

PARISH OF FORDICE. Old Statistical Account, 1792

(County of Banff.)

By the Rev. Mr JAMES LAWYER.

Name, Situation, Extent, Soil, and Surface.

THE antient and modern name of this parish is Fordice, it is said to be derived from the Gaelic, and to signify the bleak country. And, indeed, the upper part of the parish may still be entitled to the epithet of bleak; but much more so, before the woods were cut down, and the marshes drained. Fordice is situated in Banffshire, in the presbytery of Fordice, and synod of Aberdeen.

This parish since Ordiquhill, Deskford, and Cullen, were detached from it after the Reformation, is nearly triangular- From the mouth of the river or burn of Boyn, on the east, to the Knockhill, is five miles Scots. From the Knockhill to Logie the same number of miles on the west. From Logie to the mouth of the burn of Boyn, near Scots Miln and Old House of Boyn, alongst the side of the sea, five miles. On the east it is bounded by the parish of Boyndie, on the south by Ordiquhill and Grange, on the west by Deskford, Rathven, and Cullen, on the north by the sea, or Moray Frith.

The general appearance of the country is rather flat, with many inequalities and rising grounds. There are two small and contiguous hills, those of Fordice and Durn, about a mile south from the sea, besides the Knockhill at the south-west extremity, much higher than the two preceding, and which separates this parish from part of Grange and Ordiquhill.

The coast or shore is high and rocky, with the exception of a few bays, such as those of Portsoy and Sandend. Many sorts of fishes are caught on the coast, ling, cod, tusk, haddock; besides dog, whiting, mackarel, holybut, turbot, cat, and flounder of various kinds. Lobsters, crabs, clams, limpets, and periwinkles. The principal market for the first four kinds was Leith and the South Frith; but now the fishers say they suffer such exactions at Leith, (a strange policy upon an article of provisions) that they seldom proceed to that market, and sell betwixt this and the South Frith. There are corallines on the coasts, and from samples taken up on the fishers lines or hooks, it is believed a few corals and sponges. There are large shoals of herrings and considerable numbers of seals, porpoises, and sometimes whales, and sharks, seen on the coast. The limestone on the coast is frequently perforated by a species of small muscle, which live and grow in the stones. The fish of this kind called pholades in Italy, have three or four shells, ours, like common muscles, only two. There might be large quantities of kelp made on the coast. However, the great quantity of both tangle, and belly-weed, which grows on the sea rocks, when by storms loosened and disengaged from them, and cast ashore, are carefully gathered and used as manure. Sometimes belly-weed is shorn or cut for that purpose by the farmers.

An intelligent boatmaster at Sandend says that the course of the tides is from half tide to half tide, and that there are no extraordinary currents until they get above Cromarty; and the only dangerous rocks are the Skairs of Causfrey. The fishers direct their course by the hills of Durn and Knockhill. There is no light-house; but a beacon, it is said, would be useful upon the above-mentioned Skairs. Easter and Wester Heads of Portsoy, and Logie Head on the west towards Cullen, and a few miles from Scarnose, in the parish of Rathven, are the most remarkable head-lands. Redhyth betwixt Sandend and Portsoy, is a very useful and safe creek in some cases, having a deep beech. A ship from Onega, about twenty two years ago, by being run into the bay of Sandend, saved both her cargo and hands.

The hills are covered with grass, or heath, mostly the latter. There has been a very deep moss on the top of the Knockhill; but was never used, being inaccessible almost by horse carriages, and mostly burnt out in the dry year 1723. There is much marble (or rather jasper) at Portsoy, quarried in the ordinary manner, and manufactured into chimney-pieces, funeral-monuments, tea cups, sun-dials, etc. Upon the first discovery, much of it was exported to France, and it is said, there are two chimney pieces of it in the palace of Versailles, and that it became fashionable in France; but the family of Boyne overstocking the market, it went out of fashion, and a ship load of it lies neglected on the banks of the Seine, as a gentleman who saw and knew the stones informed me. This quarry runs southward from Portsoy into the hill of Durn, and then across the country to the west end of the hill of Fordice, and from that south nearly to the Knockhill. The hill of Durn seems to be one mass of marble, and a kind of quartz, a white siliceous stone employed in the manufacture of stoneware. There are likewise in the lower end of the parish, through the estates of Findlater, Birkenbog, Glassaugh, and Durn, inexhaustible quarries of limestone; large quantities of lime and limestone are transported. There is a weighty clumsy sort of slate in the rocks of Findlater. Hopes have been entertained of finding a coal mine near Glassaugh or Sandend. Alongst with the limestone here are mixtures and layers of a black substance, like slate or coal. Boring was tried at Glassaugh, both by the late General Abercrombie, and his father, but no discovery of coal was made. The rocks on the sea the east side of the parish, near Craig of Boyn, have been said to consist entirely of iron stone. The soil in general is deep and fertile, but rather wet than dry, which renders the harvest late in a rainy harvest. No part of the parish is subject to inundations, except the haughs and flat grounds, near the rivulets, where mischief is sometimes done, both to corns and houses. In summer 1772, some houses and a bridge were swept away, both at Fordice and Glassaugh. The same happened in November 1781.

Climate and Distempers.

The air is rather dry than moist, and in general healthy. The ravages of the small-pox are very much abated by the practice of inoculation. The most prevalent distemper is fever, and that for the most part not universal, but confined to particular district. It is sometimes thought to arise from infection and communication with other parts of the country; at other times from local situations, and circumstances of the people's houses and habits of living in particular districts.

Population

The population of this parish, so far as it has been traced, was as great formerly as at present. This may appear a little problematical, considering the great number of people collected together and living in Portsoy; but formerly there were many mosses, now exhausted, and the sides of these mosses were crowded with cottagers, who laboured a few acres of ground, had a little coarse flax of their own growth, and kept a small flock of sheep, which afforded them clothes. These people multiplied and afforded soldiers, servants, and tradesmen. The great check given to this rank of people was first the mosses being exhausted, and then some heritors limited by their leases the number of subtenants, in order to have their mosses. The return of the population of this parish to Dr Webster was 3212. In the year 1782, the police of the county required an account of the number, young and old, in the parish, in order to ascertain the quantity of meal necessary to be imported. A tolerably exact numeration was made, and then young and old, amounted to about 3425. The population since that period has rather increased than diminished.

The average of births according to the register of baptisms in 1683.-4,-5, is 104; in 1783.-4,-5, 55. It is believed, however, that there are as many, or nearly as many births and baptisms in the parish now

as formerly, and that the difference of these two averages arises in a great measure from the inaccuracy of the baptism registers, owing to the negligence of the people, in registering their children's names. During last century, there was only one minister, and the schoolmaster was attentive to his own interest, in obliging the people to register their children. There are now several who baptize at Portsoy, a minister of the establishment, a Seceder, a Nonjuror who preaches every fortnight, and a Roman Catholic priest, who frequently says mass there. The register of baptisms commences in 1663, and from the beginning, the average of baptisms continues much the same as the first mentioned average, to the end of the century, when the seven years famine which then happened, reduces the number in 1699, to 70. From that time the number rises gradually in the register to 1717, when a Nonjuror settling at Portsoy, and afterwards near it, the people became negligent in registering, and have generally continued so, to the great loss of many, in proving their kindred with relations who had entered the seafaring line, or settled abroad.

There has only very lately been a register of burials; and the average for 1784,-5,-6, is 4 d. But, as there is a burial place at Portsoy, this average is not very accurate. There is no register of marriages before 1722. By the average for 1729,-30,-2 L, about 22 men settled in this parish married wives either within or without the parish,-and eight women married from this parish into other parishes. In 1784,-5,-6, 24 men settled in this parish, married women of this or other parishes, and three women were married from this into other parishes. Without attending to this circumstance, marriages might be stated twice; because, when the man and woman belong to different parishes, the publication of the bans and registration of the contract take place in both.

There are five fishing boats, six men to a boat, and a few yawls besides, for the boys. This rank is still diminishing by pressing for the Navy service, and young people going to the merchant service; likewise by accidents of shipwreck.

There is one student at the University. A few belonging to this parish were born in England. Great numbers are born to the west of Spey. A great part of the servants male and female come from other parishes, in quest of more liberty and better wages; particularly from the more northerly parts of the island. No nobility have resided in this parish since the end of last century, when the family of Findlater sold Durn. Resident families are Birkenbog, Glassaugh, and Durn; only Sir George Abercrombie of Birkenbog, has pulled down the old family seat, and has not yet rebuilt it.

There are six heritors. There is a minister of the established church at Fordice, and a preacher at Portsoy, presented by the present Lord Findlater's grandfather with L. 20 yearly; likewise a Relief one, occasionally a Nonjuror Episcopalian minister, and a Popish priest. There is one notary, and one messenger. One surgeon at Portsoy, and one apothecary. The great body of the people are Presbyterians of the established church. There are a few Seceders. A considerable number of Episcopalians. A few Papists.

The population of the parish is not very materially different from what it was 25 years ago. The decrease of subtenants by throwing many small tacks into one, is balanced by tenanting the grass-rooms, and the increase of people at Portsoy. The tenants amongst the coast paid large victual rents; and therefore, found it convenient to have grass farms in the upper part of the parish, for subsisting their cattle in summer. In these farms the folding grounds were only sown. The introduction of grass-seeds, and partial conversion of victual rent, have rendered this policy unnecessary; and it is discontinued.

None have died for want since the 1700. None have left the parish for want of employment, except a few day-labourers, who removed to the contiguous parish of Cullen, for more constant employment in Lord Findlater's works; and a considerable number of lint-dressers dispersed into different parts upon the failure of the thread manufactory at Portsoy, a few years ago.

Cultivation and Produce, etc.

Horse ploughing has in some farms superseded the use of oxen; sheep have greatly decreased by winter herding, and the wearing out of the commons by tillage and much seat. A great deal of oats and barley, and also a considerable quantity of wheat, are raised in this parish, especially since the erection of flour-mills. Almost every farmer has fields of turnip and potatoes; the last are sometimes sold for exportation. The culture of field cabbage and coleworts is likewise coming into practice. The parish does surely more than supply itself with provisions, though there is, no doubt, a considerable importation of meal and flesh at Portsoy, from other parishes; yet that must be more than balanced by exportation. Almost all the farmers raise flax for their own use, and some of them for sale; while others let their land for a crop to the flax-raisers at Portsoy. The sowing of grass-seeds has become very general. The rage of ploughing and raising corn had long ago destroyed the natural best pastures of the parish, except a few on the sides of burns and rising grounds, which could not be lately touched by the plough. There are, however, still remaining in some parts of the parish, what they call outfields, which may be called pasture, as they do not undergo the culture of the plough, except for two or three crops in a dozen or twenty years. The use of lime has much diminished the quantity of out-field. Wheat is generally sown in the end of harvest, pease, beans, oats, and barley, are sown from the beginning of March to the end of May, according to seasons and situations. Harvest begins in August, and in early years terminates in September or beginning of October. Common or waste ground is every year diminishing, being converted into tillage by the contiguous tenants, or planted by the heritors. There is one natural wood of alder, and several plantations of fir, ash, elm, and other trees; but fewer than might be expected from the residence and opulence of the heritors. The land-rent of the parish may amount to nearly L. 4000 yearly. The valuation of this parish is between the 8th and 9th part of that of the whole county. The rent of fishing boats about L. 4 yearly each; but from this is to be deducted the price of a boat furnished once in seven years by the heritors. About 20 s. is the rent of the best lands. From 10 s. to 12 s. for those of inferior value. The small allotments to the inhabitants of villages go higher, perhaps above 40 s. the acre. The number of farms is diminishing every year. From 80 to 100 acres is the largest. However, a considerable number of small farms still remain, for furnishing tradesmen and servants to the country. Farms are beginning to be enclosed. There is a white peat (under the name of greasy clods) which may be called a bitumen, and some years ago was universally used for giving light to spinner in winter; and is still used by the poorest people for that purpose.

Language.

No language is spoken in this parish, except the Scottish or Anglo-Saxon. All the old farms seem to have their names from the Gaelic or Erse. Glossough, Gray or Green-Haugh. Kuhillock, Burial-Hillock. Aird of Portsoy, Height of Portsoy. Durn, Round, from its contiguous round hill. Auchmore, Large Field, Hindrought, Bridge-end, etc. The old Mains of Findlater, which was very extensive, is now divided into many farms, which have all English names. Some farms in the upper part of the parish, which were laid waste, in the bad years, or famine, at the end of the last century, have had new and fanciful names given them, such as York, Windsor, etc.

Stipend.

The stipend (in which are 21 1/2 bolls meal, reckoned at 10 s. per boll) amounts to L. 71:10. The glebe, according to the value of contiguous lands, L. 7:10. Grass money L. 2. In whole L. 8l. The glebe having been perfectly inclosed by the present incumbent, it may be worth something more to his successor. There is likewise L. 5 of communion-element money; but that has not been uniformly paid. The Earl of Findlater is Patron.

Poor

The number of poor receiving alms is 97. There are three different managements for the poor at Fordice, Portsoy, and Sandend. The produce of the collections may be about L. 3l annually. Besides this, there is the interest of L. 130 of settled money, which has chiefly risen from saving on the collections, which a few small benefactions from particular persons. There is the rent of a loft in the church at Fordice, and of two mort-clothes. There are likewise penalties on delinquents; and three of our heritors dying within the last ten years, about L. 30 accrued to the poor, either by their own bequeathments, or that of their families. Some of the heritors likewise, give every year a quantity of meal to the poor of their respective estates.

Price of Provisions and Labour

When the incumbent settled here, 43 years ago, beef, mutton, pork, and lamb, sold from 1 1/2 d. to 2 d. per pound. Chickens at 2 d. the pair; hens from 5 d. to 6 d. the pair. Butter from 5 s. to 6 s. the stone, Amsterdam weight; cheese at 2 s. 6 d. per stone. At present beef sells from 2 1/2 d. to 4 d. the pound Amsterdam weight; mutton from 2 d. to 4 d. according to the season; veal and lamb from 3 1/2 d. to 6 d.; pork from 2 1/2 d. to 3 1/2 d.; pigs from 2 s. 6 d. to 6 s. Ducks 1 s. 6 d. the pair; hens 1 s. 4 d. to 1 s. 6 d. the pair; chickens sell at 2 d. the piece; pigeons at 2 d. the pair; turkies at 2 s. 6 d. and 3 s. each; geese 2 s. 6 d. each. Wheat at an average may be 17 s. 6 d. the boll; something better than Linlithgow measure. The heritors convert barley rent at 14 s. Oats may be reckoned from 8 s. to 12 s. the boll; pease and beans equal to one boll oat meal. Farmers' men-servants get from L 2:10 to L. 6:6 annually. Maid-servants from L. 2 to L. 2:10 annually. Day-labourers from 8 d. to 1 s. per day, without meat, with meat 6 d. a day. Mossing and harvest-work is the dearest, and perhaps a little more than the above; for a good harvest-man sometimes gets 1 s. and victuals, per day. Thirty or forty years ago, men-servants got from L. 1:13:6 to L. 4 yearly; women-servants from 16 s. to 20 s.; day-labourers from 5 d. to 6 d. without meat, with meat, about 4 d. Master-masons now receive about 2 s. per day; master-carpenters 1 s. 4 d. or 1 s. 6 d.; journeymen-masons from 1 s. 4 d. to 1 s. 6 d.; journeymen-wrights from 10 d. to 1 s.; taylors get 6 d.; and victuals; house servants-maids from L. 2

to L. 3:3 yearly; men from L. 6 to L. 10 yearly. With the industry of his wife, a day-labourer may bring up his family. As soon as they are able to work, the children are set to spinning, or hired out to herd. When old, if their children be not both dutiful and successful, they need help from the poor's-funds. Their food is meal of oats, barley, pease, and beans, with potatoes, milk, greens, and some fish, which some years ago, when cheap, was a great help to their living; but of late are rising above their purchase. They seldom can afford any flesh meat now, except at Christmas; but formerly could afford a little through the winter. They are generally affectionate to their children, and part with more to them, than a prudent concern for old age permits.

Antiquities

There is a triple fosse and rampart on the sides and top of the hill of Durn, which seem to have quite surrounded it. The highest, which includes the large plain on the top of the hill, seems to have been strong, with a stone rampart or wall, especially at the entry or most accessible part, where it joins

the hill of Fordice. It commands an extensive view of the adjacent country; and probably was used as retreat for the people, their families, and cattle, on invasions of the Danes from the sea, or the wild Highlanders. Hard by it, on the side of the hill of Fordice, there is a farm called Badhuntoul. According to Mr Pennant, in his Hebrides, Badhun signifies a place of refuge, and some say Toul signifies a burn, others a hollow; in either way it seems to justify the supposition with respect to the intrenchments on the hill of Durn. Of predatory invasions from the Highlanders, there still remain some traditions in the parish. There is a tribe of Gregors amongst the country people, said to be the descendants of boys taken in a pursuit of the thieves. Kirktown and the Castle of Deskford in the old bounds of this parish, are supposed to have been a Roman station. Flint arrow-heads of our ancestors, called by the country people elf arrow beads, have been found in this parish. There are the remains of some Druidical temples, likewise burrows or tumuli. Three of the last have been opened within these few years. One very large between Glassaugh and the sea, immediately above the bay of Sandend. It consisted of a large circular accumulation of stones, fourteen feet high, and sixty feet broad, and then covered with earth or turf. Upon breaking in at the top, there were found a stone coffin of flag or flat stones, and in it the bones of a chieftain lying in their natural order; and a deer's horn, a symbol of the chief's being a hunter. The stones, of which sort there were few in the neighbourhood, by the shells of the pholades, or muscles, included in many of them, seem principally to have been brought from the sea. The quantity, distance, and difficulty of access, seem to have required an army, or large district of country to transport them. This burrow is now the site of a wind-mill. There had been another comparatively very small burrow, at about a hundred paces distance from the largest. It had been constructed by casting up a trench round it, which still remains; but the earth of the tumulus has been long ago carried off. Another burrow was likewise broken up at Kilhlock in Findlater some years ago. It was entirely a cairn of stones; and in removing them for the purpose of inclosing, an urn was found, and likewise a stone coffin covering a skeleton. The tenant was greatly surprised, and, that he might not suffer for violating a burial ground, he carefully interred the bones, and the pieces of the urn, at a marked place in the inclosure. Another tumulus was likewise broken up in the contiguous farm of Brankamentum, through the curiosity of Mr Duncan of Broom, where there was found an urn containing ashes; it was very hard, and the clay well baked. In the 10th century, the Danes landed at the mouth of the burn of Cullen; King Indulfus came up, beat them, and obliged them to re-embark; but was slain at the end of the engagements, in a corner of a wood, where he fell in with an unbroken party of the Danes. It is a matter of uncertainty whether the battle was fought in this parish, or in that of Rathven on the west of Cullen, where remains the King's Cairn, in the midst of Lord Findlater's plantations, a little to the west of Cullen-House, at which place, according to some, Indulfus fell.

Eminent Men

It is probable that Archbishop Sharp was a native of this parish. His father was proprietor of Ordinhoves, the family estate in this parish, and afterwards removed to Banff, where, as is generally supposed from that circumstance merely, the Archbishop was born. The father managed the business of the family of Findlater, and the incumbent has heard the late Earl of Findlater's father say, that the best written papers in their charter chest, were done by him. The late General Abercrombie of Glassaugh, was a native of this parish, and educated in it. Mr George Smith, another native of this place, after serving as clerk in Holland, Paris and Aleppo, found his way over land to the East Indies, was not heard of by his friends for several years, and died February last, on his way to Britain. He had become master of a very considerable fortune; and, if any of his five sisters, or their progeny, fail to claim in five years, their shares come under the administration of the magistrates of Banff.-L. 1000 to be employed for an hospital or infirmary of Banff or Fordice, L. 25 yearly in augmentation of the minister of Fordice's stipend. L. 40 yearly, to endow a schoolmaster at Fordice, to teach the

French and Dutch languages, with arithmetic, mathematics, and book-keeping, and L. 25 yearly, to each of his bursars at this school. Walter Ogilvie of Redhyth, a native of this parish, last century, endowed twelve bursars at the school of Fordice, and eight at King's College Aberdeen. The presentation was in the gift of Ogilvie of Boyn, but sold by the late Inchmartin to the family of Findlater. Trial is appointed to be made of the proficiency of the bursars, the 4th year of their attendance, and, if they be found not qualified for a literary education, or not inclined to follow it, they get the 5th year to prepare them so far for some trade.

General Character of the People, etc.

There is nothing in the height of the people which may distinguish them from their neighbours in the country. Their size cannot be called dwarfish, but lower, probably, than it would otherwise be, owing to the boys being early put to hard work, and the girls confined to spinning. Very few of the people reach the height of six feet. Here it may not be improper to observe, that Sir John Gordon of Park, about a century ago, introduced a breed of tall men into his estate in Ordiquhill parish, collected from different parts of Scotland; but that their descendants of the third generation have generally come down to the size of the country. More lately, when the King of Prussia was collecting his tall men, the incumbent has not heard that he obtained any from this corner; but he got some from the contiguous parish of Rathven. The people are in general disposed to industry. Since the failure of thread-bleaching at Portsoy, there is no manufacture of consequence carried on within the parish. But most of the inhabitants raise as much flax, and weave as much linen cloth, as serve their families. Perhaps not 1000 yards of the cloth manufactured in it, are sold out of the parish at present. The manufacture of linen seems to have existed in this parish 300 years ago, for amongst other privileges granted to the weekly market at Fordice, by charter from the Crown, that of selling *Linteum latum et arctum*, is given in 1490. The people are rather inclined to the sea than the land service. However, many do not enter voluntarily, but by draughts made from the fishing boats, and pressing from the merchant service. The people are in general economical and frugal; but luxury in dress and living are creeping in. Only one estate in this parish has been sold for many years, that of Durn, which fetched, it is believed, about 30 years purchase; but much more had been offered for it a few years before. A part of Sir William Gordon of Park's unentailed estate in this parish, sold not long after 1746, for 40 years purchase. The better sort of people are much disposed to give charitable assistance to the shipwrecked; but perhaps the old feudal savage custom of distressing the ship-wrecked, and embezzling their property, would appear, is not restrained by law, and by the humanity of the better sort. The people enjoy the comforts and advantages of society in a tolerable degree, and seem contented. Their state might be still bettered by long leases, commutation of victual rent, abolition of services, etc. and all these things are coming in apace. There is one woman in prison for theft.

School

The number of scholars at the parochial school is, at an average, between 50 and 60. The master's emoluments from the kirk-session, keeping the registers, salary from the parish, and thirteen bursars, amount to L. 26. Besides this, he has school-fees from his other scholars, from 1 s. to 2 s. 6 d. quarterly, according to what they are taught. Something likewise is made by teaching book keeping.

There is a school by subscription at Portsoy, the fixed salary of the schoolmaster is L. 15; and, as he is allowed to take in some more scholars than those subscribed for, about L. 5 more is made of it. The number of scholars amounts to 30. There is likewise a charity schoolmaster at Portsoy, for teaching the poor. His fixed salary from the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge is L. 8, from the

Countess Dowager of Findlater L. 5, and the value of L. 2 in land from Lord Findlater as a cow's grass, L. 2 as clerk and treasurer for the poor's funds at Portsoy, in all L. 17. And about seven pound more may be made by teaching those who are able to pay for reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and navigation.

There is another school for boys at Portsoy, where from 20 to 30 are taught; and through the rest of the parish there are four schools for girls, where reading, sowing, and knitting of stockings are taught.

Miscellaneous Observations

The remarkable meteor which travelled over so great a space a few years ago, was seen here, as also in the neighbourhood, about the same hour. Likewise the remarkable noise like cannon shot, heard all over the north country in summer 1745, was heard in this parish.

The fuel generally used in the parish is peat or turf; a good cart load of the first costs 1 s. 3 d. or turf 8 d. Considerable quantities of English and Scots coal are imported at Portsoy, and even bought by the tenants in the lower parts of the parish, at a distance from the mosses. Some of the poorer villagers pull heath and cut furze.

There is one coach and two four wheeled chaises belonging to private persons. There is a fishing village at Sandend. A fishing and trading one at Portsoy, both on the sea side. The Kirktown of Fordice, half a mile above Sandend, which was erected into a borough of barony, by Elphinston Bishop of Aberdeen, in 1499, afterwards by another Bishop of Aberdeen feued out to Ogilvie of Durn, is now the property of Lord Findlater. There is a small village at Newmills of Boyne, about two miles from the sea.

The bridges are few, and not all in repair; they are mostly constructed and kept up by county assessments. The great road between Cullen and Banff is in excellent order, but the other roads are greatly neglected since General Abercrombie's death. The statute labour is generally exacted; but by the lateness of the harvest, the exaction of the three last days being sometimes hindered, these days are frequently commuted for a day extraordinary in summer.

In the years 1782,-83, the parish sell short of its ordinary produce of corn and potatoes, and, without importation, could scarcely have supplied itself with feed and provisions. The heritors sold their farms in the country, and encouraged importation; Government gave supplies, and the kirk-session encroached upon their funds. The incumbent had the curiosity to read over the session's records, for the last ten years of the last century, in which period happened the great famine of seven years, called the Ill Years. An antient elder of this parish said, that if the same precautions had been taken at that time, which he had seen taken more lately in times of scarcity, the famine would not have done so much hurt, nor would so many have perished. From the records, it did not appear, that any public measures were pursued for the supply of the poor, nor any thing uncommon done by the session, except towards the end. The common distribution of the collections of the church, amounted only to about 1 s. 2 d. or 1 s. 4 d. weekly. The thing most remarkable was, that for several years before the famine, adultery and fornication had been extremely frequent, to which the famine put an entire and speedy stop. Neither do these crimes seem to have abounded so much in the parish, since that time.

Soon after the Reformation, Popery in its outward form seems to have left the parish entirely, but the superstition as to wells, spells, charms, remained much longer; and above all, a disregard to the decent religious observation of Sunday. The east and west side of the parish continued their

competition at the foot-ball after divine worship, and a public market was held in the church-yard. Bishop Elphinston, when he got his village of Fordice erected into a borough of barony in 1499, and obtained the privilege of a weekly market day, thought it decent to leave out *Sabbathi*, and perhaps thought of abolishing the practice, which probably existed before his time. But in the renewal of the charter in 1592, to Menzies of Durn, whose predecessor had feued it from the Bishop of Aberdeen, *die Sabbathi* is expressly inserted. This practice was only got gradually suppressed in the beginning of this century or end of the last. Some people, whom the incumbent has seen, remembered the sale of oxen-yokes, snuff, etc. upon the Sunday. The last parcel of snuff brought into the church-yard for sale on Sunday, was tossed out of the bag by Mr Gellie the minister, who paid the value. The annual market called Hallow-fair, by Mr Menzies's charter, was to be held *ad Festum Omnium Sanctorum ad All Hallomes per Spatium octo dierum*. By Bishop Elphinston's charter, in *Festo Sancti Talleritani et per octavos ejusdem*; of which saint, none of the Popish clergy of this country, with whom the incumbent has conversed, can give him any account; though it is plain he was once a saint of their church, and had a festival dedicated to him. He seems to have been the patron saint of the parish, and a well is still called by his name.

There are in this parish thirteen ale-houses and three inns. The number of ale houses is greatly diminished, whereby the morals of the people with respect to sobriety and decency are greatly mended. The ale houses in this village, now reduced to one, were very numerous, and the Sunday's drinking very great, originating from the Sunday's market; in so much that the minister was obliged to compound the matter, to allow a certain time after public worship, and then to cause ring what was called the Drunken Bell; after which he visited the ale-houses, and dismissed any who remained in them. This practice, however, ceased before the incumbent's time, or that of his predecessor, though both have been obliged to make a step through the village, after dinner, and break up drinking companies.

More cottages have fallen in the last ten years than have been rebuilt; but on the whole, the number fallen in and not rebuilt, is abundantly compensated by new feus taken, and new houses built at Portsoy.

The employing cottagers in agriculture is much discontinued in this parish. The farmers think themselves better served by hired servants who lodge with them, and have no interruption by the neighbourhood of their families. Forty years ago, most large farms had their cottar-man, i.e. a cottager living near them, who held the plough, bound the corn in harvest, and built the ricks. This seemingly useful member of a farm is discontinued, because ploughing is better and more generally understood than formerly, and the difficulty is not great, of finding a good ploughman to hire at any term; however, some of the farmers with for cottagers on their farms, whom they can employ incidentally, or, what would be still more useful, to have villages scattered up and down the country, where day-labourers could be hired.