

A VIEWE OF THE ISLANDS.

THE FIRST PART.

CHAP. i.

The Description of Jersey, the nature of y^e Soile, number of Inhabitants, their occupations, hauens, Townes, fortifications & other principall things therein contained.

The Isle of Jersey in M^r. Cambdens accompt, & of others who have written of it, exceeds not twelve miles in length, & thirty or, at most, thirty six in compasse: but by a late more exact Survaye, it is found to exceed forty; and yet if one should measure it following closely the surface of y^e ground, y^e is to say descending with y^e Vallies & then ascending with y^e Hills, there would be found a much greater proportion: for y^e whole Island espially towards the West, South & Southwest parts is a continued series of hills dales & meadowes lying betweene them, some indeed stony & barren as to corne, but for the most part capable of some kind of husbandry, as trees & Orchards, or at least pasture of sheepe, and fewell, Ferne Furzes & broome. It lay heretofore, about a hundred years since, allmost open, with fewe Inclosures in it & very fewe Orchards; the ordinary drinke of those times being, not as at pnt cydar, but a kind of meade made of hony as y^e principall ingredient, of two sorts; the one called Vittoe, soe strong, that it made men drunk as cydar doth now; from whence there is still a Proverb vsed among the People: "Vous estes Envittoe," for one who knowes not what he doth: y^e other sort was called Boschet; for then the people

gñally applyed themselves to the keeping of bees, which thrived there exceedingly, & made a more excellent sort of hony, then is scene ordinarily; which since by y^e multiplying of apple-trees hath by degrees ben neglected; & those sorts of drinke left off vtterly. As likewise that kind of sheep whercof the females had most times foure hornes, & the rams oft-times six, that is three of each side, whercof two made a circle towards the nose, two others another circle back-wards towards the eares, & two stood upright betweene them, which kind was of a small size, is allmost abolished, by the substitution of a larger kind, like those in Salisbury plaine, brought, I suppose, out of England. Likewise in lieu of Vittoe & boshet y^e auncient drinke Cydar is at present altogether in vse: wee have likewise made vse of perry heretofore, before Cydar was soe plentifull as it is nowe, but at present it is soe little regarded that labourers & servants will hardly drinke of it: for Cydar is growne so plentifull; that it serues not onely for common vse euen to excesse; but much of it might be spared for transportation. For of late times people finding the proffitt arising from Improvement of ground by orchards to be farre about that which they had afore by Tillage, they have soe vniuersally applyed themselves to make fences for y^e preservaçon of their Apple-trees that the whole Island was in danger of becoming, at last, a continued orchard, if care had not ben taken to put a stopp to that vnlimited inclinatiō of y^e Inhabitants. By which meanes husbandry is nowe soe decay'd that whereas formerly there grewe more corne in y^e Island, then was sufficient for its prouision, & that much of it was transported abroad, nowe on y^e contrary, it must be beholding to Britany & other places beyond sea, for one half, at least, of what is spent there. For besides the increase of Apples, the people, who were wont to attend Tillage, a painefull occupation, and sowing of hemp & flaxe for y^e making of linnen cloth, finding nowe by experience more ease in knitting of stockings & wastcoats, haue soe generally, men women & children, giuen themselves that waye, that none will assist husbandmen, but with repugnancy, & at such rates, as cannot consist with that moderate price at which foraigne

Corne is sold in the market. For as to that reason which is commonly giuen of the difference betweene the time past & present, viz., that the number of people that nowe is, being greater then was anciently, is the cause why the Island is not sufficient to feed them all, seems to me farre short of the truth. It is indeed hard to guesse at the number of people in former times; but by all y^e coniectures can be made from ancient Records of surnames & such like circumstances, it is probable, that there were then as many Inhabitants in the Island, as at present. I knowe it hath ben from a long time beleecued that the Isle of Jersey containes fifty Thousand persons of all sexes & ages; but it is easy to shewe y^e contrary; & that there are not past Twenty Thousand. Wee knowe by y^e Muster Rolles howe many beare Armes, & howe many Co^municants there be in each Parish: make a guesse at y^e number of children & infirme persons, & you cannot be much out in yo^r coniecture, vnlesse perhaps you thinke it a surer waye, by taking the number of the severall families in each Parish, & then y^e number of persons in each family; which may easily be don; & see the whole number knowne. Within fewe hundreds of these the greatest part are knitters. For as there be many houses, in which there are fewe or none; soe there are a greate many more, where man & wife children & all, beginning at y^e age of fiue or sixe yeares old, have noe other employment, & may be sayd to make (taking one with another) every one a paire of stockings every weeke: which must after my accompt come to more then ten Thousand paires weekely. All these stockings are bought by Merchants of that profession every Saterday, in fewe houres' time, in the Towne of S^t Helery (not Hilary, as hath ben by writers mistaken), where a plentifull markt is kept that day, all the yeare long, for all co^modities, in the manner of a Faire: and hauing ben washed & prepared by them, they are for y^e most part transported into France: some fewe are alsoe caryed into Spaine of a different making from the rest, according to y^e vse of that Countrey; fewe or none goe for England, but knitt wastcosts* onely.

* Sic.

Besides y^e Towne of S^t Helery, which is the chiefe with vs, there is the Port Towne of S^t Albin, (Albinus), not Albon, which is much improued, since the beginning of a Peere there: for it hath brought allready soe much reputation to that place, though yet vnfinished, that within these fewe yeares the buildings are growne there double the number they were afore the sayd Peere was in designe & will doubtlesse still increase more and more, as it shall feele the benefitt which y^e perfection of that worke must of necessity bring vnto it. There is a Market kept alsoe among merchants for foraigne comodityes vpon y^e monday euery weeke; it being the onely considerable Port in y^e Island.

Just before it within musket shot lyes the small Island & Fort of S^t Albin, & y^e Peere ioyning to it on y^e East side to shelter the ships ryding at Anchor. The Fort hath a Garrison consisting of an Officer & *soldiers & sufficient store of Artillery & Amuniçon. From this Fort is a very faire prospect beginning at y^e point of Noirmont & ending at S^t Heleryes mont in y^e forme of a Theater or Halfe moone very pleasant to behold, Elizabeth Castle being seated allmost in y^e middle of it vpon an Islet in y^e Sea (from which wee call it alsoe L'Islet) a very faire, large & strong peece, begun by Queene Elizabeth, augmented of y^e Lower Guard very spacious by Charles the first of blessed memory and nowe compleated by his Ma^{ties} munificence vnder the Gouvernement of that expert & vigilant Co^mander S^t Thomas Morgan: for all y^e ground formerly without it, called the Greene, is taken in, & makes part of y^e fortification; & there remains nothing without but rocks which couer euery Tyde: soe that an enemy attempting it must come a mile from any part of y^e land all open to y^e shot from it, & doe his businesse in six houres time or else make his retreat in like manner as he came on, without shelter all y^e while, for y^e Tyde will giue him noe more time. There are about the Island other Bayes & Anchoring places, where good harbours might be made; especially at a place in Trinity Parish called Bowley, where shippes of great Balke might safely ryde, enter & goe out, & at another place

not farre frō Montorgueil Castle called S^t. Catherin's; both of them much more commodious for Navigation, & neerer y^e. Channell: from whence shippes might sayle out almost in any kind of wind; whereas going out from S^t. Albin they loose a great deale of time in that compasse which they make about S^t. Brelades & S^t. Ouen's before they enter into the maine. But the businesse of the Island hauing by lenght of time ben altogether turned towards y^e. South-west part and soe the Townes & principall buildings with Court & Jurisdiction being placed there, it would be a businesse of noe litle difficulty to dispose & change it towards y^e. contrary Part.

On the Southeast lyes the village of Gouray, with a faire Castle anciētly call'd by the same name, but more modernely Mont Orgueil, being indeed a stately peece of building, & making a proud shewe as you approach it from Grouill Church, seated upon a steepe Rock hauing the Sea on y^e. South side, and a Hill overlooking it at too neere a distance on y^e. other. It was surprized in Eduard the fourth's time, or rather in y^e. latter & declining time of Henry the Sixt, by the conniuaunce of Queene Margeret his wife, who by an vnderhand bargaine made ouer this Island to a French Count, called Peter de Bressé, for y^e. assistance of fīue or six hundred men, to be brought ouer into England at his owne charge; who possess't it with the greatest part of y^e. Island about fīue yeares, being opposed by Philip de Carteret Signor of S^t. Ouen, who with his assistants made good against him S^t. Ouen Parish with the adiacent Parishes, till being relieued by the helpe of S^t. Richard Harliston Vice-Admirall of these parts, with some number of shippes riding at y^e. Port of Guernezey, it was by them suddenly beseeged & retaken for want of prouision, before those within could be supplied from Normondy: for which seruice Harliston was made Gouvernor of the Island; who built there a Towre to this day call'd Harlistons Towre. But it is not found by Records that this Castle was euer taken by force; although in the yeare 1374 it was hard putt to it by de Guesclin Constable of France, with y^e. fīowre of the French Armyes, of which particular more hereafter.