

PARISH OF STRATHDON.

PRESBYTERY OF ALFORD, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN.

THE REV. ROBERT MEIKLEJOHN, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name, Boundaries, &c.—THE original name of this parish was Invernochty, so called from the church being situated at one period, it is said, at the confluence of the Nochty and the Don. The etymology of the modern name is sufficiently obvious, and descriptive of the locality of the parish, which lies chiefly in an extended strath stretching from the source of the Don down its course, from west to east, to the influx of the Kindy with that river.

Strathdon is the most westerly parish in the synod and county of Aberdeen, and conterminous on the west with Kirkmichael, and the district of that parish now allotted to the Government church at Tomantoul; on the south, with Glenmuick and Coldstone; on the east, with Migvie now annexed to Tarland, and Towie; and on the north, with Glenbucket, Cabrach, and Inveraven. It is about 23 miles in length, and from 3 to 8 in breadth.

The parish is extremely irregular in its figure, both from the mountainous nature of the country, and from being intersected by other parishes. A portion of Tarland parish, 4 miles long and 2 broad, containing a population of 281, is situated in the very centre of it. At the junction of the Bucket with the Don, Glenbucket intersects Strathdon for about three-quarters of a mile; and where the Deskry falls into the Don, Migvie juts in, scarcely three miles from the church.

Topographical Appearances.—The appearance of the surface of this parish is singularly diversified, and, at many points, of great beauty—now presenting all the luxuriance of a fertile strath, and again all the wild and rugged scenery of the Highlands. One feature of beauty is the river Don winding prettily through the main strath. Along its banks, there is a considerable extent of arable land, including some fine haughs subdivided into well cultivated fields; while, in the lower half at least of the parish, the sides of

the hills are covered with thriving plantations. Farther up, the scenery is of a different, but not less beautiful character. The strath becomes narrower, the mountains rise up precipitously, and on their sides, reaching almost to the river, here and there are clumps of coppice-woods, composed chiefly of birch, interspersed occasionally with pines and aspens, which are in fine contrast; and in spring and autumn the whole is beautifully tinged with shades of almost every varied hue. The highest district consists almost entirely of moorland and mountain, and is of a bleak and barren appearance, particularly toward the source of the Don.

Besides the strath of the Don, there are five or six glens, wild and sequestered, indeed, but not destitute of beauty and interest, which generally lie nearly at right angles to the main strath, bending towards the west at the upper end. Except in Glenkindy, the lower part of Glenernan, and the plantations of Auchernach in Glendochny, there is little or no wood in them, unless it be some detached bushes (clumps) of natural birch; yet these glens, in the stillness of a summer afternoon, with the clear streams flowing through the soft green glades, and the mountains rising abruptly on either side covered to the top with long thick heath in full bloom, afford a richness of beauty rising almost to grandeur.

Situated in, or in a branch of, the Grampians, the glens just mentioned are separated by masses of mountains, many of which are of considerable altitude; yet there is little either in their conformation or character that requires particular notice. The most remarkable mountain, which, although not actually in the parish, lies contiguous to the southern boundary, is Morven, 2880 feet (according to Dr S. Keith) above the level of the sea. The principal mountains in the parish are Scroulach, 2700 feet, resting towards the west on the Glaschill, over which the old military line of road passes from the south, by Corgarff Castle to Fort George. Cairnmore, and Ben-Newe, each 1800 feet; and Lonach,* 1200 feet. There is also worthy of notice a mountain named the Greenhill, so called from the absence of heath, and the north and south-east side being partially covered with verdure. It is composed of serpentine. A quarry has recently been opened on the north side, from which large masses are with little difficulty extracted. It is easily dressed for building purposes, and looks well in coursed rubble-work

* Lonach is the *logan* or watch-word of the Strathdon men. On the summit of this hill, a large cairn was erected, in 1823, by the tenantry in honour of Sir Charles Forbes's elevation to a Baronetcy, with an inscription.

when newly built, but, after long exposure to the weather, it assumes a dingy grey appearance. Any attempts that have been made to employ it for finer purposes have not been attended with success, as it is too soft to admit of a very high polish. On the south-west of the hill, the serpentine crops out in masses of considerable height, having, at a distance, the appearance of the ruins of old castles. On the western extremity, asbestos is found in abundance, lying on the surface of the different eminences. Upon the whole, the mountains of this parish are much inferior in picturesque effect and rugged outline to the sister district of the head of the Dee.

Meteorology.—No regular account has ever been kept, so far as is known, of the meteorology of this district; but it may be mentioned that the highest temperature, indicated by the thermometer within the observation of the writer, during the last seven years, was 83° Fahrenheit in the shade, on the 7th July 1833, and he has been informed, on unquestionable authority, that in 1826, at Auchernach, it stood at 90° in the shade. On the 14th February (1838), at 8 o'clock P. M., it stood at 8° below zero, or 40° below the freezing point.* No storm of such severity has been known since 1814, as that in the beginning of the year 1838, which continued from the 8th of January, with only partial mitigation of rigour, till the 19th of April.

The range of the barometer is extensive. On the 29th November 1838, it fell to 27.50; and on the 7th January 1839 to 27.20. The highest point reached, that we have observed, is 30.50, on the 10th April 1839. It is subject to very rapid depression and elevation, rising or falling sometimes three-fourths, or a whole inch in twelve or twenty-four hours; and hence it would prove a fallacious guide to trust, irrespective of contingent circumstances, to the rising and falling of the barometer as an index

* The writer has not a self-registering thermometer, and may not have observed the lowest degree of temperature that occurred during this very severe storm. It is unnecessary to give the temperature of every day, but it is worthy of notice that the thermometer did not average higher than 24° at 8 o'clock A. M. from the 15th January to the end of February. The following are some of the more excessive degrees of cold that were remarked, viz. :—

January 18th, at 4 o'clock P. M.,	10.5 above zero.	Fahrenheit.
19th,	5	7.
25th,	10	2.5
26th,	8	6.
February 2d,	8	5.
12th,	10	5.
14th, at 8	A. M.,	3. above zero.
8	P. M.,	8. below zero.
15th,	8	A. M., 1.
March 24th,	9	P. M., 18. above zero.

of foul and fair weather. With a strong easterly wind, we often see a sudden start of $\frac{1}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch, while a three days' torrent of rain follows. Again, a sudden fall with a north-west wind often indicates a coming hurricane, as during the series of remarkable high winds in spring 1837, when the barometer fell $27\frac{8}{10}$ inches without rain.

The aurora borealis is very common, especially during the winter months, and of great brilliancy. Twice in the course of the last five years, a beautiful luminous arch shot athwart the zenith, at right angles with the magnetic meridian, irradiating the heavens with a vivid light. Towards the end of 1837, the polar lights assumed a new appearance: the fitful dancing of the streamers was exchanged for a deep red glare, resembling the vivid reflection of an extensive moor-burning. On the 25th of January 1838, when the thermometer stood at 2° , the aurora was unusually bright, and the hissing sound (about which so many people are still sceptical) remarkably audible.

Climate, Diseases, &c.—The elevation of the river Don, (according to the authority already quoted,) at a point about two miles above the church, and 47 from Aberdeen, is 950 feet above the level of the sea, while at its source it is stated to be 1740 feet. We, therefore, necessarily experience a keen atmosphere, but the climate is, nevertheless, bracing and healthy; so much so, that valetudinarians frequently come to reside in the strath during the summer months for the benefit of the pure air, and it is believed the influx would be greatly increased, were there more convenience of lodging, &c. The climate of the upper or Corgarff district is distinctly different, and much inferior to that of what may be termed Strathdon proper. The parish is liable to the most serious injury from spring and autumnal frosts, especially the latter; but the Corgarff district, in an aggravated degree, suffers from this calamity. Few harvests pass in which the crops are not partially injured, but in many they are entirely ruined. It is true, for the five years previous to 1836, frosted grain was almost unknown in the parish, and fond hopes began to be entertained that a beneficial change for the better had taken place in the seasons, and various sage theories were propounded satisfactorily to account for the fact. That year, however, the crop in the upper district was almost totally lost,* and in the present crop, (1838,) there is not one boll of safe seed in the parish.

* It is a fact worth notice, connected with this subject, that it is a universally re-

Another evil the Strathdon farmer has to contend with is the high winds. From the funnel shape of the strath, the wind (being confined by the mountains on each side) may be said to blow only in two directions. From the west, varying a point or two north and south down, and from the east up the strath. The latter, however, except in spring, is comparatively of rare occurrence, and generally only lasts three days, bringing continued heavy rain. But by far the most prevailing wind is from the north-west, which often sweeps down the valley with tremendous violence, in the more exposed situations shaking the standing corn, so as to leave the straw completely thrashed, and sometimes actually overturning the stacks that have been led into the barn-yard.

Epidemic distempers are seldom known, and there is no endemical disease. Stone or gravel is mentioned in the former account as very prevalent. It is now confined chiefly to one glen, (Nochty). A few years ago there were five or six cases at one time in that glen. One individual, in 1832, 73 years of age, went to Liston in Edinburgh, and had three stones the size of a hen's egg extracted. In a few weeks he returned cured, and at this day retains perfect health, walking three miles to church every Sabbath, and discharging his duties as an elder, which he has been in the parish for upwards of thirty years. Hernia is not uncommon. In several instances young men are afflicted with it. The former account states that "consumptions are very rare." There is no reason to believe the parish less healthy at the present day than forty years ago, but it cannot now be truly said consumption is rare. In its various forms, with the diseases resembling and connected with it, not a few fall victims to its ravages. Of these diseases, unquestionably scrofula is most predominant. One family in the parish, consisting of a father and four children, have been cut off by it, and the childless widow is a helpless cripple. There is one decided case of bronchocele, as distinctly marked as the writer has often witnessed it on the Cretins in Canton de Vallois in Switzerland. There is, however, no Cretinism or fatuity in this case. The woman has a numerous family, but the disease has not hitherto appeared in any of her offspring. It is a singular circumstance, that the woman lives in the glen already mentioned

ceived opinion amongst the inhabitants of this district, founded on accurate observation, and verified by experience, if the strath escapes frost from the middle to the end of August, and more particularly about the 20th, they count upon the crop as safe for the season.

ABERDEEN.

L I

as the locality where calculus prevails. It would be an interesting subject of inquiry, whether or not the common origin of both diseases might not be traced to some peculiar impregnation of the water in the glen. Still, on the whole, the quantity of disease is small, unusually small, when the extreme variations of temperature, already referred to, and the insufficient protection that the dwellings and clothing of the poorer classes too often afford against the rigours of winter, are taken into account. Many of the parishioners have from time to time reached an extreme old age. About four years ago, one man died in the 103d year of his age. When the present incumbent became minister of the parish, his session consisted of six elders, the youngest of whom was about 70. Not many years since, nine Forbeses, born within the sound of the kirk bell, met at Bellabeg, whose united ages were 750 years.

Hydrography.—In a parish possessing so much of mountainous character there are, of course, innumerable springs, the mean temperature of which has not been ascertained with sufficient accuracy to warrant a statement being given. With one or two exceptions, none of them merit particular notice. In Corgarff there is one remarkable for its copiousness. During the whole year, it discharges a volume of water sufficient to turn a mill wheel. The burn of Loinheirie is entirely supplied by it. Its size, accordingly, is nearly the same at its source as when, after its course through its little glen, it joins the Don. At Glenconry, there is a chalybeate spring, but, so far as is known, it has never been properly analyzed. There are several others that show impregnation with iron, but in so slight a degree that particular notice is unnecessary.

The Don, the second river in the county in point of magnitude, takes its rise in this parish, on the very confines of the counties of Banff and Aberdeen, and takes its course from west to east, dividing the parish into nearly two equal parts.* It runs nearly two miles through peat moss before it assumes the appearance of an ordinary burn. Then, augmented by the Vannich and other mountain-streams, it continues its course about ten miles, without attaining any considerable magnitude, till it receives the tributaries of the lower district. The most considerable of these are the Conry, the Ernan, the Carvy, the Nocht, the Deskry, the Bucket at the intersection of Glenbucket already noticed, and

* It is a singular fact, that the source of the Don has lately been actually turned into the Avon, in order to turn the neighbouring farmer's mill-wheel.

the Kindy, the eastern boundary of the parish, all which take their rise in the glens of their respective names.* At the manse the Don is about 70 feet wide, and is of very considerable velocity. The Don, as well as the lesser streams, is here justly held in high repute for angling, few places perhaps in Scotland affording better rod-fishing. The trouts are not large in general, perhaps not averaging three-fourths of a pound; although instances are occasionally met with reaching three, four, and even sometimes five pounds. A few salmon every season find their way up, but the number is so small, that it is only in trouting that the angler can find amusement.

Rising in the mountains, and receiving so many mountain tributaries, the Don often "comes down" with amazing rapidity. The most destructive inundation in the memory of man, was in 1829. The keystone of the arch of Pooldhulie bridge is 25 feet above the river, and on that occasion the water, it is said, reached within a few feet of it. Much is now doing in the way of making embankments, to guard against the devastation of the more ordinary floods. They have been more frequent since 1829, which is believed to be occasioned by the shiftings that then took place in the channel of the river.†

Geology, &c.—The prevailing rock in this parish, and particularly along the line of the Don, is sienite, generally of a granitic appearance. It is composed of white felspar and hornblende. These minerals are oftentimes in pretty large crystals; and in veins the hornblende is to be found in large crystallized masses. Veins or beds of compact felspar are found in this sienite. Garnets also occur in some places. The most remarkable vein, however, by which this rock is traversed, is one of graphite, about four feet wide. This graphite is intimately mixed with dark-green chlorite, which may be partly separated from it by rubbing in a mortar, diffusing the powder in water, and allowing subsidence to take place. The difference in specific gravity, and the scaly form of the chlorite, cause the powders to arrange themselves in two distinct layers. The graphite is not compact, but like soft clay, probably from this intermixture of chlorite. The rock on each

* In a curious old poem entitled "Don," printed in London, 1655, the tributaries of the Don in this parish are described.

† Two or three years ago the proprietors of machinery on the Don contemplated building three extensive reservoirs in this parish, for a constant and regular supply of water; one on the head of the Don, a second on the Nocht, and a third on the Deskry. Surveys were made, and, it is said, L.90,000 was to be expended. Whether the idea is now abandoned the writer cannot tell.

side of the vein is in a very shattered state, and has assumed a schistaceous appearance.

On the north-west of the Don, there is a great ridge of serpentine rock, having in it small disseminated crystals of chromate of iron. It is about a mile in breadth adjoining to the sienite; this is in contact westwards with mica-slate, in which are found beds or veins of primary limestone. To the mica-slate, clay-slate succeeds, and lies upon it.

In Glenkindy again, in the lower end of the parish, there is another great dike, or vein of serpentine, between four and five miles eastward of the former, and apparently running nearly parallel to it. It seems scarcely so broad. It is in contact with graphic granite, which probably is connected with the sienite in its vicinity. A red granite is found in abundance on the other side of the hill, which certainly conjoins with the sienite, although its junction has not been laid open.

In this serpentine of Glenkindy, there is at one point a considerable deposit of bright green, scaly chlorite, and immediately below, masses of compact white chlorite of a beautiful appearance.

In the line of the first mentioned serpentine dike at Corgarff, in the south-west end of the parish, the serpentine and limestone intermixing form a marble exactly similar to the Glentilt. And it is deserving of notice, that the serpentine at Portsoy has connected with it the Glentilt marble and the graphic granite. The Portsoy vein or dike has been traced in a direct line towards Corgarff for thirty miles, and at about twenty miles from Portsoy, it seemingly divides into two dikes, which, at the distance of thirty miles, are at about five miles from each other, just as in this parish, as above stated. What seems further to prove the identity of the Portsoy, Corgarff, and Glentilt vein, or at least to call for investigation, is that, if a ruler be laid on the map of Scotland, (in the maps of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge,) on Portsoy and Corgarff, Glentilt will be found within less than four miles of the line. The graphite vein in this parish also points to the identity of the Portsoy serpentine, and the dikes of that mineral here; as graphite is found in several localities along the directly traceable course of the Portsoy serpentine dike.*

It may only be further noticed on this head, that the distinctive peculiarity of appearance of this section of the Grampians

* For the above notice, the writer is chiefly indebted to his friend, a learned professor, who declines allowing his name to be given.

is the covering of gravel and debris which rests on the sides of the hills, and generally forms the bed of the Don. The gravel varies from a few inches in depth to upwards of 100 feet, with occasionally interposed strata of sand, and assumes the form of terraces and low truncated hills in some localities, as at the mouth of the Nocht, in the vicinity of Pooldhulie bridge, and in Glencarry. These have been formed by the action of water. Nearly half a mile below the junction of the Nocht with the Don, there is a ridge of sienite, traversed by a vertical dike of felspar porphyry, which runs right across the valley. At Pooldhulie there is another similar. Previous to the disruption of these dikes, the waters must have been collected in vast lakes, in which deposition of the washed down sand and gravel would take place. As these dikes gave way, the waters would cut for themselves passages through the deposited gravel, and hence occur those terraces, tablelands, and low truncated hills.

Soil.—The prevailing soil in the arable part of the parish is a good loam of considerable depth. In the haughs, being alluvial, sections of gravelly loam occur, and traces of former beds of the river are distinctly marked. The loam is generally superincumbent on gravel, a crust, technically termed a pan, in many places intervening, so hard and impervious, that it requires laborious pick-work to penetrate it. After it is cut through, gravel or sand and sometimes sandy clay succeeds, which generally yields to the spade. This description of the subsoil will show the urgency of drainage to carry off the surface water. An improvement which is yearly being more attended to.

There are some peculiarities with regard to the soil worth notice. It is invariably deeper on the north than on the south side of the hill or mountain, and by consequence the north lying farms are generally supposed to be the best in respect of soil, although the advantage is counterbalanced by deficiency in point of climate. Again, the best quality of soil is not found in the haughs, but on the sides of the hills, and the higher up, as far as cultivation can be carried, the soil is said to improve. This is markedly exhibited on the farms on the right side of the Nocht. But on the very tops of several of the hills good soil is found, and in many instances where they are now covered with heath, traces of the plough can still be seen, although the exposed situation, and the risk of the crop not ripening, probably led to the abandonment of their cultivation. Still, the more elevated fields on the hill side often

escape the August frosts, that are so destructive to the crops on the margin of the river and rivulets. Last season every potato field on the banks of the Don was ruined early in autumn, while those at the very head of the glens escaped without injury. This may be partly accounted for by the vicinity of the water, but the visitations of this scourge are involved in much obscurity. Some farms, apparently in every respect as favourably situated as their neighbours, are proverbially "frosty places." Nay, sometimes one field on the same farm and with the same exposure, is more liable to be affected with frost than another only separated from it by a fence.

Connected with the soil, it may be stated as a fact, probably of some interest in a geological point of view, that the peat mosses are all situated on the tops of the hills,—many of them of vast extent and very great depth. The peats taken from the different mosses are as various in point of quality and value, as the coals from different seams in a coal country. Some of them supply a rich black peat, which, when properly dried, becomes almost as hard as coal, and makes excellent fuel burning with brightness, and throwing out a very strong heat. In Corgarff and Glen-Nochty moss-fir is found. It was, and not at all rarely still is, the practice for some of the poorer classes, who cannot afford other light, to go to the moss, and with a long probe something like a rude auger, search for trunks of trees buried perhaps six or eight feet deep. These, often of a diameter of 12 or 13 inches, are dug up, carried home, and cut into splits. Then being dried on the *kilchan*, or on a kind of round brander with spiral bars, they are made use of in place of candles, thus illustrating the passage in Ovid,

"Flammifera pinus manibus succendit ab *Ætna*."

A good piece emits a strong resinous smell, and when lighted, the rosin boils out at the root of the flame like a torch. In provincial language they are termed candle, or fir-candle, in contradistinction to a tallow-candle, which is denominated "white candle."

Zoology.—This parish, comprising extensive woods, mountain, and moorland, affords a great variety of animals, some of them common to the Lowlands, and others only met with in the Highlands: rather a full account, although without pretension to minuteness, of its zoology, may therefore be permitted.

Among the quadrupeds we have the red-deer, (*Cervus Elaphus*.)

formerly only visitors in their passage between the forest of Braemar and Glenfiddich, but now located in our woods all the year, although there is not as yet more than one well authenticated instance of their breeding here. The roe-deer (*C. capreolus*) are very numerous; as many as thirteen have been killed in a day. The hare; the alpine (*L. var.*); and the rabbit are found in abundance, although it is only about twenty years since they last appeared. The black-legged or hill fox (*Vulpes vulgaris, var.*) only is found. Serious injury is sustained by the sheep-farmer from its depredations amongst the lambs. Those who possess considerable flocks pay so much per annum to a fox-hunter for destroying these creatures. He, at certain seasons, comes with a motley pack, composed of a few couples of old fox hounds, greyhounds, lurchers, and terriers, which are turned into the woods, and the passes being guarded by men with guns, five or six are often destroyed in a day. The wild cat (*Felis catus sylvestris*) is met with, but is rare. A remarkable specimen, killed in winter 1835-36, measured 12 inches round the head, 3 feet 9 inches including the tail in length, and weighed about 15 lbs. Five martins (*Martes fagorum,*) were killed some years ago in one season, in Glenernan; the polecat (*Mustela putorius,*) and the weasel (*M. vulg.*) are very common; the stoat or ermine, (*M. erminea,*) less so. An opinion prevails that, when the stoats are numerous, it is the index of a severe season. They were unusually abundant in the beginning of the winter 1838; the remark was often made, and the prediction fully realized. The otter (*Lutra vul.*) is not unfrequently met with on the banks of the Don. The water-rat (*Arvicola aquatica*) inhabits the banks of the Don and the Carvy. The badger (*Meles Taxus*) has been killed at Coilnabechan, and in the woods of Newe, but is now believed to be extinct. The hedgehog (*Erinaceus Europ.*) was unknown ten or fifteen years ago, but is now common. The brown rat (*Mus decumanus,*) has not hitherto obtained a footing with us. Some years ago, a solitary specimen was killed at Edinglassie, but the presumption is, it had been imported with luggage from London, or from on board ship. The black rat (*M. Rattus*) is, however, numerous. It is well known, that wherever the brown appears, the black is extirpated. The latter is destructive enough in the house and offices of the farmer; but it is a singular fact, he does not, like the brown, infest the stacks in the corn-yard. The farmers here are, indeed, incredulous respecting the depredations of rats in stacks. The

shrew (*Sorex araneus*) is common; (*S. fodiens*) more rare. The mole is abundantly common. The common or short-eared bat (*Vespertilio murinus*) is seen, but not very numerous. Before concluding the Mammalia, it may be worth mentioning, that, about ten years ago, Sir Charles Forbes sent two varieties of the Zebu (*Bos Indicus*) to Edinglassie. The first were extremely diminutive, appeared to suffer much from the severity of the climate, and did not breed. The other was a larger variety, and bred readily with the common bull of the country. Two half-bred bulls were kept that grew to great size and weight. They became so furious that it was found necessary to destroy them. Both these and the next generation retained the distinctive hump, or excrescence, on the shoulders. A good many of their progeny were to be met with five or six years ago, but they were invariably rejected by the cattle-dealer, and hence unprofitable to the farmer.

Two kangaroos were also sent. They seemed to experience no inconvenience from the rigour of the climate, and fed readily on grass and vegetables in summer, and on hay with occasional green food in winter. Unfortunately they were both of the same sex. It would have been interesting to have ascertained whether they had been so far naturalized as to have bred in the head of Aberdeenshire.

Birds.—There is, in the slocks of Glencarvy, an old eyrie, but no eagle has occupied it for many years. It would appear, however, eagles had formerly been much more numerous, as pits are still pointed out in the hills that were made for the purpose of destroying them. Two different species are said still to be seen on the north-west extremity of the parish. Hawks of different species are numerous. The buzzard (*F. Buteo*) is very common. The kite (*Milvus vulgaris*)* is more rare. The hen-harrier (*Circus cyaneus*, here called blue-sleeves,) breeds in the parish. The sparrow-hawk (*F. nisus*) is very common. The kestrel's nest (*F. Tinnunculus*) was found last season; and the merlin (*F. Æsalon*) is occasionally seen. The barn-owl (*Aluco flammeus*), the horn-owl (*Otus vulgaris*), and the tawny-owl (*Strix stridula*), are all met with, but are rare. The raven (*C. corax*) breeds annually in the slocks of Glencarvy. The carrion-crow (*C. cornix*); the hooded-crow (*C. corone*); the magpie (*C. pica*), and the jack-daw (*C.*

* Sir Charles Forbes's keeper reports having frequently seen the goshawk (*F. Palumbarius*) in Glenernan. A fine specimen was shot this winter in a neighbouring parish, and is now in the possession of Lord Aberdeen's keeper at Deskry Lodge.

monedula) are very abundant. It is not many years since the rook (*C. frugilegus*) became established in rookeries with us: many attempts (whether wisely or not) have been made again to banish them, but without success. The jay (*C. glandarius*) is not known here. The goat-sucker (*Caprimulgus Europæus*) is an occasional visitant for a short time in the midst of summer. The wood-pigeon is common. The common thrush; the missel-thrush (*T. viscivorus*); the blackbird; the ring-ouzel (*T. torquatus*), and the water-ouzel (*Cinclus aquaticus*), all regularly breed here. The fieldfare (*T. pilaris*), and the red-wing (*T. iliacus*) appear in great numbers in the beginning of winter, but speedily migrate further south. The snow-flake or bunting (*Emberiza nivalis*) continues all winter congregated in immense flocks, and when they descend low down are regarded as the harbingers of severe weather. The most common permanent small birds are the house-sparrow (*Pyrgita domestica*); the yellow-hammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), and the chaffinch (*Fringilla Cælebs*), two white specimens of which were seen for a considerable time in Candacraig woods; also the red-breast (*Sylvia rubecula*); the blue titmouse (*Parus cæruleus*): the bullfinch (*Pyrrhula vul.*), and the creeper (*Certhia fam.*). The goldfinch (*F. carduelis*) is not found here. The principal summer birds are the pied wagtail (*Motacilla alba*), here called the *seed-bird*, which comes regularly, as its local name bears, at seed-time. The yellow wagtail (*M. flava*) is an occasional but rare visitor. The *Motacilla boarula* rare. The common wren (*Troglodytes vul.*), and the golden-crested wren (*Regulus cristatus*) both build in this parish. The wheat-ear, or fallow-chat, provincially called the chackert (*Saxicola cœnanthe*), is common. The whin-chat (*S. rubetra*) rare. The white-throat (*Curruca sylvia*), and the whin-sparrow (*Accentor modularis*) are seen in summer. The black-cap (*Sylvia atricapilla*) very rare. The skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) is rather rare. The meadow-pipit (*Anthus pratensis*) common. The swallow (*H. rustica*); the sand-martin (*H. riparia*), and the martin (*H. urbica*), make their appearance about the first of May. The swift (*Cypselus apus*) was observed here by the writer for the first time last season. The cuckoo pays his annual visit two or three weeks later than to the south of the Grampians; but he continues longer, not ceasing his song sometimes till the first week of August.

Of the game birds may be mentioned the red-grouse (*Lagopus*

Scot.) * The hills in this district are amongst the most celebrated for grouse-shooting, but, it is said, the number of birds is materially diminished within the last ten or fifteen years. The black-cock (*Tetrao tetrix*) is, on the other hand, supposed to be on the increase. The ptarmigan (*T. Lagopus*) breeds in Corgarff, on a hill called the Brown Cow. The partridge (*Perdix cinerea*) was abundant, but has suffered much by the storm of last winter. The gray plover (*Charadrius plumbealis*) is abundant; and the dotterel's (*C. Morinellus*) nest is found in the more sequestered hills. The lapwing (*Vanellus cristatus*) appears early in spring. It is here called the *teuchat*, and the short storm that often occurs after field labour has commenced is hence called the *teuchat's storm*. Numbers of the nests of the lapwing are found every season. The curlew (*Numenius arquata*) comes in numbers to breed in the marshes in the hills. The common snipe (*Scolopax gallinago*), and the jack-snipe (*S. gallinula*) are abundant. The woodcock (*S. rusticola*) is an annual visitant, and in some seasons plentiful. Their nests have several times been found in the parish. The water-rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) has been killed, but is very rare. The land-rail (*R. crex*) breeds every season. The wild duck (*Anas boschas*) breeds in numbers in the Bunzeach. The teal-duck (*A. crecca*) is shot occasionally. The heron (*Ardea cinerea*) breeds at Edinglassie, where there has been for many years a small heronry.†

The indigenous reptiles are few, the adder (*Coluber Berus*) has been seen in the hills, but is very rare. The *Lacerta agilis* is also rarely seen. The *Rana temporaria* and *Bufo vulgaris* are common.

Botany.—This parish is not deficient in variety of vegetable productions. The following will be found a pretty correct list of the less common plants. The locality of a few of the Alpine plants mentioned is, however, immediately beyond the western boundary of the parish, but the close connection with the botany of the head of Aberdeenshire will be an apology for noticing them here.

* A specimen of the *Lagopus Scotticus* was shot this season with fully half of the plumage pure white.

† A remarkable proof of the distance the heron goes in search of food was observed here some time ago. Monymusk (by the map published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge) is twenty-five miles distant from Edinglassie. A heron lost one of its legs in one of the Edinglassie keeper's traps. A few days afterwards, the heron without a leg was seen at Monymusk.

Adoxa moschatellina	Fumaria officinalis	Prunus Padus
Arabis turrita	Galium Aparine	Pyrola media
Arenaria verna	———— boreale	———— minor
Asperula odorata	Gentiana acaulis	———— secunda
Avena alpina	———— campestris	Ribes petræum
Botrychium lunaria	Gymnadenia conopsea	Rubus Chamæmorus
Cardamine amara	Habenaria albida	———— saxatilis
———— pratensis	———— bifolia	Sambucus ebulis
Carum carui	———— viridis	Saxifraga aizoides
Chrysanthemum Leucan-	Listera cordata	Scrophularia nodosa
themum	Lonicera Periclymenum	Solidago virgaurea
Circea alpina (rare)	Molinia cœrulea β	Statice Armeria
Cochlearia officinalis	Menyanthis trifoliata	Thalictrum alpinum
Cornus Suecica	Meum athamanticum	Thlaspi arvense
Corylus avellana	Orchis mascula	Trollius Europæus
Echium vulgare	Origanum vulgare	Turritis glabra
Epilobium angustifolium	Oxalis acetosella	Verbascum Thapsus
Festuca sylvatica	Populus tremula	Vicia sylvatica
Fumaria capreolata	Primula veris	

Woods and Plantations.—There is no feature in which the progress of improvement in Strathdon is more distinctly indicated, within the last half century, than in woods and plantations. The whole extent of ground covered with wood did not, before then, exceed 200 or 300 acres, whereas there are now nearly 3000 acres of thriving plantations. Scotch fir and larch are the predominant description of trees, and to these both soil and climate appear to be most congenial. Ash, plane, and gean grow also freely; and in the more sheltered situations, the other kinds of hard-wood thrive. In the more recent plantations, a much greater proportion of hard-wood plants have been introduced. One proprietor, several years ago, obtained the Highland Society's premium for having put in the greatest number in one season. There are no trees of remarkable dimensions in the parish, but at the residences of the different proprietors there are large-sized trees of plane, ash, and elm.

In the management of woods and plantations, the radical error has been planting too thick, and the prevailing one is the neglect of sufficient thinning.* Many extensive plantations are almost impenetrable thickets. The superior health and strength of the exterior trees of these very plantations obviously prove how injuriously this system operates. The woods of Auchernach are under very superior management, and although in a less favourable locality with respect to climate, the progress they make shews the beneficial result of the proprietor's care and attention.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Historical Events.—Under this head the parish furnishes no-

* Since the above was written, much has been done in the way of thinning the plantations.

thing of importance, unless the share its people had in the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745 deserves a passing notice. Although Strathdon lies in the country of the Forbeses,—a family which the Scottish Jacobites styled one of the most rebellious in Scotland—like most of the Highlands, it was deeply involved in the troubles of the times.

There is no traditionary legend to countenance the supposition that the people were devotedly attached to the Pretender's cause. On the contrary, the remarkable letter* from the Earl of Mar, who was superior of the whole parish, to "Jock of Inverernan," would rather prove that it was the tyranny of feudal despotism which forced them to join the insurgent's ranks. Mar angrily complains; "It's a pretty thing when all the Highlands of Scotland are rising upon their King and country's account, that my men should only be refractory;" plainly intimates to his vassal that "he was in the right not to come with the hundred men he sent, when he (Mar) expected four times the number," and sends a message to his tenants, "that if they come not forth with their best arms, he will send a party immediately to burn what they will miss taking from them," adding, "they may believe this is not only a threat, but, by all that's sacred, I will put it in execution."

The aversion of the people to engage in the cause is further corroborated by the proceedings of the presbytery of Alford against the Episcopal ministers. The libel against Mr John Alexander, Episcopal minister of Kildrummy, commences—"his praying publicly in Braemar for success to the Pretender his arms when the standard was displayed there," &c. He protested against seven of the witnesses, "in respect they are habit and repute as of the number of those rebellious accomplices that were with the late Earl of Mar in arms at Braemar; and, therefore, till they be purged of the said scandall, cannot be sustained as *habiles testes*." "Upon which Maister Thaine, in the name of the presbytery, re-protested, that the former objection and protestation was groundless, and no regard should be had thereto; because, though these persons might have been at Braemar with the late Earl of Mar, yet it does not follow that they were of the number of his rebellious accomplices, because it is nottour in the country side that many of the poor countrey people were only brought thither upon pretence of hunting, and when they were there were pressed to

* The original manuscript is still in the possession of the Inverernan family. It has more than once appeared in print, and need not be repeated here.

go along with the Rebels, contrary to their inclination, and how soon soever they had an opportunity of deserting, they came home, thereby testifying their want of inclination to rebel: and the Government is so conscious of this, that they have never called any of these people to account for their being in the Rebellion." The people of Strathdon, however, seem to have been pretty generally implicated; for Mr Robertson, * the Episcopal minister, says in his confession on the presbytery's libel, "that he did read the proclamation for the thanksgiving from the pulpit, but did not observe the thanksgiving, because his people were out on parties, and, therefore, had none to keep it with him."

In 1745, Gordon of Glenbucket joined the Pretender with 400 men raised in Strathdon, Glenlivet, &c. The families of Skellater, Inverernan, and Edinglassie, joined the cause of the Pretender; but, fortunately, no confiscations, nor even prosecutions by the Government took place after the insurrection was suppressed.

Eminent Men.—There is no person of particular eminence, either in literature or science, with whom this parish can claim connection by birth or residence. There are not wanting, however, characters of distinguished moral excellence, some of which merit especial notice in the statistics of this parish.

General John Forbes of Skellater, when a young man, distinguished himself by resenting the attacks on his country of the celebrated John Wilkes, contained in the "North Briton," and sought in vain for a personal rencontre with him. General Forbes married a princess of the blood-royal of Portugal, and rose to be a field-marshal in the Portuguese service. He was a distin-

* Mr Robertson appears to have had a strong hold of the affections of his people; and his being forcibly separated from them by deposition, will account for one of those ebullitions of violence against his successor at his first introduction, mentioned in the former account. The whole of his confession before the presbytery is made with so much naïveté, that we extract it from the record of the presbytery. "Master John Robertson was called and compeared, and being interrogate upon the several articles of his libell, replied and confessed as follows, viz. That during the time of the late Rebellion he prayed for the Pretender; but with these limitations, that God would incline his heart to be a true Protestant; and if it were God's will he would bring him to the throne who was lawfull heir to our native kings; and if not, that God would be pleased to incline him to set his heart upon ane heavenly kingdome. That he prayed God would preserve the Earl of Marr and his own parochiners from sin and wrath, and every mark of God's displeasure, and bring them safe home again. That he observed the fast-day lybelled, and prayed for the Pretender, the Earl of Marr, and his own parochiners, and that God would reconcile disagreeing parties. That he did read the proclamation for the thanksgiving from pulpit, but not observe the thanksgiving, because his people were out on parties, and therefor he had non to keep it with him. That he did not pray for King George in the time of the Rebellion, but prayed for him before and since that time *nomina-*
tim."

gushed soldier, and acted with great success against the Spaniards. He accompanied the Royal family to the Brazils, where he died in 1809.

John Forbes, Esq.—Mr Forbes was born at Bellabeg in September 1743. In early life he went to Bombay, and engaged in mercantile pursuits. His talents for business and indomitable probity and virtue speedily laid the foundation of that distinction which his name afterwards attained in all the three presidencies. His enlightened views led him to embark in a field of commercial enterprise of vast magnitude, from which he realized a large fortune. The mercantile house he established at Bombay became of distinguished eminence, and still bears his name. Mr Forbes was a quick discerner of character, and to the deserving proved a steadfast friend and generous benefactor. From his innate goodness of heart, he took a warm interest in the young men recommended to his attention, and delighted to exercise the extensive influence he possessed in forwarding their views. The paternal counsel he gave at the outset of life, and the benevolent assistance he afforded by pecuniary advances, are still gratefully remembered by many now retired upon their fortunes. Mr Forbes repurchased Newe, the estate of his ancestors, besides other extensive property in Strathdon, and from that era in reality commenced the improvement of the country. The whole rental of his estates was laid out in carrying forward this great object,—but the nature of these improvements will more properly fall to be noticed afterwards.

But the character of Mr Forbes was pre-eminently distinguished for a spirit of philanthropy and Christian charity, founded on genuine and simple piety. His private beneficence, both in India and at home, was almost unbounded, and his munificent donations to public charities, amongst others that of L.10,000 to the Aberdeen Asylum, and L.1000 to the Infirmary, are well known. A handsome monument in Aberdeen to his memory testifies the gratitude of its inhabitants.

Sir Charles Forbes, Bart.—Mr Forbes died in 1821, and his estates descended to his nephew, Sir Charles Forbes, Bart. He also in early life went to India, returned to England in 1812, and in 1823 was created a Baronet of the united kingdom. He sat in Parliament for upwards of twenty years, steadily advocating the cause of the native Indian, and, although now retired from Parliamentary duty, the energies of his mind are still untiringly devoted to the amelioration of British India. Twenty-eight years

ago, on leaving India, the natives, as a testimony of respect and affection, presented him with a service of plate of the value of L.1500; and in gratitude for the important part he has taken in exalting their position in society, obtaining their admission to the offices of justices of the peace, and grand jurors, the natives of Bombay have subscribed for a statue of him, for which he is now sitting to Sir Francis Chantrey. Sir Charles claims to represent the Lords Forbes of Pitsligo as heir-male.

Rev. Dr Forbes.—Another member of this family, intimately connected with the parish for the greater part of his life, well merits notice. Dr Forbes, the immediate predecessor of the writer, was for twenty-five years minister of Strathdon. Although very early in life called to the discharge of the ministerial office, he zealously performed its duties, and, under the Divine blessing, his labours were attended with eminent success. No man could be more devoted to the best interests of his people, and none ever more fully enjoyed their confidence and affection.

Dr Forbes died suddenly of an affection of the heart in 1834. No event ever caused a stronger sensation in Strathdon,—deep grief reigned in every cottage, and his memory is still affectionately cherished by the people, as their best and kindest friend.

Land-owners.—The landed proprietors are, Sir Charles Forbes, Bart. of Newe and Edinglassie; Major-General Sir Alexander Leith, K. C. B. of Freefield and Glenkindy; Robert Anderson, Esq. of Candacraig; the Earl of Fife; Mrs Forbes of Inverernan; General Forbes of Dunotar and Auchernach; and Robert Farquharson, Esq. of Allargue.

Parochial Registers.—The parochial register of births and marriages from 1674 to 1710 is carefully filled up, but the volume is in very bad condition.* There are no regular books from that date till 1741, when a register of baptisms commences, but down to 1830, it has been very irregularly kept. A regular register of baptisms and marriages has been kept from the year 1830. No register of burials has ever been in the parish.

Antiquities—Old Castles.—From Kildrummy to the head of

* The following quaint entries occur. "Anno 1666, September 22; William Elphinstone of Bellabeg (his first wife Jean Johnstone, a discreet, modest, and virtuous gentlewoman being dead, the twenty day of October last bye-past,) gave up his name to be proclaimed with Isobel Forbes, second lawful daughter to William Forbes of Skellater, and were married October 1."

"Anno 1705, September, 22. Maister John Robertsons, parsons of Invernochtie, a son baptized by himself called James, wit. James M'Farlan in Bruz, and Maister James Mitchell, schoolmr, who held up the child.

Strathdon there is a regular chain of ruinous castles, and it is a singular coincidence, that the first four are all placed at equal intervening distances,—Towie Castle, being about three miles up the Don from Kildrummy; Glenbucket, three above Towie; and Culquhanny, three miles higher up than Glenbucket; a mile beyond Culquhanny stands the Doune of Invernochty; and, lastly, at the head of the strath, the Castle of Corgarff. The latter three only are in this parish. Tradition says Culquhanny Castle was built by Forbes of Towie (a cadet of the Putachie family, who married the heiress of Towie), early in the sixteenth century, but it was never finished. “The most ancient building still entire,” says the former Account, “is the Castle of Corgarff. It is supposed to have been built by some of the Earls of Marr for a hunting-seat. During the feuds between the Gordons and the Forbeses, it was burned down in 1571 by Adam Gordon of Auchendown or some of his officers, and in it Margaret Campbell, daughter of Campbell of Calder, then big with child, together with her children and servants, 27 in number, were cruelly burned to death. Having been afterwards rebuilt, it was purchased by Government in 1746 from Mr Forbes of Skellater, and for several years thereafter 15 or 20 men were stationed in it.” From 1827 to 1831, it was garrisoned by a captain, subaltern, and 56 men, to support the civil authorities in the suppression of smuggling.

Doune.—A short way above the confluence of the Nocht and the Don, there is a very remarkable abruptly conical mound, about 60 feet in height from the bottom of the ditch; 970 feet in circumference at the base; and 562 feet at the top. It is of an oval form, and the flat surface on the top measures about half an acre. It has been regularly fortified by a moat 16 feet deep and 26 feet wide at the bottom, which has been supplied with water by the stream Bardock. It has evidently been one of those gravelly eminences already mentioned, and probably the cutting of the wet ditch and the more regular formation of the sides is all that is artificial about it. Its situation and figure pointed it out as a place on which to erect a stronghold. All around the top, the foundations of buildings are visible. A small portion of wall on each side of the gateway to the south is still seen, but it is too dilapidated to judge of what the thickness had been. At the level of the ground it measures six feet. There is no account of this remnant of antiquity. Some vague tradition states that the church originally stood here, which merely rests on the former name of the

parish being Invernochtie. It has been a place of considerable strength in a remote age. Chalmers mentions traces of a Roman *iter* from Dee-side, which would point precisely in this direction. The traces of science in fortification would support the conjecture, that it might be a Roman fort to preserve the line of communication across the country; or it may pertain to a later era, and have been one of those forts erected by the Picts or Britons as a protection against the incursions of the Danes, and other northern hordes from the north-west. The former Account mentions "the ruins of buildings in the neighbourhood." These have been long since obliterated by the plough.

Eirde Houses.—Five of these interesting vestiges of antiquity, called Eirde Houses, from being subterranean, have been discovered in the parish. We have been so often applied to for some account of them, that a brief description of one is deemed necessary. It is a singular fact that, both in this parish and in Kildrummy, where they are still more numerous, they are all of the same shape. The outer passage, which lies to the south, is circular, and about 8 feet in length. The exterior chamber is 24 feet long, 6 feet 8 inches high, greatest breadth across the floor 8 feet 8 inches, while at the roof it is only 6 feet 6 inches. The floor is laid with stones. The foundation, or lowest course, consists of 22 stones, averaging 3 feet in height, so set up as to give the largest surface to the inside of the wall, and they all decline outwards from the perpendicular. Above these are several courses of smaller stones, so placed that each covers the joint of the under stones, and inclines a little more inward. The whole wall, on each side, thus forms the segment of a large vertical circle. On the side walls are laid nine flat stones, 8 feet 6 inches in length, and 3 feet 8 inches in breadth, which form the roof. The interstices are jammed full of small stones, but there is no appearance of any kind of cement having been used, neither is there any indication on the stones of the hammer having been employed. On the north side of this chamber is an aperture 15 inches high, 7 inches wide at the bottom, and 10 inches at the top, which communicates with a small apartment, 5 feet long, and 1 foot broad; the back, cover, and ends being each a single stone. On the same side, very near the inner end of the outer apartment, is another opening, 2 feet high, and 1 foot 8 inches wide, and 3 feet above the floor which leads to the inner chamber. Here is the only angle that occurs,—all the other parts being segments of circles. The length of this

ABERDEEN.

M m

chamber is 16 feet 6 inches, breadth, 6 feet 6 inches, and height, 6 feet, and precisely of the same construction as the outer. The whole length of the house, including both chambers, is thus 48 feet 6 inches.

Rings and Coins.—In 1822, in digging the foundation of a dike, on the north side of the hill, opposite to Garchory, were found two rings and several hundred silver coins. One of the rings is gold, with a small dark sapphire. A ring precisely similar was discovered 16th July 1829, with other relics, in the coffin of a bishop of Chichester, in the cathedral of that city. The date of the tomb is A. D. 1146.

The other was a broken iron gilt ring, with a pale sapphire, and is very similar to many Arabian and Indian rings.

The coins are nearly all of Henry III. of England. Some of them are of William the Lion of Scotland, and two of them of King John. A portion of them was divided into halves, and others into quarters. Those of Henry III. have on the obverse, the King's head, full-faced and crowned, holding the sceptre with a cross patee: reverse, a cross with a small cross in each quarter.

They all have the names of the towns where they were coined, and of the mint-masters. Such as SIMVN ON + CANT—(Canterbury.)

The coins of William have the King's head in profile on the obverse, holding the sceptre with a cross. Reverse, a cross with a star in each quarter.

Those of King John are stamped with a triangle on both sides. The effigy on the obverse is within the triangle. They are much defaced.

Modern Buildings.—The house of Newe is a handsome modern edifice, built in 1831, of Kildrummy freestone—Mr Simpson, architect. The style is a happy combination of the manor-house of James I.'s time, and the Henusk. The skill of the architect has been ingeniously exercised in adapting the old house, (which was to be preserved) to part of the plan, without at all interfering with the elegant suite of rooms on the principal floor. The portico, the vestibule, and the corridor, which are lighted with stained glass, are very successful efforts of architectural genius.

The house of Candacraig is a mixture of the Elizabethan and Scotch manor-house—Mr Smith, architect. Built in 1835, of granite, chiefly taken from a quarry which was fortunately discovered

Families employed in agriculture in 1881,	162
in trade, manufactures, &c. do.	47
All other families,	142
Families employed in agriculture in 1899,	148
in handicraft and manufactures,	58
not employed in either division,	84

The great defalcation of the population in the present year is obviously attributable to emigration and the enlargement of farms, also to a failure of the harvest, which induced many young men and women to seek service, or employment in the south.

The number of children under 15 years of age,	501
persons above 70 do.	54
Average number of children in each family,	3 ¹ / ₁₀
births for the last seven years,	47
marriages, do. exclusive of the Catholics, who do not register with us,	12
illegitimate children for the last three years,	4
Number of persons partially insane, but not so as to require constraint,	3
confined in a private asylum,	1
fatuous,	1
blind, or almost totally so,	4

There is no deaf and dumb person in the parish.

Habits of the People, Popular Customs, &c.—In the habits of the people there is an obvious and increasing attention to comfort and cleanliness. The ordinary dress of the men is of stout home-made manufacture; the women wear gowns or wrappers of home-spun wincy. Strangers commonly remark the well-dressed appearance of the congregation on the Sabbath.

The ordinary food of the peasantry is oatmeal, vegetables, and the produce of the dairy. Fortunately for morality and good order, the "bothy" system for servants is scarcely known in the parish. In some cases the men have their meal and milk, which is prepared in the kitchen.

The people in general are frugal, and, upon the whole, temperate and industrious. Unhappily, a few individuals are habitually addicted to the use of ardent spirits; but these are the exceptions; the majority are decidedly sober people. If they have sometimes been charged with indolence, it will be found that it arises chiefly from the circumstances in which they are placed. They are capable, when called into activity, of great and laborious exertion, as well as of patient endurance under privations.

Their intellectual powers are not, perhaps, in general, much elevated by reading and education, although, with hardly an exception, they can all read; but they are endued with great natural acuteness and sagacity in the management of their own affairs. If in some instances they are too much disposed to retain a sense of injury, they at the same time are extremely sensible of, and

grateful for kindness and attention. The influences of pure and undefiled religion are, it is hoped, being more and more diffused over their minds, one evidence of which is their habitual and regular attendance on Gospel ordinances.

The favourite pastimes are, prize-shootings about Christmas, and subscription dances. These are generally made subservient to charitable purposes. They are set on foot for the relief of some case of poverty or incidental distress in the neighbourhood; and thus, at the individual cost of a few pence, a considerable sum is realized for a needy neighbour. Another charitable practice prevails. When an extraordinary case of helpless distress occurs, the young men in the locality assemble together, and, often accompanied with music, go from house to house, where they receive a donation in kind or money. In this way a considerable supply is speedily raised in behalf of the object of their charitable exertions.

There is, indeed, no feature of character that more peculiarly marks the people than their warm sympathy, humane attention, and active benevolence to their suffering neighbours: however straitened their own circumstances may be, the common beggar is never allowed to pass from the door unrelieved.

Poaching in game prevailed to a considerable extent some years ago. During the shooting-season, bands of desperate characters still infest the hills; but they are not connected with the parish. The analogous offence of moor-burning, however, is still too prevalent. Neither can they be acquitted altogether of *blazing the river*. A good many foul fish are thus annually killed. This is not done secretly as a crime, but openly as a diversion.

Previous to the alteration in the distillery laws, this parish was one of the strongholds of smuggling. The inhabitants of Corgarff, the glens, and not a few in the lower part of the parish, were professed smugglers. The revenue-officers were set at defiance. To be engaged in illicit distillation, and to defraud the excise, was neither looked on as a crime, nor considered as a disgrace. As may be supposed, such a system of things proved most pernicious, productive of the grossest demoralization, irreligion, and sin, and destructive of every habit of regular industry. But a happy change took place. By the vigorous measures adopted by Government, effectively seconded by the proprietors, this moral pest was struck at the very root, and speedily became utterly extinct. The lawless life of the smuggling "bothie" was wholly

abandoned, and the honest labours of agriculture substituted. It is a subject of just congratulation, to contemplate the industrious spirit, the healthy tone of moral feeling, and the fixed religious principle that are gradually, under the blessing of God, acquiring more and more strength over their minds.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—The number of acres cultivated and waste cannot be stated with precision, as several of the properties have not been surveyed. The most accurate approximation the writer has been able to arrive at is as follows, viz.

Arable land in round numbers,	4,500	Scotch acres.
Wood,	3,000	do.
Waste and pasture probably upwards of	60,000	do.

Rent of Land.—The gross rental of the parish, (including the portion of Tarland* formerly mentioned,) is, as nearly as can be ascertained, about L.5000. The valued rent, exclusive of Tarland, is L.3039, 1s. 6d. Scots. The average rent of arable land may be stated at L. 1, 5s. per Scotch acre; the right of common pasture in the hills included. The grazing of a full-sized ox may cost L.2. A sheep pastured on the hill for a year, 2s. 6d.; grazed in an inclosed field, 5s. 6d.

Wages, &c.—A farm-servant's wages with victuals, or two pecks of meal per week and a Scotch pint of milk per day, are from L.10 to L. 14 per annum; a woman servant's vary from L. 4 to L. 5, 10s. according to the kind of work required. The scythe is now almost entirely employed in cutting down the crop. The farmers engage hands for the harvest about Lammas. A cutter gets about L. 2, 10s.; a bandster from L. 2 to L. 2, 5s.; women from L. 1, 10s. to L. 1, 15s. Formerly, thravers were engaged for harvest at 3d. per thrave without victuals, but the scythe has now superseded every other method. It is more expeditious, the crop seasons sooner, and more straw is obtained. One scythe cuts down an acre and a-quarter per day, with a woman to gather the swathe into sheaves, and a bandster to bind and stook. A day labourer's wage is from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. in summer, and 1s. to 1s. 4d. in winter. The prices of articles of country manufacture for rural purposes are, a full-mounted iron plough, L. 3, 10s.; do. of wood, L. 2, 15s. to L. 3; harrows of hard-wood, L. 1, 3s.; do. of larch, which is found to answer well, 16s.; a double close cart, L. 10 to

* This portion of Tarland is so intermixed with Strathdon, that the writer has not been able to separate it in attempting to ascertain the real rent. As it is not mentioned in the Tarland Account, it was thought right to include it here.

L. 12; a long cart, generally made of Braemar fir, or larch, and to fit on the axle of the close cart, L. 1; a wheelbarrow, 16s.; a set of horse-shoes, 3s. 4d.; a riding-horse's, with steeled toes, 3s. 6d.; mason work per rood, materials afforded by the employer, L. 2 to L. 2, 8s.; do. providing the materials, L. 6 to L. 8; a carpenter, 12s. per week; dry stone dikes, 3 feet 9 inches high, 4½d. per yard.

Live-Stock.—The common breed of cattle is the Aberdeenshire. The polled are, perhaps, at present more in fashion than the horned. In the upper district and glens, a smaller horned race prevails, in which there is an intermixture of the Ross-shire and West Highland breed. Much attention is paid to the breeding and rearing of black-cattle in this parish. The dairy is altogether a secondary consideration to the rearing of good calves; hence a cow good at the pail is of less importance than a good breeder, and strong prejudice exists against the admixture of any south country blood. The late Dr Forbes of Blelack and Inverernan, with great care and expense, succeeded in raising a justly celebrated stock, which became widely diffused over the parish. The enterprize and skill of the Messrs Grassick are successfully employed in the improvement of this as well as other descriptions of farm stock. They do not spare expense to procure the best bulls, and keep valuable cows. The farmers, in general, are superior judges of cattle, and, as the better classes especially keep well, they find a ready market for their beasts. Since the London market for fat cattle has been opened up by steam ships from Aberdeen, a considerable number of beasts are stall-fed in the parish. One of the gentlemen above-mentioned sold four this winter for L. 105. One of the four was a four year old ox reared on the farm. The purchaser, after gaining two prizes for them at a fat cattle show, sold them to advantage in the London market.

The sheep are of the black-faced breed. Some of the farmers purchase wedder lambs at Lanark lamb fair, which they keep till three years old. Yearling rams are generally bought there, and brought north to improve the stock. Few horses are reared in the parish, except to supply the place of such as are worn out. The number in the parish in 1835 was 314.

Husbandry.—Within the last twenty years, very great and rapid progress has been made in agricultural improvement. By trenching, drainage, &c. many of the tenants have made consider-

able additions to the arable land of their farms. The facility in the command of lime is of material benefit in this respect. Generally each farm has its own lime-kiln, to which limestone is driven during summer to be burned the ensuing spring, and laid hot upon the land. Occasionally the old system is practised of spreading it over the turnip field, and hoeing it in with the second hoeing of the turnips, but this is rapidly falling into disuse. It has already been stated, that, upon the principal farms, the most approved husbandry system has been introduced. It is still, however, a prevalent error to keep too many beasts; and, in some cases, the old prejudice exists of considering it waste to give straw for litter. The economy of expense of labour, compared with what it was forty years ago, is illustrated by the fact, that, within that period the farm of Buchaam was worked by 6 ploughs, 18 horses, and 4 yokes of cattle of 10 or 12 each. The present enterprising tenant works the same farm (with a great additional extent of arable land which he has reclaimed) in a manner not to be surpassed, with 3 ploughs, 4 horses, and a pair, or occasionally two pairs of work oxen.

The rotation followed, and which the terms of lease commonly stipulate, is the seven-shift, viz. 1. oats; 2. oats; 3. green crop; 4. bear or bigg; 5. hay; 6. and 7. pasture. No wheat is ever grown, and very rarely English barley; bear or chester being found much more suitable for the climate. The favourite oats, and, unquestionably, the best fitted for the climate, are, the early Angus and Scotch birley. The soil is well adapted for turnip, of which excellent crops are raised. A few globes are sown for early consumption, but the principal crop consists of green and red-top yellow. Swedes grow well, but they have given place to the red-top yellow turnip, which is found to keep as long good in spring, and yield a more abundant crop. Few potatoes are raised; the soil suits them well, but they run great hazard of being ruined by early frosts.

Leases.—The general duration of leases is nineteen years. The farm-buildings are generally of a superior description. The dwelling-houses are comfortable and commodious, and the offices neat squares of substantial stone and lime, with slated roofs. There are nine thrashing-mills in the parish driven by water, and one by horse power. There are four meal-mills, which on an average grind from 1600 to 2000 bolls per annum.

Distance from market, and uncertainty of climate, are the great

obstacles to agricultural improvement. In not a few instances these evils are aggravated by deficiency of agricultural capital. It unfortunately happens, such is the desire to possess a farm, arising perhaps from local attachment, that whenever a place becomes vacant, an unwise competition takes place, which leads to the offer of higher rents than prudence can at all times justify.

Quarries.—There are eight or ten quarries of limestone, which are regularly worked for the supply of the parish, and to meet a considerable demand from Kildrummy and Towie. The quality of the lime is excellent, being part of the same great bed of limestone wrought near Keith and at Ardonald. It is a singular fact, that all the limestone rocks lie on the north side of the Don, with the exception of one near Boilhandy. The lime is burned with peats, with the addition of a small quantity of coals when they can be obtained. A slate quarry was formerly wrought, but the quality being coarse, it has been long abandoned.

Produce.—The statement of raw produce is given as taken in the year 1835–36, no year since having been nearly an average crop. The gross amount, as nearly as can be ascertained, is as follows:—

Bear, 1302 quarters, at L.1, 5s. per quarter,	L.1627	10	0.
Oats, 3574 at L.1, do.	3574	0	0
Hay, 39,310 stones imperial, at 4½d. per stone	787	1	3
Grass fields let annually,	700	0	0
Turnip and potatoes, 466 imperial acres, at L.5 per acre,	2330	0	0
Black-cattle 2115, of which one-third for sale, at L. 4, 5s. each,	2996	5	0
Sheep 8664, of which one-fourth for sale, at 10s. each,	1063	0	0
Butter, sold 2138 imperial stones, at 8s. 2d. per stone,	873	0	4
Eggs, sold 11,200 dozen, at 4d. per dozen,	186	13	4
2560 pairs of stockings knitted, and sold at 1s. per pair,	128	0	0

L.14235 9 11

Manufactures.—There is not anything deserving the name of a manufactory in the parish. At the wool-mill of Glenkindy, the average quantity of blankets and plaiden manufactured per annum is about 2220 yards; listing 4000 yards; woollen yarn spun 5800 cuts. The number of persons employed is 6.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Town.—The nearest market-town is Aberdeen, forty-five miles distant; but at Rhynie, eighteen miles distant, there is weekly an excellent market for butcher-meat. It is to Aberdeen that all the grain and other produce is driven, and from thence that all the merchandize, groceries, and coals are brought. There is no village in the parish, unless nine cottages at Heugh-head may be called one.

Means of Communication.—The means of communication are good. Strathdon has a daily post. The turnpike road runs through it for eighteen miles, and terminates in Corgarff. There are also excellent cross roads, most of them made by the heritors within the last few years, on their different estates. There are three stone bridges over the Don. The old bridge of Pooldhulie was one of the two on the whole course of the river that withstood the flood of 1829 uninjured. Luib-bridge was built by Sir Charles Forbes in 1832. There is an iron bridge, with a span of forty feet, for the turnpike road, over the Nochtly, and seven other stone bridges over different streams in the parish. A public coach runs to and from Aberdeen on alternate days during the summer. In the winter months it does not come farther up than Mossat, twelve miles distant.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church is, upon the whole, perhaps as conveniently situated as well could be for the lower district of the parish. In a widely scattered population, such as this, there must necessarily be many families at too remote a distance for regular attendance on public worship at the parish church. The distance of the church from the eastern extremity of the parish is seven miles, and upwards of fifteen from the western; but the greatest distance of any dwelling-house from the church is about twelve miles. The church was rebuilt in 1757, and thirty years ago was ceiled and re-seated. The main fault of it is its inadequacy for the accommodation of the congregation. It is seated for 504, but the average number of communicants of the united congregations, for five years previous to 1838, (and they all communicate at the parish church), is 860. The tenants of each heritor possess a right of sitting in the division of the church assigned them. All the sittings are free.

A missionary minister, on the Royal Bounty, has been stationed at Corgarff for upwards of 100 years. A new church, manse, and offices, which have already been alluded to, were built in 1835, and cost nearly L.1000. The missionary receives L. 60 per annum, a croft, and right of pasturage, for so many sheep in the hill. Every attempt that has been made to obtain the usual grant for dispensing the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Corgarff, where the accommodations are now of the most superior description, has hitherto unhappily not been attended with success.*

* Since the above was written, the Royal Bounty Committee have allowed L.3 for this desirable purpose, and the Lord's Supper was this year (1840) dispensed for the first time.

Manse, &c.—Very large additions were made, or rather, it would be more correct to say, a new manse was built in 1831, while the chief part of the old one (built in 1791) was retained. Having been completely gutted, it joined well with the new building, and it now possesses every convenience for a family. An excellent steading of offices was built at the same time. The glebe is about $1\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre in extent. The value may be estimated at L. 2, 12s. 6d. per annum. The stipend is L. 190, 5s. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. money, including L. 20 Scots for grass, and communion element money: meal, 2 bolls, 3 pecks, $\frac{4}{5}$ lippie: bear, 1 boll, 1 firloft, 1 peck, $\frac{4}{5}$ lippie, and 634 back-loads of peats, which, by an agreement between the heritors and minister in 1838, were commuted for half-a-merk per load.

There is a small Roman Catholic chapel in the upper district of the parish, in which service is performed once in three weeks. Ten years ago there were 69 Roman Catholics in the parish. The whole number is now 23, consisting of 6 families and 9 individuals. There is one Dissenting family in the parish, which came from Aberdeen some years ago. The number of Dissenters is 2.

Divine service, both at the parish church and the missionary chapel, is attended in the most exemplary manner. The number of families attending the Established Church is 283, or all in parish excepting the 7 above-mentioned. The average number of communicants has already been stated to be 860, including, of course, those who communicate from neighbouring parishes.

The average annual amount of church collections for religious and charitable objects, as ascertained in answer to the queries of the Church Commissioners, was found to be, for three years previous to 1835, L. 14, 12s. 11d.

Education.—There are seven schools in the parish, exclusive of a sewing-school taught by a dress-maker; one parochial; three supported by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge; and three adventure schools taught only in winter. The branches taught at the parochial school are, reading, writing, arithmetic, mathematics, English grammar, geography, and Latin when required. The school is daily opened with prayer. A portion of scripture is read by each pupil, sufficiently advanced, every day; and prayers, psalms, and portions of scripture repeated weekly. The general expense of education is, English reading, 6d. per month; reading and writing, 8d. per month; do. do. with arithmetic or Latin, 10d. per month. The salary of the parochial

teacher is L. 28 per annum, with an allowance of L.2 in lieu of a garden. The amount of school-fees is about L. 8. The nominal amount is fully a third more,—but they are very irregularly paid. The number of pupils may be stated to be from 65 to 90 in winter, and from 35 to 50 in summer. The excellent accommodations that have been recently provided have already been noticed. The present incumbent was appointed in 1803, but for nearly twenty years has been afflicted by the hand of God, and confined in a private asylum. An assistant and successor has been appointed. He receives a very small portion (L. 3) of the salary; the school-fees, and possesses the dwelling-house. He also receives a share of the funds under the management of the Trustees of the Dick Bequest.

The three teachers supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge receive L.15 per annum of salary, and have the requisite accommodations of a house, croft, and fuel. Each of the schools is most useful in the locality in which it is placed. In Corgarff the Roman Catholic children freely attend the Protestant school, read the Bible, and commit the Assembly's Catechism, and the Psalms to memory.

Friendly Society.—The Lonach Highland and Friendly Society was instituted fifteen years ago. As its name imports, its object was twofold, viz. the preservation of the Highland garb, and the Celtic language; and also the establishment of a Friendly and Insurance Society for affording weekly allowances to sick members, and widows, and orphans. At the outset, owing to the imperfect knowledge of the equitable principles on which such institutions should be founded, this society was not free from some of the prevalent errors of the time. The want of proper caution and foresight in the enrolling members, early caused an undue pressure on the funds. Fortunately its capital was strong, and it surmounted its difficulties. Aided by the Report of the Highland Society upon Benefit Societies, it is now conducted on sound principles, its funds are prosperous, and it proves a most useful association.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of individuals permanently on the poor's roll, together with their families dependent upon them, for the three years prior to 1838, was 79. The average amount of payments to these during the same years, L. 74, 1s. 4d. The average number of persons that received occasional relief during that period was 33, and the average amount paid to them, L. 17, 17s. 8d. The highest ordinary rate to in-

dividual paupers on the permanent roll varies from 6s. to 8s. per month, but this is only to totally helpless or bed-ridden persons.

The average amount of church collections in the above years, exclusive of the special collections formerly mentioned, was L. 55, 1s. 8d.; other voluntary contributions, L. 18, 8s. 5d.; mortcloth dues and interest from funds, L. 32, 16s. 8d. The funds available for the relief of the poor are the interest of Newe's Legacy of L. 500, less legacy duty, which is intrusted to the management of the minister and kirk-session for charitable purposes, whether to the relief of paupers or others; likewise L. 100, less legacy duty, bequeathed to the poor by the late Miss Forbes of Bellabeg; and other smaller sums, altogether amounting to L. 600, which is lent on interest.

At no distant period, a very strong aversion existed to the reception of parochial relief. There are still not a few instances to be met with of that creditable spirit, but, it is to be feared, that honest independence which rejected the aid of the kirk-box is fast dying away, and but little feeling of degradation remains at receiving eleemosynary aid.

The writer must not omit to notice here, that some of the heritors annually, and others from time to time, give liberal donations in money, meal, or clothing to the poor on their estates.

Fairs.—There are five fairs or markets held in the parish during the summer. The principal one is John's Fair, for cattle, sheep, and horses. Three are small cattle markets, and the remaining one, Andermas Fair, at the end of harvest, for the sale of meal, fodder, &c.

Inns and Alehouses.—There is one inn in the parish, in which very good accommodation can be had. There are also five houses licensed to retail spirits. Five or six years ago, besides the inn above-mentioned, there were no less than eleven tippling houses. The minister has resolutely refused every application that has ever been made to him for a certificate to open a spirit-shop, and, by the cordial co-operation of the heritors, seven have been shut up. It is believed all the existing houses are as decently and well conducted as places of the kind can be; but a still further reduction of their number would be of advantage to the moral welfare of the community.

Fuel.—Peat, as may be conceived, is the common fuel of the country. Wood, as far as it can be obtained, is also used. Amongst the better classes, coal only is burned in rooms. English

coal alone is used, brought from Aberdeen. The price, according to the supply there, varies from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 6d., and the carriage is from 5s. to 7s. per boll.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Few parishes have undergone a greater change within the last forty years than Strathdon. The vast improvement of the country, by reclaiming and planting of waste lands; the drainage and enclosure of fields, and general introduction of the improved system of husbandry; the opening up of the strath by a turnpike road running through the centre of the parish; and the formation of good cross-roads, with stone bridges over the different streams; the elegant and commodious residences of the proprietors; and the comfortable slated dwelling-houses and substantial farm-offices of the tenantry, are some of the more obvious marks of the progress of cultivation.

In the comparative state of the parish since the former Account was given, there are some remarkable differences. The real rent was then about L. 1600, now it is between L. 4000 and L. 5000. The old Account, speaking of improvements, states, "this practice (carrying out manure in creels) is still continued by almost all the tenants above the kirk, where two-thirds of the parish as to extent are situated. In the lower part of it, however, there are now upwards of fifty carts. One of the gentlemen keeps a carriage." There are at the present day 309 carts in the parish, and, with one exception, every proprietor keeps a carriage. On the other hand, the numbers of live-stock are singularly coincident. Then, there were 8543 sheep,—now there are 8664; then, there were 2286 cattle,—now there are 2115. The number of horses, however, was greatly more numerous, being 552, and now only 314. But the former Account says, "the ploughs are drawn some by 8, some by 10, and some by 12 cattle; some by cattle and horses before them, and a great many by horses alone. All the tenants in Corgarff, and some in the other parts of the parish, yoke four horses abreast." Now, the horses are of a superior description, do vastly more work than all the formidable array here described, and, except for subsoil ploughing, there are never more than two in a plough.

Such are some of the more striking variations betwixt the present state of the parish and that which existed at the time of the last Statistical Account; but what its capabilities may be for still

further improvement, or how far the happiness of the productive classes might be increased, it would not be easy to determine.

April 1838.

Revised and partly re-written April 1839.

Earthquakes.—The writer avails himself of permission given him, while these sheets are passing through the press, to notice the interesting phenomenon that occurred in October 1839, of several distinct shocks of earthquakes. The most remarkable were those on the 17th and 23d of the month,—the former at ten minutes before three o'clock A. M., and the latter at twenty minutes past ten P. M. In both cases a rumbling noise preceded the concussion, which was accompanied with a tremulous and undulatory motion, somewhat resembling the feeling on board ship when a wave strikes heavily against the bow of the vessel. The undulation was so violent, that, in some instances, people were turned round in their beds; and the concussion so severe, that the doors slammed violently, and the glasses danced on the table. The concussion was most distinctly felt in the upper parts of the houses, and universal testimony concurred in giving the direction from the southwest,—a fact which leads us to trace the connection of the shocks felt here with those at Comrie about the same period.

The only other fact necessary to mention is, that the week previous to the last shock, the weather was dry and favourable for harvest operations. The barometer had risen to 29.75. On the 22d there was a heavy rain from the east, which continued during the 23d, (the day of the shock). From that date the weather became completely broken. The barometer was carefully examined on both occasions, but did not appear, at the time, to be sensibly affected by either of the shocks. By a strange anomaly, however, it stood high during the long period of continued wet weather which followed. It is a remarkable circumstance, too, that the shock of an earthquake, which was felt here in 1816, (and which appears to have been much about the same in violence with those of last year,) was followed by a long track of wet weather, so that in that year, as in the last, the crop was wholly lost.

December 1840.