

NUMBER XXI.

PARISH OF KIRKINTILLOCH.

(COUNTY OF DUMBARTON.)

By the Rev. MR. WILLIAM DUNN.

Extent, Situation, Surface, &c.

THE district, which now constitutes the parish of Kirkintilloch, made, in the time of the Romans, a part of the northern boundary of the province of Valentia. When, at an after period, the country was divided into parishes, it acquired the name of Wester Leinzie. Under that denomination, it was given, by Robert I. of Scotland, to Sir Robert de Fleming, in consideration of the eminent services, he had performed, in the course of the long and bloody contest, which that monarch carried on with the English, for the possession of the Scottish throne.

‘ The great Roman wall, commonly called Graham’s dyke*,
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* *Roman Wall.*—The remains of the Roman wall, and of three large forts, and as many watch-towers built upon it, may still be distinctly traced in this parish. The wall proceeds through Kirkintilloch for the space of 5 miles, between east and west. The
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passing through the whole length of the parish, its former name was probably derived from that circumstance, since *Leinzie*, may, by no very fanciful etymology, be considered as a provincial corruption of the Latin term, *Linca*. Its present appellation, *Kirkintilloch*, or rather *Caerpentilloch*, is said to signify, in the language of the antient inhabitants of North Britain, “ the end of a long tongue or promontary of rising ground,” which is exactly descriptive of the situation of the town, standing on the extremity of a ridge, advancing from

first of these posts upon the east side, stands upon the top of the *Barr-hill*; a situation so elevated, as to command a view of almost the whole length of the wall, both east and west. The fort is a square area of 150 yards. Some vaults belonging to it, have lately been discovered. These are still entire; and are covered above with flat bricks, and floored with a mixture of lime and black and white gravel, resembling sand from the sea shore, very unlike any that is now to be found in this neighbourhood. The next of these forts, proceeding westward, is situated three miles distant, at the village of *Auchindowie*: this appears an oblong rectangular figure, extending 150 yards one way, and 70 another. It is now almost defaced; one part of the area being now a corn-field, while another is occupied by the houses of the village; and the rest has been cut away in opening the canal between the *Forth* and the *Clyde*.—Two miles onward, in the same direction, is the fort of *Peel*; situate on a piece of rising ground, at the western end of the town of *Kirkintilloch*; oblong and rectangular, 90 yards in length, 80 in breadth; singular, in being situated on the north side of the wall, whereas the others stand upon the south side.—Stones, bearing inscriptions, have been dug up among the ruins of all these forts: But the only words of these inscriptions, that could be read, were, *LEGIO SECUNDA AUGUSTA FECIT.*

from the south, into a plain on the banks of the Kelvin. From the town, the name came at length to be extended to the whole district.

The parish is situated in the shire of Dumbarton, or Lennox, in the presbytery of Glasgow, and synod of Glasgow and Ayr. It is of a triangular figure, no where exceeding $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length. Its breadth varies considerably.—The face of the ground, although diversified throughout by a succession of waving swells, is no where broken into abrupt precipices; and, excepting in one place of inconsiderable extent, no where deformed by rugged rocks.—There are no lakes in the district. The Kelvin is the principal river, which, of itself, is a considerable body of water, and, which is joined in its course along this parish, by many smaller streams; in particular, by the Skinna, and the Luggie. The latter passes through the town of Kirkintilloch.

Soil, Fossils, and Animals.—The husbandman finds a considerable diversity of soils, through the lands in this district. The ground along the southern part of the Kelvin, is of a deep, marshy nature, and is often overflowed by the river. The soil of a small tract, towards the north-east angle, is of a light reddish earth, upon a whinstone and gravelly bottom. Around the town of Kirkintilloch, the soil is a light black loam, 16 or 18 inches deep, on a reddish tilly bottom. A strong natural clay prevails through the southern, and the eastern parts of the parish. Tracts of moss, affording a black peat earth, are interspersed here and there, throughout the whole district.—Lime, coal, and freestone, are found in great abundance.—The streams by which the parish is watered, afford salmon, trout, perch, and pike.—We have the common domestic animals,—horses, cows, swine, and a few sheep.—Our draught-horses are strong, gentle, and handsome

some. Our milch-cows often yield 8 English gallons of milk in a day.

Cultivation and Produce of the Lands.—The lands in this parish are almost entirely arable ;—and we have happily abundance of the best manures. Our farmers, accordingly, are chiefly employed in agriculture. Oats, barley, hay from sown grasses, flax, pease, beans, and a small proportion of wheat, are our chief articles of crop. Turnips begin to be cultivated among us. Dung, lime, a compost of earth with other materials, and an addition of simple earth, of a different nature from the soil of the field upon which it is laid, are the manures principally made use of.

A chalder of lime, consisting of 16 bolls, each of which contains 3 firlots, wheat measure, is, at present bought, at any of the lime-works, in the neighbouring parish of Campsie, for 6s 8d.

The average produce of oats and barley, through these lands, may, in moderately favourable seasons, be about 5 or 6 bolls an acre : And, in years of moderate plenty, their average price in the market, is from 13s to 14s, a boll. The farms are in general small ; consisting commonly of about 50 acres each. The farmer is often proprietor, in feu, of his own farm. The lands may be estimated as either actually yielding, or, at least, capable of yielding from 15s to 20s an acre, of yearly rent.

Town, and the Employments followed in it.—The town of Kirkintilloch is a very antient burgh of barony. It was erected about 1170, by William, King of Scots, in favour of William Cumin, Baron of Leinzie, and Lord of Cumbernauld ; and still holds of the barony of Cumbernauld, for the payment of 12 merks Scots, of yearly feu-duty. The privileges with which it

it has been endowed, are very ample. Its burgesſes elect their own magiſtrates, independently of the lord of the barony. The magiſtrates are two baillies; and are annually choſen. They are impowered by the charters of the burgh, to hold courts, levy fines, imprifon offenders, or even baniſh them from their liberties; and in ſhort, to exerciſe every right with which the baron himſelf was veſted, before the erection of the burgh. Theſe rights, the community have continued, ever ſince that period, to enjoy, undiſturbed. They were, in no degree, affected by the act, by which the Britiſh parliament, in 1748, aboliſhed the heritable juriſdictions in Scotland. A large tract of land was alſo annexed to this burgh at its erection; and is now feued out, from time to time, in moderate parcels, as purchaſers offer. —Linens and cottons, of different ſorts, are manufactured here. —The weavers are the moſt numerous claſs of mechanics in it. Many of the other mechanical employments, which ſupply the neceſſaries, and the ordinary conveniencies of life, are likewiſe practiſed. —Mr Stirling, younger of Glorat, a gentleman of diſtinguiſhed public ſpirit, lately erected a ſmall cotton-mill. Hand-machines, for ſpinning cotton, were, at the ſame time, introduced. The undertaking is in a very thriving condition. And, as the pariſh affords ſeveral other happy ſituations, it is probable, that theſe may ſoon be occupied by more works of the ſame kind.

Highways, and the Canal.—One of the great roads between Glasgow and Edinburgh, paſſes through the town of Kirkintilloch; which is 7 miles diſtant from the former, and 49 from the latter.—None of our rivers are navigable; but the great canal between the Forth and the Clyde, paſſes through the whole length of this pariſh. After having been frequently propoſed, ſince the Union, this canal was at length begun in 1768, and
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finished in 1790. The trade upon it is already great, and is rapidly increasing. One of its first effects has been, to equalize, in a great measure, the price of grain, throughout all the corn-countries in Scotland; to the temporary loss of the landholders, in the southern, and to the gain of those in the northern districts.

State of the Landed Property.—In the beginning of the 14th century, the whole parish, excepting the burgh lands of Kirkintilloch, and the small barony of Wester-Gartshore, (which has, for many generations, been possessed by that ancient and respectable family, the Gartshores of Gartshore,) were the entire property of the noble family of Fleming. But, in the long series of years, which has elapsed since that period, that great estate has been gradually dismembered, partly in forming establishments for the younger branches or connexions of the family; and partly by supplying the enlarged expences, required by those new modes of life, which have been introduced in the progress of society. The last remainder of it was sold off, in 1757: And nothing now continues in the possession of the former proprietors, but the feu-duties, and some other casualties of feudal superiority.

The Poor.—The poor of this parish are not numerous. The weekly collections at the church-doors, have hitherto been found more than sufficient for their support. These happy circumstances are to be ascribed chiefly, to the minute subdivisions of the landed property in the parish, and to the general manners, and personal habits, which usually attend agricultural industry. But, it is to be feared, that if a greater proportion of the inhabitants, shall be induced to apply themselves to manufactures, one disadvantage which must necessarily arise from this increase of industry, is such a change in the manners
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of the lower classes, as may reduce them much oftener to a state of helpless poverty.

State of Population.—The whole inhabitants of this parish, have been found, upon a very accurate survey, to amount, at present, to the number of 2639.

Of these 1536 reside in the town.

Among whom are 185 weavers

11 stocking-makers

15 smiths

20 house carpenters, and cabinet-makers

10 masons

10 shoemakers

4 saddlers

6 coopers

A good many taylor's; and a few hairdressers.

In 1751, the Rev. Dr. Erskine, at that time minister of Kirkintilloch, now of Edinburgh, found the number of the families in the town, to be 195.

The families in the country 226.

The persons in the town, from eight years of age, upwards, 575.

Those in the country, from 8 years of age, upwards, were 796.

The addition of the Seceders and Quakers, at that time in the parish, to these numbers, make up 1400 examinable persons in the parish. The return of souls to Dr Webster, was 1696. Hence, it appears, that the increase of numbers, within these last 40 years, amounts to 943.

Character and Manners.—The inhabitants of this parish are, in general, a virtuous and industrious people. That pride of

mind, and impatience of contradiction, which the possession of landed property frequently inspires, perhaps may occasion too many law-suits. The present minister was told, before he came amongst them, that they were often disposed to treat their clergymen with neglect and unkindness; but he has experienced nothing in his ministry, that could justify such an accusation. The existence of Seceders, and of seceding meeting houses, has perhaps no bad effect upon the manners and sentiments of the people, either here, or any where else throughout the kingdom. They are in some degree spies and checks upon the members of the established church; and the discourses of their clergy are often adapted, with singular felicity, to the capacity and the prejudices of the least enlightened classes in the community.—The small number of the poor, dependent upon alms, and the liberal provision made for them, by voluntary contributions, are facts implying, in so populous a parish, no common praise: they bespeak industry, sobriety, frugality, and charity, to be the leading features in the moral character of these people.—As to their external appearance, they are of a middle stature; and, being free from hereditary diseases, while they enjoy the advantages of an open situation, and a pure, although rather moist air, they are, in general, vigorous and healthy. Some, indeed, particularly the females, are not a little subject to hysterics; a disease, the prevalence of which in this place, has, with some shew of probability, been attributed, partly to the dampness of our earthen floors, and partly, to the effects of spinning, for which, the women in this neighbourhood are deservedly famous*.

Probable

* The women, when engaged in spinning, especially in winter, sit by the fire-side, and keeping, as their custom is, always the same station, the one side is exposed to the chilling cold of the

Probable Improvements.—It is easy to see, that the parish of Kirkintilloch, situated as it is, in the vicinity of a great, an opulent, an industrious, and a commercial city, and in a tract of country, where a passion for manufactures is so prevalent, intersected by a canal which joins the two greatest navigable rivers in the kingdom, and which promises to spread cultivation, opulence, and industry, every where along its banks; divided, too, by the great road between the two principal cities in Scotland; possessing such varieties of excellent soil, and so plentifully supplied with fuel, manure, and materials for building:—With such advantages, it is easy to see, that the population, wealth, and industry of this parish, can hardly fail to increase considerably, even before the close of the present century. The value of the lands may yet be greatly raised, by the introduction of more improved modes of agriculture: and scarcely any place can enjoy circumstances more favourable to manufacturing industry. It is, indeed, probable, that either manufactures or agriculture, might long since, have attained a state of still greater improvement, if they had not mutually checked one another's progress. The facility, with which a piece of ground has been hitherto obtained, in feu from the burgh, has generally tempted the trader and the manufacturer, to retire too early to en-

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the season, and the other is relaxed by the warm influence of the fire. Besides, in turning her lint-wheel, the person who spins, commonly employs but one foot, and uses chiefly the hand of the same side, in making the thread. Thus the labour is very unequally divided, by which the health of the body must naturally be affected. Lastly, the waste of saliva in wetting the thread, must deprive the stomach of a substance essential to its operations, whence, all the fatal consequences of crudities, and indigestion, may be expected.

joy the consequence, which landed property confers, and to the pleasures which imagination fondly, but too often fallaciously, ascribes to a life spent in rural employments: Whilst again, the profits of spinning, and the manufacturing spirit of the country, have commonly induced the farmer to pay only a partial attention to the cares of husbandry.

Corruption of Morals likely to attend the increase of Industry.
 —One unhappy circumstance, that may attend the increase of industry, and the introduction of new manufactures among us, is too important to be overlooked: Children becoming sooner able to subsist by the profits of their own labour, will, of consequence, sooner disregard the authority of their parents, acquire earlier habits of expence; and, being exposed to the infection of vice and dissipation, before the powers of their minds are in any degree matured, or their characters formed, —will be much more worthless in manhood, and more helpless in old age. It would be a happy circumstance, therefore, if politicians could contrive some means, to preserve the virtue and morals of the people, while they are endeavouring to increase their numbers, to enliven their industry, and to augment their wealth*.

* The advantages resulting from our late improvements is attended with one circumstance, of which, we have reason to complain, which is this, that the use of lime upon our lands, the filth, which is conveyed into our rivers, from the coal-works in the neighbourhood, and the machinery which have been erected, have already rendered a salmon fishery, which was considerable, very insignificant; and, indeed, there is too much reason to apprehend, that the fish in our rivers will be almost totally exterminated by the joint effects of these different sources of destruction.