

UNITED PARISHES OF
GLENMUICK, TULLICH, & GLENGAIRN.

PRESBYTERY OF KINCARDINE O'NEIL, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN.

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—GLENMUICK is compounded of two Gaelic words, *Glean Muic*, signifying the *swine's valley or glen*. There is a tradition that wild hogs once abounded in an oak forest, skirting both sides of a small river, called the water of Muick, from which the parish takes its name.

Tullich is a corruption of a Gaelic word, *Tulach*, signifying hillocks; and on such a situation stands a small village, named Tullich, which gives name to this parish, and also to the burying-ground around the walls of its old church, now in ruins.

Glengairn is a corrupted compound of three Gaelic words, *Glen-garbh-amhain*, signifying the *glen of the rough water*; and this is very applicable to a small river intersecting this parish, and giving name to it, called the Gairn, or rough water, on account of its rocky and precipitous channel.

Extent.—Glenmuick, at an average, is about 15 miles long from east to west, by $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles broad, from north to south. It lies all on the south side of the river Dee, with the exception of a small part which, at some remote period, has been evidently cut off, or disjoined from the rest, by the Dee changing its course.

Tullich, at an average, is about 14 miles long from east to west, by 7 miles broad from south to north, and lies all on the north side of the Dee, extending farther to the east, than Glenmuick, but not nearly so far to the west. It is, however, intersected, about the middle of its length, by the parish of Glengairn, which stretches along both sides of the water of Gairn about 8 miles, at the average breadth of 4 miles, in a direction from north-west to south-east. This is one specimen of the many injudicious divisions of parishes at their origin; for nearly one-half of Tullich lies on

the south-west, and the rest of it on the north-east side of Glengairn; the latter (with the exception of a small part of it which is on the south side of Dee), being all on the north side of Dee, as well as Tullich.

In many places, these united parishes are 18 miles long, by 15 miles broad; but, as their figure is very irregular, their average length and breadth is computed to be only $14\frac{1}{2}$ by $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles, making their extent to be about 180 square miles, that is 82 for Glenmuick, 66 for Tullich, and 32 for Glengairn. They are bounded by the following parishes, viz. Strathdon, on the north; Coldstone, on the north-east; Aboyne, on the east; Glentanner, on the south-east; Lochlee, on the south; Clova, on the south-west; and Braemar and Crathie, on the west. They are mountainous and hilly, and mostly fit for pasture only.

Mountains.—The principal mountains are Lochnagar, Cairntaggart, Mountkeen, and Morven. But these mountains are all on the confines, and none of them wholly within these united parishes. By a medium of barometrical observations, made by different persons at different times, the elevation of Lochnagar, partly in Glenmuick, and partly in Braemar, and distant from this church about ten miles west, is 3814 feet; the elevation of Cairntaggart, partly in Glenmuick, and partly in Braemar, and distant from this church about fifteen miles south-west, is said to be 3000 feet; the elevation of Mountkeen, partly in Glenmuick, and partly in Lochlee, and distant from this church about seven miles south, is 3126 feet; and the elevation of Morven, partly in Tullich, and partly in Coldstone, and distant from this church about six miles north, is 2934 feet.

The highest hills are in ranges, varying from 1000 to 2500 feet of elevation. One range, in the east end of the parish of Tullich, named Culblean, runs from Morven six miles south by east, and terminates at the river Dee. Another range (whose highest summits have their distinctive Gaelic names, as have also all those in the other ranges to be now mentioned), runs westward from the middle of Culblean, along the north side of Dee, to the valley of Gairn; after disappearing there, it rises again on the west side of Gairn, and goes along the north side of Dee as far as the church of Crathie, thus passing through the south side of Tullich and Glengairn. A third range, in Glenmuick, and on the south side of Dee, runs parallel to the former about six miles westward; then it bends southward, and runs in that direction about two miles

along the right bank of the water of Muick; then it turns westward, and goes in that direction about twelve miles more, along the south side of Muick, Loch Muick, and Loch Dhuloch, till it meets the parish of Braemar at Mont Cairntaggart, almost due south from Invercauld. A fourth range, also in Glenmuick, and about four miles west from the church, runs northward from the left bank of Muick, a distance of five miles, till it terminates where a small river, called the Girnac, falls into the south side of the Dee.

Besides these four ranges, there are several detached hills, one of which, named Craigandaroch, 400 yards north from the church, is about 1400 feet; and the other, named the Cnoc, about a mile west from the church, is about 1150 feet of elevation.

The low and flat lands, varying from two furlongs to two miles in breadth, lie along the banks of the Dee, the Muick, the Gairn, and some considerable brooks; and these streams, according to their magnitude and windings, determine the width and bendings of the valleys. The acclivities, where not too rocky or steep, are cultivated to the height of from 100 to 200 feet above the bed of the streams, or from 900 to 1000 feet above the level of the sea.

There are no caves, caverns, nor fissures in these parishes worthy of notice, except one in Culblean, in the east end of Tullich. This is an object of curiosity to strangers, and, from its remarkable figure, is termed the Vat, to which vessel it bears a striking resemblance. It seems to have been formed, in the course of ages, by the friction of pebbles whirled about by water. It is smoothly polished, and almost circular; its diameter at the bottom is about 12 feet, increasing gradually towards the top. A stream of water, which, after thaw or rain, becomes a mountain torrent, falls into it from a height of not less than thirty feet. There is a small outlet for the water, at the bottom, on the east side, by which one can enter it. The surrounding rock is gneiss.

Hydrography.—There are no remarkable springs, but the celebrated wells of Pananich, in the parish of Glenmuick, on the south side of Dee, about two miles east from the church, and on the north side of the third range of hills, before noticed, from which they take their name. By chemical analysis, these wells, four in number, and all near to one another, have been found not exactly alike in their properties, but all containing carbonates of iron and lime, with small proportions of other ingredients. They are all chalybeate, stimulant, and tonic, of a cold temperature,

but very agreeable to the taste; and, although injurious to consumptive patients, they are allowed to be beneficial to those afflicted with gravelly, scorbutic, and scrofulous complaints. For the accommodation of water-drinkers, there are comfortable well-aired lodgings at these wells, and also hot, cold, and shower-baths; and, in the summer season, a great many people resort to them from distant parts of the country.

There are three lakes in these parishes, viz. Loch Dhuloch, Loch Muick, and Loch Cannor. Loch Dhuloch lies in the south-west corner of Glenmuick, and about three miles east from Mount Cairntaggart. It is of small extent, of a cold temperature, and of considerable depth. The stupendous overhanging cliffs of Craighdulloch, surpassing in grandeur the celebrated rocks of Lochnagar, rise on the south side of it to the height of more than 1000 feet, and, by throwing their gloomy shade over it, give a dark and sombre appearance to its limpid water, from which circumstance it probably took its name Loch Dhuloch, or the black lake. A mountain rill falls into it from a height of 200 feet, over a projecting rock on the north side, which renders it altogether the most awfully sublime object in these parishes. A small stream, called the water of Dhuloch, issues from this lake, and, running eastward, forms a series of little cascades, till, at the distance of a mile and a-half below, it falls into the west end of Loch Muick.

Loch Muick is about two miles long, and half a mile broad. In some places, this lake is shallow; in others, which have never been properly sounded, it is said to be more than forty fathoms deep. Its temperature is cold, even in the greatest heat of summer, being fed by several mountain-streams, besides the water of Dhuloch. Its scenery is bold and romantic, having Lochnagar touching its north side, and a high range of the Grampians closely encompassing it on the south and west sides. Towards the west end of it, there is a small island, on which sea-gulls are always to be found; but there is little wood, either on the island or the margin of the lake, except some dwarfish birch.

In the east end of the parish of Tullich, at the foot of Culblean, and not far from the Vat, there is a third lake, about three miles in circumference, called Loch Cannor. This lake is beautifully skirted with birch wood, and studded with small islands. On the largest of one of these, once stood a fortress, said to have been built, and occasionally occupied as a hunting-seat, by Malcolm Canmore, whence it probably got its name. Towards the east end

it is shallow, in the middle from three to four fathoms deep; and its temperaure is much warmer than either that of Loch Dhuloch or Loch Muick.

Rivers.—The principal river is the Dee, which divides these parishes through their whole length. Its source is in the mountains of Braemar, in the head of the county. It receives many tributary streams, and runs in an easterly direction, till it falls into the German Ocean at Aberdeen. Its length, following the windings of its course, is from 90 to 100 miles; its mean annual breadth at Glenmuick, about 70 yards; its mean depth, about 4 feet; its mean velocity, about 3 miles an hour; and its mean temperature, between 40° and 42° of Fahrenheit.

Besides the Dee, there are two smaller rivers or waters, the Gairn and the Muick. The Gairn has its source from springs in the east end of Benavon, a high mountain in the parish of Braemar. The length of its winding course is about 20 miles; its mean breadth, about 10 yards; its mean depth, about 18 inches; its mean velocity somewhat greater than of the Dee; its mean temperature lower. It runs in a direction from north-west to south-east, and, after intersecting the parish of Glengairn, it falls into the north side of the Dee, about a mile and a-half north-west from the church.

The Muick takes its rise from Lochmuick, before noticed, and runs through a considerable part of Glenmuick, in a direction from south-west to north-east. The length of its winding course is about ten miles, and it falls into the south side of the Dee, at the manse, or about half a-mile west from the church. Its breadth, depth, and temperature, are nearly the same as those of the Gairn, but its velocity is less. About the middle of its course, there is a cascade, called the Lynn of Muick, where the water falls from a height of thirty-six feet over a perpendicular rock, and in floods, after rain or thaw, it makes a thundering deafening noise, and dashes its spray in every direction above and around it.

Geology, &c.—The direction and dip of the strata, and the veins that cut across them, have not yet been well ascertained. The most prevalent rocks are, gneiss, trap, and primitive limestone. The two former, particularly the gneiss, are here and there cut across by veins of quartz, porphyry, &c., containing fluor-spar and galena. Some serpentine has been found, also some amianthus, and plenty of common asbestos. There is an abundance of granite, not in solid rocks, but in boulders and isolated masses; bog-iron and

ironstone are also very common. No fossil organic remains, either of the animal or vegetable kingdoms, have yet been discovered; nor of alluvial deposits can anything interesting be mentioned. The soil is generally shallow, dry, sandy, or gravelly; some of it is loamy, and contains boulders of ironstone, gneiss, or granite; little of it is clayey, and none of it marly. There is no indication of pit-coal, nor have mines been opened of any description.

Zoology.—One species of animal, that of rabbits, which formerly was never seen here except in warrens, has now overspread the country, and is more destructive to turnips and other vegetables than even hares. It may also be mentioned, as a rare occurrence, that a number of white rats have lately made their appearance.

The fishes in the lakes and rivers are, pike, eels, par, trouts, and salmon. Salmon come up the rivers to spawn in October and November, and return to the sea in January and the two following months. One species of them, called canavegs, from the smallness of the head, come up later, and do not return till April and May.

Botany.—The rarer species of plants are what are termed alpine, and are found chiefly on the highest mountains and hills; but they are seldom or never used for medicinal, or any other purposes. The forests consist of Scotch fir; the plantations of Scotch fir, interspersed with larch, pine, mountain-ash, and some other varieties. Birch, oak, aspen, and hazel, grow spontaneously on dry, gravelly, and sandy soils; aller on marshy soils, and along the banks of rivers. The soil is not favourable to the more valuable kinds of timber, such as plane, elm, ash.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Land-owners.—The chief and only land-owners are, the Marquis of Huntly; Mrs Farquharson of Invercauld; Michael Gordon, Esq. of Abergeldie; and the Representatives of the late William Farquharson, Esq. of Monaltrie; and their respective valued rents, according to the order in which they here stand, are L.967, 3s. 4d.; L. 1509, 7s. 7d.; L. 507, 5s. 9d.; and L. 407, amounting to L.3384, 16s. 8d. Scotch money for the three parishes.

Parochial Registers.—The parochial registers are very defective, and not voluminous. During the incumbency of Mr John Ferguson, the earliest minister here on record, the cash and discipline register begins 23d June 1661, and ends 6th January 1677: then it begins again at the admission of his successor, Mr

David Guthrie, 11th December 1687, and ends 16th February 1696: it begins again at the admission of his successor, Mr James Robertson, 22d March 1699, and ends 13th November 1726; then it begins again at the admission of his successor, Mr William Mackenzie, 5th May 1748, and ends 16th May 1760: it begins again, in Mr Mackenzie's time, 8th March 1768, and from this date it has been regularly kept. The register of baptisms does not begin till 6th November 1768. Previous to this time, it is said to have been lost through the negligence of the relatives of the session-clerk, about the time of his death. The register of marriages does not begin till 4th June 1792. Since these dates, the registers of baptisms and marriages are entire; but it does not appear that there ever has been any register of deaths.

Antiquities.—There are many large heaps of stones, commonly called cairns, on a heath or moor near Culblean, in the east end of Tullich: and they are said to cover the graves of those who fell in flight after the battle of Culblean or Kilblane, which, according to Buchanan, B. ix. c. 23, was fought between the adherents of King David Bruce and the followers of Cummin, Earl of Athole, in 1335. But, as none of these barrows have yet been opened, it is not known what may be under them, or whether they may not be of a still earlier date.

Modern Buildings.—The chief modern buildings are the mansion-house of Ballater, now called Monaltrie House; Birkhall, a seat belonging to Mr Gordon of Abergeldie; the present parochial central church; and a mason hall, all built of granite and lime, covered with slates, and having the best Scotch fir for roofing and other carpenter-work. Of meal-mills there are nine, and three of these have each a drying-kiln, and all their machinery of a new and improved construction. Of manufactories there are none, except a carding-mill for wool, at which also some coarse cloth is made. These mills are all driven by water.

III.—POPULATION.

The number of souls, according to Dr Webster's report, was	2270
Sir John Sinclair's Account,	2117
Census 1811,	1804
1821,	2228
1831,	2270
1841,	2118

All these returns show that there has been little difference in the population for nearly eighty years, except in 1811; and the cause of the decrease that year cannot now be discovered. It

would seem that the census had not been accurately taken that year.

The number of the population residing in villages is 346; viz. in Ballater, 271, and in Kirkton of Tullich, 75; all the rest, 1933, reside in the country.

The yearly average of births for the last seven years is	49
deaths,	40
marriages,	18
The number of persons for the same period under 15 years of age is	787
betwixt 15 and 30,	569
30 and 50,	456
50 and 70,	349
upwards of 70,	94

There are no nobility residing in these parishes, nor any persons of independent fortune, except one for a few months in summer. The number of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L.50 and upwards, is only 4.

The number of bachelors and widowers upwards of 50 years of age is	36
unmarried women upwards of 45,	87
families,	548

The average number of children in each family is $2\frac{1}{2}$

The number of insane, fatuous, blind, deaf and dumb, is 11.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—

The number of acres standard imperial measure, cultivated and occasionally in tillage, is	3643
The number of acres never cultivated, and constantly waste,	106,372
The number of acres that might be profitably added to cultivated land is	253
The number of acres in a state of undivided common, none.	
The number of acres under wood, natural and planted, is	3185

Total standard imperial acres, 115,459

The general kind of trees planted is Scotch fir and larch; of indigenous it is birch and alder. Little attention is paid to the yearly thinning, pruning, and the like.

The total rental of the parishes is L.5105, which would make the average rent of arable land about L.1, 8s. per acre; but after deducting the rent of eight sheep farms, and a moderate value for hill pasture attached to others, it is not fully L.1, 1s. per standard imperial acre.

Live-stock.—The common breed of cattle is the small home-bred animals, crossed with the Galloway and some other breeds; and of sheep it is the black-faced common Scotch, and a mixed breed between these and others brought from Lanark sheep fair in August. The cattle are improving in size and shape, in con-

sequence of greater attention paid of late to their improvement; and the store-farmers are at considerable pains to improve the breed of their sheep, particularly as to the quantity and quality of their wool. But the small tenants, who are allowed to keep only a few sheep, in proportion to their rent and the extent of hill pasture in their respective districts, pay little attention to their improvement in any respect.

The general character of the husbandry hitherto pursued is not much to be commended. The specialties which distinguish it are over-cropping, want of proper attention to cleaning, liming, and dunging the ground under green crop, and a disregard to any regular rotation. However, the more slothful and indolent part of the tenantry are beginning to follow the example of the more active and industrious, old prejudices and practices are giving way to conviction, a seven shift rotation is becoming more and more general, and an evident change to the better has been gradually taking place since smuggling was suppressed.

About 312 imperial acres have been brought under tillage in the course of the last ten years, by trenching and draining: embanking has been carried on to a considerable extent; but irrigation, unless in some rare instances, has not been attempted.

The general duration of leases is nineteen years.

The state of the farm-buildings in general is above mediocrity; but sufficient enclosures, though becoming more and more common, are still wanting in some parts of these parishes.

At present, the main obstacles to improvement seem to be, the low prices of grain, cattle, sheep, and every sort of farm produce, the distance from markets and sea-ports, and a general scarcity of money.

There are no mines in these parishes, nor any quarries, except two of limestone, and these are wrought by persons who sell the limestone to those who want it, at 6d. per cart load. Granite, without quarrying, is found above ground, in quantities sufficient for building, and every necessary purpose.

Produce.—The yearly average gross amount and value of raw produce raised in these parishes, for seven years preceding 1833, may be stated as under:

Imp. acres.		Value.
1129	under oats, produce 3669 qrs., at L.1, 10s. 9d. per qr., with fodder,	L.5641 1 9
472	under bear or big, produce 1652 qrs., at L. 1, 14s. per qr. with fodder,	2806 8 0
128	under potatoes, produce 490 tons, at L.2 per ton,	960 0 0

371 under turnips, at L.5 per acre,	L.1855	0	0
Small quantities of cabbages, &c. cultivated in the gardens of the tenants, little or none in the fields, value about	310	0	0
504 under hay, produce 604 tons, 16 cwt., at 4s. per cwt.,	2419	4	0
Flax, little or none cultivated,			
1099 pasturegrass, 1st and 2d year after hay, at L. 1, 10s. per acre,	1558	10	0
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3643 total acres.			
Value of garden produce at Monaltrie House, L.50, ditto at Birkhall, L.15,	65	0	0
Annual thinning and felling of woods, &c. for fuel,	200	0	0
Annual felling of wood for carpenter and mechanical work,	600	0	0
Horses of different ages and sizes, 304, at L.10 average value,	3040	0	0
Black-cattle of different ages and sizes, 2054, at L.4 average value,	8216	0	0
Sheep, ewes, and widders, of different ages, 18192, at 13s. average value,	11785	16	0
Goats of different ages, 200, at 5s. do	50	0	0
Swine of different ages, 450, at 16s. do.	360	0	0
Beehives, 1000, at L.1 average value,	1000	0	0
Butter and cheese,	670	0	0
Eggs and poultry,	240	0	0
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Total value,	L.41,378	19	9

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Villages.—There are only two villages,—Ballater and Tullich. Ballater, though of recent origin, is much frequented in summer by strangers from a distance, on account of the salubrity of the air and the beauty of its scenery. Its streets or lanes cross the main street at right angles. Its houses are built on a regular plan, and neatly fitted up for the accommodation of summer lodgers. A post-office is established in it, and it has the advantage of a daily post to and from Aberdeen.

Means of Communication.—There is an excellent commutation road on the north side of the Dee to Charleston of Aboyne, where it joins a turnpike road, 30½ miles in length, leading to Aberdeen. On this road, three weekly carriers travel between Ballater and Aberdeen; but, at present, there is no public coach upon it, except a mail-coach, which runs daily. There is also a good commutation road to Aberdeen on the south side of Dee, and several cross roads northward and southward, all kept in a proper state of repair.

As to bridges, this parish has been very unfortunate. Two excellent stone bridges, each consisting of five arches, have been swept away by the Dee, within the space of thirty years. The first catastrophe was occasioned by an unusually high flood in the end of August 1799; and the last by a still higher flood on the 4th August 1829, of which some notice is taken by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder in his account of the floods. The second bridge, which stood only twenty years, was erected near the ruins of the first in 1808—9; and the expense of it, between L.4000 and L.5000, was

defrayed, the one-half by public subscriptions, and the other half by a grant from the Parliamentary Commissioners for Highland Roads and Bridges. In 1834, a neat substantial wooden bridge, of four arches, was erected on the site of the stone bridge, of five arches, destroyed by the flood in August 1829; and the expense of this third one, amounting to upwards of L.2000, was defrayed, the one-half by public subscriptions, and the other half by a grant from the Parliamentary Commissioners for Highland Roads and Bridges.

Near the manse, there is a stone bridge, of one arch, across the Water of Muick, in the line of the road on the south side of Dee. There is also another stone bridge, of one arch, across the Water of Gairn, in the line of the road on the north side of Dee; and both these are of great public utility, and are at present in a substantial condition.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church stands on the north side of Dee, and in the middle of a large open square in the village of Ballater. It is as central for the three parishes as possible; yet, the extremities being too distant, it is not convenient for a great part of the population. It was built in 1798, has a neat spire, is in a good state of repair, and accommodates about 800 persons, who have all free sittings. On most occasions, it is roomy enough, except on the communion Sabbath,—then it is by far too crowded; and the reason of this is, that a distant part of the parishioners, who attend a missionary chapel at Rinloan, assemble with others at the parish church on that day, in order to communicate.

The manse stands on the south side of Dee, and on the north side of Muick, on a narrow strip of ground, about 200 yards from the point of their junction; and, following the windings of the road, it is nearly a mile south-west from the church. A part of it was built about forty years ago; and a larger and older part appears, from a date upon it, to have been built in 1725. This older part has been repeatedly and recently repaired; but it never can be made comfortable, because the walls of it have been built with clay instead of lime, and that too in a very insufficient manner.

The extent of the glebe, in lieu of 3, should be $6\frac{1}{2}$ Scotch acres, and its value about L.10 per annum; but, since the flood in 1829, an acre of it has been carried away by the Dee. It has been lately embanked by the heritors at a considerable expense,—up-

wards of L.100; and it is hoped this will prevent the river from making future encroachments.

The amount of the stipend is 17 chalders, half meal, half barley, standard weight and measure, payable in money, according to the county fiars, with L.8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. But a part of it was permanently converted into money by the Court of Teinds, and is not affected by the fiars.

There is a missionary chapel at Rinloan in Glengairn, about seven miles from the parish church; and its minister receives L.60 annually from the Committee for managing the Royal Bounty, besides enjoying all the accommodations which they require.

In these parishes, there are no chapels of ease, Government churches, catechists, Dissenting, Seceding, nor Episcopalian chapels.

There is one Catholic chapel on Gairnside, about five miles north-west from the parish church, and about two miles east from the missionary chapel at Rinloan; and its bishop resides at Pres-home in Banffshire.

The number of families who are members of the Established Church is 462; of persons do. 1919. The number of families who are members of the Catholic Church is 86; of persons do. 360. Divine service at the parish church, and also at the chapel at Rinloan, is well attended, except on very bad days. The average number of communicants at the Established Church, for the last ten years, is 936; the average number of young communicants for the same period is 31; and the average of their ages about nineteen years.

No Society for religious purposes has yet been established in these parishes. The average amount of church collections yearly for the Indian Mission, the Assembly's Schools, the Infirmary at Aberdeen, and other religious and charitable purposes, has hitherto been about L.12.

Education.—The total number of schools at present is 8, viz. 1 parochial, 1 endowed, 1 unendowed, and 5 supported by subscription among the parishioners. The parochial schoolmaster's salary is the maximum; the amount of his school fees and other perquisites about L.20; and he has the legal accommodations. He has also a share of the Dick Bequest. The teacher of the endowed school has a salary of L.15, with the usual accommodations; and the amount of fees paid to him is about L.6. The teacher of the unendowed school has a salary of L.30, without any accommodation

but a house for teaching; and the amount of fees paid to him is about L.5. The five subscription schools are taught for only three or four months in winter; and, during that time, the average of the whole emoluments to each teacher, without any accommodation but a hovel for teaching, is only between L.5 and L.7.

The number of the young betwixt six and fifteen years of age who cannot read and write is 370; of those upwards of fifteen years of age it is 240. Some of the people are not so much alive to the benefits of education as might be expected; but, in general, they begin to see and appreciate them much better than they did a few years ago.

There are many parts of these parishes by far too distant from the parochial school; but this inconvenience is, in some measure, remedied by the western and north-eastern extremities being near to the adjoining schools of Strathgirnac, Crathie, and Logie-Coldstone. There are, however, two districts, each of which would require an additional school,—they being five and six miles distant from any school either within or without these parishes, and having each a population of more than 300.

Library.—A circulating library has been established in Ballater.

Friendly Society.—There is a Friendly Society,—St Nathalen's, a masonic lodge, whose charter from the Grand Lodge of Scotland is dated 9th May 1815.*

Savings Bank.—A parochial Savings Bank was established on the 26th February 1821, which, besides a treasurer and clerk, is managed by twelve directors, four of whom go out by rotation at the end of every year to make room for as many new ones, who are then elected to continue in office for three years. The investments are generally made by servants out of their wages, mostly by females; and the number of depositors has never yet exceeded 50.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—Taking the average of the last seven years, the number of persons receiving parochial aid is 84, and the average proportion of the funds to each is only a fraction above 14s. per annum; but, according to their age and other circumstances, the sums which they actually receive vary from 12s. to L.1 per annum. The average annual amount of contributions for

* This society has now sold their hall, and divided their funds; but they still continue to admit new members, and to maintain their connection with the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

their relief is L.65, 6s. 6d., viz. church collections, L.41, 13s. 8d.; donations, L.6, 13s. 11d.; penalties, L.6, 12s. 6d.; mortcloth dues, 6s. 5d.; and L.10, the interest of L.250, settled for their behoof, at 4 per cent. From this is to be deducted L.6 for session-clerk's, precentor's, and kirk-officer's salaries, or L.2 for each, which leaves only L.59, 6s. 6d. to be divided among 84 paupers. Besides what has been now stated, there is no other mode of procuring funds for their relief. But here it may be proper to mention, that John Burnett, Esq. of Dens, and formerly a merchant in Aberdeen, by a deed of settlement, left his residuary estate, which turned out to be L.2000 Sterling, for the following charitable purpose: That is to say—he appointed his Trustees and the Synod of Aberdeen to apportion and divide the interest of it, in the way he has prescribed, for the behoof of all the parishes within the county of Aberdeen, with the particular exception of the town and parish of Aberdeen, for which he had made provision in a prior and separate deed. And the method pointed out by the latter deed, here referred to, is briefly this,—that his Trustees and the Synod shall, with the exception of Aberdeen, take all the parishes within this county in rotation; that, at the beginning of each rotation, they shall determine the *quantum* to be allowed to each parish, according to its population, the number of its poor, the extent of its funds, and other circumstances at the time; that no parish shall receive more than L.50 nor less than L.20 in each rotation; that no distinction shall be made of persons on account of their religious professions, but that preference shall be shown to such as have lived soberly and religiously; that, after having gone over all the parishes in one rotation, the managers shall, at the beginning of the next rotation, determine the *quantum* to each parish anew, and proceed as formerly; and so on in all time thereafter. Our parish has been found entitled to the maximum, L.50, which it has received twice in rotation since the commencement of the distributions, viz. in 1816 and in 1832. And, it is to be hoped, that it will come round again in about half the former time, as an addition has been made to the original stock from funds lately realized, which will nearly double the interest.

It must also be mentioned that, besides this, the Invercauld Trustees have under their management the interest of L.500, destined for poor householders and others in reduced circumstances, which they divide annually. With this our session has no farther concern than in recommending to the trustees such persons as it

thinks the fittest objects; and, in this way, it assists our poor's funds, and affords relief to many of the most necessitous.

Fairs.—There are two annual fairs at Ballater for the sale of horses, cattle, and sheep,—the one on the first Tuesday of May, O. S., the other on the second Monday and Tuesday of September, O. S. There is also a Martinmas fair at the same place for engaging servants, the sale of grain, and paying and receiving money; and it holds on Saturday immediately preceding 21st November, N. S.

Inns.—In these parishes there are 11 inns and alehouses, most of them respectable in their way.

Fuel.—The general kind of fuel is peats, procured from mosses in the hills at the cost of from 3s. to 4s. 6d. per single horse cart-load, according to the distance and other circumstances. Wood, though expensive, is also used; and coals from Aberdeen at the cost of 2s. per cwt., including carriage, which, dear as they are, many people consider to be the cheapest kind of fuel.

July 1842.

PARISH OF BIRSE.

PRESBYTERY OF KINCARDINE O'NEIL, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN.

THE REV. GEORGE SMITH, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE name of the parish is derived from a Gaelic word signifying *bush*, and seems to express what was formerly the general appearance of the district in which it is situated.

Extent, &c.—The parish is of great extent, being on the south side along the top of the Grampians, and on the west side from the top of the Grampians to the river Dee, about ten miles long. On the north side, it is about eight miles long, and on the east it is about six miles. This parish forms the south-east point of Aberdeenshire; and is bounded on the east by the parish of Strachan, which is in the county of Kincardine, and along the Grampians; on the south, by a part of the same parish, and by Lochlee, in the county of Forfar; on the west, by a mountain range