

## PARISH OF KINELLAR.

PRESBYTERY OF ABERDEEN, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN.

THE REV. DAVID SMITH,  
THE REV. R. FIDDES, A. & S. } *Ministers.*

---

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

KINELLAR is situated in that division of the county called Mar. Mar is considered as consisting of four divisions, Braemar, Cromar, Midmar, and Mar the most easterly portion. It is in this last part where Kinellar is situated, at the distance of nine miles from Aberdeen, and ten from the German Ocean.

*Boundaries and Extent.*—The parish has Dyce and Newhills on the east; Skene on the south; Skene and Kintore on the west; and Fintray (from which it is separated by the Don) on the north. Its length from south to north is rather more than four miles, and its breadth from east to west nowhere much exceeds two. It contains about 4000 acres, on an undulating surface, no part of which rises very high, or sinks very considerably. The greater part of the parish is much exposed to wind and storms, not having any shelter from woods or neighbouring hills, except a little from Tyrebagger on the east.

### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Antiquities.*—There is an extensive heathy common between Kinellar and Kintore, in which are a great number of tumuli, which indicate it to have been, at some distant period, the principal scene of a most sanguinary conflict; but at what time, and between whom, tradition is silent. It seems very probable that the battle had taken place between the Scots and a party of Danes, who may have landed about Don mouth, and met with the first opposition here; but at what period it is difficult to conjecture, as they made frequent landings on both the north and east coasts. Such of the barrows as have been examined contained no urns, fragments of weapons, nor marks of burning, but bones and skulls in good preservation. Some barrows which have been found in the northern quarter included urns of baked clay, containing ashes and calcin-

ed bones, placed on beds formed of clay, hardened by fire, and the hillocks made up of soil from a distance. The stones of *Cairn-a-veil* being removed a few years ago, it was found to contain a stone coffin, about six feet long, of six flags, holding neither bones nor ashes, but some black dust. The churchyard has been the site of a Druidical temple, several stones of which, of great size and weight, though fallen, yet remain above ground, and others have sunk in the earth. It is matter of surprise by what process such weighty masses have been transported from such distances as they must have been. *Cairn-semblings* occupies an elevated spot on the hill of Achronie, and is visible over a great extent of country to west and north. Near to this place is a large stone on which Irvine, *the much redoubted Laird of Drum*, sat, and made his testament, on his way to the *battle of Harlaw*, where he fell.

*Parochial Registers.*—The oldest register begins in 1640, containing the texts and discipline; but no separate register for marriages, baptisms, and burials was kept till a dozen years ago. An unwillingness to register baptisms is but too prevalent among parents. The following entry appears, under datè “May 4th 1684, This day was read from pulpit an act of his Majesty’s Council, for a solemn and religious fast, upon account of the rigour of the last winter, the coldness of the present spring, and the great mortality of bestial, to be observed on Wednesday the 7th.” It is mentioned in a note, that the snow and frost continued without any relaxation eighteen weeks.

*Land-owners.*—The proprietors are, Mrs Brebner of Glasgow Forest, valued rent, L. 315, 2s. 2d.; Dyer Society, Kinellar, L. 152, 6s. 8d.; Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen and Glasgoego, L. 133, 6s. 8d.; William Tower, Kinaldie, L. 127, 13s. 4d.; Mr Crombie, Auchronie, L. 107, 13s. 4d.; King’s College, Cairntradlin, L. 100; Dr Ewing, Tartowie, L. 84, 13s. 4d.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population is smaller than that of any parish within the synod. For a considerable number of years previous to 1777, the number of persons exceeded 400; but from that time to the census in 1831, it was considerably less. In 1821, 359; in 1831, 449; 218 males, and 231 females. The increase betwixt 1821 and 1831, was owing to a large distillery being set on foot at Blackburn, and an attempt to raise a small village, neither of which have succeeded.

Number of families in the parish in 1831,	88
chiefly employed in agriculture,	53
trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	8

Number of illegitimate births during the last three years, 5.

Less than twenty years ago, illicit distillation was almost universally practised among the lower orders; but for many years, nothing of the kind has existed.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—Within the last twenty or twenty-five years, both the theory and practice of agriculture have experienced a great and favourable alteration. The ridges then raised in the middle, and with deep valleys between, are now straight as an arrow, and level as a turnpike road.

The numerous ploughing matches established in most parishes, where small premiums are given to the best ploughmen, have greatly contributed to this salutary change, and have excited a laudable spirit of emulation among the young farm-servants, which is attended with many good effects. These ploughing competitions were principally set agoing by the proprietors of Garioch district, who formed themselves into a Farmer Club in 1808. They were soon joined by other proprietors and gentlemen farmers around, who, by judiciously bestowing prizes contributed by the members, have done great benefit to a considerable extent of country. This club still exists.

Except a few acres under wood, and a patch or two of rocky moor, the whole parish is under the plough. The long teams of ten or twelve cattle in a plough have long since given place to the pair of horses without a driver. There is a large heathy undivided common between Kinellar and Kintore; but whether it should belong to the Earl of Kintore, to the burgh, or in general to all the contiguous proprietors, has never been decided.

When Mr Tower purchased Kinaldie about sixteen years ago, the greater proportion of it consisted of poor, thin, heathy, stony ground, which, by judicious management and great expense, he has converted into well laid out enclosed fields, which produce very fair crops of grain and turnip.\*

\* The situation of this place forbids the supposition that its name is derived from the Gaelic. *Kin*, in that language, signifies *the head*, whereas Kinaldie is situated at the Inver, or mouth of a stream. Its name is probably derived from Kenneth, the Scottish King, whose name is written Cinadius in many ancient records. History informs us that one of the kings of this name was forced, during the troubles which disturbed his reign, to betake himself to the northern parts of his kingdom, where he was engaged in frequent contests with the Danes. The place which we have already mentioned as being the scene of a conflict, at some distant period, may have been the field on which on some occasion Kenneth or Cinadius may have

Farm-houses and steadings have been of late very much improved, and, in general, are comfortable and commodious. Most leases extend to nineteen years, which is in the tenants' favour; one or two are of long duration, and except in these, all the rents are by far too high. Some very good land lets at L. 3 per acre, and the average rent is L. 2.

*Wages.*—Good ploughmen get from L. 5 to L. 7 half yearly; next class from L. 4, 10s. to L. 5, 10s.; boys from L. 2 to L. 3; females from L. 1, 10s. to L. 2 in winter, and L. 2, 10s. to L. 3 in summer,—all with victuals. The connection between farmers and their servants is now very different from what it was forty or fifty years ago. Most servants then remained with the same master till they married and got possessions; they thus became attached to the master and the farm, and felt an interest in every thing about the town. Now, they rarely engage but for a half year, and, delighting to move from place to place, they contract little attachment either to persons or places. This roving disposition is much fostered by the great number of seeing-markets, which promote idleness and dissipation.

*Rent, &c.*—It is scarcely practicable to state with accuracy the real rent of the parish. It may be about L. 3000. Its valued rent is L. 1020, 15s. 6d. Scotch.

Turnips are universally sown, and their management well understood. The turnip fly is often very destructive, but the writer has never lost a crop, by sowing seeds of several years growth,—a practice which, on his recommendation, has been followed by many with advantage. By this plan, as the seeds of the different years vegetate at different periods, and as the fly does not continue long, a crop may be depended on. Where the manure raised is deficient, it is easily procured from Aberdeen, and bone-dust is getting into use. There is very little *ruta бага* sown. The scythe is universally employed to cut both oats and bear, and a month frequently finishes the harvest. Six years shifts of crops are most general; and every farmer has a thrashing-mill. There is only one flock of sheep, and the number of black-cattle varies every month with the markets. A disease called *red water* has lately appeared among new-calved cows, which, in many cases, proves fatal. A great improvement in the breed, both of cattle and horses,

encountered the Danes. This supposition receives confirmation from the circumstance, that in the part of the ground referred to, which lies nearer to Kinaldie, there have been found tumuli containing urns, &c. It has also occurred to the writer that this is the most likely way of accounting for the origin of the name Kinaldie.

has taken place within the last twenty years, which is encouraged by many local associations bestowing premiums.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Kintore, at the distance of two miles, was the post-town till 1837, when an office was established at Blackburn. The nearest market-town is Inverury, distant seven miles, where there are twenty fairs yearly. An excellent turnpike from Aberdeen to the north-west, divides the parish into two equal parts, from east to west. Besides the mail, three stage-coaches from, and as many to Aberdeen, run every lawful day, whose fares are very moderate. The cross-roads, except one, which leads to a single farm, are in very bad order; part of the most frequented one, as leading to the church, has not had a farthing of the parish money expended on it for twenty years. A small canal, made in 1797, runs from Aberdeen to Inverury, at about a mile north of the church; on which is a passage boat, and other boats, which bring coals, lime, and manure from Aberdeen to the country; and take grain, slates, wood, &c. from the country to Aberdeen. Though it has not yet been a profitable concern to the proprietors, it has been of considerable advantage to a large tract of country.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church was built in 1801; it is not centrally placed, being only a mile from the Don on the north side, and nearly four from the southern boundary of the parish. It is in tolerable repair, and may contain nearly 250 sitters. It is well attended by all, except one Roman Catholic family. The communicants vary from 194 to 210 in number.

Kinellar, during Popery, was a vicarage belonging to the parsonage of Kinkel, along with Kintore, Kemnay, Dyce, Skene, and Drumblade. The patronage and tithes of all these were bestowed by Archbishop Sharpe on the Dean of the University of St Andrews, to present to them with consent of the Archbishop. After the abolition of Episcopacy, the university exercised this right till 1761, when these patronages being all sold, Kinellar, with four others, was bought by the Earl of Kintore, who is now patron. The manse was built in 1778, is in tolerable repair, but not commodious. The glebe is 5 acres in extent, very good land, and the minister receives a trifle above L. 60 from the Exchequer, to make his stipend L. 150. He has L. 20 Scots for grass-money, and an equal sum for moss-money, there being no moss in the parish.

*Education.*—The school, built a few years ago, is pretty conveniently placed; the salary L. 26, with house and garden. All the

ordinary branches, with Latin and geometry when wanted, are taught, and the fees are very moderate,—2s. for English, 3s. for arithmetic, and 3s. 6d. for Latin, all per quarter, and book-keeping, 10s. 6d. per course. The fees amount to about L. 13 per annum. The average number of scholars may be 25 in summer, and 45 in winter. The schoolmaster, who is also session-clerk and a preacher, derives benefit from Dick's liberal bequest to the parochial schoolmasters of the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Moray, which the heritors reckoned upon when the salary was fixed. There is also a Sabbath school, with a small library attached to it, and a general desire for instruction prevails.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number on the poor's roll is 6, of whom some get 10s. and some 25s. quarterly, as their circumstances and the times require; but many others occasionally receive relief. The annual collections and penalties average from L. 12 to L. 15; and it is to be remarked that this comes from the farmers, cottars, and servants,—for the heritors, not residing, contribute very little; so that the weekly collections demonstrate the benevolent dispositions of the parishioners. Most of the poorer class are rather shy of applying for, and need to be sought out and offered, assistance. During the present incumbency L. 100 have been added to a small sum previously at interest for behoof of the poor, obtained by savings and two small mortifications; and a small sum is also kept in a bank, to be ready in case of any sudden emergency. The parish has twice received its proportion of a legacy left by Mr Burnett, a merchant in Aberdeen, to every parish within the shire. The least sum given to any parish is L. 20, and the greatest L. 50. The management is under trustees, and the inspection of the synod, and the sums paid, are proportioned to the various circumstances (strictly inquired into) of the respective parishes. The order in which the several presbyteries receive their allowances, was at first determined by lot.

*January 1840.*