

PARISH OF ABERNETHY.

PRESBYTERY OF PERTH, SYNOD OF PERTH AND STIRLING.

THE REV. DAVID DUNCAN, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE ancient form of the name by which the town and parish are known, was *Abernethyn*; and so late as 1420, Winton, the rhyming chronicler, and prior of St Serf's Inch, in Loch Leven, makes the final syllable to rhyme with the Scottish word, "syne," (Anglice "since.") The word evidently denotes the town upon the Nethy, a small stream which flows through the centre of the parish, and close by the town. About a mile farther down, on the same stream, and nearer to its influx into the river Earne, is *Innernethy*, formerly the family residence of the Freers, and now belonging to Sir Thomas Moncrieffe of Moncrieffe, and a place, the name of which may be traced back to the time of King William the Lion.

Chalmers says, that "*Neith*" or "*Nid*" in the British language denotes a stream that forms "whirls" or "turns," and that *Nethan* or *Nethy* are diminutives.* It is proper to add, that, in the last Statistical Account of the parish, drawn up by the father of the present incumbent, it is alleged that the name which the Highlanders give to Abernethy is *Obair*, or *Abair Nadchtain*, i. e. the work of Neathan or Nectain, a name of more than one of the Pictish kings, who are supposed to have been founders of Abernethy, and by whom it was selected as their capital and place of residence.

Boundaries.—The parish is bounded on the north by the rivers Tay and Earne; on the west, by the parishes of Dron and Dunbarny, and the Farg, a rivulet which joins the Earne at Colfargie, and flows through the romantic scenery of Glenfarg; on the east, by a small rivulet which separates it from the parish of New-

* Winton's Chronicle, Vol. i. p. 242, 270. Register, Aberbroath, quoted in Jamieson's App. Chalmers's Caledonia, Vol. i. pp. 84, 480, 47.

burgh, and is also the boundary in this quarter of the counties of Perth and Fife. On the south, its confines adjoin the parishes of Auchtermuchty, Collessie, Strathmiglo, and Arngask. A small portion of the southern district is in the county of Fife, but by much the larger part of the parish is in the county of Perth. It forms a very irregular trapezoidal figure, whose greatest diameter from the north-west to the south-east may be about nine miles. Its length and breadth from east to west, and from south to north, vary much in different places. In the middle of the river Tay, opposite to Mugdrum, (which is in the parish of Newburgh,) is an island belonging to the parish, called Mugdrum Island, about an English mile in length, containing an area of 35 acres of arable land of the richest quality, which, by the improvements in progress and embankments, &c. may be greatly extended, as has been the case by similar operations, along the opposite shores of the Carse of Gowrie.

The parish may comprise an area of about 7030 acres, two-thirds of which, forming part of the range of the Ochils, are hilly; the remaining part, lying between the Ochils and the rivers Tay and Earne, is arable, and in the highest state of cultivation. It forms the lowest part of the vale of Strathearne, and its beauties, as well as fertility, not exceeded by those of any other district in Scotland, are too well known to require notice.

In examining the soil along the banks of the Earn, and the sections in which the strata are exposed to view, there appears, under a thick layer of clay, a bed of peat of about two or three feet thick, being apparently a continuation of the submarine forest discovered in the neighbourhood of Flisk by Dr Fleming. Below the peat is a stratum of white or yellow sand, the depth of which is not known. The contents of the peat are thus arranged: Immediately above the white sand, lies the lowest and hardest part of the peat, composed of the leaves and branches of trees, principally birch. Above this, is a stratum composed of moss, and a considerable quantity of seeds, similar to those of the common broom. Above this, the peat passes into a sedimentary like matter, forming the uppermost part of the bed of peat, in which are found remains of reeds extending upwards into the bed of clay. These are found in abundance in that part of the bed of clay immediately above the peat, leaving their impression on the clay. These remains are frequent for a space of three or four feet above the peat, but as we ascend they gradually become fewer and less dis-

tinct, till they entirely disappear, leaving a bed of pure clay or loam.

Geology and Mineralogy.—The old red sandstone, which fills up so much of the Carse of Gowrie and Stratherne, was at one time quarried at Innernethy, near the junction of the Earne and Tay, and is visible in contact with the trap about 800 yards to the south of the manse, as also about half a mile distant from the House of Ayton, in the channel of the Farg. Though concealed elsewhere by a thick mass of alluvial matter, it most probably constitutes the only rock in that part of the parish which lies between the Tay and the first trap range of the Ochils. It declines towards the north at an angle of from 15° to 20° . It occasionally inclines to conglomerate. In the Glenfarg quarry, near Ayton, have been discovered fragments of scales of those extraordinary *ichthyolites*, which have of late been found in abundance at Clashbenny, in the Carse of Gowrie, and Duraden to the south-east of Cupar, Fife. The Ochil Hills, among which a considerable portion of the parish is situated, consist wholly of trap, and in this quarter, of the varieties known by the names of clinkstone, amygdaloid, porphyry, and claystone. A singular blood-red variety of the last of these is found around Balvaird Castle. From the Castle Law west towards Glenfarg, on the north face of the hill, trap tuffa, resembling some of the gravel stones of Colonel Inrie, prevails. The boulders which are scattered over the parish, and are especially prevalent on the tops of the hills, consist chiefly of gneiss, primitive trap, and quartz rock.

Quarries.—The only quarries worked in the parish are from the greenstone and clinkstone rocks in the Ochil range. They are used generally for road-metal, but sometimes for coarse building. The quarry in Glenfarg, immediately above Ayton and in Lord Mansfield's grounds, exhibits the clinkstone arranged in beautiful distinct concretions. The Zeolites of Glenfarg have been long so celebrated, that they need not be particularly described. They are found on the rocks stretching from Ayton to Balvaird Castle. In the same locality, and particularly on the estates of Balvaird and Catochil, agates of various kinds, jaspers, and calcareous spars, are in abundance.

In the range of hills near Auchtermuchty there are limestone rocks.

Zoology.—The quadrupeds which abound are those common to

the surrounding districts, the roe-deer, the fallow-deer, the fox, hare, rabbit, and weasel. The polecat is occasionally found; and there are the ordinary varieties of the rat, mouse, and mole.

As for the feathered tribes, there are the varieties of species common to this and other parishes. Vast numbers of water-fowl are found around Mugdrum Island. Among these, specimens of the magnificent wild swan are sometimes observed. Wild-geese make their appearance in great flocks about the middle of October, and continue throughout the winter; while, all the year round, there are found on the shores of the rivers the mire-duck, the sheldrake, the teal, the poker-duck, the coote, the water-hen, and various tribes of divers, the red-shank, the ourlew, the green and yellow plover, the heron, and sometimes, though very rarely, the bittern. The larger and lesser gull visit us in stormy weather; while kittywakes, sea-swallows, and sea-pies, continue with us through the summer. Many other varieties of water-fowl are occasionally found.

The mammifera which frequent the waters of the river itself are, the seal, the otter, the grampus, and the porpoise. The two latter are rarely seen above Newburgh, and the otter seldom without the mouth of the Earne.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

There are few parishes so rich in antiquities as Abernethy; and the town itself, though no longer occupying any prominent claims to attention on other grounds, is to be traced to a very remote period, and was much more populous and extensive than at present. According to traditions which exist, and which are confirmed by the discovery of ruins of buildings, it extended a considerable way to the eastward of the present village. We may here introduce a curious passage, as given by Sir James Balfour from Campden Manuscript Col. Stratherne. "Or ever the river Earne hath joined his waters with Tay in one streame, so that now Tay is become more spacious, he looketh up a little space to Aberneth, seated at the feete of the Ocellian mountains, anciently the royall seat of the Picts, and a weel peopled city, which, as we reade in ane ancient fragment, Nectan, King of the Picts, gave unto God and St Bridget, until the day of doome, togidder with the bounds thereof, which lay from a stone in Abertrent, to a stone nigh Carpul, (supposed Carpow), and from thence as far as to Ethan," supposed to be Hatton, the name of a farm-steading.

The oldest Scottish historians represent Abernethy as the capital of the Pictish nation, both in civil and religious matters.

Most probably, a church was built at Abernethy at a very remote period—in the fifth century, by Nethan Morbet, a king of the Picts, according to the Pictish chronicle; towards the close of the sixth century, by King Garnard M'Dourmach, according to Fordun, Winton, and Major; or in the beginning of the seventh century, by King Nethan II., Garnard's immediate successor, according to the Register of St Andrews.

Pinkerton supposes that Nethan III., who asked architects or masons from Ceolfrid, Abbot of Weremouth, in the eighth century, and who, according to Winton, founded Rosemarkie, may have been a founder of Abernethy also; or, at least, have substituted more substantial buildings in place of the original wooden erections.*

According to the Pictish chronicle, the founding and endowing of the church of Abernethy was a sacrifice which the Pictish king offered to God and St Bridget, in acknowledgement of the recovery of his kingdom; and over the sacrifice, *i. e.* on the occasion of dedicating the church and lands to the use of religion, hallelujahs were sung by Darlintach, an Irish abbess, who had previously in her own country prayed for the restoration of the Pictish king, and was then, as it would appear, placed at the head of an establishment of nuns in her capital. Fordun, indeed, does not scruple to relate that St Patrick himself introduced St Bridget and her nine nuns into the religious establishment of Abernethy.†

The antiquity as well as dignity of the church of Abernethy may be seen in this, that it was the seat of the Bishop of the Picts. Fordun says, that there were three elections of bishops at Abernethy, while as yet there was only one bishop in the whole kingdom of the Picts; and that the church of Abernethy was founded 227, some said 244, years before the church of Dunkeld.

According to Boethius and Buchanan, Kenneth M'Alpine, King of the Dalriad Scots, translated the Episcopal see, after he subdued the Picts, from Abernethy to St Andrews, in the ninth century; and the Bishop of St Andrews henceforward was known as the national Bishop, *Episcopus Scotorum*.

The bishopric of Dunblane, within which the parish of Aber-

* Pictish Chron. in Pinkerton and Innes; Fordun's *Scotic. Chr. Lib.* 4, 12; Winton, Vol. i. p. 127; Major's *Hist.* p. 85; *Regis. St Andrews*; Pinkerton's *Inquiry*, Vol. i. p. 296, edit. Edin. 1814.

† Boethius's *Hist.* pp. 156, 160.

nethy came to be included, was founded in the twelfth century, by King David I., seemingly out of the great national bishopric of St Andrews, according to the manuscript missal.

Of the early history of the monastery established at Abernethy, and of the institutions of the Culdees, who had one of their principal seats in this parish, we possess scanty information. From a confirmation of some lands which were given to the Culdees of Lochleven, we learn, that, towards the end of the eleventh century, there were schools at Abernethy, in which was taught the whole circle of the sciences, as far as they were known in dark ages, and among a barbarous people. Among the witnesses are, the rector of the school of Abernethy, three priests of Abernethy, and a fourth, who is styled priest of the Culdees. Almost all the names are evidently of Celtic origin, and indicate that the Saxon had not yet supplanted the ancient language in that part of the country.*

In the following century, Orme, the son of Hugh, proprietor of various lands in Angus and Fife, received the lands of Abernethy from King William the Lion; and from these lands, he and his posterity assumed their surname. A charter of the same King and of Lawrence de Abernethy, conveyed to the Abbey of Arbroath, as a free and permanent alms-gift, the church of Abernethy and its advowson, with all its pertinents, the chapels of Dron, Denboig, and Errol; the lands of Balloch, Pittenlower, (Pitlour), and tithes of several kinds. But, among other things, there are excepted the tithes of Mukdrum, Kerpull, (Carpow), Balchere-well, Baltolly, and Innernethy; which tithes, as well as the lands themselves, were the property of the Culdees. The charters were confirmed by the bishop of Dunblane, within whose diocese the church of Abernethy lay. But the avarice of the Abbey of Arbroath; the poverty, as it seems, of the see of Dunblane; and the growing dislike of the hierarchy towards all the institutions of the Culdees, soon operated to the disadvantage of the monastery of Abernethy.

About the year 1240, the altarage of the church, with the lands of Pittenlower, and a moiety of those of Balloch, were transferred to the bishop of Dunblane; and, in return, the bishop engaged to provide for the service of the church of Abernethy; to establish a vicar in his own cathedral, in the name of the abbot and

* Register of St Andrews, in Jamieson's Culdees, App. No. 5.

monastery of Arbroath; to enrol Abernethy among the prebendal churches of the diocese; and to instal the abbot of Arbroath, as a prebendary or canon, with a manse and privileges similar to those of the other canons.

At last, the fate which sooner or later overtook all the Culdee institutions, came upon Abernethy also in 1273, when the ancient monastery became a priory of canons regular, and a cell of Inchaffray, from which place came the new order of priests.*

It would appear, that, in process of time, the priory of Canons regular became a provostry or college of secular priests. Forbes says, that a provostry was founded at Abernethy by the Earl of Angus; and Sir James Balfour speaks of Abernethy as a collegiate church with eight prebends, founded by Henry Lord Abernethy, the nobleman, perhaps, who is mentioned in 1455, in the Parliamentary forfeiture of the Douglasses. It might have been expected that the provostry had been the work of an Earl of Angus, probably of the Earl George, who, receiving a great part of the forfeited estates of the Earl of Douglas in 1457, was one of the first subjects in Scotland, both in power and popularity, and rendered the Douglasses of Angus formidable to the throne as well as to civil liberty. But, be that as it may, we hear no more of Canons regular in this district; and there is every reason to believe that, for a very considerable period before the Reformation, Abernethy was a collegiate church, at the head of which was a provost.† In a charter of privileges given to the town of Abernethy, of date 23d August 1476, and by which charter the government of Abernethy was and continues to be vested in two bailies and fifteen councillors, one of the witnesses is John Frizzel or Frazer, who is designated provost of the collegiate church of Abernethy.

The common seal of the collegiate church or establishment at Abernethy, of which a *fac simile* or plate is given in Jamieson's History of the Culdees, was as follows: Obverse, a shield of arms in a shield gule; a lion rampant, surmounted with bend dexter argent; Legend, "Sig. commune Collegii de Abernethe." Reverse, an abbess, probably representing St Bridget (the supposed tutelar saint, concerning whom there are traditions,) in a veil, holding a crosier in her right hand, and at her right hand is

* Regist. Aberbroth. in Jamieson's Culdees, App. No. 1, 2, 3, 4. Fordun's Scotichron. lib. x. 89.

† Forbes on Tithes, page 90. Jamieson's Culdees, page 115. Pinkerton's History of Scotland, Vol. i. p. 490, 238.

a small figure of a bull, deer, or such other animal. Legend, "In domo Dei ambulavimus concencu,"—words which are taken from the vulgate Latin of the 55th Psalm, verse 14, a *c* being erroneously substituted in the place of *s* in the penult syllable. It is remarkable that the matrix for making casts of this seal was found so late as 1789, and so far from home as Eniskillen, in the county of Fermanagh, in Ireland. It is of brass, and, at the period when the last Statistical Account was published, was in the possession of the Honourable Mrs Drummond of Perth. Whether it be still preserved by her successors, the writer has not been able to ascertain.

In 1531, in a rental of the churches of the Abbey of Arbroath, the church of Abernethy is stated at 293 lib. 6s. 8d.

In 1560, at the time of the Reformation, the valuation of the kirk of Abernethy is said to be 273 lib., a sum which is somewhat smaller numerically than that stated in the rental of 1531, and much smaller in actual value when the diminished weight of the coin is considered. After the Reformation, the church of Abernethy seems to have come under the denomination of a parsonage, like, perhaps, several other vicarages; for the bond by which they were connected with bishopricks, abbeys, and other religious establishments, was then dissolved. The rental of the provostry at the time of the Reformation was as follows:—Money, 13 lib. 13s. 4d.; bear, 2 chal. 9 bolls, 1 firiot, 1 peck; meal, 5 chal. 2 bolls, 3 firlots.

Of the events in the department of civil history connected with Abernethy, few have been handed down. Fordun, Winton, and the English historians tell us that, in 1072, when William the Conqueror invaded Scotland, Malcolm Canmore did homage (probably for his English possessions) at Abernethy.

Goodal, in his introduction to Fordun's History, says that the place was on the river Nith, in the south of Scotland; and his opinion is generally approved by subsequent Scottish historians. But the harangue of an English general, before the battle of the Standard, in the following century, implies that William had passed through several provinces before Malcolm made his submission; and David M'Pherson, the editor of Winton, supposes that the English army advanced as far as Stratherne. Winton's language is:—

"As thousand twa and seventy yere,
William Bastard, with his posse
In Scotland came, and wasted syne,
And rode throught till Abernethyn."

Alexander de Abernethy, the great-grandson of him who co-operated with William the Lion, in granting the church of Abernethy to the Abbey of Arbroath, swore fealty to Edward I. in 1292: and, adhering to the English interest, was appointed warden of the counties between the Forth and Grampians in 1310, by Edward II. His lands seem to have been forfeited, after the battle of Bannockburn, by King Robert Bruce, and they were probably saved by the marriage of his three daughters, who carried them to husbands better affected towards the Scottish Crown. With Margaret, the eldest daughter, John Stewart, Earl of Angus, inherited the lordship of Abernethy. Margaret Stewart, their grand-daughter, married William, Earl of Douglas. Their son, George Douglas, on the resignation of his mother in 1389, became Earl of Angus; and Lord Douglas, as the representative of the Earl of Angus and Duke of Douglas, is still superior of the town of Abernethy and many neighbouring estates.† In the early history of Scotland the Douglasses were a most powerful family. Their historiographer has observed that, "so many and so good as the Douglasses have been, of one surname, were ne'er in Scotland seen." Pennant states, that "they went about with 2000 men with them, and had their councillors and established ranks, and constituted a Parliament, and might have provided a House of Peers out of their own family."

The family, during their early and more intimate connection with the parish, seem to have had a castle or place of residence, which, tradition says, was near to the House of Carpow. In this parish also, it appears, was a place of sepulture, in which the ashes of some of the family repose, and which is supposed to have been within an aisle of the old church, taken down in 1802. At Abernethy, says Monipenny, in his *Scottish Chronicle* in 1612, the Earls of Angus have their sepulture. Earl George, the second of the name, a loyal and good man, the head of the aristocracy, and chief of his family, after the forfeiture of the older branch, and who was probably the founder of the provostry, was buried here in 1462; as was also Alexander, his great-grandson in 1556, who led the van of the Scottish army in the unfortunate battle of Pinky. George's son, the Great Earl, as he is called, or Archi-

* Hales's *Annals*, Vol. i. p. 389, edition, Edinburgh, 1819. M'Pherson's *Geographical Illustrations*.

† *Doug. Peerage*, Vol. ii. p. 466. Robertson's *Index*, page 15. *Statistical Account*, Vol. xi. page 445-446.

bald Bell-the-Cat, whose two oldest sons, with 200 gentlemen of their name, fell at Flodden in 1513, ended his days in the following year at Whittern in religious solitude; but some time previously, he had given to Abernethy a proof of his favour in the charter before referred to, which erected the town into a burgh of barony, and vested the municipal government in two bailies and fifteen councillors. Earl William renewed the charter in 1628.*

Antiquities.—The most remarkable evidence of the antiquity of Abernethy, and of the prominent place it occupied in the civil and ecclesiastical history of Scotland at a very remote period, is the round tower, to which there is nothing similar in Scotland, except at Brechin. It is 74 feet in height, and consists of 64 courses of hewn stone. The external circumference is 48 feet at the base, and diminishes somewhat towards the top. The thickness of the wall is $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The door stands a little above the base, and faces the north; is $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in width from jamb to jamb. Towards the top of the building are four windows, equidistant from one another, and pointing to the four quarters of heaven, each of them 5 feet 9 inches in height, and 2 feet 2 inches in width. The steeple or tower is a hollow pillar, and the only mode of ascent is by scaling ladders attached to different wooden platforms erected for the purpose. It stands detached from, but near to what was the site of the buildings connected with the college and ecclesiastical establishment, and where stood the parochial church, one of the oldest in Scotland, which was taken down in 1802, when the present new church was built in a different locality. It is now, and has been, occupied from time immemorial, as a belfry for ecclesiastical purposes; and a right to use it for civil purposes connected with the burgh, has been claimed and exercised within certain limits. Though this tower is generally, and by the voice of tradition, ascribed to Pictish times, and supposed to have been connected with ecclesiastical purposes, much obscurity rests on the subject, which has not yet been removed, and will probably remain on it.

Circular towers, of the same kind as those at Abernethy and Brechin in Scotland, are found in different parts of Ireland, and also in some parts of Asia. As to the origin and uses of these towers, there has been of late much speculation, and various theo-

* Doug. Peerage, Vol. i. 433, 437, 434. Stat. Account, Vol. xi. p. 446. Jamieson's Culdees, p. 126.

ries have been proposed. O'Brian has recently drawn much attention to this class of antiquities. The theory which he endeavours to establish is, that the round towers of Ireland and Scotland are by much the earliest buildings we possess, dating their existence before the Christian era, and owing their origin to oriental idolatry, being the temples of the Buddhist worshippers. This theory seems to derive much weight from the arguments adduced in its support by the most recent and brilliant historiographer of Ireland, as well as the learned writer of the Pictorial History of England. Among those who ascribe the circular tower to Pictish and Christian times, some conceive that it was not only connected with ecclesiastical purposes, but was also designed as a place of sepulture for the Pictish kings, during the period Abernethy continued to be the capitol of their kingdom. A few months ago, the public attention was directed, through the newspaper press, to the discovery of a human skeleton within the basement of the round tower of Ardmore, in the county of Waterford. In the process of digging within this tower, there was found, first, a layer of large stones, then a perfectly smooth surface of mortar, and beneath this a bed of mould, in which, at the depth of some feet, a skeleton was discovered lying from east to west. After seeing this statement, the writer of this report had a communication with the proprietor of Ardmore, and also with Mr Windele, the secretary of the South Munster Antiquarian Society.

It would appear from these communications, that the subject of round towers, which are numerous in Ireland, occupies at present much attention; and that, with a view to throw light on the origin and uses of this class of antiquities, some of these towers have been particularly examined by competent judges. One of the results of their investigation has been to prove, that they were generally used as places of sepulture. Evidences of this fact have been found in the round towers not only of Ardmore, but of Ram Island and Timahoe, and latterly in the tower of Cloye.

Of the operations in this last place, the writer has received from Mr Windele the account which follows: "In September 1841, the workmen under the superintendence of Mr William Hackett, after penetrating through about two feet of rubbish, reached a solid floor, about a foot in thickness, formed of small stones laid in gravel, so firmly bedded as to yield only to repeated efforts with the crow-bar and pick-axe. Under this they found, within a space of six feet diameter, a stratum of earth mould, in which were dis-

covered three skeletons laid west and east, two of them lying side by side of each other, and the third under these. The gentlemen under whose directions these researches were prosecuted, and who were in attendance on this interesting occasion, were the Rev. Messrs Horgan, Rogers, Jones, Bolster, and D. Murphy, Messrs Hackett, Sainthill, Abell, Windele, Kelcher, and F. Jennings." While upon this subject, it is worthy of being noticed, that, in May 1821, the Rev. Andrew Small, author of a curious work entitled *Roman Antiquities in Abernethy and neighbouring parishes*, discovered a stone-coffin, with an entire skeleton and several human skulls and other detached bones, within the tower at Abernethy, while digging in the foundation of the building. An account of the discovery will be found in the work to which I have referred, published in 1823.

After all, however, which has been written or suggested as to the origin and uses of this class of ancient monuments, it must be admitted, that the researches of the antiquarian have hitherto failed in producing any theory on which much reliance can be placed.

"On the summit of a hill immediately behind Pitlour, and in this parish, are the remains of an ancient fort, called 'the Roman Camp,' which Colonel Millar, in his *Essay respecting the site of the battle of Mons Grampius*, supposes to have been occupied by the army previous to the great battle, which he supposes to have been fought in the plain below. The sides of this hill, except on the north-east, where it is connected with the general range of the Ochils, are steep, and it rises about 400 feet from its base. The summit is surrounded by a chain of rocks upwards of 300 yards in circumference, which forms a sort of natural citadel, and is still called 'the fort.' It has besides been well fortified; and many of the stones used for that purpose have been brought from a great distance. Upon clearing the ground for planting it in 1828, the road leading to it, laid with stone, was laid open. The entrance on the east side was also discovered cut through the rock, and the pavement in the inside quite entire. Upon digging, many human bones were found, both within and without the circumference of it, also the bones and teeth of horses. A little below the summit, and on the side facing the Lomond hill, the slope was cut into terraces, similar to those at Markinch, with this difference, that these seem to have been faced with stone. They are now all levelled but one, which is used as a farm road. Although this fort

PERTH.

3 H

may have been occupied by the Romans, there seems little reason to doubt that it had previously been a British fortress, and that it had even subsequently been used by that people for the same purpose.”*

Among the Ochils, in the south-west corner of the parish, and in Fifeshire, stands Balvaird Castle, a relic of feudal times,—the property of the Earl of Mansfield and of his ancestors since the days of Robert II. Andrew Murray of Balvaird was settled minister of Abdie in 1618, knighted in 1633, and created Lord Balvaird in 1641, some conceive in consequence of the manner in which he acted in the important Assembly of the Church of Scotland of 1638. He died in 1644. His son, David, the second Lord Balvaird, succeeded a kinsman in the older titles of Scone and Stormont in 1658.

The seventh Viscount of Stormont succeeded his uncle in the Earldom of Mansfield in 1793, and was grandfather of the present Earl.

At an early period the titularity and patronage of the parish were granted by the Crown to Sir Andrew Murray of Balvaird, who was one of the Lords of Erection.

“The Castle of Balvaird is at present in a ruinous state, but it has obviously been, in former times, a place of considerable strength and importance. No date can now be traced on any part of the building; but there are the remains of several coats of arms, almost wholly obliterated, on different parts of it. Above the door which opens into the principal building from the court-yard is a shield, on which two coats of arms are emblazoned. They are very indistinct; but they appear to be those of Margaret Barclay and her husband, Sir Andrew Murray. And if this be the case, the building must be as old as the reign of James IV. In the open green in front of the castle, lies the recumbent figure of a female carved in freestone, which has obviously formed part of a monument. The stone was brought from the old church of Arngask at the time it was taken down, and is said to have been the monument of Lady Margaret Barclay, who married Sir Andrew Murray, youngest son of Sir William Murray of Tullibardine, and who, as the only surviving child of James Barclay of Kippo, to whom the barony of Balvaird and Arngask previously belonged, brought with her in marriage these baronies. Since that period, a considerable portion of the lands included in these

* *Vide* Fife Illustrated, by Joseph Swan, &c. p. 206.

baronies have passed into the hands of other persons, who hold them in feu of the Earl of Mansfield, with whom the superiority still remains."*

Besides the relics and monuments of other times, to which I have referred, there are others in the parish which, for some years, have drawn much attention, and have led to the conclusion, that here there was an important and extensive Roman station at a former period.

On the lands of Carpow, and near to the junction of the Earn with the waters of the Tay, there have been discovered foundations of buildings. These are within the policy grounds around the mansion-house of Carpow: and, when the surface of the ground was scorched by the extreme drought of 1826, attention was particularly drawn to them and to their extent.

A recent excavation in these grounds brings to light the foundations of many old walls. They are rudely constructed of stones and pieces of brick, with what would now be considered a very superfluous expenditure of lime and cement. One apartment, pretty entire, of which the walls are standing to the height of 20 inches, measures 10 feet by 18, and seems to have been neatly floored with tiles. Another appears to have been fitted up as a bath. It is 7 feet by 10, and the floors and sides are carefully plastered over with a hard compact cement, apparently composed of lime and brick-dust.

Near to this there was dug out, a few years ago, a piece of lead pipe about an inch and a half in internal diameter, and rudely soldered together with a coarse external seam. It is now, together with some Roman urns, coins, and fragments of bones, &c. found in the neighbourhood, in possession of Peter Hay Paterson, Esq. of Carpow. While Sibbald refers to ruins as existing in his time, in this district, he also refers to a Roman road as leading from thence to Ardoch, and another to Perth. †

The Castle Law, about three-quarters of a mile south-west from the village, is a steep, picturesque, grassy hill, rising to the height of about 600 feet. On its summit, from which there is a most delightful view of Strathearn and the Carse of Gowrie, are the vestiges of a very imperfect vitrified fort. The principal enclosure seems to have been surrounded by a rude mound of irregular

* *Vide Fife Illustrated*, by Swan, &c. pages 205, 206.

† *Vide article in the Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Millar, C.B. and F.R.S.L. Vol. iv. Part I. Edin. 1830.

stones, many of which are burnt or partially fused. The form is somewhat like the section of a jargonelle pear cut longitudinally.—the greatest diameter from east to west being 16 yards, and from north to south, 24. Two indistinctly visible outworks, lower down the hill, as also a winding terraced walk, seem to have been connected with it. It might have perhaps been designed to guard the pass into Abernethy Glen, which it overlooks, or to watch the Roman station below. Supposing it to have been a signal-post, an office for which the site and construction of other hill forts point them out as well adapted, it could communicate with the vitrified forts on the Law Hill, seven miles east from Dundee; with those on Evelick and Dunsinnane Hill to the north, with which it nearly forms a straight line; with Dunmore at the mouth of Logiealmond, on the north-west; and with its magnificent namesake, the Castle Law, about six miles west, in Strathearn, in the same range of hills.

The Chronicle of the Church of Abernethy is the title of a record long since lost, but to which there is reference in Fordoun, and in Innes's quotation from the Book of Paisley. In consequence of the loss of this document, and also the imperfect and mutilated state of the records of the diocese of Dunblane, within which Abernethy was, posterity have perhaps been deprived of much that would have been interesting in relation to the ecclesiastical and literary institutions of Abernethy. In order to set aside or depreciate their claims to notice, it has been asked why so little has been found concerning them in the registers of Scone, or in that of St Andrews, the metropolitan seat. This, however, will appear less surprising if we remember that it was the system of the canons regular, after they obtained the superiority of the Episcopal seats and monasteries, to keep the Culdees and their institutions in the shade as much as possible, and to seek their extinction.

To the ecclesiastical antiquities of Abernethy, and to the prominent place which the Culdees (who had their principal seat in this parish) occupy among those who were witnesses for the truth in a dark age, by testifying against many of the errors of the Church of Rome, the public attention has been directed in the collections of Sir James Dalrymple, and, more recently, in the *Historical Account of the Ancient Culdees of Iona, and their Settlements in Scotland, England, and Ireland*, by John Jamieson, D. D., F. R. S., F. A. S. E. To these sources the author must

refer his readers for fuller information on this interesting subject than can be given within the limits of a statistical report of the parish. If Abernethy, as associated with the name of the Culdees, the pioneers of the Reformation, be a scene interesting to the Christian inquirer, both as a seat of learning and religion, it became, in a later age, one of the original seats of that secession from the Church of Scotland, which has now extended so widely, and produced an important change in the state of society in Scotland.

One of the fathers of the Secession, the Rev. Alexander Moncrieffe, was minister of Abernethy, and proprietor of Culfargie, a considerable estate in the parish. He was the son of Matthew Moncrieffe, Esq. of Culfargie, and born about the year 1696. His grandfather was the Rev. Alexander Moncrieffe, minister of Scoonie, in Fifeshire, from 1643 to 1660, who was ejected at the Restoration, and died in 1688. After prosecuting his studies in Scotland, and for some time at Leyden, in Holland, he returned home, and soon after was licensed to preach the Gospel by the presbytery of Perth, and was ordained minister of Abernethy in September 1720.

He was one of the four ministers who protested against the Act of the General Assembly of 1733, which restrained ministerial freedom, and who, being afterwards ejected from the Established Church, constituted themselves into a presbytery for bearing testimony to the covenanted work of the Reformation in Scotland, and against all defections from the same. He is the author of two volumes of sermons, and of different pamphlets on subjects connected with the controversies and errors of the times. He was appointed Professor of Divinity to the General Associate Synod, after the death of Mr William Wilson of Perth, about the year 1742, and continued to have the charge of the students of divinity at Culfargie till the period of his death in 1761. His popular talents, and the influence which his property in the parish gave him, enabled him to draw away from the Establishment a great proportion of the population; and though a great change has since taken place, the name of Moncrieffe is dear to many connected with that body of Christians in which he acted so prominent a part. After his ejection from the Church, he continued to live on his paternal estate of Culfargie, and out of his private funds immediately erected a large substantial meeting-house, in the vicinity of Abernethy, capable of accommodating about 1000

persons, and also gave the ground for its site to the congregation gratis. But besides the place of worship, he left them, for the support and accommodation of their ministers, four or five acres of valuable land, on which the manse and offices are built for the incumbent. It is understood that, both in relation to the meeting-house and glebe, the rights are given to Mr Moncrieffe's successors in the charge of the Secession congregation, only so long as they continued to adhere to the principles for which he had seceded.

The Rev. John Brown, who was for thirty-six years minister of the Associate Burgher congregation at Haddington, and the author of the *Self-Interpreting Bible* and other valuable works on theology, was born at Carpow, in this parish, in 1722.

Parochial Registers.—Many of the session records preceding the period of the Secession seem to have been carried away or lost during the troubles of this period, and all attempts to recover them have hitherto failed. The register of baptisms commences in the year 1667, and, with the exception of a few years before and after the Secession, has been continued to the present time. It is to be observed, however, that in this, as in other parishes in similar circumstances, many of the Dissenters, as well as some connected with the Established Church, have not registered the births of their children. Hence the little value of the register as a statistical document in relation to the number of births in the parish. The same remark applies to any records which have been kept of marriages and burials, &c. The defects which exist in all our parishes, with few exceptions, in the system of registration, suggests the necessity of some legislative measure on the subject.

Ministers of the Parish.—The following is a list of the ministers of this parish, with the dates of their settlements and deaths, so far as it has been ascertained:—1. Robert Jenkins, deposed by the council for not praying for William and Mary, &c. September 7, 1689; 2. Alexander Dunning, ordained, 1691, died, 1719; 3. Alexander Moncrieffe, ordained, 1720, deposed, 1740; 4. Andrew Grey, D.D., * ordained, 1747, died, 1779; 5. William Duncan, ordained, 1780, died, 1809; 6. David Duncan, ordained, 1809. From a small document, entitled *Some Notices of the Family of Moncrieffe of that Ilk, and its branches in Perthshire*, furnished to the author by Mr Rowand, keeper of the Theological Library, Edinburgh, it would appear that one of the numerous branches

* Author of a valuable work on the Parables.

of the family of Moncrieffe was the Moncrieffe of Culfargie, in this parish. Alexander Moncrieffe, deposed in 1740, and one of the fathers of the Secession; and his son, Matthew, the second minister of the Seceding congregation at Abernethy, belonged to this family, and were proprietors of Culfargie. It would appear, from the document adverted to, as well as from the presbytery books, that persons of the same name, and probably belonging to the same family, had been ministers of Abernethy before the Revolution.

The first of these was Archibald Moncrieffe, who, after receiving his education in England, returned to his native country, and became minister of Abernethy about 1579 or 1580. He appears to have taken an active part in the disputes of the times between the Court and the Church, and in general to have supported the Court party. In the act of the Secret Council for support of the Protestant religion in 1589, his elder brother and himself are both named as commissioners. He supported the King's measures, violent as they were, in the Provincial Assembly of Perth, in 1607. But this is not surprising, when it is observed that his two brothers-in-law, David Murray of Balgonie, and Sir George Auchinleck of Balmanno, were joint commissioners for the King, with Sir David Murray of Arngask, the comptroller. Being appointed to attend the meeting of Assembly, they contended, with most incessant violence, to carry a point the King had much at heart, viz. the appointment of bishops to be perpetual moderators of the Church courts. Mr Archibald Moncrieffe does not appear to have had fortitude to resist their influence. He was accused, besides, of aspiring to a bishoprick, and was for some time in the Court list for that situation, though he never obtained it. These facts are detailed in the manuscript copy of Calderwood's history, a much more complete and larger work than the printed book which bears his name. Mr Archibald Moncrieffe was also named by the Court party to be a member of the meeting, then called the "Privy Conference at the General Assembly of Perth in 1618 (a committee the same in substance with regard to the ecclesiastical assemblies which the Lords of the articles were with regard to the Parliament of Scotland); and although he does not appear to have attended, he was nominated one of the Court of High Commission in 1619. His father had acquired the property of the monastery of Elcho, which was in the vicinity, and, in 1601, Archibald Moncrieffe,

the minister of Abernethy, was appointed prior and commendator of that priory and monastery, with a right to the whole rents belonging thereto, which must have been considerable.

Archibald Moncrieffe married Margaret Auchinleck, the sister of Sir George Auchinleck of Balmanno, who was admitted a Lord of Session 14th February 1626. The fruits of this marriage were three sons and three daughters. His second son, George, was minister of Arngask, and afterwards represented the family. His eldest son, Archibald, was his heir, and also successor as minister of Abernethy. He succeeded his father about the year 1630, and married Barbara, eldest daughter of David Moncrieffe of Balcas-kie, one of six brothers who all belonged to the household of James VI. Archibald, the second of the name who was minister of Abernethy, lived till after 1662, as appears by a document of that date, in his own writing, in the possession of the late Sir Henry Moncrieffe of Wellwood.

Land-owners.—The greater part of the parish belongs to the following heritors, who are non-resident: The Right Honourable Earl of Mansfield, who is patron of the parish, and takes one of his titles from Balvaire; the Right Honourable Earl of Wemyss and March; Sir Thomas Moncrieffe of Moncrieffe, a branch of one of the most ancient families in Scotland, the genealogical accounts of which go back to the beginning of the twelfth century, and represent Ramerus de Moncrieffe as the founder, who lived between A. D. 1107 and 1124, and is said to have been keeper of the wardrobe in the family of King Alexander I. The principal resident heritors are, Peter Hay Paterson, Esq. of Carpow; Joseph Murray, Esq. of Ayton, formerly Craigmottie; James Ritchie, Esq. of Carey, &c. The feuars generally hold of Lord Douglas, and are numerous, the number of heritors at present on the roll being 78. Though the greater proportion of these occupy only from one to three acres, yet, from the conjoined value of their lands and houses in the village, the number of individuals in the parish who enjoy the political franchise under the Reform Bill is very large.

III.—POPULATION.

The return to Dr Webster, in 1755, was	1490
1792,	1415
1831,	1776
1841,	1915

It appears from the census of 1841, compared with that of 1831, that there has been an increase in the population to the ex-

tent of 139. This increase may be ascribed to the recent accession made to the villages of Glenfoot and Abernethy; but chiefly to the establishment of a bleachfield at Clunie, in the eastern part of the parish. Of the population about 1100 reside in the villages of Abernethy, Glenfoot, and Aberargie, and the remainder are scattered over the landward part of the parish, which is extensive.

The comparative state of the population, &c. in 1831 and 1841 is exhibited in the following certified extract :

Population of Abernethy parish in 1841 :

	Inhab.	Houses.	Uninhab.	Build.	Males.	Females.	Total.
County Perth, Abernethy parish (part),	316		20	1	855	907	1762
County Fife, Abernethy parish (part),			1	0	78	75	153
Total of parish,	348		21	1	933	982	1915

Population in 1831.

County Perth, Abernethy parish (part),	296		11	2	747	865	1612
County Fife, Abernethy parish (part),			0	0	84	90	164
Total of parish,	324		11	2	831	945	1776

In the villages by far the greater proportion of the inhabitants, both male and female, are employed in weaving linen yarn. During the fishing season on the Earn and Tay about 70 individuals are engaged in the salmon-fishery, a great proportion of whom have recourse to the loom during the winter months.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—There is no accurate survey of the parish, but the total number of acres, as nearly as can be ascertained, may be 7030, or thereby, which may be classed or subdivided as follows :

1st, The north division, or low ground of the parish, forming the lowest part of the fertile and beautiful vale of Stratherne, may contain one-third of the whole, or 2568 acres, the produce and value of which may be thus stated :

528	acres in wheat, at 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ quarters per acre, = 1848 quarters, at	L.4580	0	0
	L.2, 10s. per quarter,			
428	in barley, at 5 do. do. = 2140 do. at	3049	10	0
	L.1, 8s. 6d. per do.			
428	in oats, at 5 do. do. = 2140 do. at	2407	10	0
	L.1, 2s. 6d. per do.			
300	in beans, at 3 do. do. = 900 do. at	1330	0	0
	L.1, 10s. per do.			
250	in potatoes, at L.10 per acre,	2500	0	0

128 acres in turnips, at L.6 per acre,	L.768	0	0
128 in fallow,			
378 in grass, at L.4 per acre,	1512	0	0
<u>2568</u>	<u>L.16167</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

2d, The high ground, or hilly ground, forming part of the Ochil range, comprises the remaining two-thirds, and contains 4460 acres, divided thus:

Arable,	2660	acres.
Permanent pasture,	950	
Under plantation,	850	
<u>Total,</u>	<u>4460</u>	

Of these, the arable may be classed as follows:

740 acres in oats, at 3¼ quarters per acre, at L.1 per quarter,	L.2590	0	0
600 in barley, at 3 do. do. at L1, 5s. per do.	2250	0	0
250 in turnips, at L.4 per acre,	1000	0	0
220 in potatoes, at L.9 per do.	1980	0	0
350 in hay, at L.3 per do.	1050	0	0
500 in pasture, at L.1 per do.	500	0	0
<u>2660 acres arable,</u>	<u>Value,</u>	<u>L.9370</u>	<u>0</u>
950 acres permanent pasture, at 5s. per acre,		<u>L.237</u>	<u>10</u>
850 under plantation, new and making, no returns.			
Total acres of high ground, 4460	value, L.	9607	10
Do. do low ground, 2568	do.	16167	0
<u>Total acres in parish, 7028</u>	<u>Total value,</u>	<u>L.25774</u>	<u>10</u>
To this add value of fisheries and orchards,		500	0

Total value of gross produce of parish, after deducting seed, L.26,274 10 0

There is no district in which there is a better specimen of agricultural operations, conducted on the most improved principles of cropping and cultivation, than the parish of Abernethy, and particularly that part of it which stretches along the rivers Earn and Tay.

The valued rent of the parish is L.8884, 15s. 1d. Scots.

The present average rental of the low land may be from L.2, 10s. to L.3, 15s. per acre; of high land, from L. 1 to L. 1, 15s. per acre. Some of the burgh acres are rented so high as L.5, 5s. per acre.

The annual rental of the fishings on Earn and Tay, belonging to the parish of Abernethy, does not, during the present year, exceed L.250 Sterling; but in some preceding years, they have brought a much higher rent. It is supposed that the Carpow fishings have been greatly injured by the operations in progress for clearing and widening the channel of the Tay. The preceding statements in relation to agricultural statistics of the parish have been drawn from materials furnished by an intelligent farmer in the parish, Mr David Barclay, tenant of Balgonie.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There are in the parish, besides Abernethy, which is a burgh of barony holding of Lord Douglas, two villages, Aberargie, and Glenfoot. Two markets are held at Abernethy in the course of the year, but for a considerable period few have resorted to them, and little business has been done. A penny-post office was established at Abernethy about two years ago, but our nearest regular post-offices are at Newburgh and Bridge of Earn. The great turnpike road from Perth to Edinburgh, passing through the romantic scenery of Glenfarg, is for a considerable way in this parish. The other roads in the district are upheld by statute labour, and one of these is the line of road leading from Perth to Cupar, Fife. In this line there has been erected since the last Statistical Account was published, a new bridge over the Farg, where it was much needed.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church, which was built in 1802, is conveniently situated, and although externally it be a plain and unadorned edifice, is very substantial and commodious. It contains about 600 sittings, and would not be nearly sufficient for the population if a considerable proportion of the people who have no right to seats in the parish church, did not find accommodation in the Dissenting meeting-house.

According to the census of the parish, given in the Statistical Account of 1792, when the whole population amounted to 1415, 628 were connected with the Establishment, and 787 with the Secession congregation. Since that period the population has greatly increased, and a very considerable majority of the people are now connected with the Establishment. Amidst all the influences which have been at work to agitate the public mind, and to widen the unhappy breach which exists between the Church of Scotland and Dissenters, it is gratifying to be enabled to state, that the ministers of the different congregations in this parish have continued to live in harmony and friendship.

The manse was built in 1774, and, though very inferior in accommodation to many built at a subsequent period, is sufficiently comfortable.

The present stipend is 17 chalders of victual, half meal half barley, and L.8, 6s. 8d. is the allowance for communion element money. The glebe does not exceed the legal minimum extent of four acres, and might bring a rent of about L.3 per acre.

Education.—Some years ago, the heritors erected a large and

commodious school-house and school-room, and provided a garden for the schoolmaster. The present incumbent, who is now old and infirm, has withdrawn from teaching, and his place has, for some years, been filled by a teacher selected by the minister and some of the heritors, who provide a salary in addition to the school fees. The average number of scholars attending the parochial school for the last three years has been about 80; and the school fees may amount to from L.20 to L.25 per annum.

The rates of fees are, 2s., 2s. 6d., and 3s. for the ordinary and elementary branches of education; and 5s. for Latin, book-keeping, practical mathematics, &c.

The schoolmaster retains all the fixed emoluments, which consist of the maximum salary, and the interest of L.190, being a sum mortified by the Earl of Mansfield for behoof of the parish teacher. He has besides the perquisites as session-clerk, which may amount to L.10 per annum.

Besides the parochial school, and a school in Abernethy connected with the Secession congregation, there is a third school in the village of Aberargie, under the patronage and superintendence of Joseph Murray, Esq. of Ayton, who gives the teacher selected by him, besides the fees, an annual salary, with a school-room and house. The teacher is a member of the Established Church, and has his school annually examined by the presbytery. In this school, the average attendance may be about 60, and here, as in the parochial school, the most approved modes of tuition are introduced. The heritors of the parish of Abernethy are entitled to much praise for the sacrifices and exertions they have made for the education of the people, and the fault is with parents themselves if they neglect the ample provisions made for the instruction of their children.

There are Sabbath evening schools both at Abernethy and Aberargie, conducted by the teachers and assistants, and under the superintendence of the parish minister. Libraries are connected with these schools, from which books, chiefly of a religious character, are circulated among the children attending the schools, farm-servants, and other classes of the population.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of paupers on the roll for the last three years is 33, and the allowance given to each individual varies from 2s. 6d. to 9s. per month. Additions, however, are occasionally made to these allowances in cases of distress, &c. Relief is also sometimes given to persons who are

not on the list of regular paupers. The sources of revenue are the collections at the church doors, and the rents of lands mortgaged for behoof of the poor, and under the administration of the kirk-session. The average annual revenue does not exceed L.85 Sterling. Hitherto there has been no assessment in the parish; but as the regular income has not for some years been found sufficient for meeting the increasing wants and numbers of the poor, it has been necessary to make up the deficiency by obtaining voluntary donations from the principal heritors, who, much to their credit, have not resisted the appeals made to their benevolence.

There was a period when the Dissenting congregation contributed largely by their collections to the relief of the poor in the parish. It is stated in the last Statistical Account to the amount of L.20 Sterling; but it is to be regretted, that, for some years, this source of charity has been almost entirely closed by the difficulties felt in raising the stipend payable to the ministers.

Alehouses.—There are within the limits of the parish five houses licensed to retail spirits. This number may not be considered large when compared with that of other parishes; but it is more than sufficient for all purposes of trade and good morals.

Much of the poverty and misery existing in our parishes is to be traced to the increasing use of ardent spirits. Any measure calculated to check an evil so inconsistent with the temporal and spiritual interests of the people, is deserving of the countenance and support of all who would desire to see an amelioration in their condition.

Ferries.—There are two stations on the river Earn where passage-boats are provided, the one at Cary, little used, and the other at Ferryfield, on the estate of Carpow, near the junction of the Earne with the Tay. There are passage-boats daily plying betwixt Ferryfield and the Carse of Gowrie, where there is now a good pier and landing-place, on the property of Sir John Richardson of Pitfour. If low-water piers were erected at Ferryfield and the opposite side of the Tay, it would be a great addition to the means of intercourse, and would be most beneficial to the public.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

At the time when the last Statistical report of the parish was drawn up by the father of the writer of this article, there were few districts in Scotland which furnished a more favourable specimen of the state of agriculture. Since that period, the parish has kept

pace with the progress of improvement. The new system of draining, &c. has been generally adopted with much benefit; and for this mode of improvement there are now great facilities in a brick and tile work which has recently commenced at Ferryfield, on the estate of Carpow. In consequence of the division of two commonties, which was effected some years ago, a considerable addition has been made to the number of acres in plantation, or under cultivation.

December 1842.

PARISH OF DRON.

PRESBYTERY OF PERTH, SYNOD OF PERTH AND STIRLING.

THE REV. PATRICK J. MACFARLANE, A. M., M. D.,
MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name, Extent, &c.—THE name *Dronn*, in the Gaelic language, is said to signify a *ridge* or *projection*, a *hunch* or *bunch*, which is descriptive of the situation of that part of the parish where the church and manse are placed. The parish is situated about a mile south of the river Earn, and five miles south-east of the town of Perth. It extends in length from east to west between three and four miles, including a narrow strip of the lands of Pitkeathly, in Dumbarny parish, which intersects it; and in breadth from north to south, about three miles. The principal and lower part stretches, in a sloping position, along the bottom of the Ochil hills, which form the southern boundary of the rich and beautiful vale of Strathearn, and presents to the view of the traveller passing along the great road which leads from Perth to Kinghorn and the Queensferry, a very agreeable prospect of well-cultivated and inclosed fields. The face of the hills here is generally smooth and regular, uniformly green, and adorned with strips and clumps of plantation. Some are covered with an extensive wood of firs, birch, ash, &c. which at once ornaments the prospect and enriches the country. A few farms, more extensive than rich, occupy the higher part of the parish, being situated on the summit of the Ochil hills.