

NUMBER XXVII.

PARISH OF KIRKNEWTON,

(COUNTY OF EDINBURGH, SYNOD OF LOTHIAN AND
TWEEDDALE, PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH).

By the Rev. Mr WILLIAM CAMERON.

Name, Situation, Extent, Soil, &c.

UNDER this title are comprehended two parishes, Kirknewton and East Calder, now within the bounds of the presbytery of Edinburgh, though formerly the latter belonged to the presbytery of Linlithgow, and was anciently called Calder Cleir * and Calder Clericus. The union of these two parishes took place 40 years ago. A new church and manse, both very decent buildings, were then

* The Earl of Morton takes his title of dignity from the lands of Mortoune, lying in this parish, and belonging to his Lordship, as appears from the minutes of the Scotch Parliament 14th March 1457—8, and from an instrument there referred to, in which are these words: "Tunc vero dictus Dominus Cancellarius, (Episcopus Brechen), declaravit dictum Dominum de Dalkeith, non intitulari debere in dicto comitatu pro terris de Mortoune, in dominio de *Niddisdale* existent; sed pro terris de Mortoune in Calder Cleir jacent."

then erected in a new and central situation. Calder, according to one etymology, seems to signify water and wood, from *coille*, "wood," and *dor*, "water." The name Kirknewton appears to be derived from a village so called near the old church, and about a quarter of a mile from the new one. The parish is about 4 miles broad, and 6 long from N. to S. On the N. it is bounded by the river Amond, which falls into the frith of Forth at Cramond; and on the S. it is washed by the water of Leith, which discharges itself into the sea at Leith. There is plenty of lime here of excellent quality, in different parts of the parish, which is carried to many miles distance all around. Several country gentlemen have lately formed an association, and opened a subscription, in order to explore the ground in this and some neighbouring parishes, in search of coal. This search is now making on the lands of Leith-head here, belonging to Mr Swanson. If this laudable and patriotic purpose succeed, it will prove a great benefit to this part of the country. But as good coal is at a considerable distance, it is hoped this disadvantage may be remedied in another way, as a canal is now projected and intended to pass through this parish between Edinburgh and Glasgow, which will provide these cities, and all the adjacent country with plenty of coal, limestone, iron, &c. of the best quality. An excellent coal, which is most generally used here, is brought from Benhaar, on the Glasgow road, 15 miles distant. Coal of an inferior quality is to be got in great plenty at the mines of Blackburn, Bathgate, and other places, at the distance only of 5, 6, and 7 miles to the S. and W. The price paid at the mine for coal is generally 4½d. a-load, 6 of which are a common cart-load, from twelve to fourteen hundred weight, drawn sometimes by one, and sometimes by two horses. Such a cart load from Benhaar costs 7s. Sterling. The appearance of the parish

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is level and fertile towards the N. on the S. it is hilly, but not rocky or steeply mountainous.

Agriculture.—The green hills afford good sheep-pasture, and in several places might yield excellent green crops of potatoes, turnip, &c. if properly cultivated for this purpose. These crops begin now to be more generally raised than formerly, and the farmers to be better reconciled to them, though some of the lower classes and more ignorant are still averse to these valuable improvements, being wedded to their old absurd and unskilful practices. But the frequent failures and losses that attend new schemes attempted by more speculative and opulent farmers, to them appear sufficient reason for not too rashly changing the plans and practices of their forefathers, and giving up a sure, though moderate profit, for the uncertain hopes of unexperienced theorists. The culture of field-turnip and cabbage is but lately introduced here; and the Earl of Morton, who of 63 ploughgates in the parish possesses 28, seems at present very anxious to promote and encourage this plan of agriculture among his tenants. The rent of land, exclusive of the poorest outfield, is from 10 s. to L. 2 an acre. The English plough, with 2 horses, is most generally used, though some farmers still prefer the old Scotch plough, with 4 horses and a driver. Of late the rent of land is greatly increased. Farms that about 20 years ago let at 10 s. an acre, are now more than 20; and those which even 6 years ago paid L. 20 of rent, now let at L. 30. But the plan of husbandry is much better now than formerly, and the land hence greatly improved in value. The real rent of the parish within these few years, has consequently been raised several hundred pounds. It cannot at present, for particular reasons, be exactly ascertained. The rotation of crops is variable according to the va-

rious soils. The most common, in the richer grounds, is summer-fallow, wheat, pease, beans, barley, oats. Of late it has been found, that both wheat and barley have succeeded as well, this after turnip, and that after cabbage, as after a summer-fallow, when the ground is properly dressed. Rye grass and clover are sown with wheat, oats, flax, but most commonly with barley. Wheat has lately been introduced into the moors with promising success, where it never was seen or attempted before. A great deal of milk, butter, cheese, eggs, poultry, veal, is daily exported and sold in the Edinburgh market. The real produce of the parish cannot be ascertained, as there is a great importation as well as exportation, chiefly to and from Edinburgh, of which no distinct account has ever been kept*.

Climate,

* *Labour and Wages.*—The want of cottagers and day-labourers is often smartly felt by the farmer, especially in harvest; and if their place were not supplied by the Highlanders, upon whom they so much depend for cutting down their crops, they would be reduced to the use of the scythe, or some such more expeditious method than that of the sickle. The first threshing machine in this parish was erected by Mr Waugh of Easter Newton. The use of these has lately become general in this country. The common wages of a day-labourer, for a man, are from 1s. to 1s. 2d. in summer, and 10d. in winter a day; for a woman, 6d.; for an hired man-servant, from L. 6 to L. 10 a-year, with a pair of shoes, and a cart of coals, in the half year. If he live in his own house, he has 6½ bolls of meal, besides L. 1, 6s. for what is called kitchen money. (This is an allowance of money, at the rate of 6d. a-week, in place of milk, butter, beer, &c.) He has also sometimes a cow's grass, with as much ground as may sow a firlof of barley. The wages of a maid servant are generally L. 3 a year. Masons and bricklayers receive from 1s. 8d. to 2s. a day; slaters, 2s. 6d.; tailors, 8d. with victuals. About 50 years ago butter sold at 4d. a-pound, a good lamb at 3s.; beef 1½d and 2d. The poultry in rentals was valued at half-a-merk. All these articles are now more than doubled in price. The people, however, in general, enjoy a competent share of the comforts of life and every man who is able to work, and who is industrious, may decently maintain himself and a family. In the year 1782 much distress would have ensued to the lower people, had it not been prevented by a liberal contribution of the heritors for their relief.

Climate, Diseases.—The air is remarkably pure and healthy. A native of this parish died in the neighbourhood some months ago, aged 106, having followed his usual occupation in the fields, and retained the full possession of his mental faculties till a few days before his death. The diseases chiefly prevalent are the rheumatism and fevers, occasioned by the poorer people living in cold damp houses, and resting after labour in wet clothes. People of better station are not so much liable to these distempers. When these fevers once begin, they often spread far and wide, as the people, from mistaken notions of sympathy and charity, crowd the house, and even the bed-room of the sick, which is kept as close often as possible. These catch and spread the infection, thinking that they do nothing amiss, and that no harm will befall them but by the special decree and interposition of Heaven.

Population.—According to Dr Webster, the population in 1755 was 1157.

Souls in 1786,	942	House carpenters,	4
— in 1792,	812	Tailors, -	4
Average of births,	26	Smiths, -	4
— of deaths,	19	Single male servants,	67
Inhabited houses,	175	Ditto female servants,	42
Males, -	395	Farmers, - -	50
Females, -	417		
Under 6 years,	113		
Students in divinity,	2	Horses, - -	261
Bachelors keeping house,	21	Black cattle, -	533
Sectaries, -	277	Sheep, -	1563
Souls in two villages,	180	Ploughs, -	64
Masons, -	4	Carts - -	85

The cause of depopulation here is chiefly owing to the near attraction of Edinburgh, to a monopoly of farms, and the use of two-horse ploughs, (by which means the farmer works with about half the number of servants he formerly employed), and the laying down so much ground in grass for hay, which, when the soil answers, is judged one of the most profitable crops. One cause of the uncommon number of sectaries is, that a Burgher meeting house was several years ago erected in the parish, and another of the Antiburgher kind on the borders of it, which at their first erection were much crowded; but which, however, have not gained seven proselytes from the parish church for the last 7 years; they rather seem to be on the decline. These establishments must be a heavy burden upon poor people; but they are productive of worse consequences, in directly counteracting the design of Christianity, which is to make men live together as brethren; and in supporting superstition and fanaticism, which are mistaken by many for religion, and maintained with a violence and flaming zeal proportioned to the ignorance of their deluded votaries.

Stipend, School, Poor.—The stipend consists of 105 bolls of victual, one half meal, and the other barley, with L. 48 Sterling of money, besides a glebe of 7 acres good arable land, which has been inclosed by the present incumbent. The Duke of Buccleugh and the Earl of Morton, formerly the separate patrons of East Calder and Kirknewton, are now vice patrons of the parish.—The school salary is L. 12 Sterling a-year, with L. 2 belonging to the session-clerkship, together with the common perquisites of baptisms and marriages. The number of scholars is between 40 and 50. The children of poor parents are educated at the public expence. Some years ago, the schoolmaster being,
through

through age and infirmity, unable to officiate, the heritors contributed L. 9 Sterling a-year, with some other perquisites, for his maintenance during life, and appointed another schoolmaster.—The number of poor that regularly receive parish charity is 12, and their proportion is from 2 s. to 4 s. a-month, intended only as a help to those who cannot entirely support themselves. The weekly collections, dues of mortcloths (palls), and a remainder of some funds which are now nearly exhausted, at present supply this charity. It is often found necessary also to grant occasional assistance to poor families in sickness and want. No person in the parish has been suffered to beg publicly, in the memory of man. In summer, all who are able to work in the fields, generally find employment, and can live very comfortably on their wages; but in winter, the women, who can often find no employment but spinning, are not able to earn more than 3 d. or 4 d. a-day, as there are no manufactures in the parish. This is a real loss in many respects, because both the old and young, who are unfit for the common labour in the fields, might be employed in some business of manufacture with much advantage, both to themselves and the public, and to the preventing of indolence and licentiousness.

Manners.—The people in general are sober and industrious, and that wild and gloomy fanaticism which formerly raged with such turbulent, unhallowed zeal, seems now, except among very few, over the whole country, as well as here, to wear a milder and brighter aspect, and the rancour of party-spirit is daily abating, as also that rage of schism which once prevailed, so hurtful to the peace of society, and to the interests of religion. More rational notions of religion are now entertained among all sects, and the doctrines of faith and morality are not unhappily separated,

rated, especially among the middle ranks of the people. These maintain much decency of character, with regard both to a religious deportment, and to honesty of manners. They are emerging from the gloom of ignorance, rudeness and superstition, and as yet are happily strangers to the vicious refinement, scepticism and licentiousness, which, from the example of the metropolis, have lately much infested the neighbourhood. Some loose and libertine principles, the poisonous spawn of a false philosophy and false patriotism, have recently corrupted the minds of half-learned wits and smatterers in science, who implicitly receive their opinions at second-hand. From these they have been caught by many among the most ignorant, the obvious tendency of which is to destroy the foundations of all civil and ecclesiastical government. When the lower people shall have learned to copy the manners and principles of some of their superiors, which they naturally do, the consequences to society must be fatal, as may be seen from the progress of modern refinement and philosophy. "He that has eyes to see let him see."

Miscellaneous Remarks.—Agriculture has lately made a rapid progress in this part of the country, and the appearance of the ground, particularly towards the south side of the parish, which was formerly bare and barren, is now greatly altered both in soil and climate, by means of the improvements and thriving wood-plantations that shelter and adorn the higher parts. The best and most extensive improver in this respect here, is Mr Maconochie of Meadow-bank, who has greatly beautified the more unfertile parts of his estate with complete inclosures for pasture, and with belts of plantation, variegated with every kind of wood suited to the soil. The roads and bridges are brought into good repair, and great improvements are daily making upon

upon them. The statute labour is commuted at the rate of 18s. the ploughgate. The largest farms let at L. 150 and L. 200, and are generally inclosed, except the hilly sheep farms. There are 12 heritors, two only of whom reside constantly in the parish, some of the rest occasionally. The valued rent is L. 3760 Scotch. From the manse, a prospect opens to the eye one of the richest and most beautiful to be seen in Scotland. On the east it is terminated by a full and picturesque view of Arthur's seat, the metropolis, and its venerable castle, which is on a level with the manse, and which seems as if only about 5 or 6 miles distant. On the north appear the Ochil hills, the frith of Forth, a great part of Fife, and several of the coast towns; and on the south arise the Pentland hills. From a rising ground, a few yards distant from the manse, a part of 13 counties may be seen, and a stretch of country of about 100 miles, almost from Berwick to Greenock. The great Glasgow road from Edinburgh passes through the parish.—About 50 years ago, it was usual for the most substantial farmers to appear at church and market in home-spun cloth and plaiden hose. Now their menial servants and cottagers are equipped in English broad cloth, silk and satin. This turn for finery is a great loss to them, as they live up to their wages, notwithstanding their being so high. Thus they enter into a married state, with their whole substance upon their back, especially women; and when sickness, or any misfortune prevents their daily labour, they immediately sink into the depth of poverty. It is generally observed, that the inhabitants of villages are more licentious and dissipated, than those who live in separate and sequestered hamlets, and are employed in agriculture. The almost universal use of tea and spirits, of an inferior quality, tends greatly to hurt both the health and morals of the lower people.—Some stone pillars in the form of a cross, and appearances of
Druidical

Druidical circles, are to be met with here ; and from a copious spring of excellent water near the manse, several old coins have been dug, the offerings presented to its presiding genius.

Eminent Men.—The celebrated Dr Cullen was proprietor of the estate of Ormiston hill ; and he lies interred in the church-yard of Kirknewton. The Doctor's great talents as a professor, as a physician, and as a philosopher, are well known and universally acknowledged in every part of the world. Other qualifications, however, he possessed in an eminent degree, though in these his fame has not been so much extended. He was a great master in the scientific branches of husbandry ; a consummate botanist ; and possessed a full-formed and correct taste in the fine arts. These attainments appeared conspicuous in his operations at Ormiston-hill. In the year 1758, the Doctor, after finishing his course of chymistry, delivered to a number of his particular friends, and favourite pupils, nine lectures on the subject of agriculture. In these few lectures, he, for the first time, laid open the true principle concerning the nature of soils, and the operation of manures. These were discoveries entirely his own, and which have since been made known to the world by a variety of channels, though without any notification of the source from whence they proceeded. The justness of these principles he demonstrated by his practice on the lands of Ormiston hill, which, though naturally of an ungrateful soil, rendered worse by immemorial bad management, and situated in an unfavourable climate, he raised in a few years to a surprising degree of culture and fertility. Early in life he was a proficient in botany, and was the first person in Scotland who understood the Linnæan system, and recommended the study of it to his pupils, at a time when it met with much opposition from others.

thers. In his gardens and pleasure grounds at Ormiston-hill, he formed an extensive collection of rare trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. The cultivation of these, and the accurate determination of their species, afforded him always an agreeable relaxation from the more serious studies and labours of his profession. He was likewise remarkable for his critical knowledge and correct judgment in architecture and painting. The hall of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh is an example of the former, which was planned when he was President, and according to his directions. The front of this building may be considered as the most chaste and beautiful morsel of Greek architecture, that has yet appeared in Scotland. The acuteness of his eye, and of his mind, in discerning the beauties and blemishes in painting, was well known to his intimate friends. This talent rendered him a superior judge in the disposition of grounds, and in the arrangement of rural ornaments. When he first entered to the possession of Ormiston-hill, every thing about the place was in such a ruinous state, so comfortless and so unpromising, that he placed over the front door of the house, EST ULUBRIS: But, by great attention and good taste, he soon made it a commodious and pleasant residence. While he resided here, he was accessible at all times to his neighbours, and testified the utmost readiness to give his valuable advice to the poor *gratis* on every occasion of distress; and attended to them as anxiously as to those of the first rank in the realm, for whom he daily prescribed. In this he seemed to be of the opinion of his famous predecessor Dr Boerhaave, who used to say, that the poor were his *best patients*, for God is their paymaster.