

THE DEATH OF ALPIN.*

A.D. 836.

A PRINCE named Alpin, the father of Kenneth King of Scotland, reigned contemporary with his cousin Drest, King of the Picts. Taking advantage of the commotions and strife characteristic of a savage age, and perceiving the weakness of his neighbours beyond the Clyde, he resolved to reign over richer people and more extensive domains. In A.D. 836 he sailed from Kintyre, and landed in the

* Chalmers' Caledonia

bay of Ayr with a powerful force. He laid waste the country between the rivers Ayr and Doon before the chiefs could collect their people and meet him in conflict, and following the course of these rivers he penetrated to the ridge which separates Kyle from Galloway, carrying destruction with him in his progress.

But Alpin soon received a check in his desolating career. The chiefs had collected their followers, and met the invader in the parish of Dalmellington, where during a sharp struggle he was killed by the weapon of an enraged chief, near the site of Laicht Castle, which derived its name from the stone of Alpin—a grave-stone known and recognised nearly four centuries after this last of the Scoto-Irish kings had finished his career, and left his claims to a more fortunate successor. The word *lacht* signifies a *grave* or *stone*, and there are still the remains of an old castle in the parish of Dalmellington, at a place called *Laicht*, demolished by the proprietor in 1771 to inclose some ground. There are also two farms in the parish called Over and Nether Laicht, and several cairns intimate the scene of strife. The foundation charter of the town of Ayr, granted by William the Lion in 1197, when describing the limits of its exclusive trade, names *Laicht Alpin*, the stone or grave of Alpin, as one of its distinguishing boundaries.
