



THE CHURCH OF FORDOUN: ERECTED 1830.

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# THE PARISH OF FORDOUN

Chapters in its History

OR

REMINISCENCES OF PLACE AND CHARACTER

BY

CHARLES A. MOLLYSON

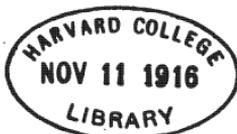
*"Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis"*

ABERDEEN: JOHN RAE SMITH  
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G. CORNWALL AND SONS, PRINTERS, ABERDEEN.



## P R E F A C E.

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IN issuing these chapters of the history of a Kincardineshire parish, and of personal reminiscences connected therewith, the Author is well aware that the little volume into which they have grown can be of little more than local interest, and possibly even that to only a limited extent. Here and there, indeed, the work may commend itself to the attention of the more general student of Scottish topography and character. For Fordoun is a parish comparatively rich in historic associations, and down even to these later times many of the people have inherited not a little of that native strength and rugged individuality which in ages long past gave distinction and renown to the men of the Mearns. And there are some of Fordoun's sons scattered over the world to whom this memento of the old place and of old times may have an interest.

During the Author's younger days there were still living in the parish men not past their vigour, whose memory stretched well back into last century, and who could have told us much of the conditions and modes of life of generations now rapidly vanishing into remoteness.

The opportunity of collecting and placing on record the information they could have given was, unfortunately, allowed to pass unused. That it was not taken advantage of while it lasted has long been a subject of regret. To make such reparation as was possible, in after days he began to write down what he knew of Fordoun and its inhabitants. From small beginnings the work grew on his hands, and he was encouraged and urged to proceed. In the circumstances it was perhaps inevitable that the result should be in parts somewhat fragmentary in form and defective as to compactness and sequence of arrangement.

The present volume cannot compare, for instance, with the admirable and exhaustive "History" of the neighbouring parish of Laurencekirk by the Rev. W. R. Fraser. While the resources of charter and family history have not been neglected, the chief aim has rather been to set forth the hitherto unwritten history of Fordoun and its people, and to sketch, if only in outline, various of the individuals that made up the corporate life in days still within or not far beyond the range of living memory. Matters relating exclusively to the present generation do not come within the scope of such a work. The account of ecclesiastical and educational affairs practically ends with the Disruption of fifty years ago, but in dealing with persons deceased, their record has been carried down to its close even where that is of comparatively recent date.

Care has been taken to avoid anything that might wound or offend the living or seem to asperse the dead. Stray anecdotes or references of a personal nature are meant only to give zest or lighten up a page that might otherwise appear dull and devoid of interest.

Asterisks and daggers, in the opinion of the Author, disturb the eye and distract attention. In the whole volume, therefore, not a single footnote will be found; but his references to authorities, where quoted, are, rightly or wrongly, invariably given in the body of the text.

To numerous correspondents, including, among others, members of the clerical, medical, and architectural professions, the Author gratefully acknowledges his deep indebtedness. Their assistance has been invaluable.

To his esteemed personal friend, Mr. William Watt of the Aberdeen *Free Press*, he is under special obligation. Of his valued counsel and advice, the Author has freely availed himself during the progress of the work. By them he has, oftener than once, been encouraged to proceed when, filled with the spirit of Lot's wife, he felt sorely tempted to turn back. Two other names, he must not omit to mention: Mr. James Milne, Inverurie Street, Auchinblae, the Author's old school-companion, has been serviceable to him in ways that are manifold. He has verified many points in local history, and recalled vividly to memory many incidents that the rusts of time—

accumulating over a lapse of forty years—had sadly obscured and, in some instances, well-nigh obliterated. Mr. Robert Lawson Crabb, Denmill-house, a worthy son of the Mearns, has deciphered with alacrity the inscriptions on many a moss-covered stone, and been otherwise also most helpful. To one and all, the Author's sincerest thanks are here publicly accorded.

CARDEN PLACE,

ABERDEEN, *May*, 1893.

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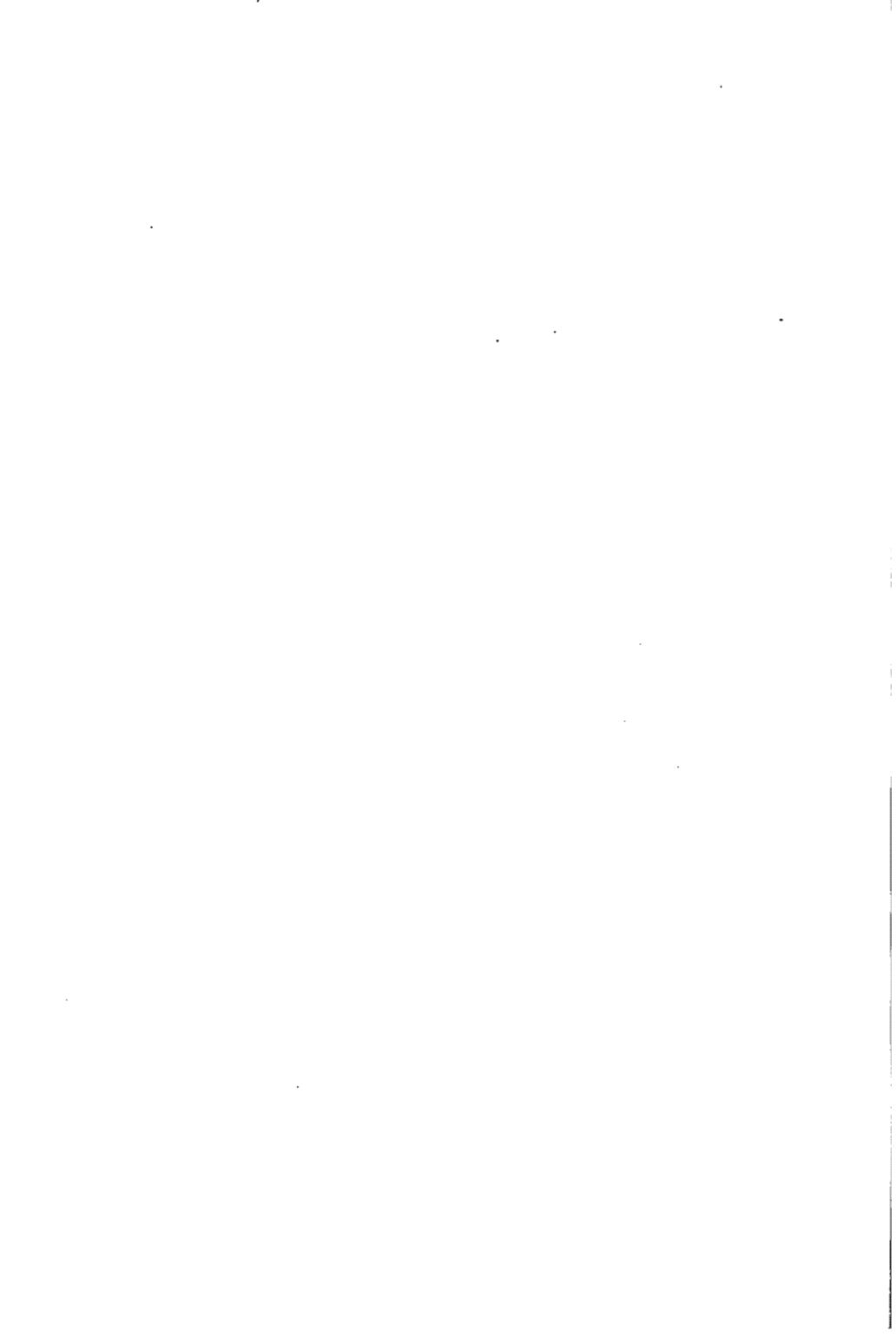
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# THE PARISH OF FORDOUN.

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## CHAPTER I.

### **Name—Boundaries—Extent—Population.**

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THE name of the parish, Fordoun—anciently spelt Fordun—is usually ascribed to a Gaelic origin, and by some is said to signify “the anterior or prominent hill”—a signification not inappropriate to the position occupied by the church at the foot of that historic mountain, Strath-Finella.

The parish is bounded on the north-west and north by Strachan, on the north-east by Glenbervie, on the south-east by Arbuthnott, on the south by Laurencekirk and Marykirk, and on the west by Fettercairn. It is of quadrangular form.

Its greatest length from east to west is about 10 miles, and its utmost breadth, from the central summit of the Grampians on its northern boundary to a point at Pittarrow on the south, is nearly 8 miles. Its area touches 27,000 acres.

In the beginning of the century the parish contained a population of over 2,500; by last census the number had, from various causes, fallen to 2,004.

**The Church and its successive Ministers.**

—:—

THE Church of Fordoun was called "the Mother Church of the Mearns." It was dedicated to St. Palladius, and was in olden days a "mensal" kirk belonging to the Archbishop of St. Andrews. Dr. Hew Scott, in his "*Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ*" (vol. iii., part ii.), gives the names of eight ministers who had in succession the care of the parish prior to the incumbency of Alexander Leslie, who was admitted 31st October, 1771, and died 15th September, 1807.

We shall mention those incumbents in their order. The first was Patrick Boncle, who had at the same time charge of Fettercairn and Newdosk (which latter parish was suppressed and added to that of Edzell in 1658). He was appointed in 1567, and seems to have died about 1607.

He was succeeded by Adam Walker, A.M., who, we are told, while engaged with other brethren on 26th March, 1601, in designing a manse for Mr. Boncle and his successors, was "sett upon and invadit" by Sir David Wod of Craig, Knycht, who, with "vithers his complices," to the number of "twelf persounis or thereby strak him with the gaird of his sword poun his heid, put violent handis on him, and with sword behind his back strak att

him, and dang him to the eird, and with thair drawin swordis hurt and woundit him in baith his handis to the effusioun of blude in grit quaintitie." Mr. Walker survived this serious onslaught for upwards of thirty years. He died 25th August, 1634.

On 15th November following, Oliver Houstoun, a student of Edinburgh University, was presented to the living by Charles I., and held it for about twenty years.

David Ouchterlony succeeded him ; he was translated from Finhaven, and admitted sometime in 1658. He died in 1691 at the age of 68. .

John Ouchterlony, formerly at Balmerino, came after him, and has the historic reputation of having been "intruded" into the parish sometime prior to 16th April, 1701. The precise date of his death is not recorded, but it seems to have occurred sometime between March, 1710, and 29th January, 1712.

David Henderson, another graduate of the Edinburgh University, and a licentiate of the Presbytery of Dalkeith, was next called to the charge by the Presbytery of Fordoun, *jure devoluto*, on 12th November, 1712, and admitted 24th December same year. The parishioners took objection to his settlement on the ground that he did not use the Lord's Prayer. Death, however, settled this controversy. Mr. Henderson died of "high fever" the following summer at the early age of 28.

The charge now fell to the lot of a licentiate of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, namely, Gilbert

Anderson. Like his predecessor, he was, on 21st October, 1714, called by the Presbytery, *jure devoluto*. He was ordained 8th December same year, and died 15th October, 1746.

When this vacancy occurred, Mr. George Campbell, then just licensed as a preacher, who afterwards became Principal of Marischal College, and rose to the most distinguished rank in the Church, was an unsuccessful candidate. He was pitted against Mr. William Forbes, one of the members of a literary society which Campbell himself, aided by Mr. John Glennie, who afterwards became minister of Maryculter, had formed for the advancement of theological learning. The Crown, we are told (in Bruce's "Lives of Eminent Men of Aberdeen," London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1841), gave the presentation to Mr. Forbes "on account of his having a majority of the heritors in his favour." He was called 8th April, and ordained 9th September, 1747. He died 20th March, 1771, in the twenty-fourth year of his ministry. This brings us down to the time of Alexander Leslie, who is the link that connects the past with the present century. The period of his incumbency we have already indicated.

#### JAMES LESLIE.

James Leslie, the eldest of four sons, succeeded to the charge formerly held by his father, the Rev.

Alexander Leslie. He was born on the 14th March, 1764, in the manse of Durris, of which parish his father was then minister, and after the usual preliminary courses of education was enrolled as a student at Glasgow University. He had probably been induced to go so far in search of learning in order to study under the eye of his uncle, Thomas Reid, founder of the Scottish Philosophy, then Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow. James's mother was the philosopher's sister, and daughter of Lewis Reid, minister of Strachan. Here, at the close of the session in the spring of 1782, when he had just completed his 18th year, he obtained a premium for the best essay on "*The Goodness of God.*" It was not, as would appear, the custom to publish those youthful attempts, and the essay referred to was probably relegated to some lumber chest in the archives of the University. The goodness of God was, however, a theme on which the amiable man never wearied descanting. He taught its truth in the most practical way by deeds of charity and benevolence, and so helped to compensate for any loss the world sustained through his prize production not having been preserved in permanent form. Genuine goodness was his own especial characteristic.

Mr. Leslie was licensed by the Presbytery of Fordoun on the 29th November, 1786, appointed to the living by George the Third in June, 1787, and ordained assistant and successor to his father

in June of the following year. He had the degree of D.D. conferred upon him by his *alma mater*, the University of Glasgow, on the 1st May, 1812. At the time of his appointment to the charge—in 1788—that is—a new church, as we shall afterwards see, was erected; but at the end of forty years it had to be pulled down, and the present splendid Gothic edifice took its place.

He continued minister of the parish for the long period of 56 years. On 16th October, 1843, he demitted office, and two days thereafter the Presbytery accepted his demission. On his retirement he took up his residence at Bath Lodge, Stonehaven, and there he continued until his death, on 20th March, 1858, at the advanced age of 95.

Such, briefly stated, in chronological order, are the leading points in the life of the venerable and much venerated Dr. Leslie.

As a preacher, he was not famed either for the excellence of his matter or the attractiveness of his delivery; but there are probably few alive now who have any intelligent recollection of his pulpit appearance or utterances. The degree of D.D. had, as we have seen, been conferred upon him; but, so far as can be ascertained, that was more an act of courtesy, and in recognition of his benevolent qualities, than as stamping him above average in intellectual endowments and scholastic attainments. It is for his genuine moral worth alone that his memory deserves to be kept alive. His was the

charity which "believeth all things and thinketh no evil." Guile was not in his mouth. He was respected and beloved alike by his superiors, inferiors, and equals. Of the poor he was especially mindful. It was not with him "be ye warmed and be ye clad"; but, while tendering good advice, he opened his hand liberally. The manse was a hospitable place, from which no one was ever turned empty away. In his day there was no poor law organisation. The wants of the poor were supplied from the church collections and other sources which systematised pauperism has long since dried up. While ready to share with his poorer neighbours what was his own, he was equally ready to help them to help themselves. His establishment of a Savings Bank in the parish, early in the century (as noticed elsewhere), when such institutions were rare, is one proof of this fact. He was, in language of Scripture, "given to hospitality." When anyone who had accepted an invitation to dine with him was, through some unforeseen circumstance, unable to be present, Dr. Leslie has been not unfrequently known to mark the occasion by sending to the absentee's house a bottle of rich old port wine. In like spirit, when he got his own annual refit of black cloth, he never forgot that his neighbour, the schoolmaster, had also to appear in clerical habiliments; but, with unseen hand, perennially replenished the wardrobe of the latter at the same time as his own.

Dr. Leslie's handwriting was peculiar, and, to the great majority of people, totally illegible. There were in the parish a few experts who could decipher it, but the fact that they possessed the key almost took them out of the category of ordinary mortals. One amusing incident, arising out of the difficulty of reading the Doctor's caligraphy, has come down to us. It is this: a crofter in the west end of the parish had a child to baptise. He sent to the Doctor, inquiring on what day it would be convenient for him to perform the rite, and got a note in reply fixing a definite day and hour. When the Doctor arrived on the appointed day at the man's abode, he was surprised to find him busy at the plough, with no preparation whatever made for his reception or the performance of the baptismal rite. "Did not I send you a letter," asked the Doctor, with more directness than was customary with him, "telling you I would be here to-day to christen that infant of yours?" "Ye sent me a letter," was the crofter's blunt reply, "which I couldna' read, and my wife, Mary, couldna' read, and, I believe, the d——l himsel' couldna' hae read it!" The poor Doctor was evidently annoyed, but this was not the first time he had learnt how puzzling to his parishioners were the characters he traced with his broad goose quill on that blue post of his.

Dr. Leslie always wore what was popularly known as "*knee breeks*," tightly buttoned up the

sides, with the square flap in front—an adjustment long discarded by modern sartorial science. In person he was short, but rather stoutly built, and the expression of the mouth recalled to us the somewhat saddened look of the great lexicographer, as seen in the familiar portrait by Sir Joshua.

Dr. Leslie is described by the illustrious Chalmers, as a man of great urbanity of manner, but with an apparent lack of evangelical sentiment. The description no doubt answers faithfully to the impression left on the mind of that great divine; but the dogmatic conditions that have long taken to themselves exclusively the name of “evangelical” would be more missed then than they would now. The spirit out of which Christian life and work grew was deeply characteristic of Dr. Leslie. His labours on behalf of his people were unwearied. He was in especial, as we have already said, the friend of the poor, and in him the cause of the unfortunate always found an advocate. He had great influence with the heritors, and it was always judiciously wielded.

Annually, in relays, he assembled the younger members of his flock at his manse, and examined them on their Scripture knowledge and acquaintance with the Shorter Catechism. Those examinations, it is true, were not severe, but they strengthened the ties between pastor and people, and left kindly memories of the manse and its warm-hearted occupant. They always terminated with good

advice, a distribution of fancy bread, and generally with a gift of some book—a copy of the Bible or New Testament, or of the Psalms and Paraphrases.

On his retirement from Fordoun, Dr. Leslie was presented by the parishioners with a beautifully polished casket, made from the trunk of an oak tree which had graced the churchyard from time immemorial, until a gale of exceptional severity occurring shortly before this laid it low. The casket contained a roll bearing the autographs of nearly every member of the congregation. Into whose hands this once prized gift, with its long list of now forgotten names, fell on the doctor's death we are unable to say, but that it is still treasured by some one need not be doubted.

Thus terminated the good old man's connection with the parish of Fordoun, where he had been so long known and held in such high estimation. It was said that even the "many wintered" ravens, which had their haunts among the hoary trees in the manse grounds, were acquainted with Dr. Leslie's familiar figure, and feared no molestation at his hands. Peace to his ashes! His tombstone is of flat table form, and stands in the north-east corner of the churchyard.

#### JAMES FLOWERDEW.

The Rev. James Flowerdew succeeded Dr. Leslie as minister of the parish. He studied theology at

the University of Edinburgh, was licensed by the Presbytery of Meigle on the 3rd April, 1822, presented to the parish of Eassie, and ordained there on the 17th April, 1828.

On 7th February, 1844, he was translated to Fordoun, and admitted to that charge on the 22nd of the same month. He was not long settled in this new sphere when his health began to decline. While the manse was being re-built, he resided in the mansion-house at Mains of Fordoun, about a mile distant from the church. This entailed on him a pretty long walk on the Sabbath day, which was probably trying to his constitution during the severe winter months. Early in the spring of 1845 he arranged with the Presbytery for a temporary respite from duty, in the hope that a sojourn at some health resort in the south might prove the means of recruiting his strength. The malady from which he suffered, however, turned out to be a fatal one. He died on the 22nd August, 1845, in the eighteenth year of his ministry, and exactly eighteen months after his induction to Fordoun. The tidings of his death were brought to the parish two days after by Robert Macdonald, the well-known local post-runner, and occasioned deep and universal regret.

Mr. Flowerdew's pulpit and other parochial duties had, during his illness, been discharged by a Mr. Smith, a licentiate of the Church, then without a fixed charge. Our recollection of Mr. Smith is

that he was a very genial man. He had silvery locks, and owned a silver snuff-box, which he patronised liberally himself, and generously placed at the disposal of others with kindred tastes. Mr. Smith's box might appropriately have borne the motto, "*non sibi sed cunctis.*" He appears to have come from Dundee, in which town Mr. Flowerdew's brother practised as a solicitor at that time.

Mr. Flowerdew's connection with the parish of Fordoun, we thus see, was of the briefest duration. It was sufficiently long, however, to secure for him an abiding-place in the affections of his people. His death, as we have said, was universally lamented. Here, as in his former charge, he took a warm interest in Sabbath school work. He had visited all within the parochial boundary during the twelve months his health permitted him to move about. He was a good horseman, and his visits to the remoter parts of the parish were performed on the back of his trusty chestnut mare. Generous and honourable, he scrupulously avoided, in his contact with people belonging to other churches, everything in word or deed that could be construed into an attempt to proselytise. It was his custom, rather, to try and impress upon all that the field was broad enough to afford scope for the energies of every branch of the Protestant faith. Breathing a spirit of charity, he gained the esteem and respect of all sections of the community. As a preacher, he was singularly

attractive and impressive. His sermons, in fact, awakened a deep interest, and were the theme of many a wayside conversation during the intervening weeks. Men who had been notoriously neglectful of Church ordinances in days gone by, now, under Mr. Flowerdew's ministry, obeyed the summons of the Sabbath bell, with undeviating regularity. In his former parish, he tells us, there was, prior to the "disruption," no dissent. The congregation here was also united and enthusiastic.

Mr. Flowerdew's style was graceful, and his matter rich and suggestive; his voice clear and mellow, his manner calm and dignified, yet natural; every sentence he uttered told with effect. He was of medium height, neat in person, with fine classic features, bright intelligent eyes, and a finely developed forehead. Altogether his aspect in the pulpit was commanding. As a debater, we are told, he was powerful, and it was not every one who cared to enter the lists with him. The records of the Presbytery of Meigle, we believe, could tell us of one splendid passage-at arms that occurred between him and a bold and able divine, who was afterwards known in a sister church as "the Lion of St. John's." The fight arose over the baptism of a poor man's child. The father could, from his poverty, ill spare another day, and the rite was performed on a Sunday. This act of alleged Sabbath desecration brought down upon the heads of those concerned the denunciations of certain of the eccle-

siastical dignitaries. The "Lion" referred to led the attack, while Mr. Flowerdew, burning with righteous indignation, resolutely came to the defence. The occasion was a fitting one for the exercise of his highest oratorical powers, and, we are told, he rose to it. Under his withering sarcasm—polished and deftly delivered shafts—the "Lion" and those who espoused the same side of the question were cowed and silenced; the charge fell to the ground, and the poor man who had so innocently offended, it may be assumed, got no further molestation.

Mr. Flowerdew had fine literary taste, and, to judge from his frequent allusion to historic narrative and poetic story, he seemed to have been well versed in classic literature both ancient and modern. His illustrations were always apt and natural, and introduced with telling effect. Once or twice his reference to incidents outside the sacred page was productive of rather amusing results. His sermons, as has already been remarked, were closely followed. Among the female members of his flock, in particular, he had many ardent admirers—some who pondered over every word that fell from his lips. On one occasion he brought in Sterne's simile, that "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." The statement seemed so true and tenderly pathetic that one old woman, whose reading was confined almost exclusively to her Bible, assumed it could only be from the pen of Isaiah or

Jeremiah, or some one of the minor prophets; but she searched the sacred page in vain; various acquaintances to whom she applied were equally at sea. None could guide her to chapter or verse, and, baffled fairly, she at last applied to the minister himself for a solution of the problem!

Beyond his account of the united parishes of Eassie and Nevay, which appears in the "New Statistical Account of Scotland" (vol. xi. : Blackwood, 1845), he does not appear to have published anything. That, however, is an elegant and comprehensive piece of writing. It is necessarily brief. As a specimen of his literary style, we give the following quotation from the article referred to. Speaking of the monumental antiquities of the district he says:—

"They are histories in stone of the age in which they were erected. They tell little, indeed, and that little obscurely, of the usages, the events, and the men of those distant times. But they tell us nearly all we yet know, or perhaps ever shall. Rising, as many of them did, long antecedent to the dawn of authentic history, they were almost antiquities to the earliest annalists, who, if they noticed them at all, speak of them as relics of a far older time than their own. Many of them have already disappeared. '*Mors etiam saxis nominibusque venit.*' Those that still stand are often the only surviving records of ages and generations long since passed away. They were designed by each successive age that left them behind it to transmit its memory and usages to posterity."

Mr. Flowerdew was never married. His father, we believe, was an officer of excise, and his niece, daughter of the solicitor mentioned in this chapter, is the wife of Mr. Lowson, the respected proprietor of Balthayock, in Perthshire.

### **A Model Church Officer.**



For many years Robert Nicoll held the appointment of church officer and sexton, and discharged its duties in a most efficient and praiseworthy manner. He was a conscientious and, in all respects, sterling man. He held office under three ministers—Dr. Leslie and two of his successors. He had his residence in one of that block of thatched cottages, situated on the south of the manse garden, on the road leading round the shoulder of the Whinhill.

One of his predecessors had incurred the displeasure of Dr. Leslie by proclaiming the large experience he had had as a grave-digger, and casting up in doggerel verse the number of his fellow-parishioners he had seen laid in their last resting-place. Of this boastful spirit Robert had none; he was duly impressed with the solemnity of his calling, and, while he was ever ready to answer intelligently any question relating to the sacred acre under his charge, he never obtruded his opinion or experience on any one. His first duty on Sabbath morning was to sound the church-going bell, which he did from the church tower precisely at eight o'clock. He renewed the summons shortly before the hour of

worship (eleven o'clock). At the close of the service, when the third of the regulation four verses was being sung preparatory to the benediction being pronounced, he rose, undid the bolt of the two east doors, and then bareheaded made his way round the outside of the church to throw open the great portals in front. On the occasion of a funeral he kept outlook from the church tower. When the procession emerged in view he began the solemn toll, which he continued until the party approached the gate, when he descended to perform the last offices to the departed. We never knew a man holding the office who had such regard for the feelings of the living and memory of the dead. When a grave had been re-opened, every bone belonging to the former occupant was carefully collected and re-committed to its former place. With scrupulous care the grass turf was cut and rolled up in one piece until the grave was filled in, when it was unrolled and laid down with the same nicety. It is only a just tribute we pay to Robert's memory when we say that neither in town nor country have we ever known a like situation held by a more conscientious man. He knew his Bible well, taught a class in the Sunday school, and had a genuine appreciation of what he regarded as an eloquent sermon.

## CHAPTER II.

**Saint Palladius.**

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THE ANCIENT CHAPEL DEDICATED TO HIS  
MEMORY.

MUCH that has been written concerning Palladius is of a fanciful and romantic kind. The accounts given by different writers are conflicting, and there is little that is reliable to be gathered about him from any source. Prosper of Aquitaine, in Gaul, is the most original authority. He was a contemporary of the Saint, and presumably, therefore, what he relates in regard to him is more to be trusted than the inflated statements of later writers.

Prosper, who wrote in 455, A.D., records that Palladius, a deacon of the Church, was ordained by Pope Celestine I., and sent to the believing Scots as their first bishop. The words used by Prosper in the original Latin are these:—"Ad Scotos in Christum credentes, ordinatus a Papa Celestino Palladius primus episcopus mittitur," which Professor Stokes (*"Contra Collatorem,"* cap. xxi.) renders—"Whilst the Pope laboured to keep the Roman island Catholic, he made also the barbarous island

Christian by ordaining a Bishop for the Scots" —a rendering preferred by competent authorities. The date of Palladius' ordination appears to be about the year 430. His death is supposed to have taken place within a year or two after that date. According to some authorities he was probably a Briton by birth, but sprung from the Gaulish family of Palladii.

Constantius of Lyons states that the mission arose out of the visit of St. Germanus, of Auxerre, to Britain; while Prosper, on the other hand, mentions Germanus' own visit as originating with Pope Celestine.

Whatever its origin, the mission of St. Palladius is a well authenticated fact in history, but much critical discussion has arisen as to the true meaning of the statement that he "was sent *ad Scotos*." Some authorities regard the phrase as relating to Ireland, which was known as *Scotia* in the early centuries, while others contend that the destination of the mission was Scotland. John of Fordun, who wrote upwards of nine centuries after the event, lends his authority to the latter view; and, in claiming the Saint for Scotland, enjoins upon the Scottish Church (Book iii., chaps. viii. and ix.) the propriety of diligently keeping his festival and Church commemorations.

It is admitted that Christian bishops from Britain had begun to take part at Church councils early in the fourth century, but Fordun's state-

ment that Scotland was converted to Christianity long prior to that time is regarded by some as unhistoric ; and his application of the phrase "*ad Scotos*" to the Scottish people has raised critical discussions as to how their Church was governed during the interval between their alleged conversion and the arrival of their bishops on the scene. His own simple solution of the difficulty is that presbyters or monks exercised the needful authority in that early time.

In Robert Keith's "Catalogue of the Bishops of the Several Sees within the Kingdom of Scotland down to 1688" (published by Ruddimans, Edinburgh, 1755), readers will find the question of Palladius' mission closely and carefully reasoned out in all its various aspects.

The writer of that standard and very valuable work (which is inscribed to His Excellency James Francis Edward Keith, second son of the ninth Marischal of Scotland), gives it as his opinion that the Scots had embraced Christianity more early than was to have been expected if the northern situation of the country is considered, and even sooner than is alleged by our early historians. Tertullian, a writer of great antiquity, in a work supposed to have been directed against the Jews, before the end of the second century, expressly says that parts of Britain, which had been inaccessible to the Romans, were subdued to Christianity. St. John Chrysostom, who wrote towards the end of

the fourth century, also records that by that early period the gospel had been propagated in Britain, and churches and altars erected there.

Mr. Keith, in the comprehensive work just quoted, cites those two ancient authorities in support of his own view as to the comparatively early date at which the Scots were Christianised ; and in regard to the difficulty raised by some as to the government of the Church previous to the arrival of their *Primus Episcopus*, he says that the ambiguity of the word *primus*, which signifies first in time as well as in dignity, misled Fordun and other writers, who took it in the former sense. His conclusion, therefore, decidedly is that the mission of Palladius was to Scotland, not to Ireland ; that the larger island alluded to in the quotation from Prosper is the former, not the latter country ; that misconceptions arose through the imperfect knowledge as to the situation of these islands until Julius Agricola first forced his way into Galloway, from whence he got a view of Ireland, and after that advanced to the Grampian Hills on the north side of the Forth, and discovered with his own eyes that what had formerly been regarded as an island was only a peninsula.

The more romantic accounts of Palladius relate that, disheartened with his reception in Ireland, he set sail for Italy, but, caught in a storm, he was shipwrecked on the north-east coast of Scotland, whence he made his way to the Mearns, and settled

at Fordoun. Modern writers (9th ed. "Ency. Brit.," vol. xiii., p. 248) characterise this narrative as a late invention.

But the claims of Fordoun cannot be thus summarily set aside. A tradition that has come down to us through so many centuries is entitled to some consideration. That the Saint's name has, from time immemorial, been associated with the chapel and with the well known well within the precincts of the manse grounds, as also with an annual fair in the neighbourhood, are facts that cannot be left out of account. There were Christians in Cæsar's household. Roman troops had marched and counter-marched through the Mearns long before the time of Palladius; they had a permanent station within a mile of the sequestered spot where the church bearing his name now stands. Is it a thing impossible that he should have found his way thither, as tradition asserts he did? Besides, writers who prefer the claims of Ireland to those of Fordoun, furnish no positive proof, so far as we have been able to trace, that Mago Girginn, the place where the Saint is said to have died or been murdered, was really situated in the sister island, not in the Mearns.

The controversy between the Scottish and Irish claimants for the possession of St. Palladius is too long and involved for discussion in this brief notice of his life. Ample details will be found in "Ussher," § c.; Todd's "St. Patrick," p. 270; and

Petrie's "History and Antiquities of Tarra Hill." "The Bollandists," A.A., S.S., Jul. ii, p. 286, give the Scottish traditions; and the Rev. J. F. Shearman, "*Loca Patricinia*," p. 25 (Dub., 1879), has diligently and learnedly discussed the different localities in Wicklow and Kildare, where St. Palladius is said to have preached and founded churches.

## ST. PALLADIUS' CHAPEL.

Whatever value may, from a historic point of view, be placed on the tradition that Fordoun was the privileged spot where, in the fifth century, Palladius planted the standard of the Cross, there can at least be no doubt that the chapel in the churchyard there, dedicated to the Saint's memory, is a structure of ancient foundation. The older part of the fabric is in all probability the Church of Fordoun that was consecrated by David de Bernham, Bishop of St. Andrews, on Monday, the 17th October, 1244. (See Robertson's "Eccles. Scot.," 1st pref., pp. 298, *seq.*).

Among other churches in the county consecrated by the same ecclesiastic are (1) St. Mary, Cowie; (2) St. Caron's, Fetteresso; and (3) St. Fittock, Nigg. The first of the three (Cowie), independently of documentary evidence of its date, is unquestionably work of the thirteenth century; part of the Nigg gable, likewise the north doorway

at Fetteresso, also belong to the same century. The west and north doors of Palladius' chapel are also of the same style of work as the churches already named. The quoins or corner-stones, from the ground to nearly the eaves' level, are of the same date as the doors.

There is reason to believe that the original building was raised in the walls and otherwise decorated by Archbishop Shevez. We include a drawing which will show its various architectural peculiarities, such as the doorways, the arched recess in the east wall, and the piscina. The venerable church is oblong in form, 38 feet 2 inches long, by 18 feet 2 inches wide. The west door has a round-headed arch with simple splay; the north door is also round-headed; in this case, the arch is composed of two stones in true Gothic fashion. Indeed these arches, although, as we have said, round-headed, are both strictly Gothic in style. The round arch obtained in Scotland throughout the development of Gothic styles. The round arch of *two abutting* stones could not possibly be Norman, nor earlier than the twelfth or thirteenth century. The only windows in the chapel are three rectangular ones in the south wall. These windows are splayed outside, and have segmental rear arches inside, and, although the masonry is similar to that of the doors, they bear signs of being "insertions" of a later date—probably the seventeenth century; indeed it is likely that a large

St Palladius' Chapel

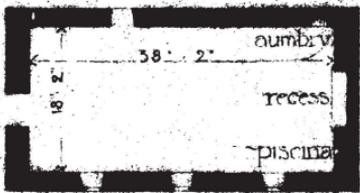


north door

West Elevation

outside inside

south windows



plan



recess



East wall inside



piscina



portion of the south wall was rebuilt at that period. In the east end is an arched recess, well moulded, with projecting sill or shelf, measuring about 6 feet 8 inches by about 2 feet, in style of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. To the south of the recess is a small piscina. In the north wall, towards the east end, is a simple aumbry or sacrament house. The present spur-stones of gables, copings, &c., appear to belong to a later restoration in the eighteenth century. In both gables are two deeply recessed holes, about 9 inches square, at a level slightly above the eaves. Their purpose is unknown, but they are unquestionably parts of the original structure.

At the ruins of St. Adamnan, Forvie, near Ellon—a chapel dedicated to another Saint of the Columban Church—are traces of similar openings in the east gable, now the only remaining fragment. They may be reminiscences of small openings for light in the original Celtic cell-churches or oratories, but this is mere conjecture, and, as we have said, the purpose they were designed to serve cannot now be ascertained. The vault, or small crypt, with stone steps leading from the floor of Palladius' chapel, may be ancient, but this also is a point difficult to determine. The arched recess in the east gable mentioned above, and which is Gothic in character, of a comparatively late period, may have been built for holding the supposed relics of the Saint. Arch-

bishop Shevez, we are told on authority, when he made his pilgrimage to the sacred spot, collected together bones that were "scattered about," and had them placed in a new silver shrine.

With the dawn of the Reformation such relics lost their value. Mr. Jervise tells us, in terms both plain and forcible, what is supposed to have been the fate of the holy casket containing those long sacredly treasured as belonging to the Saint.

The same writer ("Memorials," vol. i., p. 143) states that the east gable of the building is obviously the oldest portion; but for this statement there seems to be no ground either in the style or character of the work.

About half a century ago Miss Gladstone, sister of the venerable statesman, apparently deeply interested in all that related to Palladius, visited and made a minute inspection of this ancient structure dedicated to his memory.

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### **The Present Parish Church.**

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#### ITS LONG-LIVED AND SHORT-LIVED PREDECESSORS.

The present parish church, the stately neighbour of the ancient edifice just described, also stands within the churchyard. It is an elegant structure, with a square Gothic tower rising to the height of nearly one hundred feet. It was erected in 1830,

after a design by Mr. John Smith, of Aberdeen. The builder was William Leslie, sometime Lord Provost of that city, and who a few years before his death purchased the estate of Nethermuir in Buchan. The interior was magnificently furnished. Messrs. Croll, of St. Cyrus, who appear to have been distinguished for the superior quality of their workmanship, executed the woodwork, while the glazing, we believe, was executed by Mr. Donald, father of the late Baillie George Donald, of Aberdeen.

This building took the place of one erected in 1788, but which had scarcely stood forty years, when, owing to a threatened collapse of the roof, it had to be demolished. The church, however, which this short-lived structure superseded, appears to have been one of very ancient date. The Rev. Dr. Leslie estimates its age at 200 to 300 years, and the antiquary is indebted to him for having preserved a record of its exact measurements. It was, he tells us, over walls 100 feet long, 24 feet in breadth at the widest, and 16 feet at the narrowest part. The venerable fabric gave way in 1787.

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### John of Fordun.

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ACCOUNT OF HIS WORKS.

The floating tradition that John of Fordun, who lived in the fourteenth century, was a native of the

parish, has by some writers been fondly set down as one of absolute certainty. That he may, in the discharge of his duties as Presbyter, have had a connection with the parish is not at all improbable. This fact would explain how his name has come to be associated with Fordoun, but to substantiate the positive statement that this was the actual place of his nativity there seems to be nothing beyond his name.

The Rev. Dr. Leslie, jealous for the honour of the place he himself loved so well, ranks among those who believe that the historian was "either a native of the parish or resided in it when he wrote his history," but the worthy doctor's short statement on the subject, in the *New Statistical Account* (Blackwood, 1843, page 81), receives somewhat supercilious treatment at the hands of the writer of the sketch in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (9th edition, vol. ix., page 397), which contains a concise account of all that research—ancient and modern—has been able to discover with respect to the chronicler.

Camden says he was born at Fordoun, but does not furnish authority for the statement. Other writers have identified him with the Abbot of Ford in England. Bower, the continuator of his work, calls him a "Presbyter," while in the Royal MS., British Museum, he is styled "*Capellanus Ecclesie Aberdonensis.*" Skene (Introduction to "Historians of Scotland," vol. iv.), a high authority,

concludes that he was a "Chantry Priest" of that Cathedral.

If the following lines, prefixed to the titles of the chapters of the first book of his Chronicles, are from his own pen, and there seems to be no reason to doubt their authenticity, Fordun has expressly localised himself, and placed his connection with the parish beyond dispute. The lines are :—

Incipies Opus Hoc Adonai Nomine Nostri  
Exceptum Scriptis Dirigat Emanuel  
Fauces Ornate Ructuent Dum Verbula Nectant.

Bede calls him "Venerabilis vir Dominus Joannes Fordun, Presbyter."

The "*Scotichronicon*" of Fordun forms, as is generally admitted, the basis of the history of Scotland prior to the death of James I. Before Fordun's time the materials were crude and scanty. They consisted chiefly of short chronicles and long lists of regal names. Germs of the fabulous and artificial were to be found mixed with fragments of true history.

He was the first to arrange, in something like chronological order, the facts and fables which earlier writers had recorded or tradition brought down, and on the basis of his system later historians reared their fictitious superstructures. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the "Chronicles of Fordun" are the indispensable groundwork of our Scottish annals ; while in the fourteenth century they become of enhanced value as a contemporary authority—

that is, so far as they can be relied on as the genuine work of the chronicler himself, and not of any credulous continuator.

Of his works there have been various editions, but, according to Skene, none can lay claim to be an exact reproduction of what came from his hands. Walter Goodall's edition, published in 1759, is the work to which the name "*Scotichronicon*" is usually applied. The work of Fordun, embracing five books of consecutive annals, is complete down to the death of David I. in 1153; but he had collected very full notes relating to public transactions during the reigns of several of that monarch's successors. Fordun's death occurred in 1385.

The village of Fordoun, to which popular belief assigns the venerable Presbyter's birthplace, was, at the commencement of the century, a complete square, with a market cross, but in later times all that remained, exclusive of the ecclesiastical and scholastic buildings, was the hospitable inn, where farmers stabled their horses on Sundays, market days, funerals, and other occasions.

## CHAPTER III.

**Schools and Schoolmasters of Fordoun.**

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ALEXANDER MILNE ; HIS POETIC PUPIL ; PHILOSOPHIC PREDECESSOR ; AND PREACHING SUCCESSOR.

Alexander Milne acted as Schoolmaster and Session Clerk of Fordoun for a period of forty-five years. He was born about the year 1740, and died on 17th December, 1812, at the age of 72. He obtained the appointment some ten years after it had been vacated by Dr. James Beattie, author of the "Minstrel," and the famous "Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth." Mr. Milne was five years the junior of the poet ; he was a native of the county, but little can now be gleaned respecting his career. He lived and taught in the old school-house, to which we shall have occasion to refer while speaking of his successor. To judge from the limited class accommodation, we should infer that the attendance at the school in those days could not have been numerous. It was probably larger in the winter than summer months. It was customary for country youths, stretching into man-

hood, to take what was called a "winter quarter," and work the rest of the year.

The Mearns is a healthy locality, but there are few of Alexander Milne's scholars now alive, and what few remain may well be styled "wonderful octogenarians." One gentleman, who was under him in 1807, writes of Mr. Milne as his "venerable teacher, who was not a hard taskmaster." From all we can learn he seems to have been like other country schoolmasters—where he found a pupil with parts he took pains to educate him, and not a few students passed through his hands into the church and other professions.

GEORGE MENZIES.

George Menzies, peasant-poet, schoolmaster, and journalist, was the last of Mr. Milne's classic pupils, and has inscribed the following tribute of respect to his memory :—

And he whose lessons taught my soul  
 To know the tranced dreams that roll,  
 Pure, warm, and bright as heaven's own flame,  
 Through all the poet's glowing frame ;  
 He sleeps yon daisied turf beneath—  
 Sleeps in the damp cold bed of death—  
 Neglected sleeps, but not forgot.  
 O were I nigh the hallowed spot,  
 A tear as warm as e'er was shed  
 Above the dwelling of the dead,  
 Should water every daisy's blossom  
 That decks the turf above his bosom.

The poet's father belonged to Deeside, but his mother was a native of Fordoun. He came under Mr. Milne's tuition in the summer of 1807, and continued under it for a period of four years, by which time he was considered sufficiently advanced to enter College, but the resources of his parents were too limited to admit of his being sent there. Always ready, as we have seen, to assist the struggling, the Rev. Dr. Leslie applied on the poet's behalf to Mr. Menzies, of Pitfodels, well known as a man of generous sympathies. This gentleman, we are told, indicated his readiness to befriend his namesake, but on condition that he would join the Church of Rome, to which he was himself warmly attached. The prospect of a liberal education was no doubt tempting, but the poet could not comply with the condition named, and we may be sure Dr. Leslie was equally resolute in his refusal. Poor Menzies had, therefore, no alternative but adopt some less ambitious mode of earning his livelihood. He apprenticed himself as gardener at Drumtochty Castle, but at the end of two years left that situation. For a short time he followed the same calling at Brechin; thereafter, for a few months, he got some other employment in Perthshire. In 1815 we find him at Tilliechewen Castle, in Dumbartonshire, working at his old trade of gardener. He did not remain long there, but in 1817 returned to Fordoun. The side school of Cockity, in the east end of the parish, was then vacant; he applied for

the appointment and got it. He exchanged, as his biographer tells us, the cultivation of floral tendrils for the training of the "young idea." But here he only remained till the spring of the following year, when he again turned his face southwards. In 1827 he published at Aberdeen the first edition of his poems. It was entitled "Poetical Trifles," and was dedicated to the Rev. Charles Ogg, then at Banchory-Ternan, and afterwards minister at Inverallochy. He had been at Mr. Milne's school for a short time along with the author. In April, 1833, Menzies went to Canada, where he engaged in literary work. He edited in succession the *Niagara Reporter*, the *Canadian Christian Examiner*, the *Niagara Mail*, and the *Woodstock Herald*. He died on 28th February, 1847, at the age of 51. Menzies was undoubtedly a man of ability, but, like many another poetic genius, he was restless, and had a chequered career. About forty years ago, a new edition of his works was published at Montrose, with an interesting sketch of his life prefixed.

#### JAMES BEATTIE.

Dr. Beattie, a predecessor of Mr. Milne, as mentioned above, was a native of the neighbouring parish of Laurencekirk. He studied at Marischal College, of which he was afterwards elected a professor, and by which the degree of Doctor of

Laws was conferred upon him. He was assistant teacher for a time in the Aberdeen Grammar School. He was born in 1735, and died on the 18th August, 1803, aged 68.

ALEXANDER SPENCER.

Alexander Milne was succeeded in the office of parochial teacher at Fordoun by Alexander Spencer, an Aberdonian by birth and education. He spoke with the strongly-marked accent peculiar to the natives of that district, which a thirty years' residence in the Mearns, where an equally broad and distinctive dialect is spoken, did little to modify—his northern origin being yet easily traceable after that lapse of time. There are some of us in whose ears his deep sonorous voice still resounds as it uttered such a phrase as "Ye're a lazy chiel!" and emphasised the utterance by a slap on the shoulders.

Mr. Spencer was born about the year 1793. He entered Marischal College as a student of Arts in the session of 1805, attended the full course, and took the degree of A.M. on 1st April, 1809. He appears on the University Register as "Alexander Spencer, *f. Roberti, Opificis, Aberdonensis,*" and from his father's designation we infer he was of humble parentage. He appears to have occupied his spare hours when a student in teaching, and

was thus probably able to help his parents to defray the expense of his own education.

In the early part of the century there was a school kept by a Miss Coutts where the block, now known as "Black's Buildings," stands, near the site of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Here for a time Mr. Spencer attended at given hours to teach the girls the art of writing. Subsequent to this he acted for a short time as assistant teacher in the parish of Udny. He thereafter obtained an appointment as tutor to the family of the late Mr. Robert Garland, farmer at Cairnton, in Fordoun. While Mr. Spencer held this situation, Mr. Milne, the parochial teacher of Fordoun, died, and he resolved to apply for the appointment. He had previous to this been enrolled as a student in Divinity, and attended several partial sessions. At a meeting of the Presbytery held at Bervie, 31st March, 1813, he appeared, and tabled a minute of meeting of the Heritors of Fordoun held on the 6th of the same month, stating that, in consequence of Mr. Milne's death, they and the minister had unanimously appointed him to be schoolmaster of the parish. He also produced certificate (so the Presbytery records tell us) of having qualified to Government as law directs. These credentials produced, the Presbytery proceeded to make trial of the young teacher's literary qualifications. In these he acquitted himself to the reverend body's entire satisfaction ; and having declared his willingness to sign the

Confession of Faith and Formula (which he did the same day), the Presbytery—being likewise satisfied of his religious and moral character—declared him duly qualified for discharging the duties of the office to which he had been appointed.

Such were the formalities that had to be complied with ere an aspirant to the office of teacher under the old parochial system could be admitted. They are interesting to those who have lived to see the power transferred from the hands of Presbytery to those of popularly elected School Boards.

The next reference the Church records make to Mr. Spencer relates to his Divinity course. At a meeting of the Presbytery held at Glenberrie 24th September, 1815 (the date of the late James Drummond's ordination and admission to that parish), Mr. Leslie, of Fordoun, reported that Mr. Spencer had attended the Divinity Hall at Aberdeen five partial sessions, and proposed to attend part of the ensuing session; that he was a "young man of considerable literary abilities;" that he had paid particular attention to the study of Divinity; and that his conduct had been "in every way such as becomes one whose views were directed to the sacred ministry." The Presbytery thereupon resolved to examine him at their next meeting, and, if they found him duly qualified, to apply to the Synod in April next for permission to take him on "probationary trials." The ecclesiastical court again met (this time at Laurencekirk) on 6th December,

1815, when there were submitted certificates from Dr. William L. Brown and Dr. Gilbert Gerard, both bearing date September, 1815, to the effect that Mr. Spencer had attended the Hall in the sessions named, and delivered the prescribed discourses with approbation. The Presbytery being pleased with this testimony on his behalf, and having received Mr. Spencer's own assurance that he purposed to attend "partially" next session, also evidence that he had completed his twenty-first year, and that he was well affected "to the happy establishment in this kingdom both in Church and State," they proceeded to examine him strictly in those branches pointed out by the Act of Assembly, and being much pleased with the knowledge he appeared to possess, they ordered the Clerk to write letters in due time to several Presbyteries within the bounds of the Synod, informing them that it had been resolved to take Mr. Spencer on "public trials."

At a meeting of the Presbytery held at Laurencekirk on the 27th March, 1816, Mr. Spencer produced a certificate showing that he had redeemed his promise to attend another partial session at the Divinity Hall, and that he had delivered, with approbation, homily, lecture, and exegesis. This certificate was ordered to be sent with others to the Clerk of the ensuing Synod.

In his divinity course the next step recorded is, that at a meeting of Presbytery held at Fordoun

on 1st May, 1816, he was allowed to be taken on "public trials," and that, being himself present at the meeting, the brethren proceeded to examine him strictly on various branches of theology and literature. Being much pleased with the answers he gave to the questions put to him, they prescribed for him certain pieces of "trial," including a popular sermon.

On 4th December, 1816, he delivered his homily and lecture, which, the record tells us, were highly approved and sustained as part of his "trial."

Finally, at Laurencekirk, on the 26th March, 1817, he put in appearance. On this occasion he delivered the prescribed "popular sermon" from St. John's Gospel, chap. iii., v. 16 and 17; a chronological discourse on the first part of the sixteenth century; explained a portion of the Greek New Testament; and thereafter read and explained part of the 23rd psalm in Hebrew, in all which trials he acquitted himself much to the satisfaction of the Presbytery. Thereupon Mr. Spencer was duly licensed by the reverend court, and authorised to procure extract of licence when required.

We shall now return to trace him in his vocation as teacher. Like his predecessor, Alexander Milne, he was not a hard taskmaster. The duties of the scholastic office, if not a drudgery, were, we suspect, never very congenial to him. This is true at least as regards the junior classes he had to instruct. With his more advanced pupils the case

may have been different. He was intellectually more in sympathy with them, and imparting instruction to an intelligent class of boys or girls taxed his patience less. He took a masterly grasp of any subject that fell to be handled. His expositions, therefore, were always clear and interesting, while his methods of illustration were happy and effective. Oft-times his capacious gold watch (a present, we believe, from his friends in the parish) was employed to illustrate some geographical or astronomical point. But withal he was fitful, and the moods in which he was inclined to impart knowledge in this genial and practical fashion were transitory. A slight noise in some corner of the school would abruptly break the thread of discourse, and initiate a process of promiscuous leathering.

Mr. Spencer was not scientific in his methods of chastising—that is to say, he rarely ordered the delinquent to stand forth and on out-stretched palm receive a given number of strokes for his offence. That was not his general mode of castigating an offender. It did not suit his temperament. He blazed up, seized the leathern thong, and lashed furiously up and down. Neck and shoulders, head and hand, alike of the erring and the innocent, came in for a share of the copious shower thus delivered. In the operation Mr. Spencer's locks—not a luxuriant crop—sometimes got dishevelled. This was not to be wondered at. Those tresses, on the two sides, artistically trained

to meet on the top of the head, kept their appointed place so long as he maintained his serenity, but when the storm arose they were apt to get loose from their moorings and tumble about his temples, a circumstance which had the opposite of a moderating effect.

Mr. Spencer's head was large and well compacted; his face, when warmed up, was very expressive. It bore traces of an attack of that dire scourge, small pox, so prevalent in the days of his youth.

In the art of making or mending a quill—an art which, in this mechanical age, has all but disappeared—he was exceptionally expert. He was also marvellously dexterous at ruling the broad sheets on which his pupils practised their hand at “strokes” and “pot hooks,” until they had acquired a fair rudimentary knowledge of the art, when the broad sheet was exchanged for the regulation copy-book. What schoolboy or girl of that period does not recall its appearance? On one side was to be seen the mail coach dashing along; on the other, the Gannochy bridge, which spans that precipitous ravine on the Esk; and then those words of wisdom which headed the pages, and which the learner was now to copy and ponder over—“Procrastination is the thief of time,” “Diligence and perseverance overcome all difficulties,” “Evil communications corrupt good manners,” and such-like sapient maxims.

Mr. Spencer himself was an excellent penman. His style of hand was round and copperplate looking, his capitals being exquisitely formed—a feature that always lends character and finish to handwriting.

About 1840, the reverend gentleman published a little work entitled an "Introduction to Religion." It was intended chiefly as a text book for his Bible classes on week days and Sundays. It consisted of four chapters, bearing the respective titles—(1) "Natural theology, or the application of Natural history to Religion;" (2) "Evidences of Divine Revelation;" (3) "An outline of Bible history;" and (4) "Introduction to the Religion of the New Testament," with an appendix containing a summary of the "Articles of the Church of England," besides a summary of "Christian doctrines" taken from Pollok's "Course of Time."

The little book is pure in style, clear and concise in expression, and admirably adapted for the purpose for which it was designed; but it is lost to posterity. It has disappeared, and there are few living who can even recall that it ever existed. A copy is rarely met with even in the parish of Fordoun where it was first circulated. He was also the author of a geographical abridgement, which was used as a text book, but it too has long been lost sight of.

At the time of his appointment, the school was taught in the north room on the ground floor of

the schoolmaster's house, an ancient building wedged into the churchyard, the basement being considerably below the level of God's acre. Besides being dreary, the situation was insalutary, and on this account one of Mr. Spencer's successors refused to occupy it. It was afterwards utilised for the parish poor-house!

In 1815, a new school was erected. That memorable year was inscribed above the entrance. The building was elliptical in form—it stood east and west, and its site was in the north-west corner of the churchyard. The door was in the west gable; a passage down the centre divided the seats into two parallel rows. On the north side were two windows, with the fire place in the centre between, while on the other side, looking to the sunny south, were three windows. At the east end stood the master's desk, in front of which he offered up prayer at the opening and closing of the day's labours. In that end was a sixth window. In front of the fire there was a square, paved with slabs, on which the various classes were drawn up in succession to read and repeat their tasks. The school was poorly fitted as regards maps, but there was a revolving globe with the usual brass equatorial circle. Add to this the black board, a piece of chalk, pointer, a stone jar filled with ink, a stock of quills, a few pen-points (for privileged boys or girls whose parents could afford such a luxury), and we have, so far as our recollection goes, the complete appointments of this

school under the old parochial system. Such was the building, externally and internally, in which for nearly thirty years Mr. Spencer carried on the work of educating youth. In 1851 the building gave place to a more elegant and commodious structure, befitting the expanded ideas of modern times. After only forty years' service this also has been superseded.

By use and wont, the open space lying between the west wall of the churchyard and the old inn of Fordoun had become the recognised playground; but it must not be supposed that the scholars in their sports confined themselves solely to this ground. They raced and roved over the fields in the adjoining farm of Kirkton, they played "hide and seek" in its stackyard, and generally took every liberty on the premises that schoolboys are accustomed to take, despite an occasional snarl from the worthy tenant, Mr. William Taylor, "Auld Fordoun," as the boys called him. It was only however, when some exceptionally daring "prank" was being played that Mr. Taylor interfered—such, for example, as a descent into the dark cavern where his threshing mill wheel performed its revolutions. Some of the more venturesome spirits often spent the play-hour in the churchyard, jumping over tombstones, climbing trees, and doing other exploits. On the playground proper, the games and sports were of a miscellaneous description, and varied with the seasons. They included "top-spinning,"

“bool playing,” “pitch and toss,” “foot and a half,” or “leap frog”; fencing and wrestling matches; and, besides, a host of others, the “ball and club”—this last, otherwise named “shinty,” being by far the most exciting.

When a game at shinty was to be played, the boys having arranged themselves on their respective sides, it was the custom to select from their number some one who had the reputation of having a powerful arm to deliver what was called “the hail stroke.” On David Lindsay, one of the older scholars attending the school in the later years of Mr. Spencer’s incumbency, this honour was frequently conferred. David was a diligent student, an estimable being in every respect, and at the performance of the initial operation referred to, he was matchless. With one sweep of his left arm (he was left-handed), to the admiration of all his schoolmates, he sent the ball bounding along the whole length of the line, from the school door to the manse gate. Then began the struggle.

Such, half a century ago, were the exercises on the old playground at Fordoun. During Mr. Spencer’s time, every alternate Wednesday afternoon was observed as a half-holiday. The practice was probably introduced in conformity to a like custom which obtained at the Aberdeen Grammar School. “Play-Wednesday,” as it was called, was always looked forward to with pleasurable feelings, especially in the summer months.

The school was closed for the harvest vacation ("the hairst play") about the end of August or beginning of September, according to the state of the fields, for in country places the holidays had to accommodate themselves to harvest requirements. The vacation usually lasted five or six weeks, so that the school fell to be re-opened in the first or second week of October.

Preparatory to closing the school for the vacation, it was customary to have it decorated with flowers and evergreens. The rowan tree, richly laden with its bright red berry, as it always was at this autumnal season, also held a conspicuous place in the decoration, to which all cheerfully contributed.

Schoolboys, as a rule, are not remarkable either for their careful treatment of the school furniture or for the respect they show for each other's feelings. The youth of Fordoun were no exception to the rule, if we are to judge from the mutilated condition of the benches and the kind of nicknames current. Of these latter some were designed to perpetuate the recollection of some unpleasant incident, others to mark some natural defect, for which he to whom the epithet was applied could in no way be held responsible. Without some kind of knife no school-boy's pocket furnishings are ever regarded as complete. The popular knife of the period was *Life's*, so called from the name of the maker. It was a Sheffield product, and procurable at the price of

fourpence, with bevelled point or rounded according as taste preferred. That those blades, or others equally effective, were freely used the desks presented ample evidence. The projections in front, and the beading along the edges, were hacked and hewed in a merciless manner, while the desks themselves teemed with names and initials cut in letters of every shape and size.

The modern School Board, it may be presumed, has effected a reformation in such matters, and inaugurated a system of greater respect for scholastic appointments. The corners of the right and left of the master's desk were respectively reserved for boys and girls caught trifling, or found guilty of some other misdemeanour. This mode of punishment, however, was mild, and had long ceased to inspire terror. After being for a little while in the separate state, the cornered ones slunk back to their usual seats, unconscious of any feeling that they had been subjected to a heavy affront. Occasionally, when the teacher's ire had been roused by any serious breach of discipline just at the end of the day, we have seen him dismiss the classes, lock the school door, and leave the offending delinquents behind. Surrounded on three sides by the churchyard, they were free to pursue for a time, if so minded, a train of meditations akin to those of Hervey among the tombs. When the teacher's old mother discovered, as she usually very soon did, that there were some "kept in," she instantly re-

paired to the place of their imprisonment, undid the bolts, and, with a few words of pity for their plight, set the captives free.

Every place has its own coterie of critics and self-appointed politicians, able and ready not only to pass judgment on current topics and events as they emerge, but also, as opportunity presents, to discuss the affairs of church or state. Of this species of talent the parish of Fordoun was certainly not deficient—it had its full share. But happily, alongside the critical and political element, there were, in Mr. Spencer's day, influences of a more salutary and practical kind at work. Although but a sprinkling compared with the population as a whole, there were to be found, here and there within the bounds of the parish, a goodly number of laymen imbued with a genuine evangelistic spirit—men who were seriously desirous to enlighten and elevate the community. Single-minded, and in other respects estimable, though perhaps (as a great ecclesiastical authority might have termed them) "finely ignorant," they were lights each in his own narrow sphere, and honestly exercised the talents with which Providence had entrusted them.

Auchinblae was the rallying ground of a band of such worthies. They were as diverse in mental constitution as in worldly calling, but they commanded the respect of all who knew them. Among others that might be named, the company included John Thomson, a venerable weaver, lame of limb,

but learned in the Scriptures; William Matthew, a factory operative, sometimes locally designed "Father" Matthew, in allusion to the famous temperance orator; and Robert Riach, tenant of the farm of Arnmill. The last named was an exceptionally amiable man, with a serenity of temper that nothing could ruffle. Of this representative trio not one now remains. They and all those then associated with them in Christian work have long since passed away.

For years prior to that great Scottish historic event, "the disruption," the men referred to had devoted themselves to the work of Sabbath School teaching and the promotion of the cause of temperance. To the honour of Mr. Spencer, it should be told, he not only lent his moral support to their efforts, but threw all his fiery energy into active co-operation with them.

Besides conducting their classes for children on the Sunday afternoons, the brethren were accustomed to meet in the public hall (such a hall as then existed) on stated nights for the purposes of prayer and reading and expounding Scripture. Those meetings were well attended, and all the brethren in turn took part in the services, and Mr. Spencer's turn always came last. In commencing to speak, it was his invariable custom to refer in flattering terms to the exhaustive way in which the subject for the evening had been treated by the previous speakers, and to the consequent absence

of any necessity for his enlarging upon it. He then proceeded himself to unfold with his wonted lucidity what appeared to him to be the lessons contained in the text, and earnestly to enforce their application. Compared to his, the expositions of the other speakers, it need scarcely be said, were crude and fragmentary.

Such were the services that fifty years ago were wont to be conducted in that primitive "teetotal hall"—an upper room in a back tenement on the east of the market square.

In the political contest that followed, as a necessary consequence, the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, Mr. Spencer ranged himself on the Conservative side. On it probably there were some of his earliest and staunchest friends—gentlemen who had helped him into the saddle when his career in Fordoun began. On this exciting occasion the contest was between a scion of the ancient and noble house of Arbuthnott and Sir Thomas Burnett, Baronet, of Leys, Banchory. It was keenly fought, but the Tory forces were strong and well marshalled. General Arbuthnott was triumphant over his Liberal opponent, and sat in Parliament as Member for the county during nearly all the remainder of his life. While Mr. Spencer remained in Fordoun no other occasion, so far as we know, arose on which he was called upon to declare himself in politics.

The Non-intrusion controversy, however, had

begun to rage. Parliament reformed, a Radical party sprang up, who, although as yet professedly attached to the Kirk of Scotland, thought the time had arrived when her grievances should be redressed. At first Mr. Spencer did not take a prominent part in the conflict. His ambition had always been towards the pulpit. For years past he had frequently preached in the church at Fordoun—on an average once a fortnight probably. He stood on the most friendly terms with Dr. Leslie, the venerable incumbent, now in his declining years, and, in the natural course of events, not likely to retain office long.

That Mr. Spencer might become his successor was not an impossible event—was even a probable one. He was on all hands recognised as a man of superior intellect. As a preacher he was interesting and admittedly able. The practical point and vehemence of his utterances delighted the people. As he closed some thrilling peroration the expression on the countenances of some in the congregation was not unfrequently one of mingled approval rising to admiration. If audibly expressed, their thoughts on such occasions, one could fancy, would have taken such form as this—"There, take you that!" "That's surely plain enough!" "That's the Gospel if anything is!" together with like phrases, all testifying that the sermon delivered was a sermon like few—one, in the opinion of the hearer, that could hardly be surpassed.

In every congregation there are some who, while failing to find in the discourse anything appropriate to themselves, never miss allusions and illustrations that they consider specially applicable to their neighbours. The congregation of Fordoun was not entirely destitute of specimens who had this *unselfish* mode of applying the preacher's statements; and the practice, it will readily be admitted, did not always tend to the speaker's popularity or the promotion of peace. To be included in the generic category of sinners brought no offence, but to be told that you were the target at which the shafts from the pulpit were specially aimed was not palatable. Mr. Spencer's style was trenchant. In the pulpit and out of it he called a spade a spade. When summoned to the bedside of any departing pilgrim he faithfully administered the consolations of the Gospel, but, as if to quicken the sense of forgiveness, he did not forget to remind the dying man of the sins that had beset him.

Reverting to his prospects of succeeding to the Parish Church—that he should aspire to the position was most natural. For elegance of structure the church had few equals among the country parishes of broad Scotland; in beauty of situation and surroundings it was unsurpassed anywhere; the parish was rich in historic associations, ecclesiastical and other kinds; and, above all, the “living” carried with it a stipend somewhat beyond average.

Moreover, to Mr. Spencer it had this additional attraction—he had spent thirty of his best years within the parish, and formed among its inhabitants many lasting friendships. During his stay in Fordoun he remained single. His mother, to whom he was strongly attached, and whom he had imported to the parish on receiving the permanent appointment, continued to find shelter under his roof, and to guide his household affairs. But after taking up his abode at Cornhill, in the afternoon of his days, he married. The lady he chose for his wife was Catherine M'Kay, daughter of Robert M'Kay, Writer, Thurso, and his wife Barbara Campbell.

Whatever the hopes and aspirations he may have formerly cherished, there was now no longer any dubiety as to what section of the Church he had resolved to attach himself to. He had definitely made up his mind to cast in his lot with the party about to sever their connection with the ancient Scottish establishment. Early in the historic summer of 1843 his resolution to this effect was duly intimated, and immediately thereafter the school doors were closed, not again to be re-opened until the month of October following. The place that had known Alexander Spencer so long, henceforth knew him no more.

According to the popular belief, as expressed at the time, he took the step with considerable reluctance. It was only natural that a sorrowful feeling

should steal into his mind at the thought of severing the old connection. That he met with a real and bitter disappointment when he discovered that, instead of being the "accepted," he was the "rejected" of the newly formed congregation, cannot be doubted. Denied a pulpit here, he, with downcast spirit, set out to seek one elsewhere. But it was not until a considerable time had elapsed after his "honourable dismissal" from Fordoun that his efforts were successful. Ultimately he settled down at the small preaching station of Cornhill, parish of Ordiquhill, in Banffshire. Dr. David Brown, the now venerable Principal of the Free Church College in Aberdeen, had been incumbent at the station during the short period of its existence prior to Mr. Spencer's appointment. The doctor had been minister of the parish up to the "Disruption," when he renounced the charge, and formed a congregation at Cornhill from such of the scattered members of his former flock as adhered to Free Church principles.

Here Mr. Spencer continued his ministerial labours for a period of thirty years, and only retired a few months before his death, which occurred on 12th April, 1874, at Cornhill Villa, Cults, on Deeside. Mrs. Spencer survived him eight years. They rest in Nellfield Cemetery, Aberdeen, where a plain monument records the names and ages.

Within the Church at Cornhill a tablet has been

erected to his memory. It bears the following inscription :—

To the Memory  
of  
The Reverend ALEXANDER SPENCER, M.A.,  
First Pastor of the Congregation,  
from 1844 till 1874 ;  
Died 12th April, 1874,  
Aged 81.

“ The Law of Truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not  
in his lips.”—Mal. ii. 6.

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## **The Dominie of Clattering Brigs.**

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### **HIS COCK-FIGHTING PROPENSITIES.**

In the west end of the parish, at the head of the Ferdun, a streamlet formed by the union of two small burns rising among the Grampians, is a place called Clattering Brigs. In former days it appears to have been a place of some importance. The Cairn o' Mount road, the great highway between north and south, skirted the western side of the ravine where it lay. On the hillsides around were a number of homesteads, now tenantless and in ruins. Down in the vale itself, in the early part of

the century, the business of lime-burning was vigorously carried on, and here also was a side school where the young natives of the glen were taught to read and write. This school is now chiefly remembered as one where the cruel, but, we are happy to say now obsolete, custom of cock-fighting was kept up. We are indebted for what little we know regarding it to a respected friend who got the rudiments of his education there sixty years ago. He has travelled many a thousand miles since that time, and we suspect has now a livelier recollection of sights and sounds on foreign shores than the surroundings at Clattering Brigs. Be this as it may, we rejoice to think that, thanks to his native energy, probity, and indomitable perseverance, the gentleman referred to has had a prosperous as well as an honourable career.

The teacher of the school in his day bore the name of Young ; he had a wooden leg, how he lost the original we cannot say. The cockfight was an annual affair, it came off under superintendence of the dominie. All the feathered combatants that fell in the fray were perquisites of his, and he had thus a potent reason for endeavouring to secure a good muster. He collected the slain, and strung them up on a rope in the "ben-end" of his bigging until he despatched them himself, or found other means of turning them to remunerative account.

Mr. Young was in office at the time the Reform Bill passed, and he turned out with his hilarious

brigade to witness Fox Maule's memorable march across the Grampians, *via* Clattering Brigs, in celebration of that event.

One aged parishioner remembers the existence of this unique west-end academy in the glen so far back as "the year of the short corn" (1826). According to her account, the dominie came from Lethnot in Forfarshire, where he had been an inn-keeper. He opened a public-house at Clattering Brigs in opposition to the one at Knowgreens, which was a place of call on the highway across the Grampians. He at the same time taught the school. He had the reputation of being a good teacher, a stiff dram-drinker, and an enthusiastic patron of the cock-fighting business. Drinking went on to such an extent as to call for the interference of Dr. Leslie, who had the licence withdrawn, but this did not effectually check the traffic. Near to the school there was a well which the older inhabitants can still point out. To this well, after a cock-fight, the dominie and all interested adjourned. The pool having been cleared out, ten or a dozen bottles of whisky, according to the quantity of water, were poured into it; the jolly crew sat round. With jugs and other utensils of the most original description, they drank so long as they were able to lift their hands to their head. Amid the fresh mountain breezes, let us believe, the effects of these annual carnivals speedily evaporated. Be that as it may, the school was in

excellent repute ; its discipline was of the severest kind. With a short stick, flat at one end, the dominie hammered the sum of the Ten Commandments into the boys in a way which the great law-giver has not prescribed. He was succeeded by a Mr. Stewart, a crazy individual, who did not remain long in the glen. His oddities proved too much for the humour of the natives.

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### **The School of Paldy Fair.**

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JOHN EDWARD.

The School of Paldy Fair—so designed in honour of the patron saint, *Palladius*—deserves a place among the educational institutions of the parish, on account both of its primitive character and the excellent work that it achieved. It was situated in the northern district of the parish, about a mile and three-quarters from the village, on a gently rising ground, flanked on the eastern side by a wooded ravine through which a small rivulet trickled down to the Bervie Water—the fields behind the school on the northern side sloping also towards the right bank of that stream. The school building was low, narrow, and thatched. The western section formed the only class-room, the

middle that in which the master slept and took his victuals, while the rest of the block served for his few farm utensils, and afforded accommodation for his cow and such other live stock as he might be possessed of, which was never large—the croft, a part of the school tenure, being itself limited in extent. The school was maintained chiefly for the convenience of parents residing in the upper portion of the barony of Glenfarquhar, the parochial school being too remote. As it was, many of the scholars hailing from a distance had either to deposit a quantity of loose brose meal, or carry with them their mid-day provender. The grass banks around became quite a pic-nic scene when the school was closed for the dinner hour.

For a number of years preceding the “disruption,” and for about nine years subsequent to that event, the person who worthily filled the office of teacher here was Mr. John Edward. His parents were William Edward and Isobel Clark, who came from the Stracathro district. His father held for a time a small tack called Kirkside, situated between Templebank and Drumelzie. He afterwards removed to Bankhead, another small farm now merged in that of Bogburn on the Brae of Glenfarquhar, which commanded a pleasing view of the scene of his son’s scholastic labours.

John Edward was a man of simple tastes and habits, earnest-minded, and upright. His wants were few, and he was a fine example of one that

turned to the best account the talents he had received.

The school, it need scarcely be said, was plainly furnished. A flat board ran along the whole length on either side, and served as reading and writing desk—forms for seats running parallel. The fireplace was in the west gable, and around it, in succession, the different classes clustered when called forth to read or repeat their tasks.

Mr. Edward's principal text books were the Bible and Barrie's Collection, together with the Shorter Catechism. He laid claim to no scholarship, but with the contents of these volumes, at least, he was thoroughly conversant. In the "Collection" there was a list of Latin roots, which the more advanced scholars were expected to commit to memory. Besides reading and writing Mr. Edwards taught the simpler rules of arithmetic. His copy-books for the writing exercises were manufactured by himself, being made out of broad sheets, which he carefully folded, ruled, and stitched. When his stock of paper was becoming exhausted, he got fresh supplies from a bookseller in Montrose through the medium of the local carrier, and everything about the school went on methodically. Occasionally, as he surveyed the writing operations, he would take the pen from a pupil's hand and write a line or two himself by way of model to the young aspirant. In the performance of this act his head was sloped to the left, his features

wore a thoughtful expression, and he moved the pen with the care and steadiness of an engraver.

The school fees were exceedingly moderate. They were collected quarterly, in accordance with the country custom of that time. Those who did not contribute in money towards the expense of heating the schoolroom in winter, were expected daily to deposit a peat or other equivalent in kind. Some boys, not always over-scrupulous, as can easily be imagined, occasionally resorted to questionable expedients to enable them to implement this condition of providing fuel for heating purposes.

As a disciplinarian, Mr. Edward was neither strict nor severe. He maintained order by the quiet earnestness of his demeanour, rather than by the rod. Occasionally, when some exceptional breach of regulation had occurred, he did indeed have recourse to what he termed "the serpent," a leathern strop of unusual length, which he twisted round his right wrist before commencing the work of castigation. But the good man often relented before his threats were carried into execution, and it was rare indeed that the "serpent" was actually brought into action. In proof of this, it may be added, it was not an instrument ready at hand. It had to be fetched from the master's sleeping apartment, where the "serpent" lay coiled up *in retentis*.

The closing of the Parochial School at Fordoun, consequent on the Rev. Mr. Spencer's demission of office in the summer of 1843, brought, temporarily,

a large accession to the attendance at Paldy Fair School—troops of boys and girls finding their way thither by the shortest routes they could invent, though not always by those approved by the farmers, whose fields were intersected diagonally, or at right angles, as occasion required, or the caprice of the moment dictated. The regular route from the village was *via* the farm steading of Arnmill (now annihilated) and Mains of Glenfarquhar (since greatly renovated), thence onwards to the ravine above mentioned, and over its left shoulder to the school. That, however, was too monotonous and circuitous a road for romping youths, who, provided with wallet, were prepared to lead a gipsy kind of life for the time, and to follow any but the beaten track. Those youthful villagers formed, as it were, a distinct tribe by themselves. They never actually blended with the more rustic portion of their school-fellows. In point of scholarship, it has to be admitted, the latter were the superior. They were better acquainted with the modes and traditions of the school, and, from longer acquaintance perhaps, appeared to stand in more filial relations to the teacher. Not a few youths, who afterwards took a respectable position in different departments of life, were indebted to John Edward for their early training; and in the memory of not a few, though half-a-century has rolled by, his name is still fragrant. Among the pupils who stood forth prominently at the time of which we write, were John

Brebner, some time a teacher in the Aberdeen Grammar School (Sir William D. Geddes being then Rector), now Inspector of Schools at Bloemfontein, in the Orange River Free State, South Africa ; and John Ross, now the able and esteemed Rector of the Arbroath Academy. They were worthy sons of worthy sires, and both were natives of the parish. Mr. Edward was a believer to some extent in phrenology, and sometimes pronounced on the intellectual calibre of a youth from the development of his head.

Like the great bulk of the residenters in that part of the parish, Mr. Edward espoused the principles of the Free Church ; but he was no partisan, and his native modesty forbade his ever appearing on public platforms. He deprecated the idea of rival schools, but the scent of normal training and more perfect educational machinery was in the air. Paldy Fair School, which, under him, had, in the summer of 1843, attained the height of its popularity, began gradually to wane, when, in the autumn of that year, a more thoroughly equipped school was planted in the village under the surveillance of the new ecclesiastical denomination.

In the summer of 1849, the Right Honourable Francis Alexander Keith Falconer, the ninth Earl of Kintore, now deceased, attained his majority. Consequent on, and in honour of the event, the tenantry on his various estates in the Mearns were invited to a public dinner at Inglismaldie, in the

county, a residential mansion belonging his Lordship. Mr. Edward, in virtue of his position and holding, was presumably included in the invitation, and would doubtless have been a welcome guest. But the quiet man, though the reverse of disloyal, appears to have preferred to remain at home on that historic occasion. He was not a sportsman, or, indeed, so far as we know, accustomed to handle fire-arms at all. That same afternoon, however—strange to relate—he did load his old blunderbuss, and, planted in front of the schoolhouse, he discharged its contents. The wadding was blown back, and lodging in the dry thatch, the roof took fire, and the whole structure was reduced to ashes.

The building was in due time restored, and the glory of the latter house was greater than the former ; but poor John Edward did not survive many years the catastrophe we have just recorded. He died suddenly, in his solitary cot, on the 4th of June, 1852, at the age of 50. His lifeless body was found by James Milne, tenant of Wardhead, near by, who was wont to render kind assistance to him in laying down his crop and the like.

John Edward rests in the Churchyard of Fordoun. No monument marks the spot. His father's death occurred a few months before, at the ripe age of 86, while his mother survived him by three years. She died in the summer of 1855, having attained the goodly age of 87.

## A Village Dominic.



JOHN GREIG: A LONG PILGRIMAGE AND  
TRAGIC END.

John Greig was the name borne by another person who had devoted himself to the task of teaching youth. John exercised his calling for a short time in the parish. He was a native of the county, and about the year 1839 opened a school in a room of one of the back tenements of the village. He collected a few boys, and the class held together for a time. He had his residence in a small cottage at Paddockbog, on the Kinkell road, about three-quarters of a mile distant from the scene of his labours. Like his worthy contemporary described in the preceding part of this chapter, John did not profess to carry his pupils far in educational matters. He restricted his programme to reading, writing, and arithmetic, but his special *forte* was "mensuration of surfaces." Any rustic desirous of learning how to handle the theodolite might, if he chose, be taught the art by John Greig. When a sale of corn, grass, potatoes, or other species of growing crop, took place in the locality, which in the summer months was not an

unusual occurrence, John was not unfrequently employed to take the measurements. He thus found scope for the exercise of his special talent ; and in after years he used to recall with pride the fields he had surveyed, and the individuals who owned or leased them. His school in Auchinblae was somehow not a success—it dwindled. He was himself of a happy, cheerful kind of disposition, but restless, and appears to have lacked that steadiness of aim essential to success in any calling. After a brief space he abandoned the attempt to establish himself as a teacher in Auchinblae, and pitched his tent elsewhere. Wandering from place to place in different counties, he exercised his vocation for periods longer or shorter, and in circumstances of varying degrees of comfort. About ten years after he had quitted the Mearns, we find him teaching a school in the Rothes district, on Speyside ; and in later years he was similarly employed among the youth at Garlogie, in Skene, where he had a kind patron in Mr. Hadden, proprietor of the wool mills there. At the former of these places domestic trouble overtook him. Altogether his career was a chequered one. Despite the dire necessities of life, however, he always contrived to look at the sunny side of things, and his natural good spirits never drooped. Occasionally, even, we find him giving expression to his thoughts in poetic form, as when, for example, he eulogises the fertility and beauty of the Spey in these words:—

Dundurcas' haughs, and Garbuty's,  
The Haughton, and Burnside,  
Do yield fine crops of corn and wheat,  
And many are with them supplied.  
When I look down the riverside  
I then have clearly in my view  
The spacious bridge of Fochabers,  
And lovely little village too.

Ultimately, after many wanderings, he took up his abode permanently in Aberdeen, where he sought out old pupils and acquaintances, chiefly Kincardineshire men, among whom he had some staunch friends to the end of his long pilgrimage. Poor man, he met with a tragic fate at last. Sauntering in the east end of the city one afternoon in the summer of 1891, he was accidentally run down by a butcher's van, and received such injuries as terminated fatally, after he had lingered for a few days in the Royal Infirmary, whither he was carried when the accident occurred. The deceased had had his full share of matrimonial experiences. He was thrice wed, and left behind him a widow who claimed compensation, under the Employers' Liability Act, for the loss of her "bread winner." She assessed the amount at £100, but the Accident Association ultimately responsible placed a greatly less value on the octogenarian's earning powers, and Mrs. Greig, on the advice of her law agent, was content to discharge the claim for the modest sum of twenty-five pounds sterling.

### **The School of Cockity.**

—:—

DAVID DURWARD, TEACHER AND PREACHER.

For some years prior to the "disruption" the school at Cockity was taught by David Durward, a native of the county, and the son of a poor man afflicted with blindness. He had a hard struggle to obtain the means to defray his own education, but, with good natural abilities and a strong determination, he succeeded. His ambition was the pulpit. He passed from College to the Divinity Hall, and during his Divinity course had a good friend in Dr. Leslie.

In due time David Durward became a licentiate of the Church. Pulpits were agoing in those years, and he had frequent opportunity of exercising his oratorical powers in that of Fordoun; but the critical faculty was keen, and somehow David's eloquence did not prove attractive. Even that masterpiece of his, the discourse on Blind Bartimæus, lost its original charm.

Mr. Durward was after a time promoted from this small side-school of Cockity, with its scant emoluments, to the parochial school of Marykirk. Thence he was called to fill a like appointment in the historic parish of Maryculter. There he laboured for many years, and died on the 16th March, 1892, at the advanced age of 92.

CHAPTER IV.

**The Barony of Glenfarquhar.**



For several centuries the lands of Glenfarquhar were in possession of a representative of "The Falconers of Haulkerton," an ancient and powerful family, who are said to derive their origin from Walter, who obtained a grant of certain lands in the Mearns from David I., and whose son, Ranulph, was appointed "*Falconer*" by William the Lion, and by royal favour had other properties added to the family possessions (*vide* "Chalmers' Caledonia," vol. i., page 541).

Sir David Falconer, sometime Lord President of the Court of Session, was a cadet of this house. He died on the 15th December, 1685, at the age of 46.

In the early part of the eighteenth century the barony lands were held by Sir Alexander Falconer. He was a gentleman of a benevolent disposition, and mortgaged several sums of money for educational purposes. He was succeeded by Sir David Falconer, who at the same time became proprietor of the lands of Newton and others. Following on a Precept from Chancery, granted in the fourth

year of the reign of George I., and dated the 28th March, 1718, Sir David was confirmed in those possessions by an Instrument of Sasine, bearing date the 8th May in the same year. This document was attested by four witnesses, namely:— James Nairn, Brunton; Robert Mortimer, Depute-Clerk, Laurencekirk; Alexander Keith; and William Black, Manor, Kincardine. It was presented by James Udny, Notary Public, on the 10th June, 1718, for the purpose of registration, and duly certified by Patrick Duff, as having been recorded in the Register of Sasines.

In a Deed relating to those lands, executed some sixty-two years later, namely, on the 3rd March, 1780, the following places are expressly mentioned, viz.:— Arnaillhaugh or Aurnealyhows, Denhaugh of Bogburn, Paldy (*vulgo vocat* Paldy-fair), Glenfarquhar, Tibbertay, Auchinblae, Fall-hills of Galloquhine, and Dillivaird; also Kinkelle, Newlands "*et dimidio molendino de Craigmyle et multures ejus,*" the last mentioned having been formerly "holden" of the Abbey of Aberbrothock.

By Deed of "special service," dated 3rd August, 1724, the lands above specified were destined by the before-named Sir David Falconer to his grand-nephew, David Low Falconer, who accordingly was confirmed in them by Deed of Entail, dated the 19th December, 1743.

By Disposition, dated 20th July, 1771, and an Instrument of Sasine following thereon, recorded

4th September in the same year, the Honourable Anthony Falconer, who afterwards became Earl of Kintore, succeeded to the possessions.

Anthony Adrian Keith Falconer (eldest son of William, Earl of Kintore), as heir *tailzie* to Anthony, the Earl first above named, who also held the title of Lord Falconer of Haulkerton, was the next to succeed to the barony lands. The Deed in his favour was expedited 17th March, 1819. He was the eighth Earl of Kintore, and was succeeded by his son, the Right Honourable Francis Alexander Keith Falconer, a nobleman widely and justly esteemed, who died in London on the 18th July, 1880, aged 52. He had just started for a drive with the Countess when he was taken suddenly ill, and on being driven back expired in the hall before medical aid could be obtained.

Five years before this event the lands of Glenfarquhar, as we shall afterwards see, had been sold to Mr. James Farquharson, a tenant on the estate, and the Kintore family's connection with them finally ceased.

#### OLD MAINS—ALEXANDER STEPHEN.

The chief farm on the barony was the Mains. It was not perhaps the largest, or even the most productive on the estate, but here in ancient days stood the baronial residence, with its embattled

fortalice. The moat that surrounded the castle, and other remains of antiquity, could still be traced, though by the beginning of the century almost every stone had been appropriated as material for other erections. The farm was tenanted at this time by Mr. Alexander Stephen, a benevolent and much respected gentleman. He was popularly known as "Mains," or "Old Mains." Besides his occupation as farmer, he carried on business as general merchant—his shop being in a squat thatched building, standing about two hundred yards from the farm-house. The latter, judging from the bends and rents in the walls, and subsidences in the roof, was a structure of considerable age.

"Mains" was a sagacious man, and one of great probity. His word was equivalent to his bond; and the knowledge of his honourable and reliable character made him trusted all round—wholesale houses never hesitated to execute his orders to any extent, and for many years he conducted a large and prosperous business. It should be mentioned that, in addition to his farming operations and trade at the Mains, he employed several "wheels" throughout the parish in spinning flax for him. The speculative element in his character thus proved of practical service to the community. Altogether he was a worthy son of the Mearns.

Mr. Stephen was contemporaneous with the Rev. Dr. Leslie, so many years the parish minister,

and an intimate personal friendship subsisted between the two, until the doctor's retirement from the parish in 1843, when, from distance and advancing years, the intercourse of former days could no longer be maintained. "Mains" died on the 18th January, 1850, at the ripe age of fourscore and seven. A severe snowstorm blocked the roads, but, notwithstanding, a large concourse turned out to witness the interment of the kindly old man in the churchyard of Fordoun.

In appearance "Mains" was short and dapper; he wore knee-breeches and a broad bonnet with the customary red brim and top. An excellent portrait of him in oil is preserved. It is from the easel of the late William Crabb, of Laurencekirk, an artist of no mean power, who has left behind him in the Mearns and elsewhere other works of an enduring character. The picture is, we believe, now in the possession of Miss Isobel Sherret, of Auchinblae, one of Mr. Stephen's grandchildren. He left a numerous colony of descendants, now scattered up and down the country, and also, we believe, in America. His tombstone gives a long catalogue of his departed sons and daughters. Joseph, one of the former, died in the Island of Jamaica on the 15th January, 1821, at the early age of twenty-one. The tombstone was erected by Miss Stephen ("Mary"), one of the daughters, a lady of great vivacity and intelligence, much esteemed by a wide circle of friends: She figures

as *Miss Meadows* in a book styled "James Meetwell, or Incidents, Errors, and Experiences in the life of a Scottish Merchant" (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1869). She died, like her progenitor, at an advanced age.

#### TIPPERTY—JOHN REITH.

The farm of Tipperty, or Tibbertay, as it is called in an old legal instrument relating to the lands of Glenfarquhar, was long tenanted by Mr. John Reith. He was a man of strong will and considerable decision of character. The school of Paldyfair, or Tipperty, was situated on the farm, and during the late Mr. Edwards's time the scholars were permitted to pay an annual visit to the "fold," at the steading on the banks of the Bervie water, to witness the interesting operation of sheep-shearing.

About forty years ago Mr. Reith retired from farming, purchased a feu in the village of Auchinblae, and, having demolished the squat thatched cottages which occupied the ground, built thereon a substantial residence, where he spent the remainder of his days, and died on the 16th October, 1857, at the ripe age of eighty-one. His wife, Jane Burness, survived him by eleven years, and attained the long age of eighty-seven. She was a person of very placid temper, singularly

gentle and amiable. She was descended, it should be mentioned, from a collateral branch of the family of Burness, the progenitors of Robert Burns, and had a distinct recollection of seeing the poet when he visited her father's farm, Brawlinmuir, in Glenbervie.

Mr. and Mrs. Reith rest in the churchyard of Fordoun. They had a numerous family of sons and daughters.

#### HONEYBANK—JAMES CLARK.

Of the tenants of the barony in more modern days, James Clark was one who deserves special notice. For upwards of a quarter of a century he was lessee of the farm of Honeybank on the Brae. He was a man of a retiring disposition, but well read, and of superior intelligence. He appears to have been familiar with the historic and poetic literature of his country—the humour and pictorial power of Sir Walter Scott having a special fascination for him. In a little volume published two years ago, titled “Leisure Musings by two Ploughmen”—the joint production of James and his son, William, also poetically gifted—we find a short but interesting account of his career.

The claim made on behalf of the ancient village at Kirkton of Fordoun to the honour of having been the birthplace of John, the historian, is disputed by some, but that here the late tenant of

Honeybank was born on 11th March, 1798, is a fact that cannot be challenged. At the age of eleven years, James Clark, we learn from the little work referred to, was sent out into the world to earn his own livelihood. His first master was Mr. John Low, V.S. and blacksmith, then at Bridge of Leppie, but who afterwards became tenant of Auchinzeoch in Fordoun. Not being provided with shoes and stockings, a heavy fall of snow in the *month of June* found our young poet in "a sad plight," but Mrs. Low, a kind mistress, supplied his wants in this and other respects. In 1826, "the year of the short corn," James, having had considerable experience as a ploughman, obtained the appointment of overseer to Mr. Milne, West Cairnbeig, where, with that gentleman and Mr. Johnston, his successor, he remained fifteen years. In 1841 he became tenant of Honeybank. In taking this step the kind assistance he received from Mr. Johnston, his former master, is gratefully acknowledged.

Mr. Johnston was an elder of the parish Kirk, a kind friend to the poor, and a man held in much esteem in his day and generation. We learn from Jervise's "Memorials" that he was the last of the life-renters on the estate of Arbuthnott. He was, we may add, the father of Dr. Johnston, late of Montrose, now the respected proprietor of Kair.

James Clark died on 6th January, 1868, in his seventieth year. The episode mentioned in con-

nection with his services at Bridge of Leppie shows the hardships which youthful rustics of the period had to endure, but it at the same time sheds a kindly ray of light on the pleasant relations that then subsisted between masters and servants.

The subjects of James Clark's versification are varied, ranging from the "Removal of the auld timber brig at Montrose," in 1828, to a "Grace at Burns' Centenary."

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### **Druidism—Paldy Fair.**

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Back in remote antiquity Druidism seems to have been the religion practised here. On the eastern extremity of the Hareshaw—a long stretch of dreary waste land covered only with heather, whins, and broom, the aspect of which years have done little to change—there is still standing a circle of stones of the kind that antiquaries used to regard as the remains of Druidical temples. Yet, dreary and deserted as this moor may appear, many and strange are the scenes that have been enacted there since the Druid took his departure. Over long centuries there have been at least three days in every year when it has presented an animated spectacle. These days are when the

sheep, cattle, and horse markets of Paldy Fair (so called, like the school, in honour of the patron saint, Palladius) are held, namely, on first Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday after the first Tuesday in July of Old Style. The markets have been held from time immemorial. Going back to the last year of the 17th century we find the "Nolt" Market, which fell that year on the 11th July, incidentally mentioned in connection with some daring thefts perpetrated by one John Duncan, who apparently had his residence in Auchinblae, but this fact, looking to the culprit's fate, did not shed lustre on the little country village, which it then was. As an example of the expeditious manner in which criminals were dealt with in those days, John's case may be briefly cited. On Wednesday, the 10th July, 1700, the indictment tells us John went to the Hill of Kirloak, and there stole two oxen and a cow from George Burnett, the tenant in Muloch, also three oxen, the property of William Taylor, in Knock. These animals he first paraded at the "Nolt" Market of Paldy Fair, and thereafter drove along the road leading to the Hill Market of Kirriemuir, where he intended to dispose of them. For these acts of daring robbery John forfeited his life. After due trial, before a jury, at Stonehaven, he was adjudged to be taken to the Gallowhill there on 2nd August, between the hours of eleven, forenoon, and five, afternoon, and there to be hanged on a gibbet. Another

culprit, John Reid, belonging apparently to the Cromar district, who had been guilty of the less heinous crime of stealing twenty-four ells' length of linen about the same time, was ordained to witness the execution and to inter the body of his unhappy companion, he himself thereafter to be kicked with the foot of the Dempster, and banished the shire !

At fairs in country towns and villages some of those travelling gaudy painted caravans, hailing from the great centres of the south, usually put in appearance, with their company of players or acrobatic performers, or their curious collection of exhibits—giants and dwarfs, or mayhap of some extraordinary woman, “ who could lift a stithy with the hair of her head, and take her supper of real fire, composed of pitch, tar, rosin, and brimstone !” But at Paldy Fair those wonderful institutions were generally conspicuous by their absence. For one thing the access was difficult. It must not, however, be supposed that there was awaiting sufficient variety of talent to entertain and amuse the heterogeneous crowd assembled on the moor. There were the vintners' tents, set up with the regularity of a military encampment, with blazing fires behind, and broth pots suspended from tripods, with smiling damsels ready to ladle out the boiling contents, or measure out a gill or half-mutchkin according as tastes required. There was poet John Milne, of Livet Glen, like Homer of old, and Blind Harry of more modern days, reciting his own compositions,

and extolling the occupation of the ploughman as superior to that of every other craft or calling. There was Singing Willie, too, with his tasselled, knotted, and gnarled, and altogether curiously-fashioned walking-stick, drawling out his effusions with nasal twang, and trying to provoke mirth by piecing in, occasionally, allusions to local incidents touching some "dainty" chiel or "bonnie lass"; but, compared to the minstrel from Livet Glen, Willie was, morally and intellectually, on a low platform. Robbie Stracathro, broad and short, in weather-beaten habiliments, was also there, piping such music as he could through his tin whistle. Robbie was an innocent wanderer, who turned up at most fairs in the county, and always met with kindly treatment. Being asked in this market one day whether he had got his dinner, he gave this laconic reply :—

Wi' bits o' beef  
 An' sups o' kail,  
 An' bits o' bread,  
 An' draps o' ale ;  
 Fat aething, fat ither,  
 I've made a dinner o't.

There were blind fiddlers, and pipers, clad in the garb of Rob Roy. There were vendors of Belfast Almanacs—then, be it remarked, an essential article in every country household. There were shooting galleries, with glib tongues doing their best to tempt the onlooker, as if the bag of hazel nuts in

store for the prizeman was not in itself sufficient allurements. Add to this catalogue the usual sprinkling of legless and otherwise defective and misshapen specimens, who by hook or crook had got themselves transported thither—some in their carriage drawn by a couple of panting dogs—and you have a tolerably accurate summary of the foreign elements mingled in the composition of a Paldy Fair Market. Hither dealers in sheep, cattle, or horses, congregated from every parish in the county, as also from Forfarshire, and across the hills from the upper regions of Deeside. We have heard of the presence of “the rough tykes” of Tarland, with boxing propensities, but whether the hardy sons of that district were deserving such an appellation we do not pretend to say. Young men resorted hither to engage for harvest work. Shoemakers, saddlers, and other craftsmen turned out to collect accounts, while dealers in turnip seeds and other specialties appeared to solicit fresh orders. Men are socially inclined, and it was but on rare occasions that such an opportunity for indulging the inclination presented itself. Here were scope and variety, fresh air, and glorious July weather. Need it be wondered that before sunset various methods of settling accounts had been adopted, and that on the field some veterans were left for the time *hors de combat*? Such was Paldy Fair. It is upwards of forty years since the writer set foot in it. The railway system is always a revolutionary force. Its extension

through the Mearns has changed the character and diminished the importance of this historic market, as it has radically affected other markets similarly situated. The changes are all for the better, and though there may be a kind of melancholy pleasure in musing over the days that are past, the subject is not one for tears. At the time when we recall the moor of Paldy Fair, there was but one solitary tenement upon it—a humble cot occupied by two ancient dames, who have long since departed this life, leaving none of that romance about their names which attaches to those of Betsy Bell and Mary Gray, two bonnie lasses celebrated in song.

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### **The Kerr Family.**

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The family of Kerr, it may be mentioned, is one widely ramified throughout the upper districts of Kincardineshire. The various branches appear to have sprung from the Kerrs of Kerrsland in Ayrshire, who settled in the Mearns towards the end of the seventeenth century.

At Bothwell Bridge four brothers fought,  
 Who had from Kerrsland followers brought ;  
 And when the bloody field was lost,  
 For life they fled from adverse host.

The four brothers referred to are said to have fled after that sanguinary battle, fought in 1679,

and the family possessions in the south-west of Scotland, which were then forfeited, were afterwards ceded to their only sister. One of the fugitives, Robert by name, settled at Lawgavel, or Lagavan, in Glenbervie. He married Isobel Dunse, and in 1700 took up his abode at Mosshead. Of this marriage were born five sons. Robert, the eldest, married Marjory Gray, and settled at her father's farm (Springing-greens), which had likewise been tenanted by her grandfather. They also held the neighbouring farm of Kinkell, both being part of the barony lands.

This Robert and his wife, Marjory, had a family of seven daughters and two sons. Isobel, their eldest child, became, as we shall afterwards see, the wife of Bailie George Gordon of Auchinblae.

John, the second son, settled at West Cotbank, and William, the third, at Cotbank, both in Glenbervie. One of his sons became a professor in King's College, London. George, the fourth, settled at Mosshead, and James, the fifth, took up his abode near the same place.

All the five have descendants living at the present day. George had a numerous family. Two of his daughters, Elspet and Jean, married Stephens—namely, the former, William Stephen, tenant in Denside, Glenfarquhar; and the latter, David Stephen, merchant in Dundee, born in 1760.

One of his sons, Dr. George Kerr, was a well-known medical practitioner in Aberdeen, in the

beginning of the present century. He was an able man, a strong politician, and a "liberal before his time." He had two daughters—Jane, who died in 1870, and Margaret, who died in 1878, both aged. Dr. David Kerr, late lecturer on surgery in the University of Aberdeen, was a nephew of the foresaid Dr. George Kerr, and, thus, a grandson of old George, who, as we have seen, had his dwelling at Mosshead. Another of his family was Isobel (the eldest daughter), who married Robert Officer, Jacksbank, in Glenbervie. Their son, Dr. Robert Officer, went to Tasmania when quite young. About twenty years ago he was knighted by Her Majesty, being then Speaker of the House of Assembly in that colony. He died a good many years ago in the same place.

A very complete genealogical tree of the Kerr family is, we believe, still in possession of the family of the late Mr. William Rettie, jeweller, a much respected citizen of Aberdeen, who died in 1886, at the advanced age of 88. His wife, Ann Campbell, was a grand-daughter of Robert Kerr, the eldest of the five sons mentioned above. She died in 1878, aged 80.

We may add that the last descendant of Robert (eldest of the five brothers), bearing the name of Kerr, is Mrs. Rettie, the wife of Mr. Middleton Rettie, advocate in Edinburgh, she being the only child of Robert's grandson, the late Mr. John Kerr, of Dundee.

## CHAPTER V.

**Auchinblae.**ANCIENT REFERENCES TO THE PLACE ; ITS  
SITUATION AND SURROUNDINGS ;  
POPULATION.

THE village of Auchinblae—variously spelt Auchinblay, Auchynbla, and Auchynbleay—is repeatedly mentioned in deeds dating back some four hundred years. Leases of the place and of other subjects in the same neighbourhood, granted by the Abbot of Aberbrothock, long anterior to the time when, as part of the barony lands, it came into possession of the Falconers of Haulkerton, are still on record. Thus, by lease dated the 29th day of September, 1506, George, the Abbot, “assigns to John Strathquhyn and Marioti Martyn, his spouse, our modern village of Auchinblay for the whole period of their life, upon condition of their paying three pounds six shillings and eightpence of

Scotch money on the festivals of Pentecost and St. Martin, with rymart, weddyr, and all the other burdens of husbandry. And if they shall be found remiss in paying, or acting rebelliously, it shall be in our (the Abbot's) power to dispone."

Again, in a lease granted at the Chapter, under the hand of George, the same Abbot, on 20th July, 1510, "Auchinblay, which they now occupy," is re-let to the same couple, together with the brewery, commonly called "Aurneaylhows," also "croft" and "common pasture"—the money rent and burdens exigible for the village tenure being those formerly specified, while for brew-house, croft, and pasture, an additional eighteen shillings of Scotch money was payable.

By deed, dated 18th May, 1525, we find the whole of the subjects mentioned above, along with certain others, let to John Straquhyn and Egidie Gardin, and their son, James Gardin, for a period of nineteen years, viz. :—Auchynbla at the "old rent;" Kynkell and the half of Mekyll Culbak for twenty-six shillings and eightpence; and the brew-house (commonly called *le Awrne-Aylhows*) for eight shillings—all Scotch money. This deed, like the two preceding ones, contains the usual provisions as to the "rynmart" and "weddyr." The pious Abbot took care that these were not omitted.

The name "Strathaquhyn" or "Straquhyn" is the same with our modern Strachan; while "ryn" prefixed to "mart"—relating, as it does, to cattle

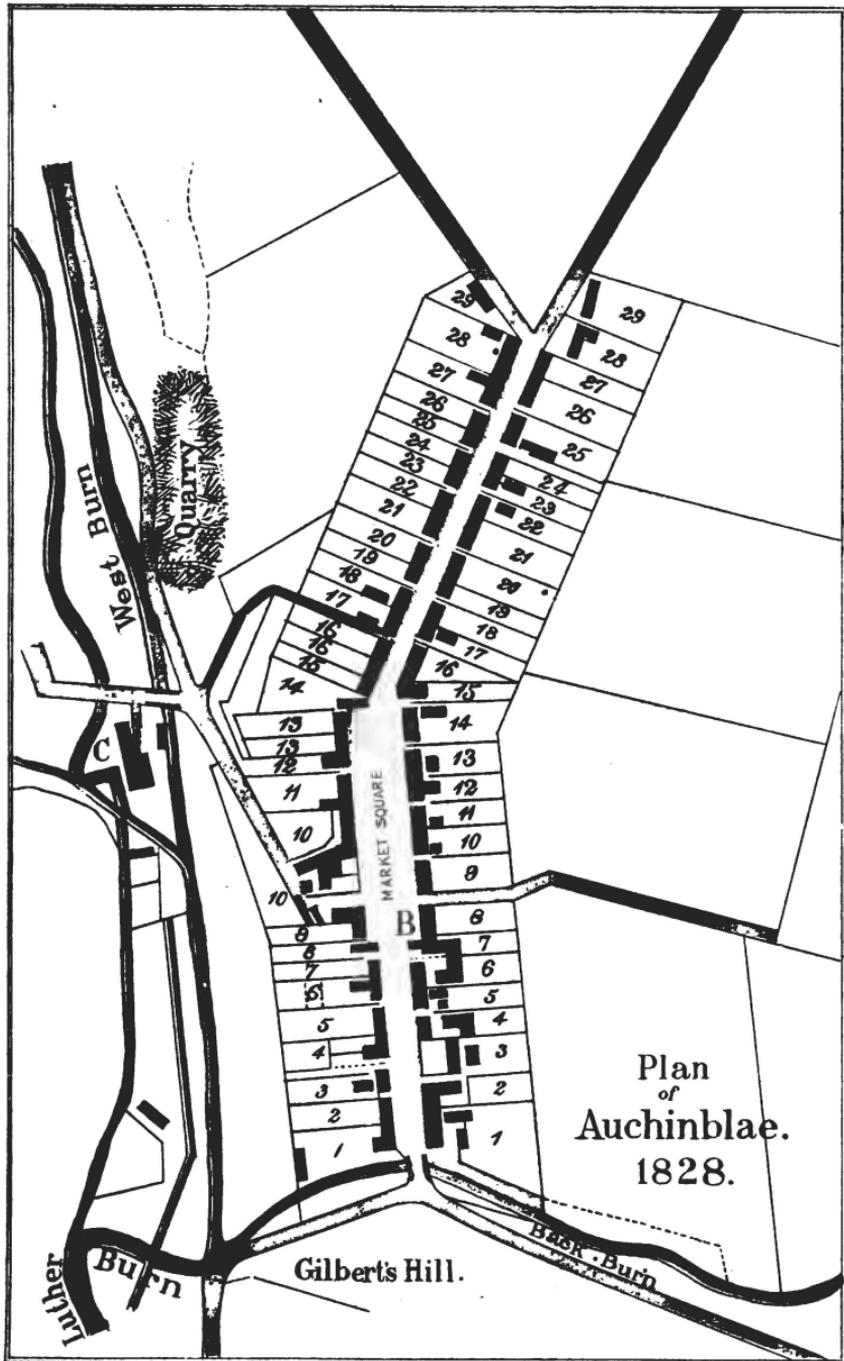
or oxen—has the same origin and meaning as “rind” in “rinderpest”—a term, the true import of which is, from dire experience of past years, unfortunately too well understood in the Mearns.

From those extracts our readers will be able to form some idea of the conditions attaching to the tenure of land back in the remote period referred to. The barony tenants of the present day will, at least, see a marked contrast between the rents they pay and those paid in the days when John Straquhyn held possession. We cannot tell whether or no that ancient lessee found farming a profitable business; but it may be safely assumed that, so long as he produced, at the stipulated terms, his rent, “rynmart, and weddyr,” and remained faithful to the Abbacie, he got no trouble from the Abbot or any of his subordinates. We find no record of any complaint against him, either for “punishing” or “miscropping” the land, or for breach of the brew-house regulations. That historic house itself has totally disappeared; even the site which it occupied it is now impossible to trace.

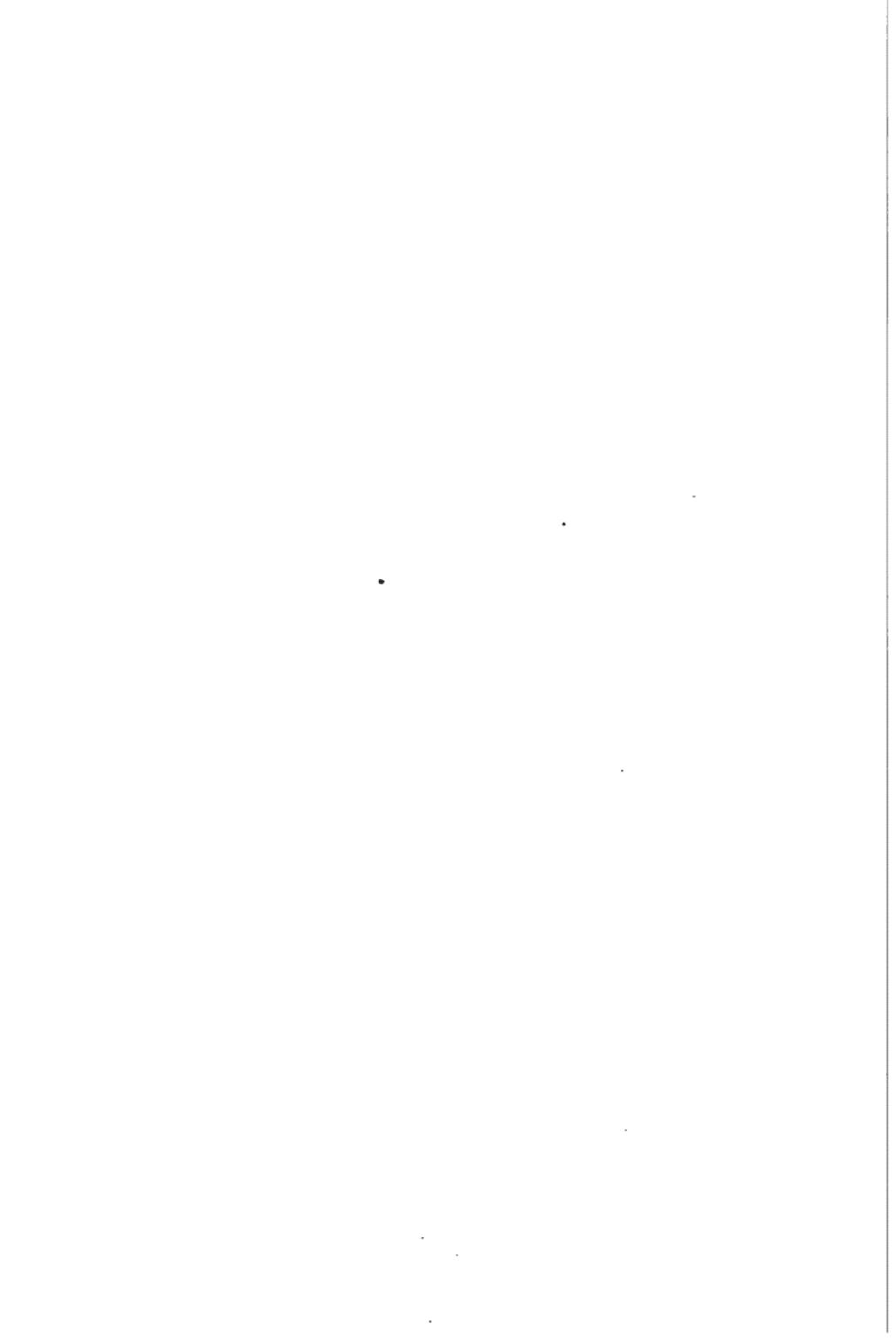
As we have already seen, the village of Auchinblae is built on ground scheduled as an integral portion of the lands belonging to the barony. It lies due north and south. We submit to our readers a plan of the place as it stood upwards of sixty years ago, together with a list of persons who were feuars at the period indicated.

NAMES OF FEUARS IN AUCHINBLAE,  
*With Numbers relative to the position of their respective  
 Feus, as indicated in annexed Plan.*

Nos.	West Side.	Nos.	East Side.
1.	William Reid.	1.	George Gordon.
2.	John Duffus.	2.	William Anderson's heirs.
3.	John Greig's heirs.	3.	John Caddonhead.
4.	Alexander Pirie.	4.	Alexander Pirie.
5.	Mrs. Charles Lyall.	5.	Alexander Milne.
6.	Mrs. William Lyall.	6.	William Petrie.
7.	William Caird.	7.	Robert Carneggy.
8.	William Scott.	8.	Robert Bruce.
9.	Alexander Duthie's heirs.	9.	Francis Legg.
10.	Mrs. Beattie (two lots).	10.	Alexander Stephen.
11.	James Sherret.	11.	Alexander Gordon.
12.	James Sherret.	12.	Mrs. Beattie, &c.
13.	{ James Jaffrey. William Annandale.	13.	{ John Reith. James Burness.
14.	William Lyall Annandale.	14.	Mrs. Alexander Simpson.
15.	William Henderson.	15.	James Cockie.
16.	Mrs. Lawrence.	16.	James Milne.
17.	Alexander Bonner.	17.	Mrs. Andrew Watson.
18.	Robert Orcherton.	18.	Mrs. John Blacklaws.
19.	David Laurence.	19.	James Finlay.
20.	David Glass' heirs.	20.	John Reith.
21.	Charles Duncan.	21.	James Annandale.
22.	Nester McKenzie.	22.	Robert Saddler.
23.	Alexander Milne's heirs.	23.	Mrs. Finlay.
24.	David Mitchell.	24.	Mrs. Cock.
25.	David Ross.	25.	Charles Benzies.
26.	William Stephen.	26.	John Simpson.
27.	David Milne's heirs.	27.	David Clark.
28.	John Robertson's heirs.	28.	John Mollyson.
29.	James Cooper.	29.	George Milne.



Plan  
of  
Auchinblae.  
1828.



To all who knew the place in early days this plan, with its roll of ancient feuars, will be interesting. The sight of it cannot fail to awaken feelings of a mixed kind. It is melancholy to reflect that, of all the persons whose names appear on the list, not one now remains; but it is, at the same-time, pleasing to know that in many cases the properties are still in the possession of lineal descendants or other worthy representatives of the original owners.

The outline of the street is still pretty much as it was; the houses occupy the same sites, but many of them have been vastly improved both internally and externally—new storeys have been added, rooms have been widened, windows have been enlarged, the primitive thatched roof prevalent in days of yore has disappeared, and now, with hardly an exception, the houses are slated. Altogether, the village has an exceptionally clean, comfortable, and prosperous appearance.

It stands on a gentle rising ground, washed by the rivulet Luther, amid beautiful scenery, and commands a fine view of the hill of Strath-Finella, a prominent object on its western side. About a mile distant in a westerly direction, is the entrance to the richly wooded glen of Drumtochty; while a little over the same distance to the north-east rises the Knockhill, whence an extensive view can be obtained. Round the eastern base of this hill the Bervie Water sweeps; and below it, to the south, lie

the lands of Castleton and Mondynes. Within easy reach of the village, lying to the south, are the Monboddo woods, which shelter the mansion-house of that historic name; and, among other snug residences, enfold within their embrace the farm steading of Drumsleed. Westward, round the shoulder of Strath-Finella, the Howe of the Mearns opens out in all its grandeur. Such are the surroundings of Auchinblae.

In 1811 it contained 311 inhabitants; by the census taken thirty years later, when the manufacturing trade was at the height of its prosperity, the population had more than doubled—the number then being 643. But in 1881, from the decay of trade and other causes, it had sunk to 411. At last census (1891), the number had slightly increased, being then 430.

We shall see later when and through whose instrumentality the place was provided with gas-light and water.

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### **The Baron Ballie.**

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GEORGE GORDON.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the only known local authority may be said to have been the Kirk-Session, whose jurisdiction was co-ex-

tensive with the parish boundary, and in certain matters supreme within it. But in the village itself there was a functionary called the Baron Bailie, who also exercised authority. His authority was derived from the reigning Lord Kintore, as the superior of the place, and his jurisdiction was therefore confined to the territory owned by that nobleman. The Bailie's duties were light, and he was seldom called upon to exercise his power among the lieges in any arbitrary way. One of his chief functions was to see that the feeing and other local markets were conducted in an orderly manner, and that the "customs" payable in respect of "stands," "tents," and other trade privileges on the market stance, were duly drawn. He had, moreover, twice a year to apprise the feuars of the village lands when that much-dreaded official, his Lordship's factor, would appear to collect the rents and feu-duties. One of the first Bailies, of whom we recollect hearing anything, was Mr. George Gordon. He was bred a mason, but had the misfortune to meet with an accident at the demolition of the ancient parish church, which cost him a limb; in consequence he had to relinquish that occupation, and his thoughts turned to mercantile pursuits. Encouraged by his esteemed friend and kind patron, the Rev. Dr. Leslie, he set up as a general merchant in Auchinblae. He was a warm-hearted man and hospitable—shrewd moreover, and sagacious. He enjoyed the confidence

and respect of the whole community. His business prospered, as under such conditions it could hardly do otherwise. He had a numerous family of sons and daughters, to whom he gave what, in those days, was regarded as a comparatively liberal education. The sons, like their worthy sire, were able and enterprising. They pushed out and planted themselves in the adjoining county of Forfar, where they had successful careers as flax and linen manufacturers—leaving numerous representatives, lineal descendants of the old Bailie. Bailie Gordon died on the 12th day of October, 1830, at the age of 75. His wife, Isobel Kerr—a member of the family described in previous chapter—followed him to the tomb on the 9th November of the same year, aged 79. Mr. Gordon had his dwelling and place of business in a cosy corner at the south end of the village, being No. 1 on the east side of the plan. The buildings remained long in the same condition as the Bailie had left them. They were for many years occupied by his two unmarried daughters, Elizabeth and Margaret, who both died there. Since then the houses have intermittently undergone radical changes.

DAVID LAWRENCE.

Mr. Gordon was succeeded in the office of Baron Bailie by David Lawrence, who was likewise a man well known in his day, and deserves a

passing notice here. David seems to have been born at Drumelzie, on the Drumtochty estate, where there were at one time several hamlets. He early acquired a feu in Auchinblae, and here stood his residence, a neat and well-kept "white cot," No. 19, on the west side of Inverurie Street, with barn and byre to the rear, and a good extent of garden ground. He rented a few acres of village land, which he cultivated carefully, and with great assiduity. David was noted for the kindly—nay, shall it not be said—affectionate way in which he treated his cows. When forced on account of age or other reason to part with any of them, the occasion was almost more than he could bear. He shrank from being a witness to the sight. He has been known occasionally to carry, as if by stealth, a sheaf of corn from his own ricks, as a luxury to the dumb animals in the stall, he himself evidently participating in their delight. David had a broad bent back, a weighty step, and was of slow emphatic speech. Like Dr. Johnson, the great lexicographer, he had a habit of talking to himself. He was a reticent man, and very prudent withal. As Baron Bailie, he had the factor's confidences, and behoved to know when any poor tenant had fallen in arrear with his rent, but knowledge of that kind never escaped David's lips, any more than did matters connected with the Kirk-Session, of which he was a member. He was passionate, but any outburst was temporary, and the deeper

flow of his native good humour speedily regained the mastery. His wife, Nellie Spence, moreover, was a meek and gentle creature. She knew where to touch the springs and pour oil on the troubled waters. He smoked a good pipe of tobacco; and enjoyed an hour's social conversation with a neighbour as opportunity occurred. He was not absolutely an abstainer, but he was temperate, and on the whole a just and peaceable man. As an elder of the kirk, it became his duty sometimes to tender advice, and on one occasion he had to remonstrate with a veteran who was socially inclined. Anticipating a *tu quoque*, David with great tact prefaced his admonition by the admission that "*we a' drink, ye ken, but we dinna a' get fu'!*"

In his more vigorous days Mr. Lawrence acted as a valuator of grain crops, and his services in that capacity were much appreciated—his selection of the "proof sheaves" generally furnishing reliable *data* for a correct estimate of the contents of the whole. He died at an advanced age. His wife had pre-deceased him by several years at the age of nearly a century.

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### The Spinning Mill.

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So early as 1795 the trade of flax-spinning had been established in this place. At the commence-

ment of the present century, when Mr. David Kinnear, proprietor of the works, acquired, on permanent feu from Anthony, Earl of Kintore, the ground on which these had been erected, the trade was already in vigorous operation.

Mr. Kinnear's right to the ground, with erections thereon, was confirmed by charter under the hand of the noble Earl, executed at the Mansion-house at Keith-hall on the 13th day of March, 1801, in presence of Alexander Daune, an Aberdeen lawyer, and James Dougall, one of his Lordship's servants. The charter, besides stipulating for the payment of a moderate feu-duty, contained the other obligations usually imported into feudal documents; but, on the other hand, it conferred all the rights and privileges to which the feuar was generally entitled—such as liberty to cut fuel in the barony moss, to dig clay, and burn bricks; besides—in the present case a most important privilege—the use of a bleachfield. The instrument was prepared by Mr. John Brand, then a well known and influential legal practitioner in Stonehaven, but who subsequently took up his residence in another country, only returning, after a prolonged absence, to close the evening of his days at Auchinblae in his native county.

Mr. Kinnear, the spinner, who was likewise a native of the county, was evidently a man of some enterprise,—presumably abreast of his time. As regards water supply, and in several other respects,

the site chosen for his factory had natural advantages. The ground lay on the right bank of the West Burn, which, rising in the romantic Glen of Drumtochty, flows through the vale skirting the western side of the village. From that burn, or from the streamlet trickling down the ravine that divides the green-clad hills beyond, a copious supply of water might always be calculated on, save perhaps in exceptionally dry seasons. Water, it need hardly be said, was then the only motive power in use, or even dreamt of, for manufacturing purposes. Within a period of less than forty years, however, the more potent agency of steam was called into requisition by one of Mr. Kinnear's more enterprising successors, a narrative of whose career will be found in another chapter.

This adventure in flax-spinning, it is believed on authority, was one of the earliest attempts of the kind in Scotland. The mill was equipped with all the latest appliances of the time. Its owner possessed energy and capital. There was thus every requisite for the development of a large and lucrative trade. In the centre of the quadrangle stood the main building—the mill itself, with counting-room at one end, and mechanics' shop at the other. The heckling operations were carried on in a separate erection; on the other side were various store rooms, all detached from the main building. At the south end stood the overseer's dwelling-house, and to the rear of it was a tastefully laid-out garden.

Skilled labour was drafted to the new seat of industry. It was obtained chiefly from the larger manufacturing towns in Forfarshire. Female operatives from various quarters also repaired to Mr. Kinnear's mill, importing names that had till then been unknown in the district. These added quaintness and variety to the plainer appellations, sprung from a few ancestral roots, that had hitherto been prevalent. This influx of people, of both sexes, in due time also produced changes in the moral and intellectual character of the place.

The position of the works is indicated by the letter "C" on the village plan.

The main building was surmounted by a belfry fitted with a bell. Besides announcing the welcome interludes for breakfast and dinner, this bell was used to summon the operatives to their work and to tell them when the labours of the day had ended. But, in order to secure punctuality in attendance, other precautions were in force. It was the duty of the mill overseer to patrol the streets in the early morning and rouse the workers from their slumbers. For many years this duty was faithfully performed by Mr. William Herries, the responsible head of the works. He was an intelligent and most trustworthy man. With trumpet in hand—a huge horn—morning after morning, William made the round of the village, sounded the alarm, and called forth the sleepers. There were always some exceptionally drowsy heads

whom the sound of the bullock's horn failed to arouse, but, with respect to these, William adopted measures that could not fail to prove efficacious—vigorously and unceremoniously he applied the horn itself to the doors and windows of the dwellings where the slumberers were quartered. This appliance was always effectual, though, as will be readily believed, it occasionally broke the slumbers and roused the ire of some that were not under any obligation to obey the summons. From one lady who had newly taken up her abode in the place, and was yet ignorant of its laws and customs, William's morning performances earned for him, as we can yet remember, the designation of "wretched man!" No, my good lady, wretched he was not! He was an honest man, who did his duty and attended to his own business—a more faithful sentinel never mounted guard. It is long since William Herries entered on that sleep from which it will take a louder trumpet than his own to awake him!

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### Gas-light and Water Supplies.

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About fifty years ago the enterprising Bank Agent, whose career we shall briefly sketch in

another chapter, had, as a private venture, constructed, at his own expense, within the boundary walls of the spinning mill, of which some ten years before he had become the proprietor, a complete set of works for supplying that establishment and the houses in the neighbouring village with gas-light, then a novelty in most country towns. As our readers will know, this place, where the experiment was for the first time to be tried, was far removed from the coal-producing districts. As yet no railway communication had been opened up or projected between those districts and the Mearns. Consequently the commodity essential to the manufacture of gas could only be brought hither at a heavy cost for carriage. The new light, therefore, whatever advantages it possessed in other respects, could not be offered to the community at a tempting price as compared with that of the existing means of illumination. Besides, partly from economic considerations, and partly, perhaps, from prejudice, the inhabitants generally were not disposed all at once to recognise the merits of the scheme. Like other promised blessings, it had to be tested. To the last there were some isolated householders who did not believe in the new light, but regarded it rather as a dangerous innovation, and accordingly refused its admission to their homesteads. Hitherto the double-shelled black iron lamp, with its rush-wick and old associations, had held sway, aided only on special occasions, such as Auld Yule night

or the like, by a few tallow candles of approved quality, size, and pattern. But in due time the venerable *crusie* was destined to disappear and yield place, if not to gas-light itself, yet, at a later period, to the more stately paraffin lamp; and now it is only to be found as a curious relic of the past in the antiquary's collection. While the *crusie* held sway, the stripping of "wicks" was a legitimate and not unprofitable pastime of the herd *loon*. It sometimes brought him a little pocket money, and accordingly, where rushes were to be had, he, in his idler hours, resorted to the business. A bonnetful of young linnets collected on the moor, for sale at so much a head, was a more hazardous venture. Not every family admitted such pets, especially in parishes where the sin of bird-nesting was vigorously denounced from the pulpit.

Quarterly, with unfailing regularity over a long series of years, the dials of the gas meters were examined, the quantity consumed ascertained, the account cast up, and the cash collected. The banker's coachman was trusted to perform the latter duty alone, but in making the survey "John" was always accompanied by a responsible clerk, who verified the quantities consumed—the two together, it was assumed, securing accuracy, and at the same time the confidence of the consumers, some of whom had hazy notions as to the nature of gas burning, and when they heard of cubic feet being registered by the meter, would occasionally

ask how many "yards" they had consumed since former inspection.

The heavy charge incurred in the carriage of coal, already referred to, combined with the limited consumption, was a great drawback. Even at the price of 13s. 4d. to 14s. per 1,000 cubic feet of the manufactured article, there was little or no margin for profit. In these circumstances no arrears were permissible. To the credit of the community, however, it should be mentioned, payment of the gas accounts was made with a promptitude befitting the punctuality with which they were rendered. The "gas man" was proud of his "retorts," and, with a strong odour of coal tar about him, he made his presence felt wherever he went.

Though thus early provided with gas-light, it was fully a quarter of a century later before a general supply of water was introduced to the village. But nearly every original feuar had dug for himself a well on some part of his ground, and some excellent springs were found. Those who had not the ambition thus to provide an independent supply for their own family wants, relied on getting these supplied at the wells of their neighbours. There was usually no lack of water from one source or another, though in times of severe frost, care had to be taken to see that the wooden pumps were properly protected. "Pump-boring" was a good business at one time.

On the west side of High Street was a well

whence a delicious draught could always be got. To it the inhabitants of that part of the village resorted with their pitchers ; and there wayfarers halted in passing to refresh themselves. The owner of the property through which this supply was conducted to the street maintained a kind of servitude over it, but exclusive rights of ownership were never exercised. So far as we know, all had free access to "the stroop," the name by which this well was familiarly known. In a sequestered nook, on the side of a dell beyond the parish church, was Palladius' well, so named after the patron saint, but none relied on it for supply, and it was only on special occasions that people drank of its sacred waters. At various other places in the outskirts of the village there were wells bearing names once familiar but now so obscure and long-forgotten that it would be useless to recall them. The well from which the dwellers in the northern part of the village chiefly drew their supplies was that at Burnmouth. Here, at all seasons, was to be found an abundant supply, available both for man and beast, though this community of rights rendered it at times not the most convenient watering-place for the former.

Thus stood Auchinblae as regards water resources, when in 1866, Mr. John Kerr, a successful engineer in Dundee, projected the scheme for the general supply which the village now enjoys. Mr. Kerr belonged to the family of Kerr noticed in an

earlier chapter (*vide* page 84). He was a native of the parish of Fordoun, and took a warm interest in everything pertaining to the comfort and prosperity of its inhabitants. He was a shrewd man, and had a singularly honourable business career. He had known the situation of the village from his boyhood, and foresaw that it would not be difficult to procure a plentiful supply of pure water, which would add so greatly to the comfort and attractions of the place. Accordingly, the projected scheme was practically carried out under his supervision. The water was brought from a spring on the farm of Newlands, about a mile due north of the village, at the entrance to which a reservoir was erected. Altogether, the works were very complete. The cost was defrayed in great part by a voluntary assessment on the feuars, each contributing at least a sum equivalent to one year's feu-duty on his property.

Reverting to the subject of lighting, the gas-works were old when taken over from the original proprietor. In subsequent years, the plant was not maintained in a state of efficiency; as a consequence gas has gradually fallen into disuse. Its manufacture here is now a thing of the past, and the inhabitants have had to resort to other means of illumination. In the matter of light, therefore, there seems to have been retrogression. The real cause of this we have already explained.

## Police Protection.

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Down to the end of the "thirties," the parish could not boast of much in the shape of Police protection. Until that time, the only functionary it appears to have ever possessed for the performance of this kind of duty, was a certain man named "Rob Russell," who was what was vulgarly called "Bung the Beggars." It was his work to "convoy" sturdy beggars "furth" the parish, and with the toes of his boots to bid them a lasting farewell. It sometimes fell to Rob's lot to escort a subject of a more than ordinarily "thrawn disposition," but on such occasions the expedients which he adopted always enabled him to accomplish his task successfully. A tramp, affecting to be both deaf and dumb, recovered his faculties with wonderful celerity when a bucketful of cold water was unceremoniously dashed about his shoulders; but if, peradventure, that remedy should fail, the arguments enforced by Robert's hazel cudgel never did!

When the new Police regulations came into force about 1840, a class of constables clothed with more official dignity than irregulars like Rob Russell appeared on the scene. The first officer under this new regime told off to protect property and maintain peace among the lieges of Fordoun was Alexander Macgilivray. He was, we believe,

of Celtic origin, but at the time of his enrolment in the force he had his residence on the north-eastern slope of the Bervie water *via* Rock Indigo. He was compactly built, had good square shoulders, and an elastic spring in his step. With his tall hat, uniform and facings, and a collar bearing the representative letters K.C.P., with his specific number, he was altogether a man of authority, calculated to inspire awe as well as admiration. At first he did seem a real "terror to evil doers," but after a time even the juveniles got accustomed to "the constable," and learnt to assess his value as a man without the uniform.

Mr. Macgilivray held his appointment for about ten years. Towards the middle of the century, the railway through the Howe o' the Mearns was being built; wages were tempting; he laid down the baton and belt, and betook himself to the masonic occupation which he had pursued before joining the force.

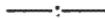
Robert Begg was appointed to the vacancy thus created in the county constabulary force. He hailed, like his predecessor, from the neighbouring parish of Glenbervie, and at the time of his appointment belonged to a craft whose members have always been famed for feats of agility. Standing some six feet in his boots, he was in other respects a stalwart enough specimen of mankind, and, when arrayed in his official robes, was one to be dreaded rather than despised. Rob Begg was a familiar

figure, if not also a household word, in the parish for long. Latterly he was, in the ordinary course of events, translated to discharge like duties in another part of the county, and there, after a time, his connection with the force seems to have terminated.

Such were the three officers who in succession acted as guardians of the peace of Fordoun during the first half of the present century.

We will now introduce our readers to the

### **Bellman.**



In country villages, announcements of rousps and raffles, public meetings, and such like, also of specific articles lost or found, are made by a Bellman or Drummer. The person appointed to discharge the functions of public crier is generally one with some distinctive features of character. At Auchinblae, this office was, for a number of years, very efficiently filled by an individual named Peter Greig, who came originally, we believe, from the Aberdeen side of the Grampians. Peter was eminently fitted by nature for the situation. He possessed the most essential qualification—a strong, stentorian, far-reaching voice. In a still summer evening, its echoes could be heard at marvellous distances from his standpoint. He was equipped

with a handbell of corresponding range. It was the property of Baron-bailie Gordon, and was lent *pro bono publico*. When an announcement had to be made, it was Peter's custom to proceed to the most northerly point in the village. There posting himself, he heralded his arrival by three or four strokes from the bell, which long practice had taught him effectively to wield. The metallic tongue instantly brought a promiscuous crowd around him, and set all ears on the alert. Having prefaced the "cry" with the words "Due and legal notice," Peter delivered his message with the gravity of Jonah before the ancient city of Nineveh. Turning down the village, he halted at intervals of about a hundred yards, and at each point repeated the same performance. Thus was the "coming event" proclaimed in the most emphatic manner to every creature in the place—whether that event were an important dispenish sale, or only a raffle of apples or pears, or of the carcass of a dead sheep.

In his earlier years, Peter had been in the employment of the famous "Meg" Drummond of Drumtochty, either in the capacity of gamekeeper or of master of the hounds. He was, judging from acts of kindness received at her hand in after years, a great favourite with that lady, and we cannot doubt, from all that is known of his character, she had found him a faithful servant. Men of Peter's quality and calibre are, like poets, born—not made.

When one such is removed it is a public loss, and a generation may often pass ere another equally gifted appears to take his place. Peter's genius was practical and many-sided. It might have been said of him, with truth, that he could almost do anything but mend broken bottles. He "soldered," he "clouted" and "clasped." His ingenuity had invented a pipe-lid of a novel and original pattern, and when other "jobs" were scarce he busied himself in the manufacture of this, which the ploughmen, and smokers generally, in the district patronised. He was not without a spark of humour. His wife's tongue sometimes proved too long for his patience, on which occasions he would exercise his "staying powers" thus:—"Noo, Mary, put a mark in there." His death was a real loss to the community. Among others, he left a soldier son, who served his full time, chiefly in India, and took good rank as a non-commissioned officer.

Peter himself died about the year 1844. Since his death, the office of bellman has been filled, in succession, by individuals possessing each a distinctive character, but all widely different from their gifted archetype both in habits and mental constitution; and on none of them did the mantle of his genius descend. One of them, indeed, bore the distinguished name of Sydney Smith, but he was neither a wit nor a born orator. Sydney had a natural impediment in his speech, and his legs—first one and then the other—had met with mis-

haps which impaired his powers of locomotion. These peculiarities did not add to his special aptitude for the post of bellman--quite the reverse; but they invariably secured for him a good following whenever he turned out with his bell. Sydney, it may be mentioned, was the first bellman that was fitted out with a uniform. Its red facings gave him a decidedly military aspect.

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### **Soldiers.**

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Among the youth of our rural parishes, as of our towns and cities, there are always to be found some for whom the profession of a soldier has an attraction. The martial spirit can never be wholly suppressed, far less extinguished. Ever and anon it asserts itself despite prevailing prejudice. Rarely a country feeling market passes but the recruiting sergeant succeeds in persuading some promising son of the soil to accept the "shilling" and take the oath of fidelity to his sovereign.

There are, however, many persons to whom war is distasteful. We have read of strange devices which some have adopted for the purpose either of rendering themselves ineligible for the life of a soldier, or of procuring release after having expe-

rienced some of its hardships. It is not so often we hear of stratagems having to be used in order to gain admission to the army ; we can, however, recall an instance where a youthful aspirant had to exercise some ingenuity before the scruples of his parental guardian could be overcome. The device to which he had recourse was so original and ingenious that it would be a pity not to place it on record. The inventive youth referred to, being tired of a sedentary occupation, longed for liberty in order that he might enlist :—He took to chewing logwood chips, and by this means was enabled copiously to spit blood ! The device was successful. It effectually convinced his father that the work he was at present engaged on was hurtful to his constitution—that, in fact, consumption had set in ! Thus was Jamie allowed to follow the bent of his inclination. Poor fellow ! it is a long time now since he grounded arms for ever. This blood-spitting episode left no blot on his escutcheon ; nay, rather it sheds a kindly light on the earlier pages of the young soldier's career. He served his country faithfully the full regulation time, and in due course obtained promotion.

The earlier part of the century was a stirring time. Napoleon the First—that troubler of Europe—was in the zenith of his power ; soldiers were in demand, and everywhere the martial spirit ran high. From what we have said it may be inferred the parish of Fordoun, like other parishes, contri-

buted its complement of men to the military service. We may here recall a few typical specimens of the old soldier-veterans who, after enduring the hardships of war, had returned in safety to their native glens, there to recount their experiences, and finally be laid at rest with their fathers.

## DAVID PIRIE.

David Pirie, as seen by the writer fully fifty years ago, was still erect and martial in his bearing. He had assisted Sir Ralph Abercromby in expelling from the land of Egypt the French army left there by Napoleon. David spent the latter days of his life in assisting his brother Alexander to cultivate a small farm lying principally in the Fahills section of the barony. Associated with his brother Joseph, Alexander kept the Thistle Inn in Auchinblae, a hospitable house, much frequented by farmers, especially on market days. The three brothers lived in family together and died at the Thistle.

## SANDY COUTTS.

“Sandy” Coutts is the familiar name of another of our local warriors. Sandy, as we recall him, with his blue coat and broad Kilmarnock, had rather a saddened expression of countenance; he looked a

man surcharged with memories of other days. He lacked the upright martial bearing of the soldier first named, and he belonged to a different branch of the service. Sandy's duties on fort and field had been to unlimber and align the big gun, and in deafening cannonades not a few he had taken his honest part. At the time we made his acquaintance, though he was still able to do a little to eke out his scanty pension, the infirmities of age had begun to press heavily upon him, and his erst erect head drooped earthwards. Sandy was not gushing over his Peninsular experiences, but occasionally, in the audience of a sympathetic ear, he was pleased to recount some of them. He had helped to bombard Cadiz, but whether on the first bombardment of 1800 or the blockade of 1808 we cannot say, and it would be difficult now to ascertain. He seems to have been present with his battery in January, 1809, when Sir John Moore, harassed by the legions of Soult, fell back on that stronghold and the British fleet. It was probably in allusion to the retreat executed on that occasion, by the able though ill-fated General, that the school-boys, with an imperfect knowledge of its masterly character, sometimes wantonly twitted Sandy with having fled before the French. It is long since Sandy Coutts made his final retreat. Few remained to "speak words of sorrow." He is safe from the enemy's fire now, and we shall "let him sleep on."

## DAVID MELDRUM.

Till within the last twenty years or thereby, the parish numbered among its inhabitants another retired soldier, of whose gait and figure we retain a lively recollection, but of whose military career we know little. David Meldrum, the soldier referred to, had acquired his experiences on a different field from that on which the gunner we have just parted company with had been taught the art of war. The marching and counter-marching in the Peninsula had ceased ; the decisive battle that gave Napoleon the First his *quietus* for ever had been fought, and peace reigned in Europe once more. But in other parts of the world soldiers were still required. David had two clasps on his medal, for at Nagpore he had chastised that unneighbourly sovereign, Berar ; and he had afterwards served with the army in 1824-5 in stopping the encroachments of the ambitious and able monarch of Burmah, and in subjecting him to great loss of territory. Wounded on the advance on Ava, he is believed to have been invalided, but David was never prone to speak of what he had seen or endured. His complexion was sallow, the result, doubtless, of exposure to an oriental sun. He was short in stature but erect, neat in person and attire. From his measured, soldierly step, it was very evident he had been a man accustomed to carry arms. He was exemplary in his attendance at church, and

had a proper sense of the decorum that worshippers ought to maintain. When the drowsy village bellman, seated two pews in front of him, began to sleep and snore (which he not unfrequently did), David had no compunction in applying his umbrella to arouse the sleeper, and from the dexterous manner in which this operation was carried out, it was manifest that David had not forgotten his bayonet exercise. Mrs. Lyall, a devout old lady, who occupied a pew on the soldier's left, heartily approved the proceeding—she herself occasionally applied her parasol to the bellman's ribs, but her thrusts were never so effective as David's direct attack on the rear. The bellman referred to, it need scarce be said, was *not* Peter, described in another chapter, but only a successor of that efficient officer. On pension days—once a-quarter—David Meldrum was social; he liked to meet an old comrade, but on those occasions, as a precautionary measure, Jean, his wife accompanied him to the place where the "pay" was uplifted, and "covered his retreat" home.

WILLIAM ESSON.

Another retired soldier the parish was proud to own at this time was William Esson. To his career we shall briefly allude. William passed through the whole of the Peninsular war in the first fifteen

years of the century. He was modestly reticent about his military experiences, but he had witnessed many a stiff encounter with the foe. He wore a medal with nine clasps, commemorative of the chief battles and siege operations in which he had taken part. He had the highest regard for his great military chief, "Lord Wellington," and he preserved to the last his regimental dialect of the English language. He was strictly sober, even on pension "pay days," a peaceable man, and exemplary in all respects. He spent the afternoon and evening of his days in the Brae of Glenfarquhar, where he occupied a small tenement. One of his younger sons became a soldier, and died in the service.

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### **A Village Merchant.**

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Among the village merchants, Francis Legg held a prominent place for long. His dwelling-house and shop were No. 9 on the east side. He was well known not only to the inhabitants of the district, but to a host of travellers hailing from Glasgow and other commercial centres. He was a vigorous type of man, had a rich vein of pawky humour in

his composition, and a never-failing flow of good spirits. His style, whether in complimenting a country customer on being a "cunning rogue," or familiarly addressing a haughty baronet across the counter as "my dear sir," was original as it was amusing, and never failed to create a ripple on the face of even the most lugubrious. He was a native of the royal burgh of Bervie, the son of a soldier, and had himself in his younger days been drilled in the ranks of the local militia. He belonged to a long-lived race. His father was a sergeant in the army, and wore a huge medal on his breast. After Quebec fell into the hands of the English in 1775, the sergeant, along with a military comrade, came home and settled in Bervie. In 1788, when the factory there, now owned by Mr. Gibb, was set agoing, the two men got employment in it; and after a time the veteran Legg became foreman of this mill. He died at the age of 97. He was twice married, and had five sons—Alexander, who lived till fourscore; Andrew and David, who attained respectively the ages of 77 and 83; John, who was drowned when about 60; and Francis, the subject of this brief notice, who reached the patriarchal age of 96.

In the churchyard of Kinneff, there is an old tombstone recording the death of William Legg, "a citizen of Loudon." He, it is believed, belonged to a branch of the same family, which is now a numerous one.

### **The Village Bookbinder.**

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We learn from Samuel Johnson's interesting Biography that in his early days booksellers' shops in the provincial towns in England were very rare, so that there was not one even in Birmingham, in which town his father used to open a shop every market day. As regards the book trade, Auchinblae, it may be said, was similarly situated. Bibles, New Testaments, and the Shorter Catechism (with the multiplication table on the back) were in frequent demand, especially the last named. But the place was without a regular bookseller. In 1848 Alexander Young appeared on the scene. He had been bred to the bookbinding craft, and in the course of his career had pursued it in various places, including Aberdeen. He now set up business in the village as bookbinder and vendor of second-hand books. The shop was a place of attraction to the dawning intellects of the parish. The shelves, with their ever shifting stock of "quaint and forgotten lore," were eagerly scanned. He himself made occasional incursions to the country for the purpose of delivering finished work, soliciting fresh orders, and, as chance occurred, picking up at nominal price some musty volume to replenish the stock at home. After a few years' experience he found that bookbinding (at which, by the way,

he was tolerably expert), even when supplemented with what second-hand bookselling was possible, and a little peripatetic tea business, was not sufficiently remunerative. He betook himself to the county town. It is thirty years since a friend of ours saw him there, and wished him well, but life is very hard for most people, and we suspect "Bookie" found his no exception.

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## **Newspapers,**

### AND OTHER LITERATURE IN CIRCULATION.

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The Newspapers that found their way to the parish in the early part of the century were chiefly the *Aberdeen Journal* and the *Montrose Review*, the former an old established publication upholding conservative principles, the latter an organ of decidedly liberal tendencies.

The first number of the *Review* was issued on 11th January, 1811, the publisher at that time being James Watt, who had his printing premises in High Street, Montrose.

We had thus both sides of politics represented. Neither paper, however, had a large circulation in the parish. One copy usually served for at least half a dozen families, and some member would call

for it, in succession, on his way from the smithy or the kirk.

In later years, *The Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register* made its appearance, bearing the motto "*Mare Ditat, Rosa Decorat.*" Its first number bore date 20th June, 1837, and the publisher was William Bennet, residing in Keith's Close. The *Standard*, it is said, owed its origin to the late Sir Thomas Gladstone, father of the present Baronet of Fasque, and brother of the great statesman—the two brothers being politically at one when it was started, though afterwards of diametrically opposite views.

The *Standard* was a smartly written and ably edited paper, supporting Tory views, and it had a select rather than a numerous body of readers. Ten years after its establishment, Mr. Calvert, solicitor, son of Dr. Calvert, for many years Rector of the Montrose Academy, became editor and part proprietor of the *Standard*. Mr. Calvert possessed considerable literary talent, and his writing was vigorous, sometimes perhaps a shade too slashing. Under his editorship and spirited management, the circulation of the paper was largely increased, and it became a recognised power in the district. Mr. Calvert occasionally spent a Sabbath in Fordoun, and graced the Parish Church with his presence. Those occasions were sometimes marked by a racy and sarcastic paragraph in his paper the following Friday, which indicated that he had been at least a

critical if not a devout hearer of the word. After one such visit, we remember, he inserted a note enquiring whether a certain cattle-dealer, who had travelled over the length and breadth of the kingdom, ever heard so much about Socrates and Plato before as he did from the pulpit of Fordoun the previous Sunday. Sometimes the sally took the form of an extract from a sermon said to have been found at a particular smithy door. But that kind of wit has passed out of fashion, and Mr. Calvert himself has long since quitted the scene. He went to Australia in the autumn of 1852, where he soon got an appointment on the *Melbourne Argus*, a daily paper, which he held for about a year. He died at Newbridge, Victoria, on the 26th May, 1879, at the age of 67.

He was succeeded in the editorial chair of the *Montrose Standard* by James Brown, who had been on the staff of the paper for some time previous. During the period of his editorship Mr. Brown contributed to its columns a series of articles, entitled "The Standard Club Papers," which were much appreciated for their flashes of wit and humour. After remaining about four years as chief on the *Standard*, Mr. Brown severed his connection with that paper, and was appointed editor of the *Edinburgh Courant*, but the duties were laborious; and he did not long remain in this situation. Ultimately he settled down in Elgin as editor of the *Courant*, a vigorous and prosperous bi-weekly

journal, formerly owned by Provost Russell, issued latterly under the able superintendence of Mr. James Black, of Sheriffstown, brother of the late Professor Black, of the Humanity Chair in Aberdeen University. Here he spent the remainder of his days, and died on Sunday, the 17th July, 1887, at the age of seventy-seven.

Mr. Brown was a native of Montrose, and had a varied experience in life. In his earlier years he served an apprenticeship both as weaver and seaman. At the time we made his acquaintance, now nearly fifty years ago, he was attendant on the late David Beattie, solicitor, Montrose, then in a very infirm state of health, owing to repeated shocks of paralysis. This gentleman was a brother of George Beattie, the gifted, but ill-fated, author of "John o' Arnha'"—a work well known and much appreciated in the district. It has passed through several editions since the author's death. "Jamie Brown" spent several summers in Auchinblae. During the day he had constantly to be by the side of his master, David Beattie, the legal gentleman above-named, but in the early mornings and long summer evenings he took lengthened walks, and drank in the refreshing breezes from the Grampians. At this period of his life he had ample leisure for study, and he diligently availed himself of the opportunity. Many a time the writer has seen him intently occupied in translating a section of some Latin author's work, or exercising his memory audibly in the con-

jugation of some Latin verb. We *hear* him yet, over half-a-century, as he closed with due emphasis the perfect tense, "*amaverunt,*" *vel* "*amavere,*" of the verb to love—his natural "*b-u-r-r*" bringing out the syllabic sounds with a distinctness and impressiveness which no ear that heard them can ever forget. Such was "Jamie Brown"—weaver, sailor, student, and newspaper editor.

Under its succession of editors, the *Review*, in its own phrase, always "adhered to the sterling Whigs," but the adherence did not prevent it from "seeing their faults and exposing them." One of its early editors was James Bowick, an able journalist, composer of melodies, contributor to the magazines, and author of a life of John Erskine, of Dun. In his days the *Review* and its readers were much occupied with the great questions of Parliamentary and Municipal Reform, and with Joseph Hume, the well-known Member of Parliament for the Aberdeen District of Burghs. The burghs represented by Hume were Aberdeen, Montrose, Arbroath, Brechin, and Bervie, each having one vote, which was exercised by a delegate appointed by the Magistrates and Town Council. Hume used to carry Montrose, Arbroath, and Brechin, but never found favour with the municipal rulers of Aberdeen and Bervie. On one occasion, when there was no second candidate, the Aberdeen delegate stayed away from the election on the plea of indisposition—a plea scoffed at by the *Review*, which duly recorded that at the

election dinner Mr. Hume, referring to the degraded state of Aberdeen and Bervie, remarked that “so despicable was the situation that they were ready to coincide with any third burgh on behalf of any creature, be he what he may, who will be the tool of the men in power.” The other side of the question was reflected in the *Journal*, and each had its partisans in the respective circles of readers.

Another newspaper of importance in the district was the *Dundee Advertiser*, which from 1809 to 1825 was under the charge of Mr. Robert Stephen Rintoul, an accomplished political writer, who afterwards went to London and established the *Spectator*, which still flourishes in all its pristine vigour. In Mr. Rintoul’s days provincial papers concerned themselves almost exclusively with Imperial affairs. One week he announced that “we have heard no local news worth repeating, and do not feel disposed to make any!”

Among other leaflets of an ephemeral kind, which from time to time found their way into the parish, were some copies of that remarkable tract entitled “*The Swearer’s Prayer*,” published by the Religious Tract Society upwards of sixty-five years ago. Its authorship was locally ascribed to Mr. Spencer, the parochial teacher; for so ascribing it there was no authority. That he may have been the means of introducing it to Fordoun, and also of seeing that it fell into the hands of persons accustomed to use well-rounded vocables, we can

readily believe. The tract, from its plain and practical character, would commend itself to him. His own style, as we have seen, was direct and forcible.

“The Swearer’s Prayer” became “out of date,” and was withdrawn from circulation long ago. It is estimated that about two million copies had been circulated. Notwithstanding this vast distribution, it is difficult now to get hold of a copy. When or by whom the tract was written it would not be easy to ascertain. The authorship, like that of “Junius’s Letters,” seems to be a subject for speculation. The tract, which consists of four pages, is taken up chiefly with a narrative of sudden deaths, which, following on “horrid imprecations,” were regarded as judgments of God. One of the instances cited happened when a cock-fighting match was on!

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### **An Ingenious Watchmaker.**

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“NOSIE CARNEGKY.”

Robert Carneggy, commonly called “Nosie,” on account of the prominence of his nose, was a watch and clock maker. His place of business was feu No. 7 on the east side. He was a decided genius in his own particular line. His clocks were of superior workmanship and much prized in the district. “Nosie” was famed for his skill in repair-

ing timepieces, telescopes, spectacles, and every species of delicate mechanism. It was said of him that he could "coin" a piece if "change" should happen to be scarce. Whatever secrets of art he may have possessed, he took this sure precaution to protect them :—no one was ever allowed to see him at work. He died early in the "thirties." He was succeeded by James Booth, who came, we believe, from a parish in the upper regions of Banffshire. Mr. Booth was an intelligent and thoroughly upright man. He, it may be added, was one of the tallest men ever seen on "any countryside," or, for that matter, outside the precincts of a caravan. The parish possessed some splendid specimens, such, for example, as John Annandale, otherwise "lang John," the mason, and Charles Crow, the tailor, either of whom would have been a marked man even in the most select ranks of Frederick the Great, but in stature James Booth was unrivalled. We had some very interesting conversation with Mr. Booth, at our parting interview, two nights before his death.

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### A Pronounced Politician.

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#### "AULD INIQUITY."

About the year 1830, there squatted down in the village a cattle-dealer or drover, named Alexander

Ellice. Little was known of his antecedents; but he was a man with very pronounced political opinions, and one who seems to have presented a "porcupine edge" to all with whom he came in contact. Anyhow, he contrived to make himself very obnoxious to his neighbours, and to the younger members of the community in general, among whom he earned the nickname of "Auld Iniquity," an appellation which seems to have been so appropriate, that he carried it with him to his grave. The drover, though, like a certain creature described by Burns, "detested baith by saint and sinner," contrived, notwithstanding, to win the affections of a guileless widow lady, who, in addition to some cash, owned the property No. 6, west side. The star of "Auld Iniquity" did not long remain in the ascendant, but set as abruptly as it had risen.

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### A Venturesome Youth.

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"SATAN."

The village possessed another drover with a distinctive title, somewhat akin to that of the man just described. Unlike "Auld Iniquity," however, Jamie Paterson, *alias* "Satan," was of native growth, not an importation. He had been a venturesome youth in his day. When yet very young, he thrust an arm through a window at

the spinning mill. It got entangled among the machinery, and was so lacerated that amputation was the result. During the operation, Jamie displayed such pluck and defiance of spirit, that the surgeon who performed it pronounced him a "perfect Satan," a sobriquet which stuck to him through life.

He had some inventive genius, and on given occasions had recourse to a device which fully compensated for the lost limb. When about to pound an adversary, he tied a good sized stone into the empty sleeve, and, thus armed, laid on in a merciless manner. Once, at least, this barbarous mode of warfare brought him within the clutches of the law. On the whole, however, unless some unusual provocation occurred to rouse the satanic ire, Jamie, with his sagacious dog "Sweep," pursued his avocations peacefully. The last time we saw any reference to him was where, in a sheep worrying case, he led important evidence in the Sheriff Court at Stonehaven. He died at Laurencekirk a few years ago.

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### **The Parish Doctor.**

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The first medical man who succeeded in establishing himself in the parish was Dr. Joseph Henderson. Now and again during the century

other members of the profession had made attempts to acquire a footing, but they all proved birds of passage, and for many years Dr. Henderson held the field against all comers. He was a native of Fifeshire, and on the completion of his studies came to Auchinblae, where he set up practice. His first residence was on the west side of Kintore Street, but in later years he removed to more commodious premises on the opposite side. Dr. Henderson was a tall, good-looking man. He was in features somewhat like Lord Brougham, but without the scowl that shaded the great statesman's face. He was a skilful surgeon. Where broken bones were concerned, he had the reputation of having a fine delicate touch, while close observation and long experience had rendered him a good physician. He was a shrewd man, said little, but saw and knew well what was going on round about him. He was an excellent horseman, performed his journeys on horseback, and had in the course of a long career cantered over many a thousand miles. He knew intimately every foot of the parish, and had visited professionally every house and hamlet within it. He died on 3rd June, 1875, at the age of 70. As we have indicated, he was an experienced rider, yet, melancholy to relate, the immediate cause of his death was a fall from his horse on the Drumslead Road. The animal had only been a short time in his possession, and appears to have been of a somewhat restive disposition.

His wife, Jane Brodie, survived him about nine years. They had a large family. John Brodie is the only one now alive; the rest died early. He followed his father's profession, and has now a good practice at Waltham Abbey in England.

About 1870, Dr. James Robertson, who was educated at the northern University, commenced the practice of medicine in Fordoun. He was then in the prime of life—a man of pleasing manners, and an obliging disposition. He was gradually forming a good connection when the death of his contemporary, Dr. Henderson, occurred. This event practically left him in possession of the field. His success seemed secured, when, to the great regret of his many friends, he also was suddenly cut off in the spring of 1887.

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### **A Church Precentor.**

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JOHN SIVEWRIGHT.

The earliest precentor that we can learn anything definite about was John Sivewright. The date of his advent to Fordoun may be gathered from the following rhyme, which was in the recollection of some of the older inhabitants fifty or sixty years ago:—

'Twas seventeen hundred and ninety-four  
 When Hieland John the hills came o'er.  
 He learned them a' to gape and glour,  
 And sing the tunes in Fordoun.

Ae simmer Sunday in July,  
 Soon after Paldy Fair was bye,  
 John took the road *wi' help to try*  
 And lead the praise in Fordoun.

But though he made nae little din,  
 And threw his face from broo to chin,  
 The feint ae tune could John begin  
 That e'er was heard in Fordoun.

Then up there started bauld Dunbar,  
 His yelps and growls were heard afar ;  
 Instead o' better he did waur,  
 If waur could be in Fordoun !

The doctor's face grew red that day ;  
 He rose and shook his locks so grey,  
 Cried " Stop, stop, John, and let us pray—  
 God sake, can this be Fordoun ? "

Notwithstanding some failings, John Sivewright was, according to local tradition, rather above the average in merit as a precentor. He composed some tunes himself, and a collection of sacred music bearing his name was in use in the early part of the century. The little book is now rarely to be met with. It is entitled, "A Collection of Church Tunes and Anthems, in three parts, with a few Duets, Catches, Glees, &c., selected from the best authors, by John Sivewright, Teacher of Church Music, Fordoun: a new edition enlarged. Printed for the Author, and sold at J. Hamilton's Music

Shop, No. 24, North Bridge Street, Edinburgh." The names of G. Murray, Bookseller, Montrose, and Mr. Burnett, Bookseller, Aberdeen, likewise appear on the title page, but there is no date to fix the exact year of its publication. We infer, however, from the name on the title that he was resident in Fordoun when this new edition appeared, and, from other circumstances, that the time of its appearance was somewhere within the first ten years of the century.

The collection contains a tune bearing the name of "Fordoun," to which is set the verse—

Salvation is the joyful sound,  
'Tis music to our ears ;  
A sovereign balm for every wound,  
A cordial for our fears.

There are tunes also with the names of "Meigle," "Monymusk," "Kemnay," and "Kintore," and it is probable that in each of these parishes, at some period of his career, he had exercised his vocation.

We learn from Love's "Scottish Church Music" (Blackwood, 1891 : p. 334) that Sivewright held office for a time as precentor in the parish church at Oldmeldrum, from which situation he retired in 1835 on the liberal allowance of £3 per annum. He appears to have died in that town about 1846. In the short sketch in Love's volume, one or two satirical verses relating to an episode in John's career at Fordoun are quoted, but they are taken from a different version to that retained in local

tradition, and reproduced above. They also ascribe the origin of the satire to a cause different from that to which it was locally assigned—to wit, John's absence from the "lettern" himself on a given occasion, when his pupils tried in succession to "raise the tune," and all miserably failed. The local story is that John was suffering from the effects of a visit to Paldy Fair, that he broke down in his attempt to lead, and that his henchman, "bauld Dunbar," entered the breach, but only to prove himself as conspicuous if not a greater failure.

We are told by the authority already quoted that Sivewright possessed a good knowledge of music, and had a fair compass of voice, but was afflicted with an impediment of speech, which was not in his favour. If the Paldy Fair story be true, we daresay the scene in the church on the occasion referred to was impressive enough.

We may add that Mr. Sivewright himself belonged to the Turriff district and his wife to the parish of Tarves. They had a family of three sons and two daughters. One of the latter died at Oldmeldrum. All the rest, in course of time, emigrated to America. The youngest son was engaged as a tutor for a time before he went abroad. Mr. Manson, the respected proprietor of Oakhill, in Oldmeldrum, was, we believe, one of his pupils.

Whilst on the subject of music we cannot forbear a passing reference to the late Deacon Bruce.

Fifty years ago, the Deacon's presence in the parish church was a circumstance that could never be ignored by those who undertook the task of leading the psalmody. The Deacon's voice was a factor which no aspirant to that office could with safety leave out of his calculations. Deep, powerful, and of far-reaching compass, it was heard in every corner of the building. When that sonorous wave rolled in from aloft, the most experienced and robust leader had to take heed to his bearings; while if a novice should happen to be in the lettern—piping perhaps in minor key—he ran the certain risk of being either stranded or totally submerged!

On rare occasions the worthy Deacon occupied the precentor's desk himself. Those who remember his broad chest and lusty lung can yet well imagine how the walls of old Zion would reverberate as he led off with "Coleshill," or some other of our grand old church tunes, with which every congregation was once so familiar. In the Deacon's day there was no place for your hum-drum precentor.

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### **Peripatetic Teachers of Music.**

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Every now and again, in "pre-disruption" days, the parish had the privilege of being visited in turns by two professional teachers of music—Mr. Addison and Mr. Youngson. Both were excellent singers,

especially the latter, who had a singularly sweet and melodious voice. In later and less stirring times, Mr. Watson, another itinerant teacher, used to pay an occasional visit. Besides musical talent, each of those three professionals had an inexhaustible fund of entertaining stories. Their psalmody classes were well attended, being attractive and pleasant places of resort in the winter evenings.

#### JAMES RENNIE, THE LAST OF THE RACE.

The race of itinerant singing-masters who used to turn up periodically in country parishes appears to have entirely died out. Jamie Rennie, once a familiar name, was the last of his class that was wont to visit Fordoun. Jamie was socially inclined, and sometimes, poor man, had to suffer for his excesses. Steering westward one winter night from the village of Drumlithie, he fell and fractured a leg. It was during nocturnal hours, and, meeting with no assistance, he had to crawl in most unromantic fashion from Kinkell to Auchinblae, where he had his abode at the time. Henceforth he had to walk on crutches. At one time he was a man of some note in the musical world, and a singer (notably of Scotch songs) of no mean order; but latterly his vocal powers, as well as his powers of locomotion, had become sadly impaired. He died some years ago.

## CHAPTER VI.

**Coaches and Conveyances.**

PRIOR to the extension of the railway system; communication through the Howe o' the Mearns and Vale of Strathmore—the great highway to the north and south—was by stage coach. Gradually, however, the metals crept northward, and journeying by coach diminished in corresponding degree, until finally about the middle of the century this mode of transit practically disappeared from Kincardineshire. But for many a day the “Defiance” coach was a well-known and familiar object to the dwellers along its route. Leaving Aberdeen at an early hour, and changing horses at various stages on its course (where, if the weather were cold, the driver and guard could regale themselves with a jug of warm porter), the coach passed through Fordoun on its southern journey about nine o'clock in the morning. At the cross-roads opposite the premises—dwelling-house and workshop—then occupied by John Dunbar, an ingenious millwright, and near to the site of the present railway station, the guard was wont to sound his horn, and the coach was

momentarily brought to a stand, when any passenger could mount or alight, and when the trusty guard could give delivery of any treasure specially committed to his charge. Here, month by month for many years, the banker's courier was accustomed to obtain delivery of carefully sealed bags of coin and parcels of bank notes to supply circulating medium for the wants of the district. Only once, we believe, did this faithful messenger allow the "Defiance" to pass the rallying point before his arrival. Laying whip to the ribs of his horse, John was not long, on the occasion in question, ere he drew himself abreast of the coach, deeply mortified, no doubt, at having allowed it so far to outrun him, while the guard, holding aloft the precious parcel, only chuckled over the *contretemps*. John vowed that the poor *Davie's* running powers should never again be put to such a test, and the good man, we believe, faithfully kept his vow!

About the year 1835, chiefly through the enterprise of Mr. Bruce, of the Kintore Arms Inn—a hospitable house from which "no one was allowed to depart with dry meal in his stomach"—a coach, styled the "Braes of Fordoun," was started to run from Aberdeen *via* Stonehaven and Drumlithie. A little to the west of the latter place it crossed the Water of Bervie (spanned at the point by a substantial two-arched bridge), and then ascended the steep road flanking the north side of the Knock Hill. At Rockindigo, the extremity of

the western spur of this mountain, the village of Auchinblae, little over a mile distant, comes in view. Having turned the shoulder of the rock, the coach rattled rapidly down the brae of Kinkell, and, entering the village at the north end, was speedily at its next stopping point in front of the Kintore Arms Inn.

As may be supposed, the "Braes of Fordoun" was a welcome and stirring sight. The jocund organ-grinder, with "his stupendous load and nimble monkey," never created a greater "rage" in any country place. The guard's scarlet coat, the shrill sound of his bugle, both excited and attracted the youth of the place. Sedater members of the community, too, turned out to see what strangers had been imported from the north, and if possible discover on what particular errands they were bent. On one of its earliest journeys, if not on the very first run, the "Braes of Fordoun" met with a misadventure which, but for the presence of mind of those in charge, might have resulted in very serious consequences. A number of the inhabitants had gone forth to meet the coach, and, in order to give it a kind of triumphal entry, all who could had scrambled aloft. Driving down the village at a rapid rate with this heavy and promiscuous supercargo, the vehicle swayed, and just when about to enter on the steep decline into the market square, the horses became restive, and some of their extemporised trappings gave way. Davie

Lindsay, the driver—a cool and experienced whip—dexterously pulled the animals to a side, thus bringing the coach to a stand-still. The passengers thoroughly shaken and alarmed, extricated themselves from their perilous position in the speediest way they could. Mr. Bruce, who appears to have been the guiding spirit on the occasion, is reported to have, with characteristic daring, leapt on to the roof of a house on the right at the point where the accident occurred. The incident would not be worth recording were it not that it seems to have occasioned considerable sensation at the time. In the summer of that year (1835), we find the *Aberdeen Shaver* (a publication of considerable notoriety in its day) making humorous allusion to the affair, and poking fun at the principal personages connected with it. In later numbers the *Shaver* made repeated references, in its own vein, to the “Braes of Fordoun” coach, and threatened to make a tour by it to the Mearns equipped with one of its sharpest razors! Whether the *Shaver* ever carried this threat into action, we know not, but it certainly devoted enough attention to certain members of the community in this quarter.

The career of the coach came to an abrupt close. In those days travellers were not so numerous as they are now; men were not tempted to go so much from home; moreover, they had not lost the art of walking, so that, when the occasion did arise, a journey of thirty or forty miles afoot

was not deemed a herculean day's task. Nay, we could instance cases of stalwart pedestrians, fed on fresh air and the simplest of fare, who could, in special emergencies, staff in hand, perform a journey from the Mearns to the Scottish metropolis itself in a wonderfully brief space of time.

Stonehaven, as the county town, was naturally the place of most frequent resort. When the lieges fell out, as would sometimes happen, it was thither they repaired to have their disputes settled and grievances redressed. In every community there are to be found litigious natures, who will gratify their taste for "law" on the very slightest pretext, and in Fordoun there was a sprinkling of such individuals. These had their special retainers at the county bar, which has never been wanting in talent. At the time of which we write there were in the profession here some exceptionally able and acute men whose names, as household words, could yet be recalled. It used to be said that if a litigant was possessed either of a cow or a calf, or an eight-day clock, his case could be made good at Stonehaven; further, that the lawyers there differed from those of other towns in respect that they did all the necessary embellishments themselves, whereas in other places that duty was imposed on the witnesses! Apart, however, from such traditional jokes, the legal fraternity of this shire have, as a whole, been a highly gifted and superior class of men.

Reverting to the means of transit, about fifteen years after the withdrawal of the "Braes of Fordoun" stage-coach, Mr. Bruce, still full of spirit and energy, placed another coach on the high road *via* Glenbervie, to run daily between Auchinblae and the county town ; but his enterprise did not meet with the requisite encouragement, and this coach, like its predecessor, had to be withdrawn. By this time, however, the whistle of the steam-engine had become a familiar sound in the Howe o' the Mearns ; and troops of *navvies*, under vigilant *gaffers*, were vigorously engaged in completing railway connection with Aberdeen. This was effected in the year 1852, and stage coaches, thenceforth, became things of the past in Kincardineshire. Mr. Bruce bowed to the inevitable ; he knew that horse power could not compete with steam. As the next best thing, however—embracing his opportunity—he placed an omnibus for passengers on the road betwixt the village and Fordoun Station. For this and many other services, the community were deeply indebted to that gentleman. He did much otherwise to enliven the place, and prevent it from falling into that state of monotony into which rural villages are apt to subside when the spirit of enterprise is wanting, and there is nothing to connect them with the speculative forces in operation outside their contracted circle.

Before passing from this subject, it may be proper briefly to allude to one or two of the most

prominent personages who acted as public carriers in the first half of the century. In 1835, we find David Sherret—a genial, honest man, long since departed—was still keeping communication open between the village and Aberdeen. With horse and cart, he performed the journey once a week with unfailing regularity (save when a snow-storm blocked his path), carrying a promiscuous cargo of goods and parcels, with an occasional passenger, who had business to transact in the city. David's rendezvous in Aberdeen was the then well-known Union Inn at 42, St. Nicholas Street, kept by Mr. James Sherriffs. There David and his patient beast of burden found hospitable quarters. In later years we find him performing like offices to the community between Auchinblae and Montrose. He was succeeded in this carrying business by Mr. George Burness, a man equally trusted, and for long well known on the north and south roads which he had footed so often. The advents of those carriers, whether from the north or south, were always eagerly looked for. Both of the two named were feuars in the village—George's house being situated on the east side of Inverurie Street (the more northerly), while David's occupied a site lower down, on the west side of the Market Square.

In addition to the carriers named above, Mr. William Ritchie, another thoroughly reliable man (likewise a feuar), performed a bi-weekly journey to Bervie and Gourdon, bringing thence, besides other

goods, the only regular supply of coals that came to the village in those days. The quantity then used was small, as the staple article of fuel was peat.

There are, we believe, not a few people here and elsewhere who would gladly see some of the old race of carriers again on the road. They were punctual, and very careful of goods committed to their charge.

The last of the race who journeyed between Auchinblae and Aberdeen was James Paterson (otherwise "Old Hillie"), whose horse bore the classic name of "Dante," a beast of elephantine size and strength, but obstinate to a degree that could hardly be surpassed. No amount of thrashing could induce Dante to quicken his pace, and his master excused him on the ground that he did not feel the blows but only heard the sound of them!

## CHAPTER VII.

**Meal Mills.**  

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IN an earlier chapter of this treatise we have devoted considerable space to the history of the flax-spinning mill and a description of its works. It may not be amiss now to explain to some extent how the parish was situated in regard to another class of mills—those, namely, for the manufacture of oatmeal. Corn-grinding is both an ancient and an honourable occupation. The mill has descended to us from feudal times, with associations almost sacred. The miller himself has always been regarded as a man of character and invention. Mill multures, on which, in days gone-by, his income mainly depended, are admittedly a complex and difficult subject. Lax notions sometimes prevailed in regard to them, as the following incident, gathered from local tradition, will help to illustrate. It relates to a certain member of the craft who was noted for his humour and quaint sayings. Whether he had mastered the theory of multures may be a doubtful point, but, if the traditional story be true, he had evidently learnt to regulate his practice in regard to it on principles most advantageous

to himself. On one occasion the miller referred to is said to have enquired, first at his wife, and then at his daughter, whether a certain quantity of meal, about to be removed from the precincts of his mill, had been "multured." From each in turn he received an affirmative reply. It had already undergone the process at the hand of both. Whereupon, the miller—so the story runs—avowed his distrust in the competency of either the one or the other to perform so delicate an operation, and, forthwith, proceeded to multure the meal himself. Thus was it thrice subjected to the process to the prejudice of its owner and the profit of the miller.

Mechanical appliances, so far as can be traced, were not introduced into Fordoun at a very early date. Meal mills seem to have been the first, and must by all accounts have been of rude construction to begin with, for so late as the end of last century, and even after the beginning of the present, they were no better than large "querns" driven by a clumsy arrangement of wooden wheels. They were used only to grind or crush the grain. The process of sifting and cleaning was by hand, and those who sent the grain to the mill had to see to the performance of this part of the business themselves. The miller's function was simply to grind.

In early days, the drying of the corn was also done by the farmers themselves on kilns of their own, which were simply pits dug in some braeside, and floored over with wood and a carpeting of

straw. Being thus very inflammable they were every now and again burned. "Cushnie" (the late Alexander Taylor) used to relate that the last kiln on that farm was burned down in the days of his grandfather; and that, as the tenant did not intend longer to have a kiln of his own, this unfortunate one was not reconstructed, but covered up, while the "dryster," who perished at the same time, was similarly disposed of. He was believed to be quite dead, and therefore of no more use! Many years after, the workmen, in excavating for the foundations of a new building, came upon the charred bones of the last of "Cushnie's" drysters.

In those days the miller was considered "uncanny." He was possessed, people believed, of a kind of black-art, and was capable of doing some things that could only be done by a person in league with the Devil. For example, by muttering some mystic word, he could make the mill stop or go at his pleasure.

In some of the older mills in the parish, parts of the original mechanism are yet to be seen—their internal appointments never having been entirely changed and renovated.

There was a predisposition in former days to credit any statement where the integrity of the miller was concerned. In some parts of the country, it had almost passed into a proverb that, if one wished to lose his character, he should adopt the profession either of a miller or a minister—the

saying probably having allusion both to the dignity of their calling and the colour of their respective coats—white and black being easily soiled. Be this as it may, such sayings serve to show that the miller's occupation was an important one, and consequently that he himself, as already remarked, was a person of note in the community.

At the period under review, oatmeal was a staple article of food in this northern part of the country—indispensable, in fact, to the very existence of the nation. The harbours of the wheat-growing countries of Europe were practically shut to Britain, and the inexhaustible stores of the West had not yet been opened to meet our requirements. With such plentiful supplies as are now poured in from all quarters of the globe, the home-grown article is beginning to be regarded as a kind of rarity. But Scotia will retrograde if she is ever so inconsiderate as abandon her native products for foreign dainties.

Among the meal and barley mills planted throughout the parish the names of Galloquhine, Denmill, and Pitrennie are familiar. Every district had its own particular mill, to which, by agreement with the superior, the feuars, farmers, and crofters were *thirled*. The parish of Fordoun was well provided with grinding power. Galloquhine, the first mill cited, was perhaps one of the more important in a historic point of view. It was situated in the vale immediately below the steading of the farm owning the same name, and was in fact an adjunct of the

farm. It derived its water supply from the West Burn, which, as already explained, takes its rise in Drumtochty glen. It was to this mill that the tenants on the barony of Glenfarquhar, and those feuars in Auchinblae that were vassals of the baron, owed allegiance.

The house of Galloquhine in earlier days was not only the farmer's residence, but a licensed inn. It stood then (as it stands now) facing the road that leads to the ford below the mill. Crossing at this ford, that road—ascending zig-zagwise to a spur of the Grampians opposite the parish church, thence turning in a westerly direction—passed *via* Fettercairn, Edzell, and Brechin into the vale of Strathmore. Much of this ancient roadway has now been obliterated, but it was in former days a road frequently traversed by dealers from lower Deeside and other northern parts *en route* for the southern markets. On going to or returning from these, this wayside inn was a comfortable and convenient resting place. Here, therefore, pilgrims would often halt to find shelter and refreshment. To this house also, it is no stretch of the imagination to suppose, the local miller for the time being, if he happened to be of a social disposition, would occasionally repair to sharpen his wits, slake his thirst, and find temporary respite from his grinding occupation.

Associated with the name of Galloquhine there is one outstanding personage who deserves a place in these reminiscences. No one alive who

was acquainted with "Miller Beattie," as the individual referred to was familiarly styled, will have any difficulty in recalling the stalwart figure of William Beattie. None, certainly, that ever experienced the grasp of his powerful fist will be likely soon to forget the impression it left. In stature far exceeding the common standard of mortals, with "square members" proportionate thereto, as the historian Boece would have described them, the miller was a man of herculean strength—the very *beau ideal* of what a specimen of his profession ought to be—renowned throughout the district for his physical powers. To swing with "the miller's lift," as it was called, a sack of oatmeal over his left shoulder on to his back, and transport a bag of corn, no matter what the weight or what the distance, was child's play to him; when roused he could, like Samson, do exploits. Not strong merely, but agile was the miller. On one occasion an intelligent, but somewhat dogmatic, expositor was expatiating, in the miller's presence, on the benefits to be derived from attending the classes of a certain itinerant dancing-master then stationed in the place—skipping hither and thither lightly by way of illustrating the style of performance. For a time the miller listened and looked on, then, lifting a leg, he put his foot in the nape of his neck, and, hopping round the room with the light grace of a professional acrobat, he turned to his discursive friend, and said, "*Do that wi' your dancin' and deportment, ye bodie, if ye can!*"

Among the miller's contemporaries there were perhaps some better acquainted than he with the folk-lore of the milling craft, and also with the technicalities of the trade, but, take him all and all, in his day and generation there was among "the men of the Mearns" none like unto William Beattie. In feats of agility and strength he was matchless. The miller lived fourscore years. The road leading from the village to the mill was known as "The Miller's Road." (*Vide* the Plan.)

## DENMILL.

Down the valley, about three-quarters of a mile distant from the mill we have left, stands, at the southern extremity of Auchinblae, Denmill, the second of the group of mills cited above. It derived its name, doubtless, from the position it occupies on the north side of the dell. If not erected specially for their accommodation, it was at this time mainly supported by the tenants on Monboddie Estate—the celebrated Lord of that ilk, his predecessors and his successors, being in turn superiors of the ground. The water-power was derived from the Luther Burn, just above the point where that stream tumbles itself over a bed of rocky boulders into "the dampot" below, thenceforth to pursue its course on lower level to the sea. This mill had, in its day and generation, likewise been tenanted by a varied succession of men, each successive

occupant possessing traits of character peculiar to himself. The aphoristic sayings of one of their number gained a currency that kept his name afloat in the district long after he himself had for ever retired from the scene ; but to introduce a sample of "Sooty's" proverbs here would, we fear, not be to edification. Nor need we rehearse any of miller Mowat's astonishing anecdotes, which, drawn from supposed personal experience, awakened many a grin in mill and smiddy.

#### PITRENNIE MILL.

About a mile due south from this point stands, on Arbuthnott land, Pitrennie mill, the third of those specified. It derived its motive power from the same accommodating stream, the Luther, while it drew grist from the homesteads on the surrounding plains. On these plains, in ancient times, scenes had been enacted widely different from any which it has been the lot of the peaceful inhabitants now-a-days to witness. Only a few hundred yards to the east of Pitrennie can still be traced, with more or less distinctness, the lineaments of an encampment, wherein, long centuries ago, Roman troops entrenched themselves for protection in their incursions northwards. How the natives of the vale regarded these bold intruders, with what feelings they witnessed from the uplands the *praetorium* take form, what intercourse they had with the

foreign foe, or whether the only intercourse consisted in efforts to harass him on the march and bar his further progress, are now only matters for speculative imagination.

However it stood with the arts of war in that age, it may be safely assumed that corn-grinding, in modern fashion, was an art unpractised, and unknown, on the banks of the Luther, but that then, as now, it may with equal certainty be concluded, the gentle stream itself pursued the even tenor of its way to the ocean!

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### **Lint Mills.**

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Lint mills were not uncommon at a comparatively early period. They were used for preparing the home-grown flax for hand-spinning "wheels." Almost every woman, industriously inclined, was possessed of such an article. "Spinsters" were numerous. It was considered a great matter to have a good going "wheel;" and a wheelwright in those days had to be a person of profound skill and subtle intellect, for, in addition to being able to construct the machine, he had to contend against witchcraft and the wiles of the Wicked one himself.

Such a wheelwright was Thomas Bonner, who about the middle of last century had his habitation

at Kirkside. He was famed far and wide, and many a perplexed woman came to him with her "wheel" in order that he might remove a spell which some "uncanny" neighbour had laid on. The ingenious man, it need hardly be said, was always equal to the occasion. A drop or two from a little bottle ready at hand, a piece of red worsted, and a mystic word were frequently all that was needed to make the bewitched wheel as perfect as any that ever revolved by the ingle-nook.

#### SPINNING-WHEELS.

It was customary with farmers, in those days, to keep several servant maids, whose work in great measure was to ply the spinning-wheel, and who thus earned for their mistresses a good deal more than sufficed to meet their wages, while, at the sametime, discharging their share of the household duties. Round a huge fire of peats, carted from the "Goyle" or other parish commonty, on the winter evenings, sat the lasses at their spinning-wheels. Dangling overhead from a blackened rafter, hung the old oily *crusie*, described in another chapter, casting weird and quivering shadows around. As the evening wore on, first one young man and then another, would steal in through the shadows about the door, and quietly seat themselves by the fire. By and by, as the blaze of the peat fell low, and the *crusie's* wick waxed dim, the

shadows of the lads and lasses drew closer and closer, until at last a venturesome arm crept round between the maiden and her wheel. As she turned her head a little, the fitful thing forgot to "birr," but "stolen waters are sweet," and a kindly "smack" filled up the space! When the hour for retiring came round, the visitors with due circumspection disappeared among the shadows again, taking care not to waken the "guidman" from his slumbers in the "ben-end"!

Such were the conditions under which lint spinning was carried on in other days.

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## **Thrashing Mills.**

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### THE FLAIL AND THE FAN.

Thrashing mills were not known in the parish until the very end of last century, and "fanners" were even later in being introduced. The country people had indeed a great aversion to machinery of every description. Seventy years ago very few farmers would consent to winnow their corn with the "Devil's wind." The barns were constructed with an arrangement of doors that allowed the wind to blow right through them, and the grain being "riddled" in the draught, the chaff was blown out to leeward.

Fifty years ago one would have heard the ceaseless thud of the flail at almost every farm-town in the parish. The barn door used to be divided horizontally into two sections, and when the operation of threshing was going on the lower part was kept bolted, but, over the top of it, the sturdy barnman, with his legs set beneath him like a Gothic arch, could be seen as with untiring vigour he whirled the flail about his head, uttering a grunt with every thud. When he had thoroughly thrashed it and beaten out every seed, he, with a change of hand and a dexterous sweep, sent the lightened straw flying to the other side of the barn. The village had some splendid barnmen. William Scott and David Greig were "to the manner born."

William Taylor was among the earliest makers of farm-fans in the parish, if not in the country. He was, by reason of his occupation, familiarly known as "Old Fanners." His fans, people said, were odd-looking things—rather asthmatic perhaps—and the grain had to be put through them two or three times ere it was considered properly "dichted" and "dressed," especially if it was intended for the market. Still, Mr. Taylor's fans were well-compacted machines, in good demand in their day, and he is worthy of all honour for his invention. It was an improvement on former methods. He had his industrial residence at a small farm on the estate of Monboddo.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**Banking.**

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JAMES FARQUHARSON.

IN the year 1815—in some respects yet the most memorable in the century—a bank for small savings was, by the foresight of the Rev. Dr. Leslie, as elsewhere mentioned, established in Fordoun, under the parish schoolmaster as actuary. This early effort to foster habits of thrift seems to have met with due appreciation among those classes for whose benefit it was principally designed.

In twenty-seven years (namely, by 1842), the bank had attained such proportions as to warrant its being incorporated as a branch of the National Security Savings Bank. It was not, however, until the year 1837 that the privileges of the banking system proper were extended to the place. But on the 8th of May in that year a branch of the North of Scotland Bank was planted in Auchinblae. The gentleman selected for agent was, Mr. James Farquharson. He had come to the place originally as clerk at the flax-spinning works, and some years prior to this time had become sole proprietor of

those works. He had presumably a fair knowledge of the resources and requirements of the district from a banking point of view ; his appointment, therefore, was favourably regarded. The house secured for office accommodation was situated on the west side of the Market Square, directly opposite the Kintore Arms Inn, then owned and occupied by Mr. Alexander Bruce, a most genial and, in his day, widely known man, possessed of a rich vein of genuine humour. Full of quiet energy, with not a little enterprise, as we shall see, Mr. Farquharson in the course of a few years collected a considerable amount of deposits, and built up a fair general business for his constituents. They were the first, as has been shown, to occupy the field, and the monopoly in the banking trade thus acquired they retained so long as he continued to represent them, which was for a period of between sixteen and seventeen years.

About the year 1848 he threw out two agencies as *sub-offices* to his own—one in the neighbouring village of Fettercairn, and another at Edzell, in Forfarshire. Both gave satisfactory promise of ultimately proving successful ventures ; but after trial for a year or two the latter agency was withdrawn, and at the close of 1853 the other abruptly shared the same fate. It should, however, be stated that the ground in Forfarshire was speedily occupied by another bank, while Fettercairn, after an interval of twenty-five years, was reclaimed by its

original occupants—the North of Scotland Bank. These facts prove that Mr. Farquharson was ahead of his time. In each of the places a flourishing banking business is now carried on.

In the autumn of 1853—to the surprise and regret of many—a crisis occurred in Mr. Farquharson's own affairs. In consequence, he resigned the bank agency; his connection with the spinning-mill ceased at the same time. Calm and self-possessed, he was patient under misfortune. With resolute spirit he set himself to form new connections and recover lost ground. The City of Glasgow Bank was at this time spreading its ramifications all over the country; Mr. Farquharson now applied for an agency of that bank, and his application was granted. His friend, Mr. Kerr, of Dundee, elsewhere referred to, had just completed the erection of a substantial villa on the east side of Kintore Street. In a wing of this building, he temporarily found the necessary office accommodation; but, not long after, he removed to a property of his own on the opposite side, further down the street. Thus Auchinblae came to enjoy the privilege of possessing two banks instead of one. Mr. Farquharson continued the representative of the City of Glasgow Bank until that ill-fated establishment finally closed its doors on the 2nd October, 1878. Mr. Farquharson had thus the misfortune to be once more cast adrift, but the old resolution that had sustained him in more trying vicissitudes

had not forsaken him, and he was at once taken over by another banking institution. The Town and County Bank, long and ably represented in other parts of the county, had not hitherto planted foot so far up among the Grampians, but they now established themselves in Auchinblae under Mr. Farquharson. Here, associated for a time with his younger son, Francis, and latterly with his elder son, William, he continued their faithful representative down to the period of his death.

Such was the banking career of James Farquharson. He possessed in considerable degree some of the qualifications more essential to the character of a successful banker. He was prudent and discreet—a man of few words, and one in whose keeping confidences were always safe.

Without some account of the various pursuits—agricultural, commercial and industrial—which, in addition to that of banking, had at one time or other engaged his attention, our readers would be able to form but a very imperfect idea of the man's energy of character and the active life he led. We shall therefore be excused if we attempt a more extended notice of his career.

He appears to have been educated at the Montrose Academy, a well equipped and ably taught institution. His father long had his residence in the neighbourhood of that town. On quitting the Academy Mr. Farquharson entered, as clerk, the counting-house of a large manufacturing

firm in the same place. As a schoolboy—we have it on the testimony of one who knew him well in early days—he was quiet and reserved, refusing to join his companions in their sports on the playground. While yet young, he transferred his services as clerk to the flax spinning-mill at Auchinblae, and with the fortunes of that place his own henceforth became closely identified. None was ever better qualified for such an appointment. Rapid in mental calculation, he was dexterous in the manipulation of figures with pen or pencil, and his powers as an accountant were justly admired. He had an excellent system of book-keeping, and all his transactions were recorded with a regularity, neatness, and exactitude that could hardly be exceeded. His handwriting, too, peculiar perhaps, some called it “lady-like,” was uniform and beautifully distinct. He was, besides, a man of exquisite taste; he delighted in good writing material and stationery articles generally of the first quality. On a copperplate-looking page his eye feasted, and blurs and blots, on the other hand, were an offence to it.

In 1841 Mr. Farquharson married Isabella Reid, only daughter of William Reid, who was tenant of the farms of East and West Galloquhine. The work-people and villagers generally showed great rejoicings on the occasion. On Mr. Reid's death a year or two after, he became lessee of those farms, and set himself enthusiastically to the business of

farming. In 1852 he was awarded a gold medal by the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland for a competitive essay on the cultivation of flax. In that essay, which is published in the Society's Transactions (vol. July, 1852 to March, 1853: New Series), he thus describes the farms then in his occupation:—"They extend together to 160 acres, are situated close to the Grampian range of mountains, and are separated from each other by a stream, which takes its rise amongst the hills about three miles north-west of the centre of the farms. The altitude above the level of the sea varies from 290 to 350 feet; and, although situated ten miles inland, the harvest is frequently not more than from six to ten days later than on the east coast. The exposure is south and south-eastern, and the climate is peculiarly salubrious, being dry, with rather a high but equable temperature. Besides being intersected by a stream of water, one of the farms is bounded on the south-east by a burn or rivulet. On the higher grounds the soil is composed of a brown light loam, resting on a gravelly subsoil, and quite dry. The haugh lands, situated on the banks of the streams already referred to, are composed of alluvial deposits, occasionally interspersed with patches of gravel."

Such was the situation of the two farms as minutely described by himself, whereon forty years ago the experiment of flax culture was successfully tried.

In addition to the farms, Mr. Farquharson inherited, through his marriage, a number of houses situated in the southern end of the village, with extensive garden and orchard grounds. These subjects were prized by their former owner ("Gallops," as he was familiarly called) because of the revenues they yielded, but in the hands of their new possessor the older edifices were destined soon to disappear, and the grounds surrounding them to undergo a total transformation.

Mr. Farquharson's energies could not be suppressed, they must have scope. Accordingly, he fenced, and drained, and planted. He cut channels, and, like Cyrus of old, he diverted the course of streams; he built bridges, made crooked paths straight, and turned barren wastes into fruitful fields. Before his march of improvement ancient landmarks disappeared. Humble cottages, the abodes of simple men for generations past, were demolished. Others were remodelled and renovated. Nearly fifty years after most of the changes adverted to had been effected, a legal gentleman, unaware of the fact that the course of a particular stream, forming one of the boundary lines of a property now under his charge, had been altered, was sorely puzzled to verify the measurements specified in the proprietor's charter. Had he known that this historic stream no longer "straggled," as of yore, at its own sweet will, but was now a straight

scientifically "shod" burn, the problem would have been easier of solution.

Finally, Mr. Farquharson built for himself, after a design by Mr. George Croll (a modest, unpretending local architect), a residence, palatial in comparison with any of the houses that had hitherto existed in the place. But, alas! after ten short years, Craig-House (the name was transferred from a thatched hamlet which once stood near by), with all its amenity of lawn and stream and tree—a place beautiful for situation—had, for reasons already explained, to be surrendered.

It need scarcely be said that, while the changes and improvements to which we have been referring gave employment to a number of men for years, they necessarily also involved a considerable expenditure of capital, much of which could never be expected to yield anything approaching an adequate return, if indeed any return at all. That the works should have proved so disastrous to him at whose instance they were carried out may thus not be wondered at. At the same time, it was a matter deeply to be regretted. At this period, the place had a life and activity about it which seem to have passed away.

It may be fitting, ere we pass from this subject, briefly to notice one worthy individual who played an important part in connection with those improvements, and whose name, next to that of his master, should ever be most closely associated with them.

James Cooper might with propriety be termed the chief of Mr. Farquharson's brigade of sappers and miners. An honest man was James—most loyal to his master, always leisurely and deliberate, there was no hurry in his camp; *festina lente*—"make haste slowly"—might well have been the motto borne on his banners. Yet on how many stubborn fields, and on what intractable subjects, had James, with the tried troop who took their marching orders from him, wielded that traditional pickaxe of his, few now remain who could recount! "Corn grows where Troy stood!" Didst thou not make it grow on sites less known to historic fame, but not less unlikely? True, in some instances, inveterate nature re-asserted herself. That brae whereon, fifty years ago, thy brigade toiled so hard to eradicate the broom, still retains its ancient name, and justifies the retention by putting on, perennially as of old, a rich mantle of golden bloom!

James died in the thatched cottage, in which he had dwelt so long, on the south side of the street as it branched off by "the Miller's Road." He was a regular attendant at the Parish Church, had some musical gifts, and assisted in the service of song. He pre-deceased his master, the laird of Galloquhine, by a good many years. He came originally, we believe, from the Ellon district, and was the son of a soldier.

Mr. Farquharson's fondness for agricultural pursuits, and his desire for the acquisition of

land, seem to have been unbounded. To his two inherited holdings, already described in his own words, and which should have been sufficient for the energies of one man, he had long since added the snug little farm of Arnmill (*Aurncalyhows*, *vide* page 70), with its primitive wayside stead-ing, where a household had been when the land belonged to the Abbey of Arbroath, resting on a charter still extant, though more than three hundred and fifty years old. Next fell in various village lots and tenements, which plodding sons of toil had striven to keep under cultivation until the evening of their days, when, with spent energies, they were obliged to renounce them. Drumelzie and Drumtochty, two hitherto independent holdings, then the property of Major Andrew Gammell, were now annexed. In turn the sloping banks of Newlands, a farm which included the once separate holding of Broadlea, together with sundry smaller crofts and tenements, came under his sway. To be the mere possessor of land, however extensive its acreage, was not the summit of his ambition. He aimed at absolute ownership, and nothing short of this it appears would have satisfied him.

The market value of land had, by the keen competition of recent years, now about attained its maximum, and some landed proprietors wisely took advantage of the tide ere it began to recede. It has been seen how large a stake

Mr. Farquharson already had in the lands of the barony. The opportunity had now come when, if so disposed, he might acquire possession of the whole estate. He did so. In 1877, for the round sum of £66,500, he, from being merely in the position of a vassal of Lord Kintore, passed into full right of the barony itself, including the superiority of the greater part of Auchinblae, with its feu-duties and market customs, and other pertinents and privileges.

Mr. Farquharson's occupations, as will be seen, were many and varied. His habits and modes of living were careful and inexpensive. Notwithstanding, however, though his aggregate income must have been considerable, it appears latterly to have been inadequate for his requirements. He acquired the estate when, as we have seen, land was at its maximum. Rentals had now begun to decline, and its value was becoming correspondingly depreciated. Some of the steadings were getting into a state of disrepair, and there was no spare margin to replace or put them into proper condition. Above all, there were heavy burdens on the property, and the annual charge for interest absorbed a large portion of the revenue. Thus, with two concurrent causes—a decreasing rental, and a growing incubus of debt—the tide could not do otherwise than set strongly adverse. When the end came it will not be wondered that affairs were found in a state of hopeless embarrassment.

We have not mentioned the full extent of Mr. Farquharson's enterprise. As fire and life assurance agent, he long represented the Northern Assurance Company, and had formed a large connection. For many years he acted as distributor of stamps and collector of taxes. He held for a time the appointment of actuary of the local Savings Bank. His other connections with banking have already been mentioned. Flax-spinning by power, with all its adjuncts, he carried on. To him the inhabitants were indebted for the introduction of gas-light. At his stores barley and oatmeal in abundance were always to be had at current market prices. He supplied the place with butcher meat for a time, but found from experience that the slaughter of diminutive Orcadian cattle was not remunerative, and so he abandoned this branch of trade. At the factory buildings he had spacious granary accommodation, which he occasionally utilized for a speculation in corn or other kind of commodity. In 1847, the year immediately following the potato blight, the price of oatmeal and other staple articles of food rose to a height that would in a measure have proved prohibitive had not work been plentiful and wages good. To relieve the pressure, Mr. Farquharson that year laid in a large quantity of Riga pease, but a considerable time elapsed ere he succeeded in running them off, and we question whether the venture was appreciated by those for whose benefit it was intended, or proved remunera-

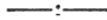
tive to him at whose risk it was carried out. At all events it was not repeated. He was the first, it may also be mentioned, to erect here for the benefit of the community a steelyard of most approved modern pattern. Hitherto the absence of proper weighing apparatus was a felt desideratum. Farmers and others were often put to great inconvenience. Now, however, the weight of a load of hay, coal, or other commodity could for a small fee be at anytime readily ascertained, a man being specially told off to attend, among other duties, to this department of the multifarious business Mr. Farquharson, as we have seen, had in hand.

He was a member of the Established Church, and occupied the front pew in that section of the south gallery assigned to the laird of Drumtochty and his tenants. The laird himself (Major Gammell), being non-resident, did not, as the country folks say, "darken the kirk door often." Accordingly, Mr. Farquharson and his family got the pew to themselves. He attended church with commendable regularity. He did not meddle with ecclesiastical matters, or matters of any kind likely to involve him in controversy. While holding his own opinions, he was tolerant of other people's; and among his employees every kind of creed—religious, social, political—was represented. He was, on the whole, a mild and good tempered master; he had implicit faith in his servants, and there was mutual respect.

On the 19th of October, 1886, at the age of 77, this silent, saddened, and, it may be added, solitary man closed his eyes in death, and the place that had known him so long now knows him no more. He was attended in his last illness by the late lamented Dr. James Robertson. He rests in the churchyard of Fordoun. Five days later his eldest son, William, passed away; and, after a further brief interval of five months, his widow followed him to the tomb—she at the ripe age of 80, the son at the shorter span of 43. James, the second son, died on 9th July, 1869, at the comparatively early age of 25; while Francis Charles, the younger, died on 18th March, 1878, aged 31. His death occurred under melancholy circumstances. He was found dead in his gig in the courtyard of the inn at Fettercairn, to which the horse had instinctively repaired when its master's hand, relaxed in death, had ceased to guide it on its homeward way.

A plain tombstone marks the last resting place of James Farquharson and the members of his now extinct family, and in unadorned letters records their names and ages, with the dates on which they "departed this life."

## CHAPTER IX.

**Feuars and Leaseholders.**

## REMINISCENCES.

WE shall now run rapidly over the names of the feuars specified on page 88, taking them in their order—those on the west side of the street first:—William Reid, popularly known as “Gallops” (a contraction of Galloquhine, of which he was long tenant), was owner of No. 1, now the site of Craig-House. He was a quiet and peaceable man of the old school, who did not “slander with his tongue.” He was tall, wore a long-tailed coat and low-crowned black-beaver hat. He lived to a good age, and was in comfortable circumstances.

No. 2 was held by Mr. John Duffus, another worthy man of the old school, who had his residence on the farm of Auchtochter in the north-east corner of the parish, of which his son-in-law, Mr. James Mitchell, had long been the respected tenant.

No. 3, originally owned by a Mr. John Greig, became in later years the property of the late Mr. Farquharson, of Glenfarquhar.

No. 4.—On this feu stood the Thistle Inn, owned by Alexander Pirie, who has already been incidentally mentioned (page 111) in our brief notice of his brother David. Sandy's ordinary habiliments were the long-tailed coat, tightly-buttoned breeks, and broad Kilmarnock bonnet. He ploughed his own fields, which lay on the Fahills section of the barony. In the distance, as seen between "the stilts," his appearance reminded one of the well-known picture of the national bard at a similar occupation. In all other respects "Sandy" differed from the bard. He took credit to himself for being somewhat abstemious. He took no supper, he said, only "twa bannocks and a bottle o' porter!"—a substantial enough meal as things were wont to go in those days.

No. 5 was occupied by Mrs. Charles Lyall, whose husband had been for a time partner with Mr. Kinnear, the mill owner. One of her sons (David) was a medical man in the naval service. He took a distinguished place in the profession, and had, we believe, been an officer on several hazardous exploring expeditions.

William Caird, proprietor of No. 7, was a man of dry, caustic humour—somewhat waggishly inclined. His aphoristic sayings, though now forgotten, were appreciated by an older generation. He was by trade a stone mason, but might more properly be described as a monument maker. He was dexterous in the use of the chisel and mallet. Half a

century ago, in the graveyard of Fordoun, there were, we believe, more tombstones bearing the *imprimatur* of William Caird than that of any other artificer. His style was bold and original. His well-rounded, textual looking letters, with their flourishes, dashes and devices, the schoolboy instinctively sought to imitate. Here, while "the city of the dead" is preserved, William's handiwork, seen in manifold forms, to the memory of others, will secure a lasting place for his own. He had decided genius.

The house was long the residence of Dr. Henderson, until he acquired the property No. 5 on the opposite side.

The next feu (No. 8) was owned by Mr. William Scott, tailor and clothier. His sons, John and David, succeeded him, but it has since gone into other hands.

No. 9, designated as belonging to Alexander Duthie's heirs, was in possession of a female bearing the name. Alexander himself appears to have long ago departed this life.

Feu No. 10 consisted of two lots, both owned by Mrs. Beattie, widow of a former proprietor of the spinning-mill. They were divided, as the plan shows, by a road leading to the mill. It was in a house on the more southerly of the two that Mr. Farquharson had his first bank office. (*Vide* page 156.) Her own residence stood on the north side of the road. It was a substantially built house (now very old), with well laid-out garden in front,

and a majestic holly tree at either side of the door. These ancient evergreens are, we believe, still there.

On Mrs. Beattie's death, this latter property was acquired by Mr. John Mollison, who had been lessee of the farm of Craigmstown, in the west end of the parish. He had been a sea-faring man in early days. At his death, his family succeeded to the property, and his two unmarried daughters, Ann and Elizabeth, continued in possession.

Nos. 11 and 12 were owned by James Sherret, the predecessor, if not also the progenitor, of David Sherret, noticed in a former chapter (page 141).

No. 13 was apparently the *pro indiviso* property of Messrs. James Jaffrey and William Annandale. The former would seem to have been the father of Robert Jaffrey, who succeeded to the feu in later years. Robert was an intelligent man, possessed of some mechanical genius. Mr. Annandale was a younger son of a respected villager, whose acquaintance we shall make when we transfer our survey to the east side.

No. 14, owned at one time by William Lyall Annandale, became at a subsequent period the property of the late Mr. Peter Murray. Mr. Murray—a just and much-respected man—had his residence and place of business here for many years.

Nos. 15 and 16, owned sixty-five years ago by William Henderson and Mrs. Lawrence respectively, have since changed hands repeatedly.

Alexander Bonner was at the date of our plan in possession of No. 17. He belonged to the same family as the ingenious wheelwright mentioned in chapter vii., page 151.

Robert Orcherton (or "Orchanter," or "Orchardson," as the name was variously spelt and pronounced in the district), was the registered owner of No. 18. He was by profession a mason, and has long ago departed this life. His modest cottage was in more modern days converted into a school in connection with the Episcopal church, but the building is now otherwise occupied.

No. 19 is the "white cot," mentioned on page 93, as the residence of Mr. David Lawrence, the baron bailie.

No. 20 stood in name of the heirs of David Glass, who were his two sons, David and George. David himself, a mason to trade, accidentally lost his life at the demolition of the old church or the building of its successor, the present edifice. The two sons—plain, kindly, unpretending men—occupied the cottage for many years. David, the elder, penetrated periodically into the recesses of Glenesk, supplying the natives of that classic vale with tea and other commodities.

The proprietor of No. 21 was Charles Duncan—a name well and widely-known throughout the district. He was a spirited and energetic man; and, on themes which came up for discussion, delivered himself with a fluency and raciness that made his company very enjoyable.

Nestor Mackenzie, who owned No. 22, was a coloured body-servant, brought home by Dr. Mackenzie, of Drumtochty, in whose service he remained until that estate was sold to Mr. Harley Drummond. He then acquired this feu, where he closed his days.

No. 23 has been in possession of the same family for at least three generations—each successor being a worthy son of a worthy sire. The late owner was a man of sterling principle, and intellectually very superior. He was modest and retiring, of few words, and not promiscuously social, but withal of a most genial disposition when in the society of those with sympathies akin to his own. Along with a taste for music and mathematics, he had fine insight which enabled him to master, almost intuitively, the details of the most complex piece of mechanism.

David Mitchell, the owner of No. 24, was a decrepit old man from the time we first remember him, and the commencement of his earthly pilgrimage must have dated a good way back into last century. To the rear of his dwelling-house was a weaving-shop, where he found accommodation for a few hand-loom operatives, who, after the manner of the time, discussed the merits of Lord John Russell and other high functionaries of the realm.

His next neighbour—No. 25, proceeding northwards—was David Ross. David was a man of a different calibre. Of a logical cast of mind, he

liked to see debatable points thoroughly discussed, and, if possible, cleared up. He espoused the cause of temperance at an early date, and to the end adhered steadfastly to its principles. He was, we believe, one of the last survivors of the original band of teetotallers in the place. Mr. Ross was a lover of flowers, had cultivated his own garden to a high pitch of perfection, and taken many prizes at the local shows. He died suddenly while making a leisurely survey of his flower-beds on the 21st August, 1879, aged 77.

The cottage to the rear of his own dwelling was long occupied by his mother. She taught a "beginner's" school, which was well attended by the youth of both sexes. From about 1830 to 1843 there was hardly to be found a young person in the northern part of the parish who had not been under her tuition for some period longer or shorter. Without this, their education was not regarded as complete. She was a strict disciplinarian, who ruled her scholars with a rod of iron. Her text books were the Bible and Shorter Catechism.

William Stephen, proprietor of No. 26, was a son of "old Mains," of Glenfarquhar, of whom a short sketch has been given (page 71). He scarcely inherited all his father's amiability of disposition, and was in some matters inclined to be "a law unto himself;" but those who knew how to gain access to the better side of his nature never found him an ungrateful or intractable individual.

Feu No. 27, east side, was owned and partly occupied by a member of the masonic craft. In his sedater moments "John" was rather of an unsocial and taciturn disposition; but under the influence of a dram he waxed wonderfully mellow and even metaphysical. Men exposed to the bracing breezes of the Grampians live to a long age, and so did John. His tenure of life far exceeded the allotted span, and we do not know that he studied very attentively the laws of health.

To James Cooper, whose property—No. 29—lay on the left of the entrance to the Miller's road, we have made suitable reference in preceding chapter.

Crossing now to the east side of the street, the first on the list is George Gordon, whose career we have sketched in chapter v., page 92.

No. 2, registered as belonging to the heirs of William Anderson, was long occupied by the late Mr. William Buchan, the respected postmaster, who, in addition to holding that office, conducted a large business as general merchant, and was extensively known among commercial men.

Feu No. 3 was in possession of Alexander Cadenhead or Caddonhead. He was succeeded by his son Isaac, whose wife was May, one of the numerous descendants of the Kerr family already mentioned. According to family tradition, the Cadenheads of Aberdeenshire and Mearns are descended from a native of Caddonhead in Ettrick Forest, who is said to have settled on Deeside in

the second half of the fifteenth century, and it is certain that soon after 1500, the name is found in the form of Caldenhead or Caddonhead in several parishes in the northern part of Kincardineshire. It was not yet common north of the Grampians, but by the middle of the present century the name was not what would be called rare in Fordoun.

Alexander Pirie's name stands against No. 4. He is the same with "Sandy Pirie," of the Thistle Inn, mentioned in connection with No. 4, on the opposite side—he being apparently the holder of both feus.

No. 5, originally held by an Alexander Milne, was purchased from his successor by Mr. Rhind-Simpson, a land surveyor, who took up his abode in the village about the middle of the century. He demolished the old structures (dwelling-house and smithy) which occupied the ground, and re-placed them by a most substantial villa, which afterwards became the residence of the late Dr. Henderson. Mr. Rhind-Simpson was a public-spirited man. He had a brilliant but short-lived career. Supplies suddenly became exhausted, and he fell like the shaft of a rocket.

No. 6 continued to hold a variety of tenants—among others John Officer, shoemaker. John was a most conscientious tradesman. He had a special knowledge of the habits of bees, and was an authority often consulted by those interested in that branch of natural history and domestic economy.

The letter "B" (feu No. 8) marks the site of the Kintore Arms Hotel, on which was suspended the armorial bearings of that ancient family, with the well-known motto "*Quæ amissa salva.*" As elsewhere mentioned, it was a popular and well-frequented house in the pristine days of Mr. Alexander Bruce. It has been occupied by a variety of tenants since he vacated it some forty years ago.

Of the owner of No. 9 a short account has already been given (*vide* page 115).

On the death of Mr. Alexander Stephen, the original owner of No. 10, the property appears to have descended to his sister "Mary," to whom reference is made in a previous chapter.

Alexander Gordon was the registered proprietor of No. 11. "Sandy" was a vigorous, outspoken type of man of the old school. He was lessee of a small farm on the estate of Monboddo.

Nos. 12 to 19 inclusive have repeatedly changed hands within the century, and the erections which originally occupied the ground have undergone radical transformation. In No. 19, of which James Finlay was the registered owner, for a number of years Mr. Alexander Lawrence, a most industrious and much respected member of the community, carried on a prosperous business as general merchant. He afterwards removed to premises further down the street, where the same fortune did not attend him. He emigrated with his whole family

to America upwards of forty years ago. He was, it may be mentioned, a younger brother of David, the baron bailie.

Of Mr. John Reith, who latterly became proprietor of No. 20, a brief sketch is given in a previous chapter (page 74).

Feu No. 21 was owned by Mr. James Annandale, a most industrious and temperate-living man. Every morning—no matter what the temperature—he washed his head out-of-doors in cold “spring-water.” He thus kept it always cool and collected. James attained to a patriarchal age, and was probably the custodian of a larger amount of historic lore and local tradition than any other native belonging to the same generation. He has numerous lineal descendants, some of them, like himself, feuars in the place, others occupying responsible positions in different parts of the country. Dr. Charles Annandale (a grandson) has left his mark on English literature, which no time will efface. Not to speak of other products of his pen, his “Concise Dictionary—literary, scientific, etymological, and pronouncing”—(based on Dr. Ogilvie’s “Imperial Dictionary,” of which he is editor), (London: Blackie & Son, 1886), is a standard work that will endure, and without which no library can now be regarded as complete.

Robert Saddler, owner of No. 22, was another patriarchal name. In his younger days he had been “minister’s man.” His only son, James Leslie, was

so named after the venerable Doctor. He sought wider scope for his energies than the surroundings of his father's quiet abode afforded, and has followed his occupation for well-nigh half-a-century in London. Robert was a peaceable man—not without a vein of dry humour in his composition, which enabled him sometimes to give a homeward and unexpected bent to the witticisms of an assailant. He leased a field on the right of the miller's road, above Galloquhine; and, latterly, held an acre or two on the slopes above the Quarry or Back-Burn. He sowed and reaped with his own hand. He preferred to shear with the hook. The scythe, he regarded as pretty much an innovation. He "stooked" his sheaves in the old fashion—the "hooded stook"—that is, five set against five, and two, head downwards, suspended triangularly to protect the ten from wet. In setting them up, the correct "dip" was towards the "tower of Johnston," on the hill of Garvock (north-east and south-west), so that they might get the benefit of the morning and afternoon sun. Altogether, Robert, in his small way, was a model farmer—neat-handed and careful.

Passing over Nos. 23 and 24, the residences of two obscure widows, we come upon No. 25, the property of Charles Benzies, an ancient villager, who quitted the scene long ago, and of whom little can now be recalled. He was succeeded by his son, John, a man better known in his day. Of a

neighbourly disposition was John. When a hurricane arose, he assisted with alacrity to protect corn ricks and other exposed property. He was abroad in the famous Michael Fair (of which we shall hear later), and made, we are told, a narrow escape that day while engaged on benevolent work of the kind alluded to. When an unwonted storm of snow fell, he was ready with his shovel to assist in raising the blockade. Cheerfully, too, he would bring supplies of water to the aged and infirm. It was a dictum locally ascribed to him that he did "not court his customers, but made the work do it"—an attitude which presupposed at once superiority of workmanship and independence of spirit.

Feu No. 26 was held by John Simpson, and there was a considerable amount of building upon it both in front and to rear. John was a patient, cheerful, uncomplaining kind of man—full of humour, and who loved to pass a joke with a neighbour. He not unfrequently illustrated his statements by a scriptural reference, giving chapter and verse where the illustration was to be found. He was intimately acquainted with the antiquities of the parish—stone cists, druidical circles, Roman relics, and the like. In his younger days, we believe, he had his residence near the "Praetorium," on the plain at Mains of Fordoun (of which we shall hear in a subsequent chapter), and that fact might account for his familiarity with the name of Agricola. For he spoke almost as if he had

had the personal acquaintance of that renowned soldier.

David Clark (feu No. 27), was by profession a "stob-thatcher," of which business he was thorough master. Since the general introduction of slates, stob-thatching has all but disappeared from the country, and the art, it may be said, is practically lost. Neat-handed and conscientious, David's work was done to perfection. He died about the middle of the century. His wife, who survived him many years, was an admirable sick-nurse. Lively and cheerful in disposition, she was at the same time fearless, and, when timid natures shrank back—dreading infection—her services could be relied upon in cases the most critical and malignant. The community owes her grateful remembrance.

No. 28 was leasehold ground, containing thirty-three falls. It was held under a lease of ninety-nine years. John Mollyson, the lessee, was a native of Glenbervie, his father being tenant of the farm of Keabog in that parish. When the latter died, Mr. Mollyson was the natural successor to the unexpired lease of the farm, but he was yet in his minority, and the bent of his inclination was not towards farming. Quitting school on the dawn of the century, he set sail in a trading vessel from Dundee for the West Indies, and settled at Kingston in Jamaica. The first few years after his arrival there were eventful. A detachment of

the French fleet hovered in the seas around, ready to seize on British possessions wherever it could find an opportunity. Our youthful emigrant had, in consequence, to learn some exercises which he had not been taught at the parochial school of his native parish, and which perhaps he would never have been called upon to learn had he remained at home to cultivate the slopes at Keabog. The appearance of Admiral Duckworth on the scene, however, speedily dispelled the fear of a French landing. On the 6th February, 1806, that intrepid sailor fell in with the foe, and, after a two hours' encounter with him, sent two of his vessels to the bottom, and carried the rest into port as trophies of war. Peace reigned in those quarters afterwards and the island prospered.

We see by a letter addressed to him by the late Mr. Thomas Burnett, Advocate, Aberdeen, that Mr. Mollyson was still at Montigo Bay in 1827, but he appears to have returned home the following year, when he acquired the leasehold ground with which his name has been associated. He had a perilous passage. The vessel grounded on a sand bank, and had to be lightened of much of its valuable cargo. He, in common with his fellow-passengers, shared in the loss incurred by the misadventure. His predecessor—the original lessee of the ground at Auchinblae—was a Mr. Hadden. Mr. Mollyson demolished the old buildings, and had a substantial dwelling-house erected in their

place. "Townhead Cottage," with its flower garden in front (which, by the way, was laid out by George Menzies, the poet) looking straight towards the glen of Drumtochty, and commanding a fine view of Strath-Finella hill occupies a pleasing and picturesque situation. Here Mr. Mollyson spent the remainder of his days, dying peacefully on the 26th of January, 1855. A monument, designed by his grandson, Mr. Charles Carmichael, Architect (who died at Johannesburg) marks the family resting-place in the churchyard of Fordoun.

The most northerly house in the village was No. 29 (leasehold like 28). It was a block of considerable size, and belonged to the late Mr. George Milne, who had his residence in the north end. Latterly the whole of the building was occupied as dwellings, but in the more prosperous days of flax-spinning it was partly used for hand-loom weaving, of which industry the owner had a practical knowledge. He knew intimately every process through which the fibre had to pass, and was also an excellent judge of the manufactured article. Along with his leasehold ground, he rented a few acres of the barony lands.

We shall close this chapter of reminiscences by a short reference to the progenitors of the late Mr. John Garland—the one a considerate and the other a courageous man.

## "OLD CAIRNTON."

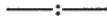
A prominent and for many a day well-known farmer in the parish was Mr. John Garland. He was tenant of the farms of Cairnton and Mains of Fordoun, holdings on Lord Arbuthnott's estate. In his younger days, while his father, Robert Garland ("Old Cairnton,") was alive he held the farm of Broombank, farther to the east in the county. Mr. Garland was a kind and considerate man, a disposition which he inherited from his father. He knew, and was known by, every creature within the parish. He was an elder of the church during Dr. Leslie's time, and distributed alms among the poor of the congregation with unstinted hand. He occupied the front seat in the Arbuthnott section of the gallery; he was noted for the regularity of his attendance at Church, and his portly figure was familiar to all. He died on the 11th November, 1876, aged 79.

We have incidentally referred to his father as a man also generously inclined. "Old Cairnton" was held in grateful remembrance by old residents whose memory carried them back to the earlier years of the century. He was a good friend to the poor when oatmeal was very dear about the end of the great French war—other farmers choosing rather to cart theirs to Montrose, where a few pence extra price might be had, than sell it round the door as he did. He died in 1831 at the age of 74.

His father was the first Garland of Cairnton, having returned from India with some money which he had earned in the carpenter craft. Said money, tradition says, was contained in a glue-pot, which, together with the ship's contents—living and inanimate—he was instrumental in saving from pirates, privateers, and other warlike persons. Snatching his axe, he hacked off the fingers of the first enemy that laid his hand on the bulwarks. A prompt, efficient man, I warrant, was he when he had something to contend for! His farm-house was a simple "but and ben"; the present house, though not now young, is a comparatively modern erection. The hardy progenitor's name is not engraven on the family tombstone.

CHAPTER X.

**"The Year of the Short Corn."**



THE year 1826 was a memorable year in the annals of Fordoun, as it was in those of many other parishes throughout the country. In the north-eastern district it is still remembered as "the year of the short corn," and under this designation it has already been several times alluded to in previous chapters. The summer was hot almost to a tropical degree. The corn crops—shrivelled up and scorched long before the ordinary time of harvest came round—never reached proper maturity. So short and scanty were they in many places that it was impossible to cut them even with "the hook." They had to be pulled up by the roots like flax.

The hay crop, too, was likewise a complete failure, and as turnips were not grown then in any such quantities as they are now, the problem how to sustain the cattle during the following winter was a very serious one indeed. The green shoots of whins, pounded into a pulp, were in many cases

the only kind of food available. We have heard an old farmer relate his experiences of that time, which was a trying one both for man and beast. For all hands, the first duty in the morning was to provide and pound the whins. Thereafter they repaired to the byres, and, by a process of hoisting, raised the poor emaciated beasts to their legs, when each was assisted to its portion of "chappit whins." Happy was the farmer who had even a handful of straw to give them as a relish after the green hash.

Man is an inventive genius: the whin stood him in good stead that year; but even of it the supply was not inexhaustible, and at last it became a difficult matter to procure it in any quantity. To crown the farmer's trials, the winter set in unusually early and with exceptional severity. Many sheep were "smored" on the hills; and country people of that time learnt by experience what "cleanness of teeth" meant. Food of every kind was exceedingly dear, and many an honest man had the greatest difficulty in finding the means of support for himself and family through that dire winter struggle.

With a plentiful supply of oilcake and other nutritious feeding stuffs there is no place now for the whin-mill. It has been disbanded.

## **Snowstorms and Hurricanes.**

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We have recorded a few facts connected with "the year of the short corn." We will now devote a brief space to tell our readers something about one or two severe snowstorms and disastrous gales which occurred within the first half of the century. Old people maintain that the seasons have changed since they came into the world—that the winters are milder, and the summers not so warm, as they used to be when they were young.

Perhaps the greatest snowstorm of the century is that which began to fall the day immediately following Yule in 1838, and which is still spoken of as "the muckle storm." On that occasion, the snow fell so heavily for two days that it accumulated to a depth of four and a-half feet all over. After that, a tempest of wind arose, and drifted the snow into such wreaths that many houses along the braesides were completely covered out of sight. Access by the doors was impossible, and more fortunate neighbours had to supply the inmates with provisions down the chimney. The higher part of the village was so blocked that there was no difficulty in walking over the tops of the houses from one to another. All out-door work was suspended, except that every morning people had to dig themselves or their neighbours out, and endeavour to keep

open such communication with each other, as was possible in the circumstances. For nine whole weeks this state of matters lasted. Some fresh snow fell and drifted daily, and the process of digging out had to be incessantly pursued.

There is yet another memorable year in the annals of snowstorms, namely, that of 1823. It was, if possible, even more severe and disastrous than the storm of 1838 just described, but was not nearly of so long duration. In this district, several people lost their lives, and sheep innumerable perished.

The earlier years of the century, we have been told, witnessed some storms of great severity, but those of 1823 and '38 seem to have left the most lasting impression.

It was in October of the latter year that what is still remembered as "the windy Michael Fair" took place. It was a gale of exceptional severity. The forenoon was beautiful and mild. Many people had gone to the fair, which was held at Drumlithie. About four o'clock the wind suddenly veered round to north-west, and came down with such terrific and unlooked for fury that in an instant the market stance was swept clear of everything. In a twinkling "tents" and "stands" disappeared. The wife of an Auchinblae innkeeper was—it has been graphically told—"blown away over a field like a wisp of straw," and would soon have been "lost to mortal sight," had not "Satan,"

who was present at the fair, with characteristic gallantry, given chase and succeeded in dragging her to a place of safety. A "boorach" of tipsy weavers were whirled into the "bogs of Drumlithie," and had a narrow escape from being drowned. Many other more serious accidents occurred that day before the market people, exposed to the fury of the current, got under shelter. The "bogs of Drumlithie," intersected by the Caledonian railway, have now for about forty years been reclaimed, and the fruitful fields into which they have been turned would no longer be fittingly described by their ancient topographic designation "the bogs."

## CHAPTER XI.

**Antiquities and Traditions.**ROMAN ENCAMPMENTS AT MAINS OF FORDOUN  
AND CLATTERING BRIGS.

Near the Mansion-house of Fordoun, about a mile south south-east of the parish church, is still to be traced part of a Roman camp or station. Up to the time when General Roy published his "Military Antiquities," the existence of this camp was apparently unknown, or, if suspected, had till then eluded antiquarian research. The General had traced and described in succession a series of military stations along the valley of Strathmore. By the aid of the known to find the unknown—he observed that, in order to complete the links of the chain between Keithock and Stonehaven—at both which places the Roman army had left distinct traces of its presence—another such station should be found near Monboddo, in the Mearns. Accordingly at a later period, last century, this camp was discovered. In 1799, the Rev. Dr. Leslie made minute measurements of it. These are referred to in Chalmers' "Caledonia" (vol. i. p. 178). The

doctor tells us that of this camp nothing then remained except the praetorium ; but that, in his younger days, he found old people who could trace to him a considerable part of its outlines, which were most extensive, and had been defended by triangular forts, at the different corners by outposts, and by a deep morass at the lower extremity. It was capable of containing a large army. These outworks have now been levelled, and the morass turned into a dry and productive field. It is situate at a distance of about twelve miles—an ordinary Roman march—from Stonehaven. The area of the camp was 3,154 square yards. The Luther water, previous to its diversion at this point, skirted the western side of the fortified ground.

Spear heads, gold rings, such as the Roman knights wore, rough-hewn stone chests with urns, and various other relics, have been picked up in this neighbourhood, all testifying to the presence here of the Roman soldier in the early centuries of the Christian era.

At Clattering Brigs, four and a-half miles west-north-west from Fordoun, there was in ancient times a Roman pass or fort, which in later days came to be known by the name of the "Green Castle." It was obviously formed for the purpose of guarding the well-known passage through the Grampian mountains. In Chalmers' "Caledonia" (vol. i. ; London, 1807) a plan of this fort is given,

with minute details of its measurements. The area within the ramparts was 157 feet 9 inches at the south-west end, while the length was 162 feet 6 inches in breadth at the bottom, and the height of the rampart from the bottom of the ditch 51 feet 6 inches.

In one of his "Antiquarian Essays" (written December, 1819; published at Aberdeen, 1846), Professor Stuart, of Inchbreck, gives a full account of the traces of Roman occupation to be found in the Mearns. He ranks among the authorities who contend that the celebrated battle of *Mons Grampius* was fought in the neighbourhood of Stonehaven. Persons desirous of seeing this question thoroughly discussed will find the Professor's Essay quoted above well worthy of perusal.

#### SCOTTISH CAMP AT DRUMSLEED.

At Drumsleed, on the hill overlooking the Luther water, about a quarter of a mile south of the parish church, there appears, in ancient times, to have been an entrenchment or fortification capable of containing a large body of men. In length, from east to west, it was about 80 yards, and in breadth nearly half that extent. By tradition this structure, whatever its origin, age, or purpose, was known to schoolboys, and the people of the county generally, as "the Scottish Camp." Probably all traces of it are now obliterated.

THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF KINCARDINE.

Three centuries and a-half ago, the parish was distinguished for possessing "the principal and capital burgh of the county." This was the ancient town of Kincardine, which either gave its name to or took it from the shire. This distinction was conferred by a charter obtained in 1531-2 by the fourth Earl Marischal; but at the end of seventy-five years the honour was again withdrawn. On a petition by the sheriff and his deputies, based on the representation that at Kincardine there was neither "tolbooth nor place of intertenement," the courts were removed from that to Stonehaven, which place was, by Act of Parliament, 1607, chap. 10, declared to be in all time coming the head burgh of the Sheriffdom of Kincardine. How far Stonehaven itself afforded the means of comfort and accommodation, which the administrators of the law required, may be judged of from the following record connected with a trial that took place there one hundred and sixty years after it had become the chief seat of justice:—"It being both frost and snow, and the Court-house being very open, and no place or apartment therein in a condition to burn fire in, it would be impossible for them (the jury) to inclose in the said court, and to consider of the proof and give their verdict, without imminent hazard to their healths. They craved

the sheriff to allow them to be inclosed in any place in the neighbourhood. The sheriff ordered them presently to pass from the Court-house, under the inspection and guard of an officer of court, to the house of Mrs. Logie, at the Mill of Stonehaven, and to return their verdict by ten o'clock forenoon." This occurred on the 29th of December, 1767. We cannot doubt but their honours received every comfort in Mrs. Logie's hospitable house.

The site of the old county town of Kincardine in the west end of the parish can still be traced, but the town itself, since it was shorn of its dignity, has dwindled to a mere hamlet. According to the writer of the "New Statistical Account" (Blackwood, 1843, page 84), it had once extended from the foot of the royal residence to near Fettercairn-House, a distance of fully an English mile. Mr. Jervise regards this as an exaggerated idea of its extent. The distance between the east and west ports, which are still traceable, is about two hundred yards. A hundred years ago the hamlet and its surrounding cots contained a population of only seventy or eighty souls.

The old market cross, still preserved at Fettercairn, was a gift of the celebrated John, Earl of Middleton, who was born near to the town of Kincardine. It bears the date 1670, with that nobleman's arms and initials, together with the Scottish lion. The Earl had a most eventful career, and met with a tragic death.

## CASTLE OF KINCARDINE.

Among the antiquities of the parish may be reckoned the castle of Kincardine, which stood in the vicinity of the ancient county town above described. It was a Royal residence in the tenth century—probably much earlier—and remained so for at least three hundred years later. Lord Hailes (*Annals*, vol. i., p. 293, 3rd Ed.) records that it was in this castle, on the 2nd July, 1296, that John Baliol resigned his Crown to Edward I. of England, from whom he had received it four years before. Whilst agreeing with Lord Hailes (who quotes from Rymer's *Fœdera*) as to the date when this transaction—the unconditional surrender of the Scottish Crown—occurred, other authorities (*Ency. Brit.*, vol. vii., p. 683) place the scene of the occurrence in the castle of Perth; but the apparent discrepancy may be reconciled by the fact, elsewhere recorded, that the deed of resignation was drafted in the castle at Kincardine.

That this castle dates back to a remote and obscure period of Scottish history, there can be no doubt; and that it was a structure of great strength is evidenced, not only by the foundational relics yet remaining, but by the fact that its battlements stood erect through the varying feuds and fortunes of so many warlike generations of men. There are no authentic records to show when it was originally

built; but that it was the residence of Kenneth III., in 994, when, according to tradition, he was murdered in the neighbourhood through a wicked stratagem of Finella, seems well attested; and, as we have seen, important business was transacted within its walls three centuries after that tragic event. But, like all "houses made with hands," it was destined to perish, and, beyond some fragments of the foundations, nothing now remains of this ancient stronghold.

#### DEATH OF KENNETH III.

John of Fordun gives a narrative of the treacherous affair (the King's death). We shall quote the chronicler's own words. In Skene's edition (Edmonston & Douglas, 1872, pp. 166 and 167) we read:—"This wily woman (Finella, daughter of Cruchne, Earl of Angus), ardently longing for the king's death, caused to be made, in an out-of-the-way little cottage, a kind of trap such as had never been seen before. For the trap had attached to it on all sides cross-bows always kept bent by their several strings, and fitted with very sharp arrows, and in the middle thereof stood a statue fashioned like a boy, and cunningly attached to the cross-bows, so that if any one were to touch it and move it ever so little, the bow-strings of the cross-bows would suddenly give way, and the arrows would straightway be shot forth

and pierce him through. Having thus completed the preparations for perpetrating the crime, the wretched woman, always presenting a cheerful countenance to the king, at length beguiled him by flattery and treacherous words. The king went forth one day with a few companions into the wood to hunt, and while pursuing beasts hither and thither with his dogs, as he hunted he happened by chance to put up hard by the town of Fettercairn, where the traitress lived. After he had alighted from horseback she took his hand, and quickly led him alone to the house where the trap was concealed. 'If,' she said, 'the top of the head of this statue (the lever of the whole trap) be touched and moved a marvellous and pleasant jest comes of it.' So, unconscious of hidden treachery, he gently with his hand drew towards him the head of the machine, thus letting go the levers and handles of the cross-bows, and immediately he was shot through by arrows sped from all sides, and fell without uttering another word."

The narrative tells how the traitress escaped by a back door, hid herself for a time among the shades of the forest, and afterwards rejoined in safety the society of those who had instigated her to the crime. Such is the historian's account of the deed. Local tradition tells that Finella made her escape by leaping from branch to branch of the trees through the dense forest. As already stated, the tragic event occurred in 994.

PROFESSOR STUART'S ACCOUNT OF A SCULPTURED  
STONE SUPPOSED TO BE COMMEMORATIVE  
OF THE EVENT.

In his "Account of some Sculptured Pillars in the Northern Part of Scotland" (December, 1820; published, 1846), Professor Stuart furnishes a drawing and description of a singular monument discovered at Fordoun. In 1788, on taking down the old church preparatory to re-building, the pulpit was found to have for its base a slab of free-stone placed horizontally. The stone was about 6 feet in length by nearly 3 feet in breadth, and fully 4 inches in thickness. When first discovered the stone was thought to be of little account, and was thrown aside in Palladius' chapel, where it was allowed to remain for many years. Ultimately, however, Dr. Leslie's attention seems to have been drawn to it. He had it cleared of rubbish and carefully examined. It was found to bear various figures, cut deeply and with some degree of elegance. Regarding it as "curious" and of "undoubted antiquity"—(the church wherein it was found being probably one of the oldest in the county—certain it is that some centuries previous to this discovery one of the Sibbalds of Kair had re-roofed it with oak as an atonement for some sacrilegious act he had committed)—Professor Stuart had a drawing taken of the stone, a copy of which is preserved in the Essay referred to. His description

is as follows :—“ On the top there is the appearance of some animal resembling a serpent, and on the left side the remains of some written characters so entirely defaced as to be perfectly illegible, and which may have been continued on the right side now entirely broken off. Under these have been three squares filled with very pretty tracery, the first and third probably similar, the last being wanting, while the centre one in the middle is of a different form but equally well executed. The centre compartment appears to contain the principal figure of the group, being placed in a separate square, and represents a warrior on horseback with a spear in his hand. On either side is another horseman with a spear in the same attitude, but who appear in dress and otherwise to be of inferior rank to the chief figure. Above the horseman on the left is seen the figure of some wild animal, but so rudely drawn that it cannot be distinguished. Below on the left is distinctly seen the hinder parts of the body of a large dog, and opposite a very fine representation of two circles, joined together like a pair of eyes or spectacles, and filled with ornamental carving. And last of all, through the centre passes the connecting line of the three before noticed, the upper line terminating in a point like a spear, while the under one is somewhat different.”

In the absence of any more probable or satisfactory explanation of its origin, Professor Stuart hazarded the suggestion that this stone was a

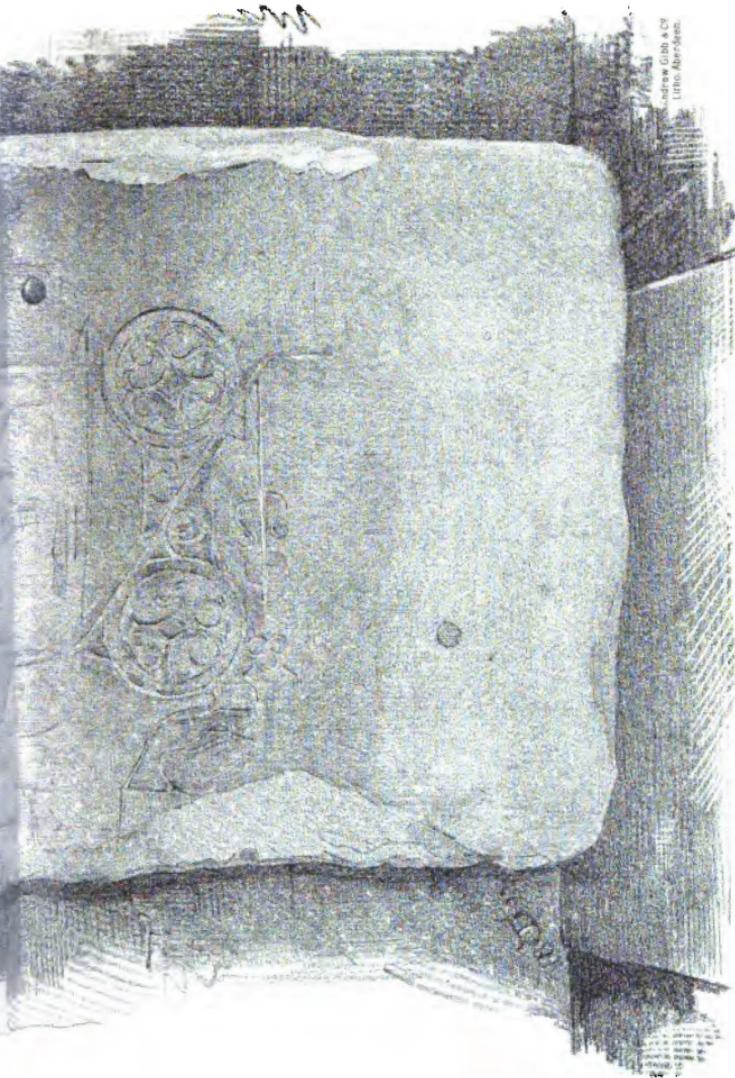
monument erected to commemorate the death of Kenneth III., of the circumstances connected with which we have just given a full narrative. He sums up his reasons in the following order :—(1) The engraving on the stone appears to be of the antiquity required ; (2) he knows of no other event connected with this part of the country recorded in early Scottish history that could form a fitting occasion for the erection of such a memorial ; (3) the figures manifestly refer to some transaction similar to that recorded ; (4) the scene appears to be a hunting match, where the principal figure in the middle may be supposed to represent the king, and the two others on horseback his murderers ; (5) the mutilated figure below is plainly a greyhound, and the animal above is either another or the hunted creature, while that at the top, if it really represents a serpent, may allude to the art and cunning of Finella.

Thus did the learned Professor, upwards of seventy years ago, marshal the facts on which he based his theory about this strange stone, which, with its quaint emblems, had, there is scarcely room to doubt, an important piece of history whatever it was to carry down to posterity. (*See plate with outline of the stone*).

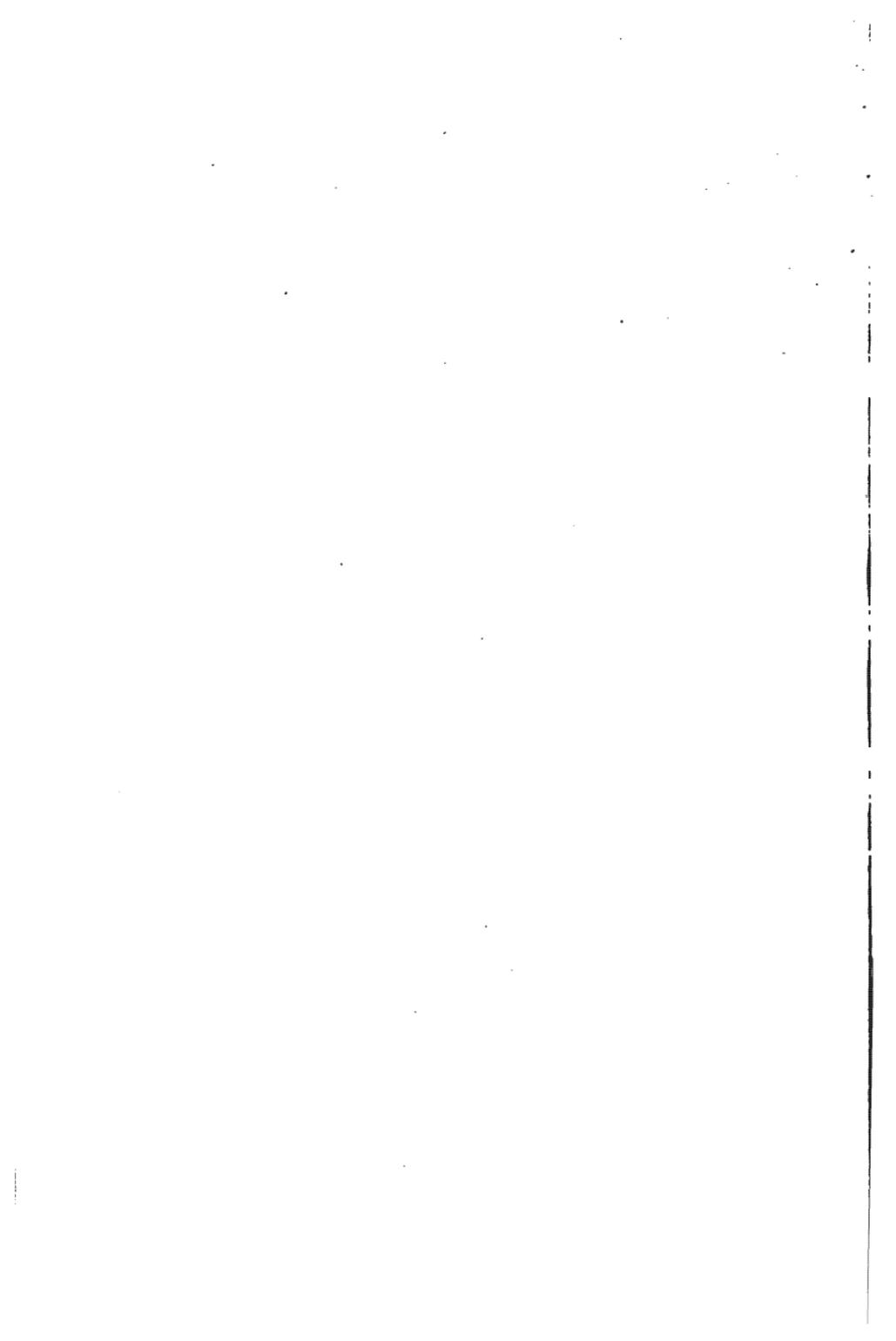
Hector Boece (the most credulous of historians) adopts Fordun's narrative, but, in accordance with his custom of "improving" on the writings of those who went before him, he has embellished it by







SCULPTURED STONE,  
WITHIN ST. PALLADIUS' CHAPEL,  
FORDOUN.



creations of his own imagination. He tells that the statue bore a resemblance to Kenneth, the king, himself, and was made of brass, holding in his hand a golden apple, ornamented with six different kinds of precious stones, which he specifies. Buchanan, though a follower of Boece in many matters, found this tale so improbable that he hesitated to accept it. For it is not probable, says he, that in the extremity of Britain, after the decline of the Fine Arts among other nations, any statue could have been so ingeniously contrived.

Other of our early historians have repeated Boece's marvellous tale, though with hardly the same minuteness. Honest Andrew Wyntoun, who lived in the fifteenth century, and whose history—the “Orygynale Cronykle of Scotland”—commences with the creation of the world! simply makes the sober statement that the king was attacked and killed, while riding near Fettercairn, by some of his own courtiers, at the instigation of Finella, in revenge for the loss of her son.

Bishop Leslie, who wrote a century later than the author just named, tells us expressly that it was while returning *from* a pilgrimage to St. Palladius' sepulchre that the king met with the fatal accident. The authorities quoted by Jervise (vol. i., p. 138) support the conclusion that the king was “waylaid” or “lured” into a hunting match, and unwittingly came by his death, not through the poisoned darts of a brazen effigy, but by

the swords of a band of hired assassins. Thus is much of the romance of Fordun's original story swept away.

#### PILGRIMAGES.

A pilgrimage denotes "the act of journeying to some sacred place, or a place esteemed sacred, for the purpose of discharging a religious obligation, or obtaining some supernatural assistance or benefit"—or it might be the two objects combined. It is a practice not confined to Christianity, but is common to many religions, and reaches back even to prehistoric ages. The pilgrims regarded it as an imperative duty to present themselves at the Sanctuary, at recurrent periods, where it was believed the deity not merely responded to prayer, but gave direct answers by omen or oracle. At first, Christian pilgrimages were limited to Jerusalem and sacred places in its immediate neighbourhood. But in later ages of the Church, another and more powerful kind of pilgrimage succeeded the journeying to the Holy Land—that, namely, to the tombs of distinguished martyrs. The sepulchre of St. Palladius at Fordoun was one of the special localities which drew the pilgrims, and, according to authority quoted, it was on a pilgrimage (going to or returning from) this sacred spot that Kenneth III. met his death.

The Rev. Dr. James Cooper, of the East Church, Aberdeen (an authority, entitled to the

highest respect in all matters of ecclesiastical history), has drawn our attention to a parallel that subsists between the ancient church of St. Palladius at Fordoun and that of St. Duthus at Tain. The latter is a fine ruin of the fifteenth century (70 feet long, by 22 feet 6 inches wide, inside). On the south side of this church, there is a small separate chapel (33 feet by 14 feet) containing work of a much earlier date than the church itself. There is a vault or crypt under the chapel, and there are traces of the two buildings having once been connected by cloisters.

As we have seen (page 27), a church of considerable antiquity (with a chancel narrower than itself) occupied the site of the present parish church at Fordoun.

It seems not unlikely that, as sacred treasures of these churches (St. Duthus and St. Palladius), *both dedicated to Celtic Saints*, the shrines (or supposed relics) of the Saints themselves were kept in the vaults below the respective chapels. St. Palladius' chapel, it may be remarked, is admirably adapted for the veneration of sacred relics by companies of pilgrims, who would pass in at one door and out at the other. It is noticeable that the dimensions of both chapels very nearly correspond.

There is no mark of any screen wall abutting on either the west, north, or east walls of St. Palladius; but an earthen rampart on the top of the steep bank on which the chapel stands

would, in this case, be sufficient for enclosure and protection.

#### DEATH OF DUNCAN II.

Precisely one hundred years after the treacherous murder of Kenneth III. in the west end of the parish, Fordoun is credited with having been the scene of the death of another of our Scottish Kings. According to tradition, Duncan II., son of Malcolm Canmore, was slain in 1094 or 1095 by Macpedir, Macpendir, or Malpet (Henderson), a thane of the Mearns. The scene of the tragedy, we are told by the historian, Fordun, was Monathethyn, or Monathyne, or Monythyn—a place evidently identical with the modern Mondynes.

Hector Boece—a historian famed for fertility of imagination rather than accuracy of research—says that Duncan was killed in Monteith, formerly a division of Perthshire; and Buchanan, who followed Boece, adopts his account of the transaction, giving the name of the place where it occurred as Taichia, which is understood to be Monteith. Boece furnishes no evidence to justify his choice of locality, and the probability is that, in transcribing from the chronicles of his predecessors, he had mistaken Monythyn (Mondynes) for Monteith, the former being a comparatively obscure place. So much for the locality in which the ill-fated monarch is believed to have met his death. According to all authorities his reign was short—not exceeding two

years—if, indeed, it extended to the length of one. Of the circumstances in which his death occurred diverse accounts are given. By some, he was killed in open warfare ; by others, he was treacherously assassinated during a stormy night while he lay fast asleep. Whether Duncan was awake or asleep when the fatal blow was delivered may never be ascertained, and it is a question of no importance, save that its solution might throw some faint ray on what must for ever remain a gloomy and obscure picture. On a field on the farm of West Mondynes, from time immemorial, there has stood an upright stone of large dimensions, without letter or sculpture of any kind, evidently intended to perpetuate some remarkable local occurrence ; and it would be no unnatural stretch of imagination to assume that that occurrence is the death of “ Donekan Mac-Malcolm, who reigned six months, and fell by the hand of Malpedir Macleone at Monachedin in the Mearns,” eight hundred years ago.

#### THE FRIARS' GLEN.

About a mile to the west of Drumtochty Castle, in a secluded glen, called “ Friars' Glen,” protected on the north by the Grampians and on the south by Strath-Finella, with its thriving plantations, are yet to be traced what were once fondly believed to be the foundations of a small priory ; while near by is “ the priest's well,” a spring of clear water, said

to be one of the most copious flowing in Scotland ; but Mr. Jervise (" Mem. Angus and Mearns," vol. i., p. 145 ; 1885) has ruthlessly disposed of the tradition by pronouncing the remains in question to be those of the dwelling-house, barn, and byre of the last occupant ! Nearly five centuries ago, the lands of Little Glensaught, on which, according to tradition, stood this religious house, had become the property of the Carmelites (White Friars), of Aberdeen. By charter, dated 1st May, 1402, James Fraser, of Fren draught, granted to that body a small annuity from the revenue of these lands ; and ten years later, by another charter, Duncan his son conveyed them absolutely to the Carmelites, in whose hands they appear to have remained until 1565. By deed, executed by their Prior on 13th June of that year, the lands came into possession of James Keith, of Drumtochty, for an annual payment of 4½ merks (equal to 5s. sterling).

The feu of the Glen was afterwards made over by the Earl Marischal to Marischal College. In a specification of certain College rentals for the year 1592, the sum derived from the feu is mentioned. Again, in 1606, in Principal Howie's rent-roll we find an entry of the item from the lands of Little Glensaught, "occupied and appertaining to James Keyth, of Powburn," a property in the Mearns.

In 1640 the College records show that those lands (*alias* the "Friars' Glen") were held of feu by the laird of Pittarrow, another separate estate in

the Mearns. Early in the present century Marischal College disposed of its interest in the Glen to the proprietor of Drumtochty, with whom and his successors the right of property has since remained.

## RELICS OF ANTIQUITY.

In the early part of this chapter we have mentioned a few articles that have been found in the parish belonging to the period of the Roman occupation. We shall now specify some of the other relics of antiquity that have been discovered within its boundary, and are yet in preservation. The following are in the custody of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland :—

## FLINT IMPLEMENTS.

- (1) Semi-oval knife,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  by  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches, partly ground on each face, especially at the cutting edge, which is sharp and almost straight.
- (2) Square-shaped knife, with rounded angles,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  by  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches, ground on each face to a sharp cutting edge on three sides.
- (3) Knife or chisel of oblong form,  $2\frac{3}{8}$  by  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches, each face partly ground, and with cutting edge ground from each face at the narrowest end.
- (4) Oval knives and knife-like implements,  $2\frac{1}{8}$  by  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches, worked over the upper face and along each side, pointed at one end.
- (5) Two fabricators or flaking tools,  $2\frac{3}{8}$  and  $3\frac{1}{8}$  inches in length respectively, with bronze-shaped section, and the inequalities of the flaking removed by grinding.
- (6) Flint arrows, with barbs and stems, of various shapes and sizes.
- (7) Axe-head of indurated claystone,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  by  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches.
- (8) Axe of grey flint,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

- (9) Axe of black flint,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  by 2 inches.
- (10) Axe of greenstone,  $11\frac{1}{4}$  by  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches, cutting edge polished, but fractured.
- (11) Axe of felstone, 5 by 2 inches, polished.

#### STONE IMPLEMENTS.

- (12) Triangular-shaped pebble of quartz,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  by 3 inches, perforated.
- (13) Ball,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches diameter, with five discs, ornamented with small knobs in concentric circles.
- (14) Ball,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter, with incised circles, imperfect (found near Auchinblae).
- (15) Ball of sandstone,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches diameter, with circular spaces filled with concentric circles.
- (16) Ball of quartz sandstone,  $2\frac{5}{8}$  inches diameter, with four projecting discs, found on the "Herschel hill" (Hareshaw !).
- (17) Four stone whorls, varying from 1 to  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches diameter.
- (18) Another of micaeous sandstone,  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inch diameter, with lines radiating from the spindle-hole on each face.
- (19) Portion of a large bullet-mould.
- (20) Toasting or baking stone for baking oatcakes before a peat-fire on hearth.

The foregoing, so far as we have been able to trace, appears to be a complete inventory of those relics of antiquity found in the parish which are treasured in the repositories of the National Museum (*vide* Catalogue, new ed., printed for the Society : Edinburgh, 1892).

A few old coins—both silver and copper—have been dug up in different parts of the parish, but none of them of any value.

The Museum at Montrose contains a rich and varied collection of antiquarian relics—such as flint arrow-heads, stone axes, and bronze hatchets ; and both Forfar and Kincardine shires have contributed

largely to the assortment, but, in the absence of a catalogue, we are unable to indicate what specimens actually belong to Fordoun, the tickets attached in many cases not being sufficiently precise to shew the particular locality where the articles were found.

#### A SPEAR-HEAD.

Mr. Carnegie, of Redhall, has kindly sent us an outline and description of a spear-head or dagger, found about 1840 near the site of the Roman camp at Mains of Fordoun, and which is now in his possession. It not improbably dates back to the time of Agricola. It is apparently composed of mixed metals resembling bronze. In colour it is nearly black, but the edges have a decidedly brazen look. It swells out about one-eighth of an inch on each side towards the centre, the edges being quite sharp. The weapon was evidently intended to be rivetted to a wooden handle, and made for warlike purposes. It was found by a workman while engaged deepening the boundary ditch between Mains of Fordoun and March-burn on the Redhall estate, and given by him to the late Mr. Carnegie, father of the present proprietor.

Mr. Carnegie is also the custodian of a very fine specimen of a stone hatchet, which was found in the spring of 1892 near his mansion-house at Redhall. Relics of the kind are not uncommon throughout the country, but this one seems to be an exceptionally superior article of its kind. It is finely finished, and had probably never been used, as the edge is quite

perfect. It is made of a very heavy stone of dark colour.

#### AN OLD OAK PULPIT.

It may be mentioned, as a fact of some interest to students of ecclesiological history, that there is also preserved in the mansion-house at Redhall another relic of some antiquity that will probably increase in value as time advances. It is half of the old carved oak pulpit of the ancient church of Fordoun, standing in pre-Reformation times. This antique piece of workmanship was bought by the late Mr. Carnegie at the sale of Dr. Leslie's effects when he quitted the manse towards the close of 1843. Mr. Carnegie had it carefully cleaned and polished and made up into a semi-circular cabinet, in which form it now adorns the drawing-room at Redhall. The other half (which was the front section) had a verse of Scripture carved upon it, but it was in so dilapidated a condition that it fell to pieces on being removed. It was purchased by the late Mr. Farquharson. The cabinet at Redhall is still in excellent preservation.

The probability is that the pulpit, whose fate we have just described, belonged to the church (believed to have been "probably the very oldest in the county") on which Sibbald of Kair, nearly four hundred years ago, had to place a new oak roof as "a punishment imposed upon him by the clergy for some sacrilegious conduct." (*Vide* page 200).

## CHAPTER XII.

**Eminent Men.**

## LORD MONBODDO.

JAMES BURNETT, Lord Monboddo, was born at the house of Monboddo in 1714. He is the author of works on "The Origin and Progress of Language," and "Ancient Metaphysics." He is regarded as one of the most remarkable figures in Scottish literary circles of last century. He studied first at Aberdeen, and afterwards at Groningen. He rose to distinction at the Scottish bar, and in 1767 became one of the Lords of Session. He performed his journeys on horseback, not in a carriage, as Lords of Session were wont to do when moving about the country. Lord Monboddo belonged to an ancient and honourable house, of which a short account will be found in a subsequent chapter.

## PROFESSOR ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Alexander Hamilton, the distinguished physician, was a native of the parish. He was the son

of a retired army surgeon who practised in Fordoun. He was born in the year 1739. In his twentieth year he became assistant to John Straiton, surgeon, of Edinburgh. On that gentleman's death, which occurred in 1762, he was admitted a member of the Edinburgh College of Surgeons, and commenced practice on his own account. He afterwards obtained a medical degree, and was admitted a licentiate, and subsequently a fellow, of the Edinburgh College of Physicians. As deacon of the College of Surgeons, he, in 1777, made strenuous efforts to get surgery, his favourite branch of medical science, taught in the University by a separate professor, but the opposition was strong, and his efforts were unsuccessful. He lectured with success for some years outside the University walls, until in 1780 he was appointed joint-professor with Dr. Thomas Young. On the death of the latter, in 1783, he became sole occupant of the chair. He was a successful practitioner, and distinguished as a writer on the operative branch of medical science. He is the author of several valuable treatises. He resigned his professorship in 1800, and died on the 23rd May, 1802, at the age of 63.

PROFESSOR JAMES BEATTIE.

Professor James Beattie was a native of Fordoun. He was a nephew of the illustrious Dr. James Beattie, author of the "Minstrel," who, as we have seen,

was for a short time schoolmaster of the parish. He was the son of David Beattie, the poet's elder brother, and was born on the 16th April, 1767, the year in which the poet was married, and in which he finished his famous "Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth," already referred to. The Professor was educated at the school of Laurencekirk, and in his fourteenth year was enrolled a student at Marischal College, Aberdeen. In April, 1784, he took his degree of M.A. He studied Theology for several sessions; and, as assistant to Dr. George Skene, taught the classical department of the second class in the College. In 1788 he was appointed to the Chair of Civil and Natural History. He is said to have been an efficient and enthusiastic teacher—much esteemed by his pupils, who, three years after his death—which occurred on 4th October, 1810—erected by subscription a monument to his memory.

PROFESSOR STUART.

Another of the eminent men to whom Fordoun is entitled to lay claim is Professor John Stuart, of Inchbreck. He was born at Castletown, in the east end of the parish, in 1751. He occupied the Greek Chair in Marischal College for a period of forty-five years, and died on the 27th August, 1827, aged seventy-seven. He was the son of Dr. John Stuart, who married, first, Elizabeth, daughter of Robert

Lawson, of Mill of Garvock ; and, secondly, Elizabeth, sister of James Leith, of Whiteriggs.

The Professor's grandfather married Margaret, eldest daughter and heiress of David Guthrie, of Kair, and of Margaret, eldest daughter of the Honourable Alexander Arbuthnott, of Pitcarles, David's father, Harie Guthrie, of Halkerton, near Forfar, had acquired by marriage with Margaret Sibbald, the sole heiress and last of the Sibbalds, the estates of Kair and Castletown, besides other property.

Professor Stuart was married on the 26th April, 1787, to Margaret Mowatt, daughter of George Mowatt, Merchant in Aberdeen. By his marriage he had four sons and two daughters. Andrew, the oldest son, succeeded to the estate, but died without issue. The property then fell to the next surviving son, Alexander, who acquired by purchase the estate of Laithers, in Aberdeenshire. The family of Inchbreck therefore, as well as the ancient house of the Sibbalds of Kair, is now represented by a lineal descendent of Professor Stuart.

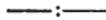
The Professor's writings are of a miscellaneous character, but the topic that engaged his attention most, and seemed most congenial to his tastes, was the antiquities of his native county. A volume of his more interesting essays on this subject, together with a brief sketch of his life, was printed in Aberdeen in 1846.

GEORGE WISHART, OF PITTARROW, THE SCOTTISH  
MARTYR.

The family of Wischart or Wishart were settled in Fordoun five hundred years ago—how much earlier cannot be traced—and they retained their connection with the parish till the beginning of the eighteenth century. In 1585, John Wischart, a military man, succeeded to “the lands of Cairntown, otherwise called Fordoun, comprehending those of Townlie, Fordounflatt, with its mill, called the Mill of Pitrennie, and Brewlands, near the Church of Fordoun, with the village of Fordoun erected into a free burgh of barony.” His successor was Lord John Wischart, who also, as was customary for the barons of the time, belonged to the military profession. He was in 1607 adjudged lawful heir to the “lands of Maynes of Pittaro, Westertown of the same, along with Muckle and Little Cairnbeg.” Michel, in his “Critical Enquiry into the Scottish Language” (Blackwood, 1882), traces the name to the French, “*huissier*,” “usher.” The family seat was at Pittarrow. The old mansion-house—in which, it is said, the illustrious Protestant martyr was born—was demolished in the beginning of the present century, and a fine old tower, long a well-known landmark in the “Howe,” shared the same fate. There is now no residence on the place save the farmhouse, which has changed tenants repeatedly within these fifty years.

George Wishart, who was led to the stake on 1st March, 1546, was a younger son of this ancient house. In 1850 a tasteful monument was erected to his memory in the churchyard of his native parish. It was designed by the late Mr. Alexander Macdonald, of Kepplestone, who had made the acquaintance of the place in his early days. It was the first piece of work in the line of his business that his father had entrusted to him, and in after years he often reverted with pleasure to the circumstance, mentioning the anxiety it had given him to be able to produce something worthy of the subject. The monument consists of a polished granite column, with massive pedestal, flaming urn, and an appropriate spiral inscription.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**Land and Landowners, Ancient and Modern.**

## A FIGHTING MAN.

THE first heritor in the parish to whom we have introduced our readers is Sir David Wood (Wood) of Craig. Sir David appears to be one of those worthies—found sometimes in sacred as well as profane history—who are remembered for doubtful deeds of valour rather than for any special virtues they are known to have possessed. He has distinguished himself by the furious onslaught he made, in the year 1601, on the Revd. Adam Walker, then parish minister (*vide* page 2). Sir David was a soldier by profession, which fact may account for his fighting propensities; but the probable cause of the particular outburst referred to was more likely his disapproval of the projected scheme for the erection of a new manse, which, he doubtless foresaw, if carried into effect, would subject himself and his fellow proprietors to additional taxation.

Sir David's interest in Fordoun arose from his being in right of one-half share of the mill of

Craigmyle, the multures payable to him in respect of such right being "dry" (*arida multura*)—that is, we presume, payable in kind (dry corn, not in meal or money). He was at the sametime baron of Hilton, comprehending the lands of that ilk, with its "sieport" (seaport) in the parish of Caterline. His son, Archibald, succeeded to the possessions in 1617.

We have, in an early chapter, traced through several centuries in succession, down to the death of Mr. James Farquharson, the last proprietor, the descent of the lands belonging to the ancient barony of Glenfarquhar. Before proceeding with our historic survey of the different baronial possessions in "the Howe," we shall specify briefly some of the links in the chain of succession of the picturesque and beautifully-wooded estate of

#### DRUMTOCHTY.

We have already given a short account of the "Friars' Glen," which is included in the possession.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, Lord George Keyth was the proprietor of Drumtochty. In 1618 he was adjudged heir to other properties in the county in succession to his father, Mr. James Keyth, of Halvestoun, or Halwitstoun.

During the last century the lands—under the general name of Woodstock—came into possession of Dr. John Mackenzie, from whose representative they were afterwards purchased by Mr. George

Harley Drummond, of Stanmore, a partner of the well-known banking house, Charing Cross, London.

Dr. Mackenzie was a brother of Colin Mackenzie, of Strickathrow, who, according to Jervise (*"Epitaphs,"* vol. i., p. 357), died in 1767. He himself died in 1775. His widow, Ann Macpherson, one of the Ballindalloch family, survived him until 1810, when she died at the age of 75. They had two sons—James, a captain in the 55th Regiment, and George, who, in succession to his brother, became heir to the property. Both died young—James in 1791 at the age of 22, and George in 1799 at that of 24. The father does not seem to have been buried at Fordoun.

In the Mackenzies' time the residence at Drumtochty is described by one who knew it well as a "snug and unpretending cottage," and the abode of "worth and unpretending hospitality."

By disposition, dated 6th November, 1822, Mr. Drummond conveyed the estate to the late Mr. James Gammell, of Countesswells, who afterwards settled it upon the late Major Andrew Gammell, son of Lieutenant-General Andrew Gammell. The disposition by Mr. James Gammell is dated 31st December, 1822, and recorded in *"The Register of Entails,"* 19th February, 1828; while a relative deed of "Revocation" and "Conveyance" is dated 1st July, 1823, and recorded 19th May, 1828.

The late Major Gammell, the immediate predecessor of the present proprietor, was confirmed in

his possessions (embracing the historic "Friars' Glen") by Crown Charter of Adjudication in implement and confirmation, dated the 17th November, 1853.

#### THE CASTLE OF DRUMTOCHTY

is a splendid modern mansion (the residence of the proprietor) in castellated Gothic style. It was erected between fifty and sixty years ago, at a cost of £30,000, after a design by Gillespie Graham. Part of the old house of Woodstock, the former name of the place, is incorporated with the building.

For beauty of situation, the site occupied by the castle of Drumtochty is hardly anywhere excelled. The glen has long been a favourite summer resort, and since the present public-spirited proprietor, the Rev. James Stewart Gammell, came into possession, he has added greatly to its attractions.

This gentleman, it is proper to mention, some years ago kindly gave off, at a nominal annual rent of 10s. per acre, a field of five acres—part of the farm of Drumelzie, in the vicinity of Auchinblae—for recreation ground. The park is held by Trustees, under lease, for behoof of the community, who have shown their appreciation of the privilege conferred, by expending some £300 on planting trees, laying out walks, and in the formation of tennis greens and a skating pond—the greater portion of the cost having been raised locally.

PLEASURE PARK AND PUBLIC HALL.

Drumelzie (Drumellie), on which the pleasure park is situated, now, as we have seen, included in the estate of Drumtochty, was, upwards of two centuries ago, a possession of Robert, Viscount of Arbuthnott, Lord of Inverbervie, who, by service, dated 18th May, 1681, was served heir to the village and lands, in succession to a lord of the same name and ilk. Fifteen years later (1st November, 1695), we find them again scheduled, among others, as owned by the representative of that ancient and noble house.

In 1870 a Town-hall was erected in Auchinblae, at a cost of £500. It was designed by an unpretending local architect, and occupies a site at the junction of the Back-burn with the Luther on the Craig-house grounds. Such a building was also much wanted; and its erection has proved a great boon to the community.

With their pleasure park and public hall, the inhabitants have now at their disposal opportunities for recreation and social enjoyment, in a variety of forms, both summer and winter.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**The Lands and Lairds of Monboddo.**

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THE owners of the cottages, villas, and other buildings, nestling round the base of "Gilbert's hill," and on its western face, at the southern extremity of Auchinblae, owe allegiance to the laird of Monboddo as superior of the ground. We will now give a short account of the succession of those lands during the last three centuries.

We find that towards the close of the sixteenth century the estate of Monboddo was in possession of James Strathauchin, the successor of his father of the same name. By extract recorded 23rd April, 1582, that gentleman was adjudged heir of a third part of the lands and village of Ardbirnie, along with other subjects. Thirty-three years later, namely, on 10th January, 1615, they vested in another James Straquhain, heir of the aforesaid. At the end of the seventeenth century, James Burnett was the proprietor. As heir of Robert Burnett of Kair, he had succeeded to a variety of lands in the county, as specified in extract "Special Service," recorded 1st November, 1695. (See "Abridgement of Records in Pub. Archives Scotiæ," vol. i., Kincardsh., Nos. 2, 26, and 165).

The name of Burnett is one that has been long honourably known in the county. James Burnett of Allagavin, or Lagavin, and Monboddo, was the third son of James Burnett of Craigmyle, and great grandfather of the celebrated Judge, Lord Monboddo, of whom we have given a brief sketch (page 213).

In the autumn of 1773, Monboddo House was visited by the learned Dr. Samuel Johnson and his companion, Mr. Boswell. The Doctor, who was then passing through the Mearns on his famous journey to the Western Islands, gives the following brief notice of the visit:—"Early in the afternoon, Mr. Boswell observed that we were at no great distance from the house of Lord Monboddo. The magnetism of his conversation easily drew us out of our way, and the entertainment which we received would have been a sufficient recompense for a much greater deviation."

Lord Monboddo was born in 1714. He married in 1760 Miss Farquharson. By his marriage he had one son and two daughters. Mrs. Burnett died early, and the son did not survive her many years. Of his daughters, the eldest married Kilpatrick Williamson, keeper of the Outer House Rolls, who took the family name—Burnett. They appear to have had three sons and three daughters. The eldest son, James B. Burnett—a most philanthropic gentleman, active in all deeds of charity and benevolence—succeeded to the property. He was for sometime captain in the Honourable the East India

Company's service. Arthur, the second son, became Sheriff of Peebles. John, the third son, a medical man, died in the East India Company's service.

Elizabeth, Lord Monboddo's youngest daughter, was much attached to her father, and continued to reside with him until her lamented death. "Fair Eliza" forms the subject of a beautiful and touching Elegy by our national poet, Burns. Lord Monboddo himself died 26th May, 1799, at the advanced age of 85. The family vault is within the precincts of St. Palladius' Chapel at Fordoun. Captain Burnett died on the 14th May, 1864, at the age of 72. Mrs. Burnett, an English lady—gentle and unobtrusive—much esteemed by the tenantry and all who had her acquaintance, survived him by fourteen years. They had two sons and two daughters.

James Cumine, the elder son, born in 1835, succeeded to the estate on the death of his father. On completing his education, he also entered the service of the East India Company, and served for ten years in the Madras Cavalry—these years embracing the eventful period of the Mutiny (1857-8), which tested and proved in so conspicuous a degree the fortitude and endurance of the British soldier. Captain Burnett was awarded a medal and clasp commemorative of services rendered by him during that eventful chapter in the history of our Indian empire. Since his return home, in 1867, he has been practically a steady residenter at the old mansion-house in the midst of his tenantry.

Arthur, the late proprietor's younger son, was engaged in the business of coffee-planting in the East Indies, but returned home, after a few years, in enfeebled health, and died, unmarried, at the early age of 31. Miss Eliza, the elder of the two daughters, became the wife of Mr. James Badenach Nicolson of Glenbervie, a gentleman who takes an active part in the management of county affairs, and who is otherwise widely known. In addition to his other possessions, Mr. Badenach Nicolson is, as we shall afterwards see, owner, among others, of lands included in the ancient barony of Mondynes. Miss Helen, the younger daughter, married Mr. Innes of Cowie, another respected county proprietor. She died in the spring of 1892—much regretted.

The mansion-house of Monboddo was originally a plain, unpretending country dwelling-house ; but, a quarter of a century ago (1866-67), it was, after a design by Mr. James Matthews of Springhill, ex-Lord Provost of the City of Aberdeen, at a cost of some £2,000, converted into a handsome Scotch baronial mansion. Some interesting features connected with the old dining-room (where many distinguished guests have been entertained with lordly hospitality) were retained, but almost the whole of the structure otherwise was renewed or modernized at the time indicated. It sits serenely, shaded by thriving plantations belonging to the domain, and is now altogether an elegant residence.

## CHAPTER XV.

**The Barony of Redball.**

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## SIR JAMES CARNEGIE.

THE estate of Redhall, which is one of the ancient baronies of the Mearns, was for a long period an integral part of the domains of the historic house of Pittarrow (which we have already had occasion to notice in connection with the Wishart family). Those domains were sold in 1764 by Sir James Carnegie to enable him to redeem the family estate of Southesk, which, along with the title, had been forfeited by his cousin, James, fifth Earl of Southesk, on account of the share he had taken in the rising of 1715. On the death of this nobleman in 1730, without surviving issue, the male representation of the Southesk family devolved on his cousin, the before-named Sir James Carnegie, of Pittarrow, who, save for the attainder referred to, would have been the sixth Earl of Southesk.

## GEORGE CARNEGIE.

The estate (Pittarrow) was bought by George Carnegie, a younger brother of Sir James's, who

also bought the lands of Charleton, near Montrose. He had made a competent fortune, as merchant, at Gothenburg in Sweden. Previous to this, however, he had followed the fortunes of Prince Charlie, and proved his faith by his works. With the courage of his race, he fought in the fatal field of Culloden; but—with a “charmed life”—after many adventures, such as those who espoused the royal cause had to encounter, he made his escape in a boat, which was picked up by a vessel bound for the Swedish shores.

GEORGE FULLERTON CARNEGIE,  
THE REV<sup>D</sup>. ALEXANDER CARNEGIE.

In the last year of last century, this courageous man was succeeded by his son, who, however, had only been in possession of the estate some five or six years when he died. The lands of Pittarrow then fell to his son, George Fullerton Carnegie, who, besides the heritage, succeeded to very ample means; but he seems to have been a man of generous disposition, not to say open-handed and extravagant, with the result that he had again to part with his possessions. The estates were sold, and the first part that came into the market was Redhall. It was purchased in 1825 by the Revd. Alexander Carnegie, minister of Inverkeillor in Forfarshire, who was also proprietor of Baldovie in

the same county. His father (the Revd. John Carnegie) had also been minister of the parish of Inverkeillor for half a century (1755-1805). His father's brother was David Carnegie. They were the sons of John Carnegie, farmer in Ferrygate, who was descended from a family who, for generations in succession during the seventeenth century, were tenants on Mill of Conveth. They were probably relatives of the Pittarrow family. There is evidence, at least, that a close friendship subsisted betwixt them, and John Carnegie, who was tenant in 1698, was factor on the Pittarrow estate (*vide* "Fraser's History of Laurencekirk").

David, the younger of the two brothers above-named, went to India about the middle of last century in the Honourable East India Company's service. He remained abroad for the long period of forty years. For the greater part of the time he acted as a Judge; but for a brief space before his return he had filled the position of Deputy-Governor of Bombay. He returned home about 1790, and died a few years thereafter, unmarried, leaving a large fortune to his brother, the Revd. John Carnegie, who in turn left it equally divided among his sons. The latter gentleman married Katharine Walker, daughter of Alexander Walker, of St. Fort, near Dundee—a family represented now by Mr. Walker, of Bowland. The marriage took place at St. Fort, in 1760.

## JOHN CARNEGIE.

The Revd. Alexander Carnegie married Elizabeth, daughter of Adam Skirving, author of the well-known song, "Johnnie Cope." He is himself author of a succinct account of his native parish of Inverkeillor (*vide* "The New Statistical Account of Scotland": Blackwood, 1845; vol. xi., pp. 239 to 244). He died on the 2nd of January, 1836, in the 74th year of his age. The property now vested in his son, John Carnegie, born 14th March, 1805, who, since the time he attained his majority, had been resident at Redhall, and who continued to reside there till his death, which, by a singular coincidence, also happened on the 2nd January, in his 74th year, in 1879. The family burying-ground is in the north-west corner of the churchyard at Fordoun, and their pew in the parish church is the front in the south-west gallery. On completing his academical studies at St. Andrews University, Mr. Carnegie, we believe, underwent for a time some legal training, which stood him in good stead in after years. He had an intimate knowledge of all public statutes relating to the management of parochial affairs, to local assessments, and other matters affecting the welfare of the community.

There was no mansion-house on Redhall when the estate came into possession of the Revd. Alex. Carnegie. The present house was built by him close

to what was formerly known as the "Brownmuir wood," from which circumstance many of the older residents believed that "Brownmuir" was the original name of the property, and that it had been changed to Redhall when the late proprietor's progenitor acquired the estate. The belief was perhaps not unnatural, seeing there was no particular place known to the inhabitants of the district as Redhall—this being the designation applicable to the whole barony, which, until sold as a separate property was, as already indicated, merged in the estate of Pittarrow.

Mr. Carnegie was a Deputy-Lieutenant and Justice of the Peace for Kincardineshire. He took an active part for many years in all county and parochial business; but latterly, failing health, consequent on advancing years, compelled him to narrow the sphere of his energies, and to leave to others much of that public duty which in his pristine days he had been accustomed to discharge with ease and alacrity.

On the passing of the Scottish Poor Law Act, well-nigh fifty years ago, Mr. Carnegie was selected as chairman of the local Board—an office which he held for long, and the duties of which he discharged with the highest efficiency. His views were broad, and his counsels tended to moderation. He had admirable faculty for gathering up the sense of a meeting, and many a one which would otherwise have ended in a wrangle of words has been brought

to a harmonious close by a cogent and succinct resolution drafted by his deft pen.

Mr. Carnegie seems to have had a taste for agriculture, and for many years farmed a considerable portion of his own estate. Balfeich and Pittengardener (two fertile farms on the plain) were in his own occupation till about 1860, when he leased them to the present tenants—Mr. William Milne and Mr. James Smith. David Milne, M.A., brother of the former (partly educated at the parish school of Fordoun), has, it may be incidentally remarked, shed lustre on his native county as the author of a valuable “English Dictionary, etymologically arranged.” (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1888.) Mr. Smith is one of the most energetic, widely-known, and esteemed farmers in the Mearns. Generous hearted and never despondent, the proprietor has reason to be proud in possessing such a tenant.

In the “Abridgment of Retours of Special Services” (published by “command” of George III., vol. i., 1811), we find both those farms (Balfeich and Pittengardener) specially mentioned (Abridgment No. 16, Kincardineshire), when, on 30th April, 1607, “Lord John Wischart of Pittarow, a soldier, was served heir to his father of the same name, also a military man. Among other subjects in the succession are included, “*terris et Baroniam, viz.: Balfeiche, Readhall, et Pittengardener, cum molendino de Balfeiche, jacentibus infra regalitatem de Aberbrothock.*”

When the market at Fordoun Station was projected, Mr. Carnegie threw himself heartily into the scheme. He erected, at his own expense, the booth wherein the grain merchants and other dealers were wont to congregate; and he gave the site, while required for this purpose, free of any rent. It never became an important cattle market, but a considerable grain business used to be transacted, until the weekly auction mart was established at the neighbouring burgh of Laurencekirk, when it gradually dwindled. In 1892, the stance was sold by the present proprietor (Alexander Carnegie), along with the Wright's Croft, of about five acres, to Mr. James Tindal.

Mr. Carnegie, it may be added, was a Trustee of the local Savings Bank, and did much to promote its prosperity.

The late Mr. Carnegie will be remembered still, by many who, as young people, attended the "Redhall Games" on old Christmas day, then the great annual holiday in Fordoun among the working class. These "games" were got up as a means of affording some rational amusement to the ploughmen and other young men in the neighbourhood, when their requirements in this respect were little regarded. They consisted of the usual competitions—among the sturdier men, feats of strength and agility; while for the younger men and boys there were foot, sack, and wheel-barrow races, also races for girls and women. While for "old wives" there was a

special race—to the winner of which latter the prize was “a pound of tea”—a prize that was appreciated in those days, when tea brought 6s. a pound. The prizes were mostly provided by Mr. Carnegie himself, and were usually useful articles. His endeavours in the way of amusing the people were so successful that latterly they became too widely known. Aliens and professional athletes appeared on the scene, and carried off most of the honours, thus defeating the original object of the games. For a few years the competition was held on a field near Fordoun station, but “the old order changed.” Other exercises more exciting and attractive, such as rifle shooting, began to engage the young men’s attention, and the games gradually died out.

Mr. Carnegie married Miss Lexy Mactaggart, daughter of Daniel Mactaggart, of Kilkivan, Argyllshire—a benevolent-hearted lady, with a fine presence and much natural grace of manner. There was a cheery melodious ring in her voice—characteristic of her native country—which had a pleasing effect on ears attuned to the broad dialect of the Mearns. Mrs. Carnegie predeceased her husband by ten years. They had five children—three daughters and two sons. Anna, the eldest daughter, married, in 1863, John Dove Wilson, a Member of the Faculty of Advocates of Scotland, then Sheriff-Substitute of the county, and afterwards of the combined Sheriffdom of Aberdeen, Banff, and Kincardine.

## SHERIFF DOVE WILSON.

An exceptionally able and accomplished lawyer, Sheriff Dove Wilson was much esteemed as a judge both by the members of the bar as well as by the community at large. In 1884 the University of Aberdeen, in recognition of his professional ability and scholastic attainments generally, conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. On the retirement of the venerable and learned Dr. George Grub in 1891, the University Court appointed Mr. Dove Wilson his successor as Professor of Law, an appointment which his large experience and intimate acquaintance with the subject eminently qualify him to hold.

Mr. Dove Wilson, it may be added, edited a new edition of Thomson's Treatise on the "Law of Bills of Exchange" (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1865)—a standard work of reference on all points relating to the negotiation of bills, promissory notes, and cheques on bankers. The unification of the law of bills of exchange is a subject to which he has devoted much attention and patient research. An article from his pen bearing the above title, and the "Antwerp Commercial Law Congress of 1885," was published in the *The Law Quarterly Review* (July, 1886), and afterwards reprinted. It contains much valuable information.

Among other books and legal articles of which Mr. Dove Wilson is also the author, may be cited the following:—

- (1) "Handbook of Practice in Civil Causes in the Sheriff Courts of Scotland": Bell & Bradfute, Edinburgh;

which has reached a Fourth Edition.

- (2) "The Law of Process under the Sheriff Courts Act of 1876." Text, 71 pp. 8vo; Appendix and Index, 56 pp. Bell & Bradfute, Edinburgh, 1876.
- (3) Review of "Casper's Practical Manual of Forensic Medicine": *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, 1857 and 1859.
- (4) "On the Prussian System of Judicial Post-Mortem Examinations": *Ibid.*, 1858.
- (5) "On Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction": *Journal of Jurisprudence*, 1858.
- (6) "On Actionable Words": *Ibid.*, 1858 and 1859.
- (7) "On Homicides committed during Intoxication": *Ibid.*, 1863.
- (8) "On the History of the Sheriff Courts." Read before the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen: *Ibid.*, 1875.
- (9) "On a proposed Digest of the Law of Scotland." Read before the Scottish Law Amendment Society, 1870.
- (10) "On the Recent Progress of Codification." Address to the Institute of Bankers, Aberdeen. *Juridical Review*, Edinburgh, 1891.

Helen Lexy, the second daughter, became the wife of Mr. Charles Bishop, of Cwm-rythen, Carmarthenshire, while Alice, the third daughter, died at Bournemouth, unmarried, in 1879, the same year as her father.

John, Mr. Carnegie's younger son, died, unmarried, at St. Paul de Loanda in Africa, in 1881, aged 35. He was one of the original partners of Newton, Carnegie, & Co. (a thriving firm of merchants there), as well as being for several years H.M.'s Vice-Consul.

## ALEXANDER CARNEGIE.

The elder son, Alexander, born in 1844, succeeded his father as laird of Redhall. He was educated at the University of Aberdeen, and, on completion of his studies there, went to India, where he spent some years. He joined the sea-transport service, and had an active time of it in the east for nearly three years. He was at Annesley Bay in Abyssinia, when, in 1868, Sir Robert Napier, in command of a picked force, numbering upwards of 16,000 men, landed at Mulkutta on that bay to commence his hazardous, but successfully accomplished, march over four hundred miles of a mountainous and little known country to the fortress of Magdala, with the humane object of effecting the liberation of the English prisoners so long held in the iron grasp of that able but dissolute and treacherous monarch, Theodore.

Some idea of the busy scene in the bay, whence Sir Robert set out on his toilsome task, may be gathered from the fact that, belonging to the transport service alone, there were congregated there between 12,000 and 13,000 men (*vide Ency. Brit.*, new ed., vol. i., 1875, page 67).

In 1869 he returned home, and shortly after joined the Forfar and Kincardineshire Militia (the 5th Brigade, Scottish Division, Royal Artillery), in which regiment he served for nine years, till in 1880 he resigned his commission, having held the rank

of captain for more than half the period. Two years prior to his resignation, namely in 1878, he was appointed factor to the Earl of Southesk, and since then has resided at Forebank House, in "the Deer Park," about a mile from the historic mansion, Kinnaird Castle, and about eighteen from his own estate at the east end of the Howe.

Mr. Carnegie is a Justice of Peace for the counties of Forfar and Kincardine, and has recently been re-elected a member of the County Council of Forfarshire for the parishes of Farnell and Kinnell. He is also chairman of the Brechin District Committee of the County Council, as well as chairman of two local School Boards—Farnell and Brechin (landward)—besides of three Parochial Boards, namely, those of Farnell, Kinnell, and Maryton.

The mansion-house of Redhall is within easy walk of Fordoun station, and is finely sheltered by trees, to which we shall briefly allude in our chapter on "Woods and Plantations."

THE REV<sup>d</sup>. JAMES KIRK,  
ALEXANDER CARNEGIE KIRK,  
DR. JOHN KIRK OF ZANZIBAR.

Before closing this account of the Redhall family, it is proper to add, as cognate to the subject, that the late Mr. Carnegie, father of the present proprietor, had an only sister—Christian Carnegie—who became the wife of the Rev. James Kirk,

Minister formerly at Barry and afterwards at Arbirlot, a co-presbyter of her father's. They had three sons and one daughter. Two of the former have distinguished themselves in their different professions. The elder, Alexander Carnegie Kirk, was principal partner in the well-known shipbuilding firm of Napier & Co., on the Clyde, and was regarded as at the head of the profession of marine engineers. He was closely identified with the invention of what is technically known as the "triple expansion engine," which has revolutionized that important branch of industry. He died in October, 1892, at the age of 54.

John, his brother, adopted the medical profession, and took his degree of M.D. at the University of Edinburgh. He accompanied Dr. Livingstone as "botanist" when, in 1859, that intrepid explorer, in a new journey in the Zambesi region, traced the Shire river to its outflow from the Nyassa, one of the great African chain of fresh lakes. Dr. Kirk remained with Livingstone in the "Dark Continent" for four years, when enfeebled health necessitated his temporary return. He was afterwards appointed Consul-General at Zanzibar, and in that important office became well-known. He is now Sir John Kirk, K.C.B., and has retired from official life, being resident with his wife and family near London. He is a Director of the Imperial British East Africa Company.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**The Barony of Mondynes.**

—: —

IN the foundation charter of the Abbey of Arbroath, granted by William the Lion in 1178 — less than a hundred years after Duncan's death— Monathethyn, Monathechyn, or Monathyne, lying on the water of Bervie, is twice mentioned. In the first reference, Umfridus de Berkeley, an ancestor of the family of Barclay of Ury, is named, along with Walter Scott, Alan, son of Symon, and other honest men; while, in the second, the land is described as that which Walter, son of Sibald, gave as a marriage portion with his daughter, Eva, to Philippus de Malevile. This Philip was the founder of the Kincardineshire branch of the family of Melville; and his son (also named Philip), by the marriage with Eva, became, in the early part of the thirteenth century, Sheriff first of Aberdeenshire and then of Kincardineshire. He is the only sheriff of the name of whom we appear to have any record. The donation, or "marriage present" as we would say, is understood to have been the separate farm of Abbeytown (the name it bears to the present day), which is well known to have been the property of the monks of Aberbrothock.

Professor Stuart in one of his essays enters pretty fully into the subject, and in a footnote it is stated that Philippus de Melville, was "proprietor of the estate of Glenbervie, and was about this time (namely, when the charter was granted) Sheriff of the Mearns, concerning whose death a singular tradition—of his being boiled—is still very current." But the learned Professor, or more probably the editor of his essays, appears to have fallen into error in this matter. Melville, the laird of Glenbervie, who was "*sodden and supped in brie*," belonged to a much later generation. According to tradition, the Christian name of the illustrious sheriff was John, and the barbarous transaction occurred during the reign of James I., about 1420, whereas the Abbey's charter is dated nearly two centuries and a-half before that time. Manifestly, therefore, the remark in the footnote referred to cannot be brought into harmony with tradition, far less with historic fact.

In 1585, Robert Lundie, of Balgonie, in succession to David Lundie, was served heir to the land and barony of Mondynes. Eighteen years later (in 1603) that Robert Lundie or Lundy was succeeded by another of the same name, who, in addition to the barony, got "its mill."

In 1616, Robert Arbuthnot, of Mondynes, was served heir to his father, John Arbuthnot, in the lands of Mains of Mondynes, the village and lands of Westertown of Mondynes, with its mill and

common pasturage on the "mountain" of Knockhill. In May of the following year, William Arbuthnot, described likewise as heir of John, succeeded to the same subjects; and it would appear either that Robert did not live to enter into possession or that there had been some defect in his title.

Some thirty years later we find the barony lands in possession of the Sibbald family, and their farther destiny will be traced in connection with

#### THE ESTATE OF KAIR.

In modern times, the estate of Kair has frequently changed hands; but the family of Sibbalds, who were owners from the beginning of the thirteenth century, long held possession. James Sibbald, vicar of Arbuthnott, and author of the "Missal of St. Ternan" (written, it is believed, in 1471-84), was a cadet of this ancient house.

In 1649, Mr. David Sibbald of Kair was served heir to his father, Mr. James Sibbald, in the lands and barony of Mondynes—comprehending Eastertown and Westertown of Mondynes, and its mill; also "Choppiswalls," the lands of "Coshnay," "Knockbank," "Auchtochter," and "Knockhill," "dominicles" of Kair, with those of "Castletown," "Watestown," and "Burnhouse"—erected into the barony of Mondynes.

This David Sibbald was succeeded by Alexander Sibbald in 1676, who was served heir to the

lands and "dominicles" specified—"Choppiswalls" being in the deed of service designed as "Thopiswalls."

In 1683, Margaret Sibbald succeeded to the subjects as heiress to her nephew, the foresaid Alexander Sibbald. As mentioned in our notice of Professor Stuart (page 216), she was the sole heiress and last of the Sibbalds, and became the wife of Harie Guthrie, of Halkerton, near Forfar. David Guthrie succeeded him, and married Margaret, eldest daughter of Alexander Arbuthnot, of Pitcarles, whose eldest daughter, Margaret, became the wife of William Stuart, of Inchbreck, grandfather of the professor.

Dr. Patrick Sibbald, Professor of Divinity in Marischal College, who died 14th November, 1697, and of whom a portrait adorns the College Hall, is also said to have been "descended of a lawful brother of Sibbald, of Kair." The artist is Charles Whyt. Another notable portrait by his hand—that of Mr. Robert Low, Postmaster of Danzig—hangs in the vestibule of the Senatus room, King's College, Aberdeen.

The lands of Mains and Mill of Mondynes, East and West Mondynes, Pitskelly and Cocketty, together with Knockbank and Auchtochter, anciently included, as we have seen, in the barony of Mondynes, are now, along with others, the property of Mr. James Badenach Nicolson, of Glenbervie House.

## THE FAMILY OF KINLOCH.

About half a century ago, the estate of Kair came into possession of Mr. George Farquhar Kinloch. He was succeeded by James John Kinloch, Deputy-Lieutenant of the County, who died in 1876. The latter gentleman married Sophia, daughter of the late General Sir George Anson, G.C.B., and the family is now represented by their son, George Hibbert Anchitel Kinloch, Lieutenant-Colonel in the 13th Foot, who was born in 1842, and married, in 1874, Margaret Emma, only daughter of John T. White, Esq., of Cashioybridge, Herts.

## DR. DAVID JOHNSTON.

Dr. David Johnston, the present proprietor, purchased this estate in 1867. He is a native of the parish, and widely known as a skilful surgeon and experienced physician. He had for many years an extensive practice in Montrose and the surrounding district.

Dr. Johnston was educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh University. On completing his University curriculum, he, in accordance with the practice of the time, served an apprenticeship to the late Dr. Alexander Murray of Aberdeen, lecturer on clinical medicine, and one of the physicians of the Royal Infirmary there, and who, as we shall see later, held a distinguished place among his professional brethren.

Dr. Johnston married Eliza Barclay, daughter of Charles Barclay, merchant, Montrose, and for a time farmer at Newton, near Laurencekirk, and sister of Robert Barclay, of Inchbrayock, in Forfarshire, ex-provost of that town (to which office his father had been thrice elected), and now, it is believed on authority, the representative of the head of the Berkeleys, of "Mernez and Mathyrs," in the twenty-third generation, in direct descent from John de Berkeley, who, in the reign of Alexander II., possessed extensive estates in Kincardineshire.

The mansion-house of Kair is a comparatively modern erection, of considerable beauty, and occupies a pleasing site on a gently-rising ground on the left bank of the Bervie-water, outside the parish boundary and within that of Arbuthnott.

Prior to 1871, the time when Dr. Johnston took up his residence there, the mansion-house was for a number of years occupied by Captain John Graham Buchanan. A somewhat amusing episode connected with the captain occurred during his stay there, which we shall notice in a subsequent chapter.

## CHAPTER XVII.

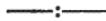
**Leithfield or Whiterigs.**

UPWARDS of two centuries and a half ago, the estate of Whiterigs was in possession of the Drum family. On 18th March, 1682, Mr. Alexander Irvine, a soldier, was served heir to it, among other lands in the county, as successor to his father, of the same name. Six years later, we find confirmation of the possession—the property (according to record of 21st March, 1688), together with that of Redmyre in the same district, being comprehended in the lands belonging to the barony of Drum.

The proprietor in more recent times was James Arnott, W.S., a grandson of James Leith, who became Sheriff-Substitute of Kincardineshire, and who married Margaret, daughter of John Young, Sheriff-Clerk of the Mearns. Mr. Arnott's mother was Janet, daughter of the before-named James Leith. She married James Arnott in Arbikie, Forfarshire, by whom she had three sons and several daughters. James, the W.S., was the eldest son, and on the death of his uncle, Major-General James Leith (unmarried), at Madras in 1829, he acquired the property of Leithfield, which the uncle had

bought back into the family. Mr. Arnott's decease occurred in 1866, and he was survived by his wife, Emily Sophia Fletcher, and several children. On his death the lands were sold to John Towns, Farmer, Bellandro, St. Cyrus, who died in 1880, and by whom the lands were bequeathed to his nephew, John Anderson, Farmer, Pitcarry and Kinghornie, near Bervie, who died in 1882, and whose widow (a niece of the before-named John Towns) now life-rents and resides on the property, along with her five sons.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**Phesdo.**

THE estate of Phesdo was at one time owned by a branch of the Falconer family, which, according to Jervise's "Memorials of Angus and Mearns," existed well down the eighteenth century.

Early in the present century the property was purchased by Alexander Crombie, an influential Aberdeen lawyer. He was enrolled among the members of the Society of Advocates there in 1789, and gradually acquired a wide business connection. Among other important appointments, he held the factorship on the extensive estates owned by the then Earl of Aberdeen.

Mr. Crombie is described to us, by one who knew him well, as a man of "invariable sweetness of temper and unwearied application to business." "Few" says the writer referred to, "have led a more useful or honourable life, or died more respected or lamented." On the property he effected great improvements in the way of planting and draining; and, at considerable expense, he erected an elegant mansion-house of granite brought from his native county. He was a generous benefactor to the poor,

and left to the Kirk-Session, in trust, a legacy for their behoof. He died on 21st November, 1832. A marble tablet to his memory, with suitable inscription, adorns the church porch.

By his deed of settlement, the estate of Phesdo was settled on his cousin, the Rev. Alexander Crombie, LL.D., who was also a native of Aberdeen. The period of his birth appears to be about 1760. He was educated at Marischal College, and, in addition to the honours conferred on him by his *alma mater*, his name carried the distinction of F.R.S. He became a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, but adopted the profession of teaching. For a short time, associated with a gentleman named Hogg, he conducted an academy in his native city. He afterwards removed to London, and finally settled at Greenwich. Dr. Crombie appears to have had altogether an eminently successful career. He was distinguished as teacher, scholar, and author. Among other works, he has left an "Essay on Philosophical Necessity" (1793), and "The Gymnasium" (2 vols. 1812).

About 1845 the late Sir John Gladstone, of Fasque, Baronet, purchased Phesdo, and it is now in possession of that gentleman's grandson, of the same name, the third baronet. He is the son of the late Sir Thomas, and nephew of William Ewart Gladstone, the statesman.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**Sir John Stuart Forbes, Baronet.**

FOR several decades before the close of the first half of the century, and down to the period of his death on the 28th May, 1866, Sir John Stuart Forbes, of Fettercairn, Baronet (who latterly, for substantial reasons, as we shall see, assumed the prefix Hepburn to the old family name of Stuart Forbes), was one of the most influential and active heritors of the parish. He was the second son of Sir William Stuart Forbes, and grandson of Sir William Forbes, the well-known banker, who wrote the "Life of Dr. James Beattie," and to whom that poet entrusted the manuscript of his famous "Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth" (page 31). He succeeded to the title and estates on the death of his father, and was the eighth baronet and a lineal representative of Lord Pitsligo. According to Jervise ("Mem. of Angus and Mearns," vol. ii., 1885, page 155) he represented also, through a female, the old family of Wishart of Pittarrow. Shortly before his death he succeeded to the property of Invermay, near Forteviot, in Perthshire, on which succession he added the prefix

Hepburn to the old family name above mentioned. He was a Deputy-Lieutenant, Convener of the County, and, as the writer already quoted says, "well acquainted with all county matters and deservedly popular." His wife was Lady Harriet, third daughter of the sixth Marquis of Lothian. By her he had an only daughter, who married, in 1858, her cousin, the Hon. Charles H. R. Trefusis, now Lord Clinton. The estate of Fettercairn has passed through the female line to their son, the Hon. Charles John R. H. S. Forbes Trefusis.

Sir John took a warm interest in all that pertained to the welfare of the parish. In the temporary absences of the late Mr. Carnegie, of Redhall, he acted as chairman of the Parochial Board. About 1847 he established in the parish, under the late Mrs. John Mollyson as local treasurer, a clothing society, which flourished for nearly a quarter of a century, and was the means of collecting annually, by subscriptions of members and donations of friends, a considerable amount, which was judiciously expended on substantial articles of clothing.

When the present parish church was erected (1830), Sir John appears to have been the most extensive owner of arable land, or at least to have drawn the largest rental in the parish, on which account, when the sittings fell to be allocated, he was allowed the first choice of a seat in the church. He chose the front one of the west gallery facing

the pulpit. Sir John, however, seldom or never put in appearance at the parish church. The ancestral mansion-house is situated in the adjoining parish of Fettercairn, which naturally had a stronger claim upon him as a worshipper. Sir John, moreover, was a leal and devoted member of a sister church—the Scotch Episcopalian.

The portion of the estate of Fettercairn lying within the parish of Fordoun embraces, among other farms, those of Arnbarrow and Castletown, also the sites of the ancient county town and royal residence, with its large forest or hunting-park.

## CHAPTER XX.

**Mountains.**

GILBERT'S HILL, THE WITCH KNAP, STRATH-  
FINELLA, ARNBARROW, THE HUNTER'S  
HILL, AND KNOCK-HILL.

“GILBERT'S HILL” (to which allusion has already been made, page 224) is an eminence on the Monboddo property, commanding a fine view of the market square and other portions of the village of Auchinblae. The road along the northern fringe of the Drumsleed woods skirts it in rear. To what distinguished personage the hill owes its name we have not been able to discover, but it may be safely assumed that Gilbert was a man of mark in his day and generation.

The people of Fordoun are too enlightened now to believe in witches or warlocks, or even, it may be, in the worry-coo himself. As a consequence, all traditions relating to the wonderful “cantrips” played by those worthies in former days are fast dying out, and all traces of their haunts becoming obliterated; but half a century ago, on the left shoulder of the hill we have just been referring to,

there existed a mound called the "witch knap," to which every schoolboy who had any superstition left in him contributed a stone in passing.

Little kent the worry-coo  
What the Covenant could do.  
What a mich' and what a men'—  
What a fech' and what a fen.'

Haud the Bible till his e'e ;  
Ding him doon and gar him flee,  
For he's a fause deceitfu' loon  
Wi' reekit ribs and riven taes.

Habbie held him gruff an' grim,  
Davie thrush him lith an' lim',  
Till like a bunch o' barkit skins  
They dang the deevil o'er the lin.

In connection with Glenfarquhar we have enumerated several mountain peaks included in that property. Kerloak (which seems "so near and yet so far"), a hill belonging to the Grampian range, is a prominent landmark visible from many points in the parish, but it is outside the parochial boundary, and therefore, save by way of incidental allusion, does not fall within scope of our survey. A mountain that more properly deserves some description is the historic Strath-Finella. It stands 1,358 feet above the sea level on the south part of the Grampians, and has been described by a writer, who was very familiar with the topographical features of the county, as a "cheerless dark-faced hill." It is cut off from the main body by the narrow but strikingly

beautiful vale of Drumtochty. On its southern side, stretching down to the plain, are numerous farms in the highest state of cultivation. On its north-eastern face, at the entrance of the glen, but stretching to a considerable altitude above the road, is the Garret or Garold wood, which, as we have elsewhere noticed, contains some excellent timber planted during last century. There is little verdant pasture on its flanks; and, on the whole, Strath-Finella hill, except, perhaps, when the heather is in bloom, presents a dreary, if not "dismal," aspect. It is about four miles in length and a little over one mile in breadth. It is one entire mass of sandstone, and in this respect it differs from the Grampians, from which, as we have seen, it stands apart. They are chiefly composed of granite, but the region of hard stone terminates here and gives place to the soft reddish sandstone, which prevails all along the Howe.

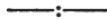
The hill of Arnbarrow (with "the hunter's hill" at the south end) is a spur of the Grampians lying on the left bank of the Ferdun.

Springing from the south-eastern base of Finella, but entirely separate from that mountain, whose broad shoulders protect it, is a hill known as "Fordoun's hill." The climb to the top is steep, but when once the summit is gained the pedestrian is rewarded for his toil by the magnificent view he finds stretched out before him.

The Knock-hill in the north-east end of the

parish is another projection from the Grampian range. From this point also an extensive view can be obtained. It was here, according to tradition, that the ecclesiastical authorities in a remote age had intended to build the parish church, but having been repeatedly counselled by some unseen power to desist, they wisely did so, and carried out the design "farther down the Howe." The Bervie-water, as we shall see when we come to trace its course, sweeps round the eastern base of this interesting hill.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**Rivulets and Rivers.**THE LUTHER, WEST-BURN, DOURIE, AND  
FERDUN.

IF we except the Water of Bervie (which we shall presently notice), there are no streams or rivulets of any great magnitude in the parish. To the rise and course of the Luther-water—called in its upper reaches the West-burn—we have already (pages 96 and 149) incidentally alluded. The most westerly stream is the Dourie or Bogindolla burn which, rising in the Grampians, skirts the west side of the farm of Arnbarrow, and forms for some distance the west boundary of the parish. Except in a rainy season there is no volume of water, and the stream can be easily spanned at any point before it enters the parish of Fettercairn.

Another stream in the west end of the parish is the little rivulet Ferdun, which, as explained (page 55), also rises among the Grampians. After running along the west shoulder of Strath-Finella hill, it continues in a southerly direction until it blends with the Luther-water. The point where it crosses the

turnpike road leading to the village of Fettercairn is called the "Devilly Brig."

A third stream that may be mentioned is the Back or Quarry-burn. It rises among the Glenfarquhar hills, and flows in a south-easterly direction until it meets a tributary (the "Hodden-burn" at the foot of the "Primrose-brae"), from which point it sweeps westward until it unites with the West-burn. (*See the village plan.*) Both the Back-burn and its tributary just named used, in former days, to contain splendid specimens of trout, which, however, could not be caught by the highest scientific methods, or by methods of any kind that a modern sportsman could be expected to approve. Occasionally, indeed, the schoolboy would construct for himself a rude line out of "Metal's" main or "Snip's" tail. Equipped with a hazel rod, a hook, and a pennyworth of gut, *plus* the foresaid line, he would sometimes try his hand at alluring the lurkers in those dark pools; but the simple and generally approved plan, irrespective of all scientific methods or opinions, was to cast off the jacket or kilt, fold up the shirt-sleeves, and, leaning over the bank, cautiously feel for the timid trout lurking in the dark recesses below!

#### THE WATER OF BERVIE.

The Bervie or Bervie-water—"water" being a qualifying adjunct denoting more magnitude than

a "burn" but less than a "river"—rises between two heights of the Grampians, named respectively Gothie and Goill or Goyle. In the initial stages of its career—by means of several small rills or brooks, which after short runs unite—it drains the eastern slopes of the mountain range, whose watershed divides it from the Water of Dye. After a short and rapid run through bracken and heather it joins the Bulg-burn above the farm of Corsebauld, continuing its course down the vale behind the woods and moor of Paldy Fair, until it turns the eastern shoulder of the Knockhill.

From its principal source, the stream, taken in a bee-line, would mark a south-easterly course, and its prevailing flow is in this direction, but it has many sinuosities. Commencing below Glenbervie House, where it receives the Forthie (a considerable stream), it takes a sweep south-south-west of nearly three miles until it reaches Whiteriggs, a short distance from Fordoun railway station; thence, with numerous little bends and zig-zags, it resumes its south-easterly course to the sea. With all its windings, its length, we should suppose, does not exceed eleven or twelve miles, but during its short run many picturesque scenes are passed ere its waters blend with those of the German Ocean, not a hundred yards to the east of the royal burgh of Bervie, from which it derives its name.

For the last three miles of its course—from Arbuthnott House downwards—the scenery is

remarkably fine. The grandeur of the mountain torrent and the soft sylvan shades of a Surrey stream are awaiting, but the banks of the Bervie-water have charms of their own. Around the ancient manor just named, on both sides of the steep valley, the trees are old and majestic. In autumn the tints are lovely as they are varied—peculiarly pleasing to the eye and gladdening to the heart of a true lover of nature. Here the herons rear their annual brood unmolested; and from among the foliage of the higher branches of the trees, at certain seasons, numerous slender necks may be seen projecting.

After leaving the woods, the river hurries past the old church of Arbuthnott (recently destroyed by fire, and for his exertions in the restoration of which the Rev. Mr. Spence, the present minister, deserves much credit), and is diverted in its course to supply motive power to the mill of Arbuthnott. Re-entering its natural bed, it continues its seaward course between cultivated fields, broken here and there on the right by steep banks of clay partially overgrown with rough grass and rank weeds. At this part of the stream wild ducks breed; and during summer it is no uncommon sight to see a shy water-hen with her downy brood disporting themselves in the water, but it is only a momentary view that can be got of the family, for on a warning “chuck-chuck” from the mother, the tiny creatures speedily disappear under the over-hanging grass.

The tall bank on the right gradually retreats until it merges once more in cultivated land, when the river is again diverted to render to the mill of Allardice like service to that which it renders to the mill of Arbuthnott higher up. Rejoining the line of the old channel, it again sweeps round, and, forming almost a complete circle, encloses a park of about ten acres, which centuries ago formed the garden of the castle of Allardice, and where, in their season, lilies in abundance yet nod, and plums can still be gathered. On the point where the curved lines open stands the castle itself, one of the seats of the ancient and powerful family of Ury. It is presently occupied by the tenant of the farm. Surrounding the castle are some fine ash and beech trees, interspersed with "gean" or wild cherry-trees. The delicate tints of the ashes and beeches, and the ruddy glow of the decaying leaves of the gean, with the turreted castle towering on the heights above, form a beautiful and impressive picture not readily effaced from memory.

Our friend, Mr. Legg, bank agent, Bervie, has drawn our attention to a peculiar geological feature observable at this point, and which, so far as known to him, has not been remarked upon. We shall quote his words. He says:—"The river-bed has hitherto been composed of sandstone and coarse conglomerate—conglomerate predominating; but on the right bank, at the point opposite the castle, a foreign element protrudes in the shape of granite

similar to that of Peterhead, but of a coarser grain. It extends for about four hundred yards in a north-west to a south-westerly direction, and was in former years quarried and used for building purposes. Part of the present bridge which spans the river at Bervie is composed of this material."

The excessive hardness of this stone taxed the powers of freestone masons (unaccustomed to work in granite), and the quarries are now abandoned.

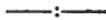
After leaving this peculiar belt of granite, the river becomes less interesting. Artificial lades confine the water, and to the owners of sundry thriving flax mills on its banks it is invaluable. Frequently during the year the mouth of the river, through the action of a southerly wind, is closed up by beach, and a large lagoon is formed. This is a favourite fishing pool, and in winter forms an admirable skating pond.

The stream is naturally an excellent one for the *salmo fario*, or common yellow-brown burn or brook trout, which is the non-migratory species. Salmon used formerly to ascend it for a considerable distance, but their ascent is now greatly retarded by causes that need not be specified. The part of the stream belonging to Lord Arbutnott is, we believe, "preserved." It is, consequently, the more valuable.

On days suitable for fly fishing (usually the most successful in the months of May and June), good baskets of trout may still be got in the Bervie ;

but the trout, like the experts who have educated them, have now more "guile" themselves. They are cuter than they were thirty or forty years ago. In consequence, the angler, if he is to cope with this higher education, must ply his art with more cunning. The big hooks, rough dressing and busking, and strands of white hair, are not gear that will serve the purpose now-a-days. Instead of these, there must now be used the fine drawn gut, the tiny hook, and the most perfect counterfeit presentment of the insect itself. The flies for trout that some expert fishers find the most effective are—during the spring months—"March brown," "red and black hackles," and "Greenwall"; but an angler, we are told, can never be wrong with "red and black hackle" all the year through. For sea-trout and finnock, a fly, locally known as the "demon," is sometimes used. It is, we believe, composed of two small hooks in the form of "Stewart tackle," dressed with a drake wing about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, plain. This fly is said to be "very killing." On the whole, the Bervie is still a good trouting stream. For its size, it is probably one of the best on the east coast.

## CHAPTER XXII.

**Woods and Plantations.**

TOWARDS the middle of the twelfth century, it is recorded, a dispute arose between Sibbald of Kair and the powerful house of Barclay (which has played so important a part in the history of the county) over the rights claimed by the tenants of the former to pasture their cattle ("nout," "sheep," and "swine") in the forests of Glenfarquhar and Monboddo, then apparently in the possession of the Barclays. Francis Douglas in his "General Description of the East Coast of Scotland," (Aberdeen, 1826, page 217), mentions the dispute in order to show how plentiful wood was in those remote ages in parts of the country where, in his time, "not a vestige of a tree" was to be found.

We will now devote a short space to tell our readers how the parish stands in the matter of trees a century and upwards after the time of the author just quoted.

On looking along the south side of the glen of Drumtochty the picture that presents itself to the eye has the appearance of one unbroken forest of

larch. It contains, however, a mixture of Scotch fir and spruce trees. There are also on the same side the remains of an old forest of Scotch fir, called the Garold or Garret wood. About thirty of the trees in this ancient forest are very old, probably two hundred years or thereby. The larch in the glen was planted in the beginning of the century by the late Mr. Harley-Drummond, who, as we have seen, parted with the lands in 1822.

On the north side of the glen the trees are a mixture of all the different kinds of hardwood—beech, ash, elm, plane, oak, linden, and the like. Some of the braes are quite covered with beech, and present a beautiful sight in early summer and autumn, when the leaves are all the colours of the rainbow. In the neighbourhood of the castle there are some very fine specimens of the silver fir. All the north side was planted by the Mackenzies, who acquired the property during last century, soon after the exciting days of Prince Charlie (see pages 220 and 221).

The Scotch fir and the willow are natives of this district, being found in places where no human hand ever planted them. But the juniper, which is so common in many of the glens and moors of the north of Scotland, is altogether absent from these parts, and does not even thrive when planted. The hazel, likewise, is only to be found where it has been planted, and the nuts very rarely ripen properly. But the rhododendron, which was introduced a few years

ago, has taken kindly to the soil, so that in the months of June and July, Drumtochty glen is quite a blaze of blossom.

The Douglas pine—introduced from British Columbia—now also graces the glen, and has thriven well. Some specimens, planted about thirty years ago, measure fifty feet in height and nearly five in circumference.

It is evident that the birch and rowan trees are indigenous to the soil of this neighbourhood. They are to be found in all the glens and corries around. In clambering up the sides of the ravines, they present a very grotesque appearance. The soil washed away by the torrents of centuries—the roots are left exposed, and stand out among the rock boulders like enormous spiders.

One has no difficulty in walking underneath those naked roots; indeed, there is frequently no other way of getting along; while, overhead, the trunks and limbs are gnarled and twisted in every direction. On scaling the breastwork of rocks and roots, the pedestrian comes every now and again on a level platform, with a carpet of green, and a clear pool of water in the centre. Tier on tier, on the hillsides all around, rise the stately “birks.” It is little to be wondered that in those spots, in days of old, the fairies loved to dwell! One might almost wish the little elfs were there still; but now the only living creature the explorer may expect to see or hear is the ubiquitous rabbit, as it darts

across the green sward, or the tender-hearted cushat, as she sits on the birken bough and sings her mournful song!

Before leaving the glen of Drumtochty, it may be mentioned that if a space is cleared and left unplanted in this glen for a year or two, luxurious growths of birch and rowans spring up spontaneously and take complete possession of the ground.

Paldy Fair wood is composed principally of Scotch fir and larch, but a beautiful belt of beech runs along the lower part of the den. This plantation is, we believe, about one hundred years old.

The forest of Monboddoo is of great antiquity, being, as we have already seen, mentioned in a document some six centuries old, relating to certain rights of pasturage claimed by Sibbald's tenants. The present woods contain about an equal admixture of spruce and Scotch fir, with a sprinkling of hardwood. Near the mansion-house there are, as in the case of Drumtochty castle, some very fine old trees.

On the Redhall property Scotch fir is the prevailing kind of timber; some of it is of very superior quality.

The fir wood on this estate was probably planted by George Carnegie, the ardent Jacobite, who, as we have seen, fought for Prince Charlie at Culloden. It is a fine old wood with an undergrowth of mountain trees. These latter never seem to attain a height

exceeding six to ten feet. They are self-sown, and spring up among the blaeberrys, which are always to be found in great profusion in this wood, as they are in the neighbouring woods of Monboddo.

The Redhall wood was of considerable extent when the Revd. Alexander Carnegie acquired the property. Nearly the whole of the farm of Marchburn, part also of Burnside, and the two crofts known as Crossroads and Ringwood, have been trenched out of wood and moor within the memory of the present proprietor (grandson of the reverend gentleman named). The wood (which, as we shall afterwards see, was completely blown down by the gale of 1838) extended from a little to the east of the Monboddo avenue to the bridge over the little brook at Burnside. It was mostly larch of the same age as the fir wood already described, and the ground which it occupied is now divided into fields of good arable land, and has for many years formed part of the farm of Burnside.

The late Mr. Carnegie planted all the hard wood about the mansion-house, and all the hedges on the main roadsides, as well as those on the estate. At that time (1826) hedges were not common in this district, and consequently few men seem to have had any special knowledge about them. Mr. Carnegie had to import a professional "hedger" all the way from Northumberland to do the planting on his property. The services of hedger Robert Trail (whose portrait, among others,

by the Dutch artist Brich, adorns the dining-room of the Gardenstone Arms Hotel at Laurencekirk), do not appear to have been available.

The Braes of Fordoun, the property of Viscount Arbuthnott, are adorned by a thriving plantation of larch and Scotch fir. The operation of planting on this part—the front of Strath-Finella—originated early in the century.

Studded around the parish church are some grand old trees, mostly plane and ash. Among the latter, standing on the right corner, at the head of “the sloch,” as the road leading up to the kirk is called, is the largest tree in the whole parish. It is a gigantic trunk of untold years, measuring thirteen feet in circumference. We do sincerely trust no radical Goth of the ancient or modern type will be daring or barbarian enough to lay axe to its root, but that it will be allowed to live on to adorn the historic neighbourhood where it has so long reigned supreme!

With regard to those trees in the vicinity of the church, the following quotation from the *Montrose Standard* of 18th October, 1838, will enable our readers to form some idea of the remarkable storm which occurred that year (as briefly described in a previous chapter), and of the devastation which it wrought:—“Altogether unprecedented and frightful, the force of the tempest seems—particularly about 6, p.m.—to have been beyond all calculation. Of the eight beautiful and weighty turrets on the

church seven were blown off. Three of them rested on the roof of the tower, two of them on the back of the church parapet after breaking the rafters on which they first fell, and the other two fell to the ground. Never was such havoc seen as has been made among the fine old trees about the manse and the church ; and indeed the whole parish, from east to west, was one humbling scene of desolation, strewed with wreck of woods, stooks, stacks, and roofs of houses. The trees on Redhall and Monboddo that are torn up by the roots and broken over by the middle amounts to thousands. Not a stook was standing in all the parish, and scarcely a stack in the corn-yards. That evening also the high chimney of the steam-engine at Auchinblae, which Mr. Farquharson erected, in aid of the water-wheel, to drive the spinning machinery, fell down with a tremendous crash, carrying with it part of the roof of the mill through which it fell."

The storm occurred on the Thursday immediately preceding the date of the above quotation (18th October). The damage to the woods must have been enormous, for, in the recollection of many, hundreds of large trees were still lying on the ground in 1849-50, just as they lay when the gust of the "Windy Michael Fair" subsided. As a consequence the country was glutted with timber, but the making of the railway created a demand and the surplus was drained off.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

**Stone Quarries.**

DURING the first half of the century there were at least some half-a-dozen quarries in the parish, from which stone could be obtained for building purposes. On the left bank of the West-burn, as shown on the village plan, was the quarry whence the material for the spinning-mill buildings was got. It was conveniently near the works, and therefore involved little expense for cartage, which was doubtless an element for consideration when the scheme was embarked upon. This quarry has been little used ever since. The last episode we can recall respecting it was the occasion when part of the embankment gave way and buried one of the quarriers, but he was speedily exhumed, and, as we have already seen (page 193), the worthy man lived to wield his favourite weapon for many a year after this occurrence.

Burnmouth, a quarry situated on the left bank of the Back-burn, and probably a continuation of the same seam as that in which the quarry first described was opened, separated only by the stream

just named, yielded a rough species of old red sandstone.

The quarry at Glenfarquhar—a kind of sandstone—is the one out of which the stones for the earlier houses of the village were obtained ; but this stone did not stand the climate, and the quarry fell into disuse many years ago.

At Drumsleed on the Monboddo estate, and Coullie on that of Arbuthnott, were quarries both yielding material of the old red sandstone character.

There was formerly a quarry in Drumtochty, called the Garret quarry, where a strong slaty kind of stone, much used for drain covers, rough pavement, and like purposes, used to be quarried.

The quarry of Paldy Fair is still in operation. It yields a black trap-rock, which is very durable but difficult to work. With the exception of this one, all the other quarries enumerated have ceased to exist.

A new quarry has recently been opened at Templebank (a place probably associated with the Knights-Templar) on the lands of Fordoun, from which good red sandstone is obtained ; and from this source local requirements are now mostly supplied.

Generally speaking, it may be said, the chief rocks in the upland districts are clay-slate and mica-slate, with others of a metamorphic description. Those of the Howe, lower down, are red sandstone, sandstone conglomerate, and intruded trap.

## THE MARL-HOLE.

During the latter half of the last century, and down for a few years into the beginning of the present, while Mr. Harley-Drummond yet held the estate, lime for building and other purposes was obtained from a pit known by the name of "the Marl-hole," in the back-brae of Drumtochty. The limestone was burned with peat, cut in the hills beyond, and the kiln where the operation was carried on is still standing. The work was discontinued solely, we believe, on account of the pit having become so deep that the expense of keeping out the water rendered it unremunerative.

Another kiln and quarry existed at Clattering Brigs, but operations there were likewise suspended soon after those at "the Marl-hole," and for a similar reason. In this latter pit, one Sabbath day early in the century, a now nameless and forgotten herd-boy lost his life by drowning. The little fellow's cap, containing a copy of the Shorter Catechism, was found floating on the surface. Ever since this sad accident "the Marl-hole" seems to have been a dread and deserted place.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**Kirk-Session Records.**

THE Register of Baptisms and Marriages—four volumes, embracing respectively the periods from 4th June, 1693 (the earliest baptismal entry), to 1764, 1765 to 1783, 1783 to 1819; and (baptisms) 1819, (marriages) 1820—both to 1854—are deposited in Register House, Edinburgh.

Till 1771 the two classes of entries are inter-mixed, but after that date they are separately recorded. The portion prior to 1741 is only a copy. Entries of baptisms, several years out of their regular sequence in point of time, occur not unfrequently; while until 1812 the mothers' names are not recorded.

The minutes from 1771 to the present time are in possession of the Kirk-session, so also are the session documents from 1747 down to date ("Miscellany N. S. Club," vol i., page 301).

The first entry in the Register of Baptisms dates two hundred years back—4th June, 1693, as above stated. The ink is pale, and the words are not easily deciphered. It is a record of the birth of

Margaret, daughter of David Robb, in . . . There were two witnesses—John Clark and another John, whose surname we have not been able to make out.

On the 13th, same month and year, James Strath, in Scotstown, had his son, named James, baptised—the two witnesses being James Christie and James Anderson, both in Fordoun—the Kirkton, we presume, for we find James Christie called in to perform similar duty on several occasions. For example—on 17th June, 1693, when James Tevendale and Margaret Walker “gave up their names in marriage” (and this is the first matrimonial entry in the volume), James appears, along with John Croll, in Cairnbegg, as cautioners for “their performance and abstinence.”

On 7th August, 1693, Charles Davidson gave up a testimonial of his marriage contract with Isobel Anderson, in the parish of St. Vigians; and on the 9th of April, in the following year, John Beattie, in Foord-house, of Pitarrow, had his *posthumous* (!) daughter, Mary, baptised. The witnesses on this occasion were David Carnegie, Mill of Conveth (*see* page 230) and John Hutchon, in Foord-house, aforesaid.

On 2nd June, 1695, John Burnes, in the parish of Conveth, and a woman residing in the parish of Fordoun, were “contracted in order of marriage”—David Watson, in Polburn (Powburn), and John Falconer, in Newlands, being cautioners for their “abstinence.”

As the name Burnes (Burns) is a historic one in the county, or one, rather, of world-wide renown, we shall give a few more extracts from the parochial registers of entries where it occurs:—On the 9th July, 1695, Robert Burnes, in Auchtochter, had his son John baptised, in presence of John Trotter, in Foord-house, of Pittarrow, and John Burnes, in Glenbervie parish. On the 25th August, same year, William Burnes, in Polburn, had his son David baptised before David Watson “elder and younger” there.

On the 10th December, 1722, David Burnes, in Knockbank, had his son William baptised—William Burnes, in Auchtochter, being a witness to the performance of the ceremonial rite. Twenty years later (20th October, 1742), Robert Burnes and Jean Beattie, both in parish of Fordoun, “gave up” their names to be proclaimed in order to marriage, but the Register is silent as to any caution having been required in their case, and probably the practice had, by this time, become obsolete.

Reverting again to the seventeenth century, occasionally we find a reason was put on record for calling a child by a particular christian name:—On the 8th of August, 1695, Sir David Carnegie, of Pittarrow, had his daughter Elizabeth baptised, “being so named after Elizabeth Irving, relict to deceased James Burnet of Kair, and Dame Elizabeth Falconer, then Lady of Ballmaine.”

In the month of June, 1705, the Registrar—

whether from pressure of business or what other cause we cannot say—adopted a somewhat curt method of recording matrimonial events, as witness the following:—

## EXTRACTS.

June, 5th.—Crab and Pedie, married.

„ 17th.—Coutts and Crab, married.

„ 15th.—Kinnear and Crab, married.

The proclamation of these marriages are duly recorded.

In the opening of this chapter we have referred to irregularity in the order of time, and the above contains a sample. On the 22nd of September, 1705, when Mr. John Ouchterlony, the minister, (page 3) had his daughter Mary baptised, the recorder had to resume his former amplitude of detail—he could hardly do otherwise when the ceremony was performed by Mr. William Dunbar, minister at Conveth, in presence of three such aristocratic witnesses as Sir Alexander Falconer of Glenfarquhar, Mr. John Arbuthnott of Fordoun, and Sir John Carnegie of Pittarrow!

The Baptismal Register of Fordoun was sometimes employed to perpetuate the memory of transactions which occurred outside the pale of the kirk as by law established. One such instance let us record:—On the 2nd February, 1713, “Mr. John Arbuthnot, of Fordoun, had his daughter, Jean Arbuthnot, baptised at his own house by Mr. William Seton, minister of the meeting-house at

Drumlithy, conform to the order of the Church of England—sureties; the Viscount of Arbutnott as god-father; the Viscountess of Arbutnott and Elizabeth Burnett, daughter to Sir James Burnett, of Leys, as god-mothers." We presume the house where the ceremony took place was the mansion-house of Fordoun.

The parish possessed at one time an Excise officer, bearing the distinguished name of John Bull. His son—honoured to carry the same christian designation—was baptised on the 13th May, 1732, before these witnesses:—Alexander Hamilton, chirurgeon-apothecary (probably the father of Professor Hamilton—see chap. xii., page 213), and Alexander Milne, vintner at the good old inn in Fordoun. John Bull's occupation in this parish is "gone." At least he has here now no industrial residence.

John Collin, servant to Lord Monboddo, preferred to have the rite of baptism performed before the whole congregation, so, on the 13th May, 1781, he presented his daughter Elizabeth in the church for that purpose.

Sometimes the proclamation of the marriage contract and performance of the ceremony itself took place the same day. Thus, on the 1st September, 1776, James Smith and Jean Greig, both belonging to the parish, were proclaimed in the church and married "the same day in the afternoon." It was approaching harvest, a fact

that may account for the promptitude with which the knot was tied. But there were cases in which the couple took the business more leisurely. On the 10th September, 1782, John Mollyson, hailing from the parish of Bervie, and Amelia Brand, in Fordoun, were "contracted in order to marriage, and their names regularly proclaimed," but the marriage was not carried into effect until the 6th of October thereafter.

The last entry in the volume (ii.) is that of the marriage of a worthy couple, Alexander Stephen ("Old Mains of Glenfarquhar"—see page 71), and Isobel Robertson. On the 29th December, 1783, they were "matrimonially contracted," and, having been "regularly proclaimed," were married the 4th of January thereafter.

The third volume closes with the registration of the marriage of another estimable couple—Mr. James Annandale and Miss Mary Beattie—who were "matrimonially contracted" on 6th June, 1819, duly proclaimed, and married the 20th of same month.

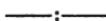
The number of marriages contracted in the parish throughout the year 1757 was 27, while during the same year there were exactly twice that number of children baptised. A decade later, the number of marriages had fallen to 20, and the baptisms to 45.

We have travelled through those Registers of Baptisms and Marriages from their commencement

to the close of last century. On the whole, they do not contain much that is of general interest, but the extracts we have given will enable our readers to judge of their contents, and of the manner in which baptismal rites and matrimonial contracts in those days were recorded.

William Dunbar, who, as we have seen, had the honour of baptising Mary Ochterlony on that beautiful September morning in 1705, when, we may safely assume, everything smiled around the venerable kirk of Fordoun, was a somewhat intractable brother, who had ultimately to be deposed for his insubordination. We learn (Mr. Fraser's "History of Laurencekirk," pp. 226 and 227) that he was a zealous adherent of the royal house of Stuart, and that, after Episcopacy had been disestablished, he not only clung tenaciously to his former opinions, but openly defended them, and refused submission to the Presbyterian government. He declined to pray for their Majesties William and Mary; and on one occasion, having assembled the parishioners in the church, he took them bound by public oath never to bear arms against any of the race or name of Stuart. Brave man! Was his contemporary, Mr. Ochterlony, like rebelliously inclined?

## CHAPTER XXV.

**Agriculture.**

IN the beginning of the century the extent of arable land under cultivation was considerably under 10,000 acres ; but by 1835 it had risen to 11,330 acres—the average rent per acre at this latter date being 19s. 6d.

In 1835 the valued rent of the parish was £7,129 5s. 4d. Scots, while the real rent was £11,420 sterling. Ten years ago the real rent had increased to £21,610 10s. sterling, exclusive of the railway. By last County Valuation Roll (1891-2) the total yearly value (also exclusive of property pertaining to railway) is now £18,009 9s. 9d. sterling. There is thus an increase during these sixty years of £7,000 to £8,000.

Of the total land surface of 245,347 acres in the county 26,937 acres, or one-ninth of the whole, lie within the parish of Fordoun.

The estate of Glenfarquhar, which stretches far up among the Grampian hills (" the Wild Mare's Loup," Bulg, Goil, and Annaharr) on its north-western border, is the most extensive in the parish ;

and, besides some eighty separate feus in the village of Auchinblae, it contains at the present time the largest number of holdings at a rent not exceeding £25 of any property in the parish. Fettercairn and Monboddo rank next in the scale in this respect, though, as we have already seen (page 252), the former of these exceeds the ancient barony in its gross rental.

The section lying at the foot of the Grampian range, and sheltered by that barrier, contains many fertile fields, and has generally been well cultivated.

The following classifications, made up from the County Valuation Roll, for the years 1881-2 and 1891-2, will show the range of rents in the parish at these periods, and, by comparison, their relative tendency during the decade :—

			1881-2.	1891-2.
Holdings not exceeding a rent of £25 per annum,			41	50
Do.	do.	50	do.	20
Do.	do.	75	do.	5
Do.	do.	100	do.	5
Do.	do.	125	do.	6
Do.	do.	150	do.	7
Do.	do.	175	do.	3
Do.	do.	200	do.	2
Do.	do.	250	do.	7
Do.	do.	300	do.	3
Farms at a rental in excess of the above maximum,			21	14

Crofts (under which denomination may be included all holdings at a rent not exceeding £25) have increased by over 20 per cent., while those in the next group of the tabulation (the £50 limit) have

diminished by 35 per cent. The number of farms at the next limit (£75) have more than doubled. On that of £300 also there is a very substantial increase.

The number of farms let at a rent over £300 have naturally decreased during the period—the decrease being 33 per cent., but it is satisfactory to note that the number of crofts and holdings in some of the lower rented groups has increased.

The aggregate numbers included in the above specifications are 120 and 133 respectively, whereby we conclude that the tendency is not to amalgamation but rather sub-division of holdings, which we cannot but regard as a healthy sign both for proprietors themselves and the country at large.

We subjoin statement showing the valuations placed upon mansion-houses, manses, and kindred subjects, within the parish ten years ago, as compared with the figures in the latest assessment roll, with the increase on each specific head during the period :—

	1881-2.	1891-2.	Increase.
Mansion-houses, Lodges, &c., . . . . .	£514	£530	£16
Woodlands, . . . . .	194	218	24
Shootings and Fishings, . . . . .	469	1,293	824
Manses and Glebes, . . . . .	70	80	10
Schools, . . . . .	68	141	73
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1,315	£2,262	£947

The above classification includes, of course, the feu-duties and rents payable by feuars and lease-holders in Auchinblae.

In 1882, the total acreage under grain crops in the county was 44,292, while that under grass, root, and other crops was 74,766.

Between 1854 and the year last named (a period of 28 years) the cultivation of wheat in the county had sunk from 2,327 acres to 598 ; while, on the other hand, barley or bere had increased within the same period from 8,480 acres to 12,006. The cultivation of oats remained pretty stationary during the period—there being only an increase of about 2000—the total extent under this particular crop ten years ago being 31,688 acres as against 29,451 in 1854.

Up till towards the close of the first quarter of last century the fiars were struck twice a-year—at Candlemas and Lammas—in some shires, if not universally over the country. They used to be given in Scotch money, and in an old standard of measures, but that system of calculation was long ago abolished.

At the opening of the present century the articles tabulated for striking the fiars or medium prices current in the county were—

Oatmeal.  
Oats with Fodder.  
Oats without do.  
Bere with do.  
Bere without do.  
Pease with do.  
Pease without do.  
Wheat.

This continued the county list until 1806, when it received the addition of barley, and, in the year following, that of potato oats.

In 1800 the prices struck were the highest average yet recorded in any year during the century. This is due to the exceptionally deficient crop with which the previous century closed. Oatmeal ranged at £1 17s. 2d. a boll, and the price of wheat stood as high as £4 9s. 4d., while the other products of the soil were in proportion. But the beneficial effects which one good harvest is capable of producing may be seen in the fact that when the averages were determined the following year, namely, in 1801, the prices of the two articles had receded to 15s. 9d. and £1 15s. respectively, or less than one-half their former quotations.

The years 1849 and '50 showed a low average for oatmeal, and consequently for oats—especially the former year, when we remember hearing a drouthy farmer from the Garvock side of the Howe grievously complaining that “ilka jugfu’ o’ punch” he and his companion drank “just cost them aboot a bushel o’ corn !”

#### TURNIPS.

The first time turnips were seen in this county was about the year 1754, and the farm on which they were first cultivated was Milton of Mathers in St. Cyrus. Ten years later they found their way into Fordoun. The farm on which they were first

grown was Wattieston, in the east end of the parish, then tenanted by Mr. William Lyall. He, cautious man, tried the experiment on a limited scale—the extent of ground covered being only about half an acre. Like the potato in the initial stages of its introduction, turnips were still such a rarity that Mr. Lyall was able to dispose of his crop in small quantities at the rate of one penny a stone weight.

By the year 1775 turnips had begun to be generally cultivated; and it has been estimated that, before the end of the first decade of the present century, one-seventh part of the whole ground under tillage in the county was under this particular crop.

In 1807 the extent of land in the parish under turnip crop was only 750 acres, while that of the whole county was 6,142 acres. By 1854 the area within the shire assigned to this crop had increased to 16,087 acres. Since that time there has been a further moderate increase. The statistics published for 1882 gave the area at 18,133, about which quantity it seems to have fluctuated for the last quarter of century.

#### POTATOES.

Potatoes were first introduced into the Mearns about 1727. The village of Marykirk is credited with having been the spot in the county where they were first cultivated. It was on a limited scale. An old soldier, who in the course of his peregrina-

tions in Ireland had acquired a knowledge of the plant, took up his abode temporarily in the village. He had in his possession some roots which he turned to account by planting them. The villagers, we are told, were "ready enough to steal" the veteran's crop, but none of them had the ingenuity to cultivate it for themselves after he was gone, and they would look in vain, says the writer who records the circumstance, "for seed from the stems!" So with his departure the art of potato-planting was suspended in the Mearns.

Its next introduction into the county did not take place till about the year 1760; but for several years after that the potato was such a rare production as, in point of preciousness, to be reckoned on an equality with apples or pears, and it was accordingly distributed with sparing hand as a luxury on special occasions.

For some fifteen years later there were few farms on which above one-eighth of an acre was devoted to the growth of potatoes. Before the close, however, of the first decade of the present century they were plentiful over the whole county. Almost every cottager by this time had his plot of potatoes larger or smaller. In 1807 the total extent of ground in the county under this kind of crop exceeded 1,160 English acres, which, it has been estimated, could yield 27,840 bolls. This at £2 8s. a ton, the price then going, was equivalent to a return of £14 8s. an English acre.

The mysterious blight that befell the potato crop nearly half a century ago was felt as a serious calamity by the whole community. The disease made its appearance first in the sister island in 1845, and proved the precursor to that country of dire famine and pestilence. In the following year it pervaded Scotland throughout its entire length and breadth—sparing scarcely a field, but resulting in almost the universal destruction of the crop. It proved for a time a serious check to the cultivation of the plant, and it was some years before the crop was again grown in such abundance, or obtained the same degree of perfection as to quality. Gradually, however, the disease disappeared, and the potato, root and stem, assumed its former healthy condition.

In 1854—eight years after the “dispensation” (for the blight was regarded by some as a judgment from heaven)—there were 2,645 acres under cultivation in the county, and in the interval since then the acreage of potatoes has increased.

In the beginning of the century the white kidney potato was generally planted, and was a favourite in the first part of the season, but was regarded as less palatable in spring. The kind most commonly planted is described by an authority of that period as “a round sort, of a darkish colour, not to be easily distinguished from the earth in which it grows. It has a coarse and rough appearance, but is very hardy and prolific; and,

although with rather an earthy flavour at first, it improves every day (like Highland whisky) till it becomes remarkably well tasted." The potato referred to, we presume, is the "Regent." Such a potato ("mealy" is the adjective), with rich milk and well-baked oatcake, is a dish that would answer Boece's description of the Pictish ale distilled from heather—"richt wholesome and delicious."

Fifty years ago, the kinds of potatoes commonly planted in the Mearns were known as "Duffs," "Dons," "Irish-cups," "Regents," and "Glenbervie Earlies." The time for planting is from the middle of April to the middle of May. They are dug up and gathered into "pits" at the end of harvest.

#### FLAX CULTURE.

The cultivation of flax in this parish and throughout the county gradually became extinct during the present century. Probably the last attempt in Fordoun was that made by the late Mr. Farquharson, of which we have already given a description (page 160). In 1807, however, this parish (if we except St. Cyrus, which was on an equality) was distinguished for having the largest extent of land bearing flax of any parish in the county. The gross number of acres laid down in the shire was only 236, but of this modest quantity Fordoun's proportion was upwards of one-sixth.

## FUEL.

The ports from which coal and lime were chiefly obtained were those of Gourdon and Stonehaven. To these also a considerable quantity of the grain grown in the county was carted for export—some of the principal dealers in agricultural products being located there. But the port of Montrose, then a thriving business town and popular educational centre, also attracted a fair share of the traffic. Early in the century, there was already a considerable importation of sea-borne coal, but the quantity brought into the parish was small compared to that annually imported through the different channels since the railway was introduced.

Peat was in former days a staple article of fuel, while brushwood ("hag"), whins, and broom were handy adjuncts. For the purpose of uprooting the last-named species of fuel—very common a while back—an implement called the *broom-dog* had been invented. The progress made in the reclamation of waste land has probably rendered this implement in less demand than it was formerly, but the march of improvement has not yet wholly eradicated the bonnie broom bush, even in Fordoun. The *dog*, we presume, is still extant, and has a useful function to perform in the sphere of our parochial economy. We will quote, from a competent authority, a description of the *broom-dog* which the men of the Mearns handled to such purpose early in the

century :—" It is," says Robertson, in his "Survey," page 447, "a stout stick of about six feet long, shod with iron in the lower end, and having there a projecting jagged spur for laying hold of the roots. It operates somewhat like a tooth-drawer, with a powerful lever, and eradicates the broom in an instant."

The same author tells us that the peat dug from the Grampian hills, on the different estates, was the best he had ever met with in his wide experience. Of a remarkably solid consistency, it burnt with a flame little inferior to coal. The origin and formation of the mosses on those hills was in his day a puzzle. It is so still, but the tradition that they had once been covered with stately oaks and other species of timber goes far towards solution of the problem.

While the peat was thus of excellent quality, and presumably by no means scarce, seeing each tenant on the property named had his own "bank," and could "cast" any quantity he pleased in the season, it was yet often an expensive commodity. Labour was sometimes difficult to procure, and, as a consequence, wages were high. The distance from the moss, too, was great, while the roads were both steep and rugged. In the generality of cases, to bring home two loads a-day was the utmost that the most powerful horse could accomplish.

Through the kindness of Mr. James Dalgarno, Corr. Mem. S.A., Scotd., we have had the privilege

of perusing a very able paper on "The Peat Mosses of Buchan," read before the Club of Deir, by the late Revd. James Peter, M.A., the scholarly and accomplished minister of Deer. (Aberdeen: Brown & Co., 1875.)

## IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY.

During the first quarter of the century—later even in some places—the instrument universally used for cutting down the grain was the hook, smooth or teethed. There were at that time three different ways of getting the harvest work accomplished. First, by hiring a band of reapers for the whole period. The master's business was to direct operations and see that the work was "accurately performed," a task sometimes not easily fulfilled. "For," says a writer of the period, "whether it may be from an increasing spirit of emulation among the reapers, or from the gaiety natural to harvest, there is a perpetual striving, called here *kemping*, who shall outwork the others, and get first to the lands end, and thus obtain the reputation of dexterity." From this cause, it was complained, much corn and straw were wasted; and after all it was pronounced "a hasty and unthrifty mode of reaping."

The second method was reaping by the acre, the effect of which was to abolish "kemping," while at the same time it was supposed to hold out a strong inducement to industry, and sustained but uniform exertion.

The third mode was what was known as "threaving." It consisted in paying each individual reaper according to the amount of work accomplished. This was accurately ascertained by counting the number of threaves cut—each threave consisting of two stooks of twelve sheaves each.

In course of time the hook was superseded by the long handled scythe, and later that implement had to give place to the two handled sned-scythe, which in turn has now practically disappeared before the higher developments of modern times. On the larger farms its only function in harvest-time now is to cut a pathway for the more complex and far more expeditious reaping-machine.

#### BARN FURNITURE.

Sixty years ago, the barn furniture in use consisted of a flail and fan—the latter sometimes joint-stock property; a fork and wooden rake, a firlot and bushel, a wooden spade or scoop and firlot "row," a sieve and couple of riddles, besides a "weicht" or two, a thraw-crook, and a rat-trap.

The "row" was used for sweeping off surplus grain from the firlot or bushel when filled, and for striking the measure a wallop on the ribs to make the corn subside, and thus prevent spilling when lifted to the mouth of the sack. There was an art in filling the measure aright, which, we suppose, has been handed down to posterity. The "weicht" was for carrying purposes, and consisted of a gird

made out of a sapling covered with a roughly tanned piece of hide.

In some corner of the barn, there was also generally to be found a beam with scales and weights—these last not infrequently of primitive enough description. We are told on credible authority that there was at least one goodwife in the parish who, in the absence of weights bearing the stamp of standard value, used to determine the weight of her butter by placing in the opposite scale a peat or half a peat which she had scrupulously adapted to the purpose.

We speak advisedly when we say that the price of farm implements of every description, from the box-cart down to the wheel-barrow, has within these fifty years largely increased, if it has not almost doubled. A cart that half a century ago would only have cost £8 cannot now be got at less than £12 to £14. So it is, we believe, with other articles in proportion. A wooden plough ready for work, back at the period indicated, could have been supplied for 15s. to 20s., while a pair of wooden harrows with their mountings would then have cost only 22s. 6d. This increase, by necessitating the employment of so much additional capital, has had its direct effect in a corresponding diminution of profit. Hence among our farming friends we not unfrequently hear the remark, that it is not so much the "rent" as "other things" they have to contend against; but a comparison of present with

former prices does not afford the most reliable criterion by which to judge of the matter. The durability of iron in contrast to that of wood forbids an accurate comparison being made.

## FIARS' PRICES.

The following table shows the fiars' prices of the county, with and without fodder, at each quinquennial period during the last forty years:—

Year.	Oat Meal.	Bear.		Barley.		White Oats.		Pot. Oats.		Wheat.	
		Without Fodder.	With Fodder.								
1852	13/5½	26/2¾	31/8¾	26/7	32/1	17/11½	24/5¾	19/8¾	26/2½	45/	52/6
1857	15/4	27/1½	32/10¾	27/9¾	33/6¾	19/7½	26/4½	20/7½	27/4½	37/11¾	45/5½
1862	16/4¾	23/2	28/5	25/5¾	30/8¾	20/5½	27/2	22/2¾	28/11¾	39/3¾	47/3¾
1867	21/11¼	34/0½	41/3½	35/4¼	42/7¼	27/9¾	36/6¾	28/10	37/7	61/4¾	71/10¾
1872	19/2	27/11	35/11	28/5.	36/5	24/2	33/2	25/1	34/1	39/5	49/5
1877	19/9	28/7	39/7	28/7	39/7	24/6	37/6	26/	39/	38/7	53/1
1882	15/10	25/4	36/4	25/9	36/9	19/9	32/9	20/3	33/3	35/5	51/5
1887	11/3	18/5	28/5	20/5	30/5	14/9	26/9	14/9	26/9	27/6	41/6
1892	16/7	26/6	37/	27/6	38/	21/	32/	21/	32/	32/5	47/5

In the neighbouring county of Aberdeen the average prices during the ninety-three years from the commencement of the century (1800 to 1892 inclusive) have been as under:—

	S.	D.
Oatmeal, . . . . .	17	0½
Bear, . . . . .	27	4½ (1st quality).
Oats, . . . . .	22	3½ „
Oats, . . . . .	19	6¾ (2nd quality).
Wheat, . . . . .	39	8
Barley . . . . .	25	0

It will thus be seen that throughout the century, so far as the years have run, although there have been seasons of dearth and scarcity, the price of oatmeal—that staple article of the farm-labourer's food—has on the whole ranged at a comparatively moderate figure. In former years the prudent farmer used to watch the markets in order to select the best time for having his "meal-girnal," of larger or smaller dimensions, replenished; and he was sometimes able to turn the store he had laid in in winter to good account in summer. Oatmeal, when properly dried and "tramped," it is superfluous to say, will keep for years in an excellent state of preservation. The girnal was, in the olden time, an indispensable institution in the household—the symbol of plenty and independence; but the economic conditions of farming are changed; with flour cheap and plentiful, not to speak of other contributory causes, the family magazine is now of little account, and, as a measure of capacity, has in most cases sunk to the dimensions of an ordinary barrel.

Of the soil, it may be remarked, a large proportion is strong clayey loam; a considerable extent is good medium loam, while the remainder consists of tracts of lighter loam. In some parts the sub-soil is a mixture of clay and gravel, in others it is hard gravel.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

**A Representative Farmer of the Brae of  
Fordoun.**

—:—

DAVID MILNE, popularly called "Carnie," was tenant of West Cairnbeg on the lands of Arbuthnott. The same farm is now occupied by Mr. Alexander Johnston, his grand-nephew, and the nephew of Dr. Johnston, of Kair, he being a son of the late Mr. William Johnston, the doctor's brother. It has, we believe, been in possession of the family for well-nigh three hundred years.

Mr. Milne was a man of much intelligence, and with tastes of a far higher order than those of the generality of his contemporaries. A great reader in general, he was an ardent admirer of Scott's works in particular—both prose and poetical. When the enchanting Waverley series was first issued, Mr. Milne greedily devoured each volume in succession as it appeared. It was in all probability his fondness for literature that stimulated like tastes in the breast of the rustic poet, James Clark, who, as we have seen, was at one time a servant to him, and who, like his master, had also a

strong partiality for the writings of the Border Minstrel. But reading was not "Carnie's" sole pastime: he had some practical acquaintance with the microscope, and for the healing art he had such a decided turn that he earned for himself in the district the reputation of being "skilly." On Sundays seldom less than a dozen patients used to be found waiting his return from church. Probably the only thing (except, perhaps, his full share of good common sense) that prevented him from being denominated a "quack," was the fact that his advice and medicine were given gratis, with, generally, something substantial out of Sunday's broth pot in addition! Mr. Milne was an elder in the parish church of Fordoun during a large part of Dr. Leslie's incumbency. His kinsman, Mr. Johnston, to whom we have referred (page 76), although not, *de facto*, an ordained ruler of the church, practically performed the duties pertaining to that office. He assisted in collecting and administering the funds voluntarily contributed from week to week in the good old days for the support of the poor of the parish.

Mr. Milne died in 1837, aged 78, unmarried. Among "Carnie's" contemporaries may be enumerated "Pitnie" (Pitnamoon), "Wysie" (Westmoston), "Odie" (Odmoston), "Crangie" (Craigmoston), "Drums" (Drumtochty), "Drummie" (Drumsleed), and "Gallops" (Galloquhine), along with others bearing like familiar and homely designations.

CHAPTER XXVII.

**Reminiscences of Place and Character.**

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JOHNNIE MURRAY, WRITER AND  
BILL-DISCOUNTER.

JOHNNIE MURRAY, who practised as a writer in the county town back about the "thirties," was a person well-known by name at least, not only in the parish of Fordoun, of which he was a native, but all over the shire, notably among Mactier's tenants on the northern side of the Grampians. Besides his calling as writer, Johnnie carried on business as a bill-discounter, and in this capacity had acquired a reputation of his own. Branch banks were less plentiful in those days than they are now ; and needy men, willing to sign for each other, or who could find a responsible endorser, repaired to Johnnie Murray for accommodation. But woe betide them if they were not prepared to retire the document when it reached maturity. No one knew better than he how to deal with debtors "conjunctly" and "severally." None certainly had fewer compunctions in carrying "summary diligence" to its utmost extremity.

Johnnie was rather discounted himself on one occasion :—On the passing of the Reform Bill, he, in common with other proprietors in the district, had to attend at Laurencekirk to prove his title to be placed on the register as a voter. One of the assessors was Mr. Buchanan, a polished barrister, sometime editor of the *Edinburgh Courant*. When Mr. Murray stepped into the box, Buchanan put the question, "What are you, sir!" "I'm a writer from Stonehaven," was the reply. "A writer from Stonehaven, are ye? I thought you were a shoemaker from the look of you!" was Buchanan's sarcastic rejoinder.

At the time of the general election following the passing of the Reform Bill, Mr. Murray was the agent for the "old party"—the Tories—then all-powerful in the county. On the afternoon of the day of election he happened to be in the Mill Inn at Stonehaven, along with Barclay of Ury and Admiral Duff of Fetteresso, uncle of the present proprietor, the late Member of Parliament for Banffshire. A noisy mob of weavers and other radicals surrounded the inn door hooting and howling. Johnnie—brave little man, with his delicate, "parchment-looking" face—came forth, hoping by threatening them with the terrors of the law to disperse the crowd. Casting his eye around, he named first one, then another, and a third, telling each that he knew what he was, and that he would yet pay the penalty for the day's proceedings. While this little

scene was being enacted, a woman, with pronounced political opinions, got hold of a corn sack, which she steeped in the mill-lade and then drew athwart a bed of dry dusty mould. Stepping stealthily up to Johnnie's side, she struck him a wallop with the sack across the eyes which momentarily blinded him. "Tak' ye that," she exclaimed, "the wizen't face o' ye; if ye ken them ye dinna ken me." Johnnie rejoined his companions in the upper chamber, but the dastardly treatment he had just received roused the laird of Ury's wrath. Barclay seized his "loaded" stick, a formidable weapon, which he knew how to use, and would not have hesitated to use had the necessity arisen. Single-handed he marched forth brandishing the stick. The mob receded. Barclay, joined by his farm overseer (a man in point of strength and daring second only to the laird himself), marched home unmolested—the yells of the mob and the squeaks of their toy trumpets gradually dying away in the distance. The blockade at the Mill Inn thus raised, Admiral Duff had now little difficulty in making his escape to Fetteresso house. Such is a sample of the electioneering scenes of sixty years ago.

We should not omit to mention the circumstances under which Mr. Murray, the astute writer named, came by his death. Riding home one night from Durris on his spirited Highland pony, he was somehow thrown from his seat into a ditch by the roadside. The pony continued its canter home

and left its master to his fate. He was discovered the following morning. He survived the accident for a fortnight or thereby, and during the time arranged his affairs preparatory to his final departure. Mr. Murray was a resolute man, not without some geniality. To young men he was always kind and affable. His bill-discounting propensities had created a certain amount of prejudice against him, but beyond enforcing his legal rights to rank on the estates of the several debtors—"aye, and until he got twenty shillings a pound"—we do not know that he took any course different from that which any ordinary creditor having a debt to constitute and recover would have adopted.

#### THE MINISTER OF GLENBERVIE.

The late Mr. Drummond, the minister of Glenbervie—a man of superior parts intellectually—had some dry humour in his composition. He disliked pretence and sinister modes of action. On one occasion when about to make a new batch of elders, he received a letter from a somewhat unctuous member of his congregation, taking exception to one of those nominated for the sacred office, and specifying with some degree of minuteness the defects in his character.

The person objected to was a genial, sturdy farmer in the upper reaches of the glen—not one of those "factious bodies" who are the bores of kirk-sessions as they are of other assemblies of

men. Mr. Drummond, at the close of service on the Sunday preceding that on which the ordination of the men selected was to take place, requested the congregation to exercise patience for a minute as he had a remarkable production to read in their hearing. Unfolding the epistle he, in solemn tones, read it over from beginning to end. During the proceeding the fastidious author, who occupied a prominent pew in the gallery, was gradually subsiding, until the final words came—"yours truly (signed) ——," when—head and shoulders—he wholly disappeared below the book-board. He had probably hoped to the last that his name at least would be suppressed. But no. Mr. Drummond dealt with the effusion in the way that he considered would most effectually check such attacks on personal character in future.

On one occasion it was suggested to Mr. Drummond that he might deliver two sermons a week, as was done by his brethren in most other parishes within bounds of the presbytery. Mr. Drummond evaded a direct reply, but, taking out a shilling from his pocket, and holding it up before his zealous friend who made the suggestion, asked whether that was not as good as two sixpences—implying, thereby that one discourse of his was equal to two of your ordinary effusions! Visiting one day a respected member of his congregation, who happened to have a wooden leg—one of those rotund, clumsy-looking dipples then fashionable—Mr. Drummond cast his

eye up to the rafters of the house where he discovered what he fancied was the chanter of a pair of bagpipes. Pointing with his staff to the instrument, he remarked, "I see you are musical, William: ye play the bagpipes." "Na, na, Mr. Drummond," was William's reply, "that's only ane o' my legs!" The wise man had possessed himself of two, so that he might be prepared in the event of an emergency, but the gift of music he modestly disclaimed.

The people of Glenbervie, as a rule, were not (in Mr. Drummond's day, whatever they may be now) inclined to be troublesome or meddlesome in ecclesiastical matters—pursuing quietly their own vocations, they did not interfere with or dictate to the minister in the exercise of his calling provided he, in turn, gave them no disturbance.

Mr. Drummond did not much care to be troubled about matters that did not directly concern him, and when approached on any such his observations were sometimes rather felicitous. Some of his sayings have come down to us. The bogs of Drumlithie—a stagnant swamp on the outskirts of the village—had long been a standing nuisance, which the former close-fisted proprietor would do nothing to redress. At last the inhabitants devised among themselves a scheme for draining the morass. Mr. Drummond having been asked to state his opinion as to its feasibility, gruffly replied, "I thought Drumlithie was a place that had been made perfect from the beginning!"

There are people alive, both in his own and neighbouring parishes, who still speak of Mr. Drummond's gifts of prayer in glowing and enthusiastic terms. His voice was deep and full, and he had a copious and natural flow of choice scripture imagery clothed in language at once beautiful and expressive. His style of composition was poetic—rather; and in common parlance he was a “flowery preacher.”

ROBERT HENRY, SCHOOLMASTER OF GLENBERVIE.

The parochial schoolmaster during a large part of Mr. Drummond's ministry was Mr. Robert Henry. He was born at Corsebauld in Fordoun, of which farm his father, and latterly his brother, James, were for a long time tenants. His brother, David, was educated for the ministry, and became minister of the Free Church in Marnoch at the Disruption. Before that event, he was, as many of our readers may yet recollect, the elect of the congregation when they rejected Edwards the patron's presentee—this rejection being followed by a long and embittered controversy. Mr. Robert Henry was a gentle, unpretending man. When he gave up teaching he returned to his native parish, where he spent the remainder of his days.

About sixty years ago, he made a miraculous escape with his life, while two of his companions—Mr. Alexander Murray, manufacturer, Stonehaven, and Mr. John Silver, schoolmaster of Fetteresso—

met with instant death. The three were returning home from Fordoun in company on the fatal night referred to. They had rather a high-spirited horse. When nearing the abrupt turning at the bridge of Glenbervie it suddenly darted off, and brought the vehicle into violent contact with the parapet. The three gentlemen were precipitated on to the rocks below with the result mentioned.

Mr. John Silver had the reputation of being a first-class teacher, and sent out a number of superior scholars. The late Dr. Alexander Gerrard, of Gordon's Hospital (now Gordon's College), Aberdeen received his early training under him. Mr. Silver was succeeded in the school of Fetteresso by his brother, Alexander, of whom we shall hear later.

#### COUNTRY CRITICISM.

Scotchmen often express a great deal in elliptical form. To the use of this form of expression the men of the Mearns were not unaccustomed, especially when there was anything humorous to convey. A member of Presbytery—much esteemed in private life, but the reverse of popular as a preacher—occasionally officiated for a clerical neighbour. Two countrymen forgathered at the church door one Sunday—the one had been a worshipper inside while the other had been sauntering among the tombstones without. "Weel," said the latter to his companion, "Fa had ye the day?" "O it was that bodie ——," was the reply. "And

fu gat he on?" was the further query. "Weel, he wan throu'," was the next brief but significant response—implying, as it did, that "the bodie" had "warsled" to the end of his discourse, but that it was anything but a brilliant display of pulpit oratory.

A ZEALOUS SHEPHERD AND A WANDERER FROM  
THE FOLD.

A late incumbent of the church who used to be unsparing in his efforts to find fresh recruits, and at the same time sofely grieved when any of his former hearers lapsed in their attendance, was one day proceeding westward in the discharge of his ministerial duty. By the way he fell in with a shepherd who had for some time been conspicuous for his absence. "Well, John," said the minister, "I have been missing you out of church." John, who was as much of a logician as to know that "a thing cannot act but where it is," frankly admitted the fact by the answer, "I dinna doot that." "And have you not been at church all this long while?" was the minister's further interrogation. "O't aye have I, I've been *antran* times" (occasionally that is) "in the kirk o' Fettercairn." "Well," rejoined the other, "I'm a shepherd myself, and never like to see my sheep wandering into other folds and among other pasturage." "Weel," said John, "that's a' the difference, ye ken; I never mind where they gang if they are gettin' better girss."

## ALEXANDER SILVER, OF DUNNOTTAR.

Among the clergymen who occasionally officiated in the church of Fordoun in pre-disruption days, was Alexander Silver, formerly schoolmaster of Fetteresso and latterly minister of Dunnottar. Looked at in any aspect, Mr. Silver was a robust specimen of mankind. With an exuberant flow of animal spirits, and a rich fund of genial humour, he was always ready with his jest or some pat illustration. This faculty of his he could not restrain even in circumstances the reverse of propitious. Occasionally he discovered to his chagrin that two could play at the same game. One day an acute Aberdeen lawyer was speeding his way south. When the train drew up at Stonehaven station, this passenger began to busy himself in tract distribution. Mr. Silver, who, among others, happened to be on the platform, and apparently did not believe much in that mode of scattering seed by the wayside, cried out to the distributor in his usual merry, jocular mood, "heave them oot, sir, heave them out, they'll do a vast o' guid in this quarter." The gentleman beckoned to his assailant to approach, which the latter did. He then said, in the hearing of his fellow-passengers, "Mr. Silver, do you know what the folk in 'this quarter' say about you?" "No, but nae doot ye can tell me," was the reply. "Well, they say ye laugh all the week and greet on Sunday." This allusion to his shrill, lachrymose

style was not palatable. "Sandy Silver" was a household word, and a universal favourite.

When a public speaker, intending to convey one meaning, uses a phrase expressing exactly its opposite, the fact is evidence not only of "temporary desertion of memory," but that mental vigour is waning. So accordingly it was with Mr. Silver—reversing the scriptural order, and praying one day with all his wonted fervour that "things might be done in heaven as they are done on earth," it became plain to all that his once clear intellectual vision was becoming obscured. When he was told of this reversal, and possibly also of other aberrations of a like nature, he was himself the first to admit that it was time for him to cease exercising his clerical functions in public, and to leave his pulpit to an occupant who would not be likely to turn somersaults to the amusement of the congregation. Mr. Silver was an excellent mathematician, but he was not equal to his late brother as a teacher. He is probably best remembered as the zealous and active actuary of the local savings bank.

#### A HYPOCHONDRIAC.

##### THE EFFECT OF DIRECT SPEAKING.

About forty years ago, there resided in the parish a most respectable old man who was subject to fits of hypochondria. In his gloomy moments he was apt to work himself into the belief that his

worldly estate was vanishing, and that his outlook to the other side was not the brightest. The parish minister paid him frequent visits, and did his best to administer comfort, descanting on the excellence of the man's character, but the difficulty he somehow had in laying hold of the consolations of the gospel. The method of treatment was not successful. But it happened one day that the depressed mortal was visited by a retired naval officer, whose early training had accustomed him to be direct and forcible in his modes of expression. Happily, his remedy proved more effectual. Turning to the man, whom he found in his usual doleful and despondent mood, the captain made this observation :—"my goodman, I perceive the spirit of the devil is in you!" The effect was magical ; it operated like a shower bath, dispelled the dark cloud, and restored serenity and cheerfulness of mind.

#### A HAPPY DISPOSITION.

Some people are so happily constituted as to be able to comfort and console themselves in the most trying circumstances, while others of a different disposition would, if placed in the same position, be well-nigh overwhelmed. There was grim humour in the saying of that woman who had just lost her husband through the effect of wounds sustained in a scuffle with a neighbour—"he died swearin', but a'thing is wisely ordered ye

ken"—the precise import of the remark apparently being that with his latest breath the dying man vowed vengeance on his adversary.

#### THE EFFICACY OF GUNPOWDER.

Captain John Graham Buchanan, as we have seen (page 246), occupied for a time the mansion-house of Kair. He was the holder of some shares in the gas corporation of a neighbouring burgh, which were yielding him no return, and as a consequence, his patience was beginning to get exhausted. Being down in the burgh one day, he, with the true spirit of a soldier accustomed to believe in the efficacy of gunpowder, warned the authorities—so runs the story—that if a dividend were not forthcoming next time he would blow their works in the air! The gallant captain's threat was effective, and the hitherto unremunerative works became for once, it is said, a "paying concern." By what process the result was arrived at we do not know, and it might not be expedient to enquire. Only our informant added this significant comment:—"They charged the kirk thirteen-pence and a *barwbee* for *licht* when it was well known there had been nae *licht* in her a' that summer!" On Dr. Johnston taking possession, Captain Buchanan took up his residence at Bridgeton House, St. Cyrus.

## FESTIVE GATHERINGS—THE PUNCH-BOWL.

In the earlier years of the century the festive gatherings in the Brae of Fordoun were many and of a lively character. The punch-bowl was all the fashion, and on every occasion, from the gayest to the most sombre, it had to be produced. It was the usual—we should rather say universal—practice to pour a small quantity of porter among the “brew,” this ingredient being added for the purpose of what was termed “soorin’” (souring). The process of “souring” has, we believe, become obsolete in the Mearns; but the blend thus produced, we are told, was very potent. From what we have heard of its revolutionary tendencies we are not surprised to learn that, as a sequel to “given occasions,” a trusty steed, saddled and bridled, has sometimes been found by the wayside minus its rider.

In those days the sturdy farmers of the Howe were wont to attend the weekly markets at Montrose. On one occasion, before the bridge at Marykirk was built, a number of them were returning from this market in company on horseback. They had not been “tampering with their constitution,” but had each been well fortified before turning face homewards. Arrived at Marykirk, they found themselves unexpectedly confronted by the North Esk in high spate. They had made the passage in the morning without difficulty, but during the day a torrent of rain had poured and the

river was largely swollen. The horsemen, with one exception, succeeded in scrambling across, but this unfortunate one, with his horse, was carried far down the stream, and was in great jeopardy of losing his life. At last, too, he gained a footing on the opposite bank. His companions, relieved of their anxiety, ran towards him to offer their congratulations, but to their surprise the drenched man met them with this repelling observation:—"I could have got oot sooner if I had liket." O, Robert, if you had only liked! Your quivering lips, palpitating breast, and the panting ribs of that tried horse of yours, hardly testified that you were so entirely master of the situation!

This same worthy farmer's little walnut-shaped watch was on one occasion made the subject of comparison with his neighbour's—an article of much larger dimensions, and more of the kind that Penderennis termed "a warming-pan." He could not deny the fact that the latter was bigger, but he was prepared to wager that his would go the *faster* of the two! Perhaps he took his time from it when struggling in the North Esk on the memorable night above mentioned!

#### SOWENS.

Sowens was a wholesome and favourite dish that we must not omit to mention, though it may now be somewhat discounted by the modern palate. Happily the method of making it is still preserved

in the Mearns. Dr. Johnson defines it as "a kind of food made by coagulation from wheat, flour, or oatmeal." But, with all respect for the doctor's definition, genuine Scotch sowens can only be made from the last mentioned, or, more correctly, from "sids" or the husks of oatmeal sifted at the mill. The utensils used in the process of manufacture are a "search" or "seydish" and a barrel or tub. The husks are poured into the former, which is placed above the other vessel, along with a proportionate quantity of water. The floury liquid gradually distils through, leaving the strained husks in the "search." The sowens can be taken in two forms—"drinking sowens" or "supping sowens"—the latter, being subjected to a longer boiling process, assumes a consistency akin to oatmeal porridge. It is very light, and, with good milk, delightfully palatable.

We have heard sowens locally defined as "water driven together by the force of fire!" Hugh Miller took Macaulay to task for adopting Dr. Johnson's definition of oats, but the learned lexicographer's definition of sowens, though less concise and scientific sounding, was perhaps as exact a definition as the local one just quoted. In his day the dish was unknown in England, and we have no evidence that the art of making it has yet crossed the border.

We have been told of a rustic who refused to sup the sowens set before him on the ground that they were "a' soot and nae sowens and nae saat." The refusal, we should say, was justifiable. With

a not over-fastidious taste, the dish might have passed muster, even with a preponderance of soot, if the qualifying element, salt, had only been there in fair proportion, but the total absence of both essentials rendered the dish simply spurious!

We will conclude this chapter of reminiscences with the description of a scene illustrative of the touches of genuine Scottish wit and humour occasionally to be met with in country life. A ploughman and herd-boy had, in the farm kitchen, just finished the more substantial part of their evening meal, a dish of porridge, and were filling up any empty crevice with a piece of oat bread and the milk that remained:—"Jock," said the ploughman to his young companion, "there's a flee amo' yer milk." "Let her wade, she winna droon," was Jock's ready and racy reply. The farmer's sharp-witted daughter, skipping across the floor, rightly reads in Jock's observation a reflection on the hospitality of the house, and instantly decided to have his supplies increased. "Mither," she cried out, "gie Jock mair milk." "I've milk enouch for a' my breed," was Jock's sarcastic rejoinder—plainly implying that the rations meted out to him, both liquid and solid, were of scant measure. The satire was perfect.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## Zoology.

—:—

THE polecat (*mustela putorius* of Linn.) is the "fowmarte" or "foumart"—formerly also called the "fethou" or "fethok."

"The fethoks crap amo' my feet  
And turst me wi' their tails."

By Act, James I., 1424, c. 24 (Edit. 1566), "It is ordanit that na man have mertrick skinnes furth of the realms; and, gif he does that, he pay the King 11s. for the custume of the skin; and for X. fowmartes skinnes callit fithowis xd."

In that monarch's reign, the polecat was evidently an important personage, but he is now known by his "depredations rather than by ocular demonstration."

Like his kinsman the wild-cat (which is now practically extinct here), he has long been proscribed among gamekeepers, and it is only his superior instincts that have preserved him from total extinction.

The otter, too, is now an equally great stranger, though occasionally to be met with in the course of Bervie.

The badger, a native of the county, was regarded as a harmless beast—nocturnal in its habits. Half a century ago ("Statis. Acct.," page 76, Blackwood, 1843), it was supposed extinct in Fordoun, but we have ourselves seen a specimen caught in the parish since that time. We believe, however, the animal is doomed to disappear. We cannot take farewell of him here without reminding our readers that, in other ages, he was turned to good account, and that his name is recorded on pages where it will endure. A late preacher who had a faculty for finding types and analogies not always so obvious to the ordinary reader of scripture, in the course of his exposition one day, told his hearers that the tabernacle was thatched with badgers' skins in order to mark off the Jewish from the heathen world—the badger being an animal ceremonially unclean. When the congregation rose to move out, David (see page 92), accustomed to look at things from what he considered a common-sense standpoint, was heard remarking to a neighbour—"Yon man is aye findin' teeps; and that about the badgers' skins! Fu' wis it thicket wi' them? Simply and solely because they keepit oot the weet better."

The weasel is not uncommon, and carries on incessant war against rats and mice, as well as against higher game—hares and rabbits. He does not disdain an egg when he happens to come across one.

The stoat, likewise, is by no means rare.

The hedgehog did not introduce himself to the Mearns till about the beginning of the century, and a writer of that period confesses his inability to see what had been his inducement. He does not obtrude himself much on public gaze even yet.

The fox was pretty numerous over the whole county in the beginning of the century, and he still holds his ground in Drumtochty, Glensaugh, and the Brae of Fordoun. When Robertson, between eighty and ninety years ago, took cognizance of him ("Survey," chap. xv., page 394) he bore a comparatively good character. At least, he was not accused in this part of the country of destroying lambs or stealing poultry, but was supposed to live a good deal on his neighbour the hare, which was then and still is a prey to every creature's voracity. Thirty years later he had not lost this character for moderation, but had begun to subsist mostly on rabbits, by this time abundant though only recently introduced. When Robertson wrote, he tells us a few rabbits in a domestic state, kept as pets for children, were to be found in the county. But not until about the end of the first quarter of the century does the animal, in its wild state, appear to have become general. The rabbit, we believe, was first brought to the parish by Mr. Harley-Drummond, the banker.

In former times, the rabbit went by the name of *cuning*, *cunyg* or *kinnin*. Hence, *cunningar* or *cunningaire*, means a warren.

In Robertson's time, hares were "incredibly numerous." According to his testimony, they abounded in many parts in dozens in every field. He estimates the number in the county as in excess of the sheep; and declares that while the latter were sent to pick up a scanty subsistence on the barren hills, the hares, left to the freedom of their own will, preferred to feed on the richer products of the plains below.

On the hills the red deer is constantly to be seen, and in the Drumtochty woods his kinsman, the roe deer, is no stranger. In these woods, and in other parts of the parish, the squirrel (unknown when Robertson made his "Survey") is now plentiful. He was known in the shires of Perth and Inverness before he introduced himself to Kincardine.

The alpine or white hare is still to be found on the Grampians, and even lower down in severe winters when food is scarce.

The black water-rat is to be found in all streams, and his detested and implacable foe, the grey-rat, is equally ubiquitous.

The parish is plentifully supplied with moles, and can never dispense with the services of a professional mole-catcher.

The adder still lurks among the heather on the slopes of the Grampians. On one occasion, at least, we have seen a specimen brought home by a pedestrian, who—proud of his trophy—had him

“put in evidence” for a day or two ; but *this* kind of viper is not common now in these parts, and most people may pass through life without making his acquaintance, though, as a late minister of St. Cyrus quaintly remarked, “the serpent that spake to Eve is speaking to us all aye yet.”

The above list pretty much exhausts our four-footed parishioners, but with the feathered denizens of the wood, moor, and mountain we are more plentifully supplied.

The falcon pays us an occasional visit, but does not deign to nest with us. The sparrow-hawk, kestrel, brown-owl (occasionally), barn-owl, and (in summer) nightjar, are all quite common. The hooded-crow, the jackdaw, the magpie, and starling are likewise numerous. The last named first made its appearance here about 1861.

In the woods and moors are to be found the capercaillie, the black-grouse, the red-grouse, the pheasant, the partridge, and the wood-cock ; also the curlew, the snipe, the golden-plover, and the lapwing.

Our lochs are frequented by the mallard or wild-duck, the teal-duck, the little grebe, the coot, the water-hen, and the sandpiper. By the burn-sides may be seen the heron, the ousel, the grey and yellow waterwagtails. The following also are plentiful, and find their home with us all the year through :—the cushat, missel-thrush, song-thrush, blackbird, the creeper, chaffinch, bullfinch, linnet,

sedge-warbler, white-throat, white-ear, stonechat, lark, corn-bunting, yellow-bunting, meadow-pipet, titmouse, wren, hedge-sparrow, house-sparrow, and robin-redbreast himself, who waxes wonderfully tame when kindly treated. The spotted woodpecker may occasionally be seen.

Among our summer visitors can always be counted the cuckoo, corncrake or landrail, and the various species of the swallow.

Here, in reference to the cuckoo's transient visit, we cannot forbear quoting a stanza or two of that delightful ode from the pen of the gentle Michael Bruce :—

Soon as the pea puts on the bloom,  
 Thou fly'st thy vocal vale,  
 An annual guest in other lands,  
 Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird, thy bow'r is ever green,  
 Thy sky is ever clear ;  
 Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,  
 No winter in thy year !

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee ;  
 We'd make, with social wing,  
 Our annual visit o'er the globe,  
 Companions of the spring.

Even "when winter chills the aged year" the braes of Fordoun have attractions. It is then the hardy snow-bunting, fieldfare, and grey-goose put in appearance.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## Botany.

—:—

DR. ALEXANDER MURRAY, author of the "Northern Flora," writing a few years before his death, which occurred in 1838, says that, among the vegetable productions of the parish, nothing had been met with having any great claim to notice, except perhaps the *Linnæa borealis*. This plant was first discovered to be a native of Britain at Inglismaldie, in the neighbouring parish of Marykirk. It was on a holiday visit to home, in the summer of 1834, that Dr. Johnston of Kair, then, as we have seen (page 245) a student under Dr. Murray, fell in with a specimen of this much-prized plant—the first of its kind found in Fordoun. Botanical research has proved it to be more common than was at one time supposed.

Dr. Murray—himself an enthusiastic botanist—never failed to impress upon his pupils, when starting on their holiday excursions, the propriety of keeping a vigilant outlook for fresh discoveries on the floral field. Two years after the first discovery made by him, Dr. Johnston is credited by his former master with having made another in Fordoun—to

wit, the *Scabiosa succisa* (Devil's-bit scabious), now, however, a very common plant. It may not be inappropriate to mention here another pupil of Dr. Murray's, who has earned for himself a distinguished place—

DR. DAVID LYALL.

We have already (page 170) incidentally referred to Dr. Lyall. He is a native of the parish, a son of the late Mr. Charles Lyall, millowner, and grandson of William Lyall of Wattieston, who was an agriculturist abreast of his time, as we have seen. Dr. Johnston and Dr. Lyall were fellow-apprentices—the latter a couple of years the junior. As a botanist, he was *facile princeps*, a student according to Dr. Murray's own heart.

In 1839, after completion of his University course, Dr. Lyall entered the navy. His first appointment was to H.M.S. Terror, a ship whose name and that of its courageous commander, Captain Crozier, will for ever be associated with one of Britain's most successful and daring of explorers—Sir John Franklin. In this ship Dr. Lyall accompanied Sir James Clark Ross's expedition to the Antarctic Regions—returning in 1842. During this prolonged voyage extraordinary dangers were encountered, but important discoveries were made, including that of Victoria Land, and the continuity of the southern continent established, while, besides, many valuable observations were taken.

Dr. Lyall next served in the combined capacity of surgeon and naturalist in H.M.S. Acheron, in the survey of New Zealand, from 1847 to 1850. He afterwards (during the years 1852 to 1854) served in H.M.S. Assistance in one of the many Franklin search expeditions.

In 1855, when the deadly war with Russia raged, he was called to take his part with the fleet in the Baltic. On that occasion he held a post on H.M.S. Pembroke. From 1858 to 1860, he acted as surgeon and naturalist in the British Columbia and North American Boundary Commission.

He retired in 1872 with the rank of Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals, and since his retirement has resided in London and Cheltenham. It need scarcely be said that Dr. Lyall's botanical tastes and acquirements admirably fitted him for the various geographical surveys and important expeditions in which he took part.

Dr. Murray remarks that (always excepting the two-flowered *Linnæa*) most of the species of plants found in Fordoun are of common and ordinary description. He enumerates the following, as perhaps in some degree rare or curious—*Cardamine impatiens*, narrow-leaved cardamine; *Circea alpina*, mountain enchanter's night shade; *Rubus chamæmorus*, cloud-berry ("averin"); *Trientalis Europæa*, European chickweed wintergreen; *Pyrola rotundifolia*, round-leaved wintergreen; *Pyrola-minor*, lesser wintergreen; *Arbutus uva-ursi*, barberry;

*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*, cranberry; *Hypericum pulchrum*, small St. John's wort; and *Parnassia palustris*, grass of Parnassus.

The mention of the "Northern Flora," and of the beautiful little *Linnæa borealis*, brings to the recollection the name of one of the most remarkable men of our northern district—the late William Smith, best known to the world as the editor of the "People's Tune Book." The *Linnæa*, one of his favourite flowers, was discovered by William Smith's father in the fir woods of Chapel of Garioch, where he was for many years the parish minister; and the "Northern Flora" was the book that gave William Smith the wonderful knowledge of the plants of the north of Scotland that he undoubtedly possessed. But William Smith was no mere botanist. Music, literature, especially the literature of Shakespeare and of the Wordsworth-Coleridge period, and folklore, were all familiar to him, and it was his delight to take a willing listener into the by-paths of knowledge and to pour out his treasures of information with a volubility and insight and enthusiasm almost equal to that of Coleridge whom in not a few respects he resembled.

He possessed the insight of genius, and an imagination that, with careful training in early life, would have made him a poet and philosopher; and, instead of being an unsuccessful tea merchant, he would probably have filled a professorial chair. Even as it was, even although he lived a life that

was full of eccentricity, and at last was shrouded in gloom, even though he possessed the kind of "squinting brain" that Oliver Wendell Holmes writes of in his last charming volume on the "Tea Cups" (and which sometimes enables its possessor to see things more clearly in their true light than they are seen by the average and common-place individual), one can look back on his memory as that of a man who was a living protest against the shallow conventionalities of his time, and who, with a loving heart, had a high ideal of the beautiful and the true. The following verses, in Wordsworthian style, give one a glimpse of the quality of William Smith's mind, and they warrant the belief that, had he been planted in a more congenial soil, he would have contributed to the literature of his time. He was in many respects a rare and remarkable man :—

**The Shortest Day brings new Spring=longings.**

---

WORDSWORTH DIVERSIFIED.

---

Winter ebbs—each day that follows  
Is an efflux from on high,  
Tending to the lightsome hollows  
Where the greens of spring-time lie !

The shortest day ; come lengthening hours !  
This stir of joy—another year !  
And soon will April hang green bowers,  
And all the flowers afresh appear.

Our minds take *colour* from to-day—  
 Though winter rules we fare to spring,  
 Though it “comes slowly up this way,”  
 The sun’s sure round the time will bring—  
 ’Tis here ! in our imagining.

And looked and longed for, day by day,  
 Our hearts grow green until it come ;  
 And hopes flush up ! the while we pray  
 That it may find us all at home.

O, heart of hearts ! at peace with God,  
 How can ye wait his utmost will ;  
 And here, or laid beneath the sod,  
 It is the same “our Father” still.

And if we meet the spring in heaven,  
 We’ll never grieve that we are gone ;  
 But only this—let it be given  
 We pass not till our work be done.

—PRIMAVERA.

In Mrs. Ella Hill Burton Rodger’s interesting and, on the whole, comprehensive work on “Aberdeen Doctors” (Blackwood, 1893), Dr. Murray does not find a place. It appears to us, however, that from the promise he gave as a physician, and his acknowledged eminence as a botanist, he came clearly within scope of the author’s design and had just claims to be included. The parish of Fordoun cannot take credit for any lustre his name has shed, or establish any connection with him, beyond the fact that he was, as we have seen, the teacher of two of her sons who have taken distinguished places in their profession. It cannot, however, be

amiss or appear incongruous, that we should record here, though only by way of simple tribute to his memory, what we have been able to glean of his history.

Dr. Murray was a native of the parish of Rathen, and seems to have been born about the first year of the century. His father, William Murray, was farmer at Redhouse in that parish. His mother, Barbara Smith, was the daughter of a builder who occupied a farm adjoining that of Redhouse, and one of whose sons, James, was long the leading architect in Inverness, while William, another son, followed the same profession in Montrose. Among other works carried out by the latter were the bridge across the North Esk at Marykirk, and that across the Bervie at Mondynes. That the former was an erection much needed, the incident recorded (page 314) is sufficient to prove.

Dr. Murray had one or two sisters, one of whom grew up to womanhood and was married, but he was the only son of his parents. He received his early education in the old parochial school at the top of the manse-garden—his teacher being Alexander Anderson (a Bourtie lad), who was drafted from the school of Rathen to be an usher under the great "educationist," Dr. Alexander Crombie, author of the "Gymnasium" (page 250)—Anderson's next step being an appointment at the East India Company's Seminary at Addiscombe, where (with the degree of Dr. prefixed to his name) he

long taught Greek and mathematics. A great friendship was maintained to the last between Dr. Anderson and his old pupil, Dr. Murray.

Dr. Murray attended Marischal College, and on completion of his medical studies commenced practice in the Vale of Alford. While in that district a case of poisoning occurred, and he was called in. His diagnosis was fully corroborated by the specialist, Dr. Christison, at that time recognised as the leading authority in cases of the kind. In the Vale, Dr. Murray earned and enjoyed the esteem of the whole community, including, among other more influential friends, the late Mr. Farquharson, of Haughton (father of the last laird, Robert, who was the youngest of five sons), whose friendship he retained after he came to Aberdeen, which was about the end of the "twenties" or beginning of the "thirties." He was soon taken out in consultation with Dr. Benjamin Williamson, who stood high in the profession.

Dr. Murray was appointed one of the physicians of the Royal Infirmary, and devoted himself with great zeal to his duties there. Besides attending at the regular hours, his anxiety for the good of his patients led him to go in the evenings to watch the symptoms in particular cases. To his zeal, there is reason to believe, he fell a victim. A tramp from Cruden, or some other Aberdeenshire parish, suffering from a malignant type of typhus fever, was placed under his charge. The vagrant was danger-

ously ill. Dr. Murray went at night to examine into the case and caught the infection. His patient recovered, but the doctor himself succumbed. His death occurred on the 10th of February, 1838, in the 39th year of his age. It was during the heavy snowstorm to which (page 189) we have adverted. The roads around Aberdeen were blocked, and, after considerable detention, a vessel had to be chartered to convey the body by sea to Peterhead harbour on its way to the churchyard of Rathen. A monument, with suitable inscription, marks his resting-place. His death occasioned universal regret. A general meeting of the managers of the Royal Infirmary, under the presidency of Provost Milne, was held on the 21st of the month, at which a resolution was passed expressive of the great loss the institution had sustained, and containing tasteful allusion to Dr. Murray's professional and literary attainments, as also to his benevolence of heart and devotion to duty. It should be added that Dr. Stephen Balfour, an ardent student of medicine, conceived a great admiration of Dr. Murray, and with brotherly affection repeatedly watched over him at night during his last illness. Besides the "Northern Flora" (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1836), a work of admirable design, of which he was spared to issue only one part, Dr. Murray was the author of many valuable papers on medical subjects.

## CHAPTER XXX.

**Auchinblae as a Health Resort.**

—:—

THE climate of Auchinblae is less stimulating than that of the seaside on the east coast, and is therefore more suitable, in the first instance, for those whose energies are exhausted by the toil and turmoil of city life. Thus residence for a week or two in an inland district of moderate elevation is the best preparation for a more lengthened sojourn either at the seaside or among the mountains and valleys of the upper Dee. But if this additional change, for economical reasons, cannot be indulged in, a few weeks in the pure air of Auchinblae will soon restore nervous vigour, and bring colour to the cheek of the jaded man of business, and he will return with renewed strength to the city where he has to bear the brunt of the battle of life for another year. It is an outcome of our advanced civilisation, with its keen struggle and competition, that residence annually for a few weeks in a country district is indispensable, and the man of business, who has true forethought, knows that this is the most economical practice to follow. Thus year by year

our quiet country villages and seaside towns are becoming more and more frequented by health-seekers. Auchinblae is no exception in this respect. It can produce abundant and unequivocal testimony in its favour as a health resort.

In the whole district there is indeed no locality to which medical gentlemen are in the habit of sending patients in need of recuperation that stands higher in health-giving properties than Auchinblae. They not only send their patients there, but their own families also, and are only too glad when they can further prove their faith by their deeds by snatching a day or two's respite from professional duty in order to regale themselves in the refreshing shades of Strath-Finella. All the elements conducive to quiet, healthy enjoyment are present. To those who are not invalids, but are "sound in lith and limb," there are excursions through the heather to the summits of Kerloak, Cloch-na-ben, and Tipperweir, from any of which a large portion of Aberdeenshire, the valley of the Dee, as also the interesting parishes of Durriss and Strachan can be surveyed. To those whose strength does not warrant such extensive undertakings, but who must confine themselves to more limited attempts, there are the delightful glen of Drumtochty (of whose attractions we have elsewhere spoken), and the charming woods and walks of Monboddo, besides numerous attractive strolls, upwards and downwards, in every direction, according as fancy or inclina-

tion may dictate. For the younger and more active portion of the community there is the well-equipped Recreation ground, to which allusion has already been made. The supply of water is plentiful, and from a source beyond the reach of contamination. The air also is delightfully pure and bracing, perfumed with the bloom of the heather. In short, it may be said with truth, and from experience, that this romantic village has all the attributes that conspire to make a summer residence agreeable and beneficial. For many seasons nearly double the number of strangers from towns in the neighbouring counties would have partaken of its pleasures and amenities if they could have found accommodation.



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