

KILFINANE:

A market-town and parish, in the barony of Costlea, 5 miles (E. by S.) from Kilmallock, on the road from that place to Mitchelstown; containing 4437 inhabitants of which number, 1752 are in the town. The town is situated in the midst of a group of mountains, by which it is surrounded on all sides but the north, where it opens upon the rich vale of Kilmallock; it has a penny post to Kilmallock, and consists of two principal and several smaller streets, containing 314 houses, many of which are large and well built, and is the property of R. Oliver Gascoigne, Esq. Many Palatine families were brought hither from Rathkeale, about 1740, by the Right Hon. Silver Oliver. In 1793, the attacks made on the town by the Defenders were repelled twice, and they were ultimately defeated by the Palatines and other inhabitants, under Charles Silver Oliver, Esq.; and at a later period, when an attack from the disaffected was anticipated, the respectable inhabitants armed themselves in defence of the place. The inhabitants are mostly engaged in agricultural occupations; a few are employed in the weaving of linen and cotton goods; and not far from the town are oatmeal-mills, and others at Sunville, about two miles distant. The market is on Tuesday, and is well attended; and fairs, for farming stock and implements, are held on 19 May, 9 August, and 25 October. The market-house is a large commodious building, and was substantially repaired in 1836. Here is a constabulary police station, and petty sessions are held on alternate Saturdays. Quarter sessions were formerly held here, but have been removed to Bruff; it is, however, in contemplation to restore them. A small bridewell has recently been built; and the sessions-house, which is large and convenient, is about to be repaired. A spacious and handsome fever hospital was erected in 1836, at an expense of £700, to which an accident ward and a dispensary are attached.

The parish comprises 9340 statute acres, as apportioned under the tithe act, and valued at £5679 per annum. The mountains consist principally of coarse conglomerate and red sandstone; silver and iron ores are found, and coal is supposed to exist; limestone gravel is abundant, and is much used for manure. The land is generally good and there are large dairy farms, and a considerable tract of bog and mountain pasture; much of the mountain land, however, has been brought into cultivation, and in a great measure provides for many poor families. The principal seats are Spa Hill, the residence of W. Oliver, Esq.; Spring Lodge, of W. Collins, Esq.; Bossonstown, of G. W. Bennett, Esq.; Kilfinane House, of C. Bennett, Esq.; and Brookville Cottage, of T. Massey, Esq., M.D. The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Limerick, united by act of council to the vicarage of Daragh, forming the union of Kilfinane, in the patronage of the Earl of Cork, partly in whom and partly in E. Deane Freeman, Esq., the rectory is inappropriate. The tithes amount to £270, of which £105 is payable to the Earl of Cork, and the remainder to the vicar; but the rectorial tithes of Bossonstown, Bosnitstown, and Moorestown, amounting to £60, are payable to E. D. Freeman, Esq. The church was rebuilt in 1760, and is a large plain edifice. The glebe-house was built in 1813, for which the late Board of First Fruits gave £400 and lent £386: the glebe comprises 4 1/2 acres. In the R.C. divisions the parish is the head of a union or district, comprising the parishes of Kilfinane, Particles, and Ardpatrick, and containing two chapels, one a large plain building at Kilfinane, erected in 1835 at an expense of £1000, and one at Ardpatrick. About 200 children are educated in two public schools. Adjoining the church are the

ruins of an ancient castle, built by the Roches. Near the town are a rath and three strong forts; also a large artificial cave. Castle Oliver, which was successively occupied by the Fitz-Harrises and the Roches, and since 1641 by the Olivers, is now in ruins. Eastward of the town is a fine sulphuro-chalybeate spring, of great efficacy in cutaneous diseases. Outside the town is ' the Danes' fort', a mound about 130 feet high, 50 feet in diameter at the base, and 20 at the summit, encircled by seven earthen ramparts about 20 feet apart, gradually diminishing in height from the innermost to the outermost, which is about 10 feet high and 2000 feet in circuit: an extensive view is obtained from its summit.