

NUMBER LV.

PARISH OF DUNDONALD.

(County and Presbytery of Ayr.—Synod of Glasgow and Ayr.)

By the Reverend Mr ROBERT DUNCAN.

Name and Situation.

NO word in the English language accurately determines the form of that rising ground which is known in Scotland by the Celtic term, *dun*. The parish of Dundonald derives its name from an eminence on which stands an antient and royal castle. In this castle lived and died Robert II. the first King of the Stewart line. From Irvine harbour, which is within its limit, this parish extends eight English miles along the sea coast, and terminates on the south, at the place where the Rumbling and Pow-burns meet, and discharge themselves into the sea: A place which, on account of its quick sands, is very dangerous to travellers*.

Soil

* The sea coast between Ayr and Irvine being flat, and, excepting at this place, which is about three miles from Ayr, the sands being firm and the prospect delightful, a strong temptation is presented to pass from the one town to the other along shore. But, as some persons have been buried alive at this spot, it is an important caution not to attempt passing it at high water, and at other times to keep as close as possible to the low water mark.

Soil and Appearance.—The parish of Dundonald presents as great variety in point of Soil and external appearance as is to be met with in any part of the kingdom. The Claven hills, and Shoualton moss, which lies immediately under them to the north, divide it almost into two equal parts; upper and lower. The former being inland, is, in general, of a fertile clay, though some farms are more inclined to a loamy, and two or three to a light texture. This part of the parish consists of gentle eminences, adorned with clumps and belts of planting. The lower part, between the hills and the sea, is very flat. Some barren sandy hillocks are to be seen in different places by the shore. Cutting the bent, which grows upon them, no doubt, adds to their barrenness, and renders them a better sport to the winds. However, there is a great extent of arable, and especially of good pasture, ground near the sea, and particularly about the Troone. Half a mile inward, and along the skirts of the hills, is a mixed soil of excellent quality; very proper for culture, and which, after regular tillage, runs immediately into rich grass.

The Claven hills consist of various heights, and extend about three miles from south-east to north-west, and a mile and an half from north-east to south-west. Many of these heights are arable, all of them afford pasture, and some of them have their shelving sides ornamented with oak, ash, birch, alder, hazle, &c. None of them are so elevated as to require critical measurement, or comparison with many hills in the county of Ayr, yet they have long been distinguished by particular names. The two highest are stiled the Lamont and Warley hills. Perhaps the latter, which overtops the rest, is a corruption for warlike; the lines of two encampments being still distinct upon it. These are usually designed Roman encampments, though their form appears sufficiently to confute that designation. The largest contains, within a circular embarkment of loose stones and earth, ten acres

acres of ground ; and there is an inner circle of the same kind, and from the same center, which incloses one of these acres. The other encampment is about two hundred yards distant. No artificial work has ever been raised upon its north-east quarter ; the steepness of the declivity being a sufficient defence. But, on the south and west, the circular embankment is strong, and within is a beautiful platform not exceeding an acre in extent. Historians seem to agree that the Norwegians, who afterwards were defeated at Largs, landed near to Ayr ; and it is not improbable that these heights were immediately occupied, and in this manner fortified, by them. No place could be more proper for their purpose, both on account of the extensive prospect, and of its great security before the invention of fire arms. A person standing within either of these encampments, is entertained with a delightful prospect, to the south, of the lands lying upon Ayr and Doon rivers ; and the prospect, upon this quarter, is terminated by the high hills of Carrick and Galloway. Turning to the north-east, Cunningham and part of Kyle exhibit a grand and rich amphitheatre, at least 14 miles in diameter. In a clear day, the eye is lost among hills stretching far beyond Ben-Lomond. To the west, the spectator has a noble view of the frith of Clyde, of Bute, Cumbræ, Cowal, the Paps of Jura, Arran, Plada, Sanda, the point of Cantyre, and different parts of the kingdom of Ireland appearing between Kintyre and Ailfa. The singular form of this last island, rising like a mighty pyramid from the ocean, is beautifully contrasted by the similar appearance of Loudon hill, rising on the opposite side from the land. No wonder that the inhabitants of the bleak mountains of Scandinavia were captivated with the prospect, and excited to contend vigorously for the possession of this part of Scotland.

Population.—In 1755, the number of souls was rated at 983.
 In 1792, the total is - - - - - 1317
 Of these—Males - - - - - 658
 Females - - - - - 659
 Below 10 years of age - - - - - 338
 From 10 to 20 years - - - - - 293
 From 20 to 30 - - - - - 220
 From 30 to 40 - - - - - 165
 From 40 to 50 - - - - - 146
 From 50 to 60 - - - - - 82
 From 60 to 70 - - - - - 43
 From 70 to 80 - - - - - 26
 From 80 to 90 - - - - - 3
 From 90 to 100 - - - - - 1
 Annual average of births during 28 years - - - - - 35
 _____ of marriages - - - - - 16
 _____ of burials - - - - - 17

Rent.—Valued rent 6367 l. 17 s. 5 d. Scots. Real rent about 6100 l. Sterling.

Church, School, and Poor.—To the ministers stipend, which formerly was 100 bolls 14 pecks of meal, 32 bolls 11 pecks of bear, Ayrshire measure, and 20 merks Scots; the Lords Commissioners of teinds have, this year, granted an augmentation of 25 l. 3 s. 2½ d. Sterling, and 5 l. Sterling to defray the expence of communion elements. The manse was rebuilt in 1784, upon a very neat plan, and was the first in this part of the country, which had slated offices. The glebe is 4 acres. No grafs is allowed for horse or cows. The school-masters salary is 100 merks Scots. The average of scholars, 34. The inhabitants are obliged to keep two private schools, in two corners of the parish, which are at too great a distance
 from

from the kirk town, for their young children. The schoolmaster has a dwellinghouse and schoolhouse, but no garden.

The funds for the poor are, the interest of 144 l. stock in the bank of Ayr, the monies received at private baptisms and for mortcloths, and the weekly collections: The average of the provision for the poor for nine years past, is 36 l. Seven persons, receive, at present, a weekly pension from 1 s. to 1 s. 6 d.; and eleven receive occasional supply. None are allowed to beg. Near to the village of Dundonald, is the castle already mentioned, which gives name to the earldom in the family of Cochrane. The rising ground on which the castle stands, with 5 roods of land adjoining, is all the property in this parish which now pertains to that family. No authentic record can be produced at what time this castle was built, or when it was spoiled of its roof, and rendered desolate. A large pile still remains: The walls are very thick, and built of whinstone, which is in abundance near it. The corners are of a freestone, superior in quality to any now found in the parish. The Stuart arms are engrossed in different parts of the building, and the whole has much the form of those castles which were raised in many places of Britain during the 12th and 13th centuries. Among the hills is still discernable the vestige of another castle, called Kemplaw, and which is said to have been of high antiquity.

Opposite to the village and castle is a very beautiful bank of wood, upwards, in most places, of 100 feet in height, and extending near a mile to the northwest. In a grand curvature of this bank, and on a gentle eminence, stands the house of Auchans, for a long period the residence of the Wallaces of Dundonald. About 1640, this estate came into the possession of Sir William Cochrane of Lowdon, knight; who was afterwards created Earl of Dundonald. Since the beginning of this century, the estate has been the property of the
Earl

Earl of Eglintoune, who, with it, acquired the patronage of the parish. At the Auchans, are the remains of a small orchard which was once in high reputation. The pear, known in Scotland by the name of Auchans, derived that name from this place. The tree came originally from France, was planted in this orchard, grew to a great height, and was, not long ago, blown down by a storm. Some large trees, particularly planes and ash, may be seen in different parts of the parish, especially at the Auchans.

Heritors.—The heritors of the parish are in number 16, and, excepting two of them who have only 39 acres, reside either within the bounds of the parish, or in its vicinity. The houses of Fullerton, Fairlie, Hillhouse, and Newfield are modern buildings, very commodious and elegant in their respective forms. To Mr Fairlie of Fairlie, the country is indebted for a considerable share of its improvement in agriculture. Of this not only his own estate in this parish, but the numerous estates belonging to the Earl of Eglintoune, in the counties of Ayr, Lanerk, and Renfrew, all under his management, are a sufficient demonstration. Persevering with uncommon firmness in combating the prejudices of old tenants, dividing the lands and making restrictions suitable to the soil and situation, he has rendered the farmers, in general, more wealthy and respectable, and the lands much more valuable. To Mr M'Kerrel of Hillhouse, the country is under great obligations in another line. He was the first who introduced the silk manufactory into Paisley, and his sons still carry it on to a considerable extent. Colonel Fullerton of Fullerton, and Major Crawford of Newfield, particularly distinguished themselves in the East Indies.

Fuel.—This parish is well situated for fuel. Shoualton
moor,

moor, which is of an irregular figure, near 4 miles in circumference, is an inexhaustible fund for peat. But there is little demand for peat owing to the abundance of coal. At Fairlie a facing coal has been wrought for many years for the benefit of the country, and, for some seasons past, a good blind coal, which is exported at Irvine for the Irish market. On account of this coalwork, a village, named Rumford, has of late years started up close by Fairlie bridge. It contains at present 74 inhabitants. At Shoualton a facing coal is wrought both for the use of the people in the town and neighbourhood of Irvine, and for exportation. The load of coals has lately been raised, and is now sold at the former of these works at 8 d. and at the later 10 d. These coal-lieries employ many failors and carters in Irvine, and during the summer and winter months, a number of tenants, who, by these means, give constant work to their horses.

Miscellaneous Observations.—A cotton work has lately been erected in the village of Dundonald, which employs 30 persons, old and young. The carding machines are turned by a horse. Excepting 6 weavers, 3 taylors, 4 shoemakers, 2 masons, 4 joiners, and 3 smiths, the rest of the inhabitants, able for work, are employed in agriculture. Land is let from 15 to 30 shillings *per* acre, according to its quality. Most of the farms are in 3, some in 4, breaks. Oats and bear are the principal articles of culture. There are 3 mills upon this side of Irvine river. One of them for oats; another for oats and lint; and the third, lately built upon the land of Shoualton, at considerable expence and with great improvements, for wheat, oats, and barley. No lime has ever been discovered in this parish. The farmers in the lower part of it have for many years imported lime-stone from Ireland. ¹ Considering the greater quantity of calca-
reous

requir earth in the Irish lime, they are at less expence for this kind of manure than to cart it from the neighbouring parishes of Symington and Riccartoun. They have likewise the advantage of the sea-wrack. Notwithstanding the hills and moss already mentioned, the parish produces more than double the quantity of grain necessary for its own consumpt. The attention of the farmers has, of late years, been turned to the rearing of young cattle, both horses and cows, and to the making of sweet-milk cheese. Both must in a short time be highly beneficial to the country; much money having long been drained out of it, to England for cheese, and to Ireland for horses. In summer 1791, there were in the parish 235 draught horses, 120 young ditto, 14 bulls, 597 milch cows, 782 young ditto, bulls and stots; 433 black cattle feeding for market; 1090 sheep, viz. 603 of the small kind and black faced, 338 of a mixed breed between the English and Scotch, white faced; a Turkish ram brought by Colonel Fullerton from Constantinople in 1790, and 48 lambs the offspring of this foreigner, and ewes of the mixed breed.

There are 4 licenced public houses in the parish; but the inhabitants are, in general, very sober and industrious. Their mode of living is much improved within these 20 years. Their way of living and their industry have a mutual influence. No customs or amusements are peculiar to them. Great weddings are fast going into disuse. Country burials are not well regulated. The company are invited at 11 o'clock forenoon, but they are, probably, not all arrived at 2. Till of late a pipe and tobacco were provided for every one of the company; but this custom is entirely laid aside. An antient practise still continues in this parish and neighbourhood of kindling a large fire, or tawle as it is usually termed, of wood, upon some eminence, and making merry around it,
upon

upon the eve of the Wednesday of Marymas's fair in Irvine. As most fair days in this country were formerly popish holy days, and their eves were usually spent in religious ceremonies and in diversions; it has been supposed, that tawles were first lighted up by our catholic fathers, though some derive their origin from the druidical times.

The Troone, which might be made an excellent harbour, is the west point of Dundonald parish. In its natural condition, it affords safe anchoring ground from every quarter but the north-west. It is an arm of rock running near a mile into the sea, and bending from south to north, broad and covered with rich pasture towards the land, and narrowing into a barren point, part of which is for a little distance concealed even at low water. Within the point at half a cables length from the rock, the mariner may trust to have three fathoms water at half-flood. The merchants of Glasgow, sensible of the advantages of this natural harbour, near a century ago made offer to the proprietor of feuing the lands adjoining to it. But their offer was rejected, for a reason, as it is reported, which however ridiculous it may now appear, would be accounted very cogent in those days; lest a rise should be occasioned in the price of butter and eggs. The place, where Port-Glasgow now stands, was deemed by the merchants the next station most eligible for their trade. The Lady-Isle, which lies in the mouth of Ayr Bay, is a pendicle to this parish; and, as it affords security to vessels upon this flat and dangerous coast, the Magistrates of Glasgow have erected two pillars to direct them*. Upon the Troone stands
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* The following is the best statistical account of the sea-coast of this parish that can be given to the sailor. 'Lady Isle is about half a mile in length, of an oval figure, and lies in the Frith of Clyde, about 15 miles east south-east from Holy Isle in the mouth of Lamfash, 9 miles south from Saltcots, 5 miles south-west

an elegant octogon temple, built by the late Fullerton, who was a gentleman of classic taste. This temple commands an extensive prospect, and is, *Baccho laetitiae dator, amicis et otio sacrum*. The Troone is an excellent situation for sea bathing, and is much resorted to by the inhabitants of Kilmarnock, and of other inland parts. People from Elgin carry on fishing of salmon at the Troone, and the Black-rock which is near a mile to the southward. In dry summers they are most successful, as floods give the salmon an opportunity of ascending the neighbouring rivers. Salmon, when most abundant, are sold at
4 d.

‘ south-west, one half south from Irvine, 2 miles west from
 ‘ Troone-point, 5 miles north north-west from Ayr, and 24
 ‘ miles north-east by east from Ailsa. The above bearings are
 ‘ ascertained by the compass, without allowing any variation.
 ‘ —In the inside of this Island, opposite to the main land,
 ‘ there is good anchoring ground; and, for the direction of
 ‘ ships and vessels, 2 stone beacons are erected on the north-
 ‘ west part thereof, of such a height as to be easily seen at a
 ‘ distance.—The best anchor ground is where these two beacons
 ‘ are brought under one, where there is 5 fathoms water with-
 ‘ in a cable’s length of the shore, and clean ground, which
 ‘ grows gradually deeper for half a mile to the south-east, till
 ‘ there is 14 fathoms water, and then it grows gradually shal-
 ‘ lower towards the bar of Ayr.—There is a ridge of rocks be-
 ‘ tween Lady Isle and the Truce-point, about three quarters
 ‘ of a mile east from the largest beacon, which is not broad,
 ‘ and runs near south and north. On this ridge there are, at
 ‘ low water, 3 and 1 half fathoms, and vessels coming too near
 ‘ it are only in hazard of damaging their cables.—The half
 ‘ tide rock lies from 1 eighth to 1 quarter of a mile north north-
 ‘ east from the largest beacon, and is covered at half floods;
 ‘ and there is a channel betwixt it and the Island 4 feet deep at
 ‘ low water, where small craft may go through, but large ves-
 ‘ sels must keep on the outside of it.—The rock called Lap-
 ‘ poch, about 100 yards in length, is in a line with Irvine stee-
 ‘ ple, the half tide rock, and Lady Isle; and lies about 1 mile
 ‘ and 1 half south south-west from the bar of Irvine; it is dry
 ‘ at low water, and has a broad channel betwixt it and the
 ‘ main land, from 7 to 8 fathoms deep—Navigated and fur-
 ‘ veyed by James Barry.’

4 d. *per* pound. There are some lobsters and crabs among the rocks. Some tons of kelp are made, every third or fourth year, from the sea weed which grows upon the rocks. Colonel Fullerton has lately built a house at the Troone, for drying the sea-weed thrown in by the surf, and for making kelp from it. But, it is very uncertain, whether a manufacture of this nature will yield a profit sufficient to recompense the loss of manure. The Colonel has two extensive rabbit warrens near the shore; both of them very thriving. While the Isle of Man remained a distinct sovereignty, the Troone was found to be a very convenient station for vessels employed in contraband trade. The British government gave the first check to smuggling upon this coast, by purchasing the regal power of that petty state. Happily the commutation act has nearly annihilated the hostile traffic. It must be acknowledged, that lessening some duties to a certain degree would not injure the revenue; and yet more effectually cut up this business, than a fleet of cutters, or an army of custom and excise officers. Uncontrovertible evidence must convince every attentive man, living upon the coast of Ayrshire, of the great wisdom of the apostle, in joining those two precepts in one sentence, Fear God, Honour the King. Smuggling, in its very nature, tends to weaken in the dealer that sense which he has of lawful authority, to disturb his peace, to injure his health, to corrupt his manners. Must it not be regretted, that men of aimable dispositions should be seduced by the temptations of this trade. Were profit and loss upon it clearly calculated, the balance would be much against the profit side, putting health and peace and character out of the question.

END OF VOLUME SEVENTH.

