

PARISH OF KINGOLDRUM.

PRESBYTERY OF MEIGLE, SYNOD OF ANGUS AND MEARNS.

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name, &c.—THE parish is said to have derived its name from three Gaelic words, signifying *the head or junction of the burn of the Drums*.

Extent, &c.—The figure of the parish being very irregular, only an approximation to its extent can be given. It may be said to contain about 20 imperial square miles. It is bounded by the parishes of Kirriemuir and Cortachy on the north and east; by Airlie, on the south; and by Lintrathen, on the west. The surface of the ground everywhere presents an undulating appearance. Considerable tracts of level land intervene between ridges of low hills, which are themselves frequently indented. The banks of Baldovie, Balfour, and Meikle Kenny present a very agreeable appearance; while those adjoining to Pearsie, though less extensive, are not inferior in beauty. The parish is situated in the braes of Angus. Catlaw, the highest hill, rises to the height of 2264 feet above the level of the sea, from which may be had one of the most extensive prospects in Scotland. The German Ocean, from Montrose round to the Frith of Forth, great part of the coast of Fife, the Bell-rock Lighthouse, Berwick Law, Arthur Seat, together with some of the highest mountains in the Western Highlands, are discernible. To the north may be observed some of the loftiest mountains of the Grampian range.

Meteorology.—The lower division of the parish is elevated about 600 feet above the level of the sea, from which it is about twenty-four miles distant. The atmosphere is exceedingly dry and pure, except in the neighbourhood of morasses, of which there are still a few.

Hydrography.—The parish is everywhere abundantly supplied with water. The principal streams are the Prosen, Melgum or

Melgund, and Carrity. They all afford excellent fishing for small trout. Salmon seldom frequent them, except at the spawning season. The Burn of Crombie may also be mentioned. It passes the village of Kingoldrum, and, after forming a sort of semicircle, falls into the Melgum. There are several springs in different parts of the parish, the waters of which are chalybeate. There is a cascade, or rather a series of waterfalls, called the Loups of Kenny. The river Melgum suddenly enters a narrow, deep, and tortuous channel, in passing through which it is precipitated at short intervals from a very considerable height. The scenery here is much admired.

Geology.—The parish is characterized by several parallel ridges, which run from east to south-west. The lowest of these, namely, the Kaimies of Airlie, is composed of the great conglomerate. On the top of the ridge the imbedded pebbles are very numerous; but where the ridge falls to the north and south, the sandstone greatly predominates, and is here used for building. The dip is various. The next ridge is that of the Kirktonhill, Schurroch, &c. It is trap, or rather conglomerate composed of various trap rocks. To the north of this ridge, in the valley which intervenes betwixt it and the next, occurs a dike of serpentine, the features of which are very interesting, and which are very fully described by Mr Lyell, in Vol. iii. of the Edinburgh Journal of Science. As it occurs at the West Balloch, in the parish of Kirriemuir, this dike is very remarkable, and well worthy of minute inspection. “After leaving the West Balloch,” says Mr Lyell, “it first appears, at the distance of about four miles, on the farm of Burnside, in the parish of Kingoldrum. The small burn in whose channel it is here obscurely exposed, falls afterwards into the Backburn. The rocks, which are there clearly seen associated together, are greenstone, with serpentine, containing much dolomite, and a red indurated rock abounding in brown spar. A little higher up, as on the Carrity, the claystone porphyry appears, which must not be considered as having any connection with the serpentine. If we continue our line to the south-westward for about two miles, we arrive at the ravine through which the Melgum flows, when the serpentine is not recognizable, unless it be considered as represented by the great dike of greenstone which crosses the river immediately below the mill of Shannaly.” To the north of this dike of serpentine lies another range of hills, composed of trap conglomerate, clay porphyry, and greywacke. The hills of Cran-

yard and Catlaw, immediately north of the last-mentioned strata, are composed of greywacke, clay-slate, and mica slate. A bed of blue slate is found to run through these hills; but it is not supposed that it would be profitable to open it up. Boulders of the primitive rocks, bearing the action of water, or some hard substance, are to be found in all parts of the parish. The distribution of the ground, especially on the property of Pearsie, is highly favourable to the glacier theory. The numerous mounds of gravel, &c. of every variety of position, size and form, are evidently the *detritus* of the neighbouring hills. These have been quoted by Mr Lyell in confirmation of his late opinions in reference to such deposits. Part of the Loch of Kinnordy is in the parish, and the marl procured from it has been much used by the farmer for the improvement of grass lands. Peat mosses are very common. Oak trees have been found in them of much greater size than any that grow at the present day. On the top of Catlaw is a moss of considerable extent. On the north shoulder of the wester Schurroch, and betwixt that and the river Melgum, occurs a bed of a variety of porcelain clay. The soil resting on the great conglomerate is partly of a sandy nature, partly moorish, and partly of a mortary till. That on the trap formation is a rich loam: this forms the best land in the parish. To the north of the church there are about fifty acres of clay soil, lying on a bed of moss, which has been formed by water. The land in the northern part of the parish is composed partly of black earth, intermixed with a sandy soil, and some parts are very moorish.

Botany.—The plants distributed over the parish are such as are generally found in upland and subalpine situations. The following, being of local or less frequent occurrence, may be mentioned:—

Hippurus vulgaris
 Plantago maritima
 Alchemilla alpina
 Symphytum officinale
 Menyanthes trifoliata
 Lysimachia nemorum
 Viola lutea
 Gentiana campestris
 Meum athamanticum
 Daucus carota
 Linum catharticum
 Trientalis europæa
 Epilobium angustifolium
 ——— alpinum
 Polygonum Hydropiper
 Adoxa moschatellina

Pyrola media
 ——— minor
 Chrysosplenium alterni-
 folium
 Saxifraga stellaris
 ——— aizoides
 ——— granulata
 ——— hypnoides
 Stellaria holostea
 Arenaria rubra
 Sedum Telephium
 Oxalis acetosella
 Anemone nemorosa
 Trollius europæus
 Cardamine amara
 Geranium lucidum

Genista Anglica
 Hypericum humifusum
 ——— pulchrum
 Gnaphalium dioicum
 ——— sylvaticum
 ——— supinum
 ——— minimum
 Gymnadenia conopsea
 Habenaria viridis
 ——— albida
 ——— bifolia
 Juniperus communis.
 Rubus fruticosus
 ——— saxatilis
 ——— Chamemorus

The following species are occasionally to be met with in the neighbourhood of houses: *Anchusa sempervirens*, *Verbascum thapsus*, *Agrimonia eupatoria*, *Chelidonium majus*. *Viola palustris* is found on Catlaw, at about 1500 feet above the level of the sea. *Echium vulgare* sometimes appears in cultivated fields. *Lychnis viscaria* grows in great abundance on rocks on the banks of the Melgum. *Cerastium arvense* is pretty common on gravelly soil. *Acinos vulgaris* is very abundant on light ground having a southern exposure. *Listera cordata* is not unusual in woods. *Lemna trisulca* may be more particularly noticed. This singular plant is found along the course of a spring that rises in the swampy ground below the hill of Landhead, and is associated with *Veronica scutellata* and *Myosotis palustris*. We are not aware that this plant has been found in a more northern habitat.

The plantations are principally composed of larch and Scotch fir. Some old Scotch fir at Balnathrash, on the estate of Pearsie, is very superior. Though it has a cold northern exposure, the trees have attained a great size, and are considered nearly equal in quality to those which grow in the forests of Braemar. The larch planted within the last thirty years is not in a thriving condition. The trees become infected with canker, and gradually decay. There is a good deal of natural wood around and near the house of Pearsie, composed of birch, oak, and alder copse.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The chartulary of Aberbrothock, which is preserved in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, contains the only authentic records which throw any light upon the early history of the parish. These records are, so far as they are connected with the parish, particular in their details, and embrace the period betwixt 1253 and 1500. They are presented to us in a form somewhat repulsive, but convey much information, particularly interesting to the antiquarian. By a foundation charter of William the Lion, the whole lands are made over to the abbey of Aberbrothock. This grant is confirmed by Alexander III., and afterwards by Robert Bruce. The words of the charter are, "Kyncoldrum cum sua tota skyra," &c. and again "totam terram suam et nemora mea de Kyngoldrum schyr in forestam." From this, Tytler in his History of Scotland remarks, that the term shire was anciently given to districts of much smaller extent than the sheriffships of the present day. There is a proclamation of Alexander III. prohibiting any one from cutting wood or hunting in the forest of

Kingoldrum, without the consent of the abbots "Quare prohibeo firmiter nequis in eis," &c. Three perambulations made at different periods by the abbots and monks distinctly mark out the boundaries of the parish. It is not a little remarkable, that the names then given to the several farms and hamlets 600 years ago are the same as at the present time. What portion of the parish was covered by the royal forest it would now be difficult to say, as no traces of it can be discovered. Flint arrow-heads have been picked up in the fields to the eastward of the church. Perhaps these may have been used in the pursuit of the chase.

Eminent Characters.—Scott, an eminent judge in Toronto in Upper Canada, was the son of a minister of that name in this parish.

Land-owners.—The landed proprietors in order of their valued rent are: Thomas Farquharson, Esq. of Baldovie; David Wedderburn, Esq. of Pearsie; The Right Honourable The Earl of Airlie; the Heirs of the late Alexander Stormont, Esq. of Kinclune; The Honourable Colonel Ogilvy of Clova; Mrs Colonel Young of Ascreavie.

Peter Wedderburn Ogilvy, Esq. of Ruthven, possesses a small part called the Mill and Mill lands of Auld Allan; but for some reason unknown, he has never been reckoned as an heritor.

Parochial Registers.—There are six volumes belonging to the kirk-session. They have been accurately kept, save during the incumbency of one clerk of session. Parents are very negligent in registering the births of their children.

Antiquities.—The Castle of Balfour, built by Cardinal Beaton, is the only building of antiquity. It has long been dismantled, and a ruin, but must originally have been a place of considerable strength. The structure is in the Gothic style. The family of Balfour has long ago sunk into that of Fotheringham of Powrie. Mr Farquharson of Baldovie, the present proprietor, lately caused two wings of the castle to be taken down, to afford materials for the erection of a farm-house. The beauty of the old ruin has been, in consequence, in a great measure destroyed.

There were on the hill called Schurroch, at three different places equally distant from each other, several large stones, erected in a circular form called Druidical temples. One of these has been removed. Upon the top of the hill, Catlaw, there is a large cairn of stones; but whether these stones be the ruin of some rude building, or a place of observation from whence sig,

nals might be given on the approach of an enemy, is uncertain. Stone coffins have occasionally been found in the fields. On taking down the old church, various stones, on which singular devices had been cut, were discovered imbedded in the building. Two stones on which crosses are finely carved, with accompanying hieroglyphics, may be particularly mentioned. These stones it is probable had their origin about the time of the introduction of Christianity into our country, and would seem to be a connecting link betwixt Pagan mythology and Christian worship. Several rude relics which may have been esteemed precious in the time of Romish supremacy were likewise found.

Mansion-Houses.—The mansion-house of Baldovie occupies a highly agreeable and well sheltered situation. It is ornamented by wood, and a great part of the land in its neighbourhood is of the richest description. The house of Pearsie is still more pleasantly situated and ornamented. The farm-houses that have been erected within the last twenty years have been greatly improved in appearance and accommodation.

III.—POPULATION.

The population of the parish has very much decreased in amount. Several small villages have entirely disappeared, and the sites of cottages to about the number of fifty, once the residence of a hardy, industrious, and attached peasantry, can now with difficulty be traced.

According to Dr Webster the population was	780
About the year 1796,	600
1811,	537
1821, males, 256, females, 261,	total, 517
1831, do. 237, do. 207,	do. 444
1841, do. 232, do. 208,	do. 440
The yearly average of births for the last 7 years may be from	16 to 20
The average of burials for the last 20 years is, per annum,	6½
marriages,	3½
The number of families,	89
inhabited houses,	74

The decrease of population has been principally owing to the union of farms, and to the removal of the smaller tenants to the neighbouring towns, who have gone there in search of employment; but who, in many cases, have eventually returned to increase the pauperism of our district. The evils of this system of depopulation are now beginning to be severely felt by the farmer, who, in the season of harvest, has to depend for assistance on the uncertain supply of the neighbouring towns. Mr Wedderburn of Pearsie has lately built several neat cottages, which are not

more convenient to the neighbourhood, than ornamental to his property.

Habits of the People, &c.—The people, generally speaking, are obliging, hospitable, and affable. They are peaceable and inoffensive in their dealings, generally moral in their behaviour, attentive to the ordinances of religion, regular in their attendance in the parish church, and in the observance of the Christian Sabbath.

Poaching in the salmon fisheries formerly prevailed; but this has been completely checked.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

The parish may be said to be completely agricultural. There are scarcely any families who are not in some measure connected with the operations of husbandry.

The number of imperial acres, cultivated or occasionally in tillage, may be stated at,	3500
Number of acres which never have been cultivated,	7000
which might be improved so as to undergo a regular rotation of cropping,	800
under wood, natural or planted,	1500
	<hr/>
	12800

Rent of Land.—The average rental of land may be stated at about L.1, 3s. per acre.

Rental.—The real rental of the parish is about L.4123.

Live-Stock.—The number of sheep kept is from 1200 to 1500. They are principally of the black-faced breed, but crosses have been lately introduced.

The Angus-shire black cattle are the most common. In general, the stock purchased for grazing and feeding cannot be surpassed in any other district of the country. They are generally sold to dealers for the London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow markets. The general rotation of cropping is what is termed the sixth, that is, three years in grass, two grain crops, and one green crop, or clean fallow. A very considerable improvement has taken place of late years in respect to husbandry. Much waste land has been reclaimed, and furrow-draining has been very successfully introduced. The general duration of leases is nineteen years.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Town, &c.—Kirriemuir, distant four miles, is the nearest market-town, at which, at convenient seasons, markets for sheep, horses, and cattle are held. The only village, properly so called, is in the neighbourhood of the church. The parish is conveniently intersected by roads, but they are kept in a bad state

of repair. This arises partly from the insufficiency of the road-money, though principally from a most imperfect mode of management. It is to be hoped that measures will soon be adopted to remedy an evil universally complained of. The bridges are not so numerous as they require to be, and several are very insecure. The fences are partly of thorn, and partly of dry stone. They are imperfectly kept, and deficient in number.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church is centrally situated, and as convenient as could be for the greater part of the population. Its distance from the farthest extremity of the parish is five miles. The date of its erection is 1840. It is built almost on the same site as the former church was, which must have been erected previous to the era of the Reformation, and which had become ruinous and unsafe. It is a plain building, but neat and comfortable. The church-yard walls have been rebuilt, and the whole ground suitably laid out. The church affords accommodation for 240. There are no free sittings, the whole area being divided among the heritors and their tenants. The manse was built in 1792. An addition was lately made to it, and it underwent a very thorough repair. It is now in every respect commodious and comfortable. The glebe is about 4 acres. From the excellency of the soil, it is of considerable value. A grass glebe of $12\frac{1}{2}$ imperial acres was lately designed to the minister, from church lands in the neighbourhood of the manse. The decret of the Presbytery, however, has been opposed by the heritors, and the matter is at present in dependence before the Court of Session. The amount of the stipend is L.157 of money, and 6 bolls, 3 pecks, 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ lippy of bear. L.1, 8s. 1d. was formerly paid in name of grass money. The church was originally a parsonage belonging to the abbey of Arbroath. After the erection of the abbey into a temporal lordship, the burden of the stipend devolved upon the titular of the tithes,—the consequence of which was that, by the decret of provisions dated in the year 1635, a considerable part of the stipend was allocated upon abbey lands, in the neighbourhood of Arbroath, from which it continues to be payable. All the inhabitants, with the exception of the families of the two resident heritors, who are Episcopalians, belong to the Established church. The average number of communicants is about 200.

Education.—There is no other save the parochial school in the parish. The branches of education are those which are usually taught. The salary of the schoolmaster is L.23 in money and

6½ bolls of oats, payable in kind, the collection of which is felt to be a grievance by the teacher. This method of payment being, in the opinion of eminent counsel, contrary to the statute, ought to be abolished, and the value, as ascertained by the Exchequer, added to the money salary. The schoolmaster has lately been provided with a comfortable house. He is not in possession of the legal quantity of garden-ground. Generally the people are alive to the benefits of education; though the real end and design thereof is often defeated by mistaken views of the method of its attainment. The district of Pearsie, where at present the greatest number of children are, is too distant from the parish school. It is desirable that a teacher were permanently settled there.

Library.—There is a circulating library in the parish composed of religious books.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of paupers receiving parochial aid may be stated at from 3 to 4. In times of distress, a few are temporarily relieved; by which means they are prevented from falling as a regular and permanent burden on the parish funds. From 1s. to 6s. is given weekly to those receiving aid as regular pensioners. The average of the last seven years' collections made in the church for behoof of the poor is L.12, 13s.; interest arising from capital annually, L.10; mortcloth dues, 15s. 8½d.; total, L.23, 8s. 8½d. Although the parish has never enjoyed any other method of obtaining funds for support of the poor, save by collections in the church; yet it has been enabled to provide for their wants by this method alone. Besides accomplishing that object, a small capital has been accumulated. The disposition of independence, so long and so warmly cherished by the Scottish peasantry, is on the decline.

The parish being divided into large farms, the practice of keeping *bothies* is almost universal. This may be advantageous to the farmer, but is certainly most adverse to the morals of the labouring population.

Fuel.—Peat and wood constitute the principal fuel. Scotch and English coals are, however, becoming every year more common. The latter are obtained from the Newtyle, Glamis, and Forfar railway depots.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

In the last Statistical Account, the number of arable acres is stated to have been between 3000 and 4000. The number of acres

in that state at present we have stated at 3500. As a great quantity of land, however, has been improved and brought into a state of cultivation within the last forty years, much of the inferior land, formerly arable, is at present allowed to lie as permanent pasture. Owing to the high prices realized from cattle, this is not thought disadvantageous to the farmer; but undoubtedly a very great deal of land in all parts of the parish could profitably be cultivated, provided the necessary expenses of improvement were in part defrayed by the proprietor.

The real rental, at the date of the last Account, is stated to be L.1600; the present rental is about L.4123. Thus, while the number of arable acres has ostensibly remained nearly the same, the rent of land has increased nearly 300 per cent. Though this is partly owing to the profits of the grazier, it is chiefly to be accounted for by the introduction of a superior mode of husbandry, and by increased industry and enterprise on the part of the tenantry.

For the last six years, owing to the unfavourable nature of the seasons, the farmer has sustained a very considerable loss by his grain crops. The high price of cattle has alone enabled him to retain his independence and hold his lease. Should this source of profit fall much in value, proprietors will certainly not realize their present rents. The climate of the parish might be much improved, and the value of many fields greatly increased by the shelter afforded by planting. The conveyance of farm produce might be greatly facilitated, and an advantage might be got of favourable markets by a better mode of managing the roads, which, in winter especially, are almost impassable.

The number of cottages should be much increased, and a few acres of inferior land annexed to them. Examples might be produced to show that, by an outlay of about L.30 on the building of the necessary houses, a rent of about L.6 might be obtained from six acres of land, the value of which at present is very small.

December 1842.