

ART. II.—*Ecclesiastical Collections for Aberdeenshire. (a)*

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[Read December 22d 1823.]

RATHVEN.

RATHVEN is a parish in Banffshire, situated in the district called the Enzie, being 10 miles in length, and from 3 to 5 in breadth. The name would appear to have been in former times pronounced *Rohtiven*, (*b*) *Rothfan*, or *Raffan*, and is now provincially softened into *Riven*. It is derived from the Gaelic: and is composed of two words, one signifying braken or fern, and the other, rock, eminence, or hillock. The propriety of this etymology is supported by *Rannachie*, *i. e.* *Brakenfield*, the name of a neighbouring farm, and *Brakenhaugh*, a place near the church, &c. (*c*).

A church must have existed here at a very early period. The first time I can find it noticed is in 1222, when, "John Bisset gives to God and the Church of St Peter at Rothven, for the sustaining of seven leprous persons, the church of Kiltalgyn, with the pertinents," which is confirmed by his brother William, to pray for the souls of King William and Alexander, and the souls of his ancestors and successors. (*d*)

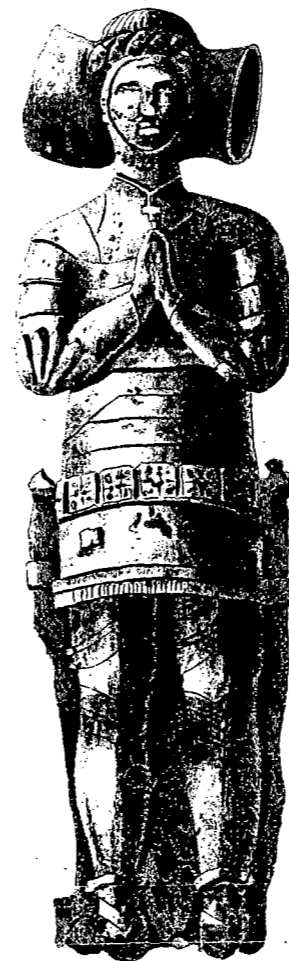
(*a*) This paper is the substance of a manuscript volume, presented by the Author to the Society, and deposited in their library. The parts omitted comprise, with some few exceptions, monumental inscriptions of a recent date, that have merely a local interest.

(*b*) Orem's description of the Chanonry of Old Aberdeen, p. 78.

(*c*) Statistical Account, vol. xiii. p. 392.

(*d*) The Bede-house is still standing, but in bad repair; and I believe none of the men live in it. The nomination is in the gift of Lord Findlater as proprietor of Rannes, from which laud they get half an acre for life, and 1 boll meal; from that of Findochtie, 8s. 1½d., and from the proprietor of Freuchnie, 1s. 4½d.—Stat. Account. Keith's Catalogue. Chalmers' Caledonia, vol. I.

Fig. 1

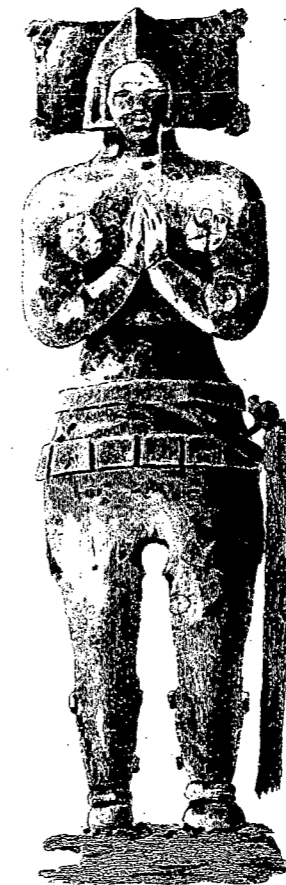


Monnies of Pysgadis

Fig. 2



Lady Monnies

Thomas Gordon of Rowan
Fig. 3.

In 1364, permission from Edward king of England was given to John De Caron, rector of the church of Rothen, to pass into England, for the purpose of studying, with two horsemen. (*e*)

In 1441, Ingraham Lindsay, bishop of Aberdeen, made the parson one of the prebends of his cathedral; and thence it became one of the common kirks of the See. (*f*)

In 1563 an account was taken of its revenues, which were considerable. (*g*)

e Rotuli Scotiae, I. 886. *f* Orem, *ut supra*.

g The following statement, in reference to this period, is found in "an original book of assumptions, which belonged to Mr James Cumming, secretary to the Society of Scots Antiquaries," and was communicated to the Rev. Geo. Donaldson, minister of the parish, by Bishop Geddes:—

"The Rental of the parsonage of Rathven, with the annexis thair of, within the diocesis of Aberdeen and Murray respective, shirefdoms of Banff and Murray respective.

In the first: The teind silver of the parochen of Rathven, seven score and six pounds.

The malles of the baronie of Rathven, thirty-one merks.

The fermes of the Loynhead, akkers and mill-multure, extendis to five score bolls of beir.

Item, the kirke of Dundurcus, sett for forty pounds.

Item the kirke of Kintallertie, twenty-four pounds.

Item, the landis of Mulben, lying in the parochen of Dundurcus, sixteen merks.

Thereof deductit of ordinar charges to six bedmen, forty-two merks.

Item, to their habits, seven pounds four shillings.

Item, to the staller in Aberdeen.

Item, given forth of Dundurcus to the Abbey of Kinloss, six pounds.

Sic subscribitur,

G. HAY, ✕ my hand."

See Statistical account of Scotland, vol. xiii. p. 413.

The "hail vicarage" in 1573, before which time we are told it was not charged nor rentalled, was valued at L.16; and in 1576, the "hail vicarage and parsonage" was charged at L.100.

About 1620, "The kirklands of Ranes, Connege, Wester Freuchie, Nether Freuchie, " 24 aikers of Rothven, with the tower, &c. in the barony of Rothven, shirrefdome of " Banff, and diocie of Aberdeen, sett to Mr Ja. Hay, for L.35. 7s. 2d. Nota, per R. " 4. 61. Nether Freuchie, per se, sett to Gordon of Bucke, extending yearlie to " L.3. 3s. 4d. 2 bolls beare, or 6s. 8d. per boll; 1 boll custom oats, with the fodder, or



A new church was erected about twenty years ago, and part of the material taken from the old kirk. This building was long and narrow, and stood on the south side of a small rivulet. The north wall and west is all that now remains. (See the subjoined wood-cut.) The projection on which the belfry is raised, is a later erection than the gable. (*h*)



“3s. 4d ; 12 capons, or 8s. the peice ; 12 hens, or 4s. the peice, and 4s. of augmentation. Inde L.4. 13s. 6d. The lands of Fresken sett to Ogilvie of Glas-sauch for 4 h. 1 boll oats, 12 capons, 4 reik hens, 1 boll multur. The lands of Fintachtie, extending in money yearlie to L.3. 6s. 8d. 5 silver pennies, at 14s. per penny, 1 boll custome oatts, 12 capons, 1 reik hen, 2 bolls multur sett to Thomas Ord. The lands of Caurbuchan, sett to him for L.1. 6s. 8d. 1 boll multur, 2 firlots custome oatts, and 6 capons. The lands of Scottistoune set to him for 7s. 1d. 2 firlots multur, 2 pecks oatts, 2 capons, and 13s. 4d. of augmentation. The croft pertaining to the vicarage sett to Duff for L.1. 2s. 8d.”—Harleian Coll. MS. 4623. 56.

h A person named Gordon, having had the misfortune to subject himself to the cognizance of session, was enjoined to be at the expence of building this part as a propitiation for his offence. On the lintel of the belfry is an inscription now illegible.

The chief antiquity is an effigy of the celebrated Thomas of Rivan, better known when mentioned with his brother John ; the song and popular stories of Jock and Tam being still familiar in that part of the country. (*i*) He was son of Sir Adam Gordon of

i The following is the song as repeated to me by an old man. I am not aware of its existence in print.

Jock and Tam went to the sea,
My good-will be in their company.
They sailed east, they sailed west,
Till they came to the coast of Spain.

.....
Then they cam' trippin' on the fleer,
Says, “ sell ye ale, or sell ye beer,
Or lodge ye ony o' our Scotsmen here ?”

“ We neither sell ale, nor yet do we beer,
Nor do we lodge o' your Scotsmen here.
Gentlemen ye appear to be,
Tho' ye be far fae your ain country.”

“ In Scotland we were bred an' born ;
Our land lies ley, it grows no corn ;
But woman, woman, ye do wrong,
For our names are Jock an' Thom.”

.....they did sleep
Until the sun shone on their feet.
Upon the morn fan they arose,
An' right lealy put on their clothes,
The handfuls of gold they did let fly,
An' would have no change for ther mony.

.....
“ We may sell ale, we may sell beer,
An' we may sell this hunder year,
This hunder year, if we live so lang,
But we'll ne'er see the like o' Jock and Tam.”

Strathbogy, (*k*) by a daughter of Cruickshank of Aswanly, and was most famous in his day for "doughty deeds." The tradition is that he was killed by a monk with whom he had a quarrel. The figure (*See* Plate 2, fig. 3) lies under an arch, and represents him "harnisit in his gear," in a praying attitude.

KINKELL.

The situation of this church is on a verdant haugh on the north bank of the river Don, and in the southern part of the parish of Keithhall, into which it is now merged. The ruins are seen in passing between Kintore and Inverury, from which towns they are nearly equidistant. The etymology assigned to the name is Gaelic; the word being a compound of *caen*, head, or principal, and *cill*, a church. The designation was appropriate, as the benefice formerly consisted of seven kirks, viz. Kintore, Kinnellar, Kemnay, Dyce, Skene, and Drumblate, besides the mother church. (*l*) It is said to have once belonged to the Templars.

In the latter end of the 13th century, Petrus de Campania was parson; and, in 1424, the incumbent was made one of the prebends of old Aberdeen cathedral.

In 1559, Henry Lindsay was parson; and, when the advancement of the Reformation alarmed Bishop Gordon, he parcelled out the cathedral plate amongst the prebends for its security, when 90 ounces of silver were entrusted to him.

In the account book of Robert Lord Boyd, receiver general in 1576, the third of the parsonage was stated at L.177. 12s. 2d. and the "hail vicarage at L.6." (*m*)

k Ancestor of the family of Huntly, and slain at Homeldon Hill.
l Orem's Descrip. of the Chan. 76. *m* Harleian M.S. 4123.

About 1620, the kirk-land was set in feu to George Earl of Huntly for L4. 13s. 4d.

In 1632, Kemnay was taken from Kinkell, and made a distinct parish by permission of the Archbishop of St Andrews. And about 1662, the patronage and parsonage were annexed to St Andrews by Archbishop Sharp. (*n*)

In 1771, the church was unroofed, and the materials used for the new church at Montkegie, which then became the parish kirk. Since that time it has gone rapidly to ruin, more perhaps from the ravages of man than the effects of the elements; the polished quoins, and even sepulchral tablets, offering a temptation so strong as to overcome the dread of sacrilege.

In its architecture this building was superior to the neighbouring edifices of the same kind, as the parson was of higher dignity among the ecclesiastics. It was long and narrow, its extreme length being nearly 80 feet and breadth about 24. The east end contained a large and elegant window, the tracery of which, it is probable, the Covenanters, in their laudable and effectual labours, took an early opportunity of simplifying. Since that time it has been entirely built up; for, besides the richness of its architecture, an *eastern* window might remind the people of the altar, and the ornaments of popery. In other respects the edifice was plain. In the north wall, about the centre, is a square niche, where perhaps the rood has been deposited. (*o*) The east window is 8 feet wide, and is ornamented outside with a weather moulding, resting on human heads for corbels.

Many of the principal persons who fell at the "brim battle o'

n Orem. *ut sup.* Carlisle's Top. Dict. &c. But I am inclined to think the place thus annexed was that so called near St Andrews.

o A tradition is still retained of images having been kept, and incense burnt, at the altar end; and much wealth is believed to lie with the foundation stone in the south-east corner.

the Harlaw," "stricken" 24th June 1411, were brought to this place for sepulture—the chief of whom was Sir Robert Scrimgeour, "high constable of great Dundee." (*p*) He was interred before the high altar, and opposite one of the entrances. The slab which covers his grave is of free-stone; but the lower end appears to have been broken. It is, however, well protected by a mass of rubbish, which will prevent its being effaced for some time. The execution is barbarous. The inscription is:—"Hic jacet nobilis armiger Robertus de Seri anno dni. m.cccc." (See Plate 3. fig. 3.)

On the north interior wall near the east end are two mural monuments which are well executed. (See Plate 3. fig. 1 and 2.) The centre compartment of one of these forms an opening through the wall; and there are the remains of iron work, from which it would seem that a tablet has at one time filled the aperture. Could it have been moveable for the purpose of depositing offerings? The frequent occurrence of the initials A. G. leads me to think it must have belonged to Alexander Galloway, who was parson in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and was rector of this church for many years. He took an active part in the affairs of the diocese, then agitated by the approaching Reformation; and appears also to have been addicted to philosophical pursuits, "gevand his mynd with maist ernst bysynes to serche the veritie," according to his contemporary Boethius, (*q*) whom he accompanied on a scientific tour to the isles, and who details his wonderful discovery of a "claik goose." (*r*)

p Boethius calls him "*Magno animo vir, ac insigni virtute.*"

q Boethius's *Cosmography*, ch. xiv. ap.—Sibbald's *Hist. Fife and Kinross*, p. 137.

r Thomas Lumsden was rector in the beginning of the seventeenth century; and a slab-stone remains to his memory in the south aisle of the cathedral full of rude sculpture in relief—the principal figure being a skeleton, with the motto "*In horte vita*" around its head.

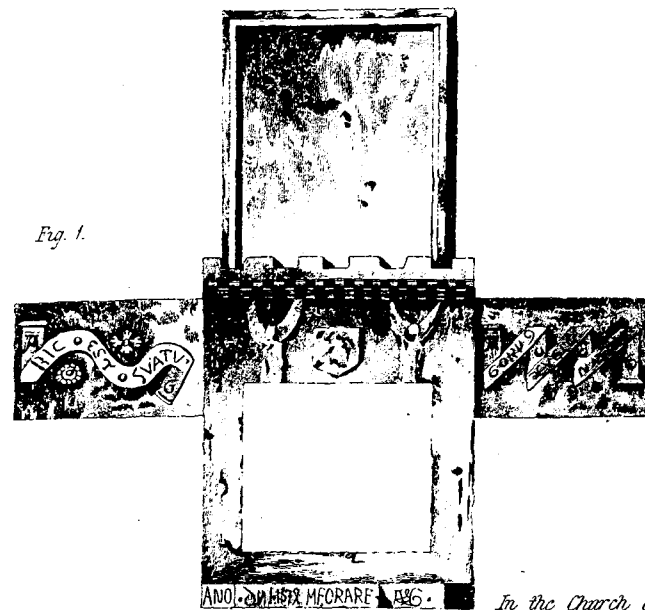


Fig. 1.

In the Church of Kinkell



Fig. 2.

Scrimgeour Great Constable of Dundee

Fig. 3.

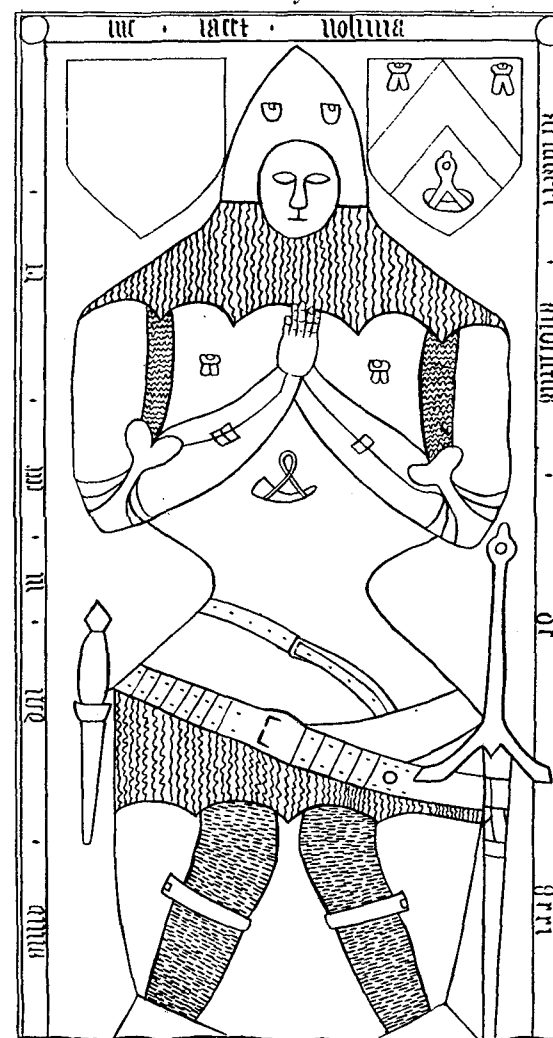


Fig. 4.



KEITH-HALL.

THIS parish is of recent origin, having been constituted when those of Kinkell and Montkegie were dissolved in 1754. It derives its name from the seat of Earl Kintore.

In the time of King William there was a chapel here; and when the Abbey of Lindores was founded, the church of Inverurie, "*cum capella de Munkegin et omnibus aliis pertinentis suis,*" were conferred on it. (*s*)

OYNE.

OYNE is 24 miles north-west from Aberdeen; and the name is probably Gaelic. (*t*)

A church must have existed here at a very early period; for, in 1163, King Malcolm IV. granted a charter to the cathedral of Aberdeen, when the kirk was bestowed on it, and the parson appointed one of the bishop's chapter. (*u*) He was *Prothonotarius Capituli*; and from having often to go to Rome to communicate with the Pope on the affairs of the diocese, he was called *Rome Raker*. As a prebend he had a manse with yard and glebe in the Chanonry.

In 1542, James Wavern was parson, and was one of the visitors of King's College in that year. (*v*) John Leslie, afterwards Bishop of Ross, was also the incumbent of Oyne.

B 2

s Dugdale's Monasticon.

t This opinion is not likely to give way to the traditional derivation of the word, *viz.* the architect's declaration, when he completed his work, that it was *one*, meaning the first erected in that part.

u Orem, *ut sup.*

v Orem.



In 1576, the "hail parsonage and vicarage" was valued at £173. (*x*)

About 1620, the lands of the kirktown, "extending yearly to £23, with 20s. of augmentation," were set in feu to Leith of Harthill. (*y*)

In the burial ground, from which the new church is removed, slight *vestigia* of the old building remain. It had an aisle on the south side, which, having belonged to the lairds of Harthill, was called *Harthills*; and I have been told that there were some inscriptions on it. On the same side, near the west end, was an arched door, which has still retained the appellation of "marriage door." Opposite to it was another narrower. There was a window in each gable, and a belfrey at the west end. Formerly two bells hung in it, and another in a tower, or other erection, in the west part of the church-yard, where its ruins are still visible. (*z*)

In 1675, the church-yard walls appear to have been very much dilapidated; (*a*) and, in 1701, the roof was renewed with fir from the woods of Glentanar. (*b*) Also, in the same year, on

x Harl. Coll. MS. 4612.

y Ibid. 4623.

z According to tradition, these bells were so sonorous as to be heard at the hill of Tyre-bagar, a distance of 16 miles. One was cracked, and the other was at length sold to the parish of Culsalmond. In both ends of the church were galleries; that in the west was common, and in front of it hung the jugs. The stool of repentance also projected from it, which was built in 1666, the session having, in April that year, "aggrieved with David Tame, wright, for to build a stule of repentance for sex pound." The pulpit was covered with green cloth, and there was a Hebrew inscription on the sound-board. There were thirteen principal or heritors' seats, some of which had canopies. The earliest date was 167—

a On the 20th of May "the minister, heritors, and tennants, conveyed after sermone for taking some effectual course for repairing the churchyard dykes; & it being aggrieved yt. every heritor, or ane for him, should draw lots which off them should begine, they did so; &c. it being ordained that every pleugh should have for their proportione four ells in length & two height; and that every one should keip up their p^{ts}. in tyme coming; and the two publick stylls are to be built and maintained by the comone good."

b At the same time, two spokes or biers were made, which continued to sustain the

the settlement of the Reverend William Mair, he required "a list of the church utensils," when there was found "Two tin Bassons, three peuter cups, ane Dornick table cloth, and ane old Mortcloath of Bishop Satine." (*c*)

FOVERAN.

FOVERAN, a parish in the district, called Formartin, is eleven

bodies of those who were carried to their narrow dwelling, until about the year 1790, a certain woman came down the country and drowned herself in the Gadie. On this occasion, the beirs were employed to bear her corpse, and for the unchristian office were burnt.

c The following are Miscellaneous Extracts from the Session-book of Oyne:—

April 8th 1666.—Giwin for seawine elnes of harden to be an sackcloath, £1 3 4
29.—Giwin for making the sd. sackcloath, - - - 0 12 0

March 16. 1673.—The minister and elders, considering how God's worship was molested by dogs in the church, desired the collector to cause mak ane dog-clip.

23.—John Meldrum, collector, declared he had cause mak ane dog-clip; and it was appointed that ane of the elders, viz. Patrick Martaine, should wait on the next Lord's day, betwixt the second and third bell, & cause thos who brought dogs to the church (either themselves or ther servants) to tak the clip & draw them to the church styll; & it was ordained that thos who disobeyed to do so should be caused satisfie as occasioners of sabbath breaking.

Decr. 12th 1675.—For trees to plant the kirk-yard (ane day's collection) £1 : 17 : 10

June 18th 1682.—The said day, the minister told the people that he was charged south as a witness by some of his loving parishoners; therefore he desired the people to go and beg their bread of life till he returned.

Sepr. 21st 1684.—James Peirie, delait for yokeing his horss, and taking in corn upon Sunday's night, * * * * * he gave his honest word he did not yoke a horse till after the cock crew!

April 12th 1685.—On William Coupper, sumond for his perturbing a woman in time of divine worship, by hurling her of the forseat of ane dask, to let his wife have place.

1703.—Robert Bainzie was accused of charming or withcraft. At flitting, he killed his dog within doors, & buried a cat beneath his hearth; also he tuke his crook out at the lumb, & extinguished the fire with p—s.

This man was an elder, and although he stood out long, was at last forced to acknowledge his fault, & was rebuked.

miles north of Aberdeen. The name is derived from the Gaelic, and is said to signify "abounding in springs." (*d*) More probably some of these may, in remote ages, have been famous for medicinal qualities, the word *fobhair*, in that language, signifying "a salve or ointment;" and the vicinity of a place so much resorted to was an eligible site for a place of worship. (*e*)

William Strathbock, who got a charter of the lands of "Foverne" from Robert Bruce, gave an annuity of L.5 out of the rents of some tenements in Aberdeen to the altar of St James. (*f*)

At kirk there was an alms house, with an inscription on a marble stone. "D. Alex^r. Forbes, Foveran qui terre hujus bona non in avaritiæ prædam sed instrumenta bonitati acquisivit, ædam hanc pauperibus aleudis extruxit et dolavit." And another over the gate, "Extra fortunam ex quicquid donatur Egenis, Quæ dantur solæ semper habentur opes."

The old church had an aisle on the south side, which is still inclosed with a low wall, and contains an old slab stone, in memory of Sir Alexander and Samuel Forbes, formerly lairds of Foveran. (See Plate 3. fig. 4.) The figures are cut; and it is curious that the inscription has not been finished. It is now broken. (*g*) If it really belongs to the Forbeses, I am puzzled with the arms represented.

On each side of the south gate of the kirk-yard is a stone rudely sculptured in relief, and intended as ornamental terminations to the sides or jambs. I have been told they were brought from Chapelton, a place at some distance, where there would seem to have been a place of worship.

d Stat. Account. vol. vi. 67.

e See Forbes's Description, M.S. in Mus. Brit. (Ayscough, 4215,) who says a well existed in his time, covered with an arch or vault, 35.

f Robertson's Index of Charters.

g The figures evidently hold scrolls in their hand, although the mottos have not been filled in.

Bishop Forbes, who died in 1635, says, there were five ministers here from the Reformation to his time; and that one became a bishop, another a doctor, and a third a professor of divinity. John Paterson was minister in 1639, when, becoming alarmed at the threatening aspect of the times, he absconded, but returned to his charge, 2d June same year. About 1722, the Reverend John Ross of Inch, decended of the Rosses of Kilravock, was minister.

MARYCULTER.

MARYCULTER, provincially *Couter*, is seven miles from Aberdeen, on the south bank of the river Dee, near which the church originally stood. Spottiswood, and the Reverend John Glennie, who wrote the statistical account, give us the etymology of the name, in *Mariæ cultura*; but it would rather appear to be the original Gaelic *cultir*, *i. e.* back-land, with the adjunct of *Mary*, to whom, most probably, the church has been dedicated.

There is a tradition that the adjoining parish was formerly included in this; but the inconvenience of an intervening river induced the Pope, on petition, to constitute the north part a distinct parochial charge, the word Peter being prefixed to the primitive *cultir*, which is still retained in the name of a neighbouring estate.

Maryculter was formerly a residence of the templars, who were introduced into Scotland, *temp.* David I. After their suppression, much of their property was transferred to the knights of St John, among which was Maryculter. The last preceptor resigning all their possessions to Queen Mary, she feued them to him again for 10,000 crowns and 500 merks per annum. He however disposed them to James Tennent of Lynhouse, and Mr Robert Williamson, writer in Edinburgh, but reserved to himself the lands of Maryculter, and right to the church. Some time after they conveyed their whole right to Lord Binny.

A manuscript, which once belonged to Patrick Murray of Deuchar, is said to have contained an account of all the lands and feu-duty which belonged to the Templars. (*h*)

There is now a new church some distance southward from the old one, which stood on a pleasant haugh. The latter is razed to the ground, but was superior to many country kirks, having the windows and doors of neat pointed arches, &c. The walls have been about 3 feet thick, and the dimensions 27 paces by 10. A part of the east end was divided from the main body, and was called an aisle, being the burial place of the family of Pitfodels, to whom the land once belonged. Here, under an arch, lay the effigies of an ancient laird and his lady; (*See Plate 2, fig. 1 and 2*) but whether the story I have heard, of their having been brought from Aberdeen when the West Kirk was rebuilt, be true, I have never ascertained, nor can I prove the truth of a tradition that the persons they represent were lost on the French coast. These venerable monuments now lie among the rubbish; but the injuries from about 40 years exposure to the weather have not yet effaced the beauty of the workmanship. The dress of the female is not unbecoming.

The bell was famous for its fine tone. (*i*) The only gallery was in the west end, the front of which was ornamented with various carvings, and on it hung the jugs. When the old kirk was demolished, those who possessed seats were allowed to remove them, and a few availed themselves of the liberty. One of these I have seen at the farm of Tilboury.

h Spottiswood.

i Only two were said to be equal to it in that part of the country, one of which was the bell of Trinity Chapel, Aberdeen. They were all three made together, and brought from Holland at the same time. This one was unfortunately cracked nearly half a century ago, by some fishermen, who had been with a funeral, and pulled it down by furious ringing.