

NUMBER IX.

UNITED PARISHES OF COLVEND
AND SOUTHWICK.(COUNTY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT.—SYNOD AND PRESBYTERY OF
DUMFRIES.)*By the Rev. Mr JAMES LITTLE, Minister.**Origin of the Names.*

THE name of the parish of COLVEND appears to have been antiently CULWEN. In the 15th century, a *Johannes de Culwen*, the ancestor of the present family of CURWEN of *Workington*, in Cumberland, into which the name, when unconnected with the territory, hath been corrupted, married a daughter of the family of the Stuarts, Lords of Galloway; which is vouched by the principal contract of marriage, in the possession of the Curwen family.—SOUTHWICK appears to be a compound of the English word *south*, and the Saxon word *wic*, which signifies, in that language, *the winding of a river*.

Situation, Extent, and Form.—This is one of what are called *the ten parishes* *, which lie within the stewartry of Kirkcudbright, on the east side of the water of *Urr*, or *Orr*, but within the presbytery, synod, and commissariat of Dumfries. The river *Urr* separates it, on the W. from the parish of *Buittle*.

* The other 9 are *Urr*, *Kirkpatrick Durham*, *Kirkgunzeon*, *New-Abbey*, *Kirkbean*, *Troquire*, *Terregles*, *Lochrutton*, and *Kirkpatrick Irongray*.

Buittle. It extends, in length, from E. to W. along the coast of the Solway Frith, about 8 miles, and in breadth, from N. to S. about 4 miles, forming nearly a right angled parallelogram. The parish church stands 20 miles S. W. from Dumfries, 16 miles E. from Kirkcudbright, and 9 leagues, by water, N. of the town of Whitehaven in Cumberland.

Surface, Soil, Hills, &c.—The surface of this parish is extremely rough and irregular. No extensive tracts of arable land, or regular fields, are here to be met with; but only small spots and patches, and even these much broke and interrupted by rocks, large heaps or cairns of stones, and impenetrable copses of thorn, furze, and briers or bramble. The surface is generally uneven, all ascending or descending, but the many rising grounds and hills are not very high. For near 2 miles towards the E. end of the parish, along the coast, the country becomes more smooth and flat, and the fields more regular, and mostly arable: But along the northern frontier, especially towards the N. E. extremity of the parish, there are very mountainous grounds covered with heath, and running in a chain, into the skirts of the large and conspicuous mountain *Crow-fell* *. In such a country, it is next to impossible to ascertain the precise quantity of arable ground, or even to conjecture what proportion it bears, to the many spots and large tracts of what may be pronounced incapable of cultivation, and utterly unimprovable. The soil is, for the most part, a light loam, warm and fertile, adapted for pasturage rather than tillage. It would be much more productive, were it not for a pernicious mixture of coarse sand, or rather large particles of flint and crumbled granite stone, which too
hastily

* Both in this, and the neighbouring counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, many of the large tracts of high mountainous ground are called *fells*.

hastily absorbs the natural moisture, and soon exhausts the strength of manure and improvement. Of late years, considerable and pretty successful efforts have been made, for clearing the ground of stones and bramble, extending the quantity of arable land, and building fences; so that now almost all that will admit of culture, or improvement, hath been actually brought under the plough.

Sea Coast.—The sea coast here along the frith is remarkably bold and rocky, forming high and tremendous precipices, from which the tide ebbs, leaving dry a large tract of flat sand, from whence, at low water, may be viewed some picturesque and magnificent scenes: High and pointed spires, at the bases of which are passages through them in form of rude arches; spacious and regular amphitheatres, and mouths of caverns running up under ground into the land, farther than any human being hath ever adventured to explore. In the crevices of the rock, but generally where the precipice is overhanging, or most inaccessible, is found the marine plant *samphire*, well known as a preserve or pickle; to the dangerous expedients for gathering which, as alluded to of old by Shakespeare *, the people here are, at this day, no strangers. Towards the east, about the mouth of Southwick water, the coast becomes entirely flat.

Frith, Rivers, &c —The *Solway Frith*, here, is 9 leagues over. By it there is frequent communication with the towns of Whitehaven, Partoun, Harrington, Workington, Maryport, and Allanby, in the north of England; from whence lime is imported, and conveyed into the interior parts of the

* ————— half way down

Hangs one that gathers samphire; dreadful trade.

LEAR.

the country up the water of Urr; which is 2 miles broad at its confluence with the frith, and is navigable from thence about 8 miles by vessels of 80 tons burden. This navigable river, about 2 miles from its mouth, forms within land a large basin, commonly called *Gibb's Hold*, into which large vessels are often obliged to put, in stormy weather, where they are well sheltered and safely moored. The water of Southwick is a smaller stream, which falls into the frith towards the east end of the parish, and also affords a convenience for importation of lime; being navigable for near 2 miles by vessels of small burthen. The navigation, however, of the Solway Frith is every day becoming more difficult and hazardous, by the large sand banks which lie in its channel, on which many shipwrecks happen; and which within these few years have risen much higher, and extended themselves much farther out towards its mouth, seeming to threaten, at no very distant period, to shut it up altogether.

Climate, and Diseases.—This part of the country, enjoying a free circulation of air, a warm dry soil, and, like all other rocky countries, many springs of excellent water, might be expected to be more healthy than it is really experienced to be. Excessive falls of rain, brought by violent southerly and south-westerly winds, blowing in from the neighbouring Atlantic, have of late years been severely felt here; and have probably contributed to the frequency of slow fevers, fluxes, catarrhs, and consumptions, but above all to rheumatic complaints, which universally prevail here. In autumn 1772, the infection of a malignant fever was communicated to this parish from abroad, and made great havock: It was 3 years before the infection was quite extinguished. The sudden and loud gusts of south-westerly winds, several of which have been experienced in this part of the country, uncommonly violent within

within these last 12 years, are by some conjectured to proceed from volcanic eruptions from the bottom of the Atlantic ocean.

State of Property.—The old valued rent of the parish is 3183l. Scotch. The present rental cannot be precisely stated: Access cannot be easily had to the knowledge of the rent of some farms; several grounds are in the natural possession of the proprietors: It may probably be somewhat between 2500l. and 3000l. There are 22 heritors, some of whom have property in the parish to the extent of 700 l. *per annum*; some so low as 7 l. Ten of these are resident. There are no towns or villages in the parish. The farms are generally small: There are about 130 tenants, or persons who may be said to occupy land in the parish, not more than one or two of whom farm to the extent of 100 l. of yearly rent; many so low as 5 l.

Produce and Cultivation.—The kinds of grain produced here consist chiefly of oats and barley; and of green crops, potatoes, turnips, and clover. The rotation of crops usually observed is, first 2 or 3 successive crops of oats; then the ground is summer fallowed, and dunged, with a green crop of potatoes or turnips; lastly, a crop of barley, along with which are sown ryegrass, and red and white clover seeds: After one crop of hay is taken, the ground is pastured 4 or 5 years before it is again opened up. Lime is used as a manure, and is imported from Cumberland, at 1 s. the Carlisle bushel. Shells are found in great abundance on the shore, and have also been much used, but are experienced to be rather too stimulating a manure for so very thin and light a soil. The great excellency of shells, as a manure, is for breaking or loosening a stiff clay, or a heavy wet soil. The farmers here, and all over Galloway, at length convinced of the benefit and importance

tance of dung as a manure, are difusing the practice of laying their black cattle out in the open fields all winter, and are now beginning to feed them in houses or shades. The foil, not only of this parish, but of almost the whole county, being warm and dry, in wet summers produces luxuriant crops of corn and grafs. The crops here have been very plentiful these laft 4 or 5 years.

Exports, Prices of Wages, &c.—Unpromising as the appearance of the country is, this parish produces considerably more grain than is consumed by the inhabitants. There are generally exported from it, annually, about 2500 Winchester bushels of barley to Whitehaven, Lancaster, and Liverpool; and from 3000 to 4000 stones of oatmeal to the sea-port and manufacturing towns in the west of Scotland; besides considerable quantities of potatoes to the English market. The exporting prices of barley here have been, on an average of the last 10 years, 2s. 8½d per Winchester bushel, and of oatmeal 1s. 9½d. per stone of 17 lib. 10 oz. averdupois. Potatoes are sold at from 20s. to 30s. per ton. The prices of butcher meat here are regulated by the Dumfries market. The smaller articles of provision, such as butter, fowls, eggs, &c. are rather high, as there are very frequent opportunities of conveying them to the sea-port towns in the north of England, where they find a ready market. The wages of mechanics, and prices of labour of all kinds, have of late years risen very high here, as in all the other farming counties in the south of Scotland.

Woods and Plantations.—From the great quantities of large and full grown oak timber, still in good preservation, which are dug up in the many small spots of peat moss in the parish, it would appear that natural wood had abounded in it. Indeed,

Indeed, the vulgar tradition is, that, a few centuries ago, it was wholly a wood or forest. There are still some natural wood-lands in the interior parts of the parish; and several small plantations of barren timber have been made lately, which thrive well. Very many attempts are now making to rear fruit orchards in the parish; but, owing to the extreme thinness and lightness of the soil, and the unfavourable exposure of this part of the country to the south-westerly winds, they do not promise much success.

Fish, &c.—The kinds of fish taken here are salmon, white flounders, plaice, some soles of a very large size, skate, and, very rarely, turbot; but the great staple is cod, of which large quantities, and some of excellent quality, are taken here, and carried to Dumfries, and other neighbouring smaller towns, and sold at from 1 d. to 3 d. per pound. Of shell fish, large quantities of cockles and muscles are found on the coast; also shrimps, wilks, and other smaller kinds, of little value. No companies are associated here for the purpose of carrying on any fisheries. Most part of the inhabitants, however, near the coast, are occasionally employed in fishing, but all as single adventurers. The shallowness of the water near the shore, and the roughness of the sea in the cod fishing season, render the use of boats in fishing dangerous, and almost impracticable. The shores produce 15 or 20 tons of kelp once in 5 or 6 years; an article reduced nearly one half in price since the barilla act was passed in 1781.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church, which is situated near the S. W. corner of the parish, one mile N. from the frith, and at the same distance E. from the water of Urr, was built in 1771, is very plain, but large and commodious. The manse, which stands about a quarter of a mile N. E. of the church, upon

upon the banks of a lake of 50 acres extent, and in form of a crescent, was built in 1763, for what was at that time understood to be the legal allowance, 1000 l Scotch, and consequently upon a small plan, and poorly executed. In 1777 it was repaired, and some additions made to it. The glebe consists of about 6 acres. The annexed parish of SOUTHWICK lies to the eastward, and the minister possesses also a glebe there of about 8 acres. Although the walls of the old church of Southwick, which stands in a very romantic small strath, about 4 miles E. from the parish church, still remain in many places at their full height, yet there is not the smallest tradition of any incumbent there, or of any circumstance relating to it as a separate charge. It appears to have been annexed to Colvend ever since the reformation. In February 1650, Mr David Hope, then incumbent, obtained decret against the heritors of both parishes, modifying the stipend at 3 chalders of victual, two thirds meal and one-third bear, and 400 l Scotch of money, with 50 merks for communion elements. By a new decret in 1789, the stipend was modified at 800 l Scotch, with 40 l Scotch for communion elements, and the victual continued. However long these parishes have been united, their antient boundaries are still distinctly known. Colvend is to Southwick *, in point of rental, extent of territory, and population, nearly as three to two.

School.—There was modified, so lately as April 1793, 200 merks of school salary, of which one schoolmaster, who teach-

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* There has been found lately a diary of the personal expenses of King EDWARD I. of England, in one of his expeditions against Scotland, kept by his purser, or some of the domestics in his suite, where, among other articles, is stated a small sum, offered, with his devotions, to our *Lady of Southwick*.

es within a mile of the church, enjoys 7l. 2s. and has upwards of 40 scholars; his income may be 18l. *per annum*. The remainder of the modified salary, with 2l. yearly of mortified money, is given to another teacher, who keeps a school in the eastern end of the parish, and has usually 30 scholars. His yearly income is about 13l. The heritors have lately affected themselves in 60l. for building two commodious and sufficient school-houses, which will be executed in spring 1794.

Population.—Although the number of births, which is generally about 36 annually, greatly exceeds the number of deaths, which is from 18 to 24, yet the population seems not to have increased much these 18 years. This, and the excess of the number of females to that of males, may be accounted for, by many of the young men going to sea, or to settle abroad. In 1772, by an epidemical malignant fever, and in 1774, by emigration, the population of this parish suffered two severe shocks, from which it hath scarcely yet recovered. Notwithstanding these circumstances, however, there has been an increase upon the whole within these 40 years. The number of inhabitants at present,

(1794) is,	Males	-	-	456	
	Females	-	-	508	
				<hr/>	964
The return to Dr Webster, in 1755, was					898
					<hr/>
				Increase	66

Occupations.—It is impossible to class the above inhabitants by their respective occupations. About 52 are sailors. The farms being numerous and small, many husbandmen are occasionally also masons, wrights, carpenters, shoemakers, weavers,

vers, and tailors, and one man professes sometimes two, or even three of these different mechanic branches.

Horses and Black Cattle.—There are in the parish upwards of 200 horses, being considerably more than are sufficient for all the purposes of agriculture; but so it generally happens where there are many very small farms. There are kept about 650 milk cows or breeders, all the offspring of which are preserved, and carefully reared to aged cattle. There are about 1300 rising cattle, from 1 to 4 years old, kept the year round, at which age, when they are arrived, they are sold lean to the graziers on the south-eastern counties of England, at from 7 l. to 10 l. a-head. All these are of the true Galloway breed, mostly wanting horns, not of the largest size, but very handsome. The breeds both of horses and black cattle in this parish have been much improved within these 5 years.

Sheep and Goats.—There are about 2000 sheep kept in the parish, and about 100 goats in the more remote and mountainous grounds. Among the sheep there are some flocks of the brown-faced small old Scottish kind, with fine short wool; the greatest number are of the black-faced kind. There are also a few upon the lower and more improved grounds of the larger breeds, with white faces, which have in later years been introduced from England*.

Minerals.

* About 6 or 7 years ago, a gentleman of this parish, a Mr CROSSIE, then master of a vessel in the Baltic trade, purchased from some Laplanders he saw at Stockholm, a Lapland ram with 4 horns, of about the size and weight of the common black-faced sheep of this country; but his great excellence was his fleece, which was very abundant, and remarkably fine and silky. He brought him home to this country, with which he seemed to

Minerals *.—The rocks and stones, which abound so much in this parish, are all of hard granite, many of them interspersed with veins of flint or spar. They furnish excellent materials for walls and fences. There is likewise a quarry of a free or softer species of granite, on one part of the shore, which is worked for mill-stones, and from whence all the mills in the south-west of Scotland are furnished. Many of them are also carried into the interior parts of the country, and some are sent to Ireland. From 20 to 15 are sold annually at about 3 l. each.

Fuel.—There are very many small spots of peat moss in the parish, which are now much exhausted. The preparation of this kind of fuel, upon which the sole dependence of the generality of the inhabitants has hitherto been, is here attended with vast expence of time and labour, and after all they are but poorly supplied. However humane the intention of the legislature was, in the late commutation of the coal duty, it has been in a great measure frustrated, as to

to agree very well. He was observed to delight much in cropping the heather, and to prefer it to every other plant the climate produced. He lived 18 months in the country, and experienced all our variety of season. He propagated with a ewe of this country; but both he and his offspring were killed by some other animal, by which means the breed was unfortunately lost.

* About 25 years ago, a copper mine was opened in this parish, near the rocky shore. A considerable quantity of ore was dug up, and sent in casks to a smelting furnace at some distance. It was found to be rich, and actually produced as much copper as cleared all charges upon it; but the work was relinquished. The estate, upon which it was found, was then the paternal estate of the late Countess of SUTHERLAND and Lady GLENORCHY, but is now the property of Mr OSWALD of Auchencruive.

to this part of the country, by the selfishness of the proprietors or tacksmen of the coal mines along the Cumberland coast, who immediately availed themselves of the opportunity it gave them to advance the price of coals at the pit, so far as to keep them still above the reach of the smaller farmers, and inferior classes.

Rare Natural Productions.—Besides the wild quadrupeds, common to all the south of Scotland, there have been found here some few individuals of a species of the weasel, more rare in this country. It resembles the pole-cat, or common founmart, from which it is distinguished by the largeness of its size, the superior quality of its fur, and by being free of that foetid smell which renders the other so disagreeable and disgusting. It is vulgarly called the *martin*, and is the *mustela martis* of natural historians.—There are found upon the shore here some of those wonderful marine productions, which seem to be the links that connect the animal and vegetable systems, viz. the POLYPUS, called also the Sea Anemone. It does not possess a loco-motive faculty, and its organs are too imperfect to entitle it to be ranked with animals; but appears to have somewhat of more *sensation* than can be ascribed to a merely vegetable substance, like some of which, too, it is reproduced from any part cut off. Such of them as are found here are of a smaller size, and their colours are not so vivid, as those in warmer climates*.—Some
of

* A neighbouring clergyman, however, (the Rev. Mr MUIRHEAD of Urr), seems to be of a different opinion respecting this wonderful semi-animal. In a letter to a friend in town he gives the following description of it: "About 5 years ago I discovered, in the parish of Colvend, the *Animal Flower*, in as great perfection and variety as it is in Jamaica. The lively colours, and the various and elegant forms of the Polypus
" on

of the springs that ooze through the rocks are of a *petrifying* quality, particularly in the higher and more rugged hills in Southwick, near Crow-fell, where some chryfallizations are found.

Antiquities *.—At Fairgarth, near the center of the parish, there is a well formed of a very copious spring of excellent water, arched over, which goes by the name of *St. Lawrence's Well*, hard by which are the vestiges of a chapel, with
burying

“on this coast, are truly equal to any thing recited by natural
“historians, respecting the sea-flowers of any other country.
“To see a flower of purple, of green, blue, yellow, &c. striving
“to catch a worm, is really amusing.”

* About the year 1780, there was found upon the estate of Southwick, belonging to Sir JAMES RIDDELL, Bart. in the middle of a large granite stone, when blasted with gun powder, in a socket exactly fitted to it, a piece of the same kind of substance, smooth and polished, in form somewhat resembling a rude hatchet. It was about 9 inches long, 6 broad at the one end, and 3 at the other end, about the thickness of the palm of the hand; one of the angles at the broad end a little more acute than the other, the corners a little rounded, and sharp round the edges. The virtuosi, to whose inspection it was submitted, did not hesitate immediately to pronounce it to be a hatchet, which had been used by the Druids in performing sacrifice, which conjecture they imagined warranted by the vestige of a Druidical temple very near the place where it was found: But this depends upon an hypothesis which admits rather of some doubt. When the size, the firmness, and solidity of the mass in which it was found, are considered, and the difficulty of assigning any period since the creation as the commencement of the formation of such a mass—indeed our entire ignorance of the nature and progress of such a process, or the time it would require,—it must be owned it becomes rather problematical, whether this hatchet is the work of art, and ever existed in a state separate from the stone out of which it was taken; or if the phenomenon is only a *lufus naturae*.

burying ground* around it, now occupied as a barn-yard.— At the south-west corner of the parish, on a very high promontory, or head of land, formed by the junction of the Water of Urr with the Solway Frith, there are the vestiges of a work of strength, supposed to be Danish; the fossè is still very apparent. It bears the name of the *Castle-hill of Barclay*. Upon the bank of the same river, on the east side, about two miles farther up, upon the narrow top of a small, but high, steep, and rocky hill or mount, have lately been discovered the vestiges of another work of strength, which, from the scanty remains of its materials that are to be found, antiquarians suppose to have been a vitrified fort. The place is called the *Moat of the Mark, or Merktand of Barclay* †.

Manners.—The Isle of Man, which lies 24 leagues distant to the S. W. the higher grounds of which are in sight here, is well known, before the lordship of it was purchased by government in 1765, to have been the great channel of a contraband trade with France, to the secret operation of which, the nature of this country as above described, but then in a still more unpolished state, was most favourable. Having the advantage of many secret caverns, impervious thickets, devious paths, and unfrequented tracts, which afforded innumerable and secure hiding places, it is not to be wondered at, if the inhabitants were generally and deeply engaged in it, and consequently addicted to idleness, and to that species of intemperance to which the staple of that trade

* Some people were alive lately, who remembered to have seen some of the tomb-stones and inscriptions, but none can now be found.

† *Vide* ARCHÆOLOGIA, Vol. X.

trade immediately ministred. But the abolition of that trade has had a happy effect upon the improvement of the country, and the manners of the people in this corner; and the traces of these more licentious times, which were a proverbial reproach to this parish, are now almost wholly obliterated. The present generation are trained up in habits of sobriety and industry, for which, and for their attention to their farms and respective occupations, they are perhaps now no less remarkable, than they were in those more dissolute times, for their dissipation.

Disadvantages.—The most striking which occur apply to the whole county of Galloway, as well as to this parish, namely, the disadvantages under which the farmers and breeders of black cattle, the great staple of this part of the country, labour in marketing them.—A number of young fellows, of the very lowest class, who dislike, or affect to be above labour, turn what are called *jobbers*, scour the country, and infest the cattle markets, and, by picking up the younger cattle, intercept a profit between the breeder and grazier, to the prejudice of one, or perhaps both of them. This is an evil which it is impracticable to restrain, unless by something like the following method: That the farmers in general, for their mutual advantage, should enter into a concert, whereby it shall be understood, to be laid down as a rule, that those who rear the cattle shall sell them only to those, who, they know, can graze them upon their own farms or possessions; and that those again shall buy only from those, whom they know to have reared them, or who have kept them at least for months.—Another evil, of which the consequences have been, and presently are, severely felt by many, is the frequent and weighty failures of the greater drovers, that is, those who yearly buy the aged cattle through the country, collect

collect them into large droves, and carry them up to the markets in the south-east counties of England. They generally buy upon credit; payments are not expected, until, in the course of 4 or 5 months, they are enabled to make them from their returns in the English markets, and consequently must, in a great measure, depend upon their success there, which they themselves have the exclusive privilege of reporting to the farmer their creditor. Of these adventurers, who these many years have obtained the credit and confidence of the country, the greater number have at one time or other failed, and some repeatedly. By such failures large sums have been lost, honest and industrious farmers much hurt and reduced, and whole families ruined. It were to be wished that the English graziers, or cattle merchants, were to be seen buying their cattle in our own markets, rather than that our farmers should be obliged to run such risks, in trusting their property to so great extent, in the hands of people, so many of whom they have experienced to be unworthy of their confidence, in order to get it disposed of in the remotest parts of the island.