



The "Auld Wives' Lifts"

## Before 1840 — The Church

**S**OME will have it that the "Auld Wives' Lifts" on Craigmaddie Moor are relics of pre-Christian Druid worship, and if so these great stones would represent the first religious establishment near Milngavie.

The Christian faith itself may well have come to the region with the Roman soldiers who served on the Wall—there is no proof of this, but it is the kind of thing that is known to have happened. Certainly by the 4th Century the new religion had reached south-west Scotland. It may even be that it was from our own original parish, at Old Kilpatrick, that St. Patrick

set out in the 5th century to evangelise Ireland, though it must be admitted that the evidence for this is not now given much credence.

We are on surer ground when we come to the recorded gift in 1227 of the Church and lands of Kilpatrick to the monks of Paisley Abbey. This means that there must have been a well-established church in our parish before that date.

That church, however, was at Old Kilpatrick, which meant a long walk for residents from our area. People did in fact travel great distances to church in those days, but it is probable that our forebears would more

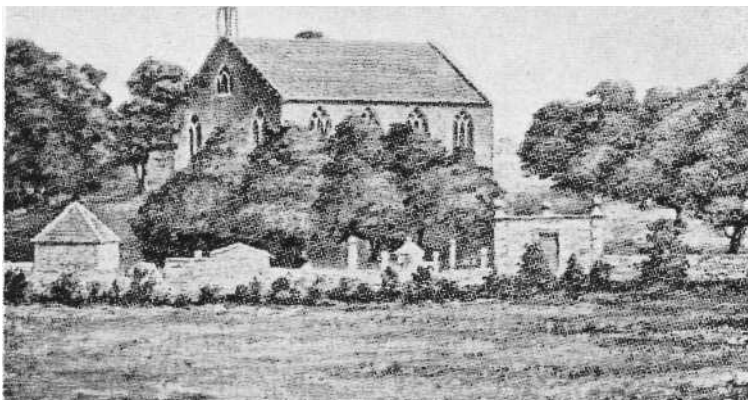
often worship in the nearer parish churches at Baldernock or Strathblane, or in the private chapel which was attached to Muddock Castle.

After the Reformation (1560), the minister of Kilpatrick was also for a time minister of Baldernock, with two "readers" to assist him. This would keep the people of this eastern part of the parish more in touch with their church. Then in 1649 the parish was divided into West or Old Kilpatrick, and East or New Kilpatrick, the dividing line running between what are now Clydebank and Drumchapel. The "New Kirk" built at "Bearsden" (a name unknown until 200 years later)

served an area which was entirely rural, the one village worthy of the name being "Milgay."

Until the Revolution settlement of 1690 Scotland was torn by the strife of Covenanting times, and there were those in New Kilpatrick parish who suffered rather than conform. One such was John Douglas of Mains, who in 1684 was heavily fined for allowing a conventicle to be held in his house.

The numerous 18th century secessions from the established Kirk of Scotland left New Kilpatrick unscathed, but in 1788 "a number of respectable people" in the parish set up a meeting house and joined them-



*New Kilpatrick Church, 1807*

selves to the " Relief" church, so-called because they sought relief from the burden of patronage. They had considerable difficulty in erecting a building, and for a time worshipped in the open on the " preaching braes " at Barloch Moor, but eventually opened a place of worship in 1799 in

Mugdock Road, Milngavie. This, the first church building in the village, was the beginning of what later became the United Presbyterian Church and is now Cairns Church, Milngavie. It was founded not as a church for the people of Milngavie, but as a " gathered congregation " from the whole parish.