

EXTRACTS FROM
PRATT'S 'HISTORY OF
BUCHAN'.

Proctor John B. Buchanan, 1858

About half a mile north of this, and close upon the coast, is the burgh of barony of *Roschearty*, created by royal charter of date 13th July 1681, and of which Captain Dunwall Fordyce of Brucklay is the superior. The inhabitants number about seven hundred. It has a weekly market, a regular post-office, and a comfortable inn. There are two places of worship in the burgh; one belonging to the Free Church, and the other either Methodist or Independent—our informant could not say which. Three vessels belong to this port, and about sixty boats are engaged in the herring fishing. The annual revenue of the harbour is about £75.

It is said that, as early as the fourteenth century, a farm on this spot was divided into crofts, and some huts erected a little westward of the oldest part of the present town; and that a party of Danes, either landing or being shipwrecked near the place, took up their residence among the inhabitants; and that, having been bred to the fishing in their own country, they instructed the crofters in the art. These after a time made fishing their sole occupation; and others, seeing their success, resorted to the place, and joined them in this pursuit. In the course of time the knight of Pitsligo, in order to encourage his fishermen, improved the creek or landing-place. He also entered into an agreement with them to furnish them with boats, on the condition that he should receive a fifth part of all the fish they caught. To carry out this arrangement, a Taxman was appointed, whose office it was to provide every six men with a boat, to be renewed, if necessary, every five years; and, in return, to receive the fifth part of the fish. A house, called the *Stone House*, was erected on the west side of the harbour, for the curing of the proprietor's share of the fish. This agreement lasted for many years. Another arrangement, by mutual consent of parties, was then entered into.* The fishermen now provide their own boats, and pay one pound each for house-rent; or, if they prefer building houses for themselves, a lease of ninety-nine years is granted them, and a certain

* MS. Information kindly furnished by Mr John Malcolm, Roschearty.

sum per fall charged as feu-rent. The greater number of the white-fishers of Roschearty are feuars.

The *New Town* was, till about the middle of the sixteenth century, let in small farms or crofts, the houses being built near to each other. There were then two large houses erected, one of which was called the *Jam*. It is still in good repair, and inhabited. The date of its erection, 1573, is inscribed on a stone in the wall. The other was named *The Lodging-House*, being built as a residence for a Dowager Lady Pitsligo. There is a stone above the entrance, with a *rose and heart*, and the following inscription, "Nunc Troia ubi Seges." Under this inversion of the classic line, 1760 is inscribed, obviously put in place of the original date, which had been either worn out or defaced. When Lord Pitsligo granted a charter to the burgh, he built a tolbooth, which is still standing, although the inhabitants of the burgh have by some means lost their right to it. The burgh and barony were granted to Lord Pitsligo in 1681, and the town's charter is dated 1st October 1681; it grants powers and privileges equal to any other burgh of barony in Scotland. The seal is a *rose and heart*, and the motto, *Corde et manu*. The links, or town's common, belong to the feuars.*

Taking the road by the coast, westward, we come to *Braco Park* (Garden), a pretty cottage, with a good farmstead, picturesquely placed on a knoll overlooking the sea. About two miles from Roschearty we come upon the *Cave of Cowshaven*, or, as it is called, *Lord Pitsligo's Cave*—a place invested with considerable interest. It is on the farm of Ironhill, in the parish of Aberdour. The cave is almost inaccessible, being about midway down the face of the rock. The entrance is narrow; after passing through two smaller cavities, we come to a large vaulted chamber, with a spring of water issuing from a crevice in the rock, and falling into a cistern, cut out by the hands of Lord Pitsligo, who was frequently compelled to resort to this dreary place of concealment; and by employing himself in hewing out this little reservoir, relieved the tedium of the many long

* See Appendix, OO.

hours he was obliged to spend in this cheerless retreat. It is a remark made by his biographer, that "the circumstances which made such a spot a convenient shelter from the storms of adversity, doubtless awakened, in a mind peculiarly contemplative and devotional, feelings which would brighten even its twilight darkness;" and that he found, with the excellent Hammond in his retreat from similar persecution, that the "grotts and caves lie as open to the celestial influences as the fairest and most beautiful temples."

About a mile westward of this cave are the scanty remains of the *Castle of Dundarg*.* This was one of the chief strongholds of the Comyns, Earls of Buchan, previous to the time of Robert the Bruce. Buchanan mentions that, in the early part of the fourteenth century, the Castle of Dundarg was garrisoned by Henry Beaumont, who had married a daughter of John Mowbray, to whose ancestors Edward I. of England had given lands in Scotland.† From this we should infer that Dundarg had at one time belonged to Mowbray, and that Beaumont claimed it in right of his wife. At a later period, as we learn from the same authority, Andrew Moray, the Regent, besieged Beaumont in Dundarg, and compelled him to surrender.‡

We read in the *View of the Diocese of Aberdeen*, that the castle was afterwards possessed by the Cheynes of Eslemont. About the beginning of the last century it was purchased by Lord Pittsligo. It is now the property of Captain Dingwall Fortlyce of Brucklay.

Dundarg is situated on a high peninsular rock. Vestiges of a large court and buildings may still be traced, but the only part remaining at all entire is a strong arched gateway which had guarded the entrance. Near the neck which joins the rock to the mainland there is a triple ditch, and ramparts of considerable extent.

It is scarcely possible to view these mouldering remains of ancient grandeur without some vague feelings of regret. For whatever time may have effected in the way of a general

* See Appendix, PP.

† *Hist.*, lib. ix. cap. 16.

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corruption of manners, and in extending the benefits of civilisation over a large mass of human misery, there was yet a rude magnificence in these old feudal systems, which, at this distance at least, we cannot but love to look upon. We can fancy these lordly chieftains, with their ample followings, their stalwart frames, their indomitable bravery, their rude eloquence, their martial law, and their chivalrous faith; and although there might be wrong, and robbery, and violence, on the reverse of the picture, we are not at all sure that, with our shaven chins and smooth manners, we have not lost as much in vigour as we have gained in virtue.

About a mile westward from Dundarg, we come in sight of the old kirk of Aberdour, standing on the brink of a wild and romantic gorge studded here and there with a few cottages, and topped by the manse and some farm-steadings. The church is a ruin, and stands on a sort of ledge or table-land on the north-western acclivity of the hill, and within a hundred and fifty yards of the shore of the Moray Firth. A deep glen or ravine skirts the churchyard on the west. The Daur, or *Dour*,* a small clear stream, sweeps down the glen, in which there is a mill and cottages, prettily situated on ledges of the precipitous bank. It was in the month of July that we visited the place, and the sides of the ravine were then clothed with the richest verdure, sweetbrier and other flowering shrubs climbing the rocky braces, while a colony of beehives nestled snugly in the sides of the glen. The stream is spanned by a rude wooden bridge for foot-passengers; huge rugged rocks of red sandstone rise abruptly from the pebbled beach; while the clear blue sea fills up the distance in this lovely picture. In the face of the rock, and at a distance of less than a hundred yards west from the point where the Dour falls into the sea, is a celebrated Well. The water issues from a crevice of the rock, and is collected in a small basin below. This well has two names and two histories—*St Drostan's Well*, and *Mess John's Well*. In a *Description of the Parish of Aberdour*, by Auchmedden,

* Signifying the *Otter*; *Aber*, the mouth; *Abordaur*, the Mouth of the Otter Burn.

A.D. 1724,* we have the following: "Near the bank there is a fine spring below the church, called St. Durstan's Well, from a bishop of that name who lived thereabouts in the times of popery; and the well is still reckoned sacred by the country people." In the *New Statistical Account* of the parish, by the late Rev. George Gardiner, the other history of the well is thus recorded: "There are mineral springs in almost every corner of the parish, but one more remarkable, and more frequented than the rest, called *Mess John's Well*, issues from a rock about two hundred yards west of the burn of Aberdour. It is a strong chalybeate, and famed for its medicinal qualities. A small basin in the shape of a cup, for the reception of the water, which trickles down the rock, is said to have been cut by a *John White*, laird of Ardlawhill, at the time that Presbytery and Prelacy contended for the mastery. Neither of the parties, during the heat of the contest, had regular worship at the parish church, but John attended every Sunday, prayed, sung, and read a chapter from the precentor's desk, then prayed again, and concluded the service by singing another psalm. This he continued to do till presbyterianism was fairly established, and hence he was designated *Mess John* by the people, and his well, *Mess John's Well*."†

The church, now in ruins, is one of the oldest in the north of Scotland. "Aberdour church is dedicated to *Saint Durstan*. He was of the royal blood of Scotland; and being addicted to religion from his childhood, was sent over to be bred under St. Colm in Ireland, where he became Abbot of Dalquhongle; but, leaving that country, he became a hermit, and returning home, he built the church of Glensck. His bones were kept in a stone chest at Aberdour, where they were conceived to work several cures."‡

The west gable of the church is still standing, in which there is a circular-headed window. Great part of the north,

* See Macfarlane's MS. Geographical Collections.

† See Appendix, QQ.

‡ See Aberdeen Breviary. His feast was kept on the 14th of December.

and a small part of the south wall remain. A south aisle is also entire, but the roof is fast falling into decay. In the east wall there had been a narrow window, but whether circular-headed, pointed, or otherwise, it is difficult to say. The font, which is octagonal, and in a tolerably good state of preservation, lies at the west end of the church, outside. The dimensions of the building, externally, had been about 69 feet by 21. The manse is close by. The new parish church is built about a mile distant from the old, at the top of the hill, and near the village of *New Aberdour*.

Crossing the Daur, we find ourselves on the estate of *Auchmedden*, where the district at once assumes a wild and almost highland aspect. The road is abruptly steep till we attain the elevation of two or three hundred feet above the level of the sea. The ground is unequal, and varied with wide patches of heather. Pursuing our path along this lofty ridge for nearly a mile, we begin to descend towards the *Dens of Auchmedden*, rich in botanical treasures, and a few years ago the frequent resort of scientific and medical men from the neighbouring towns.

Pitjossie is on this estate, about a mile west of the old Church. This is a stupendous natural arch, thought by some persons to rival the Bullers of Buchan—an opinion, however, to which we beg to demur. Not far distant from this, in the *Den of Dardar*, there is a fine cascade of three successive falls, which empties itself immediately below into the Moray Firth.

Here the geologist will find abundant material for research. "The rocks," says the late Hugh Miller, "which bound the shore, are highly interesting, of stupendous height, and various formation. The sandstone is accounted of the oldest secondary formation, and is destitute of all traces of organic remains." There are also slate and outlying blocks or boulders of primary trap and granite; and it is the expressed opinion of geologists, that if the dens or deep ravines which run inland from the coast in this vicinity were carefully investigated, many facts interesting to the naturalist might be brought to light.

But to return to the road. Pursuing our route for about

a mile and a half, we strike into a path on the right, which leads to the summit of the *Red Head of Pennan*. Here, on looking back, we survey the long line of indented coast, stretching to Kinnaird's Head, and thence, in the extreme distance, to Rattray-Head. Looking westward, the prospect is equally extensive. The pretty creek or bay of Pennan lies almost beneath our feet—the only indication of the snug little village being the wreaths of smoke rising from the chimneys. Troup-Head and Gamrie-Head, or, according to its local appellation, Mhor-Head, fill the picture on the opposite side of the bay. Beyond that, a headland near the Boyn; and farther still, and a little to the left, rises the Bin-hill of Cullen; and lastly, in the extreme distance, the fading outlines of the Caithness hills. Such is the scene that here presents itself.

The path from hence by the *Pennan Farm* down to the village is carried along the sloping side of the hill, with a ravine on the left, little terraced gardens or potato-plots overhauling the road on the right. On the opposite side of this glen stood the ancient Castle or Place of the Bairds of Auchmedden, not a vestige of which, beyond a few scattered stones of the foundations, is now to be seen. The field, at the lower end of which stood the Castle, is still called "The Green," and lies between the *Mains of Auchmedden* and the ruin. Part of the Castle remained, and was used as a granary within the memory of man. A portion of the garden wall, on the near side of the ravine, is still in existence. The Castle was about a quarter of a mile from the sea, to which it lay open on the north-west, but was sheltered on the north-east by Pennan-Head. Mains of Auchmedden is a little beyond the tenth milestone from Fraserburgh.

A little below the site of the Castle, the ravine is met, nearly at right angles, by another, *Glenquithle*,* of a still wilder and more romantic character.

* The second title of the Comyns, Earls of Buchan, was formerly *Glenduaichie*, from an ancient thanedom of that name belonging to the family. In the *View of the Diocese* it is stated that *Glenquithle* was formerly called *Glenduaichie*, and gave the title; but *Glenquithle*

Not far from the debouchment of Glenquithle into this ravine, is *Gibb's Rush*, a waterfall of thirty feet perpendicular descent. To the west lies the very neat and cleanly *village of Pennan*, stretching along the margin of the sea, and under the shadow of rugged cliffs, which rise abruptly above the houses to the height of two hundred feet. At high tides, and in particular points of the wind, the houses are occasionally flooded.

Westward of Glenquithle is the *Chapel Den*, which may be said to form part of the *Tor of Troup*, being the entrance, from the sea-side, to the wild basin into which the numerous ravines of the Tor descend.

Here are the ruins of another old chapel on a haugh opposite the Tor. A short time ago, the only remains of the building were a heap of stones, which had been held sacred by the husbandman on the spot. But as recently as 1855 these were made to give way to the utilitarian ideas of the times—site, and stones, and the memories of the past, all obliterated by the levelling operations of the plough! If we could only bethink ourselves that these fading memorials are the only remaining types of ages now past and gone, some forbearance in the work of destruction would surely be exercised.

The *Tor* of Troup* is one of the most noted places in Buchan. It is a rugged mass of broken hills, forming a cluster of remarkably wild glens, rich to exuberance in plants and flowers—a very garden of delights to the botanist. Tangled brushwood and magnificent trees are the alternating features, the former with its underwood twisted into the most grotesque and unimaginable forms. This group of glens forms altogether a scene of inconceivable beauty, well worthy of a pilgrimage. The proprietor, Garden Campbell, of Troup and Glenlyon, has a cottage residence here,

where traditionally recognised under this name. There is a *Dhu* about a mile to the south, crossed by the old road from New to Pennan, which may possibly be the *Glen-dhu-achy*. Second were not given till about the sixteenth century.

* *Tor*, or *Thor*, in Celtic, a mountain-top, or cliff.

preferring this charming retreat to the tame and bleak situation of *Troup House*, which is situated about a mile westward from Pennan, and not far from the sea. The Tor of Troup is skirted on the east by the moors of Aberdour and Auchmedden, through which passes the old road from Ellon to Pennan. At its entry on the moors of Aberdour, at the *Gonar Burn*, two miles north of New Pitsligo, the road passes the first of these glens.

There are numerous cairns and tumuli in the parish of Aberdour. Three of these (of which there were probably four, originally), known as *Brodie's Cairns*, have a traditional history attached to them, and, as illustrative of an ancient mode of trial by ordeal, claim a place in our records. The *New Statistical Account* states, that "a farmer of the name of Brodie murdered his mother, whose body was brought to the gate of the churchyard of Aberdour, and every individual in the parish called upon to apply his hand to the naked corpse, under the superstitious belief that the blood would gush upon the murderer. It was observed that, during the time that this was going on, her son carefully kept at a distance, and showed great reluctance to approach the body; and that, when recourse was about to be had to compulsion, he confessed the murder. The tradition further states that the murderer was drawn and quartered, and that his four limbs were buried on the sides of the four roads leading to the church of Aberdour."

Retracing our steps as far as the village of Pennan, and looking back to the Red-Head immediately east of it, we are enabled to form some idea of the magnificent front of this bold headland, rising to a perpendicular height of some three hundred feet. The rock is of that species known as *pudding-stone*, or conglomerate, and has been quarried from time immemorial for millstones, vast quantities of which have been supplied from it.

In these crags was the eyrie of the *Eagles of Pennan*.—As true and faithful chroniclers of all that is remarked or remarkable in our good district of Buchan, we are bound to

give the traditional belief respecting these birds, mentioned by no less an authority than the Lady Anne Drummond, as one of its notabilities. We must again have recourse to the pages of the *New Statistical Account*: "At one period there was a pair of eagles that regularly nested and brought forth their young in the rocks of Pennan; but, according to the tradition of the country, when the late Earl of Aberdeen purchased the estate from the Bairds, the former proprietors, the eagles disappeared in fulfilment of a prophecy by Thomas the Rhymer, *that there should be an eagle in the crags while there was a Baird in Auchmedden*. But the most remarkable circumstance, and what certainly appears incredible, is, that when Lord Haddo, eldest son of the Earl of Aberdeen, married Miss Christian Baird of Newbyth, the eagles returned to the rocks, and remained until the estate passed into the hands of the Honourable William Gordon, when they again fled, and have never since been seen in the country. These facts, marvellous as they may appear, are attested by a cloud of living witnesses."

Thomas the Rhymer is generally considered to have been so correct in his oracular vaticinations, that we should hardly be doing him justice if we omitted the verification of this noted prophecy, especially as we have another stone to add to the traditional edifice. Mr Gardiner, the writer on this subject in the *New Statistical*, favoured us (Nov. 5, 1856) with the following *vidé voce* statement: "Soon after the late Robert Baird purchased the lands of Auchmedden (about 1855), *one eagle* returned to the rocks. But this, the men of the coast-guard, either ignorant of the singular history connected with the return of these birds, or indifferent to the romance of the story, pursued from crag to crag with their guns, till they either killed or dislodged it."

The old family of the Bairds of Auchmedden, it seems, were not free from the thralldom of this legend. Believing that the fortunes of the family were, in some inevitable way, connected with the presence of these eagles, they had sedulously protected, and regularly fed them, by placing a daily

supply of food on a ledge of the neighbouring rocks. Whether it was the *name* or the *family* of the Bairds that was honoured by the patronage of this kingly denizen of the crags, it is not easy to decide; but we are led to believe that the present proprietors of that name are not indifferent to the apparent predilection of this singular protector.

Taking advantage of low tide, and leaving Penman by the shore, westward, we come to a path which requires the safe conduct of a guide, winding along a wilderness of rough boulders of rock. The road here is no bad representation of Swift's imaginary infantine journey to "London townie;" for sometimes we have to ascend to some height, then suddenly we are buried among the huge boulders; again we have to spring from mass to mass, coming occasionally on the sharp angle of the parent rock, along the face of which, on a ledge of not more than fifteen inches wide—a sort of miniature representation of the celebrated "Mauvais Pas" of the Swiss Alps—we have for some little distance to make our way as best we can. This bit of "sharp practice" accomplished, we skirt a small bay, and, passing under a magnificent natural archway in the rock, we find ourselves in a level open area, gradually contracting into a ravine. On a bold bluff, near the mouth of this gorge, stands *Penman Lodge*, and down below, the *Nether Mill of Penman*. Farther up is the Tor of Troup, already mentioned. This glen is threaded by an insignificant stream, which takes its rise several miles into the interior, and forms the boundary between the parishes of Aberdour and Gamrie, and also between the shires of Aberdeenshire and Banff.

We are now across the stream, and in the parish of Gamrie, and county of Banff. Here the road for some distance follows a considerable acclivity. At about half a mile from the glen, on the right, we pass *Troup House** (Garden Campbell).

* "Troup, belonging anciently to the Troups of that ilk (of a branch of whom 'tis said Van Tromp, the Dutch admiral, was descended.)"—*Vice of the Diocese of Aberdeen*, p. 488. In the *History of Scots Affairs*, vol. iii. p. 48, it is said that "Martin Harpison Trumpe, the Admiral of Hollande, was the sonne of a Troup."

It is a large, heavy-looking building, and has been unoccupied by the family for many years. At a little distance from this, the old road from Fraserburgh to Banff, which we left near Penman-head, is regained. The factor's house stands here on the brow of the hill; and between it and the sea lies *Northfield*, formerly the seat of *Keith* of Northfield, now the property of Garden of Troup. The present house is erected on the site of the former mansion, part of the old walls having been left standing, on which the new ones are built up. The Manor-house had been a structure of no particular note.

Beyond this point the road continues through extensive and highly cultivated fields, till we reach the *Cot-Town of Middleton*, a village or hamlet, the houses of which are all built of mixed clay and straw—a species of material in general use in these parts a century ago, but now rarely seen.

At a short distance westward of the village, we again leave the main road; and, turning off to the right, another three quarters of a mile brings us to *Bracoden*, a deep narrow glen, coursed by a stream, said in places to be unfathomable. We must remember, however, that in the "hill countries" these fabulous depths frequently occur.

Skirting the hill to the westward of this glen for some little distance, we descend by a winding path to the village of *Gardenston* or *Gamrie*, which, like Penman, is built on the margin of the Moray Firth, at the base of a steep hill. The road, following its turnings and windings down the face of the brae, cannot be far short of a mile, the direct descent probably not exceeding a sixth of the distance. In making our way to it, we descend from terrace to terrace, and look down, as it were, into the very chimneys of the houses below. The situation is singularly striking. The houses are perfect cyries, built on ledges, and in the recesses of the cliff. The lower and older part of the village is close upon the sea. The harbour was crowded with boats, and two small sailing craft were receiving their cargo of fish. Men with the loose sailor-jacket, red woollen nightcap, and huge

one *Harper*, borne at Peeterheade in Buchaine." The *Cot-Town of Middleton* are said to be descended from the Garden of Banchoy.

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Westward from Dundarg, we shortly come in sight of the *Old Kirk of Aberdour*, standing on the brink of a wild and romantic gorge studded here and there with a few cottages, and topped by the manse and some farmsteadings. The church is a ruin, and stands on a sort of ledge or table-land on the north-western acclivity of the hill, and within a hundred and fifty yards of the shore

¹ *Hist.*, lib. ix., cap. 24.

of the Moray Firth. A deep glen or ravine skirts the churchyard on the west. The Daur, or *Dour*,¹ a small clear stream, sweeps down the glen, in which there is a mill and cottages, prettily situated on ledges of the precipitous bank. It was in the month of July that we visited the place, and the sides of the ravine were then clothed with the richest verdure, sweetbrier and other flowering shrubs climbing the rocky braes, while a colony of beehives nestled snugly in the sides of the glen. The stream is spanned by a rude wooden bridge for foot-passengers. To the west of this brook, along the base of the brae of Auchmedden, which here rises abruptly, a small mill-lead may be traced, which conducted the water to *The Waukmill of Auchmedden*. Of this place we read that, "On the night of the 8th March, 1784, at Waukmill of Auchmedden, a large piece of brae slipt down and overturned the house of Thomas Torry, dyer, and killed his wife, one of his sons, and his servant maid." Huge rugged rocks of red sandstone rise abruptly from the pebbled beach; while the clear blue sea fills up the distance in this lovely picture. There are two noted springs in this immediate neighbourhood—*S. Drostane's Well*, and *Mess John's Well*. *S. Drostane's* is about a hundred and fifty yards along the beach, eastward from the point where the Burn of Aberdour joins the sea. It is a copious spring of the purest water, bubbling up from a rocky bottom, at the mouth of *Durstane's Glen* or *Durstane's Slack*. Drostane was a disciple and companion of S. Columba of Iona, and it is made clear by the "Book of Deir," lately discovered, that he brought the knowledge of Christ to the shores of the Moray Firth, as early as the sixth century. Although his name had long been venerated as the patron saint of the parish of Aberdour, it would not appear to have been generally known that his ministrations were exercised at so early a date, nor that his visit to the place was anterior to the acknowledgment of the Pope's

¹ Signifying the *Otter*; *Aber*, the mouth; *Aberdour*, the Mouth of the Otter Burn.

authority by the Scottish Church, for in a *Description of the Parish of Aberdour*, by Auchmedden, A.D. 1724,¹ we have the following: "Near the sea-bank there is a fine spring below the church, called St. Durstan's Well, from a bishop of that name who lived thereabouts in the times of popery; and the well is still reckoned sacred by the country people." In the *New Statistical Account* of the parish, by the late Rev. George Gardiner, the history of the other well is thus recorded: "There are mineral springs in almost every corner of the parish, but one more remarkable, and more frequented than the rest, called *Mess John's Well*, issues from a rock about two hundred yards west of the burn of Aberdour. It is a strong chalybeate, and famed for its medicinal qualities. A small basin in the shape of a cup, for the reception of the water, which trickles down the rock, is said to have been cut by a *John White*, laird of Ardlawhill, at the time that Presbytery and Prelacy contended for the mastery. Neither of the parties, during the heat of the contest, had regular worship at the parish church, but John attended every Sunday, prayed, sung, and read a chapter from the precentor's desk, then prayed again, and concluded the service by singing another psalm. This he continued to do till presbyterianism was fairly established, and hence he was designated *Mess John* by the people, and his well, *Mess John's Well*."²

The church, now in ruins, is one of the oldest in the north of Scotland. "Aberdaur church is dedicated to *Saint Durstan*. He was of the royal blood of Scotland; and being dedicated to religion from his childhood, was sent over to be bred under St. Colm in Ireland, where he became Abbot of Dalquhongle; but, leaving that country, he became a hermit, and returning home, he built the church of Glenesk. His bones were kept in a stone chest at Aberdaur, where they were conceived to work several cures."³

¹ See Macfarlane's "MS. Geographical Collections."

² See Appendix, RR.

³ See Aberdeen Breviary. His feast was kept on the 14th of December.

The west gable of the church is still standing, in which there is a circular-headed window. Great part of the north, and a small part of the south wall remain. A south aisle is also entire, but the roof is fast falling into decay. In the east wall there had been a narrow window, but whether circular-headed, pointed, or otherwise, it is difficult to say. The font, which is octagonal, and in a tolerably good state of preservation, lies at the west end of the church, outside. The dimensions of the building, externally, had been about 69 feet by 21. The manse is close by. The new parish church is built about a mile distant from the old, at the top of the hill, and near the village of *New Aberdour*.

Aberdour House, situated in the south-eastern quarter of the parish, is a large, inelegant building, in the style of the last century. It was formerly the residence of *Gordon* of Aberdour, and is now the property of Captain Dingwall Fordyce of Brucklaw, and is, at the present time, the residence of — Barclay, Esq.

Crossing the Daur, we find ourselves on the estate of *Auchmedden*, where the district at once assumes a wild and almost highland aspect. The road is abruptly steep till we attain the elevation of two or three hundred feet above the level of the sea. The ground is unequal, and varied with wide patches of heather. Pursuing our path along this lofty ridge for nearly a mile, we begin to descend towards the *Dens of Auchmedden*, rich in botanical treasures, and, a few years ago, the frequent resort of scientific and medical men from the neighbouring towns.

Pitjossie is on this estate, about a mile west of the old church. This is a stupendous natural arch, thought by some persons to rival the Bullers of Buchan—an opinion, however, to which we beg to demur. Not far distant from this, in the *Den of Dardar*, there is a fine cascade of three successive falls, which empties itself immediately below into the Moray Firth.

Here the geologist will find abundant material for research. "The rocks," says the late Hugh Miller, "which bound the shore, are highly interesting, of stu-

pendous height, and various formation. The sandstone is accounted of the oldest secondary formation, and is destitute of all traces of organic remains." There are also slate and outlying blocks or boulders of primary trap and granite; and it is the expressed opinion of geologists, that if the dens or deep ravines which run inland from the coast in this vicinity were carefully investigated, many facts interesting to the naturalist might be brought to light.

In this part of the district there are scattered, here and there, many reliques interesting to the antiquarian. From the hill of Bracklaymore, the ground slopes gently eastward to the brink of a glen, through which the infant rills of the North Ugie find their way. On this slope lies the farm of *Glaslaw*, where is a knoll rising equally on all sides to the height of 12 or 15 feet, on the level top of which was a cairn of from 8 to 10 feet in height, and about 34 feet in diameter. It was called "the Lickerstone Cairn," but what this name implied no one seems to know. The cairn is now removed. About 150 yards northwards from this spot, is a small, strangely-shaped hill, called *The Law*. It rises abruptly from the plain, and stands alone. It is perhaps from 50 to 60 feet high. There are doubts whether it is natural or artificial. A fine spring of water rises at the east end of it.

On the hill of Earlseat, westward from Aberdour, there were, till about 1855, eleven or twelve low circular mounds of a peculiar description. They varied from 24 to 36 feet in diameter—one, on the level top of the hill, being 40 feet. These were raised above the plain from 1 to 2½ feet. A sort of entrance to the flat surface of the enclosed space, through the outer line of circumference, was uniformly on the south-east point of the circle. On the same hill there were a great number of small cairns, of different sizes, containing from one to three cart-loads of stones. These were sometimes single, sometimes in groups of two or three. Also, on the southern slope of a hill above the farm-steading of *Upper Glaslaw*, there were seven circles, measuring much about the same as those on Earlseat, only the entrances here were on the south side. Two of them,

33 feet in diameter, were placed close together. On the opposite declivity of this hill similar mounds were to be found. One of these rose to about 3 feet above the surface. It was near the *Hare Moss*, a little to the north of which are two trenches, 41 yards in length, 20 feet apart, and 6 feet deep. They are on the farm of Glenhouse, on the estate of Auchmedden.

About two miles westward from this place, on the top of a hill, and on the same estate, there is another entrenchment, 240 yards in length, and 20 yards in breadth. It is now filled with water, and goes under the name of *The Loch of Minwig*.

There can be little doubt but that these are the silent records of some fierce conflict in bygone ages.

But to return to the road. Pursuing our route for about a mile and a half, we strike into a path on the right which leads to the summit of the *Red Head of Pennan*. Here, on looking back, we survey the long line of indented coast, stretching to Kinnaird's-Head, and thence, in the extreme distance, to Rattray-Head. Looking westward, the prospect is equally extensive. The pretty creek or bay of Pennan lies almost beneath our feet—the only indication of the snug little village being the wreaths of smoke rising from the chimneys. Troup-Head and Gamrie-Head, or, according to its local appellation, Mhor-Head, fill the picture on the opposite side of the bay. Beyond that, a headland near the Boyn; and farther still, and a little to the left, rises the Bin-hill of Cullen; and lastly, in the extreme distance, the fading outlines of the Caithness hills. Such is the scene that here presents itself.

The path from hence by the *Pennan Farm* down to the village is carried along the side of the hill, with a ravine on the left, little terraced gardens or potato-plots overhanging the road on the right. On the opposite side of this glen stood the ancient Castle or Place of the Bairds of Auchmedden, not a vestige of which, beyond a few scattered stones of the foundations, is now to be seen. The field, at the lower end of which stood the Castle, is still called "The Green," and lies between the

Mains of Auchmedden and the ruin. Part of the Castle remained, and was used as a granary within the memory of man. A portion of the garden wall, on the near side of the ravine, is still in existence. The Castle was about a quarter of a mile from the sea, to which it lay open on the north-west, but was sheltered on the north-east by Pennan-Head. Mains of Auchmedden is a little beyond the tenth milestone from Fraserburgh.

A little below the site of the Castle, the ravine is met, nearly at right angles, by another, *Glenquithle*,¹ of a still wilder and more romantic character.

Not far from the debouchment of Glenquithle into this ravine is *Gibb's Rush*, a waterfall of thirty feet perpendicular descent. To the west lies the very neat and cleanly *Village of Pennan*, stretching along the margin of the sea, and under the shadow of rugged cliffs, which rise abruptly above the houses to the height of two hundred feet. At high tides and in particular points of the wind, the houses are occasionally flooded.

Westward of Glenquithle is the *Chapel Den*, which may be said to form part of the *Tor of Troup*, being the entrance, from the sea-side, to the wild basin into which the numerous ravines of the Tor descend.

Here are the ruins of another old chapel on a haugh opposite the Tor. A short time ago, the only remains of the building were a heap of stones, which had been held sacred by the husbandman on the spot. But as recently as 1855 these were made to give way to the utilitarian ideas of the times—site, and stones, and the memories of the past, all obliterated by the levelling operations of the plough! If we could only bethink ourselves that these fading memorials are the only remaining types of ages

¹ The second title of the Comyns, Earls of Buchan, was formerly *Glenduaichie*, from an ancient thanedom of that name belonging to the family. In the *View of the Diocese* it is stated that *Glenquithle* was formerly called *Glenduaichie*, and gave the title; but *Glenquithle* is nowhere traditionally recognised under this name. There is a *Dhu Strath* about a mile to the south, crossed by the old road from New Pitlago to Pennan, which may possibly be the *Glen-dhuachy*. Second titles were not given till about the sixteenth century.

now past and gone, some forbearance in the work of destruction would surely be exercised.

The *Tor*¹ of *Troup* is one of the most noted places in Buchan. It is a rugged mass of broken hills, forming a cluster of remarkably wild glens, rich to exuberance in plants and flowers—a very garden of delights to the botanist. Tangled brushwood and magnificent trees are the alternating features, the former with its underwood twisted into the most grotesque and unimaginable forms. This group of glens forms altogether a scene of inconceivable beauty, well worthy of a pilgrimage. The proprietor, Garden Campbell, of Troup and Glenlyon, has a cottage residence here, preferring this charming retreat to the tame and bleak situation of *Troup House*, which is situated about a mile westward from Pennan, and not far from the sea. It was built in 1763. It is large and contains many good rooms. The outside aspect is anything but pleasing, and many of the minor buildings are fast falling into decay. There are here some fine family pictures, among which is that of Lord Gardenstone, and that of Captain Campbell of Glenlyon, the infamous hero of Glenco. Between the house and the sea, the ground rises high. Here is the *Battery Green*, in the vicinity of which is *Hell's Lum*, a ghastly opening on the slope of the hill, of about 60 feet by 40, and of a depth of about 40 or 50 feet. From this hole to the sea, there is a subterranean passage nearly a hundred yards in length, along which, on the occasion of a storm, the spray is forced with great fury, till it finds its escape by “the lum,” in the shape of dense smoke. “*Pacilis descensus*”—the crater may easily be descended, and the view along the passage to the sea will well repay the labour. Besides Hell's Lum, there is, in the immediate neighbourhood, the *Needle's Eye*, another subterranean passage, running quite through the peninsular eminence. It is about 150 yards long, and so narrow, that one person at a time can with difficulty make his way through it. At the north end it opens into a cave of about 150 feet long, 30

¹ *Tawr*, or *Thor*, in Celtic, a mountain-top, or cliff.

