

NUMBER XVI.

PARISH OF BALDERNOCK.

(PRESBYTERY OF DUNBARTON, COUNTY OF STIRLING, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND Ayr.)

*By the Rev. MR. JAMES COOPER, Minister.*

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*Name.*

**I**N the beginning of the reign of Alexander the II. the lands of Cartonbenach were conveyed to Maurice Galbraith by charter from Malduin Earl of Lennox. Soon after, in the year 1238, we find the same barony granted by a new charter, under the name of *Bathernock*, to Arthur son of Maurice Galbraith, with power to seize and condemn malefactors, on condition that the convicts should be hanged on the Earl's gallows. From the Galbraiths of Bathernock, chiefs of the name, descended the Galbraiths of Culcruich, Greenock, Killearn, and Balgair, which estates have all, except the last, passed, by females, long ago into families of other names. The family of Bathernock ended also in an heiress, and the estate, about the beginning of the 14th century, passed by marriage to David, son of Lord Hamilton,  
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and ancestor of the present John Hamilton, Esq; of Bardowie. From that time, the proprietor of the barony appears to have taken the title of Bardowie; and the title of Bathernock (now written Baldernock,) dropped by the family, was probably revived and perpetuated by bestowing it on the parish, when it came to be erected. But when that erection took place, or when the name Bathernock came to be written Baldernock, as at present, is uncertain. If a conjecture may be hazarded with respect to the name, we should rather suppose, that Baldernock was not a new name, but the original one revived, of which Bathernock was a corruption; and that Baldernock is also a corruption of Baldrinich, (*i. e.* Druidstown) it being highly probable, that this was a Druidical place of worship, as will appear from a remarkable monument of Druidism to be mentioned afterwards.

*Situation and Surface.*—It is situated within the county Stirling, in the presbytery of Dunbarton, and synod of Glasgow and Ayr. The surface is various. On the South, where it is bounded by the river Kelvin, there are six or seven hundred acres of rich flat land. The inundations of this river frequently blasted the hopes of the husbandman, by damaging, or sweeping away his luxuriant crops. To prevent such disasters, the proprietors, about 16 or 18 years ago, united in raising a bank upon the brink of the river: but there are seasons still, when it breaks over, or bursts through its barriers, to resume for a little its former desolating sway. From South to North there is a gradual ascent, pleasantly diversified by round swelling hills. The flat ground, before mentioned, is a rich loam; the rising grounds towards the East, are a clayey soil over till; and those towards the West, a light sharp soil over whin rock. On the North side there is some moorish ground, but the greater part of the parish is arable.

arable. Towards the South West lyes Bardowie Loch, covering about 70 acres. In it are plenty of pike and perch, of a good size and quality. The banks are pleasant, upon which is situated the house of Bardowie, within a few paces of the lake.

*Climate and Diseases.*—The air, on the high grounds especially, is extremely salubrious, and the inhabitants healthy. There are no diseases uncommon, or peculiar to the place, nor any, for a long time past, that could be called epidemical, unless we should rank slow fevers under this class. They make their appearance sometimes in the spring, but more frequently in the autumn, and spread through whole families, and from family to family. This is observed to happen chiefly among those whose houses are small, dirty, and not properly ventilated. It is to be regretted that the absurd, and not altogether innocent practice, of exposing themselves and their families, by unnecessary visits to those who have been seized with this infectious disease, but too much prevails. And it is also a subject of just regret, that the prejudice against inoculation of the small-pox still keeps hold of the minds of many in this part of the country. The poor children are thereby exposed to the danger of that disease in what they call the natural way; but the inoculation is equally well entitled to be called the natural way. The one way differs from the other in this only, that, by the inoculation, the infection is, by the tender and prudent care of the parents, communicated in that way which, by long experience, has been found most safe and easy; whereas, without the inoculation, the infection is, by careless and superstitious parents, left to be communicated from their own cloaths after visiting children under the disease, or by accidental intercourse of their children with persons who have the infection about their

cloaths, in that way which experience shows to be most severe and fatal.

*Population, &c.*—In the month of April 1794, the number of families was 137, of persons 620, of whom there are,

Under 10 years of age	136
Between 10 and 20	133
———— 20 and 50	242
———— 50 and 70	98
———— 70 and 85	11
	————
Total	620

There are at present in this parish no instances of remarkable longevity.

Bachelors from 20 to 40	45
———— ——— 40 to 60	7
———— ——— above 60	2
Widowers from 20 to 60	0
———— ——— Upwards of 60	10
Yearly average of baptisms	18
———— ——— — Marriages	6

*Occupations.*—The greater part of the inhabitants of this parish devote their time to that most innocent and most useful of secular employments, the cultivation of the earth. There are 45 farmers, including 12 feuars, who cultivate their own grounds; 36 labourers, 43 male servants, all labourers, 38 female servants, almost all labourers, 10 weavers of household cloth, 1 taylor, 3 shoe-makers, 3 masons, 3 carpenters, 2 millers, 2 gardeners, 2 smiths, 1 engraver, 1 flax-dresser, 4 miners, and one man who exercises the several occupations of weaver, constable, physician, surgeon, apothecary, and man-midwife.

*Character.*—The people are, in general, remarkable for a sober and regular deportment; an advantage, in a great measure,

measure, to be ascribed to their occupation, and to want of manufactures, whose boasted benefits make but a poor compensation for their baneful influence on the morals of the people.

*Rent of the Parish.*—The valuation of the parish is 1744l. Scots. It is not easy to ascertain the real rent, because a number of the proprietors cultivate their own ground ; but it is supposed that it will not be over-rated at 3000l. Sterling. Arable land is rented from 10s. to 2l. per acre : and besides their rent to the landlord, the tenants are generally bound by their tacks to pay all the public burdens upon the lands they possess. Most of their farms are also thirled to a particular mill, and pay, some of them so high as the 16th or 17th part of all the grain which they have occasion to grind ; a discouragement to industry now altogether unnecessary, and which every landholder, who wishes to advance the value of his property, by encouraging the industry of his tenants, ought if possible to remove.

*Mode of Cultivation.*—The farms are in general small, inclosed and subdivided ; and the present race of farmers are supposed to surpass their fathers in skill and industry. Clearing the ground of stones, draining, levelling the inequalities of the surface, straightening the ridges, laying on lime, and guarding against the common mistake of overcropping, may be esteemed the chief improvements. The Scotch plough, drawn by 3, and sometimes by 4 horses, is that in most common use. Oats and barley are the kinds of grain chiefly cultivated. The plough goes little before the beginning of March ; and the farmers seem not anxious to have the sowing of oats finished before the end of April, and the barley before the 20th of May. After liming their ground, they generally take two

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crops of oats, and one of barley. With the barley, rye-grais and clover are sown, of which hay is made in the ensuing summer, and sometimes for two summers. They afterwards pasture for two or more years, as they judge requisite to give the ground a sufficient rest, before the same rotation be repeated. In the flat lands, wheat has been tried with success, and has been found to suffer less damage than other crops, by the floods, from which these grounds are, notwithstanding the embankment, not yet effectually secured. Potatoes are raised sufficient for home consumpt, and some to spare for the Glasgow market, where they generally draw from 8d. to 1s. per water peck. From the few trials that have been made, there is much encouragement for the cultivation of turnip. The black cattle are mostly small, and the farmers not very attentive to improve the breed of their milk cows.

*Roads.*—The multiplicity of roads renders it impossible, by the conversion of the statute labour, to put them all in a proper state of repair. It deserves therefore the attention of both masters and tenants, how far the improvement of the country, and their own private interest, might be promoted, by shutting up some of the roads that are of least public utility, and by making an extraordinary exertion for a year or two, to put the rest once in good repair, after which the road-money would be sufficient to keep them so. A good turnpike road has lately been made, passing through the skirts of this parish, from the thriving and now populous village of Balfrone to Glasgow. It is thought that, by directing it nearer the centre of this parish, a saving of a mile and a half at least might have been made in a distance of nine miles.

*Price of Labour and Provisions.*—A good ploughman receives, besides his board, from 5l. to 7l. per half year, and a servant

servant woman from 35 to 50 shillings. The common wages of a labourer are 14d. per day ; and when they work at piece work, they generally earn from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per day. They are better cloathed and lodged, and in every respect live more comfortably than those of the same rank, half a century ago. Old people remember that, in their early years, there was not a cow killed for beef by any one in the parish, excepting in gentlemen's families, and by one or two more ; but now there are few families that cannot attain to half a cow at least. The price of all kinds of provisions is nearly the same with that of the Glasgow markets.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—There are 110 families belonging to the Established church, 11 to the Relief, 10 to the Burghers, 2 to the Antiburghers, 3 to the Cameronians, and 1 to the Bereans.

The present incumbent was admitted in 1783. His predecessors, since the Revolution 1688, were Messrs Wallace, Colquhoun, Garrick, and Taylor. The King is patron of the parish. The living consists of 63 bolls of oat-meal, 33l. in money, a manse, and a glebe of 10 acres, whereof 7 are arable. The church has been built at different times. The last enlargement was probably made before the beginning of this century, with a view to accomodate the inhabitants of the lands annexed by decret 1649. The manse was built about 50 years ago, and has undergone several repairs.

*State of the Poor.*—The average number of poor in this parish is about six. They are supported, according to their exigencies, in their own houses, from the weekly collections at the church door, and from the interest of a capital of 420l. which has accumulated by the donations of charitable persons, and from the surplus of the weekly collections. None of the poor of  
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this parish are disposed to beg, either in this or neighbouring parishes; but much is given away by the inhabitants in alms to beggars which swarm from other places, especially from manufacturing towns and villages.

*Minerals and Fuel.*—This parish abounds in coal and limestone. The coal resembles that of Newcastle, caking together, and making a strong fire, when properly put on, and allowed to rest three or four hours before it be stirred. It is generally found in a stratum of from 3 to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet thick, between two strata of lime-stones. The upper stratum of limestone is called the *blue lime*, and the lower the *white lime*, which last has generally been esteemed of an inferior quality to the blue. These useful minerals, in places where there is no great thickness of strata above them, are come at by removing the superincumbent soil. but where they lie deep, the coal is wrought first by miners, and afterwards the upper or blue lime is separated from the roof by wedges or gunpowder. The coals are sold at the pit for 3d. per hutch, five of which may be drawn in a cart, by an ordinary horse, and six by an able bodied horse. The only coal in the parish wrought for fuel, is the property of Robert Dunmore, Esq; of Ballindalloch, whose exertions for the improvement of his own estate, and of the country in general, cannot be mentioned with too much praise. He works the lime also to a very considerable extent. Besides his, there are three other limeworks going in the parish, but upon a smaller scale; and there is lime-stone, more or less, through almost all the high grounds. In it are found petrified shells of a variety of kinds, stimulating the conjectures of naturalists concerning the revolutions of this globe. There is abundance of freestone of a good quality for building, and a little iron-stone; but, at the place where it hath been observed, the stratum is so thin

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as not to be worth working. A small rivulet in the East end of the parish makes a very plentiful deposition of ochre, which, if proper means were used to collect it, might turn to some account. Peats can easily be procured for fuel, but few of them are used, the coals being found less costly. A considerable quantity of them was formerly required by the farmers for kiln-drying their victual; but by the introduction of kilns with brick heads, they have become less necessary, coals answering the purpose equally well.

*Antiquities.*—Upon the high ground, in a commanding situation, at the North West corner of the parish, stands an old ruinous tower, being all that now remains of the mansion house of the Galbraiths of Bathernock, which appears to have been a large building surrounded with a ditch. Its antiquity must be very considerable, but how great, even tradition does not venture to determine. Not far from thence, to the eastward, are several of those large loose heaps of stones called Cairns, some of them oblong, and others of a circular shape. One of the circular ones, which has not yet been broken up, is about 80 yards in circumference. From two that have been broken up, it appears that they are composed of loose stones carelessly thrown together; but at the bottom are large flags placed on edge, in two parallel rows, at the distance of between 3 or 4 feet, lidded over with flags laid across, the cavity thus formed is divided by partitions into cells of 6 or 7 feet long. In one of the long cairns lately broken up, were found several fragments of a large coarsely fabricated urn, and some pieces of human bones. Tradition says, that in this place, called Craigmadden moor, a battle was fought with the Danes, in which one of their princes was slain. The farm in which these cairns are, is named Bloch-airn, which may be a corruption of Balcairn, *i. e.* the tower  
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of the cairns. But the most curious remain of antiquity in this parish, is a structure called the *Auld wife's lift*. It is situated near a mile North from the church, on very high ground, in a little flat of about 100 paces diameter, surrounded by an ascent of a few yards in height, in the form of an amphitheatre. It consists of three stones only, two of which, of a prismatic shape, are laid along close by each other upon the earth; and the third, which was once probably a regular parallelo-piped, and still, notwithstanding the depredations of time, approaches that figure, is laid above the other two. The uppermost stone is 18 feet long, 11 broad, and 6 deep, placed nearly horizontally with a small dip to the North. Its two supporters are about the same size. It can hardly be matter of doubt, that this is one of those rude structures erected by the Druids in their sacred groves. Its situation, in a very sequestered spot, on an eminence, surrounded by a grove of oaks, stumps of which trees are still visible, corresponds exactly to every description we have of these places of worship. The figure of the stones themselves, and their position, bear a strong resemblance to others which antiquarians have not hesitated to pronounce monuments of Druidism. The name by which they are called seems no small confirmation of the truth of this opinion. A Druidical stone in Ireland, mentioned by Camden, is called the *lifted* stone; and there are some in Poitiers in France, known by the name of *Pierres levées*. But besides that the stones under consideration have the name of *lift*, which appears to be the general appellation of such Druidical stones, the specific part of their name, viz. *Auld wives*, is easily accounted for, on the same supposition. Upon the authority of Tacitus and Mele, we know that female Druids, generally pretty far advanced in years, lived together in sisterhoods, in sequestered spots, devoting their time to the offices of the Druidical worship.

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These were by the people held in high esteem, and called *Senæ*, or *venerable women*, words nearly synonymous to the Scots word *Auld wives*. Hence we are induced to conclude, that this is one of those lifted stones, *Pierres levées*; and that it is called the *Auldwife's lift*, because it was the lifted stone where the *Senæ*, or sisterhood of venerable female Druids residing here, paid their devotions. Upon the supposition, also, that this was a feat of the Druid worship, we have suggested to us a very probable etymology of the name of the parish. *Bal*, in the Gaelic language signifies *town*, and *Druinich*, of or belonging to the Druids. The present name, *Baldernock*, is not a greater corruption of *Baldruinich*, *i. e.* *Druidstown*, than might be expected in the lapse of eighteen hundred years.

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