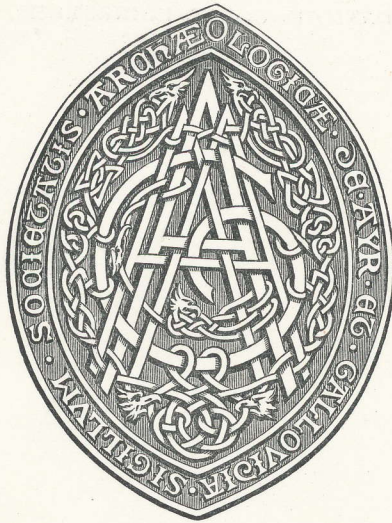


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VI.

THE CHURCH OF LARGS.

THE name Largs is considered by Chalmers to be derived from the Scoto-Irish *Learg*, signifying a plain. The final *s*, the sign of the English plural, having been added in this name, as in other cases, from two places bearing the same name.¹ The late Dr. Andrew Crawford of Lochwinnoch, in his MS. notes on the derivation of place names, slightly varies the definition thus, *Learg* or *Leirg* (Gaelic), a plain, holm, or green slope.

The district of Largs, now forming part of Cuninghame, the northern division of Ayrshire, in its earlier history formed an independent territory or lordship. In the reigns of Malcolm IV., and of William the Lyon, Hugh de Morville and Richard de Morville were Great Constables of Scotland, and Lords of Cuninghame, Largs, and Lauderdale. These honours and territories continued in the possession of the de Morvilles during the twelfth century, towards the end of which, in 1196, they passed by an heir-female, Eva or Ella,² sister of William, the last male representative, to Roland, Lord of Galloway, whom she had espoused. On the death of Alan, Lord of Galloway, in 1234, the lordship of Largs was inherited by his daughter Dervorguilla, who married John de Balliol, and had a son, John Balliol, afterwards competitor with Robert the Bruce for the Crown.³ Dervorguilla survived her husband, and during her widowhood granted in pure and perpetual alms to Robert, Bishop of Glasgow, and his successors, all her lands and pastures of Torhgil, with their pertinents, in her tenement of Cuninghame; all her lands and pastures of Ryesdale with their pertinents; twenty-four acres of land

¹ *Caledonia*, vol. iii. p. 562.

² *Archæological and Historical Collections of Ayr and Wigton*, Vol. I. p. 132, note.

³ *Caledonia*, *ut supra*.

in her mains of Largs, commonly called Bayllof's lands; and one bovat of land in her tenement of Larges with its pertinents, which formerly belonged to Thomas Seysil. This grant was confirmed by charter of Alexander III., dated at Hadyngton on the 18th of May, in the twenty-eighth year of his reign—or in 1277.¹ John Balliol, who on the death of his mother Der-vorguilla succeeded to the lordship of Largs, forfeited all his extensive possessions on the accession of the Bruce to the throne, by whom they were conferred on various of his faithful adherents; and the lordship of Largs appears to have been granted to his son-in-law, Walter, the Steward of Scotland.² King Robert granted a charter confirming to Robert Boyd, Knight, all the land of Nodellsdale with pertinents, the *redendo* being a pair of gilt spurs annually at the Feast of Pentecost;³ and he grants another charter confirming to Robert, Lord Sympil, all the land with pertinents which belonged to the late John de Balliol, Knight, in the tenement of Largs, to be held in one free barony, with equal privilege in the pasture of Largs and all other liberties and just pertinents, for payment of one silver penny annually on the before-mentioned feast.⁴ He also granted to his dear kinsman Robert Steward, son and heir of Walter, Steward of Scotland, for homage and service, all his lands of Cunynham, as well within burgh as without, in free barony, and with all the powers and privileges which any former lords of the lands and barony had from his predecessors, Kings of Scotland, at any time before.⁵ In 1366, Robert, Steward of Scotland, Earl of Stratherne, with consent of John Steward, Lord of Kyle, his eldest son, grants hereditarily to Lord Hugh of Eglintoune and his heirs, the office of heritary Bailie in his barony of Cunyngham, with command of all the men inhabiting the same, and with all and full power as to the office of Bailie pertains; also granting to the said Lord Hugh the office of Chamberlain to our burgh of Irwyn, with a third of all issues and fines of Court. There are three charters of like tenor,—two being dated at Erth 15th January 1366, and the third at Renfrew 30th May 1370.⁶ In a charter of Robert II., following upon an Inquisition appointed by the king to be made by the Bailie of Conynghame in order to determine a controversy pending between the burgesses of Are and Irwyne as to the ends limits and liberties of the

¹ *Reg. Episc. Glasg.*, vol. i. p. 192. Maitland Club ed.

² *Caledonia, ut supra.*

³ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, vol. i. p. 10. No. 47.

⁴ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, vol. i. p. 11. No. 52.

⁵ *Ib.* p. 11. No. 54.

⁶ *Memorials of the Montgomeries*, vol. ii. pp. 6-7.

said burghs and burgesses, by which it clearly appeared that from time immemorial the merchandise and trading in the whole barony of Conynghame and the barony of Largs had been exercised by the burgesses of Irwyne, and were annexed to the liberties of that burgh,—the King confirmed these rights and privileges to the burgh of Irwyne and burgesses of the same, and inhibited any interference in the foresaid liberties under pain of forfeiture; he also granted to Irwyne and the burgesses to hold the burgh as a free burgh, with all the privileges pertaining thereto, with the liberty of a free Gylde. The charter is dated at Edynburgh on the 8th of April in the second year of his reign, 1372.¹ In the year 1425, an Indenture was made at Irwyne, on the 16th day of June, between Schir Jone of Mungumry lorde of Ardrossane, and Schir Robert of Conyngham lorde of Kilmawrys, for promoting of the marriage of Anny, dochtir of Schir Jone, with the said Schir Robert. Besides a tocher in money Schir Robert is to joyse and browk the Balzery of Conyngham, with all the profits pertinande till it, for the term of his life; Schir Jone and his heirs having recourse to the said Bailiary “eftir the dede of the said Schir Robert.”² This inducement to wed the lady Anne probably gave rise to the disputes and consequent feuds between the rival houses of Eglintoun and Glencairn in regard to this office. Sir Robert seems to have died about 1448,³ as in that year James II., as Steward of Scotland, grants a charter under the Privy Seal, confirming to Alexander de Montgomery, eldest son and heir of Alexander, Lord Montgomery, the office of Bailie of the barony of Cunynghame, dated at Striveling 31st January:⁴ and in 1466, Alexander de Montgomery is retoured heir of his father Alexander, in the office, the inquest being held at Linlithgow on 17th June.⁵ In a charter by James IV., which narates that because the late Alexander Montgumry, grandfather of Hugh Lord Montgumry, and his predecessors, had for long time held the offices of Bailie of Cunyngham and Chamberlain of the burgh of Irwyn, and because the said Hugh from various vexations and disturbances which in diverse ways had arisen to impede and prevent him entering on the duties of his office, nevertheless for his good and faithful service, and having now attained the perfect age of twenty-five years, the King grants and confirms to the said Hugh, Lord Montgumry, and his heirs, the said offices of Bailie and

¹ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, vol. i. 86–302 and 88–306.

² *Memorials of the Montgomeries*, vol. ii. p. 8.

³ His death is not recorded, but his eldest

son Alexander was created Lord Kilmaurs in 1450.—Wood's *Peerage*, voce Glencairn.

⁴ *Mem. Mont.* ii. p. 8.

⁵ *Ib.* ii. p. 36.

Chamberlain with power to hold the courts pertaining thereto,—dated at Edinburgh 4th June 1498.¹ Hugh, Lord Montgomerie, was created Earl of Eglintoun in 1507; and the Earls of Eglintoun and Glencairn submitted their differences to the bishop of Moray, the earls of Angus, Argyle, Cassilis, and Lord Borthwick, who pronounced decree on 12th January 1509–10, finding that the Earl of Eglintoun had a full and heritable right to the office of Bailie of Cuninghame—(Decree in Eglinton archives). But though this decree settled the legal right to the office, it did not terminate the feud between the two Earls.² The baronies of Cuninghame and Largs remained thus united under the jurisdiction of the Earls of Eglinton, as hereditary Bailies, till the abolition of hereditary jurisdictions in 1747.

The Church of Largs was dedicated to Saint Columba, the celebrated Abbot of Iona, whose festival was commemorated on the 9th of June. A fair, famous all over the West of Scotland as a market for Highland cattle and hiring farm-servants, was held on Saint Columba's day. The fair, though fallen off in importance, is still kept up under the saint's name, contracted to "Col'msday," and is now held on the second Tuesday of June, O.S.

In *Origines Parochiales Scocie*,³ the ecclesiastical history of Largs opens between the years 1124 and 1158—"David I. bestowed upon the Church of St. Kentigern of Glasgu, the tithe of his kain of Strathgrive, Cunegan, Chul, and Karrie; but, when the bishop obtained the Papal ratification of that grant, he procured the insertion, perhaps by way of explanation, of the territory of Largs, so that the bull runs, 'Of the tithe of the kain of Charri, of Chil, of Cunigan, of Strathgrif, of Larghes.'" In a bull of Pope Clement IV., dated at Perusium in the year of grace 1265, the church of Largs is named among the chapels, churches, lands, and other privileges then belonging and confirmed to the monastery of Paisley.⁴ As before noticed, Dervorguilla, widow of John de Balliol, granted, in pure and perpetual alms, to Robert, bishop of Glasgow, and his successors, all her lands and pastures of Torghil and Ryesdale, twenty-four acres of her mains of Larges, and one bovate in her tenement of Larges; which grant was confirmed by Alexander III. in 1277. Although no direct grant has been discovered, Robert I. appears to have granted the lordship of Largs, including the church and patronage, to Walter the Steward of Scotland, to whom his daughter Marjorie was espoused, as on 30th January 1318, after the

¹ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, vol. ii. 2413.

² *Caledonia*, vol. iii. p. 465.

³ Vol. i. p. 89.

⁴ *Reg. Passelet, Transumpt*, p. 308.

sudden death of Marjorie, Walter the Steward, for the safety of his soul and of Marjorie his late spouse, and for the safety of his predecessors, as also for all the faithful dead, granted and confirmed to God and Saint James, Saint Mirinus and Saint Milburga of Paisley, and the monks of the same, in pure and perpetual alms, the church of Largyss, with all the tithes, obventions, oblations and fruits, wherever and by whatever manner or right pertaining thereto : The grant to take effect from the day of the death of Sir William Lyndesay, rector of the same, or from the day of his resignation, promotion, or cession, and from thence in all time coming ; with all the land to said church pertaining, in which from time immemorial the said church was endowed and seized, and with all other conveniences and easements pertaining by right thereto, which grant the Steward warrants fully to defend against all men, and women.¹ On 3d February, in the same year, the Dean and Chapter of Glasgow (the See being then vacant) receives the resignation of Sir William de Lyndesay, and orders corporal possession of the church to be given to the monks of Paisley ; which ceremony having been duly performed, it is confirmed by the Chapter, the monks being bound to have a vicar in the church with a portion of seventeen merks sterling, six acres of land, and four waggon-loads of hay ; the monks paying the procurations of the bishops and finding wax for church lights, the vicar being responsible for the procurations of the archdeacon, synodals, and all other ordinary burdens.² About the year 1330, John, Bishop of Glasgow, in consideration of the great damage sustained by the convent of Paisley from the war between England and Scotland, and to aid in the rebuilding of their church burnt in said war, grants to the monastery of Paisley the church of Largs in Cuningham, and the chapel in Cumbray annexed to the same church, dispensing with the appointment of a vicar, and permitting the services of the church to be performed by simple presbyters, removeable at pleasure, but the monastery being answerable to the bishop for the cure of souls and other spiritualities, the bishop reserving the episcopal and archidiaconal rights.³ This grant is again confirmed by William, Bishop of Glasgow,⁴ and also by a bull of Pope Clement VII., dated at Avignon 13th July, in the third year of his pontificate, 1381. In this bull the Pope makes the proviso that the said parochial church and chapel are not to be

¹ *Reg. Passelet*, p. 237.

Parochiales Scocie, vol. i. p. 89, note.

² *Reg. Passelet*, p. 240. "But this does not appear to have been effectual."—*Origines*

³ *Reg. Passelet*, p. 238.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 239.

defrauded of services, nor the cure of souls neglected, but shall be diligently exercised and attended to by secular presbyters, who shall be either perpetual or removeable at pleasure.¹ The bull is presented by John, Abbot of Perth, to John, the Official of Glasgow, by whom it is ratified, approved, and confirmed, in the house of the chapter of the monastery of Paisley on 26th April 1387.²

In the year 1420, during the reign of James I., a complaint was made by the Abbot of Paisley, against Robert Boyd of Tinwald, who laid claim to the fruits of the church of Largs, and endeavoured to sustain his alleged right by force. A letter was thereupon issued by the King in the following terms—"James, be the grace of God Kyng of Scottis, till our lovid Robert Boid of Tynwald, gretynge: Foralsmekill as we ar informit that yhe adres yhow to be at the Kyrk of Largyss on Friday nextocum, with a multitude of our liegess in feyre of were, in hurtyn and scath of our devote oratours the abbot and convent of Passelay, brekyn of our crya and offens of our maiestie, Our will is and straitly we charge yhow, gif it sua be, that ye desist tharof and mak na syk gaderin, under all the hiest payne and charge ye may inryne agane oure maiestie, and gif ye haif ochut aganes our said oratours, folond thame as law will.—Gifwyn vnder our pryue seill at Edinburgh the xxiiii day of Aprile and of oure regne xiiii yhers."³ On petition of Thomas, Abbot of Paisley, to William, Bishop of Glasgow, the question was brought before the Commissary Court of the Dean and Chapter, when, on 23d April 1449, after hearing parties and taking evidence, the following judgment was pronounced: That the claim of Robert Boyd, founded on the assedation to him by Sir Richard Bothuil, of the fruits of the church for the term of six years to be completed on the feast of Saints Phillip and James in the year 1450, is valid, and decreed to take effect; and that all other letters of assedation of the fruits of the church to the said Robert Boyd, by whomsoever made, are decreed to be invalid, and of no force or value:—Expenses in the case to be borne equally by both parties.⁴

John de Kelsou, son of the laird of Kelsouland, with consent of John de Kelsou his father, for the safety of his own soul and those of his predecessors and successors, grants to God and the blessed Virgin, Saints James and Mirinus of Paisley, and the monks of the same, all his right and title to that portion of land with its pertinents, commonly called Langle-

¹ *Reg. Pass.*, p. 241.

² *Ib.* p. 243.

³ *Ib.* p. 245.

⁴ *Ib.* pp. 245–6.

bank, lying in the barony of Cuninghame and shire of Ayr, between the ecclesiastical lands of the church of the parish of Largs on the west, and the lands of Kelsouland on the east:—The charter is dated at Paisley 5th January 1403.¹ John de Kelsou of Kelsouland, filius, appears also to have granted to the monks of Paisley a half-stone of wax from his lands of Kelsouland payable annually at the feast of Saint Mirinus, as both of these grants are confirmed by charter of Robert III., dated at the castle of Rothesay 18th April 1404.² John Kelsow, dominus de Kelsowland, for the safety of his soul and the soul of Christian Lewingston his spouse, grants to God and the saints, and to the monks of Paisley, in free, pure, and perpetual alms, half a stone of wax at the feast of Saint Mirinus annually, from his lands of Kelsowland, with power to the monks or their bailies to destrain for non-payment; and binding himself and his heirs to submit to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Glasgow, and Dean or Chapter of the same should the See be vacant. His seal, and for greater security the seal of David Cadzow, the Official of the said court of Glasgow, is attached at Paisley on the last day of March 1432.³ A charter by Janet of Cairns lady of one part of Busby, and John of Fergushill lord of the same, granting to Thomas Scot of Baillie-land, for his services thankfully rendered, the lands of Hayandhouth and Atkyns croft in the barony of Largs, is dated at the parochial Church of Largs 20th July 1433.⁴

Mr. Patrick Shaw, vicar of Monkton and farmer of the fruits of the churches of Largis and St. Kennot,⁵ being about to set out for Rome, appoints John Locard of Bare as his sole procurator and assignee, but especially for intromitting with, levying, and receiving, all and sundry the fruits, profits, teinds, and offerings, etc. etc., belonging to him in the parish of Monkton; and receiving all debts due to him within the parishes of Largis and St. Kennot, of the fruits of the said churches remaining unpaid in the hands of the parishioners, and disposing thereof until the return of the said Mr. Patrick to Scotland.—Instrument dated at Glasgow 20th November 1510.⁶

¹ *Reg. Pass.*, p. 244.

² *Ib.* pp. 270–1.

³ *Ib.* p. 369.

⁴ *Charters of Royal Burgh of Ayr*—Ayr and Wigton Archæological Association, Vol. 1883, p. 86.

⁵ St. Kennot, St. Kennoch, St. Kevoch, occur as the ancient name of St. Quivox

—derived from *Sancta Kennocha virgo in Coila*. See *Calendar of Scottish Saints* (Edin. 1872), pp. 361–374.—*Brev. Aberd. pars hyem.*, fol. lxviii.—Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, vol. i. p. 346.

⁶ *Liber Protocollorum Glasguensis*, No. 494. Gramp. Club ed.

At the period of the Reformation the churches of Largs, Inverkip, and Lochwinnoch were leased together by the Abbey of Paisley for £460. In the "*Libellus Tax. Reg. Scot.*,"¹ the rectory and vicarage of Largs are valued at £40.² In 1587 Lord Claud Hamilton, Commendator of Paisley, obtained a grant of the patronage and tithes of the Church of Largs, along with the other revenues of the monks of Paisley, the whole of which were then created a temporal lordship and bestowed upon him and his heirs, with the title of Lord Paisley. He was succeeded, in 1621, in all these estates, revenues, and title, by his grandson, James, Earl of Abercorn. In the reign of Charles I. the patronage and tithes of the church of Largs passed from the Earl of Abercorn to Sir Robert Montgomerie of Skelmorlie, the first baronet. Lillias Montgomerie, who in default of heirs-male became heiress of Skelmorlie, by her marriage in 1735, carried the patronage and tithes of the church of Largs to Alexander Montgomerie of Coilsfield. Their son and heir, Colonel Hugh Montgomerie of Coilsfield, succeeded to the Earldom of Eglinton in 1796,³ and with his descendants, Earls of Eglinton, the patronage of Largs remained till the abolition of church patronage in 1875.

The chapel of Cumbray, as we have already seen, was anciently dependent upon the parish church of Largs. It stood at the Kirktown, on the south side of the island of Mickle Cumbray, then the only village in the island, half-a-mile inland from the present town of Millport. The church of Cumbray was stated in the rental of the Abbey of Paisley, given up for the assumption of thirds in 1561, at two chalders eight bolls barley. After the Reformation it became a separate charge, and the island a distinct parish.⁴

Under Presbyterian church government the parish of Largs was, until recent times, included in the Presbytery of Irvine, and the estates of Southanan and Crosbie formed part of the parish. The church, which had been erected previous to the Reformation, stood at the village of Largs. From the *Records of the Presbytery* it appears that the church was found to be insufficient for the accommodation of the people, and so inconveniently situated for those residing in the southern part of the parish that, on 27th July 1647, commissioners from the Presbytery to the

¹ MS., Advocates' Library, 31, 2, 5.

² *Orig. Paroch.*, vol. i. p. 90.

³ *Caledonia*, vol. iii. p. 563.

⁴ *Orig. Paroch.*, vol. i. p. 90.

General Assembly were appointed "to deal with my lord Abbercorne for the division of the paroch of Larges." On 15th September following, "Mr. James Fergusone, Mr. Hew M'Kaile, and Mr. John Bell are appointed to think upon overtures for furthering the division of the Larges and to propose them at the next meiting;" and on the 28th Mr. John Bell gave in the overtures condescended upon by him and the rest of the brethren, when they are "read and approven;" and "for promoting the samine the Ministers who goe down to visit the Larges are appointed to speak the gentlemen and to report." On 7th December, "the Presbiterie, considdering the great necessitie of erecting a new kirk within the paroch of Larges, namely, the multitud of the communicants, exceeding the number of 2000; the largeness of the boundes of the paroch, extending to full ten myles of length; the incapacitie of the present place of meiting not being able to containe the half of the people; and the great hazard that great many of the people is in by coming to the present kirk by reason of the water callit Gogo that runs throw the midst of the paroch quhilk after raining becomes almost impassable even to horses: Upon this and the like pressing considerations the Presbiterie does conclude the necessitie of a division of the paroch, and for that effect does appoint Mr. John Bell, Mr. Wm. Russell, Mr. Hew M'Kaile, and Mr. James Fergusone to meit this day fourteen dayes at Southanan with the heritours of the paroch to represent to them the necessitie of a division, and to deile with them for their concurrence, and report their diligence." On 28th December Maister John Bell, in name of the rest of the brethren appointed at last meeting, "reports that they had met with some of the heritours, and all of them had condescendit to a division, whereupon it is thocht fit for the Presbiterie's more orderlie ongoing that the Act of Parliament for perambulations be seen and perused." On 18th January 1648, "the Presbiterie having heard and considerit the supplications both from the south part and the north part of the paroch of Larges for the erecting of a new kirk in these parts, respective, does think it necessary that there be a present perambulation of that paroch, whereunto the whole gentlemen, Kelburn only being exceptit, has condescendit, like as they do condescend, and that Mr. Hew M'Kale, Mr. John Bell, Mr. William Russell, Mr. James Fergusson, Hill of Beith, Baidland, and Monkcastle, sall be at the pains to visit the said paroch upon Thursday come eight days for finding

out the place most convenient for situation of a new kirk and to report their diligence." On 8th February, "the Presbiterie having heard and considerit the report of the ministers, viz., Mr. Hugh M'Kaile and Mr. James Fergusson, and of the ruling elders, Baidland and George Hay of Monkcastle, who were appointed to perambulate the paroch of Lairges, Doeth fullie approve of their judgement concerning the most convenient place for situation of the new kirk that it sould be upon the south syd of the water of Gogo, within the laird of Fairlie his land upon ane parcel of grund callit Sandflatten, and that all the lands on that syd of Gogo sould be annexit to it, except some families of the laird of Bishoptoune lying hard upon the water, the particular lands being these—the lands of Southanen and Gogosyd belonging to my Lord Semple, the lands of Corsbie belonging to Auchinames, the lands of Fairlie belonging to the laird of Fairlie, the lands of Kelburne belonging to the laird of Kelburne, the lands of Ryesdalemoore belonging to the Lord Boyd, the lands of Craiglie belonging to the laird of Heslet, the lands of Blare-Hali belonging to Gavan Blare of Hali—and does hereby ordaine that their commissioner Mr. John Nevay sall give in ane supplication to the Lords Commissioners for Plantation of Kirks in the name of the Presbyterie entreating earnestlie their lordships to decerne that the said new kirk be presentlie erected and the above namit lands annexit thereto, and that he also give to their lordships the reasons condescendit upon by the Presbiterie wherefor they thought it most necessar that a new kirk sould be erectit in the paroch, sick as these—1, The number of communicants, exceeding 2000 and above; 2^dlie, The largeness of the bounds, extending to full ten myles in lenth; 3^dlie, The incapacie of the present place of meeting not being able to containe the halfe of the paroch; 4thlie, The great hazard and danger that many of the people are now in by coming to the present place of meiting throw reason of a water callet Gogo, running throw the midst of the paroch, qlk. after raining any space becometh impassable even to horses, and it runneth with sick violence that ther is no possibilitie to get a bridge upon it; 5thlie, The state of the paroch, being now destitut of a minister, is such, partlie because of the foresaid reasons, and partlie because of the stubbornness of many of the people in it, that the Presbiterie does almost despair of getting any honest man who will undergoe such a burthen except the paroch be devydit. As likewise the Presbiterie does ordaine that

the said Mr. John sall acquaint the Lords Commissioners with the reasons why the Presbiterie thought fit that the new kirk should be rather buildit upon the south syd of the paroch than upon the other, and that he also acquaint them with the Presbiterie's proceeding, that they did advertise and warn all the heritours and did convene them by reason of the necessitie of a division, q'upon they did desyre the Presbiterie to send some of their number to perambulate the paroch for searching out the most convenient place to build the new kirk into; for doing all which and whatsoever sall be fund conducable for the advancing of so good and necessar a work, power and full commission is given to the said Maister John Nevay."

During these years the parish of Largs was fearfully desolated by the "seiknes" or "plague." In the records of the Presbytery it is first noticed in the minutes of 29th June 1647, when the minister of the parish, Mr. William Smith, is absent, and "The referrs that concern the Larges are continued because of the seiknes there." Similar notices are repeated at subsequent meetings of Presbytery, when it is sometimes called the "plague," or "pestilence;" and in the minutes of 28th September the death of Mr. Smith is thus recorded:—"The Presbiterie laying to heart the lamentable and calamitous condition of the paroch of Larges partly by reason of the hand of God that is lying heavy upon them, and partly by reason of the removal of their minister by death, think it expedient that Mr. Wm. Lindsay be sent to visit them, and to take notice of their desires, and to enquire ane overture of themselves how they may be gotten helpit and supplied, and the said Mr. William to make report of his diligence." On 26th October the laird of Bishoptoun remonstrated that the calamitous condition of the paroch and toun of Largs was such "that if it were not tymouslie removit and helpit the people wald be forcit to break out athort the countrie." "Further, the laird of Bishoptoun relates that they were thinking of a way how to be helpit by preaching, but fand that they could not be gotten helpit for the present because of a new infection that was broken out among them." A contribution from the neighbouring parishes for relief of the destitution was ordained to be collected with all possible diligence, the following being the result:—"From Newmylnes, lvij lib. viij s. iiij d.; from Irvin, 200 merks; from Kilmaurs, 1 hundrith two merks; from Stewartoune, 1 hundrith eleven punds; from Kilwinning, 1 hundrith pund; from Perston, 40 lb. viij merks; from Kilbirnie, 50 lib.; from

Dreghorne, 43 lib. 8 s.; from Dalry, 48 lib. 20 merks; from Ardrossan, 50 merks."

In consequence of the desolation caused by this visitation, the Presbytery departed from their intention of dividing the parish and building a new kirk. On 24th October 1649, another perambulation was appointed, and on 1st November the perambulators gave in their report—"Concerning the accomodation of the Larges, which is a wyd and spacious congregation, the perambulators did judge it expedient that the lands of Southanen belonging to my lord Semple, and the lands of Corsbie belonging to Achinnames, sould be annexit to Kilbryd, because of their neirness to that kirk and farness from ther owne. *2dlie*, Because of the impossibilitie of building a new kirk within that paroch be reason of the desolation of these partes; and *3dlie*, Because of ane impassable water betwene them and Larges." The disjunction of these lands from Largs and their annexation *quoad omnia* to Kilbryde accordingly took place about the year 1650.

The division of the parish, however, only remained in abeyance. In 1835, Largs was transferred from the Presbytery of Irvine to the newly formed Presbytery of Greenock; and on 1st June of that year the chapel of Ease, built at Fairlie in 1833, was, by the General Assembly, erected into a *quoad sacra* parish, in which are included the estates of Kelburne and Fairlie, in the parish of Largs, and the estate of Southanan in the parish of Kilbryde. A further division has since taken place, when the chapel built at Skelmorlie in 1856, and enlarged in 1858, was in 1860 likewise erected into a *quoad sacra* parish. In it are included the lands of Auchengarth, part of the estate of St. Fillans, the barony of Thirdpart, the estate of Skelmorlie, and part of the estate of Kelly in the parish of Largs, and also the estates of Kelly and Castle Wemyss, in the adjoining parish of Innerkip.

The succession of ministers in the church of Largs from the Reformation to the present time is here given on the authority of Hew Scott, D.D., F.S.A. Scot.,¹ to which a few particulars have been added within brackets.

1564. David Neill, mentioned as minister 10th November, but is ranked as exhorter in 1567, [his stipend being "xl merks."—*Reg. Min.*, p. 37.]

1574. Alexander Callendare, translated from Killearn; Kilbryde and Ardrossan were also in his charge; "his stipend j^c xxxiiij ti. vj s. viij d.

¹ *Fasti Eccles. Scot.*, vol. ii. part i.

(£11 : 2 : 9 $\frac{1}{3}$), and the kirk lands of Kilbryde, etc.”; continued in 1580. [In 1576, along with Mr. Callendar, David Neill is reidare at Largis, his stipend xvj li. with the kirk land.—*Reg. Min.*, app. p. 85. He is mentioned in Mason’s *Protocol Book* as “reader at the kirk of Largs” in 1585.]

1585. William Foullertoun, he was presented to the vicarage of Irvine by James VI., 30th November 1586, but went to Kilmaurs in 1589.

1586. William Cock; continued in June 1620. [In 1598 William Cole was minister. He appears as one of the subscribers to the letter of admission in favour of Alexander Campbell to the kirk of Ardrossan.—*New Stat. Acc.*, vol. Ayrshire.]

16[31]. Thomas Craig, A.M., was laureated at the University of Glasgow in 1617, on the exercise there 15th March 1620, admitted prior to 12th May 1631; he contributed xx li. in the following year towards erecting the library in the College of Glasgow. [He obtained a decree of locality of stipend in 1635.—*New Stat. Acc.*, Ayrshire], and continued in 1637, but was deposed about 1640. Baillie states that “he is worthie of more punishment.”

1644. William Smith, A.M., had his degree from the University of Glasgow; in 1639, schoolmaster of Irvine; died by “the pestilence” in September 1647, aged about 28. “Being ane young man unmarried, he had no cornes, cattel, nor vther moveable guidis, except allenerlie certane small insyght and plenishing in his chalmers,” with his buikis and abuilzements of his body, estimat worth j^c li. Inventar and debts ij^m ij^c liij li. xj s. viij d. He “was somewhat lame in one of his feet,” but “a choice man for piety,” who “had an excellent gift of preaching,” and was “most taking with the people.” A younger brother, Mr. Hew, became minister of Eastwood.

1649. James Glendinning, A.M., studied at St. Leonard’s College, St. Andrews, formerly of Kilbarchan, was settled temporarily; he was settled at Row 27th June 1658.

1662. John Wallace, A.M., was laureated at the University of Glasgow in 1649; deprived by the Acts of Parliament 11th June, and of Privy Council 10th October, 1662. He was accused in March 1669 of preaching and baptizing irregularly.

1664. Peter Trumble, passed trials before the Presbytery of Paisley and got a testimonial 7th April for ordination.

1672. John Wallace, A.M., noticed before, indulged by the Privy

Council 3d September; a warrant for apprehending him was issued 14th July 1674, for keeping conventicles. He petitioned the Privy Council in 1676 that he might be relieved from paying the synod clerk and bursary dues; he was deprived of his indulgence 18th February 1679.

1672. Alexander Gordoune, formerly of Inverary, indulged with the preceding by the Privy Council, 3d September; having kept a conventicle at Glasgow the magistrates were ordered, 5th June 1676, to produce him, and not appearing, his cautioners were fined in v^m merks, 27th May 1679; he was settled at Greenock in 1688.

1680. Charles Littlejohn, A.M., promoted from being Regent of Humanity in St. Salvator's College, St. Andrews, passed trials before the Presbytery of Glasgow, and got a testimonial for ordination 28th April; deprived by the Act of Parliament restoring the Presbyterian Ministers 25th April 1690, and died at Edinburgh 12th November 1732, aged 82, in the 53d year of ministry. He married, 19th July 1684, Mary Ramsay. [Fountainhall states that "on his pursuing Montgumerie of Skelmurlie for his stipend, the Chancellor had this expression, that the Ministers were the persons in the kingdom that deserved worst at his Majesty's hands."—*New Stat. Acc.*, Ayrshire.]

1687. John Wallace, A.M., above mentioned, returned. [Mr. Wallace acquired, in 1666, the lands of Monkcastle and Craigmill from John Hay, and transmitted them to his family, by whom they were sold, in 1703, to Mr. Adam Cuninghame, Advocate.—*New Stat. Acc.*, Ayrshire.]

1689. John Wilson, formerly minister to the Presbyterian congregation at Dunbo, or Dramaul, in Ireland, was called to Kilmarnock, but declined its acceptance; admitted 26th January; was a member of Assembly in 1692, [and died 15th November 1699, aged 46 years.—*Tombstone record*].

1701. Andrew Cumine, doctor in the Grammar School at Irvine in 1696, ordained 27th September 1701; he dissented from the deposition of the eight seceding ministers by the General Assembly, 15th May 1740, and died FATHER of the Church 4th July 1762, aged 88, in the 61st year of his ministry; he married Jean, daughter of John Caldwell of that ilk, and had a son John, who follows.

1742. John Cumine, son of the preceding, licensed by the Presbytery 5th June 1739, called 18th January, and ordained (assistant and successor) 27th May 1742; died 31st January 1743, aged 29, in the 1st year of his ministry.

1748. Patrick Wallace, licensed by the Presbytery 10th August 1742, called 31st March and ordained (assistant and successor) 10th October 1748; died 18th November 1755, in the 8th year of his ministry.

1756. Gilbert Lang, A.M., in Greenock, called 20th April, and ordained (assistant and successor) 3d August; died 30th December 1791, in the 65th year of his age¹ and 36th of his ministry. He married for a second time, 5th February 1771, D'arcy Millar, who died 27th August 1840, and had a daughter Jane, who attained the age of 85. Publication—Account of the Parish (Sinclair's *Stat. Acc.*, ii.)

1792. Stephen Rowan, in Kilmarnock, licensed by the Presbytery 28th November 1780, presented by Hugh Montgomerie, Esq., of Coilsfield, 8th March, and ordained 15th May 1792; died 4th June 1801, in the 10th year of his ministry. He married Janet Bogle, who died at Ayr, 15th January 1815, aged 70.

1802. John Mitchell, M.D., a native of Cupar, and licensed by the Presbytery 17th December 1793, studied medicine, and took his degree at the University of Edinburgh in 1801; presented by Hugh, Earl of Eglinton, in November 1801, and ordained 22d April following; he got a new church built in 1812, but having been admitted Professor of Divinity in St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, he demitted 16th May 1826, and died 14th November 1835, in his 64th year and 34th of his ministry.

1826. Jacob Richardson, tutor in the family of Mr. Charteris of Amisfield, licensed by the Presbytery of Dumfries 6th November 1810, presented by the trustees of Archibald, Earl of Eglinton, in June, and ordained 28th September 1826, died 6th October 1830, in the 4th year of his ministry. He married, 25th December 1826, Wilhemina, only daughter of the Rev. Dr. Scott, Dumfries. She died 3d February 1855.

1831. John Dow, a native of Dunkeld, became one of the Masters of George Watson's Hospital, Edinburgh, and subsequently tutor in the family of Sir James Montgomerie Cuninghame of Corsehill, Baronet; licensed by the Presbytery 24th November 1818, presented by Archibald, Earl of Eglinton, in October 1830, and ordained 28th April succeeding. On joining in the Free Secession and signing the Deed of Demission he was declared no longer a minister of this Church, 21st June 1843; admitted to the Free Church, Roberton, 24th April 1845, which he resigned in 1852, and died at Edinburgh 20th September 1865, aged 79, in the 35th year of his ministry.

¹ Tombstone record.

1843. John Kinross, A.M., [born at Dunblane 13th July 1812, in which parish his ancestors on the mother's side had been for at least nine successive generations, father and son, of the same name and surname, and occupiers of the same farm of Crosscaple, part of the estate of Kippenross. His grandfather, James Dawson, originated and acted on the idea of planting trees for a profitable return, and induced the Dukes of Athole and Montrose to plant their highland estates. The subject was afterwards taken up and urged upon the notice of the Highland and Agricultural Society in a paper read by Sir Walter Scott, Baronet.¹ Mr. Kinross studied at the University of Glasgow, where he took his degree 24th April 1833, and afterwards attended the Theological Hall, Edinburgh, for two years, under Drs. Chalmers, Walsh, and Brunton. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Dunblane 2d February 1836; was tutor to the present Earl of Glasgow, Sir John Marjoribanks, Bart., of Lees, and in the family of Sir William Millikin Napier of Millikin, Bart. Appointed in 1840 assistant to Dr. Campbell, Kilwinning; presented by Sir John Gladstone of Fasque, Bart., to St. Thomas's Church, Leith, on 10th May 1842, and inducted 22d June thereafter, having in the interim declined the offer by the Duke of Portland of the Laigh Kirk of Kilmarnock. Presented to this charge by Archibald William, Earl of Eglinton and Winton, on 7th July 1843, and inducted 1st September following. He died, after a brief illness, on 5th December 1883, in the 72d year of his age, and 41st of his ministry in this parish. "He was a kind and scholarly gentleman, a vigorous and eloquent preacher, and a warm friend to missionary and educational movements." Publications, anonymous—*A Holiday in Scandinavia*, Glasgow, Murray and Son, 1871, 12mo; and a pamphlet *On the Dis-establishment of the Church of Scotland*, Edinburgh, Blackwood, 1881, 8vo.

1885. John Keith, B.D., studied at the University of Edinburgh, and from 1871 to 1877 acted as Assistant Professor of Greek; licensed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh 26th July 1876, and ordained to the *quoad sacra* parish of Skelmorlie 7th November 1878. Called to this parish and inducted 5th February 1885.]

The manse, built in 1764 during the incumbency of the Rev. Gilbert Lang, has been entirely rebuilt in 1886 on the site of the former building.

¹ *Proceedings of the Society*, vol. xxi.; see also Sir Walter's Prose Works "On the Planting of Waste Lands with Trees."

It is pleasantly situated in the outskirts of the town, towards Skelmorlie, and occupies part of the glebe lands, which extend to seven acres.

The Church of Largs stands at the north end of the Gallowgate, or street facing the pier and shore, and was erected in 1812. It is a neat plain building, originally an oblong in plan, but as a greater amount of accommodation was required, cross aisles were added to its eastern extremity in 1832. A quadrilateral tower, crowned with embrasures and small turrets at the angles, from which rises an octagonal spire surmounted by a vane, graces the west gable, which moreover is the principal façade of the building. The church is lighted by a single tier of pointed arched windows, the interior presenting a light, airy, and comfortable appearance. It is capable of accommodating 1300 sitters, two thirds of the sittings being allocated among the heritors, the remainder belonging to subscribers resident in the town. The bell is of modern date, measuring 2 feet 3 inches in height, by 3 feet in extreme diameter at the mouth, and bears the following inscription in raised Roman capital letters: PEACE AND GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD. T. MEARS OF LONDON, FECIT, 1814. Of its predecessor, nothing has been ascertained further than that it was a very fine-toned bell, but having been cracked was sold and taken to Port-Glasgow.

The burying-ground, within whose precincts stand the remains of the old church of Largs, is situated behind the southern part of the Gallowgate and the High street. The principal approach is from the latter street, at the upper end of the Brisbane Arms Inn, through an open space called the Manse Court. In this court yet stands, entire, the old manse of Largs.¹ It is an oblong building, consisting of two storeys and attics, terminated by high gables and corbie steps. The attic room next the burying-ground is said to have been the minister's study. Though now divided into separate dwellings and deformed by outside stairs leading to those in the upper storey, the turret at the back of the building which contained the circular stair, formerly giving access to the upper flat, is still there, though no longer in use.² In the year 1764, being "in great disrepair," it was sold by the minister and heritors to Archibald Fraser, wright and mason in Largs, for the sum of £64 sterling, and the disposition is signed by the Rev. James Woodrow, Moderator of the Presbytery, the Rev. Gilbert Lang, minister of Largs, the Right Hon. John Earl of Glasgow, Thomas Brisbane of Brisbane, for himself and as tutor in law to James Brisbane of Bishop-

¹ Plate VII., Fig. 1.

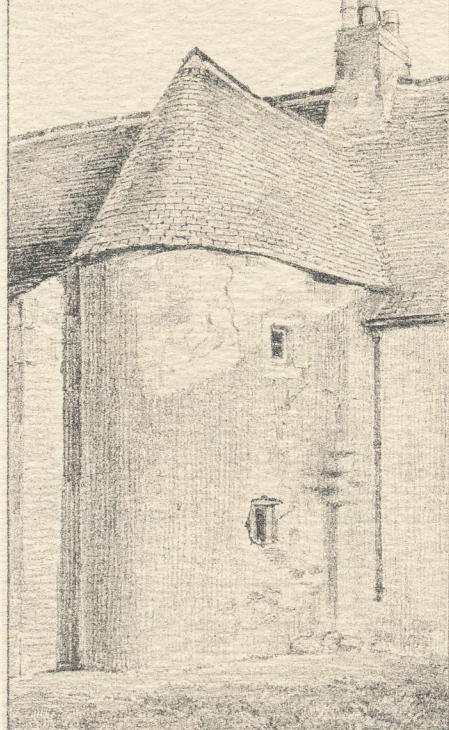
² Plate VII., Fig. 2.

Church of Largs .

Fig. 1. View of the Old Manse from the south-west, and of the Gateway to the Churchyard .



Fig. 2. Stair turret at back of Manse .



Details of Manse .



Estas :



Fig. 3. View of Old Church from ceiling of Skelmorlie Aisle .



Fig. 4. Monumental stone of Crawford of Thirdpart .

6 ft 7 ins. x 3 ft 2 ins. Maclure, Macdonald & Co., Glasgow.

toun, James Ballantyne of Kelly, William Patton of Nodsdale, and John Dunsmore of Middletoun. In the disposition it is described as "All and Whole the old manse, and yard joining thereto at the back thereof, lying within the town of Largs, bounded, viz., on the south by the High Street of Largs, on the west by a yard belonging to Brisbane, on the north by the house and yard of William Shearer, bellman, and on the east by the churchyard dyke." No date appears on any part of the building, but the "churchyard dyke," being built against the corners of its east gable, and one of the rybat stones of the arched gateway to the churchyard bearing in raised characters the date 1636, leaves no doubt of the manse having been built prior to that period. A flight of steps leads to the above-mentioned gateway. The burying-ground, which has been closed against interment since the new cemetery was opened in 1866 on the lands of Haly-Blair, is nevertheless kept in a state of order creditable to the good taste of the heritors. It is a quiet spot, and so surrounded by dwelling-houses and gardens as to be quite unnoticeable from the principal thoroughfares of the town. Adjoining on the north-west, and by which it is overlooked, is a large tumulus or mound of earth of an elliptical form, measuring in length about twenty-five yards by nine in breadth, and between four and five yards in height. From the circumstances of human bones having been found several years ago beneath a portion of it, and the statement in the *Norwegian Chronicle* that "Haco ordered his dead to be carried to a church," some antiquarians have adopted the conclusion that this mound was raised

"Above Norweyan warriors grim
Savage of heart and large of limb,"

who fell at the battle of Largs in 1263; while others, again, consider its origin to have been similar to the Moothills, and of much greater antiquity.

The old church was taken down when the present church was erected, but a fragment of the south wall containing a monument to the Boyles of Kelburne, was on that account allowed to stand. The building was of unknown age and of great strength, the portion remaining being then about four feet in thickness, and of the most compact solidity.¹ It is therefore not improbable that the demolished edifice may have, in whole or in part, formed the original church of Largs, which, as has been already shown, existed prior to 1263. An aisle, erected in 1636 by Sir Robert Mont-

¹ The remains of this wall were afterwards encroached upon for the purposes of interments.

gomerie of Skelmorlie, and which was attached to and extended northward from the church, has been left entire. It contains a burial vault, and over it a stately and richly sculptured monument erected in 1639 by the same eminent person. In a painting in one of the compartments of the richly adorned ceiling of the aisle, representing summer, a view of the church and aisle is given.¹ Making due allowance for the faulty perspective and the incongruity of the surrounding features of the landscape, the main building appears to have been of the simple oblong form so common to our older parish churches, its west gable being crowned by a bell turret. The Skelmorlie aisle and monument, and the other ancient and more notable monuments in or near Largs, will however be found fully described and illustrated in another article devoted to them.

In concluding this brief notice of the burying-ground, two memorial stones, selected from among the many, are considered worthy of particular mention from the inevitable decay fast creeping over them as it has over the family they represent. They are oblong in form, and formerly rested on pedestals, but are now recumbent on the ground, alongside each other, to the west of the aisle. On the one there is carved in relief, a shield, bearing what was probably meant to represent a fess ermine parted per pale, the fess being slightly sunk, leaving the ermine spots in relief. Above the fess is cut the date 16...63. In the dexter base is a spur revel, or mullet, and in the sinister, a rose, beneath which are placed, respectively, the initial letters I . C . . . A . C , and in a lower line AGV . 27—all incised.² The marginal inscription, if there ever was any, has been altogether deleted by the weather. The initials I. C. and A. C. are probably those of John Crawford of Thirdpart and his wife Agnes Crawford, "Lady Thirdpart," the date 1663 being that of his death, the lower line giving the month and day. On the other stone is cut in Roman capital characters the following marginal inscription:—HIERE . LYES . DAVID . BVRBONE . WHO . DIED . DEC^R . 1696 . ALSO . ARCHIBALD . BVRBONE . HIS . 1 SON . AND . HVS BAND . TO . AGNES . CRAVFVRD . LADY . OF . THRIDPART. HE . DIED . FEB^Y 2 . 1705; and on the centre of the stone are the following letters and date in larger characters, arranged in three lines, D B . . A B A C . . 1707.³

The family commemorated by these monuments has long been extinct, nor can anything now be learned from tradition regarding it in the parish.

¹ Plate VII., Fig. 3.

² Plate VII., Fig. 4.

³ Probably the date of lady's death.

Robertson, in his *Ayrshire Families*¹ is inclined to think they were of the same family as the Crawfurds of Thirdpart in Renfrewshire, and had carried the name of that place with them when removing to Largs. But what may be the mere coincidence of the by no means uncommon name of Thirdpart, requires confirmation; and an investigation of the titles,² so far as attainable, throws no light on the family connection. The Renfrewshire family sold their lands to William Lord Sempil in 1523, but how long the Crawfurds held Thirdpart in Largs has not been ascertained. The property consisted of the lands of old extent called the lands of Thirdpart, Haining, Knockhead, Torr, Barrheads, Newintack and Brakenlie, extending to a ten pound land, and the five merk land of old extent called The Moat, Auchengarth, and Bankhead. They were owned by John Crawford previous to 1657, in which year he granted a bond for 2000 merks Scots, containing an heritable security over his lands, to Hugh Crawford of Cloverhill, who in 1659 assigned his right to his son Thomas, who in 1672 transferred the same to James Crawford of Gartnavle. The burden on the property had meanwhile accumulated to £2753 : 6 : 8 Scots, and on 15th January 1687, James Crawford of Gartnavle obtained decret of adjudication before the Lords of Council and Session against Hugh Crawford, only son and heir of the deceased John Crawford of Thirdpart. Thereafter, on 21st January 1699, and in corroboration of this decret, Hugh Crawford of Thirdpart granted disposition of the lands and discharge of reversion to the said James of Gartnavle, but excepting always the liferent right that Agnes Crawford his mother, now spouse to Archibald Burgon³ in Torr, has of said lands, conform to her liferent rights. In 1701 James Crawford sold the lands to James Montgomerie, younger, Merchant in Glasgow, second lawful son to John Montgomerie in Campbelltown, who in 1706 sold the property to David, 1st Earl of Glasgow.

JOHN SHEDDEN-DOBIE.

MORISHILL, December 1887.

¹ Vol. i. p. 182, note.

² Penes Mr. Clark of Curlinghall.

³ There is a discrepancy in the name as given here and on the tombstone.