

PARISH OF ALVAH.

PRESBYTERY OF TURRIFF, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN.

THE REV. ANDREW TODD, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name, Extent, Boundaries.—ALVAH and the adjoining parish of Forglen were originally united; but before the middle of the seventeenth century, they were erected into separate parishes. In the most ancient manuscripts and printed records connected with the parish, the name, Alvah, is found to occur with the varied orthographies, *Alveth, Alveth, Alvecht, Alvechte, Alvach, Altwach, Alwach* and *Avauch*; but, after the most diligent inquiry, the writer has been unable to form any probable conjecture in regard to its etymological meaning. The parish extends in length about 6 English miles; and at its greatest breadth, to nearly the same distance; but in some places, to little more than two. In Robertson's map of the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Kincardine, published in 1822, the superficial extent of the parish is estimated at 11,282 imperial acres, or $17\frac{2}{3}$ square miles; but, according to the most accurate information which the writer could obtain, the superficial extent is only 11,133 imperial acres, being 149 acres under the extent given in the map. On the north and north-west, Alvah is bounded by the parish of Banff; on the south-west, by Marnoch; on the south by Forglen; on the south-east, by Turriff; and on the east and north-east by King-Edward and Gamrie.

Topographical Appearances.—The highest elevations in the parish are the hill of Alvah and the hill of Maunderlea. The former, according to Robertson's map, rises, near the northern extremity, to the height of 578 feet above the level of the sea, while the latter, situated on the confines of the parish, nearly four miles south-west of the former, has on the same authority, 155 feet of superior elevation. Both hills are rather steep towards the north, but of more easy ascent on the sides more distant from the sea.

The hill of Alvah stands apart from any other considerable or immediate elevation ; but the hill of Maunderlea, proceeding in a northerly direction from the parish of Marnoch, is connected with a series of minor elevations, which are scattered over the western and south-western division of the parish, and which give to this district a bleak and hilly appearance, strikingly contrasted with the woodland scenery which adorns the sloping sides of the hill of Alvah, and the rich and fertile lands which encircle its base. From the summit of this latter hill, the view is extensive, varied, and picturesque, and on an unclouded evening of summer, cannot be contemplated but with the most pleasing emotions. Towards the east, as far as the eye can reach, appears a large portion of the level, naked, and, comparatively speaking, uninteresting district of Buchan, having its otherwise monotonous aspect relieved, however by the bold and projecting headlands of Gamrie and Troup, which rise in frowning majesty along its shore ; on the south is beheld the Doveran flowing along between banks of the most fertile description, and here and there adorned with gentlemen's seats embowered amid thriving plantations,—the well known mountains of Bennochie, the Buck of the Cabrach, and further to the south-west, Belrinnes, appearing with imposing dignity along the line of the distant horizon. Looking in the direction of the north, the spectator beholds spread out, as it were, on a map below him, the picturesque and highly embellished scenery, amid which stands conspicuous, Duff House, the classical and magnificent mansion of the Earl of Fife,—the Doveran winding amid the surrounding woods in many a tortuous maze, as if loth to quit so fair a scene, and at length flowing into the ocean at Banff, which, together with the adjoining bay, is from this eminence distinctly visible ; while, far in the west and north-west, are seen relieved against the evening sky, the fantastic forms of the Caithness hills, behind which the sun is setting, and is throwing a parting gleam of molten gold across the broad bosom of the Moray Frith, the whole of which is stretched out before the spectator in mellow and unbroken repose, save where here and there is espied the white sail of some distant vessel.

The river Doveran may be considered as the natural boundary of Alvah on the east, although the estates of Inverichny and Dunlugas are situated on its eastern bank. This river, while within the parish of Alvah, flows nearly from south to north, and, including its numerous and beautiful windings, has a course of more than six miles in length. Where it enters the parish, it flows between

the estates of Dunlugas and Montblair, the proprietors of both of which have elegant mansions on its banks, surrounded with extensive and thriving plantations. Below the estate of Dunlugas, on the eastern bank of the river, a part of the parish of King-Edward intervenes, and at the distance of a mile and a half farther down, lies the estates of Inverichny on the same side. On the opposite side, below Montblair, are situated, in succession, the lands of Auchenbadie, Sandlaw, and a small part of the barony of Alvah. Before the Doveran leaves the parish, the scenery on either side becomes strikingly bold and picturesque. The ground rises to the north, presenting a rocky barrier, as if to intercept the progress of the stream. In this barrier, after diverting it from its northerly direction for more than a mile, a narrow chasm, as if by some great convulsion of nature, has been opened through the rocks for the reception of the water. Here the rocky and precipitous sides of the chasm are joined by a majestic arch, * which has more the appearance of a Roman structure than of a work of modern times. The chasm immediately under the bridge is only 27 feet wide, while the depth of the water is 56 feet, and from the top of the parapet to the surface of the water, the height is 55½ feet. The scenery at the bridge of Alvah† is much and justly admired; but it is not easy by words to give any precise and accurate idea of its beauties. Immediately to the north of the bridge, the rocks start back, as it were, into a sort of amphitheatre, rising, in some places, almost a hundred feet above the water, and clothed, fringed, and festooned with the most beautiful and diversified tints, arising from the luxuriant intermixture of trees, shrubs, lichens, and mosses. The water below is collected into an extensive, deep, and dark-looking basin, exhibiting, on ordinary occasions, no appearance of life or of motion, save when momentarily agitated by the splash of the leaping salmon. Farther north, and yet higher up, arises the hill of Montcoffer, stretching away to a great distance, clothed to its top with firs, and forming the back-ground of the picture. The whole scene is of a solemn and secluded nature, and the sounds which most frequently break in on its gloomy stillness, are the scream of the heron, and the hoarse note of the raven. Farther down; the stream is again contracted by a succession of shaggy rocks and steep wooded banks, between which it

* This bridge was erected in 1772 by the late Earl James Fife.

† An engraving of the bridge of Alvah may be seen in the Annual entitled *Friendship's Offering*, for 1832.

urges its winding way for nearly a mile, when it becomes the eastern boundary * of the parish of Banff, at the distance of about two miles from the sea. From the bridge of Alvah, downwards, art has everywhere been successfully exerted to add beauty to the grandeur of nature. The summits of the rocks and steep banks of the river are clothed with a striking variety of forest trees, either tastefully disposed for effect, or studiously adapted to their congenial soils, while, from the rocky crevices below, springs a rich profusion of wild flowers and shrubs, that dip their pensile branches in the stream. But this scene, at all times beautiful and romantic, assumes only its character of horrible grandeur when the river is swollen in a flood. On such an occasion, the narrow chasm at the bridge of Alvah, being insufficient to admit the augmented stream, the waters are repelled by the opposing crags, and flow backwards for nearly two miles along the stream, and, in many places, extend for more than a quarter of a mile over the adjacent fields. When this mighty lake and the roused-up river, pour their waters over the opposing rocks at the entrance of the gorge above the bridge, and when the tortured stream is thence thrown down with resistless force into the narrow gap beneath the arch, where "it boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through," a scene is presented of such mingled beauty and horror, that, to convey an adequate conception of it, might require the combined powers of a Claude and a Salvator.

Hydrography.—This parish abounds with perennial springs of the purest soft water, and contains also several excellent chalybeates. The most remarkable fountain of the first class is called Comes-well—a name which occurs in a charter dated more than 500 years ago. This fountain rises on the farm of Tippetty, at the northern base of the hill of Alvah, and is as remarkable for its magnitude as for the excellence of its water. It throws out twenty-seven imperial gallons in a minute, and when tried by the hydrometer appears only a shade heavier than water distilled. It has long been envied by the people of Banff, but has never yet been conducted thither, although such a scheme has been frequently contemplated. Many other fountains, of similar quality, spring from the base of the same hill, but none of them rise far up its sides. The temperature of the numerous springs within the parish ranges from

* By some, the parish is said to extend downwards, along the course of the river, until within a very short distance of the *cruive dyke*; others are of opinion that its northern boundary is only a few hundred yards below the bridge.

45° to 46° of Fahrenheit, with the exception of the well at Kemplemire, of which the temperature is as high as 50°. The formation of calcareous concretions has been ascribed to drinking from this last-mentioned fountain; but from a recent chemical analysis, the water does not appear to be distinguished by any quality productive of such a disorder.—None of the chalybeates are worthy of particular notice, with the exception of the Red Gill well on the hill of Brownside, and a spring rising on the Hill-head of Montblairy. Each of these has been found to hold a greater quantity of iron in solution, than either the Red-well in Boyndie, or the well of Tarlair in Gamrie. From a qualitative analysis recently obtained, it appears that the Red Gill well contains a large quantity of the protoxide of iron held in solution by excess of carbonic acid, with an average quantity of chloride of sodium, carbonate and sulphate of lime. The Hill-head spring contains fully as large a quantity of iron as the former, held in solution as a protoxide by excess of carbonic acid, with rather less carbonate and sulphate of lime, but with fully as much salt. The writer has obtained analyses of several of the other springs, but the results are marked by no peculiarity worthy of insertion. The whole of the springs appear to arise, in general, between the clay-slate and greywacke, which constitute the prevailing rocks within the parish.

The only river is the Doveran, which has only three tributaries of any consequence within the parish. Two of these flow from west to east, and join the river at Auchenbadie and Mill of Montblairy, the other flows from east to west, and joins the river at Boat of Ashoagle. The breadth of the Doveran varies from 90 to 320 feet.

*Geology and Mineralogy.**—This parish presents but few features interesting in a geological point of view. The surface, although varied and irregular, and raised up into small hills and rising grounds, and intersected by hollows and chasms, yet affords but an occasional view of the solid strata. In the higher grounds, and in those places where the soil has been opened up, and quarried for building, the solid strata are occasionally discovered, but in other places they are covered up by deep diluvial beds, the thickness of which it would be difficult to determine. The hollows, ingeneral, are not traversed by any stream of magnitude sufficient to disclose the nature of the adjacent rocks: hence our

* For this section, and for information on other points connected with this report, the writer has to acknowledge his obligations to James Christie, Esq. Banff.

report upon this head has been attended with more difficulty than was at first anticipated. Enough, however, has been seen to afford sufficient evidence of the structure and superposition of the solid strata.

The direction of the strata is from north-east to south-west, or perhaps, where the strata have been more than usually deranged, varying a point or two nearer the south on the one hand, and the north on the other; and the dip is to the north-west and south-east at right angles to the direction. The eastern side of the parish is watered by the river Doveran, the banks of which, and the lower grounds, are a deep alluvial loam, resting on a bed of blue clay, intermixed with clay-slate, in broken fragments and in a state of dissolution. Indeed, it appears to me, that the bed of blue clay on which the alluvial and vegetable soils rest, is almost wholly a formation arising from the disintegration and dissolution of the clay-slate on which they are reposing. The vegetable soil on the lower grounds of the other parts of the parish is also reposing on a bed of diluvial coarse clay, and occasionally intermixed with thin veins or beds of ferruginous sand, shingle, and water-worn boulders; and on the higher grounds, around the hills of Tippetty, Alvah, &c. the soil reposes on beds of sand and shingle, intermixed with fragments of greywacke slate, &c. These are resting, throughout the whole parish, on a bed of clay-slate, which again is resting on a bed of greywacke, and on which the clay-slate lies in a conformable position, and in its lower strata following the windings of that mineral, with which, at their junction, the greywacke passes into greywacke slate, and for some distance alternates with the clay-slate. The greywacke is intersected with thin veins of quartz, the greatest thickness of which may be about four or five inches. These veins ramify through the mass, diminishing in size till they totally disappear. The angle of elevation of the clay-slate is different at different places. Towards the top of the hill of Alvah, the clay-slate is standing almost vertical; but on descending the hill the angle diminishes, and in the lower grounds, where the strata are less deranged, it is found almost horizontal. I cannot, with certainty, determine the existence of any fault or dike by which the strata are deranged. The upper bed of the hill of Tippetty, toward the base, is clay-slate, but towards the top of the hill, coarse mica-slate passing into secondary gneiss crops out; but we are unable to determine the strata on which these last repose.

Rolled blocks were formerly common throughout the parish; but on the surface of the cultivated ground most of them have yielded to an improved husbandry long ago. A few blocks of greywacke, similar to the rocks *in situ*, are still to be seen on the waste and rising grounds, between the farms of Clayfolds and Sandlaw; and on the hill of Maunderlea, on the south-western boundary of the parish, a number of rolled blocks of granite, coarse mica-slate, gneiss, quartz, and trap, are still to be seen on the surface, and many similar are found deeply imbedded in the soil. Various blocks of sandstone are also intermixed, of a coarse and hard texture, altogether different from any sandstone rock within the county; but most of those of a larger size have been fashioned into rabbets and lintels, or otherwise employed as materials for building.

The existence of flints in Scotland is a recent discovery, the chalk formation in which they form a constituent part of the upper beds, being there unknown. Notwithstanding, flints have now been found both in this and the neighbouring parishes, which geologists have considered to be the true chalk flints. They are common on the sea shore, intermixed with the shingle along the beach adjacent to Banff, and have also been traced to Gamrie, and to the eastward as far as Peterhead. A large deposit of flints was first discovered in the hill of Delgaty, imbedded in a sort of unctuous clay, intermixed with nodules of quartz and shingle. They have also been discovered by Colonel Gordon of Park, in the parish of Ordiquhill, and they have been met with in the hill of Alvah, and in different other places within the parish. As there are no chalk-beds in this country, it appears evident that the flints and other debris, dissimilar to the rocks *in situ*, must have been brought there by some mighty inundation from a great distance, sweeping off the superior strata from extensive tracts which they once covered, and spreading and throwing them together in indiscriminate masses at great distances from the range, with which they have every appearance of having been once connected. To this great cause we cannot help assigning the great mass of the upper beds of coarse clay, intermixed with every variety of the debris of rock, neither to be found here *in situ*, nor at any known distance from the spot. To this general covering of water-worn debris then, torn from all the strata, the name of diluvium has been given by geologists, from that great and universal catastrophe to which it appears most properly assignable. Within

this parish there are no data from which we might form even a probable conjecture, in regard to the direction of this mighty current. Were we, however, permitted to travel beyond our bounds, we might remark, in passing, that, in the neighbouring parish of Boyndie, a narrow line of water-worn boulders of hornblend and hypersthene, many of them weighing more than thirty tons, runs from a north-easterly to a south-westerly direction, and which are traced more than thirty miles in that line through part of the parishes of Boyndie, Ordiquhill, Grange, Keith, Cairney, &c. while no rock on that line, of the same kind, is found *in situ*.

No organic remains are known to have been found within the parish, neither of plants nor animals, neither the ores of any of the metals, with the exception of iron, which, in combination with the mineral, gives it its colouring matter.

*Zoology.**—The mammalia, and indeed most of the other animals, are, with perhaps a few exceptions, precisely the same in number and character in this parish as they are in most of the parishes immediately adjoining.

Pearls are occasionally found in the Doveran. They are, however, of very small size, and of no great brilliancy.

Entomology.—On this head it may be mentioned that a few years ago, a large and beautiful specimen was found at Montblair, in this parish, of the death's-head hawk-moth (*Sphinx atropos*). This insect is said to advance with the cultivation of the potato. Mr Duncan, in his History of British Moths (Naturalists' Library, Vol. xiv.) does not take notice of any example of it having been hitherto met with so far north. The specimen now mentioned is in the possession of a gentleman in Banff.

Botany.—This parish possesses a highly interesting Flora; but, from a list of about 460 species transmitted by the writer, we have only room for the insertion of the following *plantæ rariores*:

Adoxa moschatellina	Bidens cernua	Epilobium angustifolium
Agrostis Eupatoria	Botrychium Lunaria	Fragaria vesca
Aira cristata	Brachypodium sylvaticum	Galeopsis versicolor
Alchemilla alpina	Briza media	Galium boreale
Alisma Plantago	Bromus asper	----- Mollugo
Anagallis arvensis	----- giganteus	Geranium pratense
----- tenella	Campanula latifolia	----- sylvaticum
Arenaria trinervis	Chrysosplenium alternifolium	Goodyera repens
Asperula odorata	Circea alpina	Habenaria viridis
Asplenium Adiantum-uid-grum	Drosera rotundifolia	Helianthemum vulgare
		Hippuris vulgaris

* A detailed account of the zoology of the parish, for which the writer was indebted to the Rev. James Smith, Banff, a gentleman highly distinguished both in moral and natural science, is preserved along with the MS.

Hyacinthus non-scriptus	Parnassia palustris	Scirpus sylvaticus
Hypericum hirsutum	Peplis Portula	Sedum villosum
perforatum	Polypodium Dryopteris	Silene inflata
quadrangulum	Potamogeton lucens	Sisymbrium thalianum
Lamium album	Pyrola media	Solidago virgaurea
Lepidium Smithii	minor	Spergula nodosa
Linnaea borealis	Radiola millegrana	Stellaria nemorum
Listera cordata	Rubus corylifolius	Veronica scutellata
Lithospermum arvense	saxatilis	Viburnum Opulus
Lotus major	Sanicula Europæa	Utriculata vulgaris
Melampyrum pratense	Saxifraga aizoides	minor
Ornithopus perpusillus	Scandix Pecten	

Plantations.—There are about 750 imperial acres under wood, nearly 300 of which have been planted within the last forty years. The trees most generally planted are the Scotch fir and larch, intermixed occasionally with a considerable proportion of beech, ash, oak, elm, plane, birch, alder, horse-chesnut, Spanish chesnut, lime, poplar, silver-fir, spruce-fir, service-tree, mountain-ash, laburnum, holly, &c. &c. Judging by the comparative growth, the particular species of trees do not, in every instance, especially in the earliest plantations, appear to have been placed in the soil most congenial to their growth. The experience of the past, however, will, it is probable, prevent in future the occurrence of such mistakes as may have been committed in this respect. As yet, it seems doubtful whether the soil generally is more congenial to the Scotch fir or to the larch. It is plain, however, that there are many stations more favourable to the one than to the other, and not a few unfavourable to both, where, notwithstanding, spruce and silver fir, as also beech and oak, are of vigorous growth. In regard to Scotch firs,* the result of many experiments seems to have rendered it certain, that plants raised from seed collected from the natural forest, grow more vigorously, and produce timber of better quality than the common plants of the nursery. The fine thriving firs immediately behind the house of Dunlugas were raised from plants of the former description, and by the accustomed eye might be distinguished as such, from the peculiar tinge of their foliage. Upon the whole, with a few exceptions in the more elevated localities exposed to the blast of the north, the soil of the parish is well adapted to the growth of timber of various kinds; and if any opinion may be formed from the success of former plantations, the soil, if judiciously selected, is congenial to a

* The Scotch fir of this part of the country is, properly speaking, the Canadian fir. The true Scotch fir is more red in the colour, its bark has a cleaner and shining appearance, its boughs are more gnarled, its timber is reckoned of superior quality, and altogether its appearance is more majestic and picturesque. It may be seen in perfection at Marr Lodge.

much greater proportion of ash, oak, beech, elm, spruce, and silver fir, than has yet been introduced.*

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Documents, Transactions, &c.—In the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, is preserved a very ancient parchment,† containing the particulars of a transaction connected with this parish, at a distance of more than 500 years. This document is a charter of donation made by Marjory,‡ relict of the deceased John Earl of Atholl, Lord Strathalveth, with consent of her son David, her lawful heir. The tenor of the donation is, that for the salvation of her own soul, as well as that of her deceased husband, John, Earl of Atholl, Lord Strathalveth, and of her father Donald,§ Earl of Mar, she gives to the blessed Virgin Mary, to God, and to the Abbot of Cupar, the right of patronage of the kirk of Alveth, with the whole lands of Kirktown of Alveth next the kirk. The charter, after the usual preamble, details very minutely the

* We have every reason to believe, that, if the following species were introduced here, they would thrive better and prove more useful than any of the pines and firs now cultivated in this quarter: *Pinus uncinata*, *P. resinosa*, *P. Pyrenaica*, *P. pinea*, *P. Laricio*, *P. mitis*, *P. Gerardina*, *P. Strobilus*, *P. excelsa*, *Abies pinea*, *A. Webbiana*, *A. Douglassii*, &c.

† This parchment was formerly one of the manuscripts of the late William Rose, Esq. of Montcoffer, to whose son, Patrick Rose, Esq. Banff, the writer is indebted for the copy now, for the first time, published. The writer has also to acknowledge his obligations to the same gentleman for affording him the use of the materials, out of which the report on this head has chiefly been drawn.

‡ This countess was the daughter of Donald, *alias* Bayne, Earl of Mar, and wife of John, tenth Earl of Atholl and Strathbogie. This Earl of Atholl was a great patriot, and joined Robert Bruce at the battle of Methven; but, being afterwards discovered, was conducted to London, where, notwithstanding his alliance by blood, to the English monarch, he was condemned and executed A.D. 1306. In consequence of his royal descent, he was hanged on a scaffold thirty feet higher than ordinary. Before life was extinct, he was taken down, when his head was cut off, and fixed on London Bridge, and his body burnt to ashes. As a ransom for his soul, his widow gave the lands of Alvah, *ut supra*.

David, eleventh Earl of Atholl, was son and heir of the above-mentioned countess, and of John Earl of Atholl and Strathbogie, and gave his consent to the above-mentioned donation. He was a favourite of King Robert Bruce, and was made High Constable of Scotland in 1311. Having afterwards withdrawn his allegiance, and revolted to the English monarch, the office of High Constable was given to Sir Gilbert Hay, and Atholl's estates were forfeited. He was married to Joan Cumyn, eldest daughter and coheir of John Lord Badenoch, and by her had a son, David de Strathbogie, the twelfth Earl of Atholl. It is said he had other sons, from whom the M'Intoshes, Duffs, &c. are believed to be descended.

§ This Donald, Earl of Mar, father of the Countess of Atholl, Strathbogie, and Strathalvah, was taken prisoner at the battle of Methven, confined eight years in London, exchanged for an English nobleman taken at Bannockburn, and conducted to Scotland in 1314. About this time he appears to have died, for the charter of confirmation accompanying the charter of donation, is granted by his son and successor, Thomas Earl of Mar, on the 19th March in the same year.

From an old and scarce work entitled "Index to Charters by King David II," it appears that this Thomas, Earl of Mar, granted a charter of the lands of Sandhaugh, (now called Sandlaw,) and of the half of Auchendadie to Thomas Hill, a person of whose history nothing is now known.

boundaries of the donation, in the following words—" usq. ad meta versus villā de Banff que dicitur lie Stanemannishead juxta commune de Banff antedict. ex boreali, descendendo in aquā de Dowern cum dicta aqua et piscatione ejusd. ascendendo ad lie meirburn ex orientali usq. ad lie blackbank et fowlfurd et inde extendendo ad knockne ex australi, ascendendo rivulem statent de lie Claretwell usq. ad viā ascendendo slakmethy et inde descendendo per viā usq. ad slacklethy descendendo ad fontem et rivulem ejusd. usq. ad redbank et illius ascendendo torrent fluent in aqua de Dowern usq. at Ranate hillock et inde ad lie Crukithillock et ad lie Scurryfurd ascendendo ad magnam foveā vulgariter lie Greit slack et Rishypannis, descendendo ad lie Comeswell et inde ad fontem Sancti Joannis et blodypotts ad burgusæt stains inter communam de Banff et terrā ecclesiasticā de Alveth antedict. ex occidentali partibus cum aliis omnibus terris avisamentis simulet et libertatibus." This charter is dated at Aberbrothwick, "A. D. 1314, die xx. proximo post Sancti Pauli Apli," and is signed by many witnesses, among whom are the Bishops of Dunkeld and Brechin, the Abbots of Dumfermling and Aberbrothwick, with several knights and persons of distinction. The above-mentioned donation is accompanied by a charter of confirmation, granted by Thomas Earl of Mar, Lord Strathalveth, signed and sealed, "apud Moravien. sedem an. dni 1314, et 19 marcij," in presence of many witnesses of distinction. To this charter of confirmation there is a docquet subjoined in the holograph of Thomas Deir, designed "clericus St Andreæ dioc. ac sacra aplica aucto: Notarius," by which Henry, Bishop of Aberdeen, confirms the said donations, 1375.

The charters of donation and confirmation, of which we have here given the substance, are very interesting as documents of great antiquity, and if rightly interpreted may yet become important in other respects. The northern boundary of the parish of Alvah cannot, at present, be precisely determined by the oldest inhabitant, nor, in so far as the writer has been able to discover, are there any existing documents, excepting the charter before us, which seem at all calculated to throw any light on the subject. If the localities here mentioned could be exactly determined, the question would doubtless be set at rest; but the face of the country has undergone so many important changes from the progress of improvement, that it is now impossible to identify the present names of places, with names which have, probably, long since been changed and forgotten.

Several of the places mentioned in the charter, however, are known by the same names at the present day,—a circumstance which enables us to form a more probable conjecture with regard to the localities of the rest; and accordingly with this assistance and that of the native octogenarians and others, we have given in a note*

* To determine the precise locality of the *Stanmannishead* is the first and greatest difficulty which presents itself in tracing the bounds of this ancient donation. From the words of the charter, the *Stanmannishead* must have extended on the north to the town lands of Banff, and these lands are known from tradition and other evidence, to have stretched into the interior of the country as far as Cairnelpie, situated on the north-eastern angle of the farm of Wardend, and are supposed to have been bounded by a line, nearly straight, passing from thence to the river Doveran, in the direction of the row of old thorn trees which crosses the upper end of the deer-park. That part of the parish which lies adjacent to this line is now called *Craig-head*,—a name which bears some distant resemblance to the *Stanmannishead*, and in terms of the charter lies due north of the church of Alvah. Supposing this line, then, to mark the boundary on the north, we are now directed, in tracing the eastern limit, to ascend the river Doveran as far as the *Meirburn*. This name, although now almost forgotten, is still remembered by a few as the name formerly given to the small burn which flows between the farms of Mill of Alvah and Clayfolds. On ascending this streamlet, in terms of the charter, we arrive at Blackbank and Fowlfurd, places which, although now unknown by these names, must have stood on the same burn a little below the present manse. A little farther up lies Knockno, a place which still retains its ancient name. From this we are directed to ascend the stream which flows from Claret-well, until we come to the road ascending to Slakmethy. The Claret-well is still known by the same name, and the stream which flows from it is only the upper end of the *Meirburn*—circumstances which confirm the opinion given in regard to the previously mentioned localities. The road ascending southward to Slakmethy, (although this name is now forgotten), can be no other than the road ascending to the place now called Berryhillocks, and the descent from thence to Slacklethy must be the continuation of the same slack to the place now called Komplemire. From the well at Slacklethy (Komplemire,) the charter directs us to follow the stream to its junction, at Redbank, with the torrent which flows into Doveran. Redbank must be identified with Path-head, and the torrent passing this and flowing into Doveran is the burn of Stonylea. Ascending this burn, as directed, we arrive at Ranate hillock, a place which probably corresponds with what is now called Ranald's hillock, situated on the same burn a little below Bythestown. Farther up we come to the Crukit-hillock, a name which, although now lost, is quite descriptive of the Broomhillock below Firfolds. Still farther up is Scurryfurd, which is probably the place where an old road now crosses the marshy hollow north-west of Bythestown, near the Slacks. We are next directed to ascend to the Greit Slack and Rishypannis. The Greit Slack is, no doubt, the Slacks of Tippetty, which commence immediately above the supposed locality of Scurryfurd. Rishypannis or Rishypans is a name not uncommon in this part of the country, and probably the Rishypannis of the charter may have been somewhere about the lower and once marshy extremity of the Slacks of Tippetty. From these Slacks a hollow on the farm of Tippetty leads directly to the next station, viz. Comeswell—a well which still retains its ancient name. In completing the circuit, we are now directed to proceed from Comeswell to St John's well, and Bludypott's ad Burgusæt stains inter comunam de Banff et terrā ecclesiasticā de Alveth. The site of St John's well is now unknown, and that of Bludypott's can only be conjectured. In regard to the Burgusæt stains we have more certainty. One of these was dug up more than twenty years ago, near the wood of Bauchlaw, on the north-east angle of the farm of Wardend. The letter B was rudely carved on it, and tradition had previously marked the spot where it was found, as the point to which the Banff lands at one period extended. With true antiquarian taste and feeling, this stone was broken down and employed as material for building. Near the place where it was discovered, once stood a cairn known by the name of Cairnelpie, in removing which, the fragments of a human skeleton were found. According to tradition, these were the remains of a person murdered here in former times, and as the cairn once stood on the margin of

below what we conceive to have formed the probable boundaries of this ancient donation, which, if our conjecture be right, will point out the northern boundary of the parish. We need only farther remark at present, that the boundary of the donation which we have attempted to trace, comprehends almost the whole of the lands possessed by the present Earl of Fife, within this parish, west of the river Doveran; and if, (as the best accredited genealogies affirm,) his Lordship be descended from the Atholl family, it is a very curious fact, that he should be in possession, at the present day, of the lands which were given away by his ancestor at the distance of 524 years.

It was the writer's intention to have traced the succession of landed property in the parish from the date of the above-mentioned charter down to the present time: but materials accumulated to an extent so incompatible with a work of this description, that he has found it necessary to present only a few detached fragments of the more interesting and less generally known portions of this part of our history.

In the "*Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum in Archivis publicis asservatum*," is found (at page 250,) the confirmation of a grant, of date 1410, by Alexander Stewart, Earl of Marr and Garviach, (Garioch,) and Dominus de Dufle in Brabant, to his brother Andrew Stewart, of the lands of Sandhalch, (Sandlaw,) in the barony of Montblair. This Earl of Marr and his brother Andrew, were two of the five natural sons of Alexander Stewart, Earl of Marr, better known by the appropriate name of the Wolf of Badenoch. In 1426, Douglas, Lord Balveny had a grant of Strathalvah confirmed by King James I. After the forfeiture of Douglas, the Lordship of Balveny, reverting to the crown, was in

a deep and extensive pond, the place at an early period may probably have obtained the name of *Bludypotts*. Thus have we arrived at the place from which we set out, namely, the *Stanemannishead*—a place already identified with what is now called *Craighead*. This *Craighead*, as already mentioned, stretches in a line from the *Burgusset* stains at *Bludypotts* or *Cairnelpie* to the river *Doveran*, and this line across the upper end of the deer-park is now pretty generally considered the northern boundary of the parish of *Alvah*, although there are some who positively maintain that the parish extends a considerable distance farther to the north. If a few more of the *Burgusset* stains were discovered between *Cairnelpie* and *Doveran*, the boundary, perhaps, might be determined with greater certainty. In regard to the boundary which we have now traced, it need only be farther remarked, that the ascents and descents, the heights and hollows, the points of the compass, and the course of the streams, all correspond with the terms of the charter,—circumstances, which, taken in connection with the names still extant, render it highly probable that the above outline is pretty accurately delineated. The northern boundary of the *Stanemannishead* is the only point about which any doubt can be entertained. Mr Cowie has the principal merit of tracing the boundaries of this ancient donation.

1460 disposed to Sir John Stewart, afterwards created Earl of Atholl; but with this lordship he does not seem to have received any of the lands of Alvah, for we find that his younger brother, Sir James Stewart, received a charter of Strathalvah from King James II. in 1466, and of the lands of Sandlach (Sandlaw,) in 1492. These two Stewarts were sons of Sir James Stewart, commonly called the Black Knight of Lorn, and of Joanna, dowager of King James I., and were, consequently, uterine brothers of King James II., for which they seem to have been distinguished by many marks of royal favour. The former (Sir John Stewart,) was created Earl of Atholl, and the latter, (Sir James Stewart, known also by the name of Hearty James,) received Strathalvah and Sandlaw, as already stated, and was created Earl of Buchan in 1469, and appointed great Chamberlain of Scotland in 1471. From several existing charters, it appears that the Stewarts, and afterwards the Douglasses, Earls of Buchan, retained property in the parish of Alva upwards of 150 years after the last mentioned date. From the worked printed by command of King George III. in 1811, and entitled, "*Inquisitionum ad Capellam Domini Regis Retornatum, quæ in publicis archivis Scotiæ adhuc servantur abbreviatis,*"* it ap-

* From this work the following excerpts may be quoted as possessing great local interest at the present time :

Feb. 19. 1593.—Joannes Johnston, hæres Georgii Johnston, de eodem, *patris*,—in annuo redditu L. 40 de villis et terris de Sandlaw in parochia de Strathavauch.

December 17, 1624.—Alexander Fraser de Philorth, hæres masculus domini Alexandri Fraser de Fraserburgh militis, *patris*,—in terris de Tibbertie, (Tipperty); villa et terris de Outlaw (Itlaw); terris de Forefauldís (Firfold); villa et terris de Bremlaw (Greenlaw); villa et terris de Feltiehead, (Fattyhead,) cum Newtown de Outlaw.

October 7, 1625. Walterus Ogilvie de Banff, hæres domini Georgii Ogilvie de Dunluggas, militis, *patris*,—in terris de Outlaw et Tipperties comprehenditibus terras dominicales vulgo Maynes de Tipperty, Brockiestown, Kiltrie-knock, Briggis hillock, Barbit hill, Rosyburn cum molendino.

January 11, 1628.—Dom. Geo. Ogilvie de Carnousies, miles, baronetus, hæres Georgii Ogilvie de Carnousie, *patris*,—in terris de Nether Deuchries (Deuchries) infra baroniam de Strathalvah—terris de Craighead de Alva, et terris vocatis Keaw in parochia de Alva.

June 15, 1648.—Patricius Comes de Kinghorne, Dominus Lyon et Glames, hæres masculus Joannis Comitís de Kinghorne, domini Lyon et Glames, *patris*,—in dimidietate terrarum et Baronia de Montblairy et salmonum piscariæ in dicta aqua de Doverne; dimidietate terrarum de Rylands, dimidietate Blacktown, Hairwood-hill, (Herod-hill) Over Deuchries, dimidietate Auchinbadie cum piscatione, dimidietate Stanieley, Balgray et Knockin.

August 5, 1669.—Christina, Isobella, et Elizabetha Hackats, hæredes portionarum Walteri Hackat de Meyen, *patris*,—in 3 aratris terrarum baroniæ de Outlaw, viz. 8 bovatis terræ de Outlaw, et 4 bovatis terræ, villæ, et terrarum de Brockiestown, 8 bovatis terræ villæ et terrarum de Outlaw, et 4 bovatis terræ de Outlaw, apud molendinum de Rosseburrie, extendentibus, in toto, ad 3 aratra terrarum infra parochiam de Alwach.

October 29, 1695.—Johannes Comes de Strathmore et Kinghorne, &c. hæres Patricii Comitís de Strathmore et Kinghorne, vicecomitis Lyon, dom. Glamis—in reliquo comitatus et prædii de Buchan, comprehendente (*inter alias*)—terras de Montblairy, Rylands, Deuchris, Blacktown, Hairwood Hill, Newton de Montblairy.

pears that Maria Douglas, Countess of Buchan, had in 1615, charters of the following lands, in the barony of Montblair, viz. Waistryne, Newtown, Todlaw, Quhitfield, Smedytown, and Haltown of Montblair, the dominical lands of Auchenbadie with the mill, the lands of Staneley, the other lands of Auchenbadie, and lands of Ryland with the mill. Soon after this, a great part of these lands seems to have passed into other hands; for from the work just referred to, we find James Earl of Moray in possession of the barony of Montblair and Ryland in 1619. About seventy or eighty years previously to this date, the other lands of the parish seem to have been possessed chiefly by Sir Walter Ogilvie of Dunlugas, whose rare turn for the acquisition of property is noticed in the present Statistical Account of the parish of Banff. Among the valuable manuscripts which belonged to the late William Rose, Esq. Montcoffer, was a charter to Sir Walter Ogilvie of Dunlugas, granted 2d February 1593, by the Cisterians of Cupar, of the lands of Alvah and Inverichny. The lands of Alvah, here mentioned, were, no doubt, the donation of the Countess of Atholl, already particularly noticed; but how the Cisterians became possessed of Inverichny is not very clear. From Nisbet's Append. 171, Inverichny would seem to have been mortified to Strathbogie, and probably may have been presented by him to the Abbot of Cupar soon after the donation made by the Countess of Atholl. The charter conveying the above-mentioned lands to Sir Walter Ogilvie is now deposited in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, and as it seems to have been quite unknown to all the collectors of antiquities of this kind, it may here be intelligibly presented in the following abridged form: "Omnibus, &c. Donaldus, &c. Abbas monasterii de Cupro, &c. dedisse, &c. Waltero Ogilvy de Dunlugas militi et Alisonæ Home ejus conjugi et eorum alteri diutius viventi in conjuncta Infeodatione et heredibus suis subscriptis pro nonnullis magnis pecuniarij summis per ipsos nobis in nra magna urgente et cognita necessitate, &c. Totas et integras terras nrs de Alveth et Innerrithny cum piscariis earund. supra aquã de duvern et suis pertinen. infra vicicomita de Banff extenden annuatim nro in rentali in omnibus proficuis ad summa duodece libra monetæ Scotice—Tenendas et Habendas, (viz. said lands, &c. by the said Walter and Alison, and longest liver of them)—et heredibus inter ipsos legitime procreatis seu procreandis; Quibus deficien Georgio Ogilvy filio naturali predict. Walteri et heredibus suis de corpore suo legitime procreandis; Quibus Oibus, quod ab-

sit, deficientibus legitimis et propinquioribus heredibus dicti Walteri quibuscunq. de nobis et successoribus nris in feoda firma emphiteōs et hereditate per omnes rectas metas, &c. &c.—warranted and dated at the Monastery, 2d February 1359—testibus Johanne Campbell de Calder, milite, Archibaldo Campbell, ejus filio, et herede apparente, et magistro Andrea Barclay," &c. &c.

This Sir Walter Ogilvie was the ancestor of Lord Banff, and as his lineal descendant is still the most considerable heritor in the parish, he may, perhaps, with propriety, be more particularly noticed. He was grandson of Sir Walter Ogilvie of Auchleven, ancestor of the first Earl of Findlater, and great grandson of Sir Walter Ogilvie of Lintrathen, High Treasurer of Scotland in 1425, and ancestor of the family of Airly. Besides the property granted to him, in the parish, by the charter just mentioned, he acquired from Urquhart of Cromarty, in 1530, the half of Dunlugas,* Sandlaw, and the haugh of Newton. The other lands of Alvah, excepting Montblair and Auchinbadie, he obtained from the Frasers of Philorth. He had also charters of Scatterly and Castletown in the parish of King-Edward, of Blackhill in Morayshire, the lands of Petty, Braithliern, Strathe, and the Castle of Howhill in Inverness-shire, Carnousie, in Banffshire, and Monycabok in the county of Aberdeen. From the Barclays of Montcoffer he acquired the Maius of Montcoffer and Gaveny. By his wife, Alisone Hume, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Patrick Hume of Fastcastle, he had a considerable estate. He had also extensive property in the county of Berwick, besides smaller estates in other parts of the country. From Leonard, Commendator of Cupar, he obtained the teinds of the parish of Alvah, and from the Abbey of Arbroath the teinds of Banff and Gamrie. His successor, for some time, appears to have rapidly increased the family property, and his great grandson, Sir George Ogilvie, for his eminent loyalty and faithful services, particularly in the action against Montrose and the Covenanters, at the bridge of Dee in 1639, was raised to the Peerage, by the title of First Lord Banff, by King Charles I. in 1642. His lineal descendant, the Honourable Lady Abercromby of Forglen,† daughter of the seventh Lord Banff, still re-

* The other half of Dunlugas belonged to John Lord Drummond, 1490; and by gift, 1511, mortified in favour of the King's College, Aberdeen, for the support of a Professor of Theology, and feued to Sir W. Ogilvie by the College for L. 19, 1s. Scotch.—MS. History of the town of Banff, by W. Rose, Esq. Montcoffer.

† The Honourable Lady Abercromby died in 1838, and has been succeeded by her, son Sir Robert Abercromby of Birkenbog and Forglen, Bart.

tains an extensive portion of the lands of her ancestors, and is, at present, the most considerable proprietor in the parish.

Eminent Characters.—This parish has produced but few individuals eminently distinguished. Dr George Chapman may, perhaps, with some hesitation, be mentioned as one. By a reference to the register of baptisms, it appears that he was born at Little Blacktown, and baptised August 18, 1723. A minute in the session records also intimates, that, while a student in philosophy, he taught the school of his native parish. He afterwards acquired distinguished reputation as a teacher and a scholar, at Dalkeith, Dumfries, Inchdrewer, and Banff. He finally removed to Edinburgh, where for some years he carried on business as a printer, and at the same time, received boarders, the instruction of whom formed his favourite recreation almost to the close of a life which extended to the age of eighty-three years. His “Treatise on Education,” and his other smaller publications on the same subject, were, at the time of their appearance, justly esteemed for their practical utility.

The name of another individual, to whose memory a monument has been erected at the public expense, may also be allowed a place in the statistics of the parish in which he resided, and in which, his memory is still cherished with respect. The late Major General Andrew Hay, who sold the estate of Montblair to the uncle of the present proprietor, was distinguished in the parish by his generous and public spirit, no less than by his valour in the field. To perpetuate his military fame, an elegant monument has been erected in St Paul’s Cathedral, London, bearing the following inscription: “Erected at the public expense to the memory of Major General Andrew Hay. He was born in the county of Banff in Scotland, and fell on the 14th of April 1814, before the Fortress of Bayonne, in France, in the fifty-second year of his age and the thirty-fourth of his services, closing a military life, marked by zeal, prompt decision, and signal intrepidity.”

Land-Owners.—The only heritors in the parish are, Lady Abercromby, who possesses the patronage of the church; the Earl of Fife; the Trustees of the late Earl James Fife; Alexander Morison, Esq. of Montblair; Hans George Leslie, Esq. of Dunlugas; and Harry Leith Lumsden, Esq. of Rosyburn. It is but justice to say that they are all liberal and encouraging to industrious tenants. The only resident proprietors are Mr Morison and Mr Leslie.

Parochial Registers.—These consist of one quarto and six folio

volumes, and appear to have been regularly kept, in so far, perhaps, as the keepers were concerned. But, from the numerous applications for extracts of births and marriages, which are not to be found in the registers, it is evident, that, until within a recent period, both births and marriages have been very irregularly entered. Each successive keeper of these registers appears also to have made his entries after a form of his own, and in some cases, these entries are very defective in point of information. For instance the date of baptism is often recorded without the date of birth, and without mentioning the place of residence. The father's name is also often recorded without that of the mother; and the residence or designation of witnesses, until of late years, appears never to have been noticed. These and other irregularities, it is believed, prevail to a great extent in our parochial registers, and should any change take place in the mode of keeping them, this is a point to which the devisers of a better scheme, ought to be particularly directed. It might tend, perhaps, to secure uniformity and regularity, if the pages of our registers were uniformly printed, and draughted in the form of schedules, with spaces left to be filled up with dates, names, places of residence, and other essential details. Each page should also be subscribed by the name of the keeper of the register, and every exertion made to enforce registration.

Our earliest recorded baptism is dated May 17, 1718, and the earliest minute of session, May 13, 1718. The earlier records are said to have been destroyed by accidental fire:—Others maintain that they were carried off by Mr George Campbell, minister of the parish, who, in 1718, was ejected from his charge on account of his adherence to Episcopacy.

Antiquities.—Scarcely any remains of antiquity are now to be found in the parish. Some years ago, a tumulus was opened on the farm of Sandlaw, containing several rudely sculptured vases of baked earth. In a tumulus, on the farm of Boghead, were found several vases of a similar kind, containing ashes. Contiguous to this tumulus is a large stone called *carlin kist*, supposed to be part of a "cromlech," or *kist-vaen*. In digging into a small gravel hillock, near Montblairy, a rude stone case or coffin, about four feet square, was discovered, and, on removing the stone which formed the lid, were found some ashes and a few fragments of calcined bones. In digging graves in the churchyard, several vases containing ashes have been found, but differing from others dis-

covered in the parish, in having handles attached, and in being glazed over with a substance resembling the exterior coating of the coarse earthen-ware of the present day. On the eastern brow of the hill of Alvah, is a large tumulus or cairn, consisting chiefly of small stones and earth. It is of an elliptical form, covering an area of about 20 fells, and in the centre rising to the height of 7 or 8 feet, but has never been sufficiently opened to disclose any remains of antiquity. Two smaller unopened cairns are also to be seen on the hill of Tippetty, and on the farm of Itlaw. There is also on the farm of Auchenbadie an apparently artificial mound of earth, nearly fifty feet high. It is known by the name of *Ha'-hill*; but there is no tradition respecting it, nor have any remains of antiquity been found in it. On the farm of Burreldales, there remain four large stones of a Druidical circle, and on the farm of Newtown of Montblair, one large stone marks the site where, a few years ago, stood another circle of much larger dimensions. Some time ago, a Druidical circle was found under ground, in digging deep into an old garden on the farm of Wardend. The ruins of the ancient castle which once stood near Montblair are levelled with the ground, and the swamp on which it stood has now become a fruitful field. According to tradition, the castle in question was built by one of the Stewarts, Earls of Buchan; but by which of them, or for what purpose, the writer has been unable to discover. In regard to the ancient chapel, (now also entirely demolished), which stood in its vicinity, tradition is entirely silent. As already stated, Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar, had the barony of Montblair, about the year 1400, and, as it is certain that he founded a chaplainry in the Garioch, the chapel in question may, probably, have been something in connection with that foundation. Whilst noting antiquities, it may also be mentioned that about 1000 acres of the poorest soil in the parish bear marks of cultivation at a period very remote; and that in the haughs of Sandlaw, and in the moss to the north of Maunderlea, and elsewhere, trees of considerable size have been frequently found deeply imbedded in the soil. In the haughs of Sandlaw, they have been discovered lying at the depth of 8 or 10 feet from the surface; and in the moss, many of the trees, consisting chiefly of fir, oak, and alder, bear the marks of fire distinctly visible, while others are found with the roots uppermost, near the surface, and with their trunks deeply sunk. In some cases, the root of one tree has been found right above the stump of another.

Modern Buildings.—Under this head, the parish presents little worthy of particular notice. The house of Montblairy, the property of Alexander Morison, Esq. was built in 1791 by the late Major-General Andrew Hay, whose name has been already mentioned. It is a substantial and commodious edifice of three storeys. A considerable addition was made to it in 1825. Within the last two years, it has received a thorough repair, and its outward appearance is now very handsome and tasteful. Its situation amid thriving plantations on a fine sloping bank, on the west side of the Doveran, is particularly delightful, and the large and beautiful quadrangle of offices erected on the wooded rising-ground behind the house, adds not a little to the beauty of the scene, when viewed from the opposite side of the river. The southern façade of this quadrangle is adorned in the centre with an elegant portico, supported by four massy columns of the Ionic order, and surmounted by a corresponding entablature and pediment. An attic storey extends from one end of the building to the other, and the whole is constructed of beautifully dressed granite.

It may be noticed, while on this subject, that in the house of Montblairy, are to be found a few paintings which deserve the attention of the lover, whether of the arts or of history. Of these may be mentioned as the most valuable, either as works of art or as representations of remarkable individuals,—an original portrait of the Admirable Crichton,* transmitted, according to tradition, by Crichton himself from Mantua to the Laird of Frendraught, to whom he was related;—six portraits† by Jameson, including the great Montrose, and the infamous Lady Frendraught, whose cruelty in setting fire to the house of Frendraught is commemorated in a well known popular ballad;—portraits of Peter the Great, and Prince Menzikoff, presented by the Czar himself to Gordon of Auchentoul, who was a General in the Russian service, and wrote

* Mr Tytler mentions, in his life of Crichton, that there are three original portraits in this country of that famed individual; one in the possession of Colonel Crichton, Edinburgh; and another belonging to Mr Stirling of Airth, both of which he has seen, and from the former of which his engraving was taken. The third is the one in question, which Mr Tytler never saw. Judging from the engraving in his book, the present portrait would appear to be much superior to the one made use of by Mr Tytler. It is indeed regarded by judges as a painting of great merit, and is also in an excellent state of preservation. The painter, in so far as we are aware, is unknown.

† These portraits are but in an indifferent state of preservation. The truth is, that, owing to the extremely thin covering which Jameson used, or else to accidental circumstances, the portraits of our Scottish Vandyke (as he has not unjustly been termed) are, in so far as we have had opportunities of seeing them, rapidly hastening to decay.

a life of the above-mentioned illustrious monarch;—a portrait of Bonaparte, when first consul, by Le Fevre;—a singular portrait, 300 years old, of Barbara, Countess of Flanders, painted on a green ground, and supposed from this and other circumstances to be from the pencil of Holbein;—portraits of the Prince of Orange and of the Duke of Alva, &c.

About half a mile below Monthlairy, on the opposite side of the river, stands the house of Dunlugas, the property of Hans George Leslie, Esq. This house, built of granite, in 1793, consists of three stories, and is substantial, commodious, and elegant. With the exception of Duff House, perhaps no residence in the county of Banff is more delightfully situated. A beautiful and extensive lawn, partially adorned with lofty trees, which are tastefully disposed for effect, stretches in front to the margin of the river, and the ground, rising somewhat abruptly behind, is covered chiefly with thriving firs, whose dark foliage is finely contrasted with the light and more varied tints spread over the scene below.

Mills.—Within the last thirty years, 31 thrashing-mills have been erected in the parish, seven of which are driven by horses, and 24 by water. There are also six meal-mills, one malt-mill, and one lint-mill; but none of these last have been recently erected. The whole of the mills now mentioned are built of clay-slate, the prevailing rock within the parish. There is still one remnant of thirlage in the parish.

III.—POPULATION.

According to Dr Webster the population in 1755 was				1161
Sir John Sinclair,				1782, 1070
Under direction of Parliament,				1811, 991
Do,	Do.	1821, males 521, females 558, total		1079
Do.	Do.	1831, 633,	645,	1278
		1841,		1407

In order to answer the additional inquiries on this head, the following results have been obtained from an exact survey made in December 1837:

Persons under 15 years of age,	479
betwixt 15 and 30,	362
30 and 50,	261
50 and 70,	150
upwards of 70,	56
Total population in 1837,	1308
Bachelors and widowers above 50,	24
Unmarried women above 45,	25
Number of families,	252
Average number of children in each family,	2
Houses inhabited,	246
not inhabited, or now building,	6

From the above tables it appears, that, during the fifty-six years which elapsed between 1755 and 1811, there was a remarkable decrease of 170 in the population of the parish, and that during the twenty years which elapsed between 1811 and 1831, there has been an increase of 287. Some years after 1755, the parish began to assume a new aspect, by the introduction of the improved system of husbandry, in the prosecution of which most of the farmers removed their subtenants, and began to farm on a more extensive scale, and to this cause alone is to be ascribed the partial depopulation which took place during the period in question. Since 1811, the number of subtenants removed has been very inconsiderable, and much more than compensated by the introduction of a number of crofters, who are now thickly and extensively scattered over the drearier districts of the parish, and are rapidly bringing into cultivation large tracts of waste land, which, at one time, were scarcely thought susceptible of improvement. Thus both the decrease between 1755 and 1811, and the increase between 1811 and 1831 are easily accounted for.

The yearly average of births for the last seven years is 32 $\frac{1}{2}$, of which one-thirteenth are illegitimate. The yearly average of marriages for the last seven years is 4 $\frac{1}{2}$. No register of deaths is kept. The number of persons of independent fortune is 2, viz. the two resident heritors. There are no proprietors of land but the six heritors formerly mentioned. The number of persons insane is 1; fatuous, 1; and blind, 2. The language generally spoken is a coarse mixture of Scotch and English, with an accent broad and drawling; but within the last forty years, considerable improvement in this respect is certainly perceptible. There are no customs, games, or amusements peculiar to this part of the country. As a general fact, indeed, it may be observed, that all ranks and ages seem to have lost much of the relish for what formerly constituted the chief amusements of their forefathers. The habits of the people are in general cleanly, although among the poorer classes, negligence in this respect, particularly in the matter of dress and bed-clothes, is but too frequently met with, and is, no doubt, occasionally the foundation of disease. The ordinary food of the peasantry consists of milk, meal, kail, or colewort, turnips, and potatoes, variously prepared. Among the aged poor, particularly females, tea is used to a great, perhaps to an injurious extent. Beef, mutton, bacon, or fish, seldom forms any part of the labourer's dinner; but it is to be hoped that one or other of these may

yet be more frequently afforded than present circumstances permit. The effects of hard labour, and under-feeding, become very perceptible on the approach of age.

In so far as moral delinquency can be traced from our earliest records, commencing in 1718, it appears that, more than a hundred years ago, when the population of the parish was much less than it is at present, crime of every description was more generally prevalent. Notwithstanding the severe discipline which the church then rigorously enforced, the number of illegitimate births was as great as at the present day, and not unfrequently attended with circumstances of a revolting and aggravated description, which are now unheard of in the parish.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—Extent of different kinds of land. *

Number of acres of cultivated land, standard imperial measure,	6955
waste or pasture land,	3428
under wood,	750
Total extent of the parish,	11133
Number of acres improveable waste land,	1597
waste land, chiefly fitted for planting,	1831
improved within the last forty years,	2205

There are no undivided commons in the parish, but on the moss of Banff, extending to about 180 acres, about one-half of which is in Alvah, the Earl of Seafield and the Earl of Fife (for a few farms on his estates) have a servitude of firing; but the "bottom" or under strata belongs in property to the Forglen estates, and being on the sandy clay, of a good quality, the ground is brought into cultivation as the moss is exhausted.

The valued rent of the parish is L. 3304, 13s. 4d. Scotch, and the real rental about L. 4065 Sterling. The average rent of arable land is 13s. per imperial acre, or 16s. 5d. per Scotch acre, but, taking into account surplus rents paid by subtenants, the average rent paid for land is 14s. 3d. per imperial acre, or 18s. per Scotch acre.

Until about the year 1754, when the late Earl of Findlater introduced the improved system of husbandry, the agriculture of this

* The extent of land improved within forty years, the extent in different kinds of crop, the quantity of grain produced, and the amount of live-stock, have been obtained from returns made by all the farmers in the parish, who both kindly furnished the information in question, and studied to render it as accurate as possible. One of the estates has been recently surveyed; but of other four the surveys are of older date, and the survey of the remaining one has not yet been completed; so that in our statements of the total extent of the parish, the extent of waste land, &c. extreme accuracy cannot be warranted, although we have reason to think that our statements are pretty nearly correct.

part of the country was of the most wretched description, and in this parish no improvement of any consequence seems to have taken place until about twenty years after;* but since that time, improvement has been rapid and steadily progressive, and the agriculture of the parish may now be said to be conducted on the most approved principles.

Rotation, &c.—A regular rotation of cropping, suited to the nature of the soil, has long been universally adopted. The most common rotations are what are called the five, six, and seven shift courses—the last-mentioned being that which is, at present, most generally followed. Great and increasing attention is also paid to the preparation of the soil by superior ploughing and cleaning, and judicious application of manure. Lime has long been extensively employed, and, excepting a few cases in which it has been injudiciously applied, it has always been attended with the best effects. Several years ago, no fewer than eighty barrels or forty bolls per Scotch acre were laid on the haughs of Sandlaw, at an expense of L. 10 per acre, exclusive of carriage. In consequence of this, the produce was doubled—the fields yielding upwards of seven quarters of wheat, followed next season by 300 stones of hay per Scotch acre. This, however, is an extreme case, arising from the depth and nature of the soil. The greater part of the inferior land of the parish can scarcely receive twenty-five barrels per Scotch acre, without sustaining an injury which the farmers as yet know not how to repair. Within the last four or five years, bone-dust has been introduced as a manure, and with a degree of success which has not yet been satisfactorily explained. We cannot as yet say with certainty which of the ingredients of this manure constitutes the food of plants; for although bones boiled and crushed have been found to afford as good a manure as those in a raw state, and although this circumstance would seem to strengthen the opinion, that it is not the oily matter in the bones that constitutes the manure, yet the fact, that bones so boiled and crushed render the soil apparently as rich with oil as bones in a raw state, forbids us from asserting positively that the phosphate of lime alone constitutes the food of plants in the manure in question.

* The state of agriculture in this parish at the period in question, is incidentally noticed in Souter's "General View of the Agriculture of the County of Banff, drawn up in 1812, for the consideration of the Board of Agriculture." In the same work may also be found descriptions and engravings of a turnip-sowing machine and horse-hoe, the ingenious inventions of the late Mr John Cowie, farmer at Sandlaw, and the first implements of the kind introduced into this part of the country.

But, whatever may be the chemical action of bone-dust, it has here been experimentally and satisfactorily proved that this manure can impart no richness to any kind of soil, unless naturally dry or thoroughly drained. To the soil of this parish, generally, it is well adapted, and has accordingly been almost universally used, although its application has hitherto been exclusively confined to the turnip crops. The quantity here employed varies from twenty-five to thirty bushels per Scotch acre, at a price which has varied from 2s. 4d to 3s. 8d. per bushel; but even a much smaller quantity has sometimes been applied with surprising effect. The best practical farmers are of opinion that thirty bushels of bone-dust, in good fresh land, not exhausted by over-cropping, will produce as good turnips, and stand out the rotation as well as if twenty-five cubic yards and upwards of farm-yard dung had been applied.

Crops raised.—Some years ago, wheat was raised in considerable quantities, but, since the fall in price, this crop has been almost entirely discontinued. Bear and barley are also at present raised to a very limited extent. Bear seems the more suitable of the two to our soil and climate, ripening earlier, and affording a better quality of grain. Chevalier-barley has been tried, but is fast wearing out of repute. Except in very favourable seasons, it is found too late for our climate. Various kinds of oats are sown, according to the nature of the different soils, such as potato, Hopeton, birly, sandy oats, &c. The potato oats are mostly confined to the deep loams. The Hopeton are getting thicker in the husks upon being re-sown. The birly and sandy oats are excellent kinds, and well adapted to our soil and climate, and, as they are little known in the southern counties, their quality may be stated in comparison with the old common oats. They are from eight to ten days earlier, produce more straw, and yield four per cent. of more meal. Their average weight in 1836 was 42 lbs. per bushel. Good sandy oats bring the same price as potato oats. They are also as early, and have a great advantage over them, in producing a much greater quantity of straw, in being less liable to shake, and not apt to give way at the roots. Pease and beans, though once common, are now scarcely sown in the parish. The average number of imperial acres in yearly grain crop is 2846, and the average produce is 9792 imperial quarters,—being an average produce, per imperial acre, of nearly 3 quarters 4 bushels, or per Scotch acre, of nearly 4 quarters 3 bushels. Ten of the best farms on and near the banks of the Doveran produce, on an ave-

rage, 5 quarters 6 bushels per Scotch acre, while some of the best fields, in the same district, have been known to yield occasionally 12 quarters per Scotch acre.

Planting.—The extent planted is 750 acres. In regard to management, although our system appears generally proper, yet, if more attention were paid to pruning and thinning, especially at an early age, it is believed that the trees would be more healthy, and of much larger growth. Several young and thriving plantations of larch might be pointed out, in which it is necessary to cut down at least one-fourth of the trees immediately, in order to preserve them in a healthy state. Young trees are also too frequently suffered to be overpowered by the growth of whins; and in some stations of considerable extent, where the whins have been eradicated, with a view to remedy the evil, the the second plantation of trees has been completely destroyed by the rabbits, with which our woods are infested.*

Waste Land Improved.—2278 imperial acres have been improved within the last forty years. By far the greater part of this extent has been reclaimed from thin land previously overgrown with furze and heath. This sort of improvement ~~on~~ large farms would seem, in some cases, to have been over-extended, as a considerable part has either again been allowed to run into its natural state, or has now been planted. The most valuable improvements, however, have been effected by means of draining and ditching marshy ground, and so far have these been carried, that comparatively little now remains to be done in this way. The usual mode of reclaiming waste land of a certain description, is to trench, or trench plough the ground in autumn, allow it to lie in that state during winter, and generally all the following year, and in the second spring to crop it with oats (in which case, turnips follow the next year) or prepare it for green crop. The mossy lands (once of very considerable extent) are improved by drying and burning. The water is drawn off by open ditches and drains. The upper part of the moss, when dry, is burnt, and spread for manure, and lime is applied for raising artificial grass. When the season is dry and early, this mode of culture produces fine crops of oats.

Waste Lands still unimproved.—In the parish there are 3428 imperial acres still unimproved. Planting is, no doubt, the only

* The Earl of Fife has of late years planted thorn hedges, to the extent of nearly eight miles within the parish.

kind of improvement of which the greater part of the waste land is susceptible; and, accordingly, we are enabled to state, that, on the western district, the property of Lady Abercromby, 306 imperial acres are to be enclosed and planted immediately, with mixed wood, but chiefly with larch, for which both the soil and climate appear most favourable. It is believed that plantations of considerable extent are also contemplated by some of the other proprietors.* After all, however, a great extent will still remain to be improved. In the district mentioned above, 664 imperial acres have been conditioned to be improved, in leases of nineteen years, lately granted. When all the improvements, both those in progress, as well as those contemplated by the proprietor, (viz. straightening the marches, dividing the land into farms of convenient size, improving and planting the wastes, and draining and enclosing the cultivated land), have been completed, this once (and still comparatively) dreary district will assume a highly improved appearance. Similar improvements on the other estates will no doubt follow in course, at least in so far as they are practicable and necessary. Whilst speaking of waste lands, it occurs to the writer, that this species of property might be very advantageously improved by letting, at least a considerable part of it, in small tenements or crofts. Besides the necessity which exists for supplying our surplus population with places of abode and the means of support, there are many parts of the parish of Alvah of a soil so poor and unequal, that no other method seems so well calculated to improve it. Large farms on such a soil are entirely out of the question. Indeed, it is doubtful, if improving a great extent of waste land on one farm, under any circumstances, be a safe speculation to the improver, or of practical utility in any respect. That it has fallen far short, often, of all reasonable expectation, there can be no doubt. But the improvement of waste lands by small tenements is of a more permanent and useful nature; and, though at first it may not be done to any great degree of perfection, its progress is gradual and sure. A crofter once set down on the poorest land, or land altogether waste, seldom or never fails to make an independent livelihood, and to bring up his family, and give them such an education as fits them for becoming useful members of society. Mechanics that are wanted for the district, such as tailors, shoemakers, masons, wrights, blacksmiths, &c. are all

* Since this report was transmitted, Mr Morison has planted nearly 400 acres on his estate of Montblairry.

sure to thrive on such possessions. Hand-loom weavers from manufacturing towns might also be tried, and if they succeeded, it would be a valuable experiment. The expense of carriage is the only obstacle, but with our present facilities of conveyance, that expense could not be great. In letting waste land, in the manner suggested, the appearance of the country would be greatly improved, and the comfort of the crofters, at the same time, increased, if they were bound to build their houses after some uniform and regular plan, to thatch and harl them when necessary, and to attend to such other cheap and tasteful improvements as their landlords might suggest.

Breeds of Cattle.—The breed of cattle in the parish seems to be the same with, or at least very little different from, the Aberdeenshire breed. The only remarkable alteration that has taken place, for some years back, is the great increase of hummel cattle compared with the number of horned. By the graziers and best judges, this alteration is considered an improvement. About twenty years ago, a different opinion prevailed, and a good show of horns was a point much valued. As to systematic breeding in the way practised in the south, very little has been done in the parish, except that, in choosing bulls and cows, the best and handsomest in the stock are generally selected and reared. The good or bad qualities of the former, however, are not always so much attended to as they ought. If the animal is once reared, he is seldom rejected, however indifferent his qualities may be. Most of the farmers consider systematic breeding as a scheme of too distant and uncertain remuneration, and, leaving this part of their economy to persons of larger means, they are content to avail themselves of the advantages resulting from the experience of others. But although the farmers here are not much given to expensive experiments, yet so greatly do they profit by the experience of others, that they cannot be said to be behind their neighbours in skill and judgment in the management of their stock. The practice generally followed on farms of a moderate size is this: the stock consists of four sets, viz. cows, one year olds, two year olds, and three year olds, of each nearly an equal number. The three year olds are sold off in the spring, or before Whitsunday (generally fat), by which time the calves are ready to take their place, so that about the same number is always kept up. Some sell off their three year olds before winter, and substitute four year olds in their room. Others speculate a little on

grazing. The fat cattle (three year old) on the best farms, will weigh on an average 35 stones Dutch, but over the parish little more than 30 stones; four year olds will weigh from 45 to 50 stones; while a few older cattle are sold annually, weighing 70 stones and upwards. If there be any thing reprehensible in our practice, it is that of overstocking and paying too little attention to the nourishment of calves, and the qualities of bulls.

The propriety of introducing what is called the short-horned, or Teeswater breed, is at present a much agitated question. The experiment has been made, with peculiar propriety, by some of the heritors in this and the neighbouring parishes, but few, if any, of the farmers here have yet followed the example, and probably will not do so, until they are satisfied as to the favourable nature of the result, and can make the experiment at less expense. The prevailing opinion is, that, in crossing the short-horned with the native breed, the race will degenerate, and at last leave in the country a race retaining all the bad qualities of both, with few of the good, and thus destroying the purity of both. In Aberdeenshire, where the experiment has been longer tried, it has been found that upon good and sheltered land, especially if enclosed, one cross betwixt the Teeswater bull and the Aberdeenshire cow answers extremely well, coming to a greater weight and earlier maturity than the native breed; but upon inferior land and open field, it is generally thought they never can supplant the native race. Their flesh cannot at all compete with prime Scotch in the London market, and the Aberdeen butchers consider them, even when crosses, as very inferior, and in fact would never wish to see them on their stalls.*

Horses.—For twenty years back, a considerable number of our best horses have been brought from the south; but this practice is now generally abandoned, and in some cases the trade has been reversed—a circumstance affording pretty strong proof of the improvement of the breed. The original breed of horses in the parish was peculiarly hardy and durable, but not equal to the present in point of bone and symmetry. The agricultural societies in the neighbourhood have, for a good many years, been giving premiums annually for the best horses, which have generally been gained by horses from the south; and, as our horses are usually descended from these itinerant prize-winners, the old breed of the

* Since this report was drawn up, the short-horned breed has been introduced to a considerable extent on several of the best farms in the parish.

parish is in a great measure extinct. This change is by some considered to have been carried too far, as having a tendency to produce a race of horses of a size disproportioned to the work. The price of a good horse at present will vary according to his quality from L.15 to L.35.

*Sheep.**—Owing to the extensive improvement of waste and pasture land, comparatively few sheep are now reared in the parish. At present no attention seems to be paid to the breed, one flock frequently consisting of half a dozen different kinds. The flock at Sandlaw of the pure Leicester breed, famed for their size and the fineness of their wool, is perhaps the only exception. Besides the small number (679) at present reared in the parish, it may be noted that, for the last five or six years, large flocks from the Highlands come here for winter pasture, on the approach of snow on their native hills. The number thus pasturing at present is 3700 of the Highland, Strathdown, and Lanark breeds. The total amount received for the winter's pasture does not exceed L.80.

Live-Stock.—From an accurate survey made in December last, we are enabled to state the average number of the different kinds of live-stock as follows: 241 work horses; 101 other horses of every age and description; 22 work-oxen; 558 cows;—541 one year olds;—401 two year olds;—271 three year olds;—76 four year olds; 679 sheep; 191 swine; and 1 goat.

The following table exhibits nearly the annual amount received from sales of live-stock now generally shipped at Banff for the London market:

271 three year olds, average weight 30 stone Dutch, at 6s.	L.2439	0	0
76 four year olds, do. 40 do. at 7s.	1064	0	0
8 older cattle, do. 60 do. at 7s.	168	0	0
130 two year olds, valued at L.4 a head,	520	0	0
226 sheep, valued at L.1 a head,	226	0	0
191 swine, valued at L.1 a head,	191	0	0
A few sales of other cattle and horses, about	300	0	0
	L.4908	0	0

It ought perhaps to be noted, that, within the last forty years, great improvement has taken place in all kinds of handicraft, our masons, wrights, smiths, shoemakers, &c. being generally very superior workmen.

Leases, &c.—These extend here to nineteen years. Although farm-buildings are more substantial and comfortable than they were forty years ago, there is still ample room for improvement.

* Mr Morrison of Montblair has of late years introduced a very large flock of sheep of the most approved English breeds.

Inclasures.—Although something in this way is done annually, yet this species of improvement may yet be said to be in its infancy.

Produce.—Average gross amount of raw produce. *

6812 quarters oats, at L.1, 8s. 2d.	-	L.10207	0	0
980 do. bear, at L.1, 8s. 7d.	-	1400	0	0
121 Scotch acres, potatoes, at L.8,	-	968	0	0
674 do. turnips, at L.5, 10s.	-	3707	0	0
374 imperial acres hay, 100 stone per acre, at 6d.	-	935	0	0
2500 do. pasture, at L.1,	-	2500	0	0
Winter pasture for 3700 sheep,	-	80	0	0
Fishings on the Doveran, about	-	40	0	0
Total gross amount of raw produce,	-	L.19837	0	0

Distillery.—About twelve years ago, a distillery was erected on the estate of Montblair, which is still in full and active operation. The extensive premises connected with this work are most complete and convenient, and being situated on an airy and romantic ridge of rock, and abundantly supplied with the purest water, the whisky produced is of first rate excellence, and greatly celebrated for its genuine flavour. This distillery was erected at an expense of L.4000, is capable of distilling 40,000 gallons annually, and in size ranks among the largest north of the Tay. Mr Alexander Scott is proprietor of the works.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Means of Communication, &c.—There are no villages or markets within the parish. Banff, at the distance of two miles from the northern extremity, is the nearest market-town. The post-offices at Banff, Abercherder, and Turriff, lie at nearly equal distances from the extreme points of the parish. The turnpike road leading from Banff to Huntly extends within the parish to the distance of four miles and a half, and the turnpike branching off from this at the Slacks of Tippetty, enters the parish of Forglen on the moors above Montblair, at the distance of four miles. To these may be added one mile of new turnpike leading from Bur-reldales, in the direction of Forglen House, making in all an extent of nine miles and a half of turnpike roads within the parish.

* The rates at which the grain is calculated in this table, is the average of Banffshire fair prices, for common oats with fodder, and for best bear with fodder, from 1829 to 1835 inclusive. No pasture is let for grazing in the parish, so that the extent stated in the tables is to be considered as the pasture on which the farmers rear their own stock.

In writing the preceding remarks on the subject of agriculture, the writer has consulted the opinions of the most intelligent practical farmers in the parish, and has received from them many lengthened written communications, the substance of which could only be presented in a very abridged and imperfect shape.

The parish is also intersected in different directions, by the following commutation roads, viz. road from Portsoy to Turriff, two miles and a half; road from Banff to Turriff, by Sandlaw, Auchinbadie, &c. four miles and three-quarters; branch to the Henford, three-quarters of a mile; road from Banff to Turriff passing through Inverichny and Dunlugas, four miles; besides several others of smaller extent, amounting in all to nearly seventeen miles of commutation roads. The whole of these roads, with the exception of about four miles and a half, have been made within the last forty years, and are at present in good repair. No public carriages travel at present in the parish, although both a coach and a car have been tried at different times, on the road leading to Huntly. On the above-mentioned roads, no fewer than sixteen bridges have been erected within the last forty years, at an expense of about L.730. When the last Statistical Account was written, the only bridges connected with the parish were those at Blacktown, Alvah, and Denmill. The first only stands wholly within the parish; the other two unite Alvah with King-Edward.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church, a plain, substantial edifice, at present in good repair, and containing free sittings for 600 persons, was erected in 1792, and is somewhat inconveniently situated near the northern angle of the parish, at a distance varying from nearly four to six miles, from the extreme points in the south-west, south, and south-east. The more remote portions of the population, however, are conveniently accommodated in the neighbouring churches of King-Edward, Turriff, Forglen, and the Ord chapel of Ease, recently erected in the parish of Banff, near the confines of the parish of Alvah.

The manse was built in 1764, and repaired in 1815. The glebe is between six and seven acres in extent, and may be valued at from L.20 to L.30 per annum. The amount of the minister's stipend is 13 chalders, the one half meal, and the other half barley, payable in money according to fiars prices.

The Established Church is the only place of public worship in the parish. The people are, in general, regular in their attendance, and about 400 communicate annually. There are only 5 Episcopalians, 1 Seceder, 2 Baptists, and 4 Catholics within the parish. No Society for religious purposes has yet been established. The probable average amount of church collections yearly for religious and charitable objects is about L.38.

Education, &c.—There are five schools in the parish. The parochial is the only school which has any endowment, with the exception of one taught by a female, who receives L. 2 a year from Lady Abercromby of Forglen. English reading, grammar, writing, mathematics, geography, Latin, and occasionally Greek and French, are taught in the parochial school. In other two schools conducted by male teachers, the branches taught are reading, writing, arithmetic, and grammar. In the two schools conducted by females, sewing and knitting are taught along with the elements of English reading. The number at present attending the parochial school is 63. The annual amount of fees varies from L. 8 to L. 20 according to the circumstances of the parents. The present scale of fees is much too high for the labouring-classes. A farm-servant, whose yearly income does not exceed L. 10, cannot afford to pay annually L. 3 for the education of five or six children. A gradation of fees might be introduced all over the country, with considerable advantage. The numbers attending each of the other two male teachers, vary from 30 to 40; the scale of fees is much the same as that of the parochial teacher; and the amount received by each is about L. 12 or L. 13 per annum. The number attending each of the female teachers seldom exceeds 12 or 15, and the fees, varying from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per quarter, may amount annually to about L. 5 to each. The salary of the parochial teacher is L. 30, with a contingent interest in the Dick Bequest. He has also the legal accommodations. Besides the above-mentioned schools, a Sabbath school has been taught in the parochial school-room, for more than three years, at the season in which regular attendance can be obtained. The number of Sabbath scholars has varied from 30 to 65. There seems to be scarcely an individual in the parish upwards of fifteen years of age who cannot read, and none between six and fifteen, who cannot both read and write. The people begin to set a high value on education, and its corresponding effect on moral conduct is perceptible.

Savings Banks have been established for several years in some of the neighbouring parishes, in some of which considerable investments have been made by the labouring-classes from Alva, although the writer has been unable to ascertain the amount.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—In 1764, the average number of enrolled poor was 12, and the average yearly allowance to each

was 9s. 4d. In 1792, the average number of enrolled poor was 32, and the average yearly allowance to each was L. 1, 1s. 3d. In 1836 and 1837, the average number of enrolled poor was 21,* and the average yearly allowance to each L. 2, 1s. Average amount of weekly collections in one year, L. 26; do. of penalties, L. 5, 5s.; average proceeds from mortcloth, 16s.; interest of L. 120, capital at 5 per cent. L. 6; do. of L. 55, at 3 per cent. L. 1, 18s. sale of effects of deceased poor, L. 2; donations from heritors, varying from L. 5 to L. 15, L. 10; total yearly amount of poor's funds, L. 51, 14s.; average amount distributed to enrolled poor, L. 43, 1s.; balance, L. 8, 13s.

Out of the above balance, L. 4 are paid to the clerk and precentor; L. 1, 12s. to the church officer; and the remainder is distributed among persons in occasional distress, who are not on the roll, or is laid out in defraying the funeral charges of the deceased poor, or other incidental expenses.

Besides the ordinary church collections, amounting on an average to L. 26 a year, we have extraordinary collections for charitable or religious purposes, varying, according to circumstances, from L. 1, 10s. to L. 5, 5s. During the eighteen months preceding Martinmas last, our collections in the church for the General Assembly's four schemes, for the Aberdeen Infirmary, and the Destitute Highlanders, amounted to L. 17, 16s. 10d. In peculiar cases of distress, the relief of which might press heavy on the funds of the poor, recourse is occasionally had to subscriptions in the parish, which have always been attended with the desired result. For two years past, the poor's funds have been relieved of an incidental burden of about L. 10, 10s. a-year, by an annual subscription from the heritors.

Having no fund for the poor arising from benefactions sufficiently large to discourage industry, or excite avarice, applications for parochial relief are generally made with great reluctance. The poor think themselves degraded by such applications.

Inns.—There is at present only one inn or tavern in the parish.

Fuel.—Peats, although not so abundant and excellent as formerly, are obtained in those parts of the parish which are farthest from the sea. In a few cases, peats are obtained from neighbour-

* Out of 21 paupers on the roll, 19 are females. Could no sort of remunerative employment be suggested for this distressed class of the community?

ing parishes. To those who have a privilege of firing, peats cost from 1s. to 1s. 3d. per cart load, exclusive of carriage; to others they cost from 2s. to 2s. 6d. English coals are procured at Banff at from 1s. 0½d. to 1s. 2d. per imperial barrel.

Drawn up by the incumbent while parochial schoolmaster of Alvah, in 1837. Revised February 1842.

PARISH OF FORDYCE.*

PRESBYTERY OF FORDYCE, SYNOD OF ABERDEEN.

THE REV. JOHN INNES, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name, Boundaries, &c.—THIS parish appears, from the earliest times, to have borne its present name. The most satisfactory account of its derivation is that which derives it from the two Gaelic words, *Fuar* (cold) and *Deas* (south); so that Fuar-deas, or, as it is now commonly written, Fordyce, would signify “a cold south.” This derivation is very descriptive of the character of the parish,—the south part of it chiefly consisting of low, wet, or moorish lands, far inferior, both in point of productiveness and climate, to that which lies along the sea-coast. That the name is of Celtic origin is farther evident from the etymology of various other places in the parish, which are unquestionably to be traced to such a root, such as *Auchmore*, the great field or declivity; *Kindrought* or *Keandrochit*, the head or end of the bridge; *Tillynaught*, the turn or ridge of the hill; *Glassaugh*, the gray haugh; *Durn*, round like a clenched fist, &c.

The parish, including the whole of the *quoad sacra* parish of Portsoy, is of a quadrangular form, irregular, however, and approaching nearly to that of a triangle. Its greatest breadth, in a straight line along the sea-coast, is 6 miles; its least, at the southern extremity, 2 miles; its greatest length, from the mouth of the Burn of Boyne to the top of the Knock Hill, 8 miles; and its least, from Logie Head to the same point, 7 miles. The num-

* Drawn up by the Rev. Alexander Reid, Minister of Portsoy.