

PARISH OF ABDIE.

PRESBYTERY OF CUPAR, SYNOD OF FIFE.

THE REV. LAURENCE MILLER, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE name of this parish, Abdie or Ebtie, is supposed to be the Gaelic word *abtaob* signifying *waterside*. According to Sibbald, the ancient name of the parish was Lindores, which is still the name of the principal village in it, a place of great antiquity. At what time the parish got the name of Abdie is uncertain. But it has been so called for many centuries; and the church of Abdie was always reckoned one of those belonging to the abbey of Lindores, which is situated about two miles from the village on the south bank of the Tay.

Boundaries and Extent.—The parish was formerly of much greater extent than at present; for in the year 1633 the whole of Newburgh parish was disjoined from it. By this disjunction, and by the intersections of the neighbouring parishes, it has become very irregular in its figure, so that it is difficult to ascertain its exact dimensions. Perhaps if the scattered parts of it were united into one whole, it might form an area of about 6 miles in length, by 4 in breadth. It is bounded on the W. and N. W. by Abernethy and Newburgh; on the S. and S. W. by Auchtermuchty and Collessie; on the S. E. the E. N. E. by Monimail, Dunbog, and Flisk; and on the N. and E. by the Tay.

Geology and Mineralogy.—Limestone occurs on the farm of Parkhill; and several attempts have been made to apply it as manure, but these have been abandoned, on account of the distance of coal, and the unfavourable dip of the stratum. This rock belongs to the old red sandstone formation of Werner. There is also a quarry of red freestone, near the same place, which has been wrought at some former period. Dr Fleming, it is said, discovered some fossil remains of plants in this district. There are several quarries of whinstone in the parish, used for building houses and

repairing roads; but the trade of exporting it, mentioned in last account, has been almost entirely given up for some years.

Climate, Soil.—The air is salubrious, no diseases here having been ever ascribed to the influence of the atmosphere.

Owing to the unevenness of the ground, the nature of the soil is various. In the lower part of the parish, on the banks of the Tay, there is a very rich alluvial field of considerable extent, of the same quality with the Carse of Gowrie on the opposite side of the river; on the ascent to the higher grounds, the soil becomes a deep black earth, or in some places light and gravelly, but still very productive. At an average, an acre may yield from seven to ten bolls; but the acclivities of the mountains, which are partly covered with heath or furze, still continue to be pastured by sheep, which are of a mixed breed, and considerable pains have been taken to improve them. They are disposed of at various prices in the neighbourhood. There are likewise considerable numbers of various sorts annually fed off, on turnip, many of which are sent to the London market by steam-vessels from Dundee and Leith. Some of the hills are now planted towards the top, which will improve the appearance of the country, but such plantations are complained of as affording shelter to rabbits, which prey upon the crops.

Botany.—In the marshy ground near the loch, there grows the *Cicuta virosa* or water hemlock, or as it is provincially called, *deaffin* or *deathin*, peculiarly noxious to cows. Here too the *Menyanthes trifoliata* grows in great abundance, and is used as a medicine, being a powerful bitter. The *Nymphaea lutea major* or great water-lily, may also be mentioned as a plant that grows in all the lochs in this parish.

Zoology.—During the violent tornado of 1825, there appeared among the poultry here a very uncommon bird. It was of the size and colour of the wood-pigeon, and exactly of the figure of the lapwing. Its bill, which was an inch and a-half in length, was one quarter at the bottom, of the colour of red sealing wax, the rest to the point was a bright yellow. It had also a faint circle of red around its eyes. It ran and flew with amazing rapidity. No attempt was made to tame it, but after being kept in the house for twenty-four hours, it was set at liberty. No satisfactory account has hitherto been got of this bird. The description which M'Loc gives of the greenshank approaches nearest it. The osprey or sea-eagle is sometimes seen on the banks of the lake; and an

islet near the west side of it, called the Maw Inch, was formerly the haunt of sea-mews or gulls, but they have now deserted it. Large flocks of crows and pigeons are very destructive to turnips, if left in the fields, in spring.

Hills, Lakes, &c.—Those natural objects of this sort that chiefly deserve attention are, the Clatchard Crag, Norman's Law, and the Loch of Lindores. The first is a majestic cliff a little to the south-east of Newburgh, about 250 feet above the road which passes near its base.

Upon its summit, there are the remains of a fortification similar to some of the outworks of the Roman camp at Ardoch. Norman's Law (the hill of the northern men) is in height 850 feet above the sea level. It commands a most delightful prospect, especially to the north, where the Carse of Gowrie and the Frith of Tay appear in full view in all their richness and variety. There are three concentric circles of rough stone near the top, supposed to have been a fortification of the Danes to cover their inroads into the country, or perhaps erected by the natives to repel these invaders. But by far the most interesting object here is the Loch of Lindores, covering an area of 70 acres of ground, and in some places 20 feet deep. This sheet of water is not only highly ornamental, but also very beneficial to the proprietors. And it so happens that, by a servitude upon it for supplying the mills, the water belongs to one proprietor, while the fish and the fowl belong to another. For the two last years, L. 15 or L. 17 have been given for the privilege of fowling and fishing upon it. It is frequented by ducks, teals, snipes, and other water fowl, and it abounds in pike, perch, and eel. A few reeds are sometimes cut for the roofs of houses. But the chief advantage is derived from the stream of water which flows from it, and which is sufficient, except in very dry summer weather, to turn five or six very valuable mills, whose yearly rent is more than could be obtained for the whole extent of the loch though it were converted into arable land. A saw mill has been lately erected, where a great quantity of fir and other wood is cut, (it is said to the value of L. 1500 per annum,) and disposed of in the neighbourhood, or exported at Newburgh to Newcastle and other places. A bone mill has also been set a-going of late, and the corn and barley mills continue to be well employed; but the fulling-mills and lint-mills mentioned in the former Report have been given up. The lake, when covered with ice, affords amusement to curlers. The stream, however, which feeds it, called the Priest's Burn, never freezes, and is never dried up, even

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in the hottest weather. In the summer 1826, when all other streamlets, and almost every neighbouring spring, was dry, this burn was still flowing. It rises from a moss about half a mile distant.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Ancient Land-owners.—Macduff, Thane of Fife, may be reckoned as one of these. This Earldom, after having been possessed by many of his descendants, came into the hands of Mor-dac, Duke of Albany. He being beheaded at Stirling, his property in Fife, Monteath, and elsewhere, was annexed to the Crown by King James I., and the succeeding kings gave portions of it to their favourites at different times. In particular, the lands of Denmill, which then comprehended the greatest part of the parish, “were given by James II., in the fourteenth year of his reign, to his beloved and familiar servant James Balfour, son of Sir John Balfour of Balgarvie.” As a proof of this fact, the mills on this estate are called the King’s Mills in the charter of the present proprietor. This family was always in great favour at court. One of them followed James IV. to the battle of Flodden, and was killed there. Sir James Balfour of Denmill and Kinnaird was Lyon King at Arms to Charles I. and II., and an historian of considerable repute. The funeral monuments of the family are to be seen in an aisle of the old church.*

John Lesly of Parkhill may be mentioned as the leader of the band that cut off Cardinal Beaton. He first entered the Castle of St Andrews, and gave the Cardinal the first mortal stroke with his dagger.

Modern Land-owners.—

	<i>Scotch Acres.</i>	<i>Rental.</i>
David Maitland M’Gill, Esq.	1200	L. 1000
Joseph Murray, Esq.	784	605
Lord Dundas,	460	1200
William Scott Moncrieff, Esq.	900	1000
Thomas Watt, Esq.	153	400
Charles Moyes, Esq. †	160	260
Henry Buist, Esq.	800	1000
Admiral Sir F. L. Maitland,	20	60
John Pitcairn, Esq.	200	450
Francis Balfour, Esq.	200	250
	<hr/> 4877	<hr/> L. 6225

* That of Sir James may be given as a specimen. It is in Latin, and runs thus: “Sir James Balfour of Denmill, Knight, Baronet, Lyon King at Arms, beloved and regretted as an example of true honour and probity, richly furnished with all kinds of learning, whether of a graver or more entertaining cast, a learned and diligent antiquarian, highly favoured by the muses and graces, died 13th February 1657, aged 58.”

† Charles Moyes is remarkable for his great age, being now above ninety, and still able to attend to his affairs. He is a brother of the famous Dr Henry Moyes, who

Eminent Men.—Admiral Maitland, one of the present land-owners in this parish, is well known as the Commander of the *Bellerophon*, which received Bonaparte at the conclusion of the late war with France. By his vigilance and circumspection, he prevented the escape of this great troubler of Europe from Basque roads. He has published a very entertaining narrative of the transactions he had with that celebrated personage and his attendants while they were with him in the ship. On all other occasions, when on active duty, he signalized himself by his intrepidity and skill in naval affairs, and was esteemed one of the best officers in His Majesty's service. While at home, he was attentive to every scheme of public utility; and particularly interested himself in the erection of our new church.

Parish Registers.—Baptisms and marriages have been registered with some interruptions from the year 1693. This is now more carefully done than formerly, though still there are many omissions.

Antiquities.—The old church, which is now in ruins, may be traced to the beginning of the fifteenth century. There still remain in the porch the basin for the holy water, and, till lately, the steps that led to the altar. All around, are the monuments of former times. We have the Lecturer's Inch, the Teind Knowe, and a park at Lindores called the Glebe. I have in my possession several old coins that were found in the neighbourhood; among these is a shilling of the reign of one of the Jameses, having on the obverse a crowned head, and on the margin *Rex Scotorum*; on the reverse, a cross, with the words *villi Edinburgi*; also a sixpence, having on the obverse a crowned head, with the letters * *Edw.* on the margin, and on the reverse a cross, with the word *vici* very legible. Urns containing bones and ashes are occasionally dug up. One very lately, of rude workmanship, was met with at the foot of Clat-chard Crag, containing a skull and some bones. It was deposited between three or four large stones placed together in the form of a coffin. There was found nearer the abbey, several years ago, a repository of the same kind containing a great number of very small bones. In the village of Lindores, there are the vestiges of an

lost his eye-sight by the small pox, but, notwithstanding, attained to great proficiency in almost every branch of liberal knowledge. He traversed the country as a lecturer on chemistry and all the branches of natural philosophy. But his favourite subjects were optics and the phenomena of light and colours. These he illustrated with peculiar propriety and success in spite of that bereavement of sight under which he laboured. He amassed a considerable fortune, which was bequeathed chiefly to his brother.

* Supposed to be Edward I. of England.



old castle, said to have belonged to Duncan Macduff, first Thane or Earl of Fife,—which is rendered extremely probable, by the circumstance, that the pedestal of his cross, the badge of the family, is still to be seen about a mile to the westward. Sir James Balfour, in his Annals, speaks of a battle that was fought, between the Scots under Wallace and the English, in June anno 1300, near the Castle of Lindores, in which 3000 of the latter were killed and 500 taken prisoners. This castle of Lindores is also mentioned in the history of Wallace, as the place to which that hero and his companions retired after the battle.

Mansion-Houses.—There are four of these lately built; but only two of the heritors reside. The most remarkable of these mansions is the house of Inchrye, which cost L. 12,000. It is in the Gothic style of architecture, with a verandah in front, and adorned with turrets and battlements. From various points this most romantic building is seen to great advantage, but especially from the high road that leads from Trafalgar inn to Newburgh. There it presents itself to the view of the delighted traveller, with its lawns and meadows, and woods fringing the lake. Proceeding westward, another picturesque object appears, the House of Lindores, the residence of Admiral Maitland, situated upon an eminence; and farther on, the new church, with its pillared belfry overlooking the waters. This is, on the whole, a delightful scene, and, were the plantations a little more advanced, might vie in beauty with places of greater celebrity.

III.—POPULATION.

In 1755, it was	822
1801,	725
By last census,	870
Males, 426; females, 444	
Male heads of families.	100
Number of families chiefly employed in agriculture,	55
trade, manufactures, or handicrafts,	55
communicants,	800
minister's roll of examinable persons,	500

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—

Imperial acres in the parish cultivated or occasionally in tillage,	6096
Cultivated,	4584
Constantly waste, or in pasture,	1528
That might be profitably added to the cultivated land,	150
Under wood,	300

The farms are about twenty in number. Their yearly rent from L. 1200 to L. 100, part of which is generally paid in grain. The leases are for nineteen years. The farmers are active, industrious, and intelligent, eager to adopt every plan by which the soil or

the crops may be meliorated. In consequence of the improved mode of cultivation, and the draining and bringing in of waste land, the quantity of grain raised is greater by one-third than it was at the time of last Report. The farm-steadings are excellent; most of them lately erected. On all the larger farms there are cot towns, where the servants reside. The men-servants' wages are from L. 10 to L. 12 a-year, with two pecks meal per week; the maid-servants get from L. 5 to L. 7.

The draught horses may be reckoned in number about 200, milch cows, 110. Butter costs 8d per lb.; cheese, 5d. There are 5 smiths in the parish. When paid by the year, they get as wages L. 13 or L. 14; when by the day, 2s. Iron ploughs are now generally used, one of which costs L. 3, 10s.; a brake of 3 harrows costs L. 3, 6s.; and a cart, L. 10. There are 3 carpenters besides apprentices; they get 2s. a-day. There are 3 shoemakers besides servants and apprentices. A pair of shoes costs 9s. There are 2 tailors, paid 1s. 3d. per day with victuals. There are 4 carters; they earn 5s. a-day; 4 inn-keepers who have too much business; 3 shepherds; 108 weavers, male and female, earn a little more than 1s. per day. Reapers are generally paid at L. 1, 10s. or L. 2 per season, or 12s. per acre, or 3d. or 4d. per thrave. Bell's reaping-machine is used on one of the farms. Every farmer has a thrashing-mill, and the use of the flail is discontinued. A stock-market has been established at Newburgh, and all sorts of grain are disposed of there every week for ready money. Grain and potatoes are exported to a great extent.

Produce.—The average yearly value of raw produce raised in the parish, as nearly as can be ascertained, is as follows:

Grain,	L. 14898
Potatoes, turnips,	3151
Hay,	1719
Pasture,	700
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	L. 20,468

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Means of Communication.—In nothing does the spirit of improvement appear more visible and beneficial than in the construction and repairing of roads. We are not now obliged as heretofore to ascend “the lofty mountain’s weary side.” Three turnpikes pass through the parish, each the length of six miles,—besides another upon the statute labour not so good. A coach passes daily from Perth to Kirkaldy through the middle of the parish; and there is ready access to Perth and Dundee by the Tay steam-boats.

Ecclesiastical State.—The Earl of Mansfield is patron; and this right is derived to him from Mr Andrew Murray, one of his ancestors, who was minister here, and also patron. He was a person of eminence in the church, and gained the favour of Charles I. by the discretion and authority with which he acted in the General Assembly at Glasgow, 1638.* He came to the peerage as Lord Balfour in 1641, but was prohibited by the Assembly from bearing improper titles. Perhaps, like Archbishop Leighton, he did not think the pompous title of my Lord would add anything to the dignity of his character. He died on the 4th September 1644, the third year after his elevation.

The church was built in 1827. It may accommodate 500 or 600. It is a plain substantial building, planned by Burn, and cost about L. 1200. The manse was built in 1721. The offices are new.†

By a locality dated 1650, the stipend, called there the mortified rent of the parish, was at that time 55 bolls bear; 83 bolls meal and oats; and L. 133, 6s. 8d. Scots. It is now 15 chalders, half meal and half barley, paid by the fiars of the county, with L. 10 vicarage, and L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. The old glebe is four acres arable in extent. The grass glebe consists of six acres in arable meadow pasture. There was a long litigation about it, first before the Court of Session, and then carried by appeal to the House of Lords. It terminated in favour of the minister in 1815. The people are in general regular in their habits, and well affected to the constitution, both in church and state. Only four or five families are Seceders.

Education.—The parish school is attended by 30 scholars in summer, and about 40 or 50 in winter. They are taught chiefly reading, 2s. per quarter; writing, 2s. 6d.; and arithmetic, 3s. The schoolmaster's salary is the maximum, and his whole income is L. 50 a-year. There is also at present a school taught by a female, attended by a few girls. Several of the children are very near the schools at Newburgh, Dunbog, and Collessie, and attend there. Teachers complain that children do not remain at school

* Douglas's Peerage.

† Inscription on the church bell: "Joannes Burgherhuys me fecit, 1671. Soli Deo gloria. Mr Alexander Balfour, minister there, of the parish of Ebde." These words, *me fecit* seem to indicate that superstitious regard to bells which prevailed in former times, (Christian Observer, Protestant.) And even now it is well known, that, in Roman Catholic countries, they are solemnly baptized and consecrated as if intelligent agents; and, if rung with sufficient force, are thought to have great influence in banishing evil spirits, and in relieving from the pains of purgatory.

a sufficient time. They are obliged, on account of the poverty of their parents, to go to a trade, or to work for their livelihood before their education be completed.

Poor.—There are 12 at present on the roll, but the average number may be 7 or 8. They are supported by the session fund, which consists of the interest of L. 320, a small mortification, and the collections at the church door. There are 4 lunatics, 2 furious, and confined in the asylums of Perth and Dundee, 2 others tractable, and kept in the country. The rest are old infirm people. The whole are maintained for about L. 50 a-year, of which the heritors contribute a part by a voluntary assessment. The church collections amount to about L. 14 per annum. L. 200 of the poor's money was lost lately by the failure of the person in whose hands it was placed.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

It would contribute greatly to the comfort of the parish, could the necessary articles of coal and lime be procured at a more reasonable rate. They are very dear at present. Whether coals are bought at Newburgh shore, or sent for to the Balbirnie or other coal pits, they cost 10s. a single cart load, and lime is proportionally expensive. Therefore, a railway has been talked of from the New Inn to Newburgh, and I doubt not but in some future time this improvement may take place. It would also be desirable, could the waters of the lake be confined within a narrower compass by such operations as have lately been carried through at Lochleven. By these means, a more equable supply of water might be furnished to the mills, and many acres of marshy and useless ground might be rendered arable. This, too, is an improvement which the lapse of time may bring about. Much has been done since last Report; many waste acres have been reclaimed; the hills are now cultivated nearer to the summit; the grounds are better enclosed; and the houses and cottages much improved.

March 1836.