

nants sowed grass seeds, or raised turnips or potatoes except for the pot;—148 horses, 610 cattle, and 1229 sheep were kept; of the latter the greater part belonged to *crofters*, and, being allowed to wander about, were very detrimental to the neighbours. There were 47 ploughs, drawn by 88 horses; 87 cows, and 157 oxen and young cattle. The wages of farm-servants were, of men, from L.4, 10s. to L.6, 10s. or L.7; of women, from L.2 to L.3 per annum; of day labourers, 6d. with maintenance. Reapers were hired for the harvest, the men at L.2 and the women at L.1. The inhabited houses were 117, of which 79 were occupied by married persons, 9 by widowers, 15 by widows, 8 by bachelors, and 6 by unmarried women.

*August 1842.*

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## PARISH OF COULL.

PRESBYTERY OF KINCARDINE O'NEIL, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN,  
THE REV. WILLIAM CAMPBELL, A. M., MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—COULL, in the Gaelic language, signifies a *corner, nook, or retiring part of the country*. It is a name common over the Highlands of Scotland, scarcely any large property being without its Coull, or Mid-Coull, or Wester Coull, &c. Coull, interpreted as above, forms a very appropriate name to a parish lying chiefly in the south-eastern corner of the district of Cromar.

*Extent, &c.*—The form of this parish is irregular. As laid down in Robertson's Map of Aberdeenshire, it resembles, in some measure, the outline of Great Britain. Its average length may be about 6, and breadth about 3 miles. It is bounded on the south, by Aboyne; on the west, by Coldstone; on the north, by Tarland and Cushnie; and on the east, by Leochel and Lumphanan. A mountain-range, whose summits are named Hill of Gellan, Mortlich, Leadhlich, and the Hill of Corse, forms, in a great measure, a natural boundary between Coull and the parishes of Aboyne and Lumphanan.

*Soil and Climate.*—The general character of the soil is good; a fine loam, in some fields of great depth, and vining on an open

gravelly subsoil. The climate is good, the air pure, and the grain crops in Cromar are generally as early as any in this county.

*Geology.*—The geology of Coull is of the same character as the general features of Aberdeenshire; the hills consisting chiefly of granite, red and white, the former prevailing. There is a considerable extent of level ground in the centre of the parish, called Bogmore. It consists of alluvial deposit on moss. At one period it was generally covered with water, and formed a disagreeable, unhealthy swamp. By recent draining, the greater part of it has been brought into cultivation, the remainder has been converted into good pasture, and the climate has been greatly improved. The oak appears to have once flourished here, a specimen of enormous size having been recently dug up on the farm of Wester Coull, and two large beams of oak, rudely joined together by blocks of wood, were lately found in a piece of mossy ground near the manse.

*Botany.*—No rare plants have been discovered. The following may be mentioned as inhabitants of the parish:

<i>Parnassia palustris</i>	<i>Chelidonium magus</i>	<i>Vaccinium oxycoccus</i>
<i>Reseda luteola</i>	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>
<i>Littorella lacustris</i>	<i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i>	<i>Trientalis Europæa</i>
<i>Radiola millegrana</i>	<i>Arbutus Uva ursi</i>	<i>Pyrola rotundifolia.</i>

The *Senecio Jacobea* is no stranger in our pastures, and of late years our hay fields are much infested with the *Matricaria chamomilla*.

Of animals, the roe-deer, hare, grouse, partridge, snipe, wild-duck, hedgehog, polecat, and weasel may be noticed.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—The earliest parochial register commences 1752. Baptisms and marriages are recorded in it; but it has not been kept with much regularity.

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners are, the Earl of Aberdeen, whose valuation is L.812 Scots; Sir John Forbes, Bart. L.432, 4s. 6d. Scots; and the Marquis of Huntly, L.288, 6s. 8d. Scots. Mr Farquharson of Finzean also possesses some land in the parish, and pays stipend; but has no valuation.

*Antiquities.*—One of those circles of stones standing upright, so common in Britain, and called Druidical circles, may be seen on a small hill called *Tom-na-hivriugh*, or the "Hill of worship or justice." About the centre of the lands of Corse, there existed, at a very remote period, a chapel called Turry Chapel. The traces of its existence are still visible. The tradition regarding it is, that

it belonged to the "monks and friars." The castle or fortal. of Corse was erected in 1581 by William Forbes, father of Bishop Patrick Forbes of Corse. The walls of the castle still remain, but in a ruinous condition. Upon a rocky eminence in the vicinity of the church may still be seen the remains or rubbish of the Castle of Coull. It appears to have been a fortification of considerable extent and great strength, of square form, with large hexagonal towers at its angles. The fosse may still be distinctly seen. It was the seat of the Durwards,—a family once of great influence in this district. It is a common saying still, that the church bell of Coull rings of its own accord when a Durward dies.

### III.—POPULATION.

Amount of population in 1801,	.	679
1811,	.	721
1821,	.	701
1831,	.	767

The population, by census 1841, is 744. Of this number, 284 reside upon the lands of Corse, and, *quoad sacra*, are attached to the parish of Leochel. The population of Coull, *quoad sacra*, is therefore 460,—being, by the late census, the smallest parochial charge in this county. There is no town, and scarcely any assemblage of cottages deserving the name of a village.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

The number of arable acres is about 2300; of uncultivated pasture upwards of 5000; of land that might profitably be added to the cultivated land from 80 to 100; and about 320 acres are under wood, scarcely any of which exceeds the age of twenty years. The highest rent per acre is about L.2; the average rent about L.1, 2s.; and the real rental of the parish nearly L.2500.

Within the last twenty years, the agriculture has undergone great improvement. Much land has been brought into cultivation. Draining, enclosing, regular rotations of cropping, turnip husbandry, artificial grasses, are universally adopted. The seventh shift (three of grass) is generally followed, although the more intelligent farmers consider the sixth, with only one oat crop, as a preferable rotation. The property of Corse has, within the last twenty-five years, been greatly improved. Colonel Arthur Forbes commenced these improvements, while acting as commissioner for his nephew, then in India. Plantations of considerable extent were very tastefully laid out. Sir John Forbes, on his return to his paternal estates, carried forward the improvements on Corse

With great zeal and judgment; and, by completing the plantations, making good roads, remodelling the farms as they fell out of lease, straightening marches, laying off fields of proper size and form, enclosing, draining, building neat slated cottages, &c. he has accomplished so much, that the aspect of the lands of Corse is entirely changed; the climate meliorated; and thus a property that previously had every appearance of neglect, is now so much improved and ornamented, as to form one of the most beautiful and valuable estates of its size in this county.

There is a wool-carding mill in the parish, at which blankets and coarse woollen cloths are also manufactured. Knitting of stockings is carried on; but the profits from this manufacture are now become exceedingly small.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—We have neither Seceder, Episcopalian, nor Roman Catholic,—the whole population being of the Established Church. Occasionally, some young folks of the Roman Catholic persuasion come into the parish as farm-servants. These generally attend the parish church, and some have become converts to Protestantism; and, after due examination, been admitted to the communion. The minister's stipend amounts to L.105 Sterling, and four chalders of victual, payable in kind. The glebe consists of nearly four acres of very fine soil, worth about L.2 per acre. There is a process at present in dependence between Sir John Forbes, Bart. and the minister, in regard to the proportion of stipend payable by him, as proprietor of the lands of Corse. By the last locality, these lands were burdened with a payment of nearly L.60 Sterling in value, in money and victual. An old valuation of the teinds of Corse has recently been brought to light, in which the teinds are declared to be 100 merks Scots; and a process has in consequence been commenced for the reduction of the last locality. The manse was built in 1832, is commodious, well-finished, and in excellent condition. The heritors, rather than repair the old, at considerable expense, preferred to build a new house; and they have erected a very good new manse for less money than was required, in a neighbouring parish, for repairing and making an addition to an old one. The church is a plain substantial building. It was erected in 1792, has no gallery, but is sufficiently commodious. The church bell is of considerable size, and well-toned. It was cast in Holland in the

year 1644, and presented to the church by Mr Ross of Mill of Coull.

Sir John Forbes, Bart. of Craigievar, is sole patron of the parish. The patronage and teinds belonged, at one period, to the Abbey of Arbroath. At the Reformation, they fell to the Crown. The patronage afterwards passed into the hands of the Earl of Panmure, from whom it was purchased by the family of Craigievar, and it has been in their possession about 150 years.

*Education.*—The parochial is the only school in the parish. Mr Theodore Allan, the schoolmaster, who is also a licentiate of the church, is a well qualified, zealous, and very successful teacher. The intellectual system is followed, and particular attention is paid to the religious instruction of the young. No additional school seems to be called for, although, at the extreme points of the parish, the children are rather far from school. The schoolmaster's salary is L.26, with allowance of L.2, 2s. for a garden. He receives annually from that admirable and well-managed charity, the Dick Bequest, nearly L. 40. The school fees amount to about L.18, the session-clerkship held by the schoolmaster, brings upwards of L. 2, and there is a good dwelling-house containing five apartments. About forty years ago, the salary of the parochial schoolmaster of Coull amounted only to fifty merks Scots, and the school-fees were of inconsiderable value.

*Poor.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 12, the average annual allowance to each L. 1, 12s., and the average annual amount of funds for support of the poor is, from church collections, L.14, from interest of money, &c. L.3. When these are exhausted, recourse is had to a small fund kept in the bank, amounting at present to L.60, but which is rapidly undergoing a process of reduction. The amount of the church collections has doubled within the last twenty years.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

A remarkable circumstance connected with this parish is the annexation, *quoad sacra*, of so large a part of it to the neighbouring parish of Leochel. It was evidently done for the convenience of the inhabitants of Corse, but it is not known at what period the annexation took place. It appears from the old parochial registers of Leochel, that the inhabitants of Corse were, about two hundred years ago, considered as in that parish. And the records of the Synod of Aberdeen, year 1651, bear, that Mr Andrew Gray, minister of Coull, who had attempted to *intermeddle* with the people

of Corse in spiritual matters, without the permission of the minister of Leochel, is discharged from such intermeddling, they being annexed *quoad sacra* to the parish of Leochel.

Coull, *quoad sacra*, has the advantage of being without a single ale-house. There is a parochial library, consisting chiefly of practical religious works, with a few select volumes of history, biography, and travels. About eight years ago, a great improvement took place in the mode of conducting funerals here: Instead of inviting the people at ten o'clock A. M., as used to be done, while the funeral generally did not move until late in the afternoon, and thus, those who attended early had to wait several hours, the people are now invited at a specified hour, and the funeral moves exactly one hour after that time. Regulations for conducting funerals on the above plan having been proposed by the minister, were most readily adopted, and the whole parish is now very sensible of their advantage.

*August 1842.*

## PARISH OF METHLICK.

PRESBYTERY OF ELLON, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN.

THE REV. JAMES WHYTE, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name of this parish is said to be derived from two Gaelic words, which signify *vale of honey*. The oldest spellings are Methelak, Methlayky, Mythlik, Methlik. The parish was dedicated to St Devenick, who, according to Dempster, flourished toward the end of the ninth century. An altar in honour of him was founded in the cathedral church of Aberdeen, and the office used in his day may be seen in that rare work, the Breviary of Aberdeen, printed in 1509.

*Extent, &c.*—This is a landward parish, and contains upwards of 20 square miles. It is situate wholly in the county of Aberdeen, the two-thirds which lie on the north side of the Ythan being in the district of Buchan, and the remaining third on the south side of the river being in that of Formartine. It is bounded by