

Aberdeenshire Epitaphs and Inscriptions

John A. Henderson

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## Cabrach or Strathdovern.

The name Cabrach is derived from the Gaelic, and is said to signify a place abounding in trees – a theory which is strengthened by the numerous remains of wood found in the district mosses.

In early times, the parish was occasionally known by the title of Cloueth, and its church or monastery, which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, depended upon Mortlach. It is mentioned in the confirmation bull of Pope Adrian IV. to Edward, Bishop of Aberdeen, dated 1157. (Reg. Epis. Aberd., I., pp. 6 and 85.) In 1520, as one of the common churches of the chapter of Aberdeen, it was leased for ten pounds. In 1549, the whole parish church lands were leased by the Bishop to Robert Lumisdane, at the rent of £9 6s 8d, plus

one mart, twelve kids, four geese, and 3s 4d for bondages, with services – the tenant being bound to defend the rights and liberties of the Church, and to resist heretics and enemies of the orthodox faith. (Ibid., p. 433.)

The lands of Strathdovern were annexed to Cabrach by order of the Commissioners of Teinds, dated 27th February, 1665.

The present parish church, which is of plain design, has no gallery. Internally, it has a neat and tasteful appearance.

According to the session records, the bell was made at Aberdeen in 1782-3, the old bell being given in part payment.

#### POST-REFORMATION MINISTERS

The parish of "Cabreth" was supplied by Thomas Christesoun, reader, from 1567 to 1580, his salary being 16 lib.

Rev. Alexander Hay held the dual charge of Cabrach and Rhyne in 1586. He removed to Dipple within three years thereafter.

The readership was held by James Warrok from 1588 to 1599.

Rev. Peter Calmeroun or Cameron, M.A.–previously at Glassford–was inducted about 1608.

Rev. Andrew Ker, M.A., was admitted from Glenbucket before 1652, but was retranslated thither about 1661 when in decrepit old age." (See Glenbuchat.)

Rev. James Ross was inducted from Strathdovern about 1662. In March, 1666, he was unable to attend the Presbytery, being "restrained by the Katherin" (Cateran). In September following, his absence from Presbytery was excused "through the looseness of the country, some parties of loose Highlanders being about the said fields." (New Spalding Club's "The Exercise of Alford," pp. 77 and 86.) He was translated to Tarland and Migvie in the spring of 1668.

Rev. John Irving was ordained in 1668. He soon quarrelled with his parishioners, one of whom called him "a dwarf and rogge," and a "dwarf bodie." The Presbytery interposed and suspended him, pending investigation. The cause of the minister was upheld, and he was reponed—"the people being rebuked for their insolent carriage towards him." The storm broke out afresh, however, and he was ultimately deposed on 15th June, 1677.

Rev. James Irvine was ordained in May, 1678, and continued till the autumn of 1681, when he is believed to have been removed on account of the Test.

There is an old tombstone to the succeeding minister and one of his sons. It is inscribed-

Here lyes Mr Alexander Brown, some tyme minister here, who departed this life the 53 year of his age, July 13, anno. 1705. Also the Rev. William Brown, his son, minister of the Gospel, Burnside, Auchindore, who died 16 March, 1772, aged 86.

Rev. Alexander Brown, M.A., was instituted 30th April, 1682. Dr Scott (Fasti) records that he was obliged during his incumbency to live in a furnished room at a considerable distance from the church for want of a manse. Besides the above son William, he had a son, John, who graduated in Arts at King's College on 15th April, 1725.

Rev. William Anderson, son of Rev. George Anderson, D.D., Professor of Divinity in King's College, was ordained as successor on 12th March, 1707. Two years subsequently he was translated to Premnay.

Rev. Robert Gray was ordained on 30th January, 1711, but was translated to Edzell in 1714.

Rev. David Strang or Strange, who had been officiating as a preacher at Glenlivet, was ordained as successor on 15th May, 1717. He was suspended in 1729, and

finally deposed on 11th March, 1730, for neglect of duty and other faults. He is said to have afterwards lived in Edinburgh, where he solemnised irregular marriages till excommunicated and imprisoned. Even in jail he continued his illegal practices. He died in confinement on 1st September, 1744, aged 70.

Rev. Theodore Gordon was ordained on 17th February, 1731. He was the son of William Gordon, in Drumbulg, Gartly (not of Professor George Gordon as inadvertently stated by Dr Scott and other writers), and graduated M.A. at King's College on 29th March, 1772. For some time he acted as schoolmaster of Cairnie. He married "Ann Gordon, eldest daughter of Mr George Gordon, Professor of Oriental Languages, King's College." (Tablet at Kennethmont.) They had a son, George William Algernon Gordon, who became minister of Tullynessle, and subsequently Keith. (See Tullynessle.) Mr Gordon expressed his sorrow to the Presbytery on 10th November, 1736, for having "given offence by going to see a rope-dancing at the Brick Hills of Old Aberdeen." He was translated to Kennethmont in 1738, where he died 29th August, 1779. His grandson, Theodore Gordon of Overhall, erected a tablet bearing a highly complementary inscription to his memory.

The succeeding incumbent was Rev. Thomas Gordon, only son of Rev. James Gordon, minister of Kinloss (1699-1750); grandson of Thomas Gordon of Monaughty, otherwise in Cloves; and great-grandson of Sir William Gordon, third Baronet of Lesmoir. He was a student at Marischal College, 1722-26, was licensed by the Presbytery of Forres in August, 1734, and ordained minister of Cabrach, 25th June, 1740. From the outset he made strenuous efforts to get the financial and other affairs of the kirk-session put upon a sound basis. In this, however, he was only partially successful, several minutes etc., having been carried off by the clerk, who enlisted as a soldier. On 12th February, 1747, Mr Gordon was inducted to the parish of Auldearn, and died there, unmarried, on 25th November, 1793. It is interesting to add that he and his father were parish ministers for the long period of 104 years.

The two succeeding incumbents are commemorated by tablets in the church. The oldest one has a carving of the Gordon and Grant arms impaled, surmounted by the motto, "Bydand." The respective inscriptions are:-

(1).

Before this stone lyes Elizabeth Grant, late spouse to Mr James Gordon, minister here, who died March 9, 1771, aged 46 yrs, and yr two sons, viz., George and John Gordons.

(2).

To the memory of the Rev. James Gordon, minister of Cabrach, who died the 6th of April, 1795, aged 77 years.

Also of the Rev. John Gordon, his son, minister of Cabrach, who died 29th of October, 1816, aged 49 years. And of his son, Robert Gordon, who died 19th June, 1817, aged 19 years.

This stone is erected as a mark of esteem and affection by Elizabeth Gordon, widow of the Rev. John Gordon, who also died 29th January, 1819, aged 46 yrs., and was likewise interred here.

Rev. James Gordon was schoolmaster of Rhynie, 1740-47; licensed by the Presbytery of Strathbogie, 18th September, 1745, and ordained to Cabrach 5th November, 1747. On 19th December, 1751, he married Elizabeth Grant, whose parentage is not stated in the parish registers. Besides the family above stated, they had a daughter, Elizabeth, who, on 30th July, 1789, married Rev. Thomas Tait, minister of Meldrum (1784-98) and subsequently of Ellon.

Rev. John Gordon, son of the preceeding,

studied at Marischal College, 1783-87, and was inducted to Cabrach on 24th September, 1795. A daughter, Jane, married Captain John Grant.

Rev. William Cowie was the next minister. He graduated in Arts at King's College, 31st March, 1806, was appointed schoolmaster of Mortlach in 1811, and was ordained to Cabrach on 6th August, 1817. He married, on 8th November following, Elizabeth Ogilvie, who belonged to the parish of Forglan; and of their family, a son, David, and two daughters, Mary and Sophia, were born at Cabrach. He was translated to Cairnie in 1826, and died 31st May, 1866, aged 80.

The succeeding incumbent in interred in a railed-in enclosure, over which is a coffin-shaped monument, with a large red granite shield or plate on the top, inscribed-

The Rev. James Gordon, A.M., Minister of Cabrach for 23 years. Died 29th December, 1849, aged 65.

Rev. James Gordon was the son of Alexander Gordon, miller, Aberdeen. He attended Marischal College, was Gray mathematical bursar and gold medallist in 1822, graduating M.A. on 31st March, 1823. He became master of the Mathematical School, Aberdeen, and securing licence as a preacher of the Gospel on 19th October, 1826, was ordained minister of Cabrach on 28th March, 1827. He died unmarried as above.

A granite tablet in the inner wall of the church bears the inscription-

The Reverend Gordon Smart, M.A., minister of the parish of Cabrach for upwards of 31 years, died on the 21st February, 1882, aged 68 years.

Erected by heritors, parishioners, and friends in loving remembrance of an earnest and assiduous pastor, a pious and accomplished man.

An esteemed and lamented friend.

Rev. Gordon Smart was the son of Robert Smart, Badcheir, Cabrach, and graduated M.A. at King's College, Aberdeen, in March, 1842. As parish minister he was much esteemed. He died a bachelor.

The present incumbent is Rev. George Gilfillan Macmillan, who was licensed by the Presbytery of Glasgow in 1880, and was ordained to Cabrach on 10th August, 1882.

#### GENERAL EPITAPHS.

A headstone bears the inscription-

To the memory of John Gordon, late farmer in Aldivalloch, who died 14th September, 1836, aged 50 years. And of Jane Walker, his wife, who died 25th February, 1861, aged 73 years. Also of Alexander Gordon, late farmer, Aldivalloch, who died 11th December, 1875, aged 55 years.

James Gordon was the principal tenant of Aldivalloch in 1696; and amongst other Gordons who have since resided there may be named-Robert Gordon in 1712, Charles Gordon in 1724, and Paul Gordon, who, in August, 1768, married Margaret Gordon, who belonged to Cabrach. The last-named was buried on 7th April, 1789. John Gordon and his wife, Jane Walker, who belonged to Glenbuchat, were married on 18th December, 1814. Besides the son, Alexander, mentioned in the inscription, they had at least two daughters, Beatrice and Helen. (All from Parish Registers.)

The name Aldivalloch has been rendered historical through the popular and stirring song, "Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch"; and the subjoined extracts from the old session records, now in the Register House, Edinburgh, are believed to refer to the marriage of Roy and his wife-"1727, January 29. It being yt John Roy, lawfull son to Thomas Roy in Aldvalloch, and Isabel Stuart, lawfull daughter to ye deceased Alaster Stuart, sometime in ye said Aldvalloch, were contracted in order for

marriage they were this day proclaimed pro l mo." On February 5th and 12th, they were proclaimed for the second and third times, and on the 21st of the same month the said "John Roy and Isabel Stuart were married." Their first-born child was baptised on 25th February, 1728, and received the name of Thomas, after his paternal grandfather.

The composition of the common version of the song of "Roy's Wife" is attributed to Elizabeth Grant, daughter of Lieutenant Joseph Grant, who married her first cousin, Mr Grant of Carron, Strathspey, after whose death she married Dr James Thompson Murray, of Bath, and died there on 26th February, 1828 (not in 1814, as stated by the majority of authors), aged 82. (Bath Registers.) Her portrait was exhibited in Aberdeen in 1859, during the sittings of the British Association, and it attracted much attention. It belonged to the Earl of Seafield. It may be pointed out that an older and less refined copy of the song-alleged to have been written by a shoemaker in Cabrach-is locally asserted to be the original, while against Mrs Grant Murray's authorship is urged the fact that she was not born till about nineteen years after the occurrence of the incidents narrated in the song, when they would have ceased to create interest.

Margaret Roy, a descendant of the family of Aldivalloch, died in December, 1859, aged 74.

One of the most interesting tombstones is that to Alexander Scott, farmer, Aldunie, "in which place his progenitors sojourned for several generations," who died 7th March, 183-, aged 85. It gives the advice-

Reader be admonished!  
You are moving on the meet the  
King of Terrors.

Scotts occupied Aldunie as early as the middle of the seventeenth century. The tenant in 1673 was John Scott, from whom the above Alexander Scott was descended. The holding even then frequently received its Lowland name of "Old-downie." The admonitory advice cannot fail to remind on of the story of the old man who, when visited in his final illness by the parish minister, and asked if he was ready to meet the King of Terrors, brusquely replied-"I might well be, for I've lived now for 40 years with the Queen of Terrors!"

The following inscription from a headstone gives an idea of the difficulties and dangers that have to be encountered during the frequent severe snowstorms which occur in this exposed and high lying parish- Sacred to the memory of Gordon William Stuart, 4th son of William Stuart, Ardwell, Cabrach, who lost his life by a slip of snow when abstracting sheep out of the burn of Hillock, on the 30th January, 1865, aged 19 years.

Weep not for me my parent,  
Brothers and sisters dear,  
I am not dead, I am sleeping here.  
My end you know,  
My grave you see,  
Prepare yourselves to follow me.

This stone is erected to his memory by his sorrowing parent.

A headstone on a railed-in grave is inscribed-

Sacred to the memory of Jane, daughter of Rev. A. Wither, who, on 6th July, 1877, after 16 days earthly sojourn, was taken home for ever to be with the Lord.

"Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Rev. A. Wither was minister of Cabrach U.P. Church. He is now retired, and living in Edinburgh. There are several tombstones to families bearing the surname of Souter, many of

whom died octogenarians. Among others may be mentioned John Souter, Nether Howbog, who died 1st May, 1834, aged 88, and his wife, Margaret Robertson, who died 28th August, 1840, aged 88. William Souter, Buck, died 6th June, 1869, aged 86. His first wife, Jane Gordon, died 25th August, 1837, aged 45, and his second wife, Ann Kellas, died 22nd February, 1865, aged 72; while his daughter Jane died 5th April, 1895, aged 74. David Souter, also in Buck, died 10th April, 1883, aged 53, and his wife, Ann Reid, died 20th September, 1868, aged 41. His son James died 21st July, 1888, aged 27; and William died 4th March, 1890, aged 25.

A tablestone is inscribed-

Here lies the body of John Grant, late in Shenual, who died the 14th January 1814, aged 65.

Done by the care of his widow Jannet Innes.

A tablestone has the following inscription-

Erected to the memory of Robert Grant, late farmer in Largue, who died 5th February, 1848, aged 78 years. And of Janet Gordon, his wife, who died 3rd June, 1858, aged 76 years. Also of their son John Grant, farmer in Largue, who died 3rd March, 1869, aged 59 years.

The name of this holding probably means hillside or slope.

#### THE GORDONS.

A tablestone has at the top the representation of an angel, while at the foot figures of a skull, cross bones, and hour glass are given, together with the scroll "Memento Mori." The inscription is-

Here lyes John Gordon, sometime farmer in Drwmferg, who dy'd July 21, 1759, aged 51 years, lafwl husband to Elisabeth Gordon.

John Gordon is believed to have been a grandson of Alexander Gordon, fifth laird of Birkenburn, his parents being Peter Gordon, in Haddoch of Cabrach, and his wife, Bessie Gordon. He was some time in Auchmair, and subsequently in Drumfergue. He was a keen Jacobite, and was "out" in the '45. In consequence he was treated with great rigour, which undermined his system, and he died at the age of 51. According to the late Mr Jervise and Captain Wimberley, he was the father of Lieut.-Colonel John Gordon, of the 92nd Highlanders, who died at Coynachie 27th March, 1827, aged 75, and whose widow-Elizabeth Souter-died at Aberdeen 23rd April, 1842, aged 82. Their eldest son, William Gordon, M.D., one of the Judges of the Supreme Court and member of H.M. Council of the island of Jamaica-who married twice and left a family-died at Elgin, 26th January. 1838, aged 52. John, the other son, was a General in the Royal Engineers. He died at Culdrain in 1861, and was buried at Drumblade. He was twice married-first, to a daughter of Rev. Dr. Skene Ogilvy, minister of Old Machar; and, secondly, to Jane, daughter of Andrew Macpherson, Gibston, Huntly. Of their family. William was a Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, and died unmarried in 1875; while Cosmo George was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Marine Light Infantry, and was afterwards in Culdrain.

A tablestone has the inscription-

In memory of John Gordon, late farmer in Gaugh, who died 27th July, 1813, aged 70 years. Also three of his children, Ann, Janet, and Alexr., who died young.

Done by the care of his son Peter.

Also of Isabel Scott, wife of the above said John Gordon, who died in 1816, aged 71 years. Also of Hellen Lindsay, wife of the above said Peter Gordon, farmer in Reekimlane, who died 25th February, 1852, aged 69 years. Also of their son Charles Gordon, who died 4th June, 1838, aged 20 years. Also the above Peter Gordon, who died June 20, 1874, aged 94 years.

The name Gaugh is frequently spelt Gauch, and the holding is occasionally called The Dauch.

The tradition as to the origin of the name Reekimlane is interesting. It is declared that during a famine nearly all the people left the district, and that this house had the only "reeking lum" to be seen, the inmates supporting themselves by fishing in the local burns. (Place Names of West Aberdeenshire.)

Gaugh, or "Geach," was tenanted in 1696 by Peter Gordon; in 1785 by John and Adam Gordon; and in 1825 by Peter, Alexander, and John Gordon, the rental of each of the three last-named being 2 hens and £33 6s 8d money.

The first-named John Gordon married Isabel Scott, daughter of Alexander Scott, farmer, Hillock, Lower Cabrach. Their son, Peter, on 5th June, 1808, married Hellen Lindsay-a native of Glenbuchat-and was long tenant of Reekimlane. He died at the advanced age of 94. Besides the son Charles also mentioned, there were one daughter and four sons-Christina, who died in Aberdeen; John, who married Jannet, daughter of James Sheed, farmer, Aldunie, and died in Reekimlane, on 15th February, 1882, aged 70; Peter, who died in Aberdeen (he was a glass and china merchant, and under his deed of settlement bequeathed to the parish of Cabrach a bursary of the annual value of twenty pounds-boys bearing the surname Gordon to have a preference); and William, who graduated M.A. at King's College in March, 1847, and was some time assistant schoolmaster of Fyvie, the schoolmaster of Auchindoir, thereafter minister of Glenbuchat, and subsequently of Glenbervie, who died 14th May, 1902, aged 78. (See Glenbuchat.) The surviving son is Alexander, who resides at Aldivalloch.

Reekimlane is now tenanted by Peter Gordon.

A tablestone alongside is inscribed-

In memory of Adam Gordon, farmer, Pyke, who died 15th March, 1770, aged 63 years. Also his daughter Rachel Gordon, who died 22nd November, 1769, aged 18 years. Also his son, James Gordon, farmer, Bank, who died 1st November, 1836, aged 83 years. Also his son John Gordon, farmer, Oldtown, who died 3rd July, 1847, aged 86 years.

The above Adam Gordon, who married Charlotte Hay<sup>1</sup>, of the parish of Rhynie, met his death under tragic circumstances. He had a large flock of sheep wintering in the neighbouring parish of Auchindoir, and, a severe snowstorm coming on, he left home with the view of giving the shepherd assistance. He perished in the snow at a point east of the Moss of Creak, where a cairn of stones-still known as Pyke's Cairn-was raised to his memory.

It may be added that these Gordons of Gaugh, Reekimlane, Pyke, and Bank all claim descent from the old Gordons of Pitlurg.

A tablestone, which shows at the top the head of an angel and at the foot a skull, coffin, hour-glass, and bones, as also the scroll "Memento Mori," is inscribed-

This stones was erected by Alexander and John Gordons in Auchmair in memory of Patrick Gordon, their father, who departed this life May the 19th, 1788, in the 73rd year of his age.

Death of all men is the total sume,  
The period unto which we all must com;  
He livs but a short life that lives the longest,  
And he is weak in death that in life was strongest.

In 1727, John Gordon, tenant in Auchmair, married Isobel Burgess. In 1767, William Gordon, Auchmair, married Ann Ross, who belonged to Glenbuchat, and they had a large family. Early in the following century, William and Alexander Gordon were joint tenants at a rental of 4 hens and £38 money. The former, on 29th November, 1810, married Jean

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<sup>1</sup> *Threestones, 29/7/2008: This is incorrect, original author has confused two different people called Adam Gordon. Wife of person in this case reported to be Margaret Craighens.*

Pyper, Cabrach; and the latter, before 1820, married Margaret Gordon, who died 11th June, 1866, aged 76. Alexander Gordon himself died on 26th April, 1871. Of their family, William Gordon, who was born 9th April, 1820, occupied Auchmair, and, on 13th February, 1851, married Elizabeth, daughter of James M'Combie, sometime in Nether Ardwell. He died 10th February, 1899; and his son, Alexander Gordon, is the present tenant of Auchmair.

Patrick Gordon, who is commemorated by the above inscription, was a merchant at Ardwell at the time of his death. His widow and the two sons mentioned in the inscription carried on the business for a time. John, the younger, took the "kiss and coin from the Duchess," and joined the 92nd Highlanders, serving in many of the campaigns in Egypt, Portugal, Spain, and at Waterloo. He married and ultimately settled in Aberdeen. Alexander Gordon, the elder brother, left Auchmair, and settled at Fichlie, Towie, where he died 19th December, 1843, aged 84. His wife, Elspet Gordon, was a native of Cabrach, and died 18th June, 1822, aged 60. Besides two of a family who died in infancy, they had five sons, of who the eldest, Alexander, settled at Upper Ley, Towie; the second, John, at Lower Ley; and the remaining three, Peter, James and William, at Fichlie, Towie. Alexander Gordon in Upper Ley, who died 22nd July, 1866, aged 78, was twice married—first, to Margaret Smith, who died 9th January, 1818, aged 33, and of their children, Alexander married, and has a family in America; John settled in Braidley, and, besides a daughter Jane, had another daughter, Annie, who married Peter Anderson. Of Alexander Gordon's second marriage to Margaret Kellas, daughter of Hugh Kellas, Tornachelt, who died 29th January, 1850, aged 52, there were three sons and four daughters—Peter, who died without issue, 15th May, 1852, aged 26; James, who married Ann, daughter of Peter Gordon, Fichlie, and died 20th April, 1902, aged 67; their son, Hugh, became tenant of Ley, Towie. Alexander Gordon's other son, Hugh, married, and has family in Australia. Of the daughters, Annie married William M'Conachie, and is now a widow residing in Keith; Jane married Peter Ellis of which family there are representatives in Windy-side, Sinnahard, Keith, etc.; Catherine married J. Macdonald, and they have family now abroad; Isabella married Alexander M'Intosh, and they have a family, of whom some are in Kildrummy. John Gordon, second surviving son of the above Alexander Gordon, Fichlie, settled in Lower Ley, and died 23rd April, 1871, aged 82. He married Jane, daughter of Robert Forbes, farmer, Upper Towie, a descendant of Forbes of Brux. She died 15th May, 1825, aged 40. Their son, John Gordon, J.P., was long the enterprising and successful tenant of Upper Towie, from which he recently retired, and is now resident at Lumphanan. His father married, secondly, Jane Forbes, a cousin of his first wife; and besides three daughters, Elspet, Jane, and Mary, they had six sons—Alexander, Peter, James, George, William, and Charles, who all went to Victoria, Queensland, New Zealand, and America.

Peter, James, and William Gordon, the remaining sons of Alexander Gordon, first of Fichlie, succeeded to that farm. Of these, James married Kate Dawson, Aulton, and, like his brother William, left no family. Peter, the eldest of the three, married Jane Shand, Nether Ballandy, Glenrinnies. He died 22nd December, 1870, survived by his wife, who died 31st May, 1881. Of their family, Alexander is the present farmer of

Braeside, Leochel-Cushnie; Elspet married Alexander Gordon, son of the late John Gordon, Lower Ley (they are now in the United States); Isabella married Alexander Glennie, farmer, Invernochty, Strathdon; Ann married James Gordon, son of the late Alexander Gordon, Upper Ley; and Jane is unmarried.

The parish, in the eighteenth century, was truly the home of the Gordons, as shown by the foregoing particulars, and by the following list of twelve married couples (each of whom had a family), extracted from the old registers between 1755 and 1782—Hugh Gordon and Marjory Russell in Bracklach; Patrick Gordon and Ann M'Kondachie in Nether Ardwell; Adam Gordon and Jean Marshall in Oldtown; Adam Gordon and Isabell Gordon in Craigenat; James Gordon and Margaret Gordon in Kirktown; Robert Gordon and Agnes Green in Gauch; James Gordon and Anna Bonnyman in Hillock of Echt, and subsequently in Bank; John Gordon and Jean Baxter in Hillock of Echt; Theodore Gordon and Margaret Thomson in Craigenat, and afterwards in Whitehillock; James Gordon and Jane Brown in Kirktown; James Gordon and Helen Grant in Tornachelt; Francis Gordon and Isabell M'Robbie in Hillock of Echt.

#### SCHOOLMASTERS.

In 1687 it was reported to the Presbytery that "there is no school, the parish no being able to afford any provision competent for a schoolmaster." Matters seem to have improved, however, for in 1728 John Clerk, student in philosophy, was elected at a salary of £3 6s 8d. He was also appointed precentor and session clerk and, in lieu of the former emoluments of 16s 8d from these offices, it agreed to give him "for his encouragement" the penalties exacted from delinquents.

Among other teachers who held office during the last century may be mentioned John Murray, M.A.; John Yeats, M.A.; George Cran, and Rev. William Ronald. The last named is said to have been descended from the Macdonalds of Keppoch, and was probably the son of Patrick Ronald, sometime in Upper Wheedlemont, who died at the Schoolhouse, Cabrach, on 23rd April, 1831, aged 89. He officiated not only as schoolmaster, precentor, and session clerk, but also as parish registrar. In the last-mentioned capacity he received a notice of the vaccination of a child, which is here given (from Jervise's MSS.) as an illustration of how liberties are sometimes taken with the King's English—

Mr William Ranle,  
My Wife got on the Nocklecaction on  
her Son ; they reasen fine and she was bedden  
let you knaw.

William Duncan.

D. Mitchell his the Shedel.

#### LANDS AND FOREST.

Cabrach originally formed a forest, and the Chamberlain Rolls (Vol. III., pp. 385 and 531) show that its glens were at one time pastured by the Royal stud.

In 1373-4, Robert II. granted to William, Earl of Douglas, the lands and forest which had previously pertained to David Brown of Glandriston. (Reg. Mag. Sig., I., No. 47.)

In 1508, the lands and forest were granted by the Crown to Alexander, third Earl of Huntly, who, in the same year, disposed of them to his kinsman, James Gordon of Auchmully. (Ibid., XV., No. 140.) The Huntly family re-acquired the possessions shortly afterwards, and the portions capable of being cultivated or pastured were, in 1600, divided into 21 holdings and leased to 26 tenants, who paid an aggregate rent of 366 merks

money and 17 stons butter. The tenants were chiefly landed proprietors and allies of the Huntly family, who in times of stress would be expected to support the cause of their chief. A copy of the rental at the date stated is given in the Miscellany of the Spalding Club (Vol. IV., pp. 279-82), and the following names of some of the holdings and tenants appear in it:-Auchmair and Ouer Howboige, young Gordon of Lermoir; Elrick, James Gordon of Knokaspack; Baldebaes, John Gordon of Newtoun; Rochefindzeauche, George Gordon of Tarpersie; Leargue, George Gordon of Couclarachie; Tornakelt, James Gordon of Prony; Reidfuird, John Gordoun in Lichestoun; Nether Howboige, Robert Gordoun in Andett.

In 1669, Parliament granted to Charles, Earl of Aboyne, authority to hold an annual public fair at the Kirk of Cabrach on the 3rd Tuesday of August and two following days. The reason assigned for the granting of this privilege was that the lands of Kirktown of Cabrach "are public places of resort and lie upon the hie way betuixt the hellands and lowlands." (Acts of Parliament.)

In 1686, the Duke of Gordon received Parliamentary powers to hold three yearly fairs in the parish.

#### LESMURDIE.

The estate of Lesmurdie, or Lesmorthi-extending to about 2000 acres-belonged to the family of Strathachin (Strachan) at an early period, and in 1474 the proprietor, George Strathachin, had a confirmation charter of a third part of Balchere, Enuercher Roche, and Auchnastank. (Reg. Mag., Sig. VII., No. 278.)

In 1562, a descendant, James Strachan, had a grant of the goods and estate of Alestir M'Grasycht (the old form of the surname Grassick) at the Mill of Lesmurdie, which had fallen to the Crown.

The family of Strachan of Lesmurdie continued in the male line until about 1663, when James Strachan was succeeded by five grand-daughters as heirs portioners. One of these ladies-Elspet Strachan-married James Stewart; and by arrangement with all interested Stewart became proprietor of Lesmurdie. He was so designed in 1667, when he and his wife were scheduled as "professed papists." A descendant married Margaret, eldest daughter of Mr Duff of Keithmore, ancestor of the Earls and Duke of Fife.

May Stewart, only daughter of William Stewart of Lesmurdie, married Peter Farquharson of Whitehouse, and died on 1st April, 1849, aged 84. (See Tough.)

#### HISTORICAL EVENTS.

In the autumn of 1592 a roving band of the Clan Mackintosh entered Strathbogie and gathered together a large quantity of plunder. While returning by way of Cabrach they were overtaken by a small body of horsemen under the Earl of Huntly and Sir Patrick Gordon of Auchindoun. After a sharp skirmish, the marauders were completely routed-about sixty men and the spoil being left in the hands of the victorious Gordons. The exploit is commemorated by an old ballad, which includes the following lines-

O, Willie Mackintosh, O, Willie Mackintosh,  
     Whaur left ye a' yer men?  
 Ye've left them in the granes o' the Gauch,  
     Feeding the Cabrach swine.

The forces of the Earls of Huntly and Erroll mustered at Cabrach prior to the battle of Glenlivet, which was fought on the 3rd of October, 1594.

John Duff of Bowmakillock, the staunch friend and follower of Montrose, who was taken prisoner, with others, on the downfall of that leader in 1650, effected a miraculous escape here. Through having had grazings in the district, he was well

known to the inhabitants, and on the soldiers reaching the inn for refreshments while on the march south with their prisoners, the landlord and his assistants at once recognised Duff, taking care, however, to conceal the fact. Means were taken to get the soldiers intoxicated, and during the debauch Duff was assisted to make off.

#### ANTIQUITIES

At Forteath, stone coffins, constructed of rough, undressed slabs, and containing human bones, clay urns, etc., have been unearthed. Flint arrow-heads and stone axes have also been got in the same locality. In other portions of the parish, remains of the stone age have been discovered, and the numerous arrow-heads which have been met with support the view that their owners had been keen followers of the chase.

A century ago, a Roman Catholic chapel stood at Bracklach, and several of the earliest priests served as professors at the College of Scalan, Glenlivet. A second chapel was situated at Shenval, in the Lower Cabrach, and was in good order as late as 1816.

Within the last century the old village of Horseward has entirely disappeared, and the ground which its inhabitants were wont to cultivate is now covered by bent and heather. In addition, nearly one hundred dwelling-houses in the valley of the Deveron, where hardy sons and daughters were brought up in peace and contentment on wholesome country fare are now in ruins. A decrease has also taken place in the neighbourhood of Aldivalloch, Bridgend, etc. An idea of this general parochial reduction may be formed from the fact that whereas the population in 1831 was 978, it had dropped in 1901 to 581.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

The parish has been described as "remote and inaccessible," as also "the coldest and bleakest district in all Scotland." (Gordon Chronicles of Keith, p. 216.) The late Principal Sir William D. Geddes calls it a "famous parish," and adds that "Besides possessing a hospitable and hard-headed people, who have to carry on a great struggle with Nature, it is a parish unique in this respect—that, in common parlance (as old as 1435, in Lord Crawford's 'Earldom of Mar,' I., p. 258, etc.), it can claim a distinction of its own, being known as The Cabrach. It therefore ranks above a parish, as, if a district or province, like 'The Enzie,' 'The Garioch,' 'The Mearns.'" (New Spalding Club's "Musa Latina Aberdonensis," I., p. 305.)

From Rhynie a good road leads past Lesmoir and Belhinny, and on to the Parish Church. It passes through excellent scenery, and what strikes the tourist on a summer day as remarkable are the high wooden poles which run almost parallel to the roadway and are fixed at regular distances for many miles to guide the traveller in the winter season, when snow renders the ordinary road impassable.

The Dukes of Gordon, and subsequently the Dukes of Richmond and Gordon, as proprietors of the lands, have ever proved themselves considerate and indulgent. Late and wet spring seasons frequently retard the seed sowing, and owing to early frost on the one hand and a backward summer on the other the crops occasionally prove a failure. In such cases the utmost consideration is shown by the proprietor to his tenants, who have always been an industrious, contented, and warm-hearted body.

Between 1693 and 1700, "the seven bad years," the parish suffered severely through a succession of adverse seasons. The upper district became almost temporarily

depopulated, and the few families who remained were driven to such straits that they bled the handful of cattle and sheep which remained. The blood thus obtained was carefully mixed with a little meal, and this was considered a luxurious repast.

In former times the parish was famous for its cattle kings or coopers, as they designed themselves. They were excellent judges of both cattle and sheep, which they bought extensively in the north and drove south to such markets as Amulree, Falkirk, Edinburgh, and Brechin, where they were disposed of to English dealers. These Cabrach dealers were inured to all sorts of labour and danger. They are said to have known no fatigue and were proof against fear. They accustomed themselves to extraordinary journeys. Walking one hundred miles in twenty-four hours was a trifling experience, and the extensive transactions of those times would surprise the modern dealer! Perhaps the last and certainly one of the most famous of the parish cattle kings was Mr Scott, Milton, who died a few years ago. The sons and daughters of the cottar population went south every autumn to engage in harvesting operations. They carried their reaping hooks with them, for scythes and reaping machines were then unheard of. It is said that upwards of fifty men and women left Cabrach every summer to engage in these operations. Many travelled to the Borders on foot, and the following lines of the poet will show the length of a Cabrach shearer's journey and his rate of progression-

His breakfast Rocky Buck did see,  
He took his supper in Dundee,  
And yet before he curbed his speed  
He saw the bonny banks of Tweed.

A century ago smuggling was largely engaged in, upwards of a score of illicit stills being in active operation. The whisky thus manufactured was carried in curracks for disposal to Aberdeen, Brechin, and Dundee. Stories are still told of the sharp encounters which took place between its carriers and the preventive officials.

"The Buck of the Cabrach" is a picturesque hull of about 2368 feet in height, and is said to have derived its title from a large projecting stone near the top. Several other hills exceeding 2000 feet in height are on the boundaries of the parish.

Cabrach has long been renowned for its hill game, from which fact the Richmond Hotel was designated "The Grouse Inn."

The parish is watered by the Deveron, Blackwater, and several minor hill burns. They are all subject to occasional heavy floods.

The Cabrach formed the subject of one of the famous Duchess of Gordon's broad Scotch conundrums to the Englishman who boasted that he understood and could explain any Scotch expression. Several versions are recorded, the following being one-

Ther' wis a quinyie [corner] in our quinyie,  
An' it wis ca'd "The Cabrach";  
It dang [rained] on for sax ouks [weeks],  
An' never eence devall'd.

The oldest parish register contains numerous entries regarding the severity of the winters of former times. Between 2nd November, 1722, and 10th February, 1723, there was no complete church service owing to "the coldness of the day," "the great storms of snow and drift," or "the great storms and frost." On 5th December, 1725, there was "no sermon in regard of great drifts of snow, none being able to come out of a house." 18th December, 1727-"In regard of the great storms of snow, the session supersede all their former affairs." 30th December, 1739-No sermon "by reason of a violent storm of snow and drifts so that no body was able to look out, etc." 9th January, 1740-

"Being the Fast Day the storm having come on so vehemently that by excessive drifts no body was able to attend." 20th January, 1740-"No sermon in regard the storm was rather growing than ceasing, so that none was able to travel this length." 27th January, 1740-"This day being nothing calmer than the last, there was no sermon."