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STRATHARDLE.

NOTES
ON
STRATHARDLE.

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NOTES ON STRATHARDLE, &c.

SECTION I.

STRATHARDLE, THE STRATH OF HIGH STREAM; ORIGINAL NAME "THE STRATH OF THE BRINDLED BOAR"—THE GRAVE OF ARDIL—KIRKMICHAEL—KIRKTOWN—TOM-AN-TIAGAIRT, THE "PRIEST'S HILLOCK"—DIRNANEAN, THE "BIRDS' GROVE."

THE above valleys and glens are beautifully situated in portions of Blairgowrie, Bendochy, Kinloch, Kirk-michael, and Moulin parishes, in the county of Perth. They are in many ways full of interest, and deserve to be better and more widely known. The writer, who was closely associated with them for nearly twenty years, has great pleasure in submitting the following notes, believing they will be read with some little interest :—

STRATHARDLE extends from the junction of the Briar-achan and Fernate—the united waters of which streams form the Ardlle—to the confluence of the Ardlle with the Blackwater or Shee, a little below the Bridge of Cally. At the latter junction the river takes the name of the Ericht. The Gaelic name of the strath is *Strath-ardshil*, pronounced Sra-ardil, and is supposed to be derived from two Gaelic words meaning the strath of high stream or river—either having reference to the high sources of the river, or to its being more elevated in comparison with another stream, such as Athole—in Gaelic *Athshil*. Another explanation, how-

ever, is given as to the origin of the name. According to ancient tradition one of the Ossianic heroes, named Ardil, who is said to have fallen in a great battle between the Caledonians and the Danes, was buried on the estate of Dirnanean, near the river, the spot being marked by a large stone erected at the head, and a lesser one at the foot of the grave. From this circumstance the name of the river and the strath is supposed to have sprung; and, as confirmatory of this supposition, it may be mentioned that the original spelling of the name was Ardil, instead of Ardle, which is now its customary form. The grave of Ardil is situated at the side of the public road, about two miles west from Kirkmichael. It appears that the strath's original name was, in Gaelic, *Strath na muic breac*, pronounced Sra na muic breac, the strath of the brindled boar; so it seems very probable that the changing of it was in some way connected with the above-named hero. It is evident, too, from many other names and circumstances, that the place was at one time much infested with boars as well as wolves. For instance, Pitcarmick—in Gaelic *Pit-car-muic*—means the hollow where the boar was turned; *Stron-a-muic*, the point towards which the nose of the boar was when conquered; Borlands, the lands frequented by these wild animals; Revaddie on the Strone of Cally—in Gaelic, *Rui-mhadaidh*, pronounced Ruivaddie—means the wolf's shieling, or pasture; Clashvaddie, in Persie hill or wood—Gaelic, *Clas-mhadaidh*—a hollow, or pass, for the wolves. Other circumstances might be mentioned to prove that these wild animals formerly infested this part of the country to a great extent, though they are now wholly banished. The roads throughout the strath are good, with the exception of the one on the south side of the Ardle, which is now almost completely grass-grown. This road extends to about ten miles in length, and there are thirty-four gates planted across it to prevent sheep and cattle from straying. The district is for the most part pastoral, and in this respect bears a high character. It is also famed for its game, which attracts sportsmen from all quarters: and during the summer and shooting seasons the neighbourhood is much enlivened by visitors, tourists, and sportsmen.

KIRKMICHAEL, the capital of Strathardle, is beautifully situated on the north bank of the serpentine river. It lies fourteen miles north of Blairgowrie, thirteen miles north-east of Pitlochry, and thirteen miles south-east of the Spittal of Glenshee. Its Gaelic name is *Kil-michael*, pronounced Kilvichael, meaning the church or burying-ground consecrated to St. Michael. The parish manse adjoins the village; and the old name of its site was *Tom-an-shagairt*, pronounced Tom-an-tiagairt, which means the priest's hillock. Kirkmichael is a very ancient place, but it is difficult to obtain any definite information regarding its date or early history. It is evident, however, that its original name was Kirktown, although the parish has always held the name of Kilvichael. Be this as it may, it seems that at some distant period the village occupied a position of considerable importance, as a large market, known as Kilmichael Tryst, was held there annually in September. Some misunderstanding having arisen, however, between the Highlanders and the English dealers, the business of this market was afterwards transferred to Falkirk. A well-attended market was also formerly held in the village every Friday. For the most part the marketing consisted of home-made goods of all descriptions and "rositty sticks" all the way from Rannoch, which were generally used for lighting purposes in those days. There is a small stream, called the "siller burn," about four hundred yards south-west of the village, where in ancient times the dealers always paid their accounts. It appears that a weekly court was held in Kirkmichael by a baron; hence the custom of the inhabitants electing a bailie once a year, in honour of the past. The school is commodious and in good condition, and the teacher, Mr Morrison, is possessed of excellent abilities. The parish church and burying-ground are bounded on the south by the Ardle and on the north by the public road. The church is a plain substantial building. It has quite recently undergone extensive alterations and improvements, which have given it an altogether modern and changed appearance internally, and have certainly made it much more elegant and comfortable as a place of worship. The various repairs and renovations have been effected at a cost of about £350, the whole of which is borne by the

heritors of the parish. The church-yard is neat and well kept. It contains a few handsome tombstones, erected in memory of dear departed friends. At the west end there is a large and beautiful granite monument, which was erected by public subscription in memory of Mr George Small, eldest son of the late Patrick Small, Esq., of Dirnanear, who died in 1854, in token of the high esteem in which he was held by the people of the strath. Fain would the writer linger upon this spot, having five beloved sons and daughters resting there. There is a post-office in the village, and two mails arrive daily—from Blairgowrie at 1 P.M., and from Pitlochry at 2 P.M. There are two respectable and well-kept inns, 370 yards apart; also, three merchants' shops and two hiring establishments. A medical practitioner also resides in the place. There is a handsome Free Church on the south side of the river. The pastor of it is justly respected, and many kind acts performed by him during the past ten years could be enumerated. On the same side of the river, and near the bridge, a number of nice cottages have been erected in recent years by William McDonald, Esq., of Balnakeilly. They form, as it were, the new town, or more modern portion of the village; and the cluster is known as Williamston, having received the proprietor's own name. The parish of Kirkmichael is an extensive one. The heritors support the poor out of their own purses, and it is questionable if in any place in Scotland this class is better cared for in every respect.

DIRNANEAN—Gaelic, *Dior-nan-ean*—means “the birds’ grove,” and a more beautiful name for a residence and estate could scarcely be found. This its long line of distinguished owners seem to have justly appreciated. The estate has been held by the same family in its different generations for fully five hundred years. The proprietor, Mr Small, holds documents connected with the property which have been handed down in direct line from father to son for nine generations. It has always been of respectable entail, and having received large additions at various times it has now attained almost princely dimensions. Long may the Dirnanean family and all such continue to prosper, though not honoured by high-sounding

court titles, which are often bestowed on less-deserving recipients. It is worthy of note here that the family to which Dalrulzion estate formerly belonged was also in possession of that property for five hundred years. The late Mrs Small of Dirnanear was connected with a branch of that family. She died in March 1863. The mansion-house of Dirnanear has a beautiful and imposing appearance, being situated on a high eminence, and towering above all others in the strath. The farm-steading, consisting of a large range of buildings, stands about three hundred yards to the rear of the mansion. The byres and stables are kept remarkably tidy, being paragons of cleanliness in their way; while the dairy, &c., are a perfect treat. The various kinds of stock grace their habitation. The accommodation for the farm servants is really comfortable. The policy-grounds are very tastefully laid out, and the avenue is one of the nicest to be seen. A fine burn runs along the east side of the stead, the mansion, and the avenue, and joins the Ardlie at the village of Ennochdhu. The burn flows through a deep den, which is prettily laid out with walks and rockeries constructed with “creature stones.” Here, also, there is a nice heather or summer house, perched on a precipice overhanging a still pool, and from which a charming view is obtained of two small cascades or waterfalls. The approach is also very lovely. Ardlie's grave is situated here, and is easily seen from the public road running between Pitlochry and Kirkmichael. Mr Small allows free access to the grounds, which are much admired.

SECTION II.

ENNOCHDHU — KINDROGAN — BALVARRAN — AULD-
CHLAPPIE—WOODHILL—BALANTUIM.

ENNOCHDHU—Gaelic, *Aon-ach-duth*—means the bleak, barren sheet of land. There is a snug little village here, and tradition says a great battle was fought at this place long ago—probably that in which Ardlie was slain, as the reputed grave of that hero is near by.

KINDROGAN—*Kin-droi-ghioun* in Gaelic, meaning the head or end of the briars or thorns which grew along the banks of the Ardlie to that place. Dropping the “h” in the Gaelic spelling, the pronunciation in both cases is almost the same. The Kindrogan family is a branch of the house of Dirnanean. The date of its origin is very distant, and is unknown to the writer. The mansion-house is really a nice country seat, being very pleasantly situated. It is bounded by the river on the north-east, and by a high rocky hill on the south-west. The proprietor, Mr Patrick Small Keir, has been honoured by no less than three visits from Her Majesty the Queen—twice when she was on her way from Balmoral to Dunkeld, and once in going from Dunkeld to Balmoral. On Monday, 9th October, 1865, the Royal party journeyed by Spittal of Glenshee and along the Blackwater road to Strathardle. They were met by Mr Small Keir at Pitcarmick. After they had partaken of luncheon there, he guided them across the hill to Dunkeld. On Monday, 1st October, 1866, Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by Prince Arthur, the Princess Louise, &c., travelled from Balmoral by Spittal of Glenshee, and over the hill by Dirnanean, to Kindrogan. The Royal party lunched on the lawn at the mansion, and thereafter drove by Glenbriarachan, Badva, and Tullymet to Dunkeld. They were escorted across the hill from Spittal of Glenshee to Kindrogan by Mr Small Keir, Mr W. A. Keir, yr. of Kindrogan, and Mr James Small of Dirnanean, along with a body of their retainers in full uniform. The Royal party returned on the following Saturday, crossing the hill from Dunkeld to Kindrogan a little to the west of the mansion. Mrs Small Keir had luncheon prepared for them, and after refreshing themselves, carriages being in readiness, they drove off, passing through the capital of Strathardle, and proceeding by the Blackwater road and Spittal of Glenshee to Balmoral. Her Majesty greatly admired the site of Kindrogan mansion-house, and instructed Mr J. Valentine, Photographer, Dundee, to take views of it for the Royal family. There is a private burying-ground a little to the south of the house, where it can be seen from the monumental inscriptions that the ancestors of the Kindrogan family have generally lived to a good old age.

BALVARRAN.—Gaelic, *Bal-bharain*, meaning the baron's seat or town. There was at one period a chapel and burying-ground on this property, a little to the east of the mansion, where the remains can still be traced. The place where they were situated bears the name of Chapelfield.

AULDCHLAPPIE is situated immediately to the east of the village of Kirkmichael. There is an inn here, standing a little off the public road, on the north side. The place derives its name from the peculiar noise made by the burn which runs past on the west.

WOODHILL.—This is a modern name, which originated from the plantation of the hill with wood. The old Gaelic name is Balnacreuchie, regarding the derivation of which various explanations have been given. According to one supposition it is derived from *Bal-na-cruthachaidh*, pronounced Balnacreuchie, which means the town of spouty ground, or of small springs or well eyes. Many of these small water springs were found along the foot of the hill, and are still to be met with where the land has not been drained. Another obvious derivation of the name is *Bal-na-crao-bhachaidh*, pronounced Balnacreuachie, and signifying the town of the tufts of wood or clumps of trees, some of which are still visible along the river side. Should this derivation be accepted as the correct one, the transition from the old name to the new, on the hill being planted with wood, was a most natural one in every way. Still another derivation is admissible, however—namely, *Bal-na-creuchie*, meaning the clay town, as the estate abounds with clay or mortar; or the designation might have arisen from the circumstance that the houses on the place were built with stones and mortar, when the rest of the houses were constructed with stones and thick divots or square pieces of turf, layer about. Thus, Whitehouse derived its name from the dwelling-houses having been plastered with lime when all the others in the neighbourhood were black. Although the names mentioned are differently spelt, their Gaelic pronunciation is somewhat similar, so that the original name cannot on any principle of language be regarded as having any reference to hanging or the gallows,

with which it has been frequently erroneously connected, in consequence of the corruption of the name by those ignorant of the Gaelic language. The invariable spelling of the name in Gaelic is "Balnacreuchie," and it is never otherwise pronounced; but in English it is customary to call it "Balmacrochie." This change in the spelling and pronunciation of the name robs it of its proper signification altogether, and no doubt makes it appear to be connected with the gallows. There are several most suitable sites for such an erection on the property, but to none of these is the name directly or indirectly attached. Should there have been a gallows on the estate—and as Balnacreuchie was the seat of a baron, he would no doubt, like other barons, have the power of pit and gallows—the most appropriate place for such a structure would have been the high knoll overlooking the Ardlie at the east end of the haugh. The Gaelic name of the "tom" or hill in the Balantuim park, below the public road, is *Tom-an-rach*, pronounced Tomanra, which means the hill of judgment—a place for holding the baron's courts or public assemblies. On the upper side of the road is another eminence which commands an extensive view of the strath, called, in Gaelic, *Tom-a-chluig*, which is pronounced as spelt, and means the belt-hill, to which it is probable the people were summoned to attend court or for other deliberations on matters of special importance. It is to be observed that none of the neighbouring barons alluded, by the means of their places or otherwise, to the gallows or to the enforcement of punishment; hence it is evident that the original name of this barony bore no allusion whatever to the execution of the criminal law, and that the hateful word gallows can in no way be applicable to it. From ancient tradition, it is said the proprietor of Balnacreuchie had the right or power to force all the owners of property by the side of the river to cut down all trees within casting-line length of the river, along its course through the strath, for fishing purposes. The eastern portion of the estate was held by the same family for nearly five hundred years, and was purchased lately by Charles Trotter, Esq., the present proprietor, to whom also Easter Dalnabreck—which adjoins Woodhill on the west—belongs. Woodhill mansion-house

is beautifully situated at the base of the hill, being shrouded in the bosom of splendid trees of various kinds. The house is built in a magnificent style, and the surroundings are pleasant and attractive. A neat Roman Catholic Chapel adjoins it. Besides making large additions to the mansion, Mr Trotter has erected an elegant new steading, and constructed a substantial wooden bridge over the river, across which a winding and finely-shaded avenue is carried from the public road to the house. Mr Trotter holds the position of a Justice of the Peace, and in December, 1866, Her Majesty the Queen was graciously pleased to honour him by raising him to the dignity of Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of the county. A number of years ago, Mrs Trotter opened a free library for the express benefit of the working class. The library is much prized by the people, being the only one in the district.

BALANTUIM means the town of the hillocks, or hilltown. At present the extent of property bearing this name is made up of three divisions, which are distinguished as Easter, Middle, and Wester Balantuim. On Easter Balantuim a handsome villa has been erected on an eminence having a gentle declivity to the public road. The proprietor, Mr M'Donald, resides for the most part in Arbroath, and only occupies his country seat during the summer and autumn months. A tastefully shaded avenue leads from the road to the house. Middle and Wester Balantuim form one estate, on which are some splendid sites for a large mansion. The proprietor, Mr William Buttar, has, however, though enterprising enough in other respects, hitherto remained content with a homely, substantial farm-house. Besides erecting a new steading, a threshing-mill of modern construction, a saw-mill, a meal-mill, &c., he has greatly improved the property by draining, trenching, and fencing. Within the past few years the appearance of the place has been considerably changed by the cutting down of large quantities of wood. The property has been held by the same family in succession for about five hundred years. Mr Buttar and his ancestors have always held a high character in the strath for their hospitality, and for being charitable to the poor, especially

in times of dearth. A private burying-ground adjoins the house. There is a small village near by, a school, a small chapel, and a post-office, the latter being very convenient. The school was erected by and formerly belonged to the Free Church, but it was transferred to the School Board for Kirkmichael parish after the education Act came into operation. It is very conveniently situated, and the teacher, Mr Cooper, is efficient in every respect. The chapel was built by the Congregational body, but it now belongs to Mr Buttar, and is very seldom used as a place of worship.

SECTION III.

CALLY—BRIDGE OF CALLY—STRONE OF CALLY—BLACK—
CRAIG—COCHRAGE—ASHMORE—CLAYWHAT—GLEN—
ERICH—RANAGEIRICH—RANNAGULZION—GLEN—
BALLOCH—CRAIGHALL.

CALLY—The district bearing this name appears to have at one time embraced all the lower portion of Strathardle, extending from the junction of the Ardlie and Blackwater to the march between Wester Cally and Balantuim, on the north side of the river, and to Easter Balnacreuchie or Crowhill on the south side. At present the name is only applied to that part of the glen included within the boundaries mentioned on the north side of the river. Cally is derivable from *Chaillich*, which means nun. The name in full, as always used in Gaelic, is *Lagan-dubh-chaillich*, pronounced Lagan-du-challie, and meaning the valley of the black nuns. The "h" in the name indicated the possessive case. A chapel once occupied the site where the steading of Steps of Cally now stands; and attached to it was a burying-ground, which is still used, and was nicely improved lately by public subscription. The graveyard lies near the river. There was a similar chapel and burying-ground at Wester Cally, but these were both annulled long ago. About thirty years ago, when the field in which they were situated were

being turned up by the plough, a great many human bones were discovered. The field—which still retains the name of Chapelpark—now forms part of the Ardliebank property. There was formerly a mill, called "The Monks' Mill," a little to the west of the Steps of Cally and Rochallie—in Gaelic, *Ruith-chaillich*—means the nun's shieling. The whole range of country from Easter Balantuim to Persie and Ashmore constituted the barony of Cally; and it is evident that the district had been devoted to the maintenance of a monastery and nunnery connected with Dunkeld Abbey, which was for a long period the principal seat of the Roman Catholic religion in Scotland, till it was transferred to St. Andrews. It would appear also, from various circumstances, that the expanse of hill and dale lying between Strathardle and Dunkeld formed part of the district assigned to this monastic establishment. The names of Loch Benachallie—from which Blairgowrie is supplied with water—and the hill on the south side of it, afford confirmation of this view. The Gaelic name of the loch is *Loch-beinn-chaillich*, signifying the loch of the nun's mountain. Cally House, the residence of James C. Constable, Esq., is a stately modern mansion. It is situated on a pretty extensive plain or haugh, near the riverside, fully a mile north of the Bridge of Cally, and is approached from the public road by a fine avenue. Considerable improvements have lately been effected on this estate.

BRIDGE OF CALLY.—This place, which derives its name from the stone bridge spanning the Ardlie, may be regarded as a main entrance to the Highland glens, and is well known as the converging point of various roads. The toll road from Blairgowrie is continued northward from here by the old military road through Blackwater to Glenshee and Braemar; while the Strathardle road branches off through the strath to Kirkmichael and Pitlochry. There is a well-kept inn—which travellers find very convenient—a post-office, and a merchant's shop, at the Bridge.

STRONE OF CALLY.—This is the narrow jutting point of land enclose by the Ardlie and Blackwater where these rivers meet. The name means the Nose of Cally. Strone House

is situated about equi-distance from both rivers. It is an elegant mansion of modern erection, standing on a lovely plain, surrounded by wooded knolls and banks. The property has been much improved by the present enterprising owner, Geo. N. Constable, Esq., of Balmyle.

BLACKCRAIG may justly be regarded as having formed a part of the territory apportioned to the monastic institution referred to above. The Gaelic name is *Craig-dhubh*, pronounced Craig-du, which just means Black-craig; but the name in full is understood to be *Craig-dhubh-chaillich*, the craig of the black nuns, the latter part being omitted, for the sake of brevity. The mansion, which is situated on the south side of the river, is a large castellated edifice of modern erection, but constructed on an ancient plan. It has a splendid appearance, and is encompassed with pretty knolls and beautiful young plantations. The approach from the public road is by a tastefully-formed and well-shaded avenue, which is carried across the river by an excellent wooden bridge. The proprietor, Patrick Allan Fraser, Esq., has expended many thousands of pounds upon the estate since he purchased it in trenching, draining, fencing, building, &c., and always keeps a force of labourers about the place, as well as on his properties elsewhere.

COCHRAGE.—Gaelic, *Comhach-raide*, pronounced as spelt in English, meaning the gaining or shortening of the road—lies to the east of Blackcraig, on the south side of the river. The place derives its name from the road which, striking off from the main road to the Bridge of Cally, leads across the hill to Kinloch, and from thence by Bridge of Isla to Perth. It is several miles shorter than the road by Blairgowrie, and on that account was called the shorter road. It is seldom used now-a-days, having been badly kept, and being almost impassible during the winter season. In olden times there was no bridge at Cally. The river was crossed by a ford about three hundred yards west from where the present bridge stands. A portion of the old ford road is still traceable, and is now part of a walk formed along the river side, and leading on to the Cochrag road.

ASHMORE.—This is a piebald name, partly English and partly Gaelic, meaning a big ash tree. The old Gaelic name of the place was *Bo-eas-buig*, pronounced Boheaspuig, the bishop's seat or cottage; the bishop in all likelihood having the superintendence of the monastery or nunnery formerly alluded to.

CLAYWHAT, to the south of Ashmore, means the resort or haunt of wild cats—Gaelic, *Clo-chait*. It is sometimes designated "The Hip," probably from its shape bearing some resemblance to that part of the human body.

GLENERICHT.—Gaelic, *Gleann-ereachd*—means the beautiful or comely glen or valley; and considering the diversity and surpassing grandeur of its scenery, the name is strikingly appropriate. The glen extends from the confluence of the Arde and Blackwater to Blairgowrie, where, terminating in the rocky ravine of the Keath, it opens out upon the smiling and fertile Howe of Strathmore. A more romantic and picturesque stretch of landscape could scarcely be found, even in all "Bonnie Scotland." Glenericht House, the residence of A. D. Grimond, Esq., stands on the east side of the river, on a low-lying but beautiful site, amidst most charming surroundings. Access is obtained to it from the public road by a fine avenue of considerable length, which is carried over the river by a handsome and substantial iron bridge. Besides erecting a splendid new steading, Mr Grimond has effected many other improvements on Glenericht since he purchased it, rendering it one of the most desirable and valuable estates in the district. He devotes great attention to agricultural matters, and is rapidly attaining eminence in connection with his breeding and rearing of stock.

RANAGEIRICH is situated near Glenericht House. Gaelic, *Ruith-nan-gavirich*, pronounced Rinan-guerich. It means the shieling of sheep.

RANNAGULZION.—Gaelic, *Ruith-nan-culann*, the sheiling of hollies or evergreens; or *Ruith-nan-cuilcag*, the sheiling of flies. Rannagulzion House is the seat of Colonel Ogilvy.

GLENBALLOCH.—Gaelic, *Gleann-bealach*, the glen of a pass—presumably because affording a passage to another district.

CRAIGHALL, the seat of Colonel James Clerk-Rattray, C.B., is the most interesting portion of Gleneloch. Craighall House and grounds are well known to tourists and sight-seers, and attract every year hundreds of visitors from all parts of the country. The natural beauties of the place elicit the wonder and admiration of all who behold them. They are beyond the writer's powers of description, but are sufficiently known, however, to require but a brief notice here. A narrow channel, 200 feet deep and extending to about two miles in length, has been formed by the Eicht in its ceaseless flow through unknown ages. The rocky sides of the ravine are so precipitous in some places that they present the appearance of gigantic walls. The banks and the interstices of the rocks are well wooded. The house is perched on the summit of a lofty crag overhanging the river, its position being certainly romantic in the extreme. The kindness of the Craighall family in affording the public free access to the grounds is worthy of the highest commendation, and ought to inspire with gratitude all who have the pleasure of visiting them. The boon, however, like too many other public privileges, has not been appreciated as it ought to have been—indeed, the fact is it has been frequently abused; and the consequence is that the grounds are now open *gratis* to visitors only on two days of the week—Tuesday and Friday. Entrance is obtained on other days, however, on payment of a nominal sum of money—the subscriptions being devoted to the Perth Infirmary. The kindly and benevolent spirit of the family, and their willingness to extend permission to all well-disposed parties to enjoy a walk through the grounds, are thus exhibited side by side. Long may they be respected and honoured for their generous and unselfish conduct!

SECTION IV.

BALMYLE—MERKLANDS—DALNABRECK—PITCARMIC—
BALANRUICH—STYLEMOUTH—BALNABRUAICH—
“THE GREY CAIRN”—THE MERMAID—THE MER-
MAID'S LOCH—THE ROCKING-STONE OF DALRULZION
—“THE BOGLE MOSS.”

BALMYLE—Gaelic, *Bal-mhille*, the town of the mount. Dropping the “h” in the Gaelic spelling, as usual, the pronunciation is Balville. The name is derived from the high hill, called the Knock of Balmyle, which forms part of the estate. Balmyle is a nice little property, and the mansion—quite a modern erection—is large and handsome, being, both in regard to site and surroundings, one of the finest in the strath. There is a private burying-ground a little to the east of it. The late proprietor, Mr J. N. Constable, was much respected by all classes of the people, and was long a Justice of the Peace. He died in December, 1863, and left a worthy successor in his son, Mr George N. Constable.

MERKLANDS.—This name is also derived from two Gaelic words—*Dun-mharig*—pronounced Dun-varig, as the place is always called in Gaelic, and meaning the merk hill, town, land, or castle, or the rusty hill. The mansion-house is a large and elegant modern edifice, and is situated on a gentle rising eminence. This estate has long been held by the same family.

DALNABRECK is on the opposite side of the river from Merklands. The name, in Gaelic, is *Dal-na-bric*, the haugh of trouts, or the trout haugh—from *dal*, haugh, and *bric*, trouts. It is probable that the name may have originated from the river at that part being well stocked with trout; or it may have arisen from the facilities afforded to anglers there owing to the banks of the river being comparatively clear of trees or bushes. Another supposition is that the name is derived from the burn which runs down the hill of

Wester Dalnabreck, and passes through the haughs of both Dalnabrecks before it enters the river. This burn is named *Ald-a-blurigan*, pronounced Aldavrigan, meaning the breeches burn, from a resemblance being traced in its course to that article of dress. This latter explanation looks rather lame and far-fetched, and the former may be accepted as being the likeliest and most natural. There is a large mansion-house of modern erection on the estate, and a strong iron bridge has only recently been constructed over the river, giving access to it from the public road.

PITCARMIC.—Gaelic, *Pit-car-muic*, the meaning of which has already been explained—embraces the farms of Easter and Wester Pitcarmic, Stronamuick, and Dalvey. The place forms part of the extensive estate of Kindrogan, and the proprietor has the farms all in his own hands, and manages them with great skill and success. The meaning of Stronamuick was also explained at a former stage. Dalvey means the haugh of birch, from *Dal-bheith*, pronounced Dalvey; or, the haugh of deer, from *dal* and *feidh*—the pronunciation being the same.

BALANRUICH means the heather town, and could easily be converted into a heath lodge or cottage. One of the original names of the place—as found in a document written when the locality was of considerable importance—was Riverdale.

STYLEMOUTH.—This is a modern name. The Gaelic name of the place is *Cul-nan-cruainh*, the back of the bones—the bones of some person having probably been found in front of the houses after they were built.

BALNABRUACH, the town of, or on, the head of the brae, or high bank of the river, is about the middle of the strath, and forms part of the estate of Dirnanean. It was formerly part of the Strathardle division of the Glendelvine estate. The farm is one of the most important and valuable holdings in the whole strath; and extensive and judicious improvements have been effected upon it by its new and enterprising

proprietor. On Balnabruaich hill stands a cairn of stones of immense magnitude, called *Carn-liadh*, the grey cairn, the origin of which, according to ancient tradition, was thus:—A loch on the contiguous estate of Dalrulzion, belonging to the same proprietor, was the haunt of a mermaid, which occasionally visited the lower portion of the strath, but never without committing damage. Her depredations becoming insupportable, and the inhabitants being in terror of her visits, various fruitless attempts were made to capture and conquer her, with the view of putting a stop to her ravages. Ultimately, a famous dog, named Bran or Brano, belonging to the Fingalians, was let loose upon her at the villiage of Kirkmichael, and, after an exciting chase and a fierce encounter, overpowered and killed her where the cairn lies. In olden times many curious and incredible stories were current amongst the people of the strath regarding the doings of this fabulous being. The loch said to have been her abode was by no means of a lovely appearance, and its banks were very unsafe for people walking on them, being liable to give way. It is about a mile distant from the mansion of Dalrulzion, and is now a handsome loch, its surroundings having been greatly improved by the proprietor. Its Gaelic name is *Loch-mhairich*, pronounced Loch-varich, meaning the mermaid's loch. According to the traditional explanation, the cairn referred to was obviously reared to mark the spot of the mermaid's grave, with the object of preventing the return of sea-monsters to the district. The accumulation of such an enormous pile of stones—principally large boulders—must have been the work of many men and horses. The cairn has recently been considerably diminished in size by the removal of stones for the building of fences, &c. On Tuesday, 26th September, 1865, it was visited by Mr Stewart, the Secretary of the Antiquarian Society, Edinburgh, accompanied by P. A. Fraser, Esq., of Blackeraig, Chas. Trotter, Esq., of Woodhill, and Wm. Buttar, Esq., of Ballantuin, besides a number of other gentlemen, as well as ladies, in the neighbourhood; and about a score of workmen were engaged in turning over the old cairn. Mr Stewart superintended the work for two days, and all were eager to find some relics of the ancient Druidical worship, which, it

was anticipated, would be brought to light. The result, however, was not very gratifying, the relics found consisting chiefly of stones used as weights and for grinding meal in those days. A little to the west of the cairn an old grave was opened. It measured $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length by $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in breadth and 3 feet in depth, and was lined with flat stones. A few pieces of bones and charred wood were discovered in the bottom. The circumstance above stated regarding the pursuit and conquest of the mermaid by the dog Bran gave the name Pitvran—Gaelic, *Pit-bhran*—to the whole face of the hill from Kirkmichael to the Cally boundaries, and the mermaid gave name to the loch alluded to. On Dalrulzion hill there is another wonder of many generations—namely, a rocking-stone of massive dimensions, called, in Gaelic, *Clash-an-sogun*. The stone stands on a flat-topped eminence in the vicinity of several stone circles and other Druidical remains. It rests on the plain surface of a rock level with the ground. It is a very hard solid whinstone of a quadrangular shape, approaching the figure of a rhombus, of which the greater diagonal measures 7 feet and the lesser 5 feet. Its mean thickness is $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and its solid contents will be 51 by 75 cubic feet or thereabout. Its weight must be over $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons, as a stone of the same quality was found to weigh 1 cwt. per solid foot. By pressing down either of the extreme corners, a rocking motion is easily produced, which may be increased so as to make the distance between the lowest depression and the highest elevation a full foot. The stone used to make 26 vibrations after the pressure was wholly withdrawn. The vibrations, however, are not now so numerous, the stone having been somewhat damaged by some idlers. The writer visited this remarkable stone, and found it to be really a peculiar one, and well worth the attention of the curious. To the north-west of Balnabruaich hill is a large moss, from which the inhabitants of the district obtain their supplies of peat. The moss is named *Mon-bhokie*, pronounced Monvokie, meaning the bogle moss, and is quite honey-combed with deep pits from which peats have been cut. These pits are full of water, which in some instances has become covered with mossy vegetation, forming a most treacherous surface, through which if any person had the

misfortune to fall they would meet certain death, as all efforts put forth to extricate themselves would only cause them to sink the farther down, till they were finally engulfed in the slimy depths beneath. The moss is traversed by several narrow paths running between these pits, which can be followed with a fair measure of ease and safety in clear daylight, but on which even those best acquainted with the place might scarcely dare to enter in misty weather or after nightfall, for fear of losing themselves amongst their intricate windings. Young people or strangers could hardly venture attempting to find their way through these passages even in the daytime. The name, "the bogle moss," had obviously been given to this dangerous expanse with the view of preventing young and adventurous people from going near it after dark.

SECTION V.

DUNIDEA—ASHINTULLY—WHITEFIELD—DALNAGAIRN—
INVERCHROSKIE — STRATHLAW — DEVON — GLEN-
BRIARACHAN—GLENFERNATE.

DUNIDEA is near the side of the road leading from Kirkmichael to Blackwater. The name is composed of two Gaelic words—*duni*, a little mount or hillock, and *deth*, separate or distant, probably from the eminence standing apart from, or out of the range of, others in the neighbourhood. The pronunciation is Duniday, or Duniyay. There is a fine limestone quarry here, the rock being of excellent quality. In olden times Dunidea was reputed to be a favourite haunt of fairies.

ASHINTULLY.—Gaelic, *Eas-an-tulich*, the cascade or waterfall of the mountain. There is an old castle on this property. It is situated about three miles north-east of the village of Kirkmichael, at the foot of a hill named Craignabrattan.

The castle bears the date, 1583, above the front door, and right above the date are the words, "The Lord defend this house." It was built on the same design as Whitefield Castle. There are over a dozen apartments in it, and from their names rather peculiar circumstances appear to have been connected with three of the rooms. One is called "Rob Roy's Room," the "bold outlaw" being said to have lodged in the castle when on one of his daring marauding expeditions. Another is named "Green Jane's Room." The lady distinguished by that appellation is said to have been killed there through jealousy; and for many years the apartment remained unoccupied for fear of her ghost. Lastly, there is "The Thief's Hole," which is covered by a strong heavy arch. The "hole" is said to be the place where thieves and other offenders were confined till a court was held by the baron. The punishment for the crime of theft in those days was death on the gallows, unless great influence or the weight of money were used; but when a bribe was successful in saving life, the culprit had to leave the district and reside in some other part of the country. This was called banishment. Such things are well known to have been done, in some instances not so long ago. The old avenue leading to the castle went in a different direction from the present one. About a quarter of a mile of it is still used as a road, but the rest of it is not in a condition for walking on except in the dry season. The portion in use is lined with large trees, which are said to have been planted hundreds of years ago. The gables of the castle are 37 feet in height, while the front and back walls are 34 and 32 feet high. A large addition was built to the old castle a number of years ago. There is a private burying-ground of a modern style adjacent. Ashintully was formerly the seat of a barony, and the barons had the power of hanging or drowning, as the case might be. Many sad traditional stories are told in connection with the castle and its former proprietors. The site of the gallows was on the farm of Tonlaid, and was called *Tom-na-croich*, the hill of the gallows. At that time it formed part of the Ashintully estate. The owners of this estate held the superiority of fishing in river or lake in the district, and also of grouse-shooting to a very large extent; but these rights

were lost not many years ago in a law-suit raised by the late Captain Ayton's aunt, Miss Rutherford of Ashintully. Tradition hands a story down to the effect that a baron of Ashintully killed and robbed a drover at the ford of Cally, and that he caused his butler, who was quite innocent, to be hanged for the crime. But it is said this black deed was speedily followed by sad desolation falling on the baron and all that pertained to him. At the same time, it is firmly stated that this is the farthest back murderer heard of in connection with Strathardle. The late proprietor of Ashintully, Captain R. J. R. Ayton, died at Ashintully Castle on the 29th November, 1871. His death was much lamented throughout the district. His eldest daughter, Miss Ann Ayton, succeeded to the beautiful estate on the 5th August, 1874, when she attained her majority. This happy event was celebrated at Ashintully in a most becoming manner.

WHITEFIELD—This is a modern name. The old Gaelic name is *Mor-chloich*, the big stone. There is an ancient castle here, now in ruins, which is said to be about nine hundred years old. Its remains exhibit a strong and warlike appearance. The mason work far surpasses any to be seen at the present day, and the walls are so firmly built that it would require a battering-ram to knock them down. The date was above the front-door, in letters; but these have now so mouldered away that they cannot be made out, only portions of them being visible. The castle is said to have been set on fire by a bitter enemy of the then proprietor, whose malice had been aroused through a slight overlook of his dignity. It stands on high ground fully a mile north of Kirkmichael, and on an eminence in its vicinity is a large stone, from which the original name of the place is supposed to have been derived. In summer numerous visitors climb the braes to view the ancient ruins. Not a few curious and interesting traditional stories are told in the strath regarding the old castle and its former proprietors. A small portion of the avenue can be traced by some very old trees. The estate has passed through many hands, but at present it is possessed by Mr P. S. Keir of Kindrogan, who purchased it

in 1863. It was at one time occupied by a number of small tenants, but it is now exclusively used for pasturage.

DALNAGAIRN—Gaelic *Dal-nan-garn*, the haugh of cars, or the cairny haugh—is situated on the north side of the river, immediately to the west of the village of Kirkmichael. The mansion-house—an elegant and substantial erection—is beautifully situated on rising ground, being surrounded with plantations of young trees, tastefully laid out. The proprietor—John Panton, Esq., banker, Blairgowrie—displays great agricultural skill in his management of the estate, which he has vastly improved since it came into his possession.

INVERCHROSKIE.—This name is formed of two Gaelic words, *inver* and *croskie*, signifying the entrance of the burn Croskie into the river. It may be explained that the burn derives its name from the circumstance that it crosses the public road. There is a fine shooting lodge on the property, which is principally used for grazing purposes.

STRATHLOCH—pronounced Sraloch—the strath of lochs, is situated at the ends of Glenbriarachan and Glenfernate. There are a pretty chapel and school, a small inn, and a letter receiving house—all within a distance of two hundred yards. A little further northward there is an excellent shooting-lodge, built at the base of a high hill. A very large block of stone is to be seen on the farm of Mr C. Farquharson. It is upwards of twenty feet in height, and measures almost seventy-four feet in circumference, or about twenty-five feet in diameter; and it has been calculated that it would weigh nine hundred tons. It is composed of a slaty granite. Being the largest stone in the district, it is called *Clashmore*, the big stone.

DEVON—Gaelic, *Da-abhuinn*, meaning two rivers, or the view of two rivers meeting—namely, the Briarachan and the Fernate. As the “bh” sounds *v*, the pronunciation is Davin. The name in full is *Da-abhuinn-tir*, signifying two-river-land, or the land at the confluence of two rivers. The

proper Gaelic would be *Tir-da-abhuinn*, country of two rivers.

GLENBRIARACHAN.—This glen obviously derived its name from the rivulet running through it, which is murmuring and seemingly talkative in its sound—*briarachan* meaning wordy, noisy, or murmuring. It is altogether a sweet little glen. The road from Kirkmichael to Pitlochry passes through it. The road is carried over a wild hill named Badvo—Gaelic, *Bad-a-bhoth*, meaning a cottage with a spot of green grass. The glen is divided among several proprietors, and is occupied by a number of farmers, who, from the extent of hill ground at their disposal, find excellent sheep pasture.

GLENFERNATE—Gaelic, *Gleann-fearnaithe*, the glen of the alder trees—is a very beautiful glen, and forms one of the most valuable grazings for sheep and cattle in the North of Scotland. It also affords excellent shooting, abounding in deer and all other ordinary kinds of game. A large and commodious shooting-lodge is situated at the lower end of the glen. In olden times, when the Highlands were far more densely populated than at the present day, there was a road leading to and from Badenoch through the glen, which was formerly numerous inhabited. It would appear, indeed, that the inhabitants were so numerous that they required a church for themselves, and the remains of the sacred edifice—portions of the foundations of which are only discernible—are still shown half way up the glen. Only three shepherds have their abode there now, each residing apart from the other. Another name of this glen—*Fonn-bharon*, pronounced Fonn-varon, meaning the baron's demesnes, residence, or territories—indicates that it was once a barony.

SECTION VI.

GLENDERBY — BALNAKEILLY — TULLOCHCURRAN —
DALREACH — BANNERFIELD — AN ATTRACTIVE
"CIRCULAR TOUR."

GLENDERBY is a beautiful little glen, lying between Strathardle and Athole. The Gaelic name is *Gleann-dear-bhaidh*, which may mean the glen of decision, or of trials. Dropping the "h" and "dh," the pronunciation is Glenderby. The old name is *Gleann-gean-ait*, which, according to one derivation, signifies the smiling or good-humoured glen, or kind people. The glen was once the seat of Lady Nairn, but now forms part of the possessions of the Duke of Athole. It is evident that it had been numerously inhabited at one period, but there is only one solitary house in it now, occupied by a shepherd. The old inhabitants were noted for their hospitality to strangers—a circumstance which probably gave rise to the original name. A rough road leading into the Athole district runs through the glen. A good road, or a single line of railway, could easily be constructed there, and would prove a great boon to both districts. A branch railway would no doubt be a remunerative speculation to the shareholders of the Highland line.

BALNAKEILLY—Gaelic, *Bal-na-killie*, the town with, or of, the church or burying-ground. The name is not applicable now, however. The mansion-house has lately been much enlarged and improved, and presents a handsome and substantial appearance. There is a nice rockery on the hillside near by, from whence a splendid view of the strath can be obtained. The proprietor—William M'Donald, Esq.—holds the estate in his own hands, and carries out enterprisingly and successfully numerous agricultural and other improvements.

TULLOCHCURRAN.—This property was lately added to the estate of the Kindrogan, and is occupied and skilfully cultivated by the proprietor.

DALREACH—from *dah*, haugh, and *reach*, rough or dark—forms part of the Dirnanean estate. There is an elegant shooting-lodge here.

BANNERFIELD.—This is a nice little property near Kirkmichael, where it is said a battle was once fought. Mr James Dow, the late proprietor, left this property at his death to assist young men "natives of the parish" of Kirkmichael, to attend St. Andrews College, £5 per session being allowed for each student. The present tenant, Mr James Small, acts as carrier between Blairgowrie and Kirkmichael. Being much respected, he received a public presentation on Thursday, 14th October 1869, consisting of a purse containing twenty sovereigns, a silver lever watch, &c. At the same time, Mrs Small was presented with a splendid dress. Near Bannerfield, on the property of Balnald—the town at the side of the burn—Mr John Sim had a few labourers trenching a birch wood. In the course of their operations they found a number of ancient silver penny coins of the reigns of Edward I. and Edward II., of the mints of Bury St. Edmunds, Canterbury, and London.

The most noteworthy places in Strathardle and adjacent districts, and the more prominent features connected therewith, have now been noticed; and if these notes have in some degree interested the reader, and awakened a desire to see and explore for themselves the hills and glens alluded to, they will not have been written in vain. These Highland districts cannot be surpassed for beauty in all Perthshire, and parties desiring a most pleasant and interesting tour during the holiday season could not do better than take a journey through Strathardle and Athole. The mail coaches convey passengers to and from Blairgowrie and Kirkmichael, and to and from Pitlochry. By leaving Dundee, Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c., by the morning trains, the journey can be performed in a single day, and a splendid jaunt can be enjoyed, going by Blairgowrie or by Dunkeld and Pitlochry. Either route can be taken with equal facility and convenience. The route from Blairgowrie

to Kirkmichael is *via* Rattray, Craighall, Mause, Glenericht, Bridge of Cally, and Strathardle; and that from Pitlochry to Kirkmichael is *via* Moulin village, Kinaird, Badvo hill, Glenbriarachan, Strathloch, Glenfernate, Ennochdhu, "Ardil's Grave," Inverchroskie, &c. The departure and arrival of the coaches being timed to suit each other, as well as the trains at Blairgowrie and Pitlochry, it will be seen that a circuitous tour through these romantic glens can be very conveniently taken. The coaches meet at Kirkmichael Hotel, and the passengers have ample time to refresh themselves and get transferred from the one conveyance to the other. Those who have taken this circular tour from Dundee up the Highland line to Pitlochry, and from thence by Kirkmichael and Blairgowrie to Dundee, or *vice versa*, have expressed themselves as highly delighted with the journey, and state that it is a first-class one for a summer's day.

The postal arrangements in Strathardle are excellent, there being four post-offices throughout the strath, and a receiving-house at Strathloch, for the convenience of the people in that district.



