

# PARISH OF ALVA.

PRESBYTERY OF STIRLING, SYNOD OF PERTH AND STIRLING.

THE REV. ANDREW BROWN, MINISTER. \*

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name of this parish in ancient records is written Alueth, Alvath, or Alveth: this last mode of spelling is to be seen upon a tomb-stone in the church yard, dated A. D. 1632. The word is doubtless of Gaelic origin, and is probably from Ailbheach, *rocky*, an epithet very characteristic of the hills around. The present spelling, Alva, has been in use since the beginning of last century.

*Situation, Boundaries, Extent, &c.*—This barony or parish belonged, in ancient times, to Clackmannanshire; but since the beginning of the seventeenth century, has been attached to Stirlingshire, although upwards of four miles distant from the nearest point of the latter county. Since the passing of the Reform Bill, Alva has been politically incorporated with Clackmannan, but is still absurdly connected with the county of Stirling, for judicial purposes. It is surrounded, on all sides, by the shire of Clackmannan, except on the north, where it is bounded by a part of Perthshire. Tillicoultry

\* Drawn up by J. B. Thomson, Surgeon.

is the adjacent parish on the east, Logie on the west, Blackford on the north; and the river Devon, forming the southern boundary of Alva, divides it from the parishes of Alloa and Clackmannan. The lands of Alva extend over a very considerable portion of that fine range of hills distinguished by the name of Ochils; and the remaining grounds stretch over part of the valley lying at their base, and watered by the river Devon. From east to west, the parish measures somewhat beyond two miles and a-half, and from north to south betwixt four and five miles.

The Alva hills are, beyond comparison, the grandest of the whole Ochil range. They are not so rugged and inaccessible as those immediately to the west in the parish of Logie, but they present a bolder and more majestic outline, while, in luxuriance and beauty, they excel all around them. Bencloch or Bencleugh, the highest of the Ochils, is situated at the north-east extremity of the parish, and extends partly into Tillicoultry, reaching the height of 2420 feet above the level of the Devon. The view from the summit of Bencloch is most extensive and beautiful, comprehending the whole picturesque range of the Grampians, part of thirteen counties, and several towns.

The Devon, a river of small size, but of surpassing beauty, has its source among these hills, in the parish of Blackford, Perthshire. This river, according to the industrious Chalmers, was formerly called Dovan, and is so written in a charter granted by Robert III. to the burgh of Inverkeithing. The Devon flows, at first, almost due east from its source towards Glendevon, lying in the centre of the Ochils. At the village called Crook of Devon, and near the church of Fossaway, it makes a sudden turn westward, and, passing through the parishes of Muckhart, Dollar, and Tillicoultry, gently glides along the southern boundary of Alva parish. The romantic waterfalls and exquisite scenery of this little river, have long been attractions to the lovers of nature. The most interesting part is its wonderful passage through arching rocks, where the hoarse music of waters has acquired for this *lusus naturæ*, the epithet of Rumbling Bridge; or where, a little further on, amid a series of cascades, we find the water producing the curious excavation of that never empty boiler, the Cauldron Linn. Nor can the passing traveller fail to admire also the wanderings of this stream, after it descends into the valley east of Dollar, whence, gliding in a serpentine course, and in a deep bed with little fall, it proceeds towards the Forth. It is singular that the

Devon, after having performed a circuitous route of about thirty miles, should finish its course, nearly opposite the point at which it first arose, reaching the Forth exactly where the latter assumes the character of a frith, two miles above Alloa.

Through each of the glens which divide the Alva hills, streamlets, diversified by small waterfalls, descend towards the valley. The most interesting of these is called Alva burn, a rivulet of excellent water, which, over abrupt and precipitous rocks, forces its passage, and falling in three beautiful cascades, seeks repose where the ground becomes soft and level, in a capacious linn. Separating the West from the Middlehill, this streamlet adds to the beauty of a romantic glen, from which, issuing at the foot of the hills, it runs along the eastern side of the village. A fine plantation of forest trees grows on the steep bank to the east, affording shelter from the north-east winds, so violent in this neighbourhood. The Alva, or Strude glen, as it is generally called, was opened up by its late proprietor, James Raymond Johnstone, Esq. who had part of the rock blasted to excavate a walk through the romantic crags. The path conducts to a waterfall about 30 feet high, above which is an excavation or hole in the rock, worn during the lapse of ages, of which there is a tradition that it once afforded refuge to an outlaw. Farther back in the hill, and inaccessible to all but the adventurous, is another arch of rocks over a waterfall, which is the most singular and wild scene among the Ochils. The water of the stream not only contributes much to ornament the landscape, but also affords a powerful arm to industry, by turning machinery in the village. Where the water finds repose in a large linn, a dam has been constructed at much labour and expense, for retaining a collection against times of summer drought and scarcity. Water-troughs or boxes for conveying the water to the mills, run along the side of the walk, forming as it were a barricade from the precipitous depths of the ravine. Here we have a splendid example of man's power to control nature, and subject her to the dominion of his rational faculties. This little mountain-torrent, which for many centuries had rolled on, unheeded and unheard, "singing to itself its own quiet tune," amid the lone and unbreathing solitude of the Ochils, and which perchance only drew the eye of the passing traveller by its beauty,—now turns the busy wheels of commerce, and not only dispenses life to the vegetable world, but to man himself throughout a flourishing district of country.

STIRLING.

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*Climate, &c.*—The climate in this district is mild, but variable. Snow seldom lies for any length of time among these hills. It is remarkable, however, that at the bottom of a ridge of rock, near to the summit of Bencloch, where it is sheltered from every wind, snow is frequently seen in the month of June. From the singular appearance of the narrow and extended sheet of snow, it has received the fanciful name of *Lady Alva's Web*.

*Geology, Mineralogy, &c.*—These hills are all of the secondary trap formation. The onyx and other pebbles have long been known and worked into ornaments, and the *Ochil Eye* pebble is peculiar to this range of hills. They are found in stony crevices, and the best specimens of the Perth lapidaries come from this quarter. Heavy spar is also found in one of the glens; and that part of the Ochils contained in the neighbouring parishes of Logie on the west, and Tillicoultry and Dollar on the east, as well as Alva, are known to have rich veins of copper, lead, and iron; although further investigation is required to ascertain their value. But that for which the hills of Alva are particularly distinguished, is the valuable veins of silver glance they are known to possess. About the years 1710 to 1715, Sir John Erskine, by means of miners from Leadhills, discovered a very valuable vein of silver, in the glen that separates the Middlehill from the Woodhill. Its first appearance was in small strings of silver ore, which being followed, led to a large mass, part having the character of malleable silver, and found upon trial to produce as much as twelve ounces of silver from fourteen ounces of ore. A sum not greater than from L.40 to L.50 had been expended, when this discovery was made. During the space of thirteen or fourteen weeks, it has been credibly affirmed, that the value produced was L.4000 per week; and it has been alleged that Sir John drew from L.40,000 to L.50,000, exclusive of ore which was supposed to have been purloined to considerable amount by the workmen. Very soon, however, the silver ore began to appear in smaller quantities, and symptoms of lead and baser metals being present, farther researches were laid aside for the time. The specimens of silver glance then found are rich and beautiful, and the pure virgin silver is observed to adhere in slender strings to the spar, with a variety of fanciful and irregular forms. In the year 1767, Lord Alva, nephew to Sir John Erskine, caused a pair of communion cups to be made for the use of the church of Alva, from some of the remains of that ore in his possession. On these the following in-

scription is engraven, " Sacris in Ecclesia S. Servani, apud Al-  
veth, A. D. 1767, ex argento indigena, D. D. C. q. Jacobus Er-  
skine."

About the year 1759, Charles Erskine, Lord Justice-Clerk, father of Lord Alva, having, a few years before, purchased this barony from his nephew, Sir Henry Erskine, revived the working of the mines. A company, consisting of kinsmen and friends of the family, subscribed a moderate capital, and carried on this work with considerable industry. They pursued the course of the vein, where the silver ore had been found, a great way beyond the old workings, but without success. Although occasional small strings of metal appeared, there was nothing important enough to encourage or reward their exertions. A shaft or sump, as miners term it, was made to the depth of several fathoms, immediately below the bottom of the waste from whence the former rich mass was taken, and a drift carried on in the direction of the silver vein upon that level; but this also failed to accomplish the object. To facilitate these operations, however, it had been resolved to drive a level at a considerable distance nearer the bottom of the hill, for the purpose of draining the water from the works above. In executing this part of the scheme, the workmen had not advanced far into the side of the hill, when a large mass of ore was discovered. This, at first, they thought silver, but upon chemical examination it was found to be cobalt. A large quantity of this was brought out, and a great part of it used in the manufacture of porcelain, at this time begun in Prestonpans in East Lothian. The beautiful deep blue prepared from cobalt, was used to colour china and glass, and showed no inferiority to that procured from the mines of Saxony. A quantity of cobalt was afterwards found among the rubbish dug from the mines fifty years before, which Lord Alva caused to be washed after the manner practised by miners, and obtained an additional quantity. The work was carried on to a great length from where the mass of cobalt was got; but spar and other vein stuff appearing, the enterprise was again abandoned. During the time these works were carried on, a very accurate survey of all the different veins of metals discovered in the hills of Alva, was made by the agent for the Company, who possessed considerable skill in the practical art of mining. The several appearances and qualities of the different ores, together with the precise directions of the veins, and other circumstances elucidated, were all accurately taken down by the agent in a register or journal, now in the possession of James

Johnstone, Esq. present proprietor of this barony. From these registers, it appears there are not fewer than fourteen or fifteen veins among the Alva hills, which, from the trials made, contain ores of silver, lead, copper, iron, and cobalt.

*Coal, &c.*—On the south bank of the Devon, immediately opposite the lands of Alva, it is well known that the finest coal in this country is procured, belonging to the Earls of Mar and Mansfield. The same seams of coal, extending to the north bank of the Devon, on the estate of Alva, were worked about a century ago, by Sir John Erskine, with considerable advantage, and the pits and other vestiges of this work are still to be seen. With a noble spirit of enterprize, that gentleman projected a canal to run along the banks of the Devon, and convey his coal to the Forth, from thence to be exported to a proper market. About sixty years since, accurate surveys of the Devon were made, as high as the parish of Dollar, with a view to facilitate the transporting of coal belonging to the different proprietors on either bank of the river, by means of a canal; but this intention was not carried forward. It is evident, from the smooth and gentle current of the stream in many places, that one entire canal might be unnecessary. It was generally believed that the coal seam here extended from one extremity of the parish to the other, but recent attempts in the west and south-west parts, carried on under the superintendence of a scientific gentleman, proved unsuccessful. Still, there can be little doubt of the existence of coal, where it was sought for, although it dips far below the surface. Indeed, this parish is part of the great coal field of Scotland, which crosses the island diagonally from east to west. Bounded on the north by the river Eden, near St Andrews, it goes to the south parts of Kinross-shire, and from thence sweeps towards the Ochils at Dollar, and stretches westward along the foot of the hills, till it arrives at Craigeith, the westmost of the Alva range. Here it makes a sudden turn southward, crossing the river Forth, below Stirling, and may now be traced by Kilsyth, Campsie, and Kilpatrick, till it falls into the Clyde above Dunbarton.

*Zoology.*—The most rare animal found in this parish, is that species of hawk (*Falco peregrinus*) used in ancient times for the diversion of hunting. From time immemorial, this bird has had its residence in a very high perpendicular rock, called Craigeith, projecting from the brow of the Westhill of Alva. Only one pair, it

is affirmed by the villagers, build a nest in the front of this precipice. These hatch their young annually, and when the progeny are of proper age, the parents compel them to seek a new habitation; death alone obliging the original pair to resign their ancestral habitation, which falls to the next survivors. In a former age, when "lords and ladies gay" were fond of the sport of falconry, a bird of this kind was deemed very valuable, and to the present day, it is in high repute with some of our nobility, who send from a great distance to procure specimens of the breed. From this place the beautiful and unfortunate Queen Mary got falcons, soon after her arrival from France. The Duke of Athol, king's falconer in Scotland, sent for these birds, and not long ago a pair of them were sent by James Johnstone, Esq. to the Duke of St Albans, who, as king's falconer in England, still keeps up the sport of hunting with them. Eagles are occasionally seen among the Ochils in this neighbourhood.

*Botany, &c.*—Alva is distinguished from the surrounding country by the luxuriance of its forests and plantations. The front of the Woodhill, on which stands the house of Alva, is clothed with the richest varieties of trees. The late Sir John Erskine, some time before 1720, planted most of those which surround the enclosures immediately below the house. The east and west sides of the hill, immediately below the house, were planted by Lord Alva, to which very large additions have been annually made by the subsequent proprietors. The hill, which is fully 1600 feet above the level of the sea, is now planted within 200 yards of the summit. The pleasure-grounds and plantations are beautiful and extensive, and the appearance of the wooded hill reminds the traveller of the monastery near Florence, a description of which is given by the poet Milton. These fine plantations are upon the hedgerows of the several enclosures, and on the brow of the Woodhill where the house stands. They are diversified by the oak, the elm, the ash, the beech, the larch, and many varieties of the pine. The ash trees are remarkable for size and strength, and fair proportion. Many of the oaks are venerable for their hoar antiquity, and before their stately forms and extended boughs, the other giants of the forest bow their diminished heads. The approaches from the two lodges, wind up beautifully towards the house, and from the house to the village church, which is nearly a mile, the rows of trees on each side form an umbrageous and delightful avenue. There is here an admirable and hitherto unexplored field for

the botanist to examine. Almost every moss of the class Cryptogamia is seen among the hills, also a great variety of what is rare and useful belonging to the Phanerogamia.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Village.*—The village of Alva is situated near the base of the Westhill. It does not appear certain when it was begun to be built, but we learn from the chartulary of Cambuskenneth, that Alva was a parish nearly 550 years ago, and probably a village of minor consequence existed at the same time. In the year 1795 the village was only about one-half its present size, and contained 130 families, including a few single persons, each of whom occupied part of a house. Towards the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century, Sir John Erskine, then proprietor, granted feus of a small parcel of ground to several inhabitants, on which they built cottages and laid out gardens. A plan seems to have been formed by Sir John, to build a village in the form of a square, two sides of which appear to have been actually completed, but the other houses have been set down at random, or wherever a convenient spot for a garden could be obtained. About the year 1767, Lord Alva, resolving to enlarge the village, granted feus to those willing to build, and in one season a complete row of new houses, amounting to 20, was erected, each house having a small garden of a few falls, equal in breadth to the extent of the front of the house. A few years afterwards, another row of houses, parallel to the former, and with gardens laid out in the same manner, was completed. The rate at which the ground was feued, was at first 13s. 4d. per fall, or 36 square yards, but it advanced by degrees to 15s. and 16s. per fall, as the premium or purchase-money, together with fourpence the fall of annual feu-duty. Taking the medium rate of 15s. it will amount to L. 120 Sterling per acre, as the price of the ground, and L. 2, 13s. 4d. as the annual rent to the superior.

*House of Alva.*—The house of Alva, the seat of James Johnstone, Esq., is about a mile east of the village, and is delightfully situated on an eminence projecting from the Woodhill near its base. The height of the projecting part where the house stands, is 220 feet above the level of the Devon, and Woodhill rises behind it to the height of 1400 feet higher, making in all 1620 feet. The Woodhill is richly ornamented with plantations, and its summit affords a most extensive prospect to the south, east, and west. The north-west view is interrupted by the hill of Dalmyot; but

the mouth of the Frith of Forth, the Bass, North-Berwick Law, with the windings of the Forth, the coasts of Fife and East Lothian, can easily be descried from the top of Woodhill, behind the house of Alva.

*Proprietors of Alva.*—The estate of Alva was anciently possessed by the Stirlings of Calder in Clydesdale. From Nisbet's first volume of Heraldry, we learn that "Sir J. Menteth, son of Sir Walter Menteth, of Rusky, married Marion Stirling, daughter and coheir to Sir John Stirling, of Calder in Clydesdale, and with her he got ye lands of Kerse and Alveth (Alva), for which ye family carried ye buckler for the name of Stirling, and flourished for many years."—Sir William Menteth or Menteth of Alva, married Helen Bruce, daughter to the laird of Airth, and his son, Sir William Menteth, married Agnes Erskine, daughter to Alexander Lord Erskine, whose successors afterwards, through right of their mother, inherited the Earldom of Mar. The Countess of Mar and of Kelly is a descendant of the family of Menteth of Rusky. By the intermarriage before alluded to, it is highly probable the Alva property went to the Bruce, and afterwards to the Erskine family. In A. D. 1620 it went to Sir Charles Erskine, fifth son of John sixth Earl of Mar. His great grandson, Sir Henry Erskine of Alva, father to the present Earl of Rosslyn, sold it in 1759 to his uncle, Lord Justice-Clerk, called Lord Tinswald, whose son, James Erskine, a Senator of the College of Justice, inherited it, with the title of Lord Alva. He was one of the most energetic proprietors, with the exception of the Bruces, who founded the present mansion and church. Lord Alva sold the estate in 1775 to John Johnstone, Esq. son of Sir James Johnstone, Bart., of Westerhall, Dumfries-shire, (brother to Sir William Pulteney,) whose grandson is the present proprietor. Sir John and Sir Charles Erskine, two of the Alva proprietors, were both killed when abroad A. D. 1746. In the church-yard of Alva, there is a mausoleum built by the first proprietor of Alva, of the Westerhall family, similar to one which he had erected in Dumfries-shire, to the memory of his father, Sir James Johnstone. The ancestral vault in the church still belongs to the Erskine family, together with several marble monuments. One to the Lord Justice-Clerk is characterized by classic taste and purity of style.

*Antiquities.*—Near to the church several of those large stones, often found in Scotland, supposed to be the relics of Druidical days, were seen to a late date, and in the neighbouring parish of Logie some

of these memorials of other times are still standing. Our forefathers, we know, were wont to set up a stone of remembrance to commemorate any battle or signal event, or more frequently to mark the grave of a hero. In the works ascribed to Ossian, this custom is often alluded to, as when the bard, and Toscar, his brother, were sent by Fingal to signalize a victory by raising up the "grey-stone on the heath." One of these records of the past was dug up, some years ago, in a field adjacent to the glebe, lying on its flat surface, and beneath it was found a human jaw-bone so large as to be attributed to a giant. Another of these stones was long to be seen in a neighbouring enclosure, standing erect, with an inscription, so indistinct as not to be legible. The village vulcan, in his vain attempts to decypher it, got into a towering passion, and with his forehammer completely destroyed the inscription, already almost worn away by time's effacing fingers. The spirit of the Vandals is not yet dead. A few years since, while some persons were digging in the northern part of the parish, probably the site of the earliest buildings here, and called Strude, they excavated a number of human remains. The rubbish in this spot led to the belief that a cemetery, and probably a Roman Chapel, had once stood there, in times now lost in the mists of ages.

"Pulvere vix tectae poterunt monstrare ruinas."

At the northern extremity of Queenshaugh, St Ninians, a curious relic was, about A. D. 1790, dragged out of the river. It was a brass collar, with the inscription, "Alexander Stewart found guilty of death for theft at Perth, 5 Decemder 1701, and gifted by the Justiciary as a perpetual servant to Sir John Aresken of Alva." This relic is in possession of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland.

### III.—POPULATION.

The following tables will show the gradual growth of the population:—

Population in 1791,	.	611	
1801,	.	787	
1811,	.	921	
1821,	.	1197	
1831,	.	1300	
1836,	.	1470	
In 1821, under 15 years of age, males,	237,	males,	208
betwixt 15 and 30,	do.	135	do.
30 and 50,	do.	109	do.
50 and 70,	do.	44	do.
upwards of 70,	do.	16	do.
In 1821, the parish contained of males,	598,	females,	599,—total,
In 1831,	males,	641,	females,
In 1831, the number of families resident was	.	288	
children in each family averaged,	.	3½	

In 1831, the number of inhabited houses, was	218
houses uninhabited or building,	8
The average of marriages for the last 3 years is	18
births registered for the last 7 years is	25
deaths registered for the last 7 years is	28½

It appears from the above tables, that a very rapid increase in the population has taken place of late,—it having been almost doubled in the last thirty years, and an evident cause for this is the great recent improvements in manufactures. In 1801, only one woollen mill was established, and now there are eight mills, besides many lesser places of manufacture. Formerly, the manufacture of the district was confined to serges, plaidings, blanketings, and coarse stuffs for the West India negroes; now, in addition to these, carpets, shawls and trowser cloths, are made for foreign and home consumption.

At present, the village contains 1 surgeon, 2 schoolmasters, 13 retail shopkeepers, 2 bakers, 2 butchers, who kill once a week, 4 blacksmiths, 5 shoemakers, 2 wrights, 2 tailors, 11 masons, 5 car- ters, 1 slater, 1 tinsmith, 1 turner, 1 cooper, 1 engineer, 2 mill- wrights, 18 mechanics, 7 licensed retailers of spirits. About 50 hands are employed in agriculture in the parish, and nearly 600 in the woollen manufactures. The land is divided betwixt 4 farmers and 2 sheep-farmers, and the number of woollen manufacturers, having factories, is 7, and 24 have a business on a smaller scale. A carrier goes to Stirling and Glasgow once a week, and there is a post-office supported by private subscription, for the convenience of the manufacturers.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—From the description given of the lands of Alva, it will be seen that they naturally divide themselves into arable and pasture grounds. The arable soil of this parish may be distinguished into four kinds. That which extends southward from the bottom of the hills, consists of a rich hazel mould, intermixed with gravel and small stones. This is succeeded by a stratum of moss over a bed of clay, and extending from 50 to 100 yards in breadth, and in some places this moss is found 7 feet deep. Next to this is a strong clay, extending a considerable way towards the Devon. Then follows what is called haughing ground, such as is usually found on the banks of rivers, and the inundations of the Devon, which occur twice or thrice a-year, leave great quantities of sand behind. The soil at the river's bed appears to be in many places more than 20 feet deep. The grounds produce the usual crops of wheat, barley, pease, beans, oats, clover, potatoes, and turnip.

The whole arable land has been long enclosed with hedges and ditches, which are kept in a very superior taste and style. Those fields which lie immediately below the house of Alva, at the bottom of the Woodhill, were enclosed and planted more than a century ago, and were among the first enclosures in this part of the country.

Till within the last forty years, the state of agriculture in this parish was miserable. The practice, however, of fallowing, liming, and cleaning the lands to obtain good returns—the advantage of having broad clover for summer food for horses, and being able to work them constantly, instead of sending them to graze for five months among the hills at much expense,—are now understood and acted on. Experience has proved the soil to be good, and when properly cultivated, capable of great improvement, and of producing wheat and all the strongest grain.

The improvement of the land was long kept back here, as elsewhere, by the farms remaining limited to a very few acres, and also by the farmers being bound by their leases to drive coals from the pits on the south bank of Devon to the shore of Alloa. Lord Alva at length prohibited this absurd and unprofitable practice, and the farmers have been since enabled to turn more decided attention to the improvements of husbandry. Since 1796, the extent of the farms has been enlarged with great advantage to the landlord, and greater respectability to the tenant. Formerly, the farms were limited to 30 and not more than 70 acres, now they run from 100 to 200 acres each.

The number of acres, Scotch measure, in arable and other tillage is 830.

Of land never cultivated, but applied to sheep pasture, upwards of 2000 acres.

Of cultivated land lying in pasture, and let to grazing 120 acres.

And of ground under wood there are 188 acres.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of land let to farmers is from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3, 3s. per acre,—for oxen and milk cows grazing, about L. 4 per acre. The grazing of sheep is rated about 4s. 6d. each, or L. 4, 10s. per score. The common breed of sheep here is the black-faced kind, and of cattle, the Ayrshire and the short-horned, or a cross betwixt these.

*Wages.*—The rate of farm-servants' wages, who work as labourers, is from 8s. to 9s. per week; and a ploughman receives L. 25 per annum, including all provisions.

*Produce.*—The average produce of grain of all kinds raised in this parish, is 3060 bolls,—of potatoes, turnips, cabbages, &c. the average gross amount is valued at L. 1020,—of hay cultivated, at

L. 275. About one acre is annually planted with woad for dyeing woollens blue, and is said to bring L. 20 per acre, but it greatly impoverishes the land. The annual thinning and periodical felling of woods, plantations, and copse, yields about L. 160.

The three Alva hills have been divided into two separate farms for sheep,—one comprehending the Westhill, the other the Middlehill, together with part of the Woodhill. The former is capable of maintaining 70 score of sheep, and the latter will maintain from 60 to 65 score. On the higher and back-lying ground, the soil is mossy, and produces abundance of heath, together with a strong and coarse grass. This, however, is resorted to by the older part of the flocks, and the shepherds keep them there for the purpose of preserving the fore-ground against the winter season. It is now the practice with the sheep-farmers to breed a few young sheep; but these bear no proportion to the number of the stock. They have always a proportion of ewes on their farms, and the lambs are chiefly sold to the butcher. The farmers go every year about Midsummer to Linton markets, and purchase sheep of a year old, which, according to the custom of the sheep-farmers in the south, are smeared with tar, and after being shorn twice white, as they express it, are sold in August and September to the butcher. Snow seldom covers these pasture-hills longer than a few days together, and even then the sheep browse on the young furze and thrive well. The hills and plantations afford excellent shelter to the flocks, which have never greatly suffered, compared with those in other places from heavy snow storms.

*Manufactures.*—Perhaps the most important feature of this parish, is the state of its woollen manufactures. For upwards of a century and a-half, these have been carried on in the village of Alva. In the early history of the district, the staple trade consisted chiefly of serges. There is no doubt that this species of manufacture also flourished long ago in the neighbouring village of Tillicoultry; and to this day it is known among the shopkeepers of the Lawnmarket of Edinburgh by the name of Tillicoultry serges. These were soon superseded by the more useful article of plaidings and blanketings, which became the principal commodity after the first woollen factory was built, in the year 1798. Since 1826, however, tartan shawls have been introduced, and become the most general article manufactured. In 1832, chequered cassimeres began to be made, and they now form a considerable branch of business. These manufactures find a market in Stirling, Perth, Edinburgh, but especially in Glasgow. There are

eight woollen mills, whose annual consumpt is not less than 480,000 lbs. of wool. The manufactures make use chiefly of English wool, from the sheep that pasture on the Cheviots, which costs from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per pound.

The number of persons employed is as follows : In the factories, 149 men, 50 women, 81 children ; in the village 89 men, 175 women, 21 children, making the total number employed in these woollen manufactures 565 individuals. The total number of looms is as follows : looms in the factories, 90 ; looms in the village 80 ; total 170. Of these, about 100 are employed in weaving soft tartan shawls—40 at blankets and plaidings—24 at chequered cassimeres—and 6 at carpetings. The wages of weavers may average about 15s. per week, and superior workmen can earn from L. 1, to L. 1, 4s. The ordinary hours of labour are from 6 o'clock A. M. to 7 o'clock P. M., except on Saturday, when labour is given up at 5 P. M., and from this stated time one hour is allowed for breakfast, and one for dinner. The working classes here are exceedingly healthy, and the children particularly exhibit remarkable vivacity of mind, and vigour of body.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical History.*—The parish of Alva was, long before the Reformation, in the diocese of Dunkeld and under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of that See. By an extract taken from the chartulary of Cambuskenneth, in the neighbourhood of Stirling, we learn, that the church of Alva was a mensal church, as it is called, (*de mensa Episcopi*—part of the funds for the Bishop's support,) belonging to that abbacy ; and that the monks, who were of the order of St Augustine, performed duty there, from want of a sufficient fund to maintain a resident and regular clergyman in the parish. In the year 1260, Richard, Bishop of Dunkeld, made a donation to the monks of the church of St Mary at Cambuskenneth, of "the church of Alva with all its legal pertinents," and dispensed with their employing a vicar to officiate stately. The following reason is then assigned, "*virorum religiosorum abbatis et conventus de Cambuskenneth, paupertati compatientes,—charitatis intuitu, et propter tenuitatem ecclesie de Alveth.*" By another extract from the same chartulary, it appears that Alexander, styled *Domīnus de Striveling Miles*, made a grant of one acre of land to God, the Virgin Mary, to St Servanus, and to the church of St Servanus de Alveth, describing it particularly as lying near the well of St Servanus, "*et inter ipsum fontem (St Serf's well) et ecclesiam.*" This charter bears date

A. D. 1276. The well is still within the limits of the minister's glebe, and continues to send forth a stream of excellent water; but the course is almost choked up with weeds and rushes; the consecrated name has long been forgotten; and its neglected state calls loudly upon the tutelar saint, or some Catholic devotee, to rescue its name from oblivion, and disclose again its healing virtues. About twenty years after the Reformation, and when Stirling, and a few parishes around it, were provided with stated pastors, the presbytery of Stirling was erected on the 8th day of August 1581, in consequence of an order from the General Assembly to that effect. From 1581, till the year 1632, this parish was united to the neighbouring one of Tillicoultry—the minister of Alva officiating in both. The livings of both hardly afforded a decent subsistence; and the stipend of Alva did not exceed 300 merks Scots, or L. 16, 13s. 4d. Sterling.

The fabric of the present church was built in 1632 by Alexander Bruce, then proprietor of Alva, who afterwards making a small addition to the stipend, procured its disjunction from Tillicoultry. The church stands a little to the east of the village, upon an eminence, commanding a fine view of the valley of Devon. The fabric is in excellent condition, but long after it was built it remained in an unfinished state—the walls and roofs were unplastered—the windows small and ill situated—and the seats in a ruinous condition. In the year 1815, at the expense of James Raymond Johnstone, Esq. it was wholly rebuilt, and fitted up properly within, so as to accommodate 586 sitters, estimated at 18 inches for each, and at present it is a comfortable and elegant place of worship.

The pews are allotted by the heritor rent-free to his tenants and feuars, and the remainder, with the communion table seats, are open to the villagers.

The church-yard is beside the church, finely sequestered from the bustle and business of men, and contains some epitaphs of the "rude forefathers of the hamlet," sufficiently curious.

The present manse is near the church, and was built in the year 1762, upon a very neat and commodious plan.

In the year 1765, Lord Alva, then proprietor of the barony, sensible of the smallness of the living, very generously, and without any application from the incumbent, gave an augmentation in victual, to the amount of L. 22 Sterling, at the usual conversion; by which the stipend consisted of L. 34, 1s. 9d. Sterling, in money, including the allowance for communion elements, together with 40 bolls of barley, and 32 bolls of meal. The Rev. Mr Duncan, to

whom this augmentation was given, gratefully records (in his Statistical Account, to which we are indebted for the fulness of the present report,) that Lord Alva not only resolved of his own accord to give this grant, but actually executed a summons against himself as sole heritor, in name of the minister, and without his knowledge, as the first step towards accomplishing his generous resolution. The glebe consists of nearly nine acres.

James Johnstone, Esq. is sole heritor of the parish.

*Education.*—The present parish school-house, built in 1828, is a fine house situated in the centre of the village, and fitted to accommodate upwards of 100 scholars. The salary of the parochial teacher is L. 29, 18s. 10d. Sterling. The village also contains a subscription school, and there are besides an infant school and a seminary for the education of female children, almost wholly supported by the patronage and bounty of Mrs Johnstone, and the young ladies at Alva House. Besides the other elementary branches of knowledge, the children are taught to knit and sew. Many great improvements have been recently adopted in the intellectual and moral training of children, which it is most desirable should find their way into this district.

The number of individuals, including children, professing to belong to the Established Church, in the year 1836, is 1185, or 262 families. Belonging to the Dissenting congregations, there are 272 persons, including children, or 60 families, averaged at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  for each family.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The poor receiving parochial aid are few in number, seldom exceeding a dozen; and occasional supply is given to others not on the poor's roll, as their necessities demand. On a board in the session house, we have recorded the following donation to the poor, A. D. 1764:—"John Mitchell, farmer in Windlestrawlee, near Leith, bequeathed to the poor of the parish of Alva the sum of L. 50 Sterling. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" The ordinary collection, with the interest arising from a small fund, and the common dues of the parish mortcloth, without any assessment upon the heritor or inhabitants, has hitherto maintained the poor. Examples are not uncommon of individuals refusing to accept charity from the parish, and, with that patience and honest pride peculiarly Scottish, undergoing privations untold, rather than ask or take relief.

*Drawn up in 1836.*

*Revised April 1841.*