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; four schools supported by private individuals. The branches generally taught in the parochial school and in that supported by the Committee of the General Assembly at Corpach, are English reading, writing, arithmetic, Latin, Greek, book-keeping, geography.

The fees of the parochial school may amount to about L. 50 per annum; but the teacher has to pay an assistant. The Society schoolmaster's income may be from L. 16 to L. 25 per annum, including school-fees, which are not well paid in general. The Gaelic schools have conferred no small benefit on this parish. They have been instrumental in introducing the word of God into families where it was not before; and the teachers in general being persons of a serious cast of mind, have been a check upon the prevailing sins of drunkenness, swearing, and Sabbath profanation.



*Libraries.*—There are two libraries at Fort William, one literary, the other religious; but no great demand for books from either of them. There is a good selection of books in each of them, but the frequent changes and vacancies in the mission of Fort William is against the taste for reading religious books; and the numerous spirit-shops in that village, and in other parts of the parish, prove a great snare to those who ought to employ their time in reading.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of poor may be about 160, chiefly supported by collections at the church door, with occasional donations from heritors, and alms received by their going from house to house through the parish. The most needy receive 1s. per week; but the average given to ordinary paupers may be from 5s. to 7s. in the year. The people are very kind to such as are in distress. They send potatoes, milk, peats, &c. to their houses. Some are very anxious to get upon the poors' list; but others abstain from applying for aid as long as possible.

*Prison.*—There is no prison in this parish. The garrison of Fort William is used as a place of temporary confinement till the accused be liberated or sent to Inverness or to Inverary jail.

*Fairs.*—There are two annual fairs at Fort William, one about the 13th of June, the other about the 13th of November,—both well attended, and considerable business transacted at each.

*Inns.*—There are three inns in the parish; and dram-houses without number,—some of them licensed to sell spirits, some selling without license.

*May 1835.*