

VI. *Some Natural Observations made in the Parishes of Kinardsey and Donington in Shropshire, by the Reverend Mr. George Plaxton. Communicated by Mr. Ralph Thoresby, to Dr. Hans Sloane, R. S. Secr.*

S I R,

YOU have oftentimes desired me to give you an Account of such Observations as I had made in my Parishes in *Shropshire*, and in some of the neighbouring Villages; my poor Remarks are hardly worth your notice, however to shew you that I cannot deny you any thing, I now send them, or some part of them.

Anno 1673, I was presented to the Vicarage of *Sheriffes-Hales*, and also to the Rectory of *Kinnardsey*, the former in the Counties of *Salop* and *Staff*. The other wholly in *Shropshire*. *November 6*. I was inducted into the Parsonage of *Kinnardsey*, where I was incumbent for 30 Years and upwards; at my Induction I found a great many *Aged People* in the Parish, upon which I took the Number of the Inhabitants, and found that *every sixth Soul was Sixty Years of Age*, and upwards, some were 85 and some 90; this I could not but wonder at, considering that the Town was surrounded with a large Morass, overflowed in Winter, and that you could not come into the Parish any way upon Arable Land. At my Entrance there, I found neither *Gentleman* nor *Begger*, nor any sort of *Dissenter* from the Church; there had been no *Law Suit* amongst them in the Memory of Man, nor was any commenced

menced during my Incumbency as Rector there, for above Thirty Years together ; they have but *one way to the Town and Parish*, the rest they hire from Lords of the adjacent Manours. The *Morasses* or *Moors* are of a great extent, and the Parish was furrounded with them, the Village was called *Kinnardsey* or *Kinnardus his Island* ; *ei, ea, ey*, all these are Watry Terminations: Thus the next Parish was *Eyton*, the Town upon the Waters, *Edney*, or *Edwynney*, *Edwin's Island*, *Buttery*, or *Butterey*, the Island of Butter, being a long Grazing Tract of Land, with some others of the like ending. All that vast Morass was called, the *Weald-Moor*, or the Wild Moor, that is, the Woody Moor : Thus the *Wood Lands* of *Kent* are called the *Weald* of *Kent* ; the *Wolds* of *Yorkshire* most probably have been Woody formerly, and called the *Wealds*, for the Word *Weald* or *Wold* is by our *Saxon* Masters render'd *Woody* ; and I have been assured from Aged people, that all the Wild Moors were formerly so far overgrown by Rubbish Wood, such as Alders, Willoughs, Salleys, Thorns, and the like, that the Inhabitants commonly hang'd Bells about the Necks of their Cows, that they might the more easily find them. These Moors seem to be nothing else but a Composition of such Sludge and Refuse as the Floods left upon the Surface of the Ground, when they drain'd away, and yet this Sediment is full three or four Foot thick ; for I have often observed, that the Black Soil cast up by Moles, or digged out of the Ditches, was a meer Composition of Roots, Leaves, Fibres, Spray of Wood, such as the Water had brought and left behind it ; in Digging they often find Roots and Stumps of Oaks three or four Foot under the Surface, and they are very common in the bottom of their Ditches and Drains : The Soil is peaty, and cut up for Fewel in some part of the Lordship ; in the bottom of these Peat Pits, they find Clay, Sand, and other sorts of Earth. These Grounds have

have been formerly much higher, for I have observed Oaks and other Trees, where the present Soyl is so much shrunk and settled from them, that they stand upon high Stilts, and are supported from the great Fibres of the Roots, so that Sheep may easily creep under them.

That great Tract, called formerly *Vasta Regalis*, is now by Draining become good Pasturage, and yields my Lord Gower, the Owner of it, a considerable Rent, his Ancestors having purchased the Royalty from one of the Earls of *Shrewsbury* : It yields great Quantities of *Hay*, tho' much of it is of such a nature, that it will dry up a new Milch-Cow, starve an Horse, yet will it feed an Oxe to admiration ; and I have heard some Grasers say, they could not by their best Upland Hay feed an Oxe so fat, as the Moor-Hay would do ; this, I suppose proceeded from its dry and binding Quality that made the Oxen drink much.

One thing I must further observe to you, within the Parish, about half a Mile from the Church, there is a pretty Farm call'd *The Wall*, which I judge was formerly a *British Fortification* ; 'tis encompassed with a Morass, and raised up from Sand, broken Stones, Gravel, and Rubbish to a great height and breadth, being (as I measured it) above 1900 Yards in Compass, and 16, 18, and 20 Yards in Breath : In some places it seems to have been Built before the Moors became Boggy, for I could never find any way over the Moors, by which they could carry those vast Quantities of Earth, Clay, Sand and Rubbish to raise that mighty Rampire. In that Parish I was the *Sixth Rector* from the Days of *Henry VIII.*

As to my Rectory of *Donington*, to which I was presented *Anno 1690.* I found there as many *Old People* as I did at *Kinnardsey*, nay, I may say more ; and in the two Parishes I had but a difference of three in the Number of the People ; at *Kinnardsey* I had 135 Souls, at *Donington*

138; of the 135 I had 23 Aged 60 and upwards, of the 138, 24; both which Numbers Multiplied by 6, the one at *Kinnardsey* was 138, the other at *Donington* would have been 144. I had nothing very remarkable at *Donington*, save the *Royal Oak*, which stood at *Boscobell* within the Parish, and the Owners thereof paid 6 s. 6 d. yearly, in lieu of their Tythes and Offerings: The *Royal Oak* was a fair spread thriving Tree, the Boughs of it were all lined and covered with Ivy; here in the Thick of these Boughs the King sat in the Day-time with Colonel *Carlos*, and in the Night lodged in *Boscobel-House*, so that they are strangely mistaken, who judged it an old hollow Oak, whereas it was a gay and flourishing Tree, surrounded with a great many more; and as I remember in Mr. *Evelyn's* History of Medals, you have one of King *James I.* or King *Charles I.* where there is a fine spread Oak with this Epigraph, *Seris Nepotibus Umbra*; which I leave to your Thoughts.

The People here live to *great Ages*; I saw in one House three Healthful People, whose Ages numbred together made 278, and I think they lived some Years after; they were the Man and his Wife, and his Wife's Brother.

I was at *Donington* about 13 Years and some Months; in all that time I Buried but 27 People, of which Number 4 came from Neighbouring Parishes, 4 were Young ones, and of the remaining 19 the youngest was about 60, and the eldest 96 Years of Age. I was there the fourth Legal Incumbent in Succession from the *Reformation*; and as I remember at one Triennial Visitation of the Bishop, we had neither Burial or Wedding to return into the Registry at *Litchfield*: The Country is very Healthful in those Parts, and tho it seems to the Eye of a Traveller to be but of a moderate height, yet in riding between *Donington* and *Wolver-Hampton*, which is but five Miles, you cross four Rills or Brooks in the Compass of three

Miles, two of which run into the South-West Seas, *viz.* to *Severn* and *Bristol*, the other two hasten to *Trent* and *Humber*, and so into the Northern Ocean.

The Poor Remains of the *Royal Oak* are now fenced in by an handsome Brick-Wall, at the Charge of *Bazil Fitz-Herbert* Esquire, with this Inscription over the Gate, (upon a Blue Stone) in Golden Letters.

*Fœlicissimam Arborem quam in Asylum
Potentissimi Regis Caroli Secundi Deus Opt. Max.
per quem Reges regnant, hic crescere
voluit, tam in perpetuam rei tantæ
Memoriam, quam in Specimen Firmæ
in Reges fidei, Muro cinctam
Posteris Commendant, Bazillius
& Jana Fitz Herbert.
Queras Amica Jevi.*

'Twas put up about Twenty or Thirty Years ago, but the Place deserved a Nobler Memorial; I have writ it in such Lines as they have cut it, and as the Letters now stand; a few Years will ruine both the Wall and the Inscription.

The Emblematick Medal my good Friend alludes to, is the XLVIth in Mr. *Evelyn's Numismata*, which King *Charles I.* caused to be stamped in honour of the Installation of his Son, whereupon is the *Royal Oak* under a Prince's Coronet, overspreading Subnaicent Trees and young Suckers.

SERIS. FACTURA. NEPOTIBUS. UMBRAM.

Reverse within the Garter of the Order is this Legend.

CAROL. M. B. REGIS. FILIUS CAROL. PRINC.
INAUGURATUR. XXII. MAII. MDCXXXIIX.

The Inscription at *Boscobel* reminds me of one I had from the late Reverend Mr. *Illingsworth*, President of *Emanuel* College in *Cambridge*, which was Inscribed upon a Pillar erected by the Sea side.

*Siste, viator, iter, vestigia prima secundus
Posuit hic Carolus, quum redit exilio.*

VII. *An Account of the Cape of Good Hope, by
Mr. John Maxwell : Communicated by the Reve-
rend Dr. John Harris, F. R. S.*

THE *Cape of Good Hope*, which is part of *Monomotapa*, and the Southernmost part of *Africa*, lies in the Latitude of 34 Degrees 30 Minutes South, and 16 Degrees 15 Minutes East of *London*. It was first, that we know of, discovered by *Bartholomew Diaz*, A. D. 1493, under *John II.* King of *Portugal*. He gave it the Name of the *Cape of Tempests*, because of the Storms he met with there, with which 'tis not strange that it is sometimes troubled; as likewise with a Sea that runs very high, and makes it ill riding at Anchor there when the Wind is at North-West, seeing it is a Shread of Land stretch'd out into a vast Ocean on each side; but King *John* gave it the Name of *Bona Esperanca*, or of *Good Hope*, which it still retains;