**TRANSLATION**

**STATISTICAL ACCOUNT OF FINTRY - 1794**

PARISH OF FINTRY

*(County of Stirling-Prosbytery of Dumbarton-Synod of
Glusglow and Ayr.)
By the Rev. Mr. GAVIN GIBB, Minister of STRATHBLANE.*

**Name, Situation, and Extent.**THE name of this parish is of Gaelic origin, and signifies
Fair Land. Contracted with the bleak and precipitous
rudeness of the adjacent moors and mountains, its grassy
hills, its fertile and well watered valleys, entitle it to this
appellation.

Fintry is situated in the midst of that range of
hills, which reaches from Stirling to Dumbarton, and behind
that particular district of them usually denominated the Camp-
sie Fells. It lies 17 miles due N. from Glafgow, 12 miles
W. by S. from Stirling, and 21 or 22 miles E. by N. from
Dumbarton. It belongs to the commissariot of Glafgow. It
extends from E. to W. 5 miles, and from N. to S. more than
4; though the only parts of it, which are inhabited, are a
small valley on the banks of the Endrick, and another on
the banks of the Carron; both of which rivers have their
source in this parish.

**General Appearance.**

The general appearance of the country is hilly. The hills are small; they are clothed with refreshing verdure; and their shapes are finely diversified. Covered with sheep, they suggest many pastoral images. The eastern part of the parish consists of three ranges of hills, withscarcely any intervening plain. Between the two souther-most of these ranges, the Carron bog or meadow commences; the largest perhaps in Scotland.

Beginning in Fintry, it runs East, between the parishes of Kilsyth and St. Ninian's to the extent of 4 miles; is in some places 2 miles in breadth, and
in no place less than 1; containing about 500 acres in one
continued plain. It affords sustenance during the winter to
the cattle of the surrounding farms. This remarkable mea-
dow, besides its utility, adds great liveliness and beauty to
the general face of the country. The scene it exhibits du-
ring the months of July and August, of 20 or 30 different
parties of people employed in hay-making, is certainly very
cheerful: And during winter, the greater part of it being
overflowed by the Carron, which runs through the middle of
it, and which is then industriously led over its whole extent,
to fertilize it for the ensuing crop, it assumes the appearance
of a large and beautiful lake. In both situations, it affords an
agreeable relief from the bleakness of the country around it.
Towards the west end of the parish, the hills are more rocky
and rugged. The valley through which the rapid stream of
the Endrick runs, widens gradually to the extent of a mile.
Several groves, recently planted, beginning to lift their heads
along the banks of the river; the cultivated fields on its mar-
gin; the hedges and hedge rows round the enclosures on the
estate of Culcruich; an extensive plantation behind the man-
sion-house of that name; and some well disposed clumps of
trees on the sides of the opposite hills, gratify the traveller,
not only with a view of beauty, but of well-directed industry.
Above these, the summits of the mountains on both sides, bro-
ken, and presenting abrupt precipices, and sometimes covered

with clouds, add grandeur and dignity to the scene.-The
prospect, however, is confined within narrow limits, excepting
towards the west, where it is terminated by Benlomond, that
rises with eminent dignity above the neighbouring Gram-
pians. Thus fenced and sequestered, the little hills and val-
leys of Fintry suggest ideas of tranquil and undisturbed se-
clution. Nor can any thing of the kind be more agreeable
than when in summer, the sun letting by the side of Benlo-
mond, throws a blaze of parting radiance on the romantic
banks of the upper Endrick.

**Soil**

The soil in those parts of the parish which are fit for

agriculture, is light, quick, and fertile; agrees better with
dung for manure than lime; and, when enriched with the
former, produces excellent crops. Some recent experiments
however have shewn, that when the ground is pastured for
two years, then limed and allowed to rest another year, it
will thereafter yield better crops, than by any mode of hus-
bandry hitherto practiced.

**Cultivation and Produce**

In agriculture, however, the in-

habitants have made but few improvements. They follow
servilely the ancient mode of pasturing, and of sowing oats, for
two or three years alternately on their out-field, and of uni-
formly sowing as much land with bear as the winter's dung will
cover; and from which they afterwards take two successive
crops of oats. However a few of the farmers are now beginning
to get the better of these prejudices, and find their account in
altering the mode of cropping. In making this change they
have been instructed and prompted by Mr. SPIERS of Cul-
eruich, who, since his residence on his estate, has set the ex-
ample of clearing the ground with turnips, and has introdu-
ced the sowing of grass and clover seeds for hay. The bene-

ficial effect of this method, has encouraged some of his own
tenants to follow his example; and there is no doubt but
the practice will become general in all those farms upon
which the enclosures are sencible against sheep. The method
alluded to consists, as was mentioned, in cleaning the ground
with turnips and potatoes; in sowing next year bear with
grass feeds; in raising hay for two years; in pasturing one
or two; in sowing oats for two years; and then in returning
to the turnips. This routine answers very well, and, with
the single improvement of taking only one crop of each
kind, and pasturing two years, is best adapted for this soil,
which, being light, is soon impoverished by a continuation of
crops, and if not regularly cleaned by pasturing and crops of
turnips, is apt to be over-run with the creeping wheat-grass,
known by the vulgar name felt, or pirl-grass. There is
no soil better adapted for raising potatoes, of which the in-
habitants plant considerable quantities; after which they
commonly sow flax-seed, which succeeds very well, yielding
from three to four stone from each peck sown.

**Cattle**

But the attention of the inhabitants is, with very

few exceptions, confined to grazing\*, which is by far the

*\*Under this article it is but justice to mention the name of DAVID DUN, a*

*man whose exertion, in impressing the mode of grassing, are truly laudable, and
to whose example its present advanced state, through a considerable part of the
west of Scotland, is in a great measure owing. He has the merit of first im-
proving the breed of black cattle and sheep, by raising them to a greater size,
and feeding them more throughly, that was done before upon grass alone.
This he has accomplished, by judiciously selecting the most choice cattle, to stock
his farms with, and by keeping his grass lighter, i. c. b putting fewer cattle
upon the same space of ground, than what had been used in former times-As
a specimen of his success in this branch, the winter flares the following facts,
which are well attested. At one time he told a Highland stot, which was killed*

*in Glasgow, and weighed, according to the purchaser's concession, 52. stones
beef, and 10 stones tallow: the price he received was 25 guineas. At an ther
time he sold 25 Highland stots at 12 L. each, the of which weighed up-
wards of 30 stones He sells annually about 60 tup-lambs of a year old, for
which he never receive, less than a guinea each; and his lambs for killing he
commonly sells in May at half-a-guinea each. He carries on his plan on a very
extensive scale, renting farms in different parts of the country, from one to ano-
ther of which, he removes his cattle at the proper season according to the qua-
lity of the farm, and the state of the cattle. His stots he tells at 5 years old,
but calves of his own rearing sometimes equal his best cattle, at three years old
and are accordingly sold at that age. When he dealt to the greatest extent he
paid rents to the amount of 1800 l. per annum; the largest proportion of which
he paid to the Duke of Montrose. His annual stock at that time was 470 black
cattle, and 2740 sheep, of which 200 were ewes, as a permanent stock from,
which he has frequently sold in a year 300 lambs.*

most beneficial mode of using the ground in this parish, where
hill and vale equally afford most excellent pasture for black
cattle and sheep. They use the plough therefore chiefly with
a view to the sustenance of their cattle through winter, as
sodder is the great object of labour. In some of the farms
the rent is solely paid from the produce of milk cows; in-
deed butter and cheese form the staple produce of the parish.
Feeding of cattle is also generally prastised. In the month of
May, each farmer but, a number of Highland cows, propor-
tioned to the extent of his farm, which he fattens during
summer, and again sells off in the months of September and
October. When markets are brisk, and sales ready, this is by
much the most convenient and advantageous method of using
the ground in this parish, as the excellence of the pasture
during summer, ensures the fattening of the cattle purchased,
and the difficulty of procuring fodded for winter prevents the
rearing any more than are necessary, to keep up the stock of
milk-cows. Sheep are also an object of attention. The
breed is in general good, a consequence of the excellent pas-

ture on which they graze, as well as of the care which is ta-
ken to improve the stock, by crossing the breed, and rearing
none but the best ewe lambs. Lambs are also frequently
brought from the southern parts of Scotland, which improve
greatly on this soil. The wool is of a very good quality.
Lambs generally sell at 6 l. per score; wool sells at from 5 s.
to 7 s. per stone. The following table will shew the number
of cows and sheep kept in this parish:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Milk Cows, | 263 |
|  | Fat ditto, | 370 |
|  | Sheep, | 2470 |

**Population**

The population of this parish, like that of

most other grazing countries in Scotland, has decreased very
much within these 40 years. Since the return to Dr. Web-
ster, in 1755, it has decreased more than a third part. There
are several farms in the parish, upon which from 14 to 20
familes formerly lived, where only from 5 to 8 families now
reside. This depopulation is evidently caused by throwing
several small farms into one, which enables the possessor to
pay a greater rent to the proprietor, and at the same time to
live better in his own family, than when parcelled out in
small portions. Nor is this counted disadvantageous to those
who are ejected, as the great demand for hands by manufac-
turing companies, affords them a ready reception; where they
and their children can earn more, and live better, than upon a
small farm. But, notwithstanding present opinions, it still
remains a doubt, whether this revolution in the state of a
country, will in the end prove a national advantage. Whe-
ther a pallid and sickly race, brought up in the confined air
of cotton mills, with few attachments, and little education,
will compensate for the sturdy sons of our hills and moun-

tains, or afford a let of as loyal and virtuous subjects, is a
question which we leave posterity to determine.-The present
state of the population is as under.

**POPULATION TABLE of the Parish of FINTRY**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Population in 1755, | 891 | Between 50 and 70, | 55 |
| Ditto in 1793, | 513 | 70 and 160\*, | 17 |
|  | --- | Weavers,+ | 5 |
| Decrease, | 248 | Tailors, | 3 |
| Of these there are, | Smiths, | 2 |  |
| Males, | 273 | Shoemaker, | 1 |
| Females, | 270 | Average of births for the last 15 |  |
| Under 10 years of age, | 136 | years, | 16 |
| Between 10 and 20, | 110 | Ditto of deaths, | 8 |
|  | 20 and 50, | 225 |  |

**Manufactures and New Village**

This parish is on the eve

of experiencing a great change, by the introduction of ma-
nufactures, on a very large scale. A cotton mill is just
erected on the estate of Culcruich, 156 feet in length, and
10 feet wide; which, when finished, will employ 1000 hands.
A handsome village, upon a rising ground along the side of
the Endrick, is already feued off, and budding for the recep-
tion of the work people. The houses, according to a regular
plan, are to stand in one row, and to consist of two stories
and garrets. Thus situated, the village will be well aired,
dry and healthy; and very pleasant, having the gardens in
front, separated from the houses by the turnpike road, dressed
on a sloping bank down to the river.

\*It is worthy to be recorded, that there died, a few months previous to tak-

ing up this list, one man above 80, and another 103 years old.
+Some of these have apprentices and journeymen; and they are supplied
with work from manufacturing companies. Men servants wages are 4 L. and
4 L. 10 s. in the half year; women servants from 1 L. 10 s. to 2 L.

**Proprietors and Rent**

The whole property of the parish

is vested in the Duke of MONTROSE, and Mr. SPIERS of Cul-
cruich; the former of whom is patron of the parish, and the
latter is the only residing heritor. The present rent is between
1500 L. and 1900 L.; but it may be expected to rise consider-
ably.

**Church**

The church was built before this century:

Part of it appears to be of a very ancient date. The manse
was built in 1732, and has undergone several repairs. The
stipend consists of 44 bolls of meal, 5 bolls of bear, and 24 L. 10 s.
Sterling in money; exclusive of the glebe, which contains 9
acres, 4 of which are arable.

**Poor**

The poor of this parish are supported by the week-

ly collections, and the interest of a fund, which has accumu-
lated to 200 L. Sterling and upwards, chiefly by donations
from the family of Montrose. The present number on the
poor's roll is 7, and varies from that 10. They receive, indi-
vidually, according to their necessities, from 1 s. to 3 s. weekly.
Besides this stated distribution, attention is paid to clothing
the most destitute, and supplying them with fuel. These
supplies are adequate to their wants; insomuch, that there is
not, nor has been for many years past, a single instance of a
poor person, belonging to the parish, going out to beg. This
attention to their own poor, however, does not by any means
free the inhabitants from the burden and plague of mendicants
from other place. Crowds stock thither, from the great
towns and populous villages, for the space of 30 miles round,
who frequently repay the charity they receive, by making
nightly depredations upon their humane landlords.

**Fuel**

The fuel which has been principally used hitherto

in this parish, is peat; in cutting, drying, and carrying home
which, the whole summer is spent, from the end of seed-

time, till the beginning of the hay harvest. This, were there no
other obstacle, is a powerful bar to agricultural improvements,
as the only time of the year, in which the farmers can carry
lime, is spent in preparing and securing their fuel. It is to
be hoped, however, that this obstacle will soon be removed.
An attempt is just now making to find coal upon the estate
of Culcruich, and appearances have hitherto been favourable.
Whatever may be the ultimate issue of this search, great praise
is due to Mr. Spiers for his indefatigable exertions, in promot-
ing every measure that can contribute to the prosperity of the
parish\*.

*\*The MODE OF BORING, which he has adopted, is such as must ascertain,*

*without a doubt, whether there be coal in the country or not, and may serve as
a lesson to others, who may have occasion to make trial or coal in hilly countries.
The top of the hall consists of a very thick bed of whin stone, below which
there is a bed of free-stone equally thick Beginning at the bottom of the
free-stone, which is half a mile up the hill, with 10 fathom bore, he takes the
level of the bottom of this bore down the side of the hill, making allowance for
the dip and run of the metal, where he bores again to the depth of 10 fathoms,
and so on, continuing till he reaches the level of the river. In one of these
bores there was found last week a small crop seam of coal, which it is to be hop-
ed is the forerunner of one of greater consequence. If the attempt succeeds,
it will be of the utmost importance to a tract of country for 10 miles round,
the greatest part of which lies at present 20 miles from coal.*

**Roads and Bridges**

Till within these two years, the access
to Fintry was extremely difficult on all sides, insomuch, that
had it not been rendered easier, no improvement could have
made its way thither. The difficulty was even so great as
almost to forbid any attempt to remove it. A hill, almost
perpendicular, over which horses could scarcely crawl with
half a load, cut off the communication with Campsie and
Glasgow, from which side coal could only be got; and deep
moor and moss obstructed the approach on the N. and W.
These obstacles, seemingly insurmountable, are now happily

overcome, by the public spirited exertions of Mr. SPIERS and
Mr. DUNMORE. The gentleman last mentioned, has formed,
as it were, a new creation on the water of Endriek, and given
life and spirit to a country which, 4 years ago, seemed con-
demned to perpetual dullness; having, in that apace, brought
from different parts of the country, to the neighbouring pa-
rishes of Balsron and Killearn, no fewer than 1100 persons.
Both these gentlemen, with much private expence, obtained
an act of parliament for a new district of roads, in the western
parts of Stirlingshire; and, with a promptitude of execution,
equal to their zeal in moving the measure, have furnished this
part of the country with as good roads as any part of Scot-
land. The Craw Road, a mile in length and upwards, which
was formerly 1 foot of accent in 7, and in some places 1 foot
in 5, is now reduced to 1 foot in 20, in the steepest place.
This line of road reaches from Glasgow through Fintry, and
joins the military road between Stirling and Dumbarton, about
6 miles to the N. of this place. The county road to the W.
is also now put into a state of repair; so that, from being the
most difficult of access, Fintry is now easily accessible on all
sides.-The bridges, on this line of road are numerous, and
add very much to the ease of the communication; as the deep
ravines formed by the mountain streams, which were former-
ly very difficult to pass, are all arched over, and filled up to
the level of the adjacent banks. The bridge over the End-
rick consists of 4 arches, 2 of which are 26 feet wide, and the
other two 12 feet each. The bridge on the old line of road,
about a mile farther up the river, consists of one beautiful
arch of 47 feet wide, and another of 15 feet.

**Rivers, Fish**

The Endrick has its source in the hill of Fin-

on the northern side of the parish. It runs E. a little way,
takes a sudden turn to the S., forming the eastern boundary

of the parish for 2 miles; then turns due W., rushing over
the Loup of Fintry, and inclosing part of the parish within 3
sides of a square. After receiving the river Blane, and other
plentiful streams, in its course, and forming 2 beautiful cas-
cades at GARTNESS, the spot where the famous NAPIER of
MERCHISTON invented his logarithms, it loses itself in Loch-
lomond, about 14 miles below Fintry. This river abounds
with trout and par. The trout are reckoned to be of a supe-
rior quality, and may be taken in great numbers, even by an
unskilful angler; upon which account it is very much resort-
ed to, by persons fond of that amusement. Salmon, likewise,
make their way in great numbers into the mouth of this
river; some of which, when the water is high, come as far
up as Fintry. The Carron rises in the W. end of the parish,
on the S. of the Endrick, and runs E. in a straight the row,
watering the Carron Bog in its passage; leaving when
over the Auchinlily-Linn Spout, a trermenduous cataract, a
responding to an interesting description in the trag
Douglas,-

"Red came the river down," etc. etc.
From this it continues its course eastward, through the Carse
of Falkirk, and falls into the Forth, about 3 miles from that
town. It abounds with small and large trout; some of which,
taken in the pools in Carron Bay, measure 20 inches in
length.

**Natural Curiosities**

The only curiosity which is uni-

versally remarked in this parish, is the above mentioned Loup
of Fintry; a cataract of 91 feet high, over which the Endrick
pours its whole stream. In rainy weather, and more especi-
ally after a thunder shower; or a water spout, which frequently

happen in these parts, the Loup of Fintry may be mentioned
along with what is moss magnificent in this kind of object.

-There is also in this parish a grand range, or colonnade,
of basaltic pillars, which rise in a hill called Dun, or Down,
at the end of the hill of Fintry. The range consists of 70
columns in front, which are of a gigantic stature, some of them
separating in loose blocks, others apparently without joints
from top to bottom. They stand perpendicular to the hori-
zon, and rise to the height of 50 feet. They are some of
them square, others pentagonal and hexagonal. A block, se-
parated from one of the hexagonal columns, measured by an
accurate survey as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Feet. | Inches. | Feet. | Inches. |
| 1st side, | 2 | 1 | 5th side, | 1 | 2 |
| 2d do. | 1 | 8 | 6th do. | 0 | 10 1/2 |
| 3d do. | 1 | 5 1/2 | Its greatest diameter, | 2 | 11 |
| 4th do. | 1 | 3 1/4 | Its least ditto, | 2 | 3 |

On the E. side of the range, the columns stand separated one
from another, by an interstice of 3 or 4 inches. This inter-
face lessens gradually towards the W. side, till nothing but a
seam is discernible, and then all is blended in one solid mass
of rock, which is very much boney-combed, and has the ap-
pearance of having been iguited. The mountain above men-
tioned, consists of very extensive beds of red ochre.