

NUMBER XXIX.

PARISH OF LONMAY,

(COUNTY AND SYNOD OF ABERDEEN, AND (PRESBYTERY
OF DEER).

*From Materials collected by Mr JOHN LUNDIE,
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Name, Situation, and Extent.

THIS parish at different times has been named St Colm, from the name of the faint to whom the old church was dedicated, and Longmay, Longmey, and Lonmay, from the name of the estate on which the church now stands.

It is situated in the presbytery of Deer, and in the Synod and county of Aberdeen. Its length is 10 English miles; its greatest breadth scarcely four miles. It is bounded on the S. E. by Crimond; on the S. by Longside and Old Deer; on the S. W. by Brechin; on the W. and N. E. by Rathen; and on the E. by the German Ocean.

Soil

Soil and Climate.—The soil of the parish is various. The air, especially on the coast, is rather moist, but not unhealthy.

Mineral Springs.—There are many mineral springs in the parish, but they have never been analyzed; and from the celebrity of the mineral well of Peterhead, at 12 miles distance, they are little used.

Lake.—There is only one lake, lying on the boundary betwixt the parishes of Lonmay and Crimond. It is now called the *loch* of Strathbeg. It was formerly a small rivulet, called indifferently the burn of Strathbeg, and water of Rattray. Buchanan calls it *Ratra amnis*. By a storm the mouth of it was shut up, and successive banks of sand have been thrown up by the sea, and the rivulet has, in the course of a little more than a century, become a lake of 550 Scotch, or 700 English acres. For several years past it has not increased in magnitude; the evaporation from the surface being equal to the quantity of water emptied into the lake. Were a person to measure with tolerable accuracy the quantity of water which runs into this lake, it would possibly afford *data* for proving, that the evaporation from the Caspian Sea is sufficient to counterbalance all the water poured in from the rivers which empty themselves into it. An attempt has been lately made to drain the lake of Strathbeg; but the person who made the attempt failed in his circumstances, which has suspended the work. It is said, however, that he is soon to resume it. His reward is a long lease of the grounds covered by the lake. The fishes contained in this lake are, red and white trout, eels, flounders, and large fresh water muscles, commonly called pearl muscles. No pearls, however,

however, have been found in the muscles taken out of this lake.

The soil in the bottom of this lake is not deep, but is seemingly of a marly nature, owing, perhaps, to muscle-shells decayed.

Rivers, &c.—No navigable rivers run through the parish, but a considerable stream, one of the branches of the Ugie, runs by the north and south-east boundaries. A canal could be carried along both branches of the Ugie at no great expence, and with the most beneficial consequences to the agriculture and commerce of Buchan.

This parish has above four miles of coast, and the shore is flat and sandy. The species of fish caught on this coast are turbot, holibut, plaice, skate, ling, cod, sand-eel, haddock, whiting, cole-fish, flounders, soles, and mackaral. Sometimes, but rarely, sea-bream, wrasse, and dorce. Herring also are found, but there are no herring-nets. One trial was made of fishing for salmon, and was tolerably successful.

Sea-wreck of several kinds is found on the coast; and kelp is made, but in small quantities.

There are two fishing-towns belonging to Mr Gordon of Buthlaw. One of these was lately built, and consists of 20 tiled houses, placed in two parallel rows, with a street in the middle.

Mosses.—There are several extensive mosses in this parish. A large one belongs to Mr Milne of Crimond-mogate, another to Mr Cumming of Kinithmont. The other heritors, Mr Duff of Logie, son of the late Admiral Duff, Mr Bisset of Rathon, and Mr Frazer of Park, have also mosses, which abound in the whole district of Buchan.

Minerals.—No marble, freestone, or slate, and not much moorstone, are found in this parish. But a blue stone has been quarried on the estate of Cairness, belonging to Mr Gordon of Buthlaw. This, contrary to the nature of the blue stone commonly found in Aberdeenshire, cuts as well as granite, and makes beautiful ashler work. Of this stone, Mr Gordon has lately built an elegant modern house, on a plan given by Mr Playfair.

No coal mines are found in this parish; but limestone is found in great quantities on the estate of Craigellie, about 2 English miles from the church, and is much used for manure.

Quadrupeds.—The quadrupeds found in this parish, besides horses, sheep, hogs, black cattle, dogs, and cats, are moles in great numbers, foxes seen sometimes, otters in the lake of Strathbeg, observed but seldom, polecats, weasels, common and shrew-mice, hares, rats, and water-rats.

Birds.—The birds and wild fowls are of various kinds; jack-daws, magpies, the cuckoo, swans, and wild-geese, (in Strathbeg after harvest, and till the spring), barnacles shot on the coast, duck in Strathbeg at all seasons, teals on the coast, soland-geese passing in sight of land, common gull, and great black and white gull, tarrock, heron, curlew, woodcock, snipe, jack-snipe, lapwing, (not so numerous as formerly), sand-pipers, green plover, coots, land rail, grouse in the moor, partridges, quails, sky-lark, starlings, field-fare, generally appearing before snow, thrush, blackbird, chatterers, crossbill, seen but rarely, greenfinches, goldfinches, chaffinches, yellow hammers, red sparrows, hedge sparrows, redbreasts, water-wagtails, swifts, swallows, and white-ears.

Population.—The return to Dr Webster in 1755 was 1674 souls. The number of inhabitants of all ages at present is about 1650. Of which, 311 are Scotch Episcopal, and 17 are Seceders. If we may judge from the situation of the church of St Colm, (of which part of the west gable still remains, and which stood on the north-east part of the parish, 10 miles from the south by west extremity), population has formerly been very thin in this parish, except on the sea-coast.

Agriculture.—The agriculture of this district, though certainly improved of late years by the introduction of lime and green crops, has not advanced so much as might have been expected. One great error of the Buchan farmers, which is apt to strike even a stranger riding through the country, is the ploughing too seldom. In deep clay soils, where, in the county of Angus, three ploughings are always used, beans are frequently sown broadcast after one ploughing, and bear after beans in the same manner. Yet a very good crop of drilled beans is to be seen this year (1795) upon a farm in the personal possession of one of the heritors. It is also to be remarked, that a rotation of crops is not yet established in this district. While the heritor only ploughs where he cannot get grass to grow any longer, the tenant sometimes ploughs as long as corn of any kind will grow. A regular rotation of crops, adapted to the different soils, is too little attended to in this district; and now that lime is very generally used, the lands may suffer from injudicious cropping.

Rent of the Parish.—The rent of this parish is about 2000 guineas; and may be supposed to increase with the improvements in agriculture.

Ecclesiastical

Ecclesiastical State.—The minister's stipend is 9 chalders of victual, and 600 merks Scots, or L. 33 : 6 : 8 Sterling in money. Mr Gordon of Buthlaw is patron. The church was built in 1787. The old church had stood since 1608, at which period the parish-church was removed from St Colm to Lonmay.

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