

## NUMBER VIII.

## PARISH OF GALSTON.

(COUNTY OF AYR.)

By the Rev. MR. GEORGE SMITH.

*Origin of the Name, Situation, Extent, and Surface.*

SOME have imagined that the name originated from a small number of the Gauls, having made a temporary settlement in the village. But the derivation cannot now be ascertained\*. It lies in that division of the county of Ayr called Kyle, in the presbytery of Ayr, and synod of Ayr and Glasgow. Its length is thirteen measured miles, and it is from four to five miles broad. The surface is very different. Towards the eastern boundary, there is a good deal of moss, muir, and heathy ground. The soil, at the head of the parish, next Strathaven, is light and gravelly: But in the lower and more cultivated grounds, there is rich clay, and in some places

\* Many names of places in the parish are derived from the Celtic, as *Achenbart*, or the field of the bards, *Icnfien*, the descent of the hill, &c. *Gall*, in that language, signifies stranger, but *tor* seems to be of Saxon original.

places loam. The bottom is, in general, a blue or red clay, and in some parts rather inclined to till.

*Rivers and Fish.*—The Irvine, which rises a little above Loudoun hill, runs on the northern boundary of the parish, and is joined by many rivulets in the neighbourhood, in particular by the Glen, the Gower, the Burn-Anne, and the Cessnock.

All these streams have very good trout, and the Irvine, at times, a few salmon. The Burn-Anne trouts, though large, are rather soft, as the stream comes from mossy grounds; those of the Irvine, and of the Cessnock in particular, are little inferior to char. Liming the lands has diminished the number of the trouts, from the noxious quality of that article to fish. But their greatest enemy is man. The few salmon that get over the mill-dams, are destroyed by means of hand nets and harpoons. Scarcely one salmon in a season can be caught by the rod, where 20 or 30 years ago, any skilful person, might, for his amusement, have killed scores of them.

*Lochs.*—There are two lochs in the parish; one Loch-Gait, at its eastern extremity, is a sheet of deep and clear water, abounding in trouts and very large eels. It is the chief source of the water of Even, or Aven, which joins the Clyde below Hamilton, and gives name to the parish of Strathaven, or Aven-dale. The other is Brunt-wood loch, towards Mauchlin. It breeds an immense number of wild ducks; and, in severe winters, great flocks of swans frequent it for the benefit of the springs. A bird, which the people here call a hether blutter, perhaps it is the bittern (it makes a loud roaring noise) built its nest on the island in the loch, about eight or nine years ago, but as some superstitious people suggested that its loud and un-

common

common cries forboded no good, soon either destroyed or banished.

*Air, Climate, Hills, &c.*—The air may be called rather moist, but it is not unhealthy. —In common with all the western coast of Scotland, there are frequent rains, and high winds; the latter of which are supposed to contribute much to the general health of the inhabitants. Sometimes, even in summer, and autumn, the rain falls in considerable quantities, and in large drops. —The most remarkable hills are Cairnfaigh, which, in the Celtic, signifies, *The Hill of Peace*; where probably, in former times, some truce or other agreement was made between two neighbouring clans, regarding their boundaries; and thus the large dykes, and cairns of stones, on the top of Cairnfaigh may be accounted for. Mol-mount (*Mollis Mons*) is arable to the top. The view from this hill is delightful; a great part of Carrick, most of Kyle, and all Cunningham being seen from it. In the neighbourhood, there is under view, the antient seats of Cessnock Tower and Loudoun Castle, with their extensive woods and plantations, the thriving village of Galston, the turnings and windings of the Irvine, &c.; and, with regard to distant objects, in fine weather, the island of Arran, (which serves as a barometer to this country), and even Ireland itself, may be clearly distinguished.

*Antiquities.*—There are the remains of a druidical temple on the top of Mol-mount-hill, of a circular form, and of about sixty feet diameter. A great part of the circle has of late been destroyed, and the stones taken away. —Some years ago, in Mr Brown's grounds of Waterhaughs, an antient burial place was dug up; an account of which was published at the time by Dr. Lawrie minister of Loudoun. —At Claymore, about ten years ago, an urn, containing some silver and other coins was

VOL. II.

K

found,

found, and in the garden of Waterhaughs, 22 silver coins of 5 different sorts were discovered. They were sold for the price of bullion, and brought only about L. 3. The inscription on one of these coins, which still remains, is,

ARCHI. AVST. DVX. BVRG. BRAB.

And on the reverse,

PHIL. III. D. G. HISP. ET. INDIAR. REX. 1622.

Among other antiquities there may be mentioned, several small hills, called Laws, on which there are cairns of stones. Also a place call *Beg*, above Allinton, where the brave Wallace lay, in a species of rude fortification, with only 50 of his friends, yet obtained a complete victory over an English officer of the name of Fenwick, who had 200 men under his command. This gallant hero, it is well known, had several places of retirement towards the head of this parish, and in the neighbourhood, some of which retain his name to this day; Wallace-hill in particular, an eminence near the Galla-law, and a place called Wallace-Gill, in the parish of Loudoun, a hollow glen, to which he probably retired for shelter when pursued by his enemies.

*Sheep*—There are some sheep farms in the parish, in which about 2500 sheep, of the black-faced or Lammer-muir breed are grazed. The pasture is exceedingly healthy, and there is seldom any loss by disease. In the lower grounds a few English sheep are also kept. The wool of the muir sheep is coarse, and it takes from eight to nine fleeces to the trone stone.

*State of Agriculture*.—There are about 100 farmers, but only 80 ploughs; two farmers sometimes joining to keep one plough. Allowing 30 acres to every plow, the number in actual tillage would be 2400; and, as the tenants are in general allowed to plough only one third of their farms, hence the whole

whole arable land in the parish may be calculated at three times as much, or 7200 acres; of which one-third is ploughed, another pastured, and the remainder cut for hay.

After six years rest, and liming the land at the rate of 100 bolls of slacked lime per acre, it is usual to take three successive crops of oats. The lime is spread upon the green sward before plowing, sometimes not many weeks before the ground is plowed, which must occasion much of the lime being lost at the bottom of the furrow; yet it is astonishing what large crops are produced in this way.——Very little bear or barley is sown. Pease, beans, &c. thrive extremely well, and should certainly intervene between the crops of oats; though there is a great deal of difficulty in preserving them, owing to frequent rains in harvest.

The produce is chiefly oats; and, for these two or three years last past, a small quantity of wheat.——Potatoes are raised in great quantities, both by the farmers and by the inhabitants of the village; the last renting the land nearest them, at 3d.  $\frac{1}{2}$  and 4d. per fall, and manuring and dressing the crop for themselves. And though the tradesmen might certainly buy their potatoes as cheap from the farmers, yet this practice tends much to promote their health, and amusement at bye-hours, when otherwise they would be idle, and ought therefore to be encouraged.

One great article of produce is cheese, made after the Dunlop manner, and equally good\*. It is sent to Kilmarnock, Paisley, Glasgow, and Edinburgh.

The farmers, in general, raise their own stock of black  
K 2 cattle.

\* The parish of Dunlop, was the first, in this part of Scotland, that took the lead in making excellent cheese for a distant market. They resemble in taste some of the better sorts of English cheese, though not yet brought to equal perfection.

cattle. Many calves in the spring are fed for the Edinburgh market; and a few horses are bred in the parish.—More grain is raised within the bounds of the district than what is necessary for its consumption, and the surplus is carried to the great manufacturing towns in the neighbourhood.

The harvest of 1782 was remarkably late, a great quantity of snow having fallen before the crop was cut; and the corn was picked out from among it, in the best manner it could. In several fields the grain was covered with frozen snow, and hardly any part of the crop was to be seen.

The soil, particularly next Straven, is well adapted for turnips, but little of that root has as yet been raised. From 20 to 30 acres are generally sown with flax, and the produce is dressed by a water-mill in the village. The quantity of flax manufactured there, is from 900 to 1000 stones avoirdupoise, and about the half of that quantity is heckled. Little flax is dressed in any other manner; though, by the hand, is by far the safest method, and subject to much less waste, than when water mills are employed. Clover and rye-grass, especially the latter, is sown for hay, when the land is allowed to rest.—White clover is, in most places, the natural product of the soil.

*Proprietors and rent.*—There are about 50 heritors great and small; of whom Miss Scot of Scotstarvet is by much the most considerable, having purchased, in 1787, the extensive baronies of Cessnock, Hainingross, and others.—The valued rent of the parish is L. 4644 : 3 : 10, Scots; the real rent from L. 5000 to L. 6000 sterling.—The greater part of the land is inclosed. Good land lets for about 20s per acre, and near the village at double the sum.

Wood's

*Woods and Planting.*—There is a great deal of fine old planting, many very large Scots firs, and some copse wood round the house of Cessnock. Within these 20 years, very extensive plantations have been raised by Mr Brown of Water-haugh, and other proprietors in the parish. Near old Barr castle, there is a very remarkable old elm, which measures 24 feet round, has 12 feet of trunk at the top, and spreads itself into 24 branches, many of which, are themselves large trees. A tree called the Maiden-Oak, was lately sold for about L. 13. By the oldest leases on the Barr estate, the tenants were bound to plant, at least twelve ash yearly. This accounts for the beautiful appearance of the farm houses on that property, which are in general surrounded by trees.

*Fowls and Birds.*—There are here all the common tame fowls of the country. The muirs yield plenty of grouse, and partridges abound in the low grounds. Within these 13 or 14 years, some wood-larks have been seen in the plantations of Cessnock; and about the same time bull-finches first appeared; and have now increased to a very considerable number. They do great damage to the blossoms of the plumbs, and small fruit; a loss which is scarcely compensated by their destroying, at the same time, some grubs and caterpillars, and filling the neighbouring woods with the music of their pipes. Wood-cocks, in the winter and spring are to be found in great numbers; and within 5 or 6 years, pheasants have bred in the parish, but have been, in a great measure, destroyed by poachers.

*Minerals.*—Miss Scot has a valuable coal, now working, within a quarter of a mile of the village; and also an exceeding good lime quarry, which sufficiently serves all the tenants on this part of her extensive domains.—It is worthy of remark, that within these 40 or 50 years, all the fuel made use of  
here,

here, was peats from Galston muir, a few coals excepted, which were carried in sacks on horses backs, from Caprington, near Kilmarnock, through almost impassible clay roads. The late Mr Wallace of Cessnock is the gentleman, to whom this neighbourhood owes the important advantages both of coal and lime, which have so materially contributed to its improvement. There is no doubt, that all the muir edges abound in iron ore, which might be smelted to great profit. At Cairnsfaigh, there was lately discovered, on the banks of the Aven, a vein of very rich iron ore; and several tons were wrought out by the Muirkirk company. But it was given up for want of proper roads to convey it.—The Burn-Anne throws up at times some good pebbles, which are supposed to come from the sides of the Mol-mount-hill, where it is said they abound.—There are many stone quarries in the parish; and, close to the village, abundance of stone of a red colour, which is well calculated for building.

*Population.*—In 1755, the population of Galston amounted to 1013 souls.

It appears, from an actual and pretty accurate survey taken in 1790, that the number had increased to 1577, of which 1219 were examinable.

In the village of Galston, which, An. 1779, contained only 455 souls, there are at present 573, of which the following is an analysis.

Population table for the village of Galston, March the 21st,  
1791.

Souls	-	-	573	Examinable persons	473
Males	-	-	257	Females	-
More women than men			59	Widows	-
					30
					Families

Families	-	152	Lint millers	-	4
Day-labourers	-	7	Colliers	-	7
Carters	-	3	Gardener	-	1
Masons	-	9	Mole-catcher	-	1
Weavers	-	55	Baker	-	1
Wrights	-	11	Paper-makers	-	3
Stocking-weavers	-	11	Dyers	-	2
Tailors	-	11	Sempstresses	-	4
Coopers	-	2	Horfe dealers	-	2
Carriers	-	2	Black-smiths	-	4
Butchers	-	2	Drummer	-	1
Tambourers, i. e. girls who sew with the tambouring needle	-	24	Flax-dressers	-	2
Grocers	-	5	Surgeon	-	1
Shoe-makers	-	21	Druggist	-	1
			School-master	-	1

From Whitsunday 1785, to December 1788, there were 68 mariages.

		Births.	Deaths.
In 1783		44	39
1784		43	44
1785		45	34
1786		42	24
1787		46	28
1788		47	35
1789		47	26
1790		50	41

These births, &c. are exclusive of such as have not been recorded, by persons who are not of the Establishment.

Since 1779, about 40 houses have been built; and, feu-  
ing

ing continues to go on rapidly, infomuch that 12 new houses were feued this year. — The conveniencies for building and carrying on manufactures are very great; to which may be added, reasonable ground-rents, abundance of stone and lime, excellent water, and a rich and populous country. Till of late, the chief manufacture was shoes, which were made for merchants in Kilmarnock, and exported. Now, the weaving of lawn and gauze is the chief object; and, if a little money were laid out in establishing these manufactures, while Paisley and Glasgow flourish, this parish might expect to thrive.

The first loom for silk or light work, was set up here in 1787. At this time there will be about 40. The weavers of Galston depend on Glasgow and Paisley. It would be desirable to have an woollen manufacture attempted. The premiums given by the Trustees might contribute to its establishment. There is some paper manufactured, but it is chiefly of the coarse sort.

*Local Customs.*—It is usual for even the women to attend funerals in the village, dressed in black or red cloaks. — Another singular custom prevails here: When a young man wishes to pay his addresses to his sweet-heart, instead of going to her father's, and professing his passion, he goes to a public house; and, having let the land-lady into the secret of his attachment, the object of his wishes is immediately sent for, who never almost refuses to come. She is entertained with ale and whisky, or brandy; and the marriage is concluded on. The second day after the marriage, a *creeling*, as it is called, takes place. The young wedded pair, with their friends, assemble in a convenient spot. A small creel or basket is prepared for the occasion, into which, they put some stones: The young men carry it alternately, and allow themselves to be caught by the maidens, who have a kiss when they succeed. After

ter a great deal of innocent mirth and pleasantry, the creel falls at length to the young husband's share, who is obliged to carry it generally for a long time, none of the young women having compassion upon him. At last, his fair mate, kindly relieves him from his burden; and her complaisance, in this particular, is considered as a proof of her satisfaction with the choice she has made. The creel goes round again; more merriment succeeds, and all the company dine together, and talk over the feats of the field\*.

*Church, Manse, Stipend, and Patron.*—The church is ancient, probably built before the Reformation. The manse was built in 1727; but has since been frequently repaired. The stipend is 8 chalders, or 128 bolls of meal, and about L. 8 in money, with a glebe. The living was the same 100 years ago. Miss Scot is patron.

*State of the Poor.*—The collections for the poor, with the interest of a small sum of money, bring in about L. 40. *per annum*, which is distributed among two classes. The first class consists of the old, the infirm, young children, orphans, &c. who have a weekly pension. Such as are rendered unfit, by temporary sickness, to provide for themselves and families, receive only an occasional or interim supply.

The Session takes an inventory of the goods of such as have a weekly provision, which, at their death, are sold for the behoof of the poor.——Intimation is given from the pulpit from time to time, to let no houses to any person who is likely to be a burden on the parish. There are no native beggars, but too many of that description from other parishes. The

VOL. II.

L

number

\* Perhaps the French phrase, "*Adieu panniens, vendanges; sont faites,*" may allude to a similar custom.

number of stated poor is from 10 to 12, of occasional from 11 to 16.

There is an universal society for the relief of the poor, at Newmills, with a fund which is of great use to tradesmen in distress. Some of the natives of Galston belong to it. One, on a very simple principle, is established in this parish. It consists of about 50 members, and is called the penny or half-penny society. It has no funds, which are too apt to be embezzled; but, when a brother is confined to bed by sickness, every member pays him a penny weekly, and if able to go about, though not to work, a half-penny. This institution is found to answer; and might be adopted in other places with advantage.

*Miscellaneous Observations.*—There are two great fairs at the village, one in July, the other in December. The first (St. Peter's) has greatly fallen off, but the custom is still retained of kindling fires on all the neighbouring hills, the evening before it is held.——The great roads from Edinburgh to Ayr, by Riccarton, and from Glasgow to Dumfries, by Mauchlin, pass through the village of Galston. The roads are chiefly made and kept in repair by the statute-labour.——There is an excellent parish school, and a school-house lately built, which accommodates 100 scholars. A Sunday-school, erected by Mrs. Scot in 1787, and maintained at her sole expence, is attended with very good effects.

There are about 5 or 6 ale-houses in the village.——Kilmarnock is the nearest post town.——There are 7 corn mills, 3 lint mills, and 1 paper mill. Of the former, one is known under the name of Patie's mill, and claims the honour of having given birth to that delightful song, "The lass of Patie's mill." The banks of the Irvine, on which it is situated, abstracted from the charms of the fair, might well have inspired a poet

poet of less powers and sensibility than Ramsay, with the sentiments contained in that celebrated pastoral.—The high multures formerly paid at these corn mills, are now, in a great measure, bought up and abolished; though, in the lands of Greenholm, and a few others, they still exist.—The only services of a personal nature which remain, are, the common mill services, of thatching the mill, dragging home the millstone, &c. &c. and, on one estate, that of bringing home the master's hay.—The people are in general long lived; many having died within these few years between 70 and 100.—The consumption is the most prevalent distemper, and the most fatal. The small-pox makes frequent ravages; and inoculation is not so common as it ought to be. The religious prejudice against it is still great. Of above 500 who have been inoculated in the space of 12 years, not one has died.—It may be added, that the inhabitants of Galston are, in general, sober, industrious, and charitable to the distressed. It is to be regretted, however, that instead of the wholesome beverage of ale, they are now compelled, by the high duties on that article, to betake themselves to the use of whisky, which is equally destructive to the health, and to the morals of the people.