

COLLECTIONS
FOR
A HISTORY OF THE SHIRES
OF
ABERDEEN
AND
BANFF.

ABERDEEN:
PRINTED FOR THE SPALDING CLUB.
M DCCC XLIII.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE EDITOR'S PREFACE	ix
MAP OF THE SHIRES OF ABERDEEN, BANFF, AND THE MEARNS, BY ROBERT GORDON OF STRALOCH. (M DC LIV.)	xiii
I. PRAEFECTURARUM ABERDONENSIS ET BANFIENSIS IN SCOTIA ULTRA-MONTANA NOVA DESCRIPTO, AUCTORE ROBERTO GORDONIO. (M DC LI.-M DC LX.)	1
II. DESCRIPTION OF ABERDEENSHIRE, BY SIR SAMUEL FORBES OF FOVERAN (M DCC XVI.-M DCC XVII.)	31
III. A VIEW OF THE DIOCESE OF ABERDEEN. (M DCC XXXII.)	67

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The VIEW OF THE DIOCESE OF ABERDEEN, which takes the last place in the volume, is printed from a manuscript in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh.² This is the only copy of the work now known to exist, although another was extant about the middle of the last century, among the manuscripts in the library of the Earl of Errol, at Slaines Castle, and although traces of other transcripts have been found, much more recently, in different quarters of the diocese.

Of the writer nothing is known beyond what may be conjectured, as to his name, from a note on one of the boards of the volume: "Al: Keith fin^t haec MSS. Nov^r. 25. 1732" ; and beyond what may be gathered, as to his calling, from the work itself. A perusal of its pages will leave no room for doubt that its author was a zealous presbyter of the Episcopal Church of Scotland ; and the persecutions which afflicted that communion, in his day, and during many following years, as they may help to explain more than an occasional acerbity of expression, or peculiarity of phrase, into which he has been betrayed, so, perhaps, they may sufficiently account for the complete oblivion which has fallen upon the learned and industrious compiler.

His work obviously has never been completed : it often presents, indeed, in the shape in which we find it, less of the appearance of a continuous narrative than of a series of tables of rough and disjointed notes, so that, in order to exhibit its text in a manner that might be generally intelligible, there has been found frequent necessity, while scrupulously preserving the substance, to use a little freedom with the form and arrangement of the manuscript.

The writer seems not only to have been diligent and painstaking in his enquiries after such information as was to be looked for on the spot, but to have possessed no mean knowledge of Scottish antiquities in general, according to the defective measure of his time ; and his work, on the whole, must be admitted to be a creditable performance, if but due allowance be made for the unfinished state in which it was left, and if we duly bear in mind that the author's object was to

1. In the MS. in the British Museum, the "Description of Aberdeenshire" is immediately followed by the "Description of the Parish of Foveran", which appears at pp. 367-371 of this volume.
2. MSS. Bibl. Adv. 31. 2. 12. (Jac. V. 6. 24.)

exhibit not so much the civil as the ecclesiastical history and condition of the province.

It appeared to the Editor, from the manifest imperfections and somewhat loose arrangement of the VIEW OF THE DIOCESE OF ABERDEEN, that he might venture freely to introduce, in appropriate places throughout its text, such illustrative documents as he has been able to collect from other sources. These *pieces justificatives*, (together with the annotations by which he fears he may have too frequently cumbered the volume,) he has been careful to distinguish from the work which they are designed to illustrate, by printing them within brackets, and in a smaller type, subjoining such brief notes as will, it is believed, in every instance, serve sufficiently to indicate their nature, as well as the places where they are deposited. One large class of them, it will be seen, has been derived from the charter rooms of noble or ancient families within the limits of the two families. The "Topographical Collections" of the indefatigable laird of Macfarlane, preserved in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, have supplied a second class ; and a third has been furnished from the same library, by the collections of charters made by Sir James Balfour and the first Earl of Hadington, and by the registers of the great Benedictine monasteries of Saint Mary, at Kelso, and of Saint Thomas the Martyr, at Arbroath.

It has been deemed allowable, in most instances, so far to abbreviate the charters, and other deeds of record, to which insertion has been given, as to omit from them words or clauses of merely common form, or technical import. This is a liberty which the Editor trusts will scarcely require an apology : he fears that the fragmentary aspect which his method of abbreviation has imposed on so many of the documents, will be less readily forgiven. The plan which has been followed was not, however, adopted without due consideration : its advantages, on the whole, appeared to outweigh its obvious defects, and it was, besides, recommended by ancient precedent, as in the instance of the earlier rolls of the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland.

In printing a volume of such extent, and so abundant in names of places and persons, many faults, doubtless, will be found. Against some such errors, perhaps, no care or skill on the part of an Editor could wholly provide ; and, probably, they who have most reason to know the difficulties which beset a work like this, will not be the least ready to excuse the imperfections which may be discovered in its execution.

JOSEPH ROBERTSON.

GLASGOW,
XXII. November, M.DCCC.XLIII.

CABRACH, OR STRATHDOVERN.¹

CABRACH church is dedicated to the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

This is reckoned the coldest parish in this diocese : being wholly enclosed with hills, the soil being very mossy, frosts here quite kill the corn, but in warm years ther is a double increase.

LESSMURDIE, the seat of Stewart of Lessmurdie.²

SOCOTH and BALCHIRIE, belonging to Gordon of Baldornie.

[Carta Willelmi comitis de · Douglas ·³ (A.D. 1374.)

Robertus *etc* · Omnibus *etc* · Sciatis nos dedisse *etc* · dilecto consanguineo nostro · Willelmo comiti de Douglas · Omnes et singulas terras foreste de Cabrauche ac dimidiam dauatam terre de Auchmayre cum seruicio libretenentis alterius medietatis dicte dauate que dicitur Clouethe · cum pertinenciis infra vicecomiatum de Banff que fuerunt Daudid Brovne de Glendrisona · et quas idem Daudid nobis sursum reddidit et resignauit · Tenendas et habendas eidem Willelmo heredibus suis et suis assignatis de nobis et heredibus nostris · in feodo et hereditate · Faciendo inde seruicia debita et consueta · · In cuius rei testimonium *etc* · Testibus *etc* · Apud Edynburghe · nono die Januarij · anno regni nostri · Tercio ·]

¹ ["The parioch of Cabrach is in the diocese of Aberdeen, and partly in that shire, namely, the south side of Doveran ; and partly in Bamfshire, namely, the north side of Doveran. The church lyes upon the river of Royster, twenty-eight miles north-west from Aberdeen. Gentlemens seats here are, Lismurdie, four miles east, The Soccoch, five miles east from the church, both on the north side of Doveran. The water Royster takes its rise eleven miles west from the church, at the head of Old Doveran, in a hill called Craigniore, and after running two miles east, takes in the brook of Lerkindie, (which arises from Monk Medden, two miles south,) and other two small brooks which spring out of The Buck, about a mile south likewise. Then, continuing its course by the church, it runs streight north two miles, till it meet with The Black Water, another large river, which takes its rise in a hill called The Klymach in Glenlivet, six miles west from the church ; and, after mixing here with Royster, they take together the common name of Doveran, and run streight east by Lismurdie and The Soccoch three miles, into the parioch of Glass. The parioch is like one entire cluster of hills ; the chief of which are Craigniore, four miles west ; Moth-medden, two miles south ; and the vast mountain called The Buck, one mile south, from the church. There is a great wood in Old Doveran, and a forrest, where there is frequent resort of deer, roes, heath-fowl, and other game ; which, with cattle, sheep, goats, butter, cheese, and wool, are the commodities of the place. There is a highway south and north to Elgine, and passes by the church, near which there is an inn for entertainment". (Description of the parish of Cabrach, [written about 1725] in Macfarlane's Geographical Collections, MS.)]

² ["There are some remains of a chapel and burial ground on the north bank of the Dovern, near Lesmurdie". (The New Statistical Account of Scotland, number xxxviii., p. 197. Edinb. 1842.)]

³ [From the Registrvm Magni Sigilli, p. 104. See also Robertson's Index to the Charters, p. 139.]