

PARISH OF KIRKDEN.*

PRESBYTERY OF ARBROATH, SYNOD OF ANGUS AND MEARNS.

THE REV. DAVID CARRUTHERS, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THIS parish, which is landward, was anciently called *Idvie*, owing to the glebe being situated in the barony of *Idvies*,—with the etymology of which vocable we are not acquainted. Its modern name, however, is *Kirkden*—evidently derived from the fact of the church being placed in a sort of dell or valley, which depressions are termed *dens* in this quarter.

Extent and Boundaries.—In length from east to west, it measures nearly 7 miles; its greatest breadth is not more than 2; at one part, within a mile east of the church, it does not exceed a stone-cast in width; and its whole superficies is nearly 7 square miles. It is bounded on the north, by *Rescobie* and *Guthrie*; on the south, by *Carmylie*; by *Kinnell* and *Inverkeillor*, on the east; and by *Dunnichen*, on the west.

Topographical Appearances.—The parish is of an irregular figure, but its surface, though gently undulated, is comparatively level, with the exception of a considerable ascent towards the south, formed by the termination of the *Sidlaw Hills*. From this elevation, the eye ranges over a rich and extensive panorama. Immediately around, are the mansions, woods, and lawns of many of the country gentlemen; to the west, is the fertile and picturesque valley of *Strathmore*, on the back ground of which are the aspiring summits and grand rugged passes of the *Grampian mountains*; and to the east, are the towns, and bays, and headlands, along the coast.

Meteorology, &c.—The prevailing wind is from the east, which, during the months of spring, carries dense aqueous vapours, here termed *eastern haars*, exhaled from the *German Ocean*. No particular disease can be said to prevail.

* Drawn up by a nephew of the present incumbent.

Hydrography.—At the junction of the parishes of Kirkden and Dunnichen, is a perennial well of a chalybeate nature, to which there seems to have been assigned extraordinary virtues in the curing of swellings and ulcers, even “after the applications of several physicians had proved ineffectual.” The small river Vinny, rising in the marsh or mire of Lower, in the parish and neighbourhood of Forfar, washes the northern boundary of this parish for more than four miles; it then enters the parish, and is shortly afterwards joined by the Lunan, when they form together a considerable stream called Lunan Water, which falls into the bay of that name near Redhead. From the marshy nature of the Vinny’s origin and course, an immense body of water is accumulated in rainy weather, and poured down like a mountain torrent, inundating the lower lands through which it flows. Both the Vinny and Lunan are excellent trouting streams, and the latter contains pike, owing to the circumstance of its rising out of the loch of Restennet, and communicating with the lakes of Rescobie and Balgavies, which abound with that species of fish; a few salmon ascend it in the spawning season, which commences in the middle of September, and ends about a month thereafter.

*Geology and Mineralogy.**—The greater part of this parish rests upon a hard grey sandstone formation, similar to that which stretches through the valley of Strathmore. It seldom, however, presents itself in this neighbourhood, unless where artificial excavations or ravines, formed by the action of water, have laid it open. Hard masses of indurated clay are found to alternate; but I am not aware that any remains of the animal or vegetable kingdoms have been discovered in these strata, although several indistinct impressions of the latter kind are occasionally manifested. Trap rocks exist in the southern extremity of the parish, which are evidently a continuation of the Sidlaw Hills; and, as the plains of the adjacent sandstone strata possess a coinciding direction, so it seems highly probable that both received their present dip and position from the same internal convulsion. These strata vary in their dip from 10° to 20° , inclining to the east and south-east.

Boulders.—Irregular masses of primitive rocks of large dimensions are frequently met with in the recently cultivated portions of the parish. These chiefly consist of mica-slate, greenstone, gra-

* For a complete account on this head, see the report of the neighbouring parish of Dunnichen, drawn up by the Rev. James Headrick, whose acquaintance with this branch of science is universally known.

nite, and gneiss. They are all considerably attritured, and whether their transportation to their present locality is to be attributed to the Noachian deluge, or to whatever cause, the agency must have been tremendous. They are fully twenty miles distant from the Grampians, where they abound *in situ*, and in the interval there are very bold acclivities, which could not fail to impede their transference thither. There are very distinct traces of glacier action throughout the valleys of the Viny and the Lunan. The *moraines* are exceedingly well marked.

Soil, &c.—The soil being the debris resulting from the disintegration of our rocks, is chiefly a friable clay, sometimes mixed with gravel and arenaceous deposits. It is naturally cold and shallow, but owing to judicious tillage, and the importation of marl, which is abundant in the neighbouring lakes, it has of late been greatly improved, and is now capable of bearing every sort of crop.

Quarries.—There are two excellent freestone quarries wrought, as occasion requires,—which afford employment to a considerable number of men.

Botany.—There is abundance of plantation in many parts of this parish, but little or no natural wood. The soil, when left uncultivated, seems disposed to produce whins, broom, fern, and heather. That extensive natural forests, at one time, however, waved over this county, is abundantly vouched for by tradition.

Among the plants seemingly indigenous, or now spontaneously produced by the soil, we find, besides the more ordinary kinds, the *Orobus sylvaticus*, *Solanum Dulcamara*, *Radiola millegrana*, *Chelidonium majus*, *Dipsacus sylvestris*, *Veronica Beccabunga*, *Cistus helianthemum*, *Trifolium ornithopodioides*, *T. striatum*, *T. campestre*, the latter often mistaken for *T. pratense*. Among the habitats of marshy districts and woods, are found—*Menyanthes trifoliata*, *Nuphar lutea*, and occasionally *Nymphaea alba*, *Cicuta virosa*, *Subularia aquatica*, *Typha latifolia*, &c. besides three species of *Orehis*, viz. *viridis*, *albida*, and *conopsea*. The poisonous *Atropa Belladonna* and *Digitalis purpurea* are abundant; and Flora at the proper season unfolds on the banks of rivulets and ravines, a rich display of varied garniture of the classes *geranium*, *avens*, *anemonies*, &c. Wild mustard, *Sinapis arvensis*, is plentiful on the cultivated lands, and proves highly pernicious to the crops.

Zoology.—The breed of cattle reared here is superior, namely, the Galloway or polled kind; although many people, not knowing whence the aborigines were imported, ignorantly denominate them the *Angus breed*.

It cannot be said that we have any variety of birds or quadrupeds peculiar to this district.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Land-owners.—The only heritors of the parish are, Henry Baxter, Esq. of Idvies; * Thomas Gardyne, Esq. of Middleton; † Alexander Lyell, Esq. of Gardyne; James Mudie, Esq. of Pitmuies; and John Watt, Esq. of Kinneries. The second and third mentioned gentlemen are natives of the parish, and dwell here; the fourth also resides in it; and the first did so occasionally, at a handsome cottage erected on his estate.

Parochial Registers.—A register of parochial matters, from the year 1650 to 1690, after having been lost for a long while, was accidentally discovered by the predecessor of the present incumbent; one of the leaves having been casually sent from a shop in the neighbourhood. From the latter date to 1735, no records are known to exist; but they have since been regularly preserved to the present time.

Antiquities.—Opposite the mansion-house of Pitmuies, close by the turnpike road, there is an obelisk which has obviously been shortened by violence, or the abrasive influence of time, but is yet five feet high, with some mutilated hieroglyphics on it. It is niched into a large stone, and is supposed to have been erected in the year 1010, by Malcolm II. upon the defeat of the Danes. About fifty years ago, a tumulus was opened in the immediate vicinity of the stone in question, and several urns containing ashes of the dead were discovered; and in the plain adjoining, nearly a score of stone coffins, placed laterally, were dug up, each containing an entire human skeleton. Stone coffins were recently discovered in the farm of Bractullo, containing human bones, with strings of beads apparently made of charred wood.

There are, in the parish, two artificial mounds of a conical figure, termed *laws*, from the circumstance of criminals having been executed there during the feudal times. Both are at present beautifully ornamented with trees. One of them named Bractullo (Bractie law) is on the estate of Idvies; the other, called the Gallows-hill, is on the lands of Gardyne.

Ancient Buildings.—The Castle of Gardyne is a very fine specimen of an old baronial residence, resembling in its style of ar-

* Mr Baxter having lately died, his affairs are conducted by his trustees, in behoof of his two daughters.

† Mr Gardyne died January 1841, leaving his nephew, Major William Bruce, who has assumed the surname of Gardyne, heir to his landed property.

chitecture the famous Castle of Glammis. It is luxuriantly embosomed in trees, on the precipitous bank of a beautiful ravine, which is enlivened by a murmuring stream of water.

Modern Buildings.—The mansion-houses of Pitmuies and Middleton are comparatively modern structures. They are situated on a plain near the banks of the Vinny, and the surrounding woods and lawns are as tastefully disposed as the equality of the ground will admit of.

III.—POPULATION.

In 1755, the number of population was	563
1790,	627
1801,	674
1811,	739
1821,	813
1831,	1039
1836,	1137*
1841,	1437

Causes of increase.—The chief cause of augmentation is evidently the increasing speculation in manufactures, which has recently induced operatives to feu houses, at a cheap rate, on the estate of Middleton. The village, called Friockheim, has, in consequence, a population of 803.

Exclusive of hamlets, or *cottons* (cot-towns), according to the orthography of the district, this is the only village in the parish; hence, when its complement of inhabitants is deducted from the total population, the remaining 537 may be said to reside in the rural parts.

The births for the last twelve years averaged 32 annually. There is no register of deaths kept; but the marriages during that time have been at the rate of 11 yearly.

Under 15 years of age,	421 persons.
Between 15 and 30,	327
30 and 50,	211
50 and 70,	143
Upwards of 70,	35
Total,	1137

There are no individuals or families in this parish who can properly be said to be of independent fortune, except the heritors formerly mentioned, all of whom are proprietors of land to the yearly value of L.200 and upwards.

The number of bachelors and of widowers above fifty years of age, is about 16; and of unmarried women upwards of 45, 21.

There are 266 families in the parish, and the average number

* The census of 1836 was taken under the superintendance of the kirk-session. Since the year 1836, the population has greatly increased, especially in the village of Friockheim.

of children in each family is from 4 to 5. There are no houses uninhabited, with the exception of a few which are in a ruinous state, and some others in the course of being built.

The unmarried agricultural male servants live together in small houses, called *bothies*, or sheds of one apartment each, where they cook their own victuals, and act in every respect as their own servants. The bad effects of this kind of residence on the morals of the class of the people here alluded to, are justly described in other parts of this work.

The people in general are very inoffensive, honest, and industrious, and seem tolerably contented with their circumstances. They possess minds of native vigour and sagacity. They are punctual in attending church, and pay great respect to the ordinances of religion.

Poaching is practised to some extent; but smuggling is now entirely abandoned.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture and Rural Economy.—The superficial contents of the parish are about 4514 imperial acres; and all are under cultivation excepting 1402, the greater part of which is planted. The remainder, consisting of 95 acres or thereby, is unworthy of cultivation, and lies constantly waste or in pasture. The kinds of trees planted are, oak, ash, elm, plane, and beech, with larch, spruce, and occasionally silver firs to nurse. One-fourth of the whole is hard-wood. Great attention is paid to these plantations, by scientific thinning and pruning, &c. The eastern division of the parish is richly ornamented with trees of various sorts, some of which have attained a considerable magnitude and age; and the fields on the estate of Idvies, to the west, are individually fringed with rows of trees, and in many places embellished with clumps of thriving plantations, which, notwithstanding the presence of stone enclosures, impart a highly tasteful aspect.

Rent of Land.—The land has been greatly improved of late, and its value has proportionally increased. This is evident from the fact of 15s. per acre having been the average rate at which the ground was let in lease, not more than forty years ago, whereas the average rate is fully twice that sum now. The grazing of an ox or cow costs about L.2 for the season.

Husbandry.—The agriculturists of this parish and of the whole of Angus have long been famous for their superior notions of tillage; although it were perhaps difficult to determine the speciali-

ties wherein they excel. The four or five shift rotation is employed, and every species of crop is raised to good advantage. The estate of Idvies has, within the last forty years, been entirely reclaimed, from a bleak moor, to a warm and fertile condition, by judicious draining and planting, &c. Leases commonly extend to nineteen years. The farm-buildings are in general very good, and the fences, which are of stone, are not bad; but the paucity of hedges, notwithstanding trees are seldom absent, greatly impedes that luxuriance and warmth which the country would otherwise assume. The farmers, however, prefer the stone dikes, not only because they are more cheaply and expeditiously brought to perfection, on account of their easy access to material; but because hedges harbour birds, which destroy the crops.

Raw Produce.—The following is a general estimate of the gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish. Of course it fluctuates annually.

1240 acres of corn and grain of all kinds, valued at an average of L.7 per acre,	L.8680	0	0
465 acres of turnips, &c. L.10 per acre,	4650	0	0
465 do. of hay at L.6 per do.	2790	0	0
792 do. of potatoes at L.12 per do.	9504	0	0
150 do. summer fallow at			
1402 do. uncultivated and wooded pasture at 5s. per acre,	247	0	0
Average sales of wood L.120 per annum,	120	0	0
Dairy produce,	899	10	0
Sale of live stock,	1240	0	0
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	L.27,630	10	0

Manufactures.—This parish contains about 780 manufacturing operatives, employed in spinning flax and weaving Osnaburgh cloth, two-thirds of whom are females, and of these nearly four-fifths are weavers on the hand-loom. This resource makes female farm-servants very independent in their own eyes, because the equally lucrative employment of the loom or mill is at their acceptance.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Towns, &c.—Arbroath and Forfar, the nearest market-places, are respectively five miles distant from the eastern and western extremities of the parish.

The nearest Post-Offices are those of Forfar and Arbroath. Application was made to Government a few years ago, to establish a letter-carrier between Forfar and Arbroath *via* Letham, but the solicitation was rejected; although in all likelihood, no loss would have been sustained thereby; as a person has, for a number of years, made a very good livelihood by undertaking on his own account the post between Forfar and Letham.

Roads.—There are no toll roads in this parish, except near the middle, where the Arbroath and Forfar one occurs for about two miles and a-half. The road is a superior one, and is very convenient for a considerable portion of the parish. Roads, however, are numerous but not very good; one of them connects Dundee and Brechin, and another Forfar and Arbroath.

Rail-roads.—A railway, which intersects the eastern division of this parish, was lately opened between Forfar and Arbroath, a distance of fifteen miles. It communicates with another, which was opened about the same time betwixt the last-mentioned town and Dundee, and proceeds thence over the Sidlaw Hills and along Strathmore to Glamis, within five miles of Forfar.

Ecclesiastical State.—The form of the parish is not unlike that of a pair of spectacles: and the church is placed in the least populous division, and within 100 yards of its boundary.

The large and growing village of Friockheim is in the other division, and fully five miles distant. Under these circumstances, the Presbytery, aided by the Church Extension Committee, erected a church about four years ago, for the convenience of the above village and neighbourhood, and the General Assembly granted a constitution, and provided that a section of the parish of Kirkden be disjoined, *quoad spiritualia*, and assigned to the new church as a parish ecclesiastical. The number of sittings in the church is 397,* eighteen inches each; but as the accommodation is not adequate to the demand, it is to be hoped that means may soon be taken to correct this. The sittings are let to parishioners, with the exception of ten set apart, rent free, for the poor of the district. The prices at which they are let are as follows: 25 at 2s.; 240 at 1s. 6d., and 122 at 1s per annum.

The total population of the district attached to the church amounts to 1020: of these, by far the greater proportion resides in the village, and none are farther removed than three miles.

A manse has also been erected for the clergyman.

The present parish church of Kirkden was built on the site of the old one in 1825, shortly after the induction of the present incumbent. It affords accommodation for 525 sitters, allowing each eighteen inches. Thirty individual sittings are set apart for the benefit of the poor. At the same date, the manse was renovated and modernized, and commodious new offices were built; an excellent new garden was also made and surrounded with a high

* The church has since been enlarged, so as to accommodate about 500 sitters.

stone and lime wall for espalier fruit trees, and the whole is well stored with every variety of garden produce.

The glebe, consisting of about 7 acres, is chiefly loamy, and lies around the manse, which is close by the church. It has been much improved of late,—neatly enclosed, by the present incumbent, with stone fences, and might be let at L.24 per annum.

The stipend is one of those requiring aid from Government, the teinds being exhausted. The whole amount of what the heritors pay in money is L.718, 6s. 3½d. Scots, besides in victual, 32 bolls, 3 firlots, 3 pecks, 1 lippie meal; and 5 bolls, 3½ lippies bear; and L.1 Sterling, in lieu of a moor which is planted. From the above is deducted L.8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. Thus in order to make up the stipend to L.150 per annum, the sum of L.67, 11s. 10d. Sterling is annually received from the Exchequer.

A catechetical meeting is held by the clergyman every Sabbath evening in the school-room, and is well attended both by young and old. He has been also in the habit of holding prayer and missionary meetings weekly in the same place.

All the people in the parish belong to the Established Church, excepting fifty of several Dissenting denominations. The church is well attended, not only by the parishioners but by a number of the inhabitants of Letham, who, owing to proximity, prefer it to their own parish church. Owing, however, to the parish of Friockheim having been entirely taken from this, the church of Kirkden is perhaps now unnecessarily large, the population being reduced to about 500, and several families being still four miles distant. Prior to the division of this parish, the communicants averaged upwards of 400 on every occasion of a sacrament; and the annual collections L.30; of course both are now proportionally decreased.

Education.—Besides the parish school, there is one supported by subscription in the village of Friockheim. All the branches usually taught in parish schools are taught in both, if requested, by able and experienced teachers. The parochial schoolmaster has the legal accommodation, which is certainly very paltry, and receives an annual salary of L. 25, 13s. 10d., besides about L. 6 per annum for officiating as session-clerk.

The amount of fees is trifling, owing to the school being situated in the most awkward corner of the parish that could have been chosen for the convenience of pupils. The parish, however, is sufficiently accommodated in respect of education, by the various

schools in the neighbouring parishes. Notwithstanding the low rate of fees, it cannot be said that the people are sufficiently alive to the benefits of education. As soon as the majority of the operatives can speak of manufacture, and speculate on parliamentary proceedings, they have attained their *acme* of intellectual cultivation. The father allows his children to attend school until they can read the Bible; but an ordinary acquaintance with the elements of arithmetic, &c. is a luxury to be classed with the study of the dead languages, and is chiefly confined to the sons of the wealthy and comparatively independent.

Literature.—There is a parochial library, which owes its commencement to James Douglas, Esq. of Cavers, who presented 72 volumes for that purpose in 1827. It was some years ago increased by James Mudie, Esq. of Pitmuies. Its management is vested in the kirk-session, and the books are eagerly sought after by the parishioners. It is chiefly composed of religious books.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—At present, the number of paupers is 13, besides those who get occasional relief. Each at an average gets an allowance of L.5, 2s. annually. There are weekly collections at church, each averaging 11s. 6½d., which go towards their support. Besides, there belongs to them a sum of L.260,* which is at interest; and they have the proceeds of a few seat rents in the church. It is but right to mention that Miss Gardyne of Middleton, at her decease in 1831, bequeathed L.14 to the poor's fund, and her sister, Miss Grizel, left L.20 to the same charity.

Inns, Alehouses, &c.—The number of alehouses is six, but it cannot be said that the parishioners are at all addicted to inebriety. All the alehouses are in the *quoad sacra* parish of Friockheim.

Fuel.—Newcastle coal is the chief fuel used in this quarter; and Arbroath is the nearest harbour whence it can be procured. It usually costs about 14s. the cart-load of twelve *barrels*, exclusive of carriage; which latter will no doubt be considerably reduced by the opening of the railway formerly mentioned.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the date of the last Statistical Account, the appearance of this parish has been entirely changed. Old plantations have been cut away, and houses and fields of grain occupy their locali-

* This sum has been greatly drawn upon, and diminished of late years, by the increasing demands of an increasing pauperism.

ties: and thriving forests are now waving, where forty years ago there was nothing but heath and marshes. The state of agriculture has greatly advanced, although it is an indubitable fact that the land might be rendered still more productive by a more thorough draining and fencing. The treatment of the estate of Idvies in the west end of the parish has proved this to a demonstration.

Shelter is especially wanted in the centre of the parish, and were the fields regularly enclosed with hedge-rows, and forest trees planted, they would prove of signal benefit to the land. When the last Statistical report was written, there were comparatively few manufacturing operatives in this parish. The large village of Friockheim has since sprung up, and is almost entirely occupied by weavers and mill-spinners.

That agriculture and manufactures have greatly progressed cannot be denied, but whether the permanent position which the latter now occupies has redounded to the moral and religious well-being of the district, may be justly questioned.

Revised June 1840.