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*Account of the Parish of Uphall.----By the Right Honourable  
the Earl of Buchan.*

*To the President, Vice-Presidents, and Members of the Society of the  
Antiquaries of Scotland.*

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

SOME time ago I threw into a weekly paper, published by Messrs Ruddiman, some anonymous hints for giving accounts of country parishes in Scotland, suited to the various objects of our institution,

and pointed out a few of the many advantages which might arise from the promotion of such communications.

Having been lately in a very indifferent state of health, and finding my mind unable to invent, or to range in my favourite fields of science, or of the fine arts, I thought my time could not be better employed, than in compiling the notes I had formerly made, with respect to the country parish where I reside, and of writing them out at length, in such a manner as to afford a specimen of the object I had in view, and which I pointed out in the paper above-mentioned.

The parish of Uphall, anciently called Strathbrok, where my property lies, and where I reside, during the summer months, is perhaps one of the most barren subjects of a parish in Scotland, and of very small extent; so that, if I shall have the good fortune to make an account of it in any degree palatable, or even tolerable, to the reader or auditor, it will be the strongest proof I could adduce, of the interesting and entertaining information which might be expected from richer subjects and abler pens.

The parish of Strathbrok or Uphall, is situated on the eastern verge of the county of Linlithgow or West-Lothian, and is surrounded by the parishes of Kirkliston, Mid-Calder, Livingston, Eccleismachan, and Linlithgow.

The parish contains 3120 Scottish, or  $3922\frac{1}{4}$  British statute acres; the number of inhabitants in 1778, by an actual numeration, amounted to 583, in this year to 600, and seems likely to increase.

There have been no regular registers kept in this parish of the births and burials; and, upon inquiry, I find, that, from the non-entry

entry of dissenters, this matter is extremely ill ascertained all over Scotland; a circumstance very much to be regretted, and which, if possible, ought to be obviated by the Legislature, and by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

To know the proportion that takes place between births and burials, is one of the greatest objects of political arithmetic, and, were it properly and accurately ascertained, would lead to inferences and regulations of the highest importance to the state. To the ignorance of those indispensable data, are to be imputed the vague disputes which have of late taken place with respect to the comparative population of ancient and modern periods of the British history, and the want of knowledge indeed in the whole department of political arithmetic in Great Britain, and in other countries.

But such accurate accounts of parishes as I am now engaged in, would go far to exhaust this interesting subject, if a method could be fallen upon to bring forward regular and authentic registers of the births and burials.

The most effectual manner of doing this, would be to give a certain small bounty, suppose one shilling, for each entry of a birth, to be paid without deduction, by the minister or clerk of a parish, to each parent who should put the birth of a child into the register, which, reckoning the births in Scotland at 50,000 annually, would be no more than L. 2500 *per annum*, for the acquisition of so useful a knowledge, and for the encouragement of poor persons who have numerous families. To enforce the exact registration of burials, a fine of five shillings for each omission on the part of the clerk, to be paid by him to the informer of the failure, would be abundantly sufficient.

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By these means, and the parochial accounts such as I am now engaged in, an exact state of the numbers, and increasing or decreasing population would be obtained; and proper remedies to the last might be applied by the Legislature, or the police of the country.

Reckoning the births in England and Wales at 250,000, the object might be obtained there at the expence of L. 12,500 *per annum*, in Ireland at 100,000 annual births, at L. 5000 *per annum*, and the whole annual expence in the three kingdoms at L. 20,000 *per annum*; a small expence indeed compared to the magnitude of the object.

From the best information, however, I have been able to obtain, the births exceed the burials in this parish more than one-fifth; and the situation being remarkably healthy, the increase of population would be very rapid, but for the want of manufactures which occasions continual emigration.

The latitude of Kirkhill, the place of my residence, taken by accurate and repeated observation, is  $55^{\circ} 56' 17''$  north, the west longitude *in time* from Greenwich observatory is  $13^{\circ} 59' 10''$ .—The variation of the compass 1778 in June was  $22^{\circ}$ , the dip of the north end of the needle at the same time was  $71^{\circ} 33'$ .—The elevation above high water mark at Leith, when there is 12 feet water in the harbour, 273 feet;—it is lower than the top of Arthur Seat 546 feet;—lower than the Observatory on Calton Hill 83;—than the top of the Castle Rock 290;—west longitude in time from Edinburgh Observatory  $1^{\circ} 8''$ ;—east longitude in time from Glasgow Observatory  $3^{\circ} 11' 50''$ ;—distant from Kirknewton manse in Mid-Lothian 20,108 feet;—north from ditto 17,005 feet, or  $2^{\circ} 47'$ ;—west from ditto 10,680 feet, or  $12''$  and  $30''$  in time.

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## SECTION II.

THE soil of this parish is in general a rich mouldering clay on a tilly bottom ; but the lower fields are covered with some inches of rich loam, or intermixed with it.—178 acres of the parish are planted with fir, oak, spruce, and larix ; 118 acres by myself, and 60 by Mr Shairp of Houstoun.

About 60 acres require a four horse plough ; there are 45 ploughs of this sort in the parish.

When

When I came to reside in this parish, no longer ago than 1768, much of it was divided in the baneful way of run-ridge; very little summer fallow practised; still less of the artificial grasses sown; inclosing neither practised nor approved of by the husbandmen; the general state of agriculture lower than one could have imagined so near a great city such as Edinburgh, from which the medium distance is no more than 11 measured miles.

The manner which I took of introducing a better method, was, first giving leases of 19 years, putting an end to run-ridge, and carrying on my own little improvements by contract, by which means the tenants saw the return for my money, and imitated my example.

Many landlords neglect this last precaution, by which means the tenants, and common husbandmen, when they are advised to follow their landlords example, plead the great expence at which such improvements are carried on, the landlords having no rent to pay, and such like; but the profit being once demonstrated, the hope of reward is more persuasive than the eloquence of a Nestor, and more effectual than the laws of a Draco. The examples I gave were summer-fallow, straightening ridges, cleaning, artificial grasses, rolling of grass feeds, and barley stirr, inclosing, draining. All these are now practised by all the husbandmen more or less, and they have tasted the fruits of it.

I employ myself no more in occupations which have become unnecessary, and which are suited neither to my strength of body, nor to the sensibility of my mind, which unfit me for the rough climate, and the rough manners of the lower ranks of mankind.

I did

I did not introduce many new tenants into my lands; I felt myself attached to the old inhabitants; and I remembered the advice of old Lucius Volusius to Columella, who thought it better to be sparing in this operation, and to introduce one or two only in the room of idle refractory hinds or tenants. There were other reasons, however, that prevented me; and I shall allow, that a partial and judicious fluctuation among the husbandmen of different districts may be useful.

The Romans also are not an apposite example; for their *indigeni coloni* were no other than servants born in their lands, who cultivated the ground only for their landlords.

The endurance of the leases in the parish now, are 38 and 31 years for inclosing, and 19 or 21 where already inclosed; a good deal of wheat is grown in this parish, and it is very fit for that grain; the barley also and the beans are excellent; the soil is rather too wet and strong for turnip and pease.

The best uninclosed land lets for 30 shillings an acre, good inclosed land 25 shillings an acre over head, middling uninclosed land 15 shillings, the worst 8 and 9 shillings, excluding muir, of which there is not above 40 or 50 acres.

Sheep are not much in use, because there are few stone fences; and the plantations are young.

Oxen are not so much used as formerly; and not so much as they ought to be.

The nearness of the parish to Edinburgh occasions much cart-work, and oxen are not so fit for that sort of labour.

T

Large

Large quantities of milk, butter, eggs, and poultry, are carried into Edinburgh; and, what is remarkable, it is but lately since the people fell upon the expedient of using a single horse cart, instead of a carrier's horse, which is a saving of 50 *per cent.* So slow and accidental is the progress of improvement.

Broxburn, so called from a rivulet of that name, is the only village in the parish. It was anciently more populous, having been burnt by the forces of King James II. when he wasted the property of the rebel Douglas, *anno* 1443.

It is now on the increase; and is let out on building leases of 99 years, at the rate of L. 3 : 4 : 0 *per* acre. There is an annual fair in August, and the Lord of the barony has a statute for this purpose, with rights of custom.

The timber in this parish is scarce, and consequently dear; the Scottish pine does not thrive so well as the oak, ash, and beech. The great willow thrives wonderfully, and is an useful tree for many country purposes.

The valued rent of the parish is L. 4262.

The materials for the roads are a species of basalt rock, which runs in a ridge from north west to south east in the parish, and is excellent for that purpose.

A chain of good road may be formed and laid 24 feet broad for about 24 shillings, finished off at 28.

There are no tolls in this parish; but they will be required, the statute work being insufficient for the purpose\*. There are no bridges of any consequence, but all necessary places are supplied; they are upheld by the county and the statute labour.

### SECTION III.

THE high roads are supported by the statute labour and subscription; the statute labour amounts to 15s. *per* plough; an average plough pays L. 45 of rent.

The

## SECTION IV.

THE mines, minerals, and fossils of this parish, are a colliery, free stone quarries two; iron stone many seams, one above and below two seams of the coal; lime quarries two, but not wrought at present; whin stone, basalts, slate stone, some coarse fullers earth, potters clay, brick clay, coarse red chalk, stone marle, small quantities of shell marle.

Specimens of these minerals have been delivered to the Society for their museum.

The time when the coal in this parish was first wrought is uncertain, probably not above two centuries ago, the coal having been first wrought to any extent in the neighbourhood of the sea. The coal

T 2. metals.

\* The late Thomas Shairp of Houston, in this parish, deserves to be remembered as the first promoter of the high roads in this neighbourhood; he died June 24th. 1772.

metals and coal dip toward the north west. There are many seams of coal, but the two seams wrought at present run to an extent of six feet, with an interstice of coal metals and iron stone of a foot and a half; the roof is good, the dip and rise from one in three to one in five; there is only an horse engine used at present to win the coal; the pit is in depth 14 fathoms. The coal, rising and falling, forms a shape resembling an inverted saddle stock; the depth of the trough of the coal where the work is carried on at present is about 35 fathoms. This coal is wrought on my estate at a farm called Newbigging; the rent paid is a tenth of the gross produce of the coal and iron stone, the tenant being bound to pay all damages done to the ground, and to erect all the works, the proprietor being liable to no expences on account of the work. The coal is of the best quality, and is raised at a very moderate expence.

The first lease in my possession of this colliery is in the year 1660. There is a seam of coal in an adjoining farm, which was wrought within these 30 years; this coal is a malting coal, or what is commonly called blind coal.

A fire engine of a small bore would win more than 200 fathoms of breast work beyond the reach of the present engine.

The coal here is sold at four, five, and six shillings per ton, according to the quality.

There are at present from 10 to 12 pickmen employed in the work:—No collieries ought to be let without an obligation on the tenant to employ a fixed number of pickmen, otherwise he may be  
tempted

tempted to shut up his work by a bribe from some great rival colliery in the neighbourhood.

## SECTION V.

OF police, trade, or manufactures, it is the misfortune of this parish that it cannot yet boast. It begins however to improve. Houses arise, and manufactures will creep to them by degrees. The women and children require to be better employed; and it is hoped that this may be accomplished by the introduction of the manufacture of coarse woollen cloths and the knitting of hose. The manufacture of Dunstable straw ware might also be introduced; and it is surprizing that this has not been introduced into Scotland long ago, so as to supply the whole consumption of Scotland.

It would give me great pleasure to promote such views; but it is no easy matter for the proprietors of small estates, held under settlements of strict entail, to give the necessary encouragement to such undertakings.

## SECTION VI.

THE antiquities of this parish are few and inconsiderable. The greatest part of it, and particularly that which belongs to me, was very anciently in the possession of the family of Sutherland; I have a charter, which is taken notice of by Sir James Dalrymple in his collections, of King William the Lyon: "Willielmo Filio Fresekin,  
' de

“ de Strathbroke, Roffile, Inchekel, Duffus, Macher, et Kentrai,  
 “ terram quam Frefekyn Pater fuus tenuit tempore Regis David  
 “ avi mei.”

From the Earls of Sutherland it passed to the Douglasses, about the beginning of the 15th century,—then to Keiths Earls Marischal, next to the Earls of Winton, and the Oliphants,—was in the person of Laurence Lord Oliphant, and called from thence sometimes Strathbroke-Oliphant,—from the Setons and Oliphants it came by purchase to Sir Lewis Steuart, whose grand-daughter Katherine Steuart marrying Henry Lord Cardross, it came to me by descent.

The ancient proprietors had a feat in the western part of the parish, which remained, though ruinous, till the beginning of this century; a stone from thence was said to bear the date 1158; but this being too early for Arabic numerals, I doubt the fact, as the centesimal figure is not legible.

The parish church stood anciently about 700 yards, in a north-east direction, from the house of Kirkhill, so named from thence. It was dedicated to St. Nicolas, and deserted for the present church at Uphall, in the beginning of the 16th century. The bell in that church was brought from the steeple of the old, and bears a date about the middle of the 15th century. I propose to cause a stone to be erected as near as can be conjectured to the altar of the ancient church, with the following inscription:

“ Fast by this rude memorial on the Knoll,  
 “ A Kirk there stood, whereof the bell did toll  
 “ For Popish rites, and call'd the swain to say  
 “ Whate'er in Latin the good priest should pray.  
 “ Aft up the loan, now Halygate we name,  
 “ 'Cause Holy-Road our guid Forbears they came

“ To

“ To worship God the best way that they knew,  
 “ To seek for guid, and evil to eschew.  
 “ Aft would they sit upon the kirkyeard dyke,  
 “ Which ran about, near bord'ring by the fyke;  
 “ There would they crack, tho' yet they had nae snuff,  
 “ And tell the news, and be well pleased enough.  
 “ Aft up the loan the jovial wedding raid,  
 “ Or, dolefull, slowly moving burial gaid.  
 “ All now is gaen, nae marks at all appear  
 “ Of jovial mood, or of the serious tear.  
 “ O'er the Kirkyeard the hind, he draws his plough,  
 “ With human dust the field's enrich'd, I trow.

“ Learn hence, my friend, to grasp the precious time,  
 “ Nor set thy heart, for sure it were a crime,  
 “ On what you see so quickly pass away;  
 “ But be ye happy while that yet ye may.”

In a list of ecclesiastical persons who held lands in Scotland, *anno* 1296, and preserved in the tower of London, we find the name of “ Ferquardus Parsona Ecclesiae de Strathbroke, vicecomitatu de Lin-  
 “ lidgo.”

The succession of parsons since the reformation stands thus: Mr James Smith,—Mr Patrick Shairp,—1585, Mr Andrew Keith,—Mr Alexander Keith,—Mr W. Moubray,—Mr George Barclay,—Mr John Wilkie,—Mr William Gib.

*Anno* 1651, six hundred and forty persons received the communion in the church of Uphall; but these times do not permit any conjecture to be drawn from thence of the population of the parish. The date on the old mansion of Kirkhill, ruined 1743, removed 1771, was 1483. Inscription on the lintel of the door, “ God  
 “ bleffeth the habitation of the godly.”

SECTION

SECTION VII.

The heritors who share this parish with me are Mr Shairp of Houston, and Mr Barclay of Middleton. The lands of Middleton were temple lands, held formerly of my family, but now of the crown. Houston built 1600, Middleton 1707, built with the stones of the old castle of the Douglasses. Of houses, pictures, gardens, or other elegant decorations, there are none to be found in this parish.

In the year 1776, I caused a representation to be made of the solar system, on a scale of 12,283 miles and  $\frac{2^8}{1000}$  to an inch; the table of which epitome is engraved on a belfray which stands in the middle of my garden, and of which I shall insert a transcript below.

THE

THE TABLE.

| Planets. | Diameters in Feet, Inches, and Decimals. | Mean Distances from the Sun.     | Obliquities of Orbits to the Ecliptic.                                   | Eccentricities | Inclinations of the Axis to the Plane of the Orbits.   | Heliocentric places. May 20th, A. D. 2255. |  |
|----------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--|
| ☉        | F. I. D.<br>6 0 0                        | 0 0 0                            | 0 0 0                                                                    |                | Vibrates ar. center gravi-ty. 87° 30' to the Ecliptic. |                                            |  |
| ♃        | 0 0 402                                  | 249 0 68                         | 6° 59' 20"                                                               | 80)387(        |                                                        | 9° 40' of Sign Sagittarius.                |  |
| ♄        | 0 0 750                                  | 466 0 55                         | 3° 23' 5"                                                                | 5)723(         |                                                        | 25° 50' Libra.                             |  |
| ♅        | 0 0 646                                  | 645 0 0                          | 0 0 0                                                                    | 17)1000(       | 66° 31' 55"                                            | 29° 30' Scorpio.                           |  |
| ♁        | 0 0 178                                  | From the Earth.<br>0 19 38       | 5° variable.                                                             | 1)19( nearly   | 90° 0' 0"                                              |                                            |  |
| ♃        | 0 0 422                                  | 982 0 78                         | All Jupiter's Satellites in the Plane of the Ecliptic nearly.            | 141)1524(      | Perpendicular nearly.                                  | 27° 42' Sagittarius.                       |  |
| ♃        | 0 7 71                                   | 3354 0 62                        |                                                                          | 250)5201(      | Perpendicular nearly.                                  | 17° 40' Scorpio.                           |  |
| 1D       |                                          | From Jupiter's center.<br>1 9 56 |                                                                          |                |                                                        |                                            |  |
| 2D       |                                          | 2 10 65                          |                                                                          |                |                                                        |                                            |  |
| 3D       |                                          | 4 7 5                            |                                                                          |                |                                                        |                                            |  |
| 4D       |                                          | 8 1 4                            |                                                                          |                |                                                        |                                            |  |
| ♄        | 0 6 448                                  | 6153 0 33                        | 2° 33' 30"                                                               | 547)9538(      | Perp. to the Ring nearly.                              | 19° 16' Capricorn.                         |  |
| ♄        | 1 2 5                                    | From Saturn. c.<br>0 4 934       | 31° 0' 0"                                                                |                |                                                        |                                            |  |
| 1D       |                                          | 0 11 4                           | All Saturn's Satel. lites in the Plane of the Ring nearly, but variable. |                |                                                        |                                            |  |
| 2D       |                                          | 1 3 14                           |                                                                          |                |                                                        |                                            |  |
| 3D       |                                          | 1 9 4                            |                                                                          |                |                                                        |                                            |  |
| 4D       |                                          | 4 0 86                           |                                                                          |                |                                                        |                                            |  |
| 5D       |                                          | 12 2 5                           |                                                                          |                |                                                        |                                            |  |

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This table was compiled, in consequence of the most elaborate comparison of the different calculations, resulting from the most accurate observations of the two last transits of Venus over the ☉'s disk, by my friend and neighbour the late Rev. Mr Alex. Bryce, minister of the annexed parishes of East Calder and Kirknewton. The body of the sun is represented by a spheroid of free stone, having, in large Hebrew letters, in *alto rilievo*, engraved on it, "What is Man?" The orbits of the earth and moon, or rather that of the moon, is represented by an elliptical platform of stone, inscribed "*Newtono Magno.*" The smaller planets are of bronze, the larger of stone, and the ring of Saturn of Iron. All are placed according to their stations expressed in the table. Inscribed on a triangular equilateral stone, in my garden, is this inscription, "Great are thy works, Jehovah, infinite thy power!" And on the belfray above mentioned are engraved the latitude, longitude, &c. of the place; with some few other inscriptions, which I shall set down below.

Jacobo Buchanano, Matheseos P. Glasg. Adolescentiæ meæ  
Custod. incorruptissimo has Amoenitates Academicas  
Manibus propriis dedicavi, inscriptis, sacrasque esse volui.  
Anno ab ejus excessu XV. et a Christo natu MDCCLXXVII.  
Ille ego qui quondam patriæ percussus amore,  
Civibus oppressis, libertati succurrere ausim,  
Nunc Arva paternæ colo, fugioque limina regum.

If, my Lords and Gentlemen, at some distant period a philosophical traveller should chance to stumble upon those marks of my love and veneration for the sciences, he may be tempted to search for the author's place in the annals of his country; but he will probably search for it in vain. The bitter wave of oblivion may then have washed away my name from the memories of men, or it will be found only in the repositories of antiquaries.

If he should regret this circumstance, his eye will meet another inscription on the same stone, full of consolation for heavier losses.

"Digna manet Divini Gloria ruris."

I have

I have the honour to be, my Lords and Gentlemen, with great respect,

Your most obedient,

And most faithful humble servant,

B U C H A N.

*Kirkhill, West Lothian, June 25. 1781.*

P. S. Of rare vegetables, there are some growing in my garden. Pinus Cembra, the Apherousli Pine of Switzerland.

Sibbaldea Procumbens.

Betula Nana, four feet high.

Azalea Procumbens.

Arbutus Uva Ursi.

Cupressus Disticha, or Deciduous Cypress.

Pinus Canadensis.

Inscription to the memory of the Earl of Chatham, in the garden.

Gulielmo Pitt, amico meo, bene merenti:

Patriæ Decor.

S. P.

Vixit et quem dederat, cursum fortuna peregit.

This motto, as relating to his political difficulties, concluded the last letter I received from that extraordinary man, not long before his death.

The Inscription that is upon the bell is,

Campanum Sancti Nicholai de Strathbroke 1441.