

NUMBER XII.

PARISH OF KIRKURD.

(County and Presbytery of Peebles.—Synod of Lothian
and Tweeddale.)

By the Reverend Mr DAVID ANDERSON.

Name, Extent, &c.

THE termination *urd* is from the Celtic language, and signifies a quarter or fourth part; hence the following description of places at each extremity of the parish, Kirkurd, Ladyurd, Netherurd, and Lochurd. The length of the parish, from E. to W. is $5\frac{1}{2}$ English miles; and its breadth, from N. to S. from 3 to 4. The parish, in general, presents a surface finely diversified; and, what is remarkable in a hilly country, such as Tweeddale generally is, the low or arable land bears almost an equal proportion, in point of extent, to the high or sheep grounds. The parish, from actual survey, contains 6620 acres, English measure. The soil is of different kinds. Towards the small river Tarth, it is mostly loam; in one large farm we meet with clay; but the prevailing soil is gravelish. The light soil is preferable for crops, as the parish lies in general high, being upwards of 600 feet above the level of the sea. Though the air is sharp, it is pure and healthful. Distempers are far from being frequent. Rheumatism is the most prevalent. This is, in a great measure, owing to the little attention that is paid to

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warm

warm and dry clothing, and to the cold and uncomfortable houses of the poorer classes. Though there are no remarkable instances of longevity, except one man who died about 10 years ago, whose age was 92, (he was born in the parish, and resided in it all his life), yet the inhabitants arrive, in general, to a good age.

Rivers and Hills.—The Tarrh runs along the north end of the parish, and divides it from Linton and Newlands. It abounds with a trout of a superior size and flavour from what is caught in the neighbouring rivers, owing perhaps to the stillness with which the river flows, and the abundant provision to be met with in its numerous pools. A few large trout or small salmon come up this stream from the Tweed after a flood; but, as they only appear in spawning time, they are unwholesome food.

The highest hill is Hell's Cleugh, on the summit of which is a small cairn, called the *Pyked stone*, the boundary of three parishes, viz. Stobo, Broughton, and Kirkurd. From this cairn is a view of the country beyond the Forth, and a chain of mountains, from the east part of Fife, as far as Dunbartonshire. South of the Forth, the view extends as far east as North Berwick; likewise to the Eildon Hills near Melrose, and Cheviot Hills in Northumberland. The height of this hill above the level of the sea was found by Captain Armstrong, who made a survey of the county, to be 2100 feet.

Proprietors.—There are four heritors, of whom only one resides at present in the parish. Mr Carmichael of Skirling, and Mr Lawson of Cairnmuir, have their principal seats here. The mansion-house of Kirkurd is a modern building, with an extensive policy. In the gardens are a green-house, an ice-house, and 3 small hot-houses. This place was vastly beautified

beautified and improved by the late worthy proprietor, John Earl of Hyndford, who left Kirkurd, and other valuable estates, to his grandnephew John Carmichael of Skirling. Mr Lawson has lately built at New Cairnmuir, or Netberurd, a large and elegant house. Around it are several inclosures and plantations of value.

Statistical Table.

Ploughs - - -	22	Old houses pulled down,	
Carts - - - -	50	ditto - - - -	11
Horses young and old	70	Married persons -	86
Cows and young cattle	200	Unmarried men above 20	28
Sheep - - - -	2000	----- women ditto	48
Valued rent, Scotch		Widowers - - - -	5
L. 1108:15:4		Widows - - - -	10
Real rent, Sterling, about	L. 850	Of the established	
Farms above 50 l. each	3	Church - - - -	250
----- under 50 l. -	10	Burgher Seceders -	23
Population in 1755 -	310	Antiburgher ditto -	11
----- in 1792 -	288	Relief ditto - - -	3
Males - - - -	131	Episcopalians - - -	1
Females. - - - -	157	Clergyman - - - -	1
Under 10 - - - -	55	Merchant - - - -	1
Between 10 and 20 -	56	Schoolmaster - - -	1
----- 20 and 50 -	113	Innkeeper - - - -	1
----- 50 and 70 -	58	Smiths - - - - -	3
----- 70 and 80 -	6	Carpenters - - - -	3
Families - - - -	65	Weavers and apprentices	4
Houses uninhabited -	6	Shoemakers and ditto -	2
Houses built within 10		Tailors and ditto - -	4
years preceding 1792	12	Gardeners and ditto -	3
		Millers - - - - -	2

Overseer

Overseer	-	-	1	Marriages, ditto	-	33
Male servants	-	-	44	Buried, ditto, in the pa-		
Female ditto	-	-	38	rish	-	34
Day-labourers	-	-	9	Buried, ditto, from other		
Student	-	-	1	parishes	-	32
Baptisms for 10 years,						
from 1783 to 1792.				51		

Agriculture, &c.—About 480 acres are kept in tillage. The common mode of farming in the croft land, (which receives all the house dung of the farms), is to have a third part under pease, potatoes, and turnips, as cleaning and meliorating crops; which third, the succeeding year (if not dunged with the cleaning crops) is dunged for bear, and next year is sown with oats. Clover, and, in a great measure, turnips, are excluded from the rotation, from the want of inclosures, and the difficulty of defending them from the sheep in winter. There may be about 240 acres of croft managed in this way, viz. 80 in pease, potatoes, turnips, and lint; 80 in bear, and 80 in oats, in a year. The remaining 240 acres under tillage are outfield, and are manured by the cattle folded at night in summer, to keep them from the growing corns. The folds are inclosures made of sod, at the expence of about 1½ d. or 2 d. the running rood of 6 yards, at 4½ feet in height. The leys intended to be brought into tillage are inclosed in this manner early in the spring; the sheep and black cattle are kept in distinct folds; and 10 score of sheep may dung in this way about 3 acres in a season. When the corns are got off the fields in harvest, the folds are levelled, and the ground ploughed. Three crops of oats are, in general, taken successively after folding; but, when the folded land is also limed on the sward, 5 crops are sometimes taken. The land is then left to collect sward as

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it may. This is the general description of the treatment of the land in tillage; but there are several exceptions, where a better system is introduced; and the Norfolk system of a rotation of four, seems to be approved of, where there is opportunity to carry it into practice. In a few instances, the dairy farming has been introduced as the chief article of profit.

The Scotch plough is generally used, with two strong horses, except in 4 instances with four. Small's plough has likewise been introduced. The horses, young and old, in this parish, will amount to about 70. A few are reared for the market, and sold when young; but the generality is for private use, and to supply the waste of the old. Thirty head of black cattle, at an average of 4*l.* each, may be sold yearly. The milch cows are, at an average, from 16 to 28 stones weight. They produce from 4 to 10 Scotch pints of milk *per day*, a few 16 or 18. The sheep are of the common Scotch breed. The number that can be spared is sold at different periods. In April, when big with young, at 10*l.* or 11*l.* *per score*; in September, to the butcher, or for further feeding, about 7*l.* *per score*. The lambs are sold in July from 2*l.* 10*s.* to 4*l.* *per score*. What remains after these different *drawings*, (as they are termed), are kept for stock; they are all laid with butter or oil, and tar, about Martinmas. The wool of late years has been rapidly rising in value. It was sold last year, after being washed, at 6*s.* 4*d.* and 6*s.* 6*d.* *per stone*; 7 or 8 fleeces of the washed wool generally go to the stone.

Between 500 and 600 acres of land are inclosed, a considerable part of which is well sheltered with trees, and sufficiently watered. This land, on an average, may be worth 16*s.* *per acre*. About 150 of these acres, divided into parks of different sizes, command, by grazing, 160*l.* *per annum*.

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The lands are inclosed by hedge and ditch. The hedges and ditches are frequently in double rows, at the distance of a few feet from each other.

There are many valuable plantations both of the different kinds of hard wood, and the various species of fir. Some of these are arrived at their full growth, and young trees are gradually coming up to supply the waste of the old. The number of acres planted will amount to upwards of 200. There are no natural woods in the parish*.

Services, &c.—A few services are still performed by the tenants, such as driving of coals, casting, winnowing, and driving peats home. There are a considerable number, too, of kain hens paid. There is a public-house in the parish for the accommodation of travellers. It has no bad effect on the morals of the people, who are, in general, a set of sober and industrious men. Two great roads pass through this parish, the one from Edinburgh to Moffat, the other, lately made, from Peebles to Glasgow. They are upheld by road-makers, and are kept in tolerable repair. The statute labour

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* In consequence of manufactures established in this, and particularly in the neighbouring county, there is a great demand for work people. Servants have of course become rather scarce in this part of the country. The wages are rising every year. A good ploughman earns 6 guineas, or upwards, and female servants from 3*l.* to 4*l.* *per annum*, with their victuals. There is no market here for provisions. The butcher meat is brought from Peebles, Biggar, or Edinburgh. Butter is sold, in general, at 8*d.* *per lib.*; ewe milk cheese at 6*s.* 6*d.* cow milk at 4*s.* *per stone*; eggs in summer, 4*d.* in winter, 6*d.* *per dozen*; chickens 8*d.* a pair; hens 1*s.* ducks 10*d.* a piece. Day-labourers earn *per day*, in winter, 6*d.* in summer 8*d.* with their victuals. Ditches, casting, and operations of that kind, are generally done by the piece, from 9*d.* to 1*s.* the running rood of 6 yards. Piece work is preferred by labourers. Carpenters wages are 1*s.* a day, masons 1*s.* 4*d.* taylor's 8*d.*

was converted some years ago by act of Parliament. The bridges are kept in excellent order.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church was rebuilt in 1766, when it was removed about half a mile westward from its former situation in Kirkurd policy. Around it there is a piece of ground appropriated for burying; but, though this burial-ground has been now opened for upwards of 20 years, the old church-yard, for various reasons, is still very much used. The stipend, with the addition of a manse, and a glebe of 19 acres, will amount to upwards of 80 l. Sterling. The manse, offices, and glebe, which were formerly at a considerable distance from both kirks, are now in the neighbourhood of the new. The manse and offices were all new built in 1788. The greatest part of the new glebe (which was exchanged for the old) has been inclosed by the minister, at his own expence, with hedge and ditch. John Carmichael, Esq; of Skirling is patron.

Poor.—As there are no rates, the poor are supported from the weekly collections in the church, by dues at proclamations for marriage, by dues for mort-cloths, and the interest of a capital of 140 l. at 5 per cent.

Average of the annual expences of supporting the Poor.

	No. of Poor.	Expence.
For 5 years preceding 1758, -	6 $\frac{3}{4}$ -	L. 5 4 0 $\frac{4}{7}$
----- 1778, -	10 $\frac{1}{4}$ -	10 9 6 $\frac{3}{4}$
For 10 years preceding 1792, -	6 $\frac{6}{10}$ -	9 7 8 $\frac{7}{10}$

In 1782, the whole crop of oats in the parish was frost bitten. It was not got in before the month of December. The meal was exceedingly bad, and sold at 2 l. 5 s. per load.
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The farmers sustained great losses, after all the deductions that was made of their rents by the lairds. They bought the whole of their seed-oats next spring from Lothian and Roxburghshire. One heritor commissioned a considerable quantity of oats from Essex, sowed part of them himself, and distributed part among his tenants. The kirk-session bought several loads of oat-meal, and sold it to cottars and householders at 1s. the peck. This, with the white beans brought from Leith, gave great relief. They have received this year (1792) to lay up a few loads of oat and bear meal, and sell it out at a reduced price, in case these articles should rise to an extravagant rate.

A society was established in this parish 6 years ago, named *the Kirkward Friendly Society*, in order to raise a fund for the relief of distressed members. Each member pays 2s. at entry, and 4s. 4d. a year, and continues 3 years before he receives any benefit; at the end of which time, if he is unable to work, is entitled to 2s. *per week*. The capital is now 80 l. As the fund increases, they intend to make a small provision for their widows. For the two last years, the clergy have countenanced this society, by giving a sermon at the annual meeting. The collection at that time is for behoof of the Society.

School.—The schoolmaster's salary is 8 l. 6s. 8d. with a house and garden. The school and schoolmaster's house were all new built, with slated roofs, in 1773. The number of scholars, at an average, is about 20. The school wages are, for reading, 1s. *per quarter*; for writing, 1s. 6d.; for arithmetic, 2s. The schoolmaster is also session-clerk and precentor, whose salary is 1 l. *per annum*, besides perquisites, for proclamations of marriages, recording of baptisms, and writing

ting testimonials, amounting to about 10 s. yearly at an average.

Miscellaneous Observations.—There is a copious sulphureous spring near Kirkurd-house. A chemical analysis was made of it some years ago by Dr Black of Edinburgh, by which it was found to be stronger than the sulphureous water at Moffat, but weaker than that at Harrogate. It has been used of late with success in several distempers. Coal, peat, and turf, are all used here for fuel. In gentlemens families, coals are always burnt; they are situated at 8 or 9 miles distance. Peats, to a great extent and depth, and of a very superior quality, are found in one farm in this parish; they are not cast. The tenants have a privilege of casting peats in different mosses in the parish of Linton, and consequently avail themselves of that privilege.

Until 1752, the large estate of Kirkurd was the resident property of Geddes of Rachan for 1100 years, while Rachan, from whence the title was taken, is reported to have been in the possession of the Geddes's for 1300 years. James Geddes of Rachan was born in this parish in 1710, was educated for, and practised several years at, the bar, but died of a consumption before he arrived at the age of 40. He published an Essay on the Composition and Manner of Writing of the Ancients, and left behind him several other tracts*.

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* In the parks of Kirkurd are two small mounts, called the *Castle* and *Law*. They are surrounded with a dike of an irregular form. Mr Gordon, in his Itinerary, thinks them artificial, but does not form any conjecture as to their use. There is to the east of these, a circular fortification on an eminence near Ladyurd, called the *Rings*, and another to the west, on the farm of Lochurd, called the *Ghesters*; hence they are supposed to have been a military erection; and a place called *Camprigend*, a mile south to the last of these, farther confirms this idea.

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Among the advantages formerly mentioned which this parish enjoys, may be added its vicinity to lime; but, notwithstanding of the acknowledged advantages arising from lime to land, the farmers here have not generally (as yet) availed themselves of it. One disadvantage which this place labours under, (and which was specified above), is the exaction of services; but there is another grievance under which the farmers groan, and which calls loudly for redress, and that is the payment of multure. The tenants are thirled to the mills, and pay a high multure, which is a great bar to improvement. By thirlage a forced employment is given to mills, for which there would be no demand, if things were left to their natural course. Though the generality of the country around is fitter for sheep pasture than tillage, yet no less than four corn-mills are found on the Water of Tarth, all in the space of about a mile and a half, two of which are situated within this parish.

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More than 30 years ago, there was found in the Mount-hill a clay urn full of bones, which was surrounded with four broad stones, and covered with a stone on the top. There was lately found at the bottom of the same hill, a stone coffin, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep. Its bottom was gravel, the sides built of several stones, and the cover one entire stone. The body was not lying at full length, as, by the size of the bones, it appeared to have been about 6 feet long. The bones appeared entire when first discovered; but, upon being exposed to the air, and lifted up by the hand, they crumbled to dust. There was found among the bones three flint stones, one resembling a halbert, another of a circular form, and the third cylindrical. The first is supposed to be the antient weapon called the *stone celt*, the other were two kinds of warlike instruments. There was also discovered a small ring. This is a Droidical amulet; and it was an indication that a person of rank was here interred.

Hairstones, so named, perhaps, from a few erect stones arranged circularly, is said to have been a place for religious worship. In the immediate neighbourhood is the Kirkdean and Temple lands.