

## NUMBER XVI.

## PARISH OF DUNNOTTAR.

(County of Kincardine—Presbytery of Fordoun—Synod of Angus and Mearns.)

By the Rev. Mr. JAMES WALKER, Minister.

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*Name, Extent, and Situation.*

**D**UNNOTTAR is said to have been anciently written *Dunotyr*, which is of Gaelic original, derived from the situation of the old castle bearing that name, the ruins of which stand upon a rock on the coast, almost insulated from the land.—This parish is nearly of a triangular form, extending about 4 miles on each side. It is divided almost into two equal parts, by a den, or hollow, which takes its origin at the N. E. angle; and, widening as it reaches the southern boundary, gives beginning to the great *Flow*, or *Hollow of the Mearns*; which also extends through the shire of Angus, under the name of Strathmore; being bounded all along, on the W., by the chain of the Grampian mountains, which reach obliquely across the island, from this neighbourhood to the west coast\*.

*Surface,*

\* Here it may be observed, that along this hollow appears to have been the line

*Surface, Soil, and Minerals.*—The surface of this parish, in general, is uneven, with small risings, but no considerable hill. The soil is various: Toward the sea coast, loamy and clayey; in the middle, wet and mossy; towards the West, gravelly and moorish. The *strata* appear, both from the sea coast and inland quarries, to *slope* toward the S. W.; which observation is also applicable to all the country round. The soil is full of round small stones, of various kinds, having the appearance of being water-worn. These stones are very useful for improvement, in filling drains in wet land, almost every field having sufficiency in itself; and the harbour is surrounded with excellent free-stone quarries, of a most durable quality, which prove extremely valuable for building.

*Climate, Diseases, Rivulets, &c.*—The air and climate here are much the same as along the whole east coast; variable,  
giving

line of march, which all invaders from England followed, at the different periods when they over-ran Scotland. To this they were particularly directed, by the fordable passages of the river Tay, above the flow of the tide at Perth, and confined by the Grampian chain on the west. The progress of the Romans, particularly, in this direction, is evident, from a regular series of encampments all the way along the foot of the hills. And it appears probable, that in this neighbourhood, where the hills join with the sea, the famous battle was fought, narrated by TACITUS, of the Scotch, under GALGACUS, with the Romans, stopt at the end of their progress, by the mountains and morasses; which are described as being at the foot of the Grampians, in sight of the Roman fleet. But at no other place in Scotland do the Grampian hills approach the sea. And in the neighbouring parish of Fetteresso, about three miles to the northward of this place, there are the remains of a very large irregular camp in the hills, strongly entrenched on the quarter next the sea. This would seem to have belonged to the Scotch army; whereas, at the distance of about two miles farther down, close to a flat sea beach, there were evident vestiges of a Roman camp, a few years ago, though they are now defaced by the improvement of the ground. And upon a moor nigh to the supposed Scotch camp, there are a number of tumuli, indicating it to have been the field of battle.

giving occasion to rheumatism and consumption; but not remarkable for any other disease. Agues are here quite unknown, though prevalent through all the parishes to the southward.—No rivers run through this parish, but several small rivulets, which chiefly find their way into the *Carron* upon the N.; the rest of the water running toward the southern boundary, and forming there a small stream. In the *Carron* there are excellent trouts, and at its mouth a salmon fishing in the sea, of which the produce is very considerable.

*Sea Coast and Fowls.*—The sea coast is very bold, formed of the *plumb-pudding rock*, and containing several deep caves. The most remarkable part of the coast is called *Fowls-beugh*, about a mile in extent, and 30 fathoms high, inhabited by sea fowls; such as gulls, coots, and kittyweaks, in such numbers, that it is an employment, during the summer months, to climb these perpendicular rocks, by the help of a rope tied round a man's middle, in which he is let down from the top to catch the fowls. The feathers and down of these fowls are in great demand; and the kittyweaks, whose flesh resembles that of solan geese, are sold at high prices in the neighbouring towns. A rent of about 2l. 10s. is paid to the proprietor for the liberty of catching the fowls: And 6 men are commonly employed in the work; 5 of these being required to let down and draw up the person in the rope. These sea fowls are all migratory, appearing in April, and removing southward in September.

*Fish and Kelp.*—The fishing, upon this part of the coast, has much declined for some years past, the sea not producing near its usual quantity: But what are caught, are of excellent quality. Three boats and a yawl, with 6 men in each, are commonly

commonly employed from this parish. The fish caught are cod, ling, had locks, whittings, and flounders; besides a considerable quantity of crabs and lobsters, which are mostly consumed in the neighbourhood. Some kelp is made along this coast, once in three years, the sea weed requiring that time to grow. But the quantity is very inconsiderable.

*Town and Harbour.*—At the N. E. corner of the parish, where the Carron runs into the sea, is situated the small town of *STONEHAVEN*, or *STONEHIVE*. The principal circumstance observable with respect to it, is its harbour, for which there is the best natural situation. It is a basin, sheltered from the S. E. by a very high rock, which stands out into the sea; and on the N. E. there is a head, or quay, which in some measure defends it from that quarter. At high tides there is a depth of 22 feet water at the entrance. If the present quay were carried farther out, and another built opposite to it, vessels could lie in perfect safety. And it would be of the utmost importance to all the shipping upon the E. coast of Scotland, that some improvement of this kind were made: For there is not a harbour betwixt the Frith of Forth and Cromarty, that vessels in distress can so easily get into; as all the sea-faring people can bear witness. A small aid from government would be requisite for this improvement, to be joined to the shore-dues and private contributions.

*Commerce and Government.*—There is very little trade here, except by 3 or 4 small vessels, which are employed for supplying the neighbourhood, in bringing lime and coals from Sunderland and the Frith of Forth, with a few cargoes of wood, iron and flax from the Baltic\*. The town consists of

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\* This town, as well as the rest of the parish, has laboured under a great disadvantage

feus granted by the *Earl Marjchal* of Scotland, within whose estate it was situated. It is a burgh of barony, of which the jurisdiction, by charter, is veiled in magistrates, chosen by the superior and feuers. The principal support of the town has been derived from the sheriff court of the county, which has its seat here;—retail shops for the accommodation of the neighbourhood;—commission upon flax given out to spin for manufactures in Aberdeen and Montrose;—and the provision for shipping, which occasionally put in here, or are detained by contrary winds.—The number of procurators, or attornies, before the sheriff court, is 4.

*Manufactures.*—In point of natural situation, no place has greater advantages, for the establishment of manufactures, than Stonehaven, having a good sea port, an excellent command of running water, a populous district of country around it, and abounding with the best spinners †. In the course of last year (1792), some branches of manufacture, of the Osnaburgh, sheeting, linen cheque, and cotton woolsey kinds, have been here set on foot, chiefly by merchants in Arbroath. These manufactures are as yet but in their infancy; but are  
proposed

disadvantage for many years past, by being part of the forfeitures of 1715, sold to the York Building Company. The affairs of that Company having fallen into disorder, about the year 1740, ever since that period there has been no superior to forward the trade, and superintend the police of Stonehaven. And few of its inhabitants being possessed of any stock, little was to be expected from them. Hence all improvement was prevented, and matters continued in the same state of backwardness.

† A considerable manufacture of sail-cloth was carried on here some years ago, by a merchant in Aberdeen, which employed about 50 looms within the town, and 15 in the neighbourhood. But though attended with great success, it was given up, upon the death of that gentleman, and an end put to the trade of the place since that period.

proposed to be considerably extended. Their present state is as follows :

The number of weavers employed is 42, who earn, at an average,

8s. 6d. per week, amounting in the year to	-	-	-	L. 928	4	0
Six flaxdressers, at 10s. per week, amounting to	-	-	-	156	0	0
Twelve labourers, 5s. per week,	-	-	-	156	0	0
Total wages paid to manufacturers in the year,				L. 1240	4	0

And, since the commencement of the present year (1793), another manufacture of fail-cloth has been established, containing 12 looms, requiring a capital of 300l. each. But to shew to what extent the manufactures might be carried here, it is to be observed, that there are wages given to spinners in this neighbourhood, by persons in Stonehaven, who give out flax for manufacturers here and in other places, to the annual amount of 2652l. 9s. 6d. Of this sum, a large proportion is on account of manufactures in Aberdeen, Montrose, and Arbroath, which have the burden of carriage of the flax and return of the yarn, to and from these towns, at the respective distances of 15, 22, and 36 miles. To Montrose alone, there are sent, weekly, at an average, 30 cwt. of yarn throughout the year.

*Manner of Living.*—The style of living here is much above what might be supposed in so small a town, possessed of so little trade. But it is much to be regretted, that among the tradesmen, and lower sort of people, the practice of drinking spirits is much too prevalent, to the ruin of their morals, health, and circumstances. The native beverage of our country, ale, is despised, though it is fitted to support the labourer for his work, and encourages agriculture and manufactures; while spirits, which enervate body and mind, also consume the profit of labour.

*Revenue, Imports, &c.*—The public revenue of Stonehaven consists chiefly of the shore dues, amounting annually to about 45*l.*, in which there has been a very great increase of late years, from the great quantity of lime brought by sea, for the improvement of lands in the neighbourhood.—Upon an average of 3 years, 10,566 bolls yearly have been imported from Sunderland and from the Frith of Forth, each boll being 128 Scotch pints. The rest of the revenue arises from 4 fairs in the year, and some small patches of ground, producing together about 20*l.* more. This sum, if properly applied, would do much to the improvement of the harbour: But, till of late years, it has been levied to little account. From this fund, however, the town has lately been provided in excellent water, conveyed in leaden pipes; the streets put in good repair; and a new steeple built, with a public clock.

*Fuel.*—No lime-stone or coals have ever been discovered in this neighbourhood; nor are there the least indications of them. The general fuel of Stonehaven, is coals, however, which are brought partly from the Frith of Forth, and partly from Newcastle and Sunderland: The Scotch coal at the usual rate of 8*s.* 6*d.* per boll, of 72 stone; the English at 3*s.* for 24 stone avoirdupoise; of which the last are found cheapest and most economical\*. But while coals are so heavily taxed, the greatest bar is laid in the way of manufactures and improvement; which is here the more sensibly felt, as our neighbours in Forfarshire, from a local exception, are free from this obnoxious tax, no duty being paid, on Scotch coal, all along the coast of Fife and Angus, till they are brought to the borders of this county. But it is with great pleasure we understand, that government have it in view to grant us relief in this necessary article. Peats in this neighbourhood  
are

\* In 1793, Scotch coal was up at 11*s.*, and English at 3*s.* 6*d.*

are so very distant (about 6 miles), that every person is convinced that coals, even high priced as they are, yield the cheapest fire.

*Population.*—Notwithstanding all the disadvantages this parish has long laboured under, there has been a gradual increase of the population within these 40 years, as appears from the following comparative view of several exact enumerations, taken at different periods.

				<i>Increase</i>
In 1755, the total number of souls, returned to Dr. Webster, was	1570			
In 1772, there were in the town,	923,	in the country, 939;	total 1862	292
In 1775, —————	927,	————— 942;	—— 1869	7
In 1791, —————	1012,	————— 894;	—— 1906	37
In 1792, —————	1072,	————— 890;	—— 1962	56
Total increase within these 40 years, - - -				392

It appears, however, that the number has been almost stationary for the last 20 years, with only a small addition in the town, of late, owing to the establishment of the new manufactures, and a trifling decrease in the country, from the expulsion of cottagers by the farmers.

It has been found impossible to keep bills of mortality, with any accuracy, owing to several circumstances. The people never were in the practice of regularly giving in their childrens names for registration, particularly the Dissenters; and since the imposition of the late tax, hardly any have applied for that purpose\*. The number of births entered on the

\* In the law respecting the tax on births and burials, there appears a defect of not enacting a compulsory upon people to register, agreeable to the spirit of the act, by empowering the keeper of each parish register to sue defaulters.

the register, has generally been only about 25. The number of marriages is ascertained, by the proclamation list, to be, at an average, 15. A register of deaths has never been attempted here; and to attain any accuracy in it, would be still more difficult than with respect to births, as not one half of the people who die in this parish are buried within it, but are carried to the neighbouring parish of Fetteresso, partly to the church-yard there, and partly to the burying ground of an old chapel within its bounds †.

*Produce.*—With respect to produce, this parish is more than sufficient to supply itself, affording considerable quantities of bear, barley and meal, to the Aberdeen market, which forms the standard price here, after deducting the expence of carriage. Since the late sale of the York Buildings Company's lands,

and recover a penalty: whereas it is only enacted, that every person craving a registration, shall pay such a tax. A new regulation to this purpose appears to be a very proper improvement of our police.

† From the slightest observation, the deaths appear considerably to exceed the births, on account of numbers of old people, and persons decayed, both in health and circumstances, who retire to Stonehaven from the neighbouring parishes, when unable to hold possessions in the country. It is also observable, that notwithstanding the decay of manufactures for several years, already mentioned, yet the population of Stonehaven not only continued nearly the same, but also a considerable addition of buildings has spread out from it, into the neighbouring parish of Fetteresso, which is separated from it only by the Carron. This circumstance is to be explained from the state of the adjacent country. Upon the sale of the York Building Company's lands in the parishes of Dunnotar and Fetteresso, a considerable revolution took place, by ejected cottagers removing from the country to the town. And from the progress of improvement upon these estates, since that time, not only these persons find employment as day-labourers, but a number of strangers from other places have been drawn hither for the same purpose. All these have sought residence in Stonehaven; which has occasioned the increase of houses, and kept up the population without the assistance of manufactures or trade.

lands, enclosing and planting have been rapidly carried forward. Hard wood and larches are found to succeed best, particularly the latter. Scotch firs are most backward.—The most general crops of grain are bear and oats, with very little barley, and no wheat. Turnips and potatoes are likewise very much cultivated. The culture of turnips particularly, has been greatly extended, which here succeed remarkably well. Formerly they were chiefly used for fattening cattle; but, of late, the high prices have induced most people to use them for rearing. They are commonly sown in broad cast with most advantage, the soil being generally dry. A considerable quantity of clover and rye-grass is now sown; but not so much as is requisite for good farming; the horses being chiefly fed upon straw, and the ground not sufficiently rested after improvement by fallow and lime.

*State of Property.*—A very accurate map of this county was executed in the year 1774; by which it appears, that in the parish of Dunnottar there are 6418 Scotch acres; of which about 3600 may be supposed arable, the rest being green pasture and moor. The greatest part of the land lies open; and much of it is let in small parcels, from 4 to 10 acres. The rent is various, according to the different soils and the distance from Stonehaven, being from 8s. to 2l. per acre. Few farms are above 50l. rent. The whole rent of the parish is about 2100l. The heritors are 4 in number, of whom only 1 resides within its bounds.

*Cattle.*—The labour is here chiefly performed by horses; there being 188 work horses in the parish, and only 24 oxen.—There is only 1 farm in the parish with a stock of sheep; but they have never been attended with any success.

*Prices of Labour.*—The inhabitants of the country parishes are mostly farmers and cottagers, with very few tradesmen; these latter commonly residing in Stonehaven. Of late, the practice, of farmers letting ground to cottagers who do their work, is much laid aside; and they either keep their servants in their own families, or depend upon labourers from the town. The ordinary wages of a farm servant or ploughman, living in his master's family, are from 6*l.* to 7*l.* per annum: The wages of a labourer, per day, from 10*d.* to 1*s.*, without victuals; and, in harvest, the same wages, with victuals. The women, in this neighbourhood, are generally employed in spinning flax to manufacturers in Aberdeen and Montrose, as well as Stonehaven, by which they gain, in ordinary times, about 3*s.* per week. But of late, the price of spinning has so much advanced, by the increased demand, that many reach as high as 4*s.* per week. Of consequence, the wages of women servants are also raised to about 2*l.* 10*s.*, and 3*l.* per annum; and 1*l.* for harvest work, when engaged for by itself.

*Poor.*—Since the introduction of improvements in land, and the establishment of manufactures in this neighbourhood, the number of poor in Stonehaven has greatly increased; partly owing to the cottagers and old people being banished from the country around, and repairing to the town; and partly to the luxury too commonly introduced by high wages among labourers and tradesmen; so that they still rise in their expences above the proportion of their gains. The number of poor now receiving alms in this parish is 71, of whom 25 are resident in the country, and 46 in the town. The annual sum expended upon them, of public charity, is about 50*l.*, of which 32*l.* arises from the weekly collections at the church, upon an average of several years past; and the rest from interest

terest of a sum funded for their benefit, and the several incidents in the parish, such as fines, proclamation of banns, and burials. In the country, the poor, being generally sober and industrious, earn a large share of their own maintenance. In the town, besides relief from the public funds, the poor receive frequent supplies from charitable persons, in private, otherwise a legal assessment would be necessary; which has never yet taken place in this part of the country.

*Ecclesiastical State and School.*—The established clergyman, by a late augmentation, has a living of about £151. value, besides a glebe, which might rent at about 81. The church was rebuilt in 1782, and the manse in 1786. In Stonehaven there are 2 dissenting meetings, one of the qualified Episcopalians of the Church of England; the other of Scotch Episcopalians\*; to each of which belong about 150 souls.—The parish school is placed in Stonehaven, where there is a very considerable number of scholars, having sometimes amounted to 100. The salary and emoluments may be about 401.; and in some years have amounted to 501. in proportion to the number of scholars, and the activity of the teacher †.

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*Roads.*

\* The Episcopal nonjurant principle was most prevalent in this neighbourhood, for many years after the late rebellions, owing to attachment to the forfeited *MARISCHAL* family. But the spirit of that sect has here subsided, as well as in other places; and the people of the different communions live together in the greatest harmony. As an instance of the liberality of mind subsisting among them, in the year 1782, when the parish church was rebuilding, the clergyman, with the congregation, had access to the qualified EPISCOPAL meeting-house, to perform divine service; and the two congregations were blended at each of the services.

† There are few objects, that merit more of the public attention than the education of youth, and the improvement of our schools, which, in general, throughout Scotland, are in a lamentable situation. It would seem, that by attempting

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*Roads.*—Two highways pass through this parish; the one directly for Perth, the other being the post road from Edinburgh along the coast, by Dundee, Arbroath, and Montrose; which two roads, uniting at Stonehaven, are continued in one to Aberdeen. It must be acknowledged, that no highways in Scotland are in worse condition; the statute labour having been very imperfectly applied, although there is reason to believe, it would have been tolerably sufficient for their support, if commuted for money; the country being populous, and there being no great towns to occasion heavy carriages. The same remark may be applied to the greatest part of this country. But, by the ruinous state into which the highways have fallen, the county have become sensible of the necessity of turnpikes, for which an application is resolved to be made to parliament next session, as well as for a commutation of the statute labour.

*Castle.*—The CASTLE of DUNNOTTAR, now in ruins, is the only antiquity, in this parish, deserving particular attention. It is situated on a perpendicular rock, level on the top, of several acres extent, projecting into the sea, and almost separated from the land by a very deep chasm. By this situation, it forms one of the most majestic ruins in Scotland. From some old papers still extant †, it appears, that upon this rock was formerly situated the parish church; and that the fortress

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to make them all *Latin* schools, their end is much lost. Perhaps the erection of only a few of these, with an annual visitation of the whole, by the Commissioners of Supply and Presbytery of the bounds, would be attended with the best effects. These visitors might also have the power of fixing and augmenting the salary each year, to be assessed upon the respective parishes, according to the merit of the teacher.

† These papers are in the custody of Mr. KEITH of RAVELSTONE, who can give a particular account of this place.

was built there, during the contest between the parties of BRUCE and BALIOL, by an ancestor of the Marischal family; who acquired this right, upon condition of building a parish church in a more convenient place, which probably occasioned a translation to the present situation. Before the use of artillery, this castle, from its situation, must have been altogether impregnable †; but, by the modern art of war, could be easily

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approached,

† Its great reputation for strength gave occasion to a circumstance which rendered it very remarkable. The REGALIA of SCOTLAND (the crown, sceptre and sword), were deposited here, in the year 1661, to preserve them from the English army, which over-ran this country during the civil wars of that period. Being lodged in this place by order of the Privy Council of Scotland, Earl MARISCAL, proprietor of the castle, obtained from the public a garrison, with an order for suitable ammunition and provisions. He, joining the King's forces in England, appointed GEORGE OGILVY of BARRAS, a neighbouring proprietor, who had been officer for several years in the King's service, to be lieutenant governor of the castle. This trust Mr. Ogilvy maintained with the greatest resolution. For after all the other forts and places of strength in Scotland were reduced by the English army, a body of troops, under the command of Lambert, sat down before Dunottar. It was first summoned to surrender in November 1651, and repeatedly afterwards during the course of the winter. About the beginning of May following, the siege was converted into a blockade. And though Governor OGILVY was in the greatest straits for provisions and ammunition; with a most scanty garrison, and though he received orders from the Earl Marischal, by that time a prisoner in London, to deliver up the place, and was repeatedly urged by the Chancellor of Scotland, and others, to convey away the regalia to some secure place in the Highlands, and thereafter capitulate; yet he still held out, till pressed by famine, and by the mutiny of the garrison, and having found means to convey the regalia privately to the clergyman of Kincrieff, in which parish Mr. Ogilvy's property chiefly lay, he at last capitulated upon honourable terms. The English, not finding the regalia, as they expected, were highly disappointed, and shut up the Governor and his wife close prisoners for a year, using every severity or allurements for years afterwards, to induce them to a discovery: But in vain. Mr. Ogilvy continued his fidelity during all the interval, till the restoration of Charles II.; when, addressing him, he made known his trust, and received orders to deliver the regalia to the Earl

approached, and commanded on every side. In the year 1685, Dunnottar Castle was employed as a place of confinement for a body of Presbyterians, to the number of 167 men and women, who had been seized at different times in the west of Scotland, during the persecution under Charles II.; and after being some time prisoners in Edinburgh, were sent to Dunnottar, upon the news of Argyll's invasion. Here they were treated with the greatest cruelty, which is particularly described in *Woodrow's History*; the whole number being confined, during the warmest season of the year, in one vault, which is still to be seen entire, and called "*the Whig's Vault.*" A list of their names is upon record, in the Sheriff-court office of the county; and a grave stone, in the church-yard of Dunnottar, placed upon a number of them who died under confinement, narrates the fact. The false policy of those times requires no comment: And it must afford satisfaction to every liberal mind to reflect, that the principles of toleration are now fully established; which not only secure the rights of conscience to every individual, but also tend, in a high degree, to preserve the peace of society, if not abused and perverted by factious and designing men.

#### Character.

Earl Marischal, who granted a receipt for them, which is in the custody of the family of Barras at this time.

For all this steady service to the Crown, attended in its consequences with many years confinement, and much loss of property, Governor Ogilvy received no farther mark of royal favour, or reward, but the title of *Baronet*, and a new coat of arms, expressive of the action, as the motto bears, "*PRÆCLARUM REGI ET REGNO SERVITIUM;*" while some other person, of higher interest, claiming merit on the same ground, received ample honours and emoluments. The whole original letters, relating to the siege of Dunnottar, and the preservation of the regalia, are in the possession of Sir DAVID OGILVY, present proprietor of BARRAS, in this parish.

*Character.*—The labouring people in the country, in general, are very sober and industrious. Those in the town, are of the same character as in other towns along this coast. It is to be regretted, that the depopulation of the country, by banishing cottagers into towns, has so much prevailed every where of late; by which the breed of men is enervated, their morals corrupted, and the strength of the state impaired. It is from the temperate and healthy family of the country labourer, or tradesman, and not from the loathsome sink of a town, that the race is to be sought, who are to cultivate our fields, or defend our property in the time of danger. In general, the character, of charity may with great justice be ascribed to the body of the people here; so that no subject of distress can be long without relief voluntarily offered. And perhaps, in a moral view, the encouragement of THIS VIRTUE may be none of the least arguments against the establishment of poor's rates. For the exercise of private charity, and compassion, must always decline where there is a public assessment.

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