



SIBBALD'S
History & Description
of
STIRLING-SHIRE,

Ancient and Modern.

1797.

1707.



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of
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TO THE
Right Honourable the Earl of *LINLITHGOW* and
CALANDER, Heretable Sheriff of *Stirling*-shire,
This History and Description is Dedicated by His Lordships most
Humble Servant,

ROBERT SIBBALD.

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SEAL OF STIRLING.

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Section I.

The Ancient State of this Shire.

Chap. I.

The Ancient People of this Shire.

IN Ancient times this Shire made a part of the *Silva Caledonia*; for *Pliny* in his Natural History, Lib. 4. Cap: 16. where he treateth of *Britain*, tells us; *Triginta prope jam annis notitiam ejus Romanis armis non ultra Vicinitatem Silvae Caledoniæ propagantibus*: by which it appeareth, that till the time that *Julius Agricola* was Governour of *Britain*, they had discovered no more of *Britain* than what was in the Neighbourhood of the *Caledonian* Wood. It was he that first penetrated into it, in the third year of his Expeditions: and *Tacitus* saith, *Tertius Expeditionum Annus novas Gentes apperuit*, it discovered People they knew not before. These People were the *Genunii* of whom we have treated already; and the *Gadeni* we are to treat of now. They had the name *Gadeni* from *Gadir*, which the Learned *Bocbartus* in the last part of his

Sacred Geographie, Book 2 : *Chap. 9.* Saith is a *Punick* word which signifieth *Septum*, a place inclosed ; for which he citeth this Verse of *Dionysius Periegetes*,

Pænus namque locum Gadir vocat undique Septum.

And *Stephanus*, *Eustathius* and *Suidas* interpret Γάδερα to be *Terræ collum*, a neck of Land ; which Name does well agree to this Shire, For in it is that Neck of Land, betwixt the two Firths, of which *Tacitus* saith, *Glota et Bodotria diversi maris æstu, per immensum revecti, angusto spatio dirimuntur.* It is but a small space of ground, that divides *Clyde* and *Forth*, whose Firths have advanced far up into the Land.

These *Gadeni* were *Picts*, a Branch of the *Mæata Scottedeni*, and they were the first invaded, because *Agricola* made his first Descents from his Fleet into this part of the Countrey, which lay upon the South side of the Firth of *Forth*.

Chap. 2d.

The Condition of the Countrey then.

THE Countrey at that time was much covered with Wood, for it was here the *Silva Caledonia* began, and ran through this Shire and *Perth-Shire*, & the

Vestiges of it remain yet in the Woods of *Callender*, *Comernauld* and *Tor-wood* &c. The Woods made it long before *Agricola* could subdue it, for there were Militarie ways to be made through them and the Marishes, before he could march through it with his Army, and the Provincials were compelled to make these ways which *Galgacus*, in his Oration to his Souldiers before the fight, sheweth, for he saith *corpora ipsa ac manus Silvis ac paludibus emuniendis verbera inter ac contumelias conterunt*. And the *Romans* could not Pursue the Natives far, when they got any advantage in fighting with them, because, as *Herodian* says, *Facilis erat ex fuga receptus Barbaris, quippe inter Silvas ac paludes et loca ipsis notissima delitescuntibus*; They had an easie retreat to the Woods and Fens and other places they knew: and *Herodian* sayes of this part of *Britain*, that *pluraque loca frequentibus Oceani alluvionibus paludescunt*. This was the condition of this Shire then, for where the *Carss* ground is now, was then Sea, which any may yet discern, who vieweth and considereth it, for upon the digging of the Soil, some few Foots deep, there appear Beds of Shells, and the Water in the Chanells, cut through that low ground is Brackish and Saltish. The Soil of the *Carss* is made up of the Earth and mud

brought

brought down by the Speats of the Waters of *Carron* and *Avon* from the higher grounds, which in Process of time has stopt the flowing up of the Sea, and has raised the Ground in Banks, and straitned the Embouchers where the Sea did enter.

Thus it was very uneasy for *Agricola* to penetrate into this Countrey, and to put it in such a condition as that he might become Master of it, and in doing that it cost him much of two Summers.

Chap. 3d.

Concerning the Wars of the Romans in this Countrey.

MUCH of the War of the *Romans* was in this Countrey, for tho' they made some attempts to penetrat further, as *Agricola* and *Severus* afterwards did, by crossing the Firth and passing further into the Countrey, they soon lost all the Ground they had acquired there.

They found the Countrey beyond the Firths could not be long kept by them. *Agricola* found the Neck of Land betwixt the two Firths was fit to be a Limit, and to bound their power, *Inventus* (says *Tacitus*) *in ipsa Britannia Terminus*, if the Ambition of some had not pushed them

on to prosecute their Victories further; yet upon the Resistance they met with in *Caledonia*, some were for retireing back to the other side of *Forth*, of their own accord, rather than that they should be compelled so to do, *Regrediendumque citra Bodotriam, et excedendum totius, quam pellerentur, specie prudentium ignavi admonebant*: and though *Agricola* carried it to march further into the Countrey, he went no further than *Tay*, which is the last Garison in *Britain* marked in the *Peutingerian* Tables: and upon *Agricola's* retireing, all he had conquer'd, was soon lost, as our Author *Tacitus* shewes. The next that carried War into *Caledonia*, was the Emperour *Severus*, who is said to have gone near to the end of the Island, yet he was so sensible of the Disadvantages of pushing his Conquests so far on (haveing lost one way and other in his Expedition in this Countrey 50000 Men, as *Dio* tells us) that he made Peace with the *Caledonians* and carried on the Wall betwixt the two Firths, a greater length Eastwards; and built stronger Forts upon it: and even that part within the *Scots* Wall, was soon lost, and the *Romans* retired with their Forces, within the *Pictish* Wall, betwixt *New Castle* and *Carleol*. And when long after this, *Theodosius* did recover all the Countrey betwixt the two Walls, and called it *Valentia*, the limit of

the

the *Roman* power was the Fort at *Stirling*, and the Tract of the Wall through this Shire, and part of *Lennox* to *Dumbarton*. Thus this Shire for severall Centuries of years was the Field of Battel, betwixt our Ancestours and the *Romans*. We have no Histories left, which give us an account of the Battels; and the account *Tacitus* gives of *Agricola's* Expeditions, is rather an Eloge of his Father in Law, and as he calleth it himself, in the close of the third Chapter, *Liber honori Agricolæ Soceri mei destinatus*, done as he saith four years after his Death, than a just Historie, where the event of the War is rather hinted at, than clearly narrated; yet the many Cairns, and Sepulchral Monuments, and the Urns, and Arms, and *Fibulae* found in severall places, (one *Fibula* I have, which was said to have been found near *Stirling*) are Arguments that both in *Agricola's* time and afterwards, there were, as *Tacitus* shewes in the account of his first years Expedition, *crebra simul ac prospera praelia*, as he favourably expresseth it for his Countrey-men. That the Natives made much resistance, the many Forts, and the Wall raised against them shewes, and make it evident that the *Romans* met, while they were here, with much Opposition, both from the *Scoto-Brigantes* in the Mountainous part of the Countrey to the South of

the Wall, and from the *Caledonii* who dwelt to the North of it, and it holds true, that

*Hic spe progressus posita, Carronis ad undam
Terminus Ausonii, signat divortia regni.*

Which I find thus translated,

a Limit there,

Which Terminus they call,

Near Carron Stream, now past all Hope

More British Ground to gain,

Markes out the Roman Empires end,

Whence they to turn were fain.

Chap. 4th.

Concerning the Roman Forts in this Shire.

ALthough some are of the Opinion that *Julius Agricola* raised a Wall in this Shire, upon the narrow Neck of Land, which runs betwixt the Firths of *Clyde* and *Forth*; there is no Ground for that Opinion, as is shew'd in our inquiries concerning the *Roman* Monuments in *North Britain*. For *Tacitus* says of that narrow space of Ground interjected betwixt the two Firths, *Quod tum Præsidiis firmabatur, atque omnis propior sinus tenebatur, summotis velut in aliam insulam hostibus.*

It was so fortified with Garisons *Agricola* placed so conveniently, that all the Bayes adjacent were possessed by the *Romans*, and the Enemies were removed as it were into an other island. And it cannot be imagined that *Agricola* who was for carrying the War further to the North, and did actually go to the length of the Firth of *Tay*, would make a Wall there, which excluded the Garisons placed at a great distance beyond it.

Agricola raised many Forts, the great alterations of the surface of the Ground in so long a time, as it is from that in which he raised them, has buried the Vestigies of severals of them ; and considering that his Army acted here only in the Summer time, the Buildings probably were most of them only of Wood (with which the Countrey abounded then) and the Rampires were only of Earth cast up, with Stakes set about them, so they were easily razed by the Enemy in the Incursions they made, and others were consumed by time, and by the Injuries of the War, and some were demolished to make way for Agriculture in after times : So that only some few of them can be traced by the Vestigies of them which appear now. The most diligent Observer of these Buildings was Mr. *Timothie Pont*, who travelled over all this Countrey more than an hundred years ago, when

there were more Vestigies of Forts to be seen than are now, because many have been levelled by tillage, and the Stones of severals have been removed to the Buildings near them : he tells in his Papers that he observed the Forts were, most of them, placed on Hights, and in places well watered, and where there was a Hight near Water, there was ordinarily a Fort.

The Forts in this Shire whereof there are clear Vestigies, are 1st, That upon the March of the Shire, to the East, at *Inneravon*, a Tower and the Foundations of other Buildings yet visible. At *Camelon* (as 'tis called by the Vulgar) there are the traces of the Streets of a City to be seen ; and some *Roman* Coins have been found there, as I was informed. At *Stirling* there was an Inscription upon a Rock ; and no doubt the Town (as many others over all *Britain*) had its Rise from the *Roman* Forts there, for there was the Quarters of part of the *Legio* 11. At *Kilsyth* also were Stones with Inscriptions found, so no doubt there was a Fort there.

The Earl of *Perth* gave me the Draught of an Altar with the following Inscription upon it, which was found near to Castle *Cary*, (near to which an Urn, a Lamp, and some Medals were found) where there was a great Fort.

The Inscription upon the Altar, is

M A T R I B U S
M I L I T E S
L E G X X V I
B R I T T O N .
V . S . L . P . M .

It is like there have been Forts where *Bruce-Castle* was raised long after, and where the House of *Airth* stands, tho' no Vestigies remain, that have been noticed.

Chap. 5th.

Concerning the Roman Wall in this Shire.

Our learn'd Mr. *George Buchanan* hath so elegantly written of the Wall in this Shire, that I cannot omit his Verses about it ; *in Epithalamio Marix, &c.*

*Si volvere priscos
Non piget Annales, hic & Victoria fixit
Præcipitem Romana Gradum, quem non gravis Auster
Reppulit, incultis non squalens Parthia Campis,
Non æstu Meroe, non frigore Rhenus & Albis*

*Tardavit, Latium remorata est Scotia cursum :
 Solaque gens mundi est, cum qua non culmine montis,
 Non rapidi ripis amnis, non objice silvæ,
 Non vasti spatiis campi Romana potestas,
 Sed muris fossaque sui confinia regni
 Munivit : Gentesque alias cum pelleret armis
 Sedibus, aut victas vilem servaret in usum
 Servitij, hic contenta suos defendere fines
 Roma securigeris præterdit Mœnia Scotis :
 Hic spe progressus posita, Caronis ad undam
 Terminus Aufonii signat divortia Regni.*

I shall first give the Trace of the Wall so far as it ran through the Shire, as Mr. *Timothie Pont's* Papers have it ; thus,

The Wall in this Shire ran from *Inneravon* to *Langtoun*, a Mile East of *Falkirk*, a Fort : at the *Rown-tree-bourn-head*, a Fort : at *Wester-cowdown*, above *Helens-chapel*, one : at the *Croy-hill*, one : and at *Cailly-bee*, or the *Kirk Wood* over against the *Croy-hill*, on the top of the *Barhill*, a great one : at *Auchterminnie*, at the *Roch-hill* over against the *Wester-wood*, at *Bankir* over against *Castle-cairy*, at *Dunvass*, Forts.

Others remark that there was alongst the *Dilatyr* a

long

long Mile to the *Wester-wood*, a great Fort : south of the *Nether-wood*, a quarter of a Mile, there was a small Fort : at the West-end of the *Sea-beg-wood* there was a Fort : and at the East end of the *Sea-beg-wood* there was a great Fort : the Mount from *Sea-begs* is called *Caledonie-hill* ; an Argument that the *Silva Caledonia* began in this Countrey : at the *Stonie-four-hill*, a Castle bewest, upon the South side of the Wall, and another at the West side of the house of *Calender*. In the part of *Calender*, the Wall appeareth close by the high-way passing the Northside of the Park, it runs after some turns to *Miln-hill*, and not far from that up to the Hill so called and then down to the Water of *Evan*.

The many Forts upon the Wall shew that the *Romans* met with much opposition in this Shire : Indeed the Countrey was so wasted, that the South part of it was turn'd to a Forest, & continued long so ; for it was by hunting thereabouts, as *Boethius* tell's us, that King *Robert Bruce* escaped so narrowly of being killed by a wild White Bull, that attacked him, and was stopt by a Gentleman, who from that got the Name of *Turnbull* : Some of which kind in latter times were said to be kept at *Cumbernauld*. The Cutting down of the Woods, and the rotting of the timber, occasioned the great Mosses

yet to be seen in several parts of the Shire, as the *Flanders Moss* to the West of *Stirling*, of which the Monks spread ridiculous Stories, of its coming from *Flanders*: the Moss to the East of *Stirling*, in the Carss-ground, may possibly be that Wood mentioned in the Verses upon the Wood, which make a part of the Seal of the Town of *Stirling*. There was found in the Carss near to *Sten-house*, the flints of an Ox-Horns, very large, which were sent to Doctor *Balfour*, and are kept in the College Hall at *Edinburgh* amongst his other Curiosities; and this is an Argument that the Sea was formerly where the low ground of the Carss is now, and that the Soil there, was laid on by the Speates of *Carron*, above what was the Bottom of the Sea in former times.

Where ever the Mosses are now, there were Woods formerly; beside the many Woods and *Copices* yet to be seen in sundrie parts of the Shire: so it is clear, that the far greatest part of this Shire was Woods in ancient time, and this was indeed part of the *Silva Caledonia*.

As to the building, called by the Vulgar *Arthur's Oven*, the Reader is referred to the Historical Inquiries, where there is an account of it given at end of book.

Section II.

The Modern State of this Shire.

Chap. I.

Of the Shire in General.

THE Modern Name of the Shire, is from the Metropolis *Stirling*, which is so called from its Situation upon the descent of a Steep hill, at the foot of which the River of *Forth* runneth; for as *David Buchanan* observeth, *Ster* in the old *Saxon* Language signified a Mountain or Rock, and *Lin* a deep water; and he takes this to have been the *Binobara* of the Ancients, though missnam'd by *Ptolemie*, *Vindovara*; for in the old Celtick, *Bin* is a Mountain, and *Vara* is a River, thus the Modern name is the Interpretation of the Ancient Appellation. Some think that the *Sterling* Money was first coined here, when the North *Saxons* possessed this Countrey, and that it was named so from *Stirling*, this place; and the Money that was coined here, was current amongst the *Scots*, the *Picts*, and the *Saxons*, whose Territories centred here. I see no ground for this Conjecture.

The *Romans* had a Garison here, of part of the *Legio* 11 : the Shire is at present of much larger extent, than it was formerly, when it comprehended only the Countrey which lay about the Town of *Stirling*. In ancienter times, much of it, both as to the Civil and the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, was contained under that of *West-Lothian*.

It hath now for Bounds towards the West, *Dumbarton-shire*, and for Marches there, *Loch-Lomund*, and the Waters of *Blane* and *Ainrick* : and it has to the South, part of *Dumbarton-shire* and *Clydsdale* : and to the East it hath *Linlithgow-shire* : and towards the North, it is limited by the River and Firth of *Forth*.

Where it is longest, that is at the Northwest point, where it joyneth with *Dundass-Moor* in *Lennox*, to the Nunnerie of *Emanuel* upon *Avon* water, which is to the East, the March betwixt it and *Linlithgow-shire*, it will be twenty Miles in length.

And where it is broadest, from the Town of *Kilsyth* to the Castle of *Elphingston*, it will be about twelve Miles in Breadth.

The Nature and Quality of its Soil differeth much, the West and South-west parts of it are Mountainous and Hillie : and the North part of it, from the Town of *Stirling* to the East March is Levell and plain ; and the

South-East

South-East part is much of it a rising ground. The whole is well watered with the Waters, and the Bourns which run through it; and besides several Woods and Copices, the Seats of the Nobility and the Gentry are well planted: the South side is a mixed countrey, fitted for Pasture and Corns: the North side is most fitted for Grains and Fruit Trees.

Upon the South side are many Feuars which hold their Lands of Duke *Hamilton*, and the Duke of *Montrose*, of the Earl of *Wigton*, and of the Earl of *Calender*.

From South to North the Shire may be divided into three Partitions. That to the West, that in the middle, and that to the East, each taking up about six Miles in length. That to the West, contains the Countrey to the West of *Kilsyth* and *Stirling*: The middle, that betwixt *Stirling* and *Falkirk*: and that from *Falkirk* to the East March, makes up the last Division.

The Learn'd Mr. *Andrew Melvin* in his *Topographie of Scotland*, addressed to Prince *Henry*, has given an elegant Description of the Ornaments and rarities of this Shire in these Verses.

*Inde die a medio quem diximus alterum Avennum
A Lothiano arvo Sterlinia dividit arva*

*Solis ab ortu Æstus Forthæ, donec juga pontis
 Fert Pontus propter Sterlinum : ubi se minor ipse
 Fluminis in morem justi stricto amne coerces,
 Hic Henrice Puer celsa sublimis ab arce,
 Undique prospectu late petis æquora campi,
 Despicias hinc saltus virides, et amœna vireta
 Silvestresque boves, torvosque a fronte juvencos,
 Quis juba densa, leonino demissaque ritu
 Qui candore nives superant, qui cursibus auras ;
 Illinc et flexus varios, variosque reflexus,
 Erroresque vagos viridique in gramine rivos
 Annis : ubi curvis veluti Mæander in undis
 Ludit Fortha suis : teneros et pascit ocellos
 Dive tuos, vitreaque unda campoque virenti ;
 Hic ille est Sterlinus ager, qui surgit in altos
 Hinc montes, illinc valles descendit in imas,
 Fluminibusque rigat fruges glebasque feraces.
 Ad lævam tumuli ex terra pacis duo duni
 Arte manuque hominum exstructi Carrontis ad undam :
 Inferius paulo est structa sine calce rotunda
 Ædicula, ex saxis firma compage coactis
 Et lapide inserto lapidi, stat pondere ab imo, et
 Paulatim ad summum veluti se angustat apertum
 Sive Tropheum seu Templum, cui Terminus hæret.*

*A dextra Carrontis ager fert cætera planus
 Prominet in collem medius qui se erigit inter
 Ædiculam et pacis Dunos, in quo anguli ad ipsum
 Flexum et adhuc urbis modicæ Vestigia parent,
 Hic locus et Bedæ Gnidi Vallumque Severi
 Ductum a Glottæ Æstu ad confluum Forthæ et Aveni
 Hic inscripti extant Lapides sint, sive sepulchra,
 Romanum in morem ceu partæ clara Salutis
 A Ducibus monumenta ac Centurionibus ipsi.*

There are within the bounds of the Sherifffdome of *Stirling*, 20 compleat Parishes ; besides four others, viz. *Lecropt*, *Logie*, *Kippon*, and *Kilpatrick*, of which more hereafter ; part of them belonging to the Sherifffdom of *Stirling* and part of them belonging to other Sherifffdomes. All these 20 Parishes, except *Alva* and a part of the Parish of *Stirling*, are on the South side of the River of *Forth*. The Names of these Parishes are, (1) *Alva* ; (where Sir *John Arskin* of *Alva*, a Cadet of the Family of *Mar*, has a stately dwelling House with Planting, Gardens and Inclosures, being Proprietor of the whole Parish) which although it lyes at the foot of the *Ochil Hills*, more than three Miles Northward of *Forth*, and about four Miles Eastward of *Stirling*, and being of

old, as I am informed, within the Sheriffdom of *Clackmannan*, yet it is now wholly within the Sheriffdom of *Stirling*. (2) *Stirling*; of which more hereafter. (3) *St. Ninians*; the Kirk is a short & pleasant Mile to the South of *Stirling*: at this Kirk there is a fine Town lately built, whereof *John Murray* of *Polmaise* is Superior, it hath also a weekly Merket on *Tuesday*. (4) *Airth*; This lyes East of *St. Ninians*, and five or six Miles from the Town of *Stirling*. It is a Regality, whereof *Dundas* of *Airth* is Superior. It hath also a Weekly Market on *Saturday*. (5) *Bothkennar*; it lyes about two Miles to the South of *Airth*. (6) *Lerbert*; here is a fine little Town, it lyes two long Miles South-west from *Airth*: and a short Mile farther West is *Dunipace*, which is annexed to the Parish of *Lerbert*. (7) *Denny*; this lyes two short Miles Westward from *Lerbert*. The Earl of *Wigton*, the Chief of the name of *Fleming*, is either Proprietor or Superior of the greatest part of this Parish of *Denny*. His Principal Seat being at *Cummernauld* in the Sheriffdome of *Dumbarton*; His Predecessors got *Cummernauld* from King *Robert Bruce*, for their valiant behaviour in the defence of their Countrey, and they thereby also attained unto the Hereditarie Honour, to be Chamberlains of *Scotland*.

I have