

NUMBER XXX.

PARISH OF CRUDEN,

(COUNTY OF ABERDEEN.)

By the Rev. Mr ALEXANDER COCK.

Origin of the Name.

CRUDEN, or CRUDANE, as it is spelled in old records, takes its rise from the famous battle, which was fought in the beginning of the 11th century, between Malcolm II. and Canute, the son of Sueno, who was afterwards King of England, Denmark, Norway, and part of Sweden. The armies met about a mile to the west of Slains castle, the family seat of the Earl of Errol, upon a plain in the bottom of the bay of Ardendraught*, near which the Danes then had a castle, the ruins of which are still to be seen. The Scots had the victory. The night succeeding the battle, both parties lay at a small distance from

* A considerable portion of the Earl of Errol's estate is called the barony of Ardendraught, a name which is said to signify *the Old Danish Road*.

from each other, and the next day presented such a view of the field, as turned their thoughts from war to peace. The conditions were soon drawn up and agreed upon*.

Malcolm and Canute swore to the observation of the articles, and faithfully performed their respective obligations. Canute, with all his countrymen, left Scotland; and Malcolm not only caused the dead bodies of the Danes to be interred with honour and decency, but also commanded a chapel to be built upon the spot, which, to perpetuate the memory of the event, he dedicated to *Olaus*, the tutelar saint or patron, both of Denmark and Norway †. The village, near which the chapel was built,

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* The terms concluded on were,

1. That the Danes and Norwegians should withdraw their persons and effects from Scotland, and within a limited time evacuate those places which they held in Murray and Buchan.

2. That during the lives of both Kings, Malcolm and Sueno, neither of the nations should attempt any hostility against the other, nor be assisting to such as should.

3. That the field of battle should be consecrated, after the rites then in use, and made a cemetery, or burying place for the dead.

4. That in it the Danes, as well as the Scots, should be decently and honourably interred.

† No vestige of this chapel is now to be seen, but the place is well known; and, as the ground about it is sandy, the bones can be dug up in several places. None of the houses of the village now remain. But some of the hearth stones, with ashes upon them, were dug up some time ago, in casting a ditch for an inclosure. In the present church-yard, which is about a mile to the westward of the place, where the old church was, there is a black marble grave stone, said to have been sent over by the Danish King, to be laid upon some of his officers, who were slain in

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was called *Croju-Dane*, or *Cruden*, which signifies, *kill the Dane*; and there is a tradition, that during the confusion of the battle, the Danish military chest was hid near that place, but it has never yet been found.

Extent, Situation, Surface and Soil.—The parish is a very regular compact field, extending about 8 or 9 miles along the British Ocean towards the south, and about 7 or 8 miles into the land westward. It is situated in that division of Aberdeenshire, called Buchan, in the presbytery of Ellon, and Synod of Aberdeen. The soil is various. A large portion of it is deep rich clay, which, with very little exception, extends along the coast till within a little of the eastern extremity, which is the only strong piece of ground in the parish. All the rest of it, except the moor and a few banks, could easily be made arable. Towards the W. and N. the ground in general is light and gravelly, or black and mossy. There is very little loam in the parish, but some excellent fields of yellow soil, upon a clay bottom. There is an immense quantity of peat moss, which extends all along the march to the N. There are also patches of moss in other places, and a pretty large portion of the moss of Loch Lundie, on the side next to Slains.

Villages.—There are 4 villages or sea towns, altogether occupied by sea-faring people, and consequently situated along the coast, *viz.* *Long-baven, Buler's Buchan, Ward* and *Whinnyfold*. None of them are very populous, having

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the battle. There is no inscription upon it. But the incumbent, upon enquiring into the meaning of a groove in the middle of the stone, was told, there had been a plate of copper, inserted into it, with some inscription. The different places where the dead have been buried, do yet strongly mark the field of battle

been much neglected of late. The whole only employ 8 boats, with 6 men and a boy to each boat when fully manned; but at present, few of them have their full complement of men, and some are laid up. It appears very probable, that a tolerable harbour could be made out at Ward. It is the eastern boundary of the bay of Arden-draught, which extends about two miles along the coast, with a beach of fine sand, and a pretty large field of bent at the back of it. If a small brook, which passes along the S. end of the Earl of Errol's gardens, were introduced into the sea, at the end of the beach next the Ward, there is every reason to believe, that a very safe landing place could be made for boats or larger vessels, and perhaps it might be the means of forming a very valuable salmon fishing.

Climate and Diseases, &c.—The climate is various. The E. end of the parish is often involved in fog, when there is none in the W. And in warm weather, the fog will sometimes extend, from a quarter, to a half or even a whole mile, over the land, next the ocean, when all the rest of the parish, except a little at the E. end, will be quite clear, at least from about 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning, to 3 or 4 in the evening, when the fog becomes general. Some parts of the parish have their crops as early, and others as late as any where in the county. Epidemical diseases sometimes prevail, yet the place, upon the whole, cannot be said to be unhealthy. One man died in the end of last year, in the 101st year of his age; another a few years ago, in the 99th, and several above 90. There are some now living above 80, and even 90. Since 1788, epidemical diseases have prevailed much, and been terribly fatal. The malignant sore throat, and putrid fever, succeeded one another, and, notwithstanding every warning, were
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much spread, by the imprudence of those, who went to visit the sick. One circumstance is worth taking notice of, namely, that of all those, who attended the *late wake* * of a person, who died of the putrid fever, not one escaped catching the infection. The practice of inoculating for the small-pox is become pretty general, and few lives are lost by that distemper. Rheumatic and consumptive complaints are most prevalent.

Waters.—There are no rivers, properly speaking, in the parish, but two or three very good streams of water. One of them drives 8 mills. There are two chalybeate springs. One at the foot of the rocks at Buller's Buchan, said to be full as strong a mineral as that of Peterhead; the other upon the top of the rock beside Dunbuy, over which the late Earl of Errol built a house. This is a very strong mineral water, though weaker than that of Peterhead.

Natural Curiosities, &c.—The Pot of Buller's Buchan is so well known, that a description would be superfluous. The rock of Dunbuy, to which the migratory birds resort, and in which there is one of the most magnificent arches upon the coast, is surrounded by the sea, and at no time can be got at, but by a boat. The Bow of Pitwartlachie, a grand arch to which the kitty-weaks resort, has a long ravine near it, of prodigious height, and very narrow, through which the noise of the waves is so reverberated, as to resemble the sound of a multitude of carriages driving furiously upon a causeway. There are two very grand arches, one above the other, at the E. end of the peninsula of Slains castle. There is another near them, high up on a rock,
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* This is a practice common in many parts of Scotland, and not yet exploded here, of people sitting up all night with the dead corps, in the chamber of the deceased.

through which the sea dashes, when the wind blows strong from the E. and which forms a beautiful cascade, in full view of the drawing room windows. One rock near these, is of the form of a round tower, and seemingly set upon its base, with a very open joint. A famous antiquary, who saw it this summer, is of opinion, that it will not stand much above 10 or 12 years longer. Of caves, there are a good number, but none of them very remarkable. There are the remains of a Druidical temple, upon a rising ground, about a mile to the W. of the church. There is an artificial mount, about a mile to the S. of it, called the High Law, and another pretty near the Druid's temple, called the Moat, at the foot of which a small stone box was plucked out, a few years ago, by the harrows, when dressing the field beside it. There was nothing in the box, which was composed of separate pieces of stone, neatly put together, without any cement, and placed in the earth. A little to the E. of the Moat, is the *Gallow Hill*, where the graves are still very distinct, and mark the effects of feudal tyranny.

Agriculture and Manufactures.—Husbandry can only be said to be in its infancy here. There are but few farms in good order. The spirit of farming seems, however, to be spreading abroad, and from the appearances of marl, which have lately been discovered, great expectations may be formed. The crops are barley, bear, oats, pease and turnips; with wheat and potatoes, for domestic use. The incumbent has seen 15 acres in one farm, laid out in turnips; and the general run is from about a half, to 7 or 8 acres. There is seldom any fallow, till this year, that the Earl of Errol has 20 acres. Much the greater part of farm work is done by horses; oxen, however, are employed in all the different branches of husbandry. The farms are of all sizes. From 16 or 20 acres, they rise to
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above 700.—There are three manufactories of thread carried on to a pretty considerable extent. And were there any inland villages, to the inhabitants of which certain parts of the work could be given out, these manufactories would be soon conducted on a very enlarged scale.

Population.—The number of inhabitants amounts to 2028. In 1778, the number was 2120. But the malignant distempers, which have prevailed since 1788, account in some measure for the difference. The return to Dr Webster in 1755 was 2549. The births, &c. for the last 7 years, are as follows :

<i>Years.</i>	<i>Births.</i>	<i>Deaths.</i>	<i>Marriages.</i>
1786	41	31	16
1787	38	31	7
1788	36	57	14
1789	38	62	13
1790	33	46	10
1791	30	46	17
1792	34	49	17
	250	322	94

The year is computed from the last day of September.

Rent and Proprietors.—The parish consists of 80 ploughs of land, 70 of which belong to the Earl of Errol. The valued rent of the parish is L. 5314 : 16 : 4 Scotch. There are in all 5 proprietors, of whom 2 are resident.

Church and Poor.—There are 3 clergymen in the parish, the ministers of the Established Church, of the English Episcopal, and of the Scotch Episcopal. The number

ber of communicants of the Established Church this year was 713, and it is supposed, that those of the other two, do not, between them, exceed 360. The parish church was rebuilt 16 years ago. And, what is rather a singular circumstance, all the outer walls, which are rough ashler work, are built out of *one stone*, upon which hallow fires formerly used to be burnt, and which also served as a land-mark to the fishers, when at sea, being upon the top of a gravelly eminence. The Earl of Errol is patron. The stipend is L. 35 : 11 : 1 $\frac{4}{2}$ in money, 48 bolls of meal, and 16 bolls of bear; with a manse and offices, and 6 acres of glebe. A process of augmentation, by desire of the Earl of Errol, is going on. His Lordship has also given orders for building a new manse, as the present one is very old and ruinous. This, to be sure, is rather an uncommon example, but, at the same time, worthy of the Lord High Constable of Scotland, and the son of a man, who made the happiness of mankind his study; and who possessed that amiable talent, so rare to be met with, of securing the regard of all who approached him, and sending them away pleased with themselves. The poor's funds consist of L. 130 laid out at interest, the weekly collections, and the penalties. There are about 70 people upon the poor's roll. The contributions from the two chapels, for their support, are not considerable.

General Character.—The people are sober and industrious. Except one smuggling business, there has been no trial, before the Court of Justiciary, of any one belonging to the parish, these 14 years. Some time ago smuggling was carried on to a great extent, but it is now almost entirely given up.

Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous Observations.—In 1782 and 1783, the parish suffered exceedingly by the bad crops, and some of the tenants have hardly yet recovered them. At the same time, in some places, the meal was very good and wholesome, and the parish, upon the whole, would have been able to have supported itself. The crops of late years have been exceedingly good. The parish is a beautiful field, and a noble subject for improvement. If the small brook, formerly mentioned, could be carried into the sea at Ward, and a harbour made out, that could receive small vessels, which might lie in safety at all seasons, (of which there appears the highest degree of probability,) a flourishing village would be the certain consequence. But if the bottom of the brook could be deepened, so as to receive such vessels as generally trade upon this coast, then, a very fine town would soon be built, and many a vessel saved, which, in time of danger or distress, durst not look at Peterhead, and would not be able to reach Aberdeen.—Were the Earl of Errol to employ a small sum annually, in carrying forward such improvements as the situation of the parish points out, and resolutely to persist in seeing them judiciously executed, he would not only have the glory of improving and beautifying a large tract of country, but the satisfaction of being proprietor of one of the finest pieces of property, in the North of Scotland.

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