

I. Part of a Letter wrote by Mr. James Frazer,
Minister of Kirkhil, near Invernes, to Ja.
Wallace at Edinburgh, concerning the Lake
Nefs, &c.

THE Lake *Nefs*, though oft mentioned by our Historians as one of the Wonders of *Scotland*, yet they give but an ill Account of it. This Lake, according to our Highland Tradition and Bards, has its Name from one *Nysus* an *Irish* Hero, that fix'd a Colony in *Stratharig*, with *Dornadillo* his Wife. The Promontory, upon which he had his Residence, is to this Day called *Down Dearnill*; and he being the first that ever offered to set out Boat or Barge upon this Lake, it is after him called *Loch-Nefs*. As to its Dimensions, it is twenty four Miles in length, and in most Places two in breadth. In many Parts of this Lake it hath been founded, but no bottom found. One *George Scot*, who built a great Ship here for the *Venetian* Service, tried 500 Fathoms, but all in vain. And when the *English* had their Garrison at *Invernes*, they had a Frigat which usually sailed from one end to another, with Provision, to their Garrison at *Inverlochy*; and one *Orton*, Captain to the Frigat, told me, that he tried a whole Barrel of Plum-line, but found no bottom. The Banks of this Lake ascend high and mountainous, with Woods. The Lake never freezes, which is imputed to the many great Springs and Fountains in it; the only Fish in it is Salmon. This Lake *Nefs* discharges it self in a River of the same Name, six Miles in length, which never freezes, but still smoaks with Frost; and from this Smoak is spread a Fogg over all the adjacent Country. The River runs slow; the Poet gave it this Epithet.

*Nessa flues lente, tamen admirabile dictu
Undas non possit bruma domare tuas.*

Upon

Upon the North side of *Loch Ness* stands the famous Castle of *Urghart* upon a Rock ; the great Ditch round it was for the most part cut out of the Rock, and received the Water of the Lake. This Castle consisted of seven great Towers, and it's said was built by the *Cuminees*, but had its Overthrow by King *Edward* the First of *England* ; and nothing remains now but one Tower to the East.

To the Westward of this Castle, about four Miles up on the side of *Loch-Ness*, stands that great Mountain *Meal-fuor-vouny*, of a round, neat, high Shape ; it will be two Miles of perpendicular height from the Lake. Upon the very top of this Hill there is a Lake of cold fresh Water, about thirty Fathom in length, and six broad, no Course or Stream running to it or from it. The bottom of it cannot be sounded. I went purposely to see it, and with a hundred Fathom of small Line plum'd it, but could find no bottom. It is the No-such Rarity of all this Country ; for Summer and Winter, Spring and Harvest, it is equally full, and never freezes.

There is, due West, from the end of the River of *Ness* an Arm of the Sea called *Beaulie Frith*, six Miles in length and two in breadth. This Bottom sure has been firm Land of old ; for near the middle of it we find long oaken Trees with their whole Roots, some above sixty Foot in length, lying covered with the Sand, which, no doubt, have grown there, and lie flat as they fell ; for further Information, there are three great Heaps of Stones in this Lake, at considerable distance one from the other, these we call *Cairns* in the *Irish*. One of a huge bigness, (in the middle of the *Frith*) at low Water, is accessible ; and we find it has been a Burial-Place by the Urns which are sometimes discovered. As the Sea encroaches and wears the Banks upward, there are long oaken Beams of 20 or 30 Foot long found ; some of these 8, some 12 or 14 Feet under Ground. I see one of them 14 foot long, that car-

ried the mark of the Ax on it, and had several Wimblebores in it. The River of *Beuly*, which falls into this arm of the Sea, near *Lovat*, hath so sunk, that oaken Trees of incredible length, and 16 Foot under Ground, are discovered in the Banks, with degrees of Sand, Gravel, Clay, and Earth above them: And if you remember, when you did me the Favour to see me at my House, when we went to *Beuly*, we found some Oaks, with Coals, and pieces of burnt Timber, as low as 16 Foot, or thereabouts.

There is, due West, from *Beuly*, about 17 Miles, a Forest call'd *Affaruck*, in which there is a Mountain call'd *Glen-in-Tea*; and on the North side, under the Shade of a great sloping Rock, stands a Lake of fresh Water, called *Lochan Wyn*, or *Green Lake*, 18 Foot in diameter, about a Fathom deep. This Lake is always covered with Ice, Summer and Winter.

The next Mountain, North of that, is called *Scure-in-Lappich*; on the top of it there is a vast heap of white Stones, like Chrystal, each of them bigger than a Man can heave, they will strike fire like Flint, and have the Smell of Sea-wrack. How these were brought there, or heap'd together, or what the nature of the Stone is, I do not know, nor is there any Tradition about them. Upon this Mountain is found also Oyster-Shells in plenty, Scallop and Limpet-Shells, yet 20 Miles from any Sea. Round about this Hill grows the Sea-Pink, in *Irish*, *Teartag*: It has the Taste and Colour of that grows upon our Sea Banks.

The *Pagan* Temples or High Places of Idolatry, are still very numerous here, upon the River-side of *Narden*; I reckon'd 13 in two Miles; they are orbicular round, and at the West end two high Stones like Pyramids; there is an outward and inward Circle of lesser Stones, and a round Mote in the Centre for Sacrifice. Another sort of them are only of Earth, and a Trench round about, and a Mote in the middle. In many of these I find a round heap of Stones, and Urns in them. It seems a different Religion afterwards turn'd these Places of Worship into Burial-Places.