

Alehouses.—There is no public-house in the parish; but there is a spirit shop on the lands of the synod of Aberdeen.

Fuel.—The fuel is of peat and turf, the expense of preparing which is 1s. the cart-load.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The greatest variations observable, within the last forty years, are in the value of houses and enclosures, which has risen from L. 150 to above L. 3000; and in the ordinary provision for the poor, which has been tripled within that time. The Earl of Kintore gives, unsolicited, an annual donation, which is more than the former yearly supply, then only L. 18. The other heritors are absentees, and draw their rents without remitting any return to the poor; but it has not been necessary to solicit a contribution from them.

July 1842.

PARISH OF INSCH.

PRESBYTERY OF GARIOCH, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN.

THE REV. PATRICK DAVIDSON, MINISTER.

THE REV. ROBERT CUSHNY, *Assistant and Successor.**

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE name Insch is generally considered to be of Celtic origin, and to signify *an island*. It is not improbable, that the Insch had originally been confined to the small town or village in which the church stands, or, at all events, to the spot of ground which forms the site of the village, and which bears some marks of having been at one time surrounded with water.

Extent, &c.—The parish is of an irregular figure. Were one part of it, however, taken away, namely, the Daugh of Moreal, which there is reason to think had not originally belonged to it, but had formed part of another parish now extinct, called Rathmoreal or Christ-kirk, the remains of whose church, surrounded by a burial-ground, are quite adjacent, in the parish of Kennethmont, the remainder would be pretty nearly an oblong, the greater sides,

* Drawn up by the Rev. Robert Cushny.

from north to south, measuring about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the lesser, from east to west, about $2\frac{1}{2}$. The superficial extent of the whole parish is about $11\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. It is bounded on the east by the parish of Culsamond; on the south, by Oyne, Premnay, and Leslie; on the west, by Kennethmont and Gartly; and on the north, by Drumblade and Forgue.

The hill of Foudland is situated in this parish, and forms the principal of a range of Slate-hills, extending into Gartly on the west, and into Culsamond on the east. It stands at an elevation of about 1100 feet above the level of the sea, has rather a lumpish appearance, but commands a very fine prospect. That rich and fertile tract, the How or Vale of the Garioch, is nowhere seen to greater advantage than from this hill, by which, indeed, a considerable part of it is sheltered on the north and north-west.

The isolated hill of Dunnideer, about a mile from the village of Inch, and due west of it, is a singularly striking and beautiful object, and one which has long attracted the observation both of antiquarians and naturalists. Its form is that of a cone a little flattened at the apex; and, owing to this peculiarity, and its summit being crowned with some curious ruins, it catches the eye of a stranger at a great distance.

It is about 3000 yards in circumference at the base, from which it rises abruptly to the height of 550 or 600 feet. Immediately facing it, on the west, and rising with equal abruptness, is the hill of Christ-kirk, in the parish of Kennethmont, the two hills being separated only by a narrow valley, through which runs the Shevock, a small stream, which, at this point, and for a considerable part of its course, forms the boundary of the parish, and whose windings, as seen from Dunnideer, have a very picturesque effect.

Dunnideer is nearly on a line with the west end of Foudland, and about due south from it, the distance between them being about three miles. There are no other hills of great magnitude in the parish. Some small hills there are, here and there rising abruptly from the plain, such as Knockenbaird, Greenlaw, &c.; but, as seen from the top of the hill of Foudland, they have the appearance of mere knolls or hillocks scattered over the level or slightly undulating surface.

Meteorology.—The average height of the mercury in the barometer throughout the year is 29.3 inches. There is a perceptible variety of climate in the parish, the crops being in general three weeks or a month later on the north side of Foudland than on the

south side, and about ten days later in the vicinity of that hill, even on the south side, than on the more southerly part of the parish. The climate throughout, however, may certainly be termed very salubrious, there being none of what are called local distempers known in the parish.

Hydrography.—Though not in the vicinity of any considerable river, Inch is well watered by small rills, so that on a majority of the farms in it, the thrashing machines are driven by water. The Shevock has already been referred to as forming one of the boundaries of the parish. This it does both on the west and south. About a mile from where it takes leave of the parish, running eastward, it unites with the Ury, a larger stream, which takes its rise in the Glens of Foudland, *i. e.* on the north side of the hill of that name, and there forms the boundary of the parish on the north.

Geology.—The hill of Foudland is famous for its slate quarries. The slate, which is of a fine dark colour, and excellent quality for roofing, is found in beds running from south-west to north-east, and inclining northwards, the angle of inclination varying a good deal. Cross-bars or dikes cutting across the veins are of frequent occurrence, and consist of a slaty substance for the most part, with pieces of trap and sometimes decomposed granite intermixed. These cross-bars are found occasionally to derange the veins, so that the sections on the opposite sides are not in the same line with each other.

The rocks composing the smaller hills in the parish seem to be chiefly gneiss, and black or grey granite.

The soil is for the most part of a loamy nature, and generally what might be called a light loam, with a mixture of gravel and yellow clay forming the subsoil.

In the low grounds, towards the base of Dunnideer, bog-iron ore is found in considerable quantities. On the sides of the hill of Foudland, the soil is generally a light clay, mixed with slaty particles, and the subsoil of a slaty nature, always retaining a certain quantity of moisture in the driest seasons, and in wet seasons, again, allowing the superfluous water to ooze off, so that the land here is not liable to be either droughted or drowned, as the expression is. There are some peat-mosses in this hill, in which large oak-trees have occasionally been discovered. The higher parts of the hill, and all that is uncultivated of it, are covered with heath.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Any authentic account of the more remote history of the parish would undoubtedly be very interesting, as the memorials of long past times, which still exist in it, are such as shew that it has once been the scene of important events. No such account, however, is known to the writer of this. In a genealogical work, now rare, entitled *Laurus Lesliana*, and which gives an account of the various branches of the Lesly family, there is some information to be found respecting the former proprietors of land in the parish, the chief of whom had belonged to the house of Lesly.

Land-owners.—The principal land-owners, at the present time, are, Count Lesly of Balquhain, proprietor of the lands termed the Barony of Meikle Wardhouse, Knockenbaird, &c. in the parish of Inch. Count Lesly's ancestors had, it would seem, at one time been possessed of the greater part of the lands in this parish, as also in not a few of the parishes in the Garioch. The baronies of Balquhain and Meikle Wardhouse, the former in the parish of Chapel of Garioch, the latter in this parish, had formerly belonged to separate branches of the family, and they continued to do so till about the year 1642, when, according to Spalding, the estates of Wardhouse were "so much dilapidated, that the heir, Sir John Leslie, (who died in 1645), on coming home from Germany, on the death of his father, found that there was nothing left for him to live upon." The greater part of his property, having probably been mortgaged, had come, about that time, into the hands of the Balquhain branch, in which it has continued ever since.

A considerable portion, however, including the site of the castle of Wardhouse, having been otherwise disposed of, and having passed through various hands, is now in the possession of John David Gordon, Esq. merchant in Cadiz, who succeeded his father, Charles Gordon, about nine years ago. The family residence in Scotland is Gordon Hall, Kennethmont. The other proprietors of land are, Theodore Gordon, Esq. Overhall, who is possessed of part of the lands of Dunnideer, in this parish.—Robert Abercrombie, Esq. of Rothney and Drumrossie, who came into possession of the above lands (lying partly in Inch, partly in Premnay), by purchase, only a few years ago, they having been sold by the executors of the late Miss Mary Gordon, the last of her family, which was a branch of the Gordons of Lesmoir, and in whose hands they had been for some centuries.—Sir Andrew

Leith Hay, of Rannes, who is possessed of the lands of Insch and Netherboddom, and the superiority of the burgh of Insch. Besides the properties above referred to, there are in the parish the lands of Boddom, Cairneston, and Johnsleys, which are at present in the market, having fallen to be disposed of by the executors of the late Mr Gordon, Newton.

Parochial Registers.—The parochial registers, including kirk-session records, and registers of baptisms and marriages, extend as far back as to the year 1683, but are not altogether complete.

Antiquities.—There are a good many remains of Druidical temples, all in elevated situations. There are also several rude obelisks, or stone pillars, in the parish; one called the Picardy Stone, standing about $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height above ground, with some carving, apparently emblematical, on the south face of it, and another, towards the centre of the parish, called the Earl of Mar's Stone.

Near the village of Insch is a mound, or rising ground, called the Gallow Hill, the road leading past which has always been known by the name of the Gallow Road; and there is a tradition, deriving some probability from this, that Insch, though but a burgh of barony, had had the power of *pot* and *gallows*.

A fragment of a brass sword, or Roman gladius, was found some years ago on the farm of Mr A. Beattie, Dunnideer, and is still in the possession of that gentleman, who has also some fragments of what would appear to have been a gold chain, of very rude workmanship, which were found on the farm of Wantinwells, on the clearing away of the foundation of some old houses. When the vacant ground on the north side of the church was levelled out some years ago, a tombstone was laid bare, very near the wall, with the words *RANDOLPHVS SACERDOS* inscribed on it lengthwise, and, after these, some date, which is illegible. The stone is about 6 feet in length, and 20 inches in breadth.

By far the most interesting objects, however, which the parish holds out to antiquarians, are the ruined fort and tower on the top of the hill of Dunnideer, the former being a fine specimen of what are called vitrified forts, the latter the remnant of a square tower or castle built within the fort, and partly of fragments of it, covering from 13 to 14 square yards of ground, including the walls, 7 feet in thickness; only one wall, however, standing entire, and it being from 50 to 60 feet in height.

As to the fort or enclosure, the subjoined remarks from Mac-

Culloch's Highlands and Islands of Scotland, give a sufficiently accurate description of it.

“ The hill of Dunnideer, having an elevation of about 600 feet from the irregular plain on which it stands, with a steep acclivity all around, has a flat oval summit, which is entirely occupied by the enclosure, so as to form a strong military position. Though much ruined, and consequently obscured, having apparently been used as a quarry for building a more modern castle in the same spot (the square tower alluded to), it is not difficult to trace either the dimensions or the disposition of the original work. The form is a parallelogram, of which one extremity is curved, so as to be nearly semicircular, and its longest side is about 58 yards, the shortest being about 24. The thickness of the wall seems originally to have been 18 or 20 feet, (more likely 12), although, from the state and nature of the ruin, it is impossible to be very accurate in this particular. The highest remaining portion is about six feet above the present surface, and if one foot be added for the increase of the soil, and two for the loss which it has sustained at the summit, we shall have nine feet as the probable original altitude. At a certain stage down the hill are the well-marked traces of a work, which once seems to have encircled the whole. It is a kind of fortification, well known to antiquaries as occurring frequently in the ancient British hill forts, and consists of a single ditch and wall. The materials in the vitrified wall are partly roasted without adhesion, and partly vitrified or glazed. It is easy to see that dark granite forms the vitrified or scorified substances. Wherever stones not capable of vitrification themselves have undergone any thing like a similar change, it has been produced by the alkali of the wood used in the process. The materials of the hill are chiefly grey granite, a fusible rock; but there are scattered, in the surrounding plain, blocks of a black variety, which, from containing hornblende, is very fusible.”

It will be seen that the above writer adopts Mr Williams's theory as to the formation of the singular species of structure, of which this is a specimen, viz. that a mound of earth had probably been raised on each side of the intended wall, and the space between filled with stones of a fusible nature, along with large quantities of wood, which, being set fire to, a sufficient degree of heat had been produced to dissolve partially or wholly most of the stones, and thus to convert the pile into a solid mass. There are, however, other theories upon the subject,—one, that the vitrification had

not been the result of design, but had been produced accidentally by the fires which, it may be supposed, the people, betaking themselves to the fort for refuge, would kindle inside the wall. And another,—that there has been no vitrification, properly speaking, at all, but that the stones have been made to adhere to each other in the manner they do by the use of some strong cement poured in amongst them, and which constitutes the lava-like substance abounding in the structure. But it seems an insuperable objection to this view of the matter, that the stones themselves have all evidently been subjected to the action of extreme heat.

Nothing, of course, can be said as to what may be the precise age of this very ancient structure. Even the tower, which has been referred to as comparatively modern, has every appearance of having been built at a period considerably remote. As has been said, only one wall of it remains entire, and this having but two windows, one above the other, and the upper one very much enlarged by the crumbling of its sides, has a curious effect seen at a distance, and is known by the name of "Gregory's wall," from a tradition that King Gregory had resided here. But it may be doubted, whether this name is not more applicable to the vitrified or more ancient structure. Fordoun has it that King Gregory died at Dunnideer. His words are,—"*Gregorius autem rex iste magnificus, postquam annos decem et octo, mensibus aliquot exceptis, strenue regnasset, apud Dornideare diem clausit extremum, et in Iona sepultus insulâ requiescit.*"

The erection of the tower is also ascribed to David Earl of Huntington and Garioch, the founder of the Abbey of Lundores. And mention is somewhere made of "the Abbot of Dunnideer," by which expression, however, it is supposed, the Abbot of Lundores is meant.

That Dunnideer, if not formerly a regal residence, had been, at any rate, a place of great importance, is manifest from various circumstances, especially from the extraordinary care with which its safety seems to have been provided for. In the hollow or narrow valley to the west of it is the site of the ancient castle of Meikle Ward House, or, more properly, the Meikle Ward House of Dunnideer,—the only remaining vestige of which now is the fosse by which it had been surrounded; although it is not very many years since the ruins of the walls were removed; and a little farther on in the same direction, that is, more to the north from Dunnideer, is a place called Little Ward House, where, however,

the name alone indicates the previous existence of a place of defence; and the northern extremity of the valley, or where it opens up to the west, is called Ward Head. Now, the idea that these names and relics are vestiges of the defences of Dunnideer, seems probable, from the circumstance, that it is only on this side (where it is nearly approached by other hills and rising grounds), that the place could have been surprised by any sudden attack, as on all other sides it commands a very extensive tract of level ground.

It is possible, however, as the valley in which the traces of these defences occur forms a principal pass to the Garioch from the north and west,—that they and the fort of Dunnideer itself had been erected for the purpose of guarding against invasion from these quarters.

III.—POPULATION.

According to the Statistical Account of the parish, published by Sir John Sinclair, the population was estimated, in 1755, at 995 souls; in 1795, at 900, shewing a decrease of 90 in the intervening forty years, which decrease is ascribed, by said account, to the scarcity of fuel then beginning to be felt in places distant from the coast, and also to the increased demand for hands in the manufactories, which had drawn off some of the rural population to the manufacturing towns and villages.

The population in 1831 amounted to	1998
the males, numbering	659
the females,	679

This shews an increase, in the space of thirty-six years, (that is, from the year 1795 to the year 1831), of 438, an increase which must be chiefly ascribed to the improvement of waste land, and the more extensive working of the slate-quarries in Foudland, to both of which a stimulus was given, by the opening of the canal from Aberdeen to Inverury, and which afforded considerable encouragement to labourers to settle in the parish.

The present population is 1379, which shews an increase of 41 in the last ten years. This increase has been altogether in the village of Inch. Rather more than a sixth part of the whole population of the parish, or about 220 persons, reside in this village, and there is no other besides it in the parish, but only two or three small hamlets, and of these there is none containing above ten families.

The yearly average of births, for the last seven years has been	37
deaths,	23
marriages,	7

The average number of persons under 15 years of age is about	550
betwixt 15 and 30 about	300
30 and 50	250
50 and 70	200
upwards of 70	47

There is a good deal of wealth in the parish, the farmers, as a body, being fully as affluent as those of any other parish in the district. There is, however, only one proprietor of land residing in the parish.

The number of unmarried men, bachelors and widowers, upwards of 50 years of age, is about	21
The number of unmarried women, upwards of 45, about	47

Fatuous persons in the parish, one; deaf and dumb, one; blind, (from decay of organs), two.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—

Land under cultivation,	5312 Imperial acres.
Uncultivated,	2196
Capable and worthy of cultivation, about	200
Undivided common (the commony of Insch),	5

There are not above 47 acres in the whole parish under wood.

A large proportion of the arable land is of excellent quality; and there are some farms, the leases on which have been lately renewed, that are yielding a very high rent, in some instances nearly L. 2 per acre, over head. But the average rent of arable land over the whole parish cannot be stated as higher than 18s. or 20s. per acre.

Very few sheep are kept.

The cattle hitherto most generally reared have been of what are called the Aberdeenshire or Angus-shire breeds. The practice of crossing these with the short-horned or Durham breed is, however, becoming very prevalent; and the superior size of the animals thus produced holds out great temptation to it, though the beef is not considered to be of such quality as that of the old breed of the country. The cattle-shows held by the Highland Society of Scotland and by local agricultural societies, have had considerable effect in causing greater attention to be paid to the rearing of stock, and consequently in improving the quality thereof.

The system of husbandry pursued in this as in the other parishes of the Garioch, may certainly be considered as having attained a considerable degree of excellence. The climate not being suitable for wheat, oats form the principal corn crop; and, according to the most improved rotation, one crop of these is taken after three years of grass; and the ground being next green.

fallowed with turnips, bears another crop of oats, sometimes barley, the sixth year, grass being sown in along with it for hay crop the following year. This rotation is called the six-shift, and is rapidly taking the place of the seven-shift formerly used, and according to which two crops of oats were taken in succession after three years of grass, which, besides that the second crop was generally a poor one, took away much from the chance of a good crop of turnips the year following,—a matter of serious consideration where so much dependence is placed upon the rearing and fattening of live-stock. The application of bone-manure to the raising of this crop is now generally practised with great advantage in light soils.

Although, generally speaking, there would be little difficulty in supplying enclosures with water, yet, owing to the scarcity of materials, *i. e.* of stones and wood, suitable for diking or paling, and the cultivation of hedges being but little encouraged, there is as yet only a small proportion of enclosed fields.

The farm-buildings, if the value of the farms be taken into account, must in general be pronounced of an inferior description. Few of them are slated, notwithstanding their vicinity to the slate-quarries; and a great deal of straw is, in consequence, annually consumed on thatch, which would be more profitably employed as provender or litter for cattle. The remedying of this state of things lies with the landlords, who would greatly enhance the value of their properties by erecting substantial farm-buildings, on a good plan, and at their own expense, and thus leaving their tenants with the full command of their capital to improve their farms, which would, of course, bear a higher rent; whereas the general system at present is to let the tenant provide himself with buildings, such as he thinks proper, allowing him only one year's rent, or one and a-half year's, at the end of the lease, for his whole outlay; or, in some cases, allowing the value of the mason-work, deducting lime and carriages; and, in others, only the value of the roof.

The general duration of leases is nineteen years.

The thrashing of corn by machinery is now almost universal. For driving the machines, water-power is used where available; where it is not, horses are employed. On the farm of Netherboddom, where there is not sufficient command of water, the enterprising tenant (A. Jopp, Esq. Advocate, Aberdeen,) has, for some time back, employed steam-power.

Quarries.—The slate-quarries of Foudland in this parish have long been in great repute, as producing an excellent quality of blue slate, large quantities of which were formerly taken to Aberdeen; but that town has for some years derived its chief supply from Easdale in Argyleshire, from whence slates being now brought by sea, free of duty, can be delivered at Aberdeen at full as low a price as the Foudland slates, which have to pay a heavy land and canal carriage, the former being at the rate of 14s. per 1000, i. e. 1s. per mile per 1000 (the distance to Inverury being fourteen miles), the latter 9s. per 1000, or 6d. per mile per 1000, the distance from Inverury to Aberdeen per canal being eighteen miles. The average quantity of slates annually taken from these quarries amounted some years ago, to 900,000, but the present average is scarcely a half of this; and it is to be feared that the yield will be still farther diminished, unless some improvement is made in the mode of working the quarries, either by the application of machinery, or by clearing away the refuse, and laying bare the slate beds to a greater depth, much evil having been done by commencing the quarries too far up the hill, to save trouble and expense at the outset, and working along the tops of the veins, or, at all events, not quarrying them to their full depth, and so disposing of the refuse as to increase the difficulty of working them out to greater depth now. The prices of slates at the quarry mouth are as follows: first quality, L. 2, 7s. 6d. per 1000; second quality, L. 2 per 1000. The cost of labour on first is L. 1, 10s. per 1000; on second, L. 1, 5s. per 1000. This includes quarrying, splitting, dressing, &c. Splitters get 10d. per 100 slates; dressers, 2s. per 100.

Produce.—Average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish:

Of grain of all kinds,	L. 9000	0	0
Turnips, potatoes, &c.	3400	0	0
Hay and first year's grass,	2700	0	0
Pasture grass,	1950	0	0
Slate quarries,	1000	0	0

Total yearly value of raw produce raised, L. 18050 0 0

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There are two half-yearly markets at Insch; one for cattle, horses, and grain, the other for the feeing of servants. Formerly the town had its weekly market, but that may be said to have ceased many years since, except that there is a regular supply of butcher-meat every Friday.

The feuars of Inch are heritable proprietors of their houses and small gardens, paying a small feu-duty to Sir A. Leith Hay, their superior, from whom they also rent about four acres of ground each.

The present population is about 220. There are several shopkeepers who deal in groceries, cloth, hard and stone-ware, drugs, &c. There are also two watchmakers, a baker, a saddler, and other tradesmen. Most of the shops and dwelling-houses have been for some years lighted with gas.

There is no post-office nearer than Old Rain, which is three and a-half miles off, the letters being at present conveyed to and from that by a runner (not a servant of the post-office), who is paid by a penny on each letter. A post-office at Inch would be a great boon to the neighbourhood.

There are from six to seven miles of turnpike road in the parish, including parts of three lines, one, the mail-road from Aberdeen to Huntly, which intersects the parish on the north side of Foudland, the other two, variations of this, taking, the one, a nearer course over the west shoulder of Foudland, the other a more circuitous but more level course through Kennethmont and Gartly.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church stands in the town of Inch, close on the southern boundary of the parish, so that the parishioners in the Glens of Foudland, *i. e.* on the northern boundary, have to travel from five to six miles to it, and this by a very difficult road, over the east end of the hill.

The date on the belfry of the church is 1613, and the common belief is, that the church itself had been built in that year. The building, although it has at various times undergone considerable repairs and alterations, and has therefore been in some sort modernized, still bears indications of considerable age. The walls are about four feet thick. It was new roofed in a very substantial manner in 1789, and new seated in 1793; and the roof is still excellent. But it is to be regretted that so much should have been expended in repairing a building, one of whose walls was even then bulged and out of plumb, and which, though perhaps at that time large enough, the population having previously undergone a considerable decrease, from which it was but beginning to recover, is now, as might have been expected, far too small for the accommodation of the people. About fifteen years ago, there was a meeting of Presbytery for the purpose of examining into the state of the

building, when it was proved on the part of the heritors, that, though the state of one of the walls was such as has been described, yet, as it had been exactly the same for a long period of years, it could not be considered as incompatible with the safety of the congregation. It is to be hoped, however, that, notwithstanding this finding, the heritors will soon of themselves see the propriety of erecting a new church on a scale adapted both to the comfort and convenience of the parishioners. The present one is neither ceiled nor plastered, and is seated to contain only 460 people.

There are 60 free sittings in the area of the church, under the control of the kirk-session, who let them at low rates, viz. from 1s. to 2s. per annum, for behoof of the poor.

The present manse, which is about half a mile distant from the church, the old site in the village having been relinquished, was built in 1771, and enlarged and repaired about sixteen years ago. The glebe is 12 imperial acres in extent, and about L.25 yearly value, having been got in exchange for one-half the quantity of very superior ground, on the site of the manse being changed.

The stipend was last modified in 1833, when an augmentation was obtained. It now amounts to 15 bolls of victual, half meal, half barley, commuted into money at the fiars' prices. By an arrangement entered into between the present minister and the heritors, and sanctioned by the Presbytery, the latter pay him L.9, 3s. 6d. annually instead of 550 *back-loads* of peats, which they were formerly bound to deliver to him, the *back-load* being as much as a horse could carry on a pair of panniers, or *creels*, the usual mode of conveying fuel from the moss in olden times.

There is no chapel of ease nor Government church in the parish, nor any Dissenting place of worship, properly so called. There is in the village of Inch an Independent preaching station, (or rather a hall given for this amongst other purposes), in which there is a sermon every second Sunday in the afternoon, the same being supplied by two Independent clergymen from neighbouring parishes.

The number of families in the parish that attend Dissenting or Seceding places of worship is about 26; the number of individuals, about 70 or 80. All the other inhabitants capable of church attendance come to the parish church, there being no Episcopalians or Catholics in the parish.

The parish church is very well attended. The average number of communicants is 575.

There are two societies for religious purposes in the parish, a Bible Society, and a Juvenile Missionary Society. The contributions of both together may average about L.25 per annum.

The church collections for religious and charitable objects amount, on an average, to L.42 per annum.

Education.—There are four schools in the parish, one of which is parochial, one endowed from the General Assembly's fund, and two unendowed. At the two first mentioned, in addition to the ordinary branches,—reading, writing, and arithmetic,—instruction is given in English grammar, geography, and mathematics, as also in Greek and Latin when required. In all, the Bible is daily read, and the Assembly's Catechism taught.

The parochial schoolmaster has a salary of L.27, and receives on an average L.16 per annum in the shape of school-fees. His income has of late, however, been greatly improved, by his participating in the benefits of Mr Dick's Bequest, along with his brethren in the three counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Moray. The present parochial school-house possesses ample and superior accommodation, having been built a few years ago, when also a detached dwelling-house was built for the schoolmaster.

The teacher of the General Assembly's school receives a salary of L.25 out of the fund for increasing the means of education in Scotland, and draws about L.14 annually in the shape of school-fees. He has the usual accommodation stipulated for by the Assembly's Education Committee, viz. besides school, dwelling-house, and garden, a croft of three acres of ground, rent free, with fuel cast and driven. This school has been established for about twelve years, and has proved a source of immense benefit to the people in the district where it is situated, viz. the Glens of Foudland, comprehending, besides a detached part of the parish of Insch, peopled in a great measure by quarriers, parts also of the parishes of Forgue, Drumblade, and Gartly, all distant from their respective parish schools.

It cannot be said that there is now any real deficiency of the means of education in any part of the parish.

The general expense of education is 10d. or 1s. per month, according to the branches taught, for each pupil.

Children are now generally sent to school by the time they are five years of age, which was far from being the case in the more

remote parts of the parish previous to the establishment of the Assembly school above referred to.

There are none upwards of fifteen years of age, and that are natives of the parish, but are capable of reading, although there may be some aged women who have not learned to write.

Charitable Institutions.—A Savings Bank has been established for some years, called the Inch and Upper Garioch Savings Bank, being for the accommodation of agricultural labourers and others in Inch and the neighbouring parishes. It is in a thriving condition, and promises to be of great benefit to the classes whose interest it was intended to promote. The deposits have been at the rate of L.528 per annum, while the sums withdrawn have averaged only L.177 per annum.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons receiving constant parochial supply is 24. The rate of allowance per week varies from 9d. to 2s. 6d.; but is sometimes higher in the case of widows left with young families, or bed-ridden persons requiring hired attendance.

The annual amount of contributions may be specified as under: Collections at church, L.34; seat-rents in church, L.4, 12s.; legacies, L.1, 10s.; interest of money funds, L.5, 10s.; rent of a piece of ground near the village of Inch, called the Bass, purchased with poor's funds about 160 years since, L.16, 10s.; making in all, besides casual donations from heritors, &c., L.62, 2s. In the distribution of the funds, the kirk-session are sometimes at a loss how to act, in order to prevent the risk of extreme distress, without, at the same time, encouraging habits of idleness and profligacy. Fortunately, however, such cases are not very common; while instances frequently occur of a reluctance to accept relief; and, generally speaking, the recipients are persons who have become such from actual necessity.

Fairs.—The two half-yearly fairs that are held have already been referred to. The one for cattle, horses, &c. is held on the third Wednesday of May, and third Tuesday of October, old style. The feeing market is held on the Fridays preceding 26th May and 22d November.

Inns, &c.—There are no fewer than five public-houses in the parish,—three of these being in the village, and one closely adjoining to it. Such a number as this is altogether unnecessary, and their decrease is much to be desired, as there can be no doubt but that, by furnishing people with additional facilities for indulg-

ing to excess in ardent spirits, they are productive of most injurious effects to the morals of the neighbourhood.

Fuel.—Peat and turf from Foudland has hitherto formed the principal part of the fuel used in the parish. As the mosses in Foudland, however, are getting pretty much exhausted, and the peat is of inferior quality, it is probable that the people will soon become more dependent on English coal, the use of which, to a small extent, is already almost general. The feuars of Inch have the privilege of fuel from the Hill of Melschach in Kennethmont, where the peat is of better quality than on Foudland; but the length of carriage is upwards of four miles.

July 1842.

PARISH OF MONQUHITTER.

PRESBYTERY OF TURRIFF, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN.

THE REV. HUGH GORDON, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE name Monquhitter signifies *the place for ensnaring the deer*, and was derived from the farm on which the church was originally built.

Extent, &c.—From east to west, the parish extends about 8 miles, and from south to north, about $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles. It is bounded on the east, by the parish of New Deer; on the north, by King-Edward; on the west, by Turriff and Fyvie; and on the south, by Fyvie and Methlick. The surface is generally of an undulating and monotonous character. The hills present a bleak and barren appearance. Nevertheless, they are of much value in their present state, from the great abundance of excellent peat fuel which they supply to the neighbourhood, and more especially, as the nearest sea-port, Macduff, from which coals can be procured, is, from some parts of the parish, upwards of twenty miles, and, upon an average, fifteen miles distant.

It is much to be regretted that so little has been done in this district of the country in the way of planting. There are numberless spots which would appear to be particularly adapted for the