

## NUMBER XI.

## PARISH OF CAIRNY.

(COUNTY OF ABERDEEN, SYNOD OF MURRAY, PRESBYTERY OF STRATHBOGIE.)

*By the Rev. Mr. ALEXANDER CHALMERS.*

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*Situation, &c.*

CAIRNY is made up of the united parishes of Botary, Rathven, and part of Drumdelgy. This parish lies in the county of Aberdeen. It is a part of the lordship of Strathbogie, taken from the Cummins by King Robert Bruce, and given to Sir Adam Gordon. This was the original estate of the family of Gordon. Since that period they have extended their dominion from the E. to the W. Sea.

*Population, &c.*—According to Dr. Webster's report, the numbers then were 2690. It contains at present 2600 people. They consist of Presbyterians, Papists, and Episcopalians. They were more numerous at my settlement here; the decrease is chiefly -

chiefly owing to their wishing to reside in the neighbouring manufacturing villages of Huntly and Keith. The manufacturers there always find employment for a number of servants. The births are about 20 yearly; but indeed they cannot be well ascertained. Every person has his child baptized by his own pastor. They are careless of inserting them in the public register. The number of deaths cannot be known; for there are three church-yards in the parish: St. Peter's is indeed considered as the most holy ground, and consecrated to the Catholics. The diseases are generally of the inflammatory kind. Some years the small-pox makes great ravages. The country people are not yet reconciled to inoculation.

*Agriculture, &c.*—The soil is generally deep and good, especially in the lower part. If farming were encouraged, it is capable of producing grain for exportation. The ground is generally let out in small tenements or crofts. These are occupied by a number of tradesmen, who pay their rent by their business. The others breed some cattle; but indeed their rents are chiefly paid by the women spinning linen yarn. They always allot a piece of their land for sowing flax-seed, which turns out to great account. Were this branch attended to by the land proprietors, it would much increase the riches and prosperity of the country. The great tenants live upon their farms, but they depend especially on raising of cattle. The parish is tolerably well accommodated with grass. Large quantities are sold yearly. It may be said, that during winter, this parish contains about 3000 black cattle. This is not a sheep country, though there are many parcels in the parish. The stormy winters are unfavourable to these animals.

*Miscellaneous Observations.*—The people in the parish of Cairny are naturally sober and industrious. The late inclement  
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ment seasons have run them into arrear of rent. This hangs over, and much dispirits them. Were this passed from but in part, it would give new life to their endeavours.—Tradition says, that some of the hills in Cairny were once covered with stately oaks. Now they present their nakedness to every passenger. Not one tree has been planted here for 60 years, though the river and burn-sides are favourable to their growth. Hard wood is scarce, which will hurt both the farmer and manufacturer.—Good roads (which was the foundation of the prosperity of the south country), are unknown here. Our moss is exhausted, The people must go to Portfoj for coals, by a road swarming with bogs and stones.—In the statistical account of this country, the manufacturing villages of Huntly and Keith should never be forgot. They are the sources of much riches. They pay a great part of the landholders rent. Huntly promises to be the Paisley of the north. Here is a large importation of flax from Holland and Flanders. Here are bleachfields, weaving lincens and cotton; threads for Nottingham. It may be said that 500 l. weekly is in circulation for many months of the year. The town is increasing. The Duke of Gordon, the proprietor, is yearly giving off new feus. The town of Huntly is thriving amidst many difficulties. Portfoj, their sea-port, is 15 miles distant. Thence they bring their fuel, though the road is many times almost impassable.

Manufactures are of great importance in any country, and should always be encouraged. They enlarge our views, and introduce a spirit of liberty. A manufacturer has always more liberal notions than a farmer.

The manufacture of linen has introduced a certain cleanliness over all this country. It has almost banished the itch. On a holiday, or at a fair, it is pleasant to behold the people well dressed, showing away in their clean linen and thread-stockings.