

PARISH OF ARBIRLOT.

PRESBYTERY OF ARBROATH, SYNOD OF ANGUS AND MEARNES.

THE REV. THOMAS GUTHRIE, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name, Extent, &c.—ARBIRLOT seems to be a contraction of Aberelliot, the ancient name of this parish, which refers to the circumstance, that the river Elliot here enters the sea. The parish is about 4 miles long and 3 broad, and is bounded on the south by the sea; on the east by the parish of Arbroath; on the west by the parish of Panbride; and on the north by the parishes of St Vigeans and Carmyllie.

Topographical Appearances.—A considerable portion of the parish consists of what may be called flat land, and the rest has a gradual elevation, not attaining such an altitude as to deserve being called hilly. The extent of sea coast is between two and three miles; and along its whole length, the shore is flat and sandy, affording excellent bathing ground to considerable numbers, who come here during the bathing season.

Hydrography.—There is a chalybeate spring in the parish, of some little celebrity, though it is not now so much frequented as formerly. The Elliot is a stream which rises in Dilty Moss in the parish of Carmyllie; from thence it pursues a south-easterly course, and after being joined by two or three smaller streams, it falls into the sea in the east part of the parish.

Mineralogy, &c.—The strata dip to the south; the rocks are red sandstone and trap, containing considerable quantities of rock-crystal. The soil, though on some farms clayey, generally consists of a light rich loam lying on gravel; this applies to the lower parts of the parish. In the higher and northern parts again, the soil is wet and moorish; and on the borders of Carmyllie, which bounds the parish on the north, there is a considerable extent of land still in a state of muir.

Since the erection of some dam dikes, almost no salmon have been found in the Elliot. The only fish now caught in that stream

are common river trouts, and, though these are not numerous, they are large.

Plantations.—There is very little wood in the parish. The grounds of Kelly, which were at one time so highly ornamented with beautiful trees, are now almost bare. There is one splendid tree still remaining beside the old castle; it is a plain-leaved holly of great size, and believed to be of great age.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Land-owner.—Lord Panmure is sole proprietor of the parish.

Parochial Registers.—The oldest parochial register begins about the year 1640.

Antiquities.—The castle of Kelly, which stands upon a high rock that rises from the bed of the Elliot, had been at one time a place of considerable strength, and is a very ancient building. It is now uninhabited, though it cannot be said to be in a state of ruin. Before it came into the possession of the Panmure family, it belonged to the Irvines of Drum. These Irvines succeeded a family of the name of Ochterlony, and, according to tradition, it was by one of the Ochterlonies, a proprietor of Kelly, that the ancient abbey of Arbrogath was burned at some period prior to the Reformation.

Arrow heads made of flint,—or elf-arrows, as they are called, have been found, in considerable numbers, in the parish.

Modern Buildings.—The only mansion-house in the parish is the modern house of Kelly, which stands near to the old castle.

On the Elliot, there are three meal mills, and one on a stream which is the boundary between Arbirlot and Panbride. There is also a flax mill upon the Elliot, and close by the mouth of this stream, at a place called Wormy-hills, there is a work for bleaching yarns.

III.—POPULATION.

In the year 1755, the population was	865
1790,	1055
1821,	1062
1831,	1026

Of these 1026, there were 62 males engaged in weaving, and perhaps as many females.

There is one blind person in the parish.

Character of the People.—On this head, it is enough to observe, that there are few country parishes where the Sabbath is so well, and none, to the writer's knowledge, where it is better, observed. Poaching does not prevail. Many years ago, smuggling of foreign goods was carried on to a considerable extent, but now there is

no such thing. It is said that the foreign merchants did not receive very regular remittances, and that this, with the low price of whisky, and establishment of the coast guard, stopped the trade of smuggling on the east coast of Scotland.

During the last three years there were two illegitimate births in the parish.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—In this parish there are about 4200 acres either cultivated or occasionally under tillage; about 800 acres which have never been cultivated, and altogether about 50 acres under wood.

Rent of Land.—The average rent of arable land per acre is about 18s.; of grazing per ox for the year, L. 3; of pasture for sheep, 10s. The rate of labour for farm-servants per year is about L. 20; for day-labourers, men, 1s. 6d., and women, 8d.; for artisans per day, 2s.

The general duration of leases is nineteen years. About one-third of the leases are still for life, as they all were at one time. These liferents account for the low average rent of land in this parish.

Produce.—The average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish is

About 2000 bolls of wheat,	L. 3000
2658 barley,	3189
5769 oats,	5144
320 peas and beans,	240
27 rye,	16
1200 potatoes,	1224
325 acres turnips,	1200
863 hay,	1089
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	L. 15,102

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-town, Means of Communication, &c.—Arbroath, the suburbs of which reach almost to the east end of the parish, is the market-town. There are two small villages in the parish, one of them at the church, the other called Bonnyton, about two miles west of it. In this parish there are four or five miles of turnpike road between Arbroath and Dundee, on which three or four coaches run daily.

Ecclesiastical State.—The situation of the parish church, which is a very handsome building, is convenient for the greater part of the parishioners. The church was rebuilt about three years ago, when nearly 200 additional sittings were provided. It affords accommodation for 639 people, but contains no free sittings. The

old church was seated at the expense of the farmers, and its seats being used for the new one, the farmers consider themselves proprietors of the seats, and entitled to charge rent for the same; and rents some of them do charge. The aisle, which contains most of the additional sittings mentioned above, was built at the expense of the kirk-session, who have found in it a very profitable investment of their money.

The manse is more than a hundred years old, and is in a very bad state; but steps have been taken towards the erection of a new one. The number of acres in the glebe is 4, and the minister receives L. 20 Scots in lieu of two acres of grass. The stipend, when grain is L. 1 per boll, is about L. 197, of which there is more than L. 150 of money.

All the families in the parish belong to the Established Church with the exception of 2; and there are only 9 communicants in the parish who belong to dissenting bodies. The services in the Established Church are well attended. The inhabitants are a church-going people; and the average number communicating, each year, is fully 500; of this number, between 40 and 50 belong to a district of the parish of St Vigeans, the inhabitants of which attend the church of Arbirlot, being separated by this parish from their own.

Though there was at one time a society for religious purposes in the parish, there is none at present; but steps have been taken by the presbytery of Arbroath to establish such in all the parishes within its bounds.

Education.—There are 3 schools in the parish;—one of these, the parochial school; and the other two, unendowed schools, one of which is kept by a female.

The parochial teacher has the maximum salary, and 8 bolls of meal, and the interest of L. 100 in addition. He has a good garden and an excellent house containing five rooms. His fees may amount to L. 15 a year.

There are 2 married men and 1 woman in the parish who cannot read; none of them are natives of this parish.

There are 4 Sabbath schools in the parish;—one of these is taught by the minister, and is in summer attended by about 70 or 80 persons; the other three are planted in different parts of the parish, are managed by 18 teachers, and attended by about 170 scholars.

Library.—About four years ago, a parochial library was formed:

it is kept in the manse, contains between 400 and 500 volumes, and is supported by nearly 100 subscribers, who pay 1s. 6d. or 2s. yearly.

Savings Bank.—About two years ago, a Savings bank was established. Four respectable farmers are directors, along with the minister, who is the manager. Last year the deposits amounted to above L. 230, and they have increased fully L. 100 in the course of the last twelvemonths.

Inns.—About two years ago, there were 2 inns in the parish, but now there is only 1.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 16, and the average sum allotted to each is between 4s. and 5s. The annual amount of contributions for their relief, taking the average of the last five years, is L. 55 from church collections, and L. 24 from other sources, such as seat rents of the aisle, interest of capital, payments for mortcloth, &c. There is no other mode of procuring funds for the poor than those mentioned, and no other is needed; for L. 15 or L. 20 have been saved yearly for some few years back. The poor's fund is the last shift with the poor; and nothing but hard necessity makes them go upon it.

Fairs.—There is a fair held in the parish, but it is a very trifling one.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

At the time of the former Statistical Account (1791, when the population was fully larger than at present,) the yearly amount of funds for the poor was about L. 35; and now it is about L. 80. At the time of the former Statistical Account, there was only 1 school in the parish, and now there are 3 week-day and 4 Sabbath day schools. At the time of the former Statistical Account, there were 4 houses in the parish where ale and spirits were sold, and now there is only 1.

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