

## NUMBER LXVIII.

## PARISH OF DORES,

*(County of Inverness.)**By the Rev. Mr JOHN M'KILICAN.**Name, Situation, and Extent.*

**D**ORES, anciently called *Durris*, is supposed to be derived from the compound word in the Gaelic language, *Tur-ri-ibh*, which, translated into English, signifies, *a rising ground near a water*. Such a rising ground there is in the parish, whose sides are washed by Lochness. It lies within the county and presbytery of Inverness, and synod of Moray; and is about 20 miles in length, and 3 or 4 in breadth.

*Soil and Climate.*—The soil is generally light, but not much cultivated, as the ground is occupied by a number of small tenants, who have but short leases of their farms, and consequently no encouragement to improve them, either for their own or their masters advantage. The mountains, which inclose the valley on the north and south, protect it from all winds, except those from the west and east; whereby, in hot seasons, the summer heat is increased so much, that the corn and grass would be in danger of being quite parched, were it not for the night dews, that frequently fall in great quantities. In the high ground there are several lakes and mountains, to the extent of which the arable land bears but a  
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very small proportion. The soil, in some of these, has greatly the advantage over that of the low ground, and is very productive in seasons free from frost, or much rain. The parish, in general, though better calculated for pasturage than for raising corn, produces as much grain as is sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants. The air is esteemed salubrious, and many live to a good age, though there are no instances of great longevity. There are, however, in the neighbourhood, 3 men and their wives, whose ages, added together, amount to 510 years.

*Cultivation and Produce.*—The crops chiefly produced here are oats, barley, and potatoes, on the latter of which the poorer sort chiefly depend for subsistence. The new mode of farming can hardly be said to be introduced into this parish, except at Gortuleg, the property of James Frazer, Esq; writer to the signet, who spares no pains nor expence to improve it. His tenants have also got good leases; and his patriotic example, in both these respects, is deserving of imitation. The season of sowing oats is from the 20th of March to the middle of April. The sowing of barley begins about the 12th May, and continues to the end of that month. The reaping of the crop, unless the season is wet and cold, as happened last year, is from the beginning of September to the middle of October.

*Wages.*—Male servants receive from 3 l. to 5 l. Sterling *per annum*; and the females from 30 s. to 35 s. There are few day labourers, (as many of the young lads go out of the county for work, in the summer and harvest), which obliges the tenants to keep more domestic servants, especially in harvest, than their farms can well afford to support. On this account, more than from unskilfulness in husbandry, some discover

discover an inclination to abandon tillage, and throw their lands into pasturage. A married servant, with 3 or 4 children, if he and his wife are sober and industrious, can live more comfortably than many of the farmers. Besides his wages, he has ground from his master for planting as many potatoes as he can gather manure fit to raise them. Tradesmen, such as masons, wrights, taylors, &c. unless they work by the piece, are allowed 18 d. a day, or 1 s. and their maintainance. Day labourers, employed in casting peats, receive 9 d. a man, and 6 d. a woman.

*Population.*—The population, of late years, if a conclusion may be drawn from the births entered in the parish register, has rather decreased. By a survey lately taken, (in April 1791), the number of souls amounted to 1365; of whom 610 were males, and 755 females. The return to Dr Webster, in 1755, was 1520. There appears to be, therefore, a decrease, on the whole, of 155. The births and marriages, for the last 10 years, as recorded in the parish register, are as follows:

	<i>Births.</i>	<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>	<i>Marriages.</i>
1781	46	24	22	6
1782	44	19	25	3
1783	37	22	15	5
1784	19	11	8	9
1785	23	14	9	10
1786	29	17	12	8
1787	23	12	11	7
1788	30	16	14	12
1789	34	19	15	15
1790	33	17	16	5
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	318	171	147	80
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Average,	32	17	15	8
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*Heritors.*—There are 8 heritors, only one of whom, viz. Mr Frazer of Gortuleg, occasionally resides in the parish. The non-residence of heritors may, in the opinion of some, be an advantage, as hereby that degree of luxury is prevented, which excites particular persons to aim at making a higher figure than is consistent with their circumstances; but perhaps it would be for the general good of the tenants, that they were like a family, under the immediate eye and observation of their master, so that his care might extend, as much as possible, to every individual residing upon his property. Indeed while the rents and produce of almost all the estates in a parish are spent out of it, no great improvement can be expected to take place.

*Roads.*—The roads of communication are properly attended to by the gentlemen concerned, and annually repaired. The statute labour is converted into money. The sheriff of the county, who is an heritor, takes an active concern in every thing that regards the police of the county in general, and of this parish in particular. He is ever labouring at the suppression of vices in general, especially such as are the most likely to affect the welfare of the community.

*Church and School.*—The stipend is 40 l. Sterling, and 3 chalders of victual, half bear, half meal. It has not been augmented since the year 1740. The glebe contains exactly 4 acres. The manse was built upwards of 50 years ago, and has since undergone various reparations.—The parochial school is far from being in a flourishing condition. The number of scholars has not, at any time, at least since the admission of the present incumbent, in 1785, exceeded 20. The salary is only 100 merks.

*Poor.*

*Poor.*—There are 60 on the poor's roll; but there is no fund established, as the law directs, by assessment on the landed property, for their maintenance. The only parochial fund for their relief, is the annual interest arising from 70 l. Sterling, mortgaged by gentlemen who were heritors of the parish, and the weekly collections at the church, which amount to about 4 l. a year. The poor here, as is the case with most of the poor in the northern counties of Scotland, ask alms, not only at the dwelling houses of the inhabitants of their own, but of other parishes. It is much to be wished, that every parish would enter into a resolution to observe the law for maintaining their own poor, when they cannot work, as vagrants and sturdy beggars, who are the pests of society, and may well be called the public robbers of the poor, would thus be effectually detected and discountenanced.

*Lakes.*—Lochness and its environs furnish excellent materials for a beautiful landscape. It lies E. N. E. and W. S. W. and is 22 miles in length, and from 1 to 2½ in breadth. The depth, in the middle, is from 60 to 135 fathoms. The flowing, occasioned by continued rains, and melting of snow, is from 8 to 10 feet perpendicular from the low water mark. The loch is so deep at the sides, that, except at the points of Torr and Foyers, a ship of the line might sail within her length of the shore, from end to end, on either side. The wind being confined, by the great height of the hills, on both sides, as it were in a funnel, blows almost always either straight up or down the loch, a circumstance much against the navigation of it; as is likewise that of the heavy squalls which blow from all the glens and gullies, when the wind inclines either to the north or south. A decked vessel may turn to windward, from one end to the other, in moderate weather in 3 days, but must anchor every night. There is  
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good anchoring ground at both ends, and at Urquhart Bay, Alt Say, and Port Clair, on the north side; and Inverfarigach and Foyers on the south. There is also a safe creek at the Horse Shoe.

The lake never freezes, which is supposed to be owing to its great depth, and sulphureous bottom; and the high hills, with which it is inclosed on the south and north, present to one sailing on the lake, a pleasant view of wood, pasture, rivers and rivulets, corn fields, broken steepes, and irregular precipices. In this large body of water there are many trouts of 3 or 4 pounds weight, and some salmon, which pass the cruives in the river Ness, when it is high. There is no regular salmon fishing on the lake, as the expence of fishing, on an average, exceeded the profits. Fort Augustus, which lies at the farther extremity of the lake, is well situated for an woollen manufacture, as it is in the mouth of the Highlands, where many, who were distressed by the extension of sheep farms, still continue to reside, from an invincible attachment to their native country, though they have scarce sufficient employment to maintain them. There are several other lakes, besides Lochness, in this parish, which abound with small trout; but the inhabitants near them fish more for their amusement than for subsistence, and never for sale. It is remarkable, that one of these lakes never freezes in winter, but frequently does in spring.

*Wood and Animals.*—There are several extensive fir plantations in the parish, which are in a thriving condition, and conveniently situated for the market.—Besides the common animals for domestic use, there are deer, roes, badgers, foxes, hares, pole-cats, wild-cats, and weasels.

*Antiquities.*

*Antiquities.*—At the distance of 3 miles from the lake, are to be seen the vestiges of a fort, called *Castal Dunriachan*, which some reckon a corruption of *Castal Dun Ri-chuan*, or *the Castle of the King of the Ocean*, a name which it is supposed to have got, at the period when the king of Norway and Denmark was master of the sea. A little to the east of that fort, there are several cairns or heaps of stones, and one almost equal in size to all the rest. Tradition reports that FINGAL, so much celebrated in Ossian's poems, here engaged in battle *Asbi*, the son of the Norwegian king, and killed him, which gave the name of *Drumashbi*, or *Asbi's Hill*, to the scene where this event happened. The inhabitants point out the chair where Fingal rested on the occasion, and which is still called *Sheir Finn*, or Fingal's Chair. About 9 miles distant there is another fort called *Dundardell*, which is said to have been one of the many forts in the great valley, extending from the German Ocean at Inverness, to the Atlantic at Fort William, that were intended for making signals, by fire, of the enemy's approach, during the times of the Danish and Norwegian incursions; and indeed they are so situated, with respect to each other, as to be very well calculated for such a purpose.

*General Character.*—The people, in general, are sober, quiet, and industrious. There are, however, some exceptions. The tenants would be better pleased with their condition, if they obtained longer leases than are commonly granted them, and their servants were more moderate in regard to wages.

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