

PARISH OF LETHNOT AND NAVAR.

PRESBYTERY OF BRECHIN, SYNOD OF ANGUS AND MEARNIS.

THE REV. ALEXANDER GARDNER, A. M. MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

LETHNOT and Navar, formerly separate parishes, were united in 1723.

Extent, &c.—The extent of the parish in length, from north-west to south-east, is about 15 miles; in average breadth about 5 miles.

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It contains 75 square miles. It is bounded on the north, by Lochlee; on the east, by Edzell; on the south-east, by Stracathro; on the south, by Menmuir; and on the west by Menmuir, Fearn, Tannadice, and Clova.

Topographical Appearances.—The cultivated and inhabited part of the parish lies along the Westwater and its tributary streams, extending about 9 miles in length, and averaging nearly one mile in breadth. The rest consists of hills and moorland, used as sheep-walks.

The hills in this parish form part of the Grampian range. The highest is Wirren, or the hill of springs. There are several others of considerable elevation.

Except in the southern part of the parish, where there is some level ground or haughs, the cultivated land lies on acclivities, rising gradually from the Westwater and other streams to the foot of the hills.

Hydrography.—There are a few mineral springs in the parish, but of no great importance or magnitude. The principal stream is the Westwater, a branch of the North Esk. Its source is in the upper part of the parish, direction south-east; its whole length about twenty miles. It joins the North Esk about five miles south-east from the parish at Inveriskandy, *i. e.* Inveresk and Dye.

Geology and Mineralogy.—The rocks composing the hills are all of the primary formation, and, of course, contains no fossil organic remains. The prevailing kinds of rock are clay-slate and mica-schist, understood to overly a bed of gneiss, but their extent, thickness, &c. are unknown. A vein of blue slate traverses the parish from east to west, and is understood to extend to a great distance in both directions—indeed, from the German Ocean to the Western Isles. The slate is of the same kind as that found at Dunkeld and Easdale, and is thought to be a continuation of the same vein which is wrought at these places. The vein was opened here a few years ago, and wrought for a short time; but, from want of capital or some other cause, this work was discontinued. Some limestone is found in the parish, but of no practical utility. Red sandstone appears immediately on the south side of the Westwater, where it divides this parish from Menmuir; but none in the parish.

Although the mineral springs indicate the presence of iron in some of the rocks, no ores of that or any other metal have been found in the parish. None of the simple minerals found. Various al-

luvial deposits are found in the lower parts of the valley, consisting of gravel, sand, clay, marl, and peat, in some of which vegetable remains have been discovered.

As in similar localities the soil in the lower parts of the valley is composed of the debris of the neighbouring hills brought down by streams, rains, and the action of the atmosphere. It is pretty deep in some places, and is partly of a clayey and partly of a sandy nature, but the clay seems to prevail. The soil on the higher grounds is much thinner, and of a gravelly nature.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Land-owners.—Lord Panmure and General Duff, brother of the Earl of Fife.

Parochial Registers.—Date of earliest entry 1728.

Antiquities.—There are the remains of two or three small Druidical temples—one at Newbigging, near the remains of an ancient castle or tower called Dennyfern, one at Blairno, and one said to have been at Craigendowie, but now demolished.

Several small tumuli of stones or cairns, said by tradition to cover those who fell in skirmishes that took place between part of Sir Robert Bruce's army and the English, when in this part of the country.

III.—POPULATION.

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| Amount in 1831, | 404 |
| 1841, | 400 |

None of the population reside in towns or villages.

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| Yearly average of births for the last seven years, | 5 nearly. |
| of deaths, | 6 |
| of marriages, | 2 |

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—The number of acres standard imperial measure in the parish, which are either cultivated or occasionally in tillage, as nearly as can be ascertained, is 2324. The rest of the parish, as formerly mentioned, consists of hills and moorland in a state of undivided common, and used as sheep walks.

There are only about 20 acres of wood in detached plots, chiefly Scotch fir and larch, and some natural birch.

The average rent of arable land per acre in the parish about 12s. The average rent of grazing per ox or cow, L.2, 10s.; per ewe, or sheep, 3s.

The modern system of husbandry is generally pursued. The rotation of cropping is three years of grass, and four of oats, barley, and green crop. No wheat is sown.

Within the last twenty-five years great improvements have taken place with respect to reclaiming waste land, draining, liming, &c. In some cases the extent of arable land has been nearly doubled. Originally the leases were all liferents; a few of these still remain. The rest are for nineteen years, and are considered most favourable to the occupier. The farm-buildings are in a very indifferent state, but the enclosures are good, and mostly of stone.

The principal disadvantages of the place arise from the rugged and uneven nature of the roads, and its distance from market-towns, the nearest, Brechin, being eight miles distant, and the road lying over a steep hill.

For the encouragement of his tenants in this and the two neighbouring parishes of Edzell and Lochlee, Lord Panmure, the principal proprietor, with his usual regard to their interests, several years ago, instituted an annual exhibition of sheep and cattle, when premiums are given by his Lordship for the best specimens of each kind.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church was rebuilt in 1827; it is in good repair; affords accommodation for about 250; all sittings free. The manse was built about thirty years ago. The stipend amounts to L. 158, 6s. 11d. The annual value of the glebe is about L. 20.

Education.—There are two schools in the parish, the parochial school, and another about five miles distant, supported partly by a small mortification, and partly by individual subscription, and taught only during the winter season. The salary of parochial schoolmaster is the maximum. School fees average about L. 7 per annum: he has the legal accommodations.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—Average number of persons receiving parochial aid, 7. Average sum allotted to each per week, 1s. 6d. Besides a few others who receive occasional aid, varying according to their circumstances. The annual amount of contributions for their relief, arising from church collections, about L. 14; from other funds, L. 20.

There is a general disposition among the poor to refrain from seeking parochial aid, so long as they are at all able to procure the means of subsistence, either by their own industry or by the help of their friends.

Fuel.—The fuel used is chiefly peat and turf procured from the neighbouring hills, and coals from Montrose.

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