

NARRATIVES AND EXTRACTS

FROM THE

RECORDS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ELLON.

PART II.—1607 TO 1628.

BY

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ELLON.

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ELLON PRESBYTERY RECORDS.

ON a fly-leaf at the beginning of Vol. II. is pasted a very much wasted leaf, on which first is a list of 6 of the ministers, only partly distinguishable, and the object for the list is almost quite effaced. Then comes, "The Roll and ordour of ye exercesers, 1607," but it does not, in several of the names, at all correspond to that date, and as it would be misleading it is not given. It might do for the year, 1627. Below this, but in different handwriting and with no date—"Ellon payes for the burses ye . . . (wasted) as follows—9 sh. ye 100 . . . (Communicants).

	libs.	sh.
"Ellon 1002 Communicants (1200 is meant)	5	8
Udney 1000	4	10
Tarves 1000	4	10
Methlique 500 (should be 700)	3	3
Logie 400	0	36
Cruden 900	4	1
Foveraine 1000	4	10
Slaynis (a blank)	0	50."

On 4th March, 1607, when there is a meeting, only Messrs. Reid, Mitchell, Bruce and Tullidaff are present. The others, as mentioned at the close of last volume, are "south . . . and unreturnit." April, 1607. Fragments remaining, speak of taking trial of witches and delating them to the Sherriff, and executing the order of the Synod against the Laird of Essilmont howsoon he comes into the country. Two Aberdeen Ministers and Mr. John Reid "to pas to Tolquhone for taking up of all materis debaittable betwix him and Mr. Thomas Gardyne."

"In respect the Erll of Eroll is presentlie in the country. The assemblie ordaneis Mr. David Rait, Mr. Geo. Hay, Mr. Robert . . . , Mr. John Reid, Thomas Tullidaff and Mr. D. Rattray to pas on Tuesday to my lord and requyre his lordship to communicat conform to his often promises. And put Mr. Arthor Pantoun, railling papist, out of his lordship's companie. And in case of refusal or delay the presbyteries of Ellon and Turriff to proceid against his lordship *pari passu* in the sentence of Excommunication. The brother failzeing or remiss, to pay 20 libs." Mr. Rattray is ordained to go through with the Excommunication of Arthur Pantoun, and again on 11th April, and "gif he be in my

lord of Erroll's companie and cannot be personalie apprehendit (or approached) becaus he is privatlie keipit" to summon him out of the pulpit publicly. Mr. Rattray, in case he fail to obey, to be suspended. He was evidently loth to go through with the task. On the 15th he produces a letter addressed to the presbytery from the Earl. "Ryt. traist freinds, pleis understand that at ye provinciall desyre and yours I have removeit Mr. Arthur Pantoune furth altogidder of my companie, sa yat heirafter there sall be gevin na occasioun of offence to you nor them. Nather sall ye neid to use ye censurs of ye kirk agains him in yat behalf. Sa resting all forder to your consideration. My hartlie commendatioun rememberit I . . . you in protectioun of ye Almichtie. Slaynis, ye 14 of Apryl, 1607 . . . assureit freind et sic subscribitur, Erroll." This letter is accepted and is to be inserted in the Presbytery's Book, 11th April, 1607. "The presbyterie being urged be ye richt honorble. ye Lairds of Muchell and Leyis, commissioners appointit for that effect, to admit Mr. Johne Reid moderator of ye presbyterie for a certane tym conforme to ane act maid laitlye at Linlithgow thairament. And the said Mr. Johne being lykways urged to accept. The brethren and the said Mr. Johne answerit . . . they thocht it necessar to see ye said act authentiklie extractit . . . and thairafter give ressonable and discreit answer in reverence and humilitie as becom them."

Margaret King, vagabond, fugitive from the parish of Ellon "for turning the five and the schew," and returned again, and now also delated for charming and witchcraft, being called, compears not. Mr. Ro. Mercer, Minister of Ellon, brings a complaint against Thos. Cattow, kirk officer, that he had struck his servant to the great effusion of his blood, and witnesses prove that "he dang him ower ane forme and bled him." Sentence is deferred.

Wm. Udny, apparent of that Ilk, to be summoned to next meeting by a libelled summons. Wm. Scheves in Fechil is sentenced for baptizing a child in a private house there. Alexr. Carll in Watertoun complains that his wife is living with James Cuming in Scheves, in Methlick. At next meeting Robert Gray gives caution that James Cuming, servitor . . . shall appear, "and that becaus ye said James had trublit ye kirk of Ellon ye tym that the brethren war sitting in presbyterie be stricking Alexr. Carll, servitor to Mr. John Reid in Watertoun with ye gards of his sword on ye breist. When Cumming appeared he was convicted and sentenced to repentance at Methlick.

According to instructions from the Synod, Inquisition as to witches within their bounds had been made by every Session, and there was only reported one, Malie Wysak, or Wyse, "dwelling in the lands of Gicht, quha haid laitlie cum and resortit within ye parochen of Tarves." There is an inquiry into her case on 17th June. Alexr. Johnstoun in Auchedly is accused of having sent for her to cure his son, John, now dead. He said he was advised thereto by David Gordon, chirurgion, who said she could tell whether it was the "fevers" or not that ailed the sick youth. John Dovernie, being accused of conveying Malie Wyse to

Johnstoun's house, said he was bidden go for her by the said David Gordon. On his saying that he didn't know her house, a boy was sent to guide him. He said "she dwelt in the Land of Gicht, in Murefoudlands, and that he fund hir in ane toun there besyd, callit Badechell, where scho useit to haunt." She would not go along with him, but followed after. The presbyterie, "in respect the matter was weichtie," appoint to bring it before the Synod, and there is a subsequent instruction from the Synod that the minister of Methlick act in concert with the presbytery of "Gareauch," towards having Malie apprehended by the Sherriff. She had probably fled to the Garioch. No more is heard of her here.

15th April, 1607. Ochterellon represents that hired servants are in the way of casting themselves out of service in the summer season, and "living generally, to ye gryt hurt of ye common weill, and agains ye Act of Parliament that receptars of sic generall vagabonds sall pay five pounds *ad pios usus*." The presbytery are to make proclamation against this from the pulpit.

17th June, 1607. Those absent from last meeting called on to answer—Mr. Reid had to be at the marriage of his brother, Robert, minister at Banchory. Mr. John Mercer was in the south, and knew not the day of meeting. Both excuses allowed. Mr. Gardyne said "he behoveit to be present at ye uptaking of his vicariage in the lands of Tolquhone, or els to tyne his caus." This was not deemed sufficient excuse and he was fined according to the act. At next meeting he was absent, having been obliged "to pas south for sic materis as wer in Difference betwixt Tolquhone and him."

1st July, 1607. "Mr. John Reid teichit upon ye controversie *de ecclesia*. The 12 note of ye kirk allegedgit be the papistis."

There is an instruction from the Synod that Mr. Rattray shall summon the Earl of Erroll, if within his parish, "befoir ye meitting to be haldin at Halyrudhous," on the 27th August.

Patrick Chein, messenger, succeeds as officer of the kirk of Ellon, Thos Catto, deceased.

21st July. Visitation of Logy. A good report. Complaint on Alex. Buchan of Auchmacoy, that he absents himself from meetings of Session and causes the elders on his lands to do the same.

"Forsamekill as the kirk wes ruynous and not watterthicht be ressoun yat ye sklattis wes brokin and reiffin," tax masters are appointed to levy funds for the necessary repairs; they are, Turing of Foveran, Wm. Lesk of that Ilk, Wm. Strathachin of Tibbertie and James Allardes of Arthrochie. They are also to see that the kirk dykes be repaired.

23rd July. Visitation of Cruden. Here there is rather a minute questioning of the elders as to their minister, and on the Book of Discipline being called for, "Their wes na formall buik but some sewit paperis and ane quair of lous paper blank for ye maist pairt." And George Hedderwick in Ardendrat "presented ane bedrell cripell befoir the presbyterie," who had oft times asked in vain

for relief from the ministers and elders. "Ye brethren saw thereby thair wes ane neglect and cairlessness of ye puir." Wherefore the minister was admonished "to have ane formall bound buik of discipline in tyme cuming—to catechese ilk Saboth day efter none—and to have ane forder cair and provisioun for ye puir within the paroch." The kirk of Cruden, like that of Logy, is found to be riven in the slates on the south side and not watertight, and tax masters are appointed—Hay of Brunthill for Lord Erroll; Hay of Auchinten for the lands of Dame Agnes Sinclair, Lady Erroll; Hay in Graystone for the lands of Delgatie, and Hucheon in Auchleuchries for the remaining lands.

At the visitation of the other kirks this summer there are good reports. Mr. Mercer of Ellon complains of Walter Cheyne of Arnedge that though oft admonished he will not come to the kirk, and the Ministers of Tarves and Udry are appointed to "travell" with him. At Logy the Minister complains that having to get his peats from the moss of Arthraich, "throw ye grounds and lands of Auchmacoy, and ower ye wattir Ythen, Buchan of Auchmacoy had violentlie impedit him of peitget, and refuseit to give him cohill leive to transport ye said fewell ower ye wattir." He craves liberty of the presbytery "to flit and remove him self his wyf and familie to sic commodious neir adjacent place as he micht have, where he micht be servit of fewell." This is granted.

Isobel Patersoun in Knokhall is sentenced "to satisfie sax Sondays in Jogis and gones and mak repentance ye said sax Sondays in sackcloth bairfuttet and bairlegit at ye kirk of Foveran." This is a sample of several sentences about this time—instead of "gowis and branks" there is "Jogis and gones." Elspet Robertson in Newburgh, dilinquent for the fifth time, is sentenced "to satisfie 12 Sondays in sackcloth at the kirk of Foveran, in Jogis and goneis, and ye ane half of hir heid to be schaven."

25th Nov. 1607. The Bishop and two Aberdeen Ministers meet the presbytery at Ellon, "for designatioun of ane full gleib to Mr. Robert Mercer, Minister thair," but the proceedings in regard to that are not set down in this book.

16th Dec. "The said day thair wes na teiching be ressoun Mr. John Mersir quha wes appointit to teich wes absent, as also the tyme being far spent and the wedder verie evill." The Ministers of Tarves and Udry were also absent, and at next meeting they pleaded the stormy weather as excuse, which was allowed. And then it was ordained that "gif it happin thair be sae evill wedder ye appointed day" they convene not until the first Wednesday thereafter.

THE PAPISTS IN THE PRESBYTERY.

Given as in Mains of Esslemont formerly and now in Claymires, are John Cheyne, his spouse, Elspet Garioch, and their son, John. All these had been summoned to 16th Dec. 1607, but failed to compear, "to give confession of the

faith and subscribe to the same, as . . . delaitted of papisterie and Idolatrie, of recepting Jesuitts and priests and contemptening ye word." On 30th Dec. John appears in answer to his summons. He says he has already subscribed, and will attend church and cause his servants to do so, but he cannot answer for his wife—"she would do nothing for him in that poynt, nor wald not be moneit be him to be obedient to the voce of the kirk" and the same with regard to his son. The Minister, who along with Ochterellon and Wm. Chein in Esslemont "travell" with them, has to report that they refuse "in ony wayes to cum to the kirk to heir preiching and Doctrine," and they are to be excommunicated.

On the 30th March, 1608, the process of Excommunication led by the minister of Ellon is written out at great and formal length. The three admonitions, and three times prayed for, occupy six different Sundays, and, besides that it is in the presence of the general congregation, the names of three or four special witnesses are given for each time. In the end, Elspet Garioch, "contumax and obstinate papist," is declared "ane rotten member of the Misticall body of Christ, noysum and hurtfull to the congregatioun, and behoveit to be cut off as ane Rotten member." Then follows a similiar and equally long process against her son. (other like processes by different Ministers about this time are given *in extenso*.)

In Jan. 1609, when the Papists are being pressed, James Cheyne in Piltachie promises to conform. Jas. Cheyne of Pennan, summoned for living at Claymires with excommunicants, keeps out of the way. John Cheyne himself has been before several successive meetings to answer for non-attendance at church, and for receipting the excommunicated Laird of Gicht. He confessed he had not communicated since Mr. Mercer came as Minister. He had entertained Gicht and would do so again. He also makes a somewhat irrelevant charge, intended probably to show that Protestant Ministers are no better than other people. "The said Johne appinlie and publictly in presence of the presbyterie and utheris . . . said that the minister of Tranent fellit and murderit his Wyiff, and tuik in hand to prove ye same." Soon after this John is accused that a marriage had been made in his house betwixt Patrick Chein, merchant, and Jane Butter, daughter to Patrick Butter of Elrick. He denied, and said the marriage was made by his brother James, and not in his house. When James, having been summoned, appeared, he denied that he made the marriage, but John, who was present, reasserted that he did. Asked where it took place, he answered, "at ane mekill gray stane besyde ye Laird of Foveren's new hous in Mekill Tibbertie. Being inquiryt wha wes present, answerit nane except the said James, the twa pairties, and Johne Chein, excommunicant sone to the said Johne." The matter to go before the Synod.

In Jan. 1610 three tenants on the Essilmont lands who had been "resorting, eiting and drinking in Claymires with Elspet Garioch, excommunicated papist," have to give bonds to the presbytery in 10 libs each that they shall not do so

again. Seven years after this John Cheyne and his wife are given as "recepters of Jesuits," and it was shown by the Bishop that there were three "trafeking papistes hanting . . . Claymires, of surname supposed, Ogilvie, Gordoun and Cant. Ye said John Chein being bailie deput to the bishop of Saint Androis." The brethren all advised to take heed of them, and also of Gilbert Chalmer, a recusant, haunting at Claymires; also of one Brown, *alias* Makkie, lately returned, who was expelled the country not to return under pain of hanging. Yet again five years, viz. in 1623, John is charged afresh for apostacy, and this time disregards the summons, and in June of 1624, Mr. Mercer of Ellon, in reporting concerning papists, says—"And as to John Chein in Claymires, in respect he had na hope of his satled conformity since his wyf was excommunicated and his hous a receptakle for priests and Messmongers, and him self haid oft tymes promiseit and sumtymes begun to heir, bot ever haid fallin bak thairfra, he haid summoned him be a libellit summons to this day." But he appears not.

Other Papists dealt with in the first quarter of the 17th Century:

James Gray, "apperand of Scheves returnit in the countrey" in 1608, is summoned for apostacy in religion. The kirk officer of Tarves stated that he could not find him so as to deliver the summons to him in person, "bot wes informit be ye servands of ye place of Scheves that he was thair, and he saw ye said James's cloak and sword and ryding geir in ye hall of Scheves, and the Laird of Scheves elder said to ye said Thomas (the officer) that his sone culd do lytill gif he culd not keep himself yeir and Day that ane officiar apprehendit him not. Wherefore he affixit the summons on the hall door of Scheves befor witnesses." There is no appearance to the summons, but he comes up at a subsequent meeting, and being accused of "apostacie to papistrie and Idolatrie as he wha of befor haid communicat at Tarves and haid bene ane speciall elder . . . wes exhortit to joyne himself to the kirk . . . quhilk he refuseit to do." He is summoned to Ellon on 23rd Nov. to subscribe and give caution to communicate. At the same time his servitor, Wm. Seymour, delated for "railling and reasouning against religioun," is similiarly dealt with. Neither of them compeared on the 23rd which however had been a day of storm—owing to "ye rochness of ye wedder nane war convenit except ye Ministrie." The next word is that he is about to leave Scotland again, and his father sets caution that he will do so or conform—the bond is given at length. He had likely gone abroad again. There is no mention of the Grays of Scheves again until more than twelve years have passed, and it is likely that his father had been dead and that he had been the Laird alluded to in the following notices. On the 20th Feb. 1622, Wm. Setoun of Blair and Gilbert Gray, brother to the Laird of Scheves, who had been summoned as recusants, appeared and were exhorted with threatenings to conform in some measure—if they would not swear and communicate, at least to be constant hearers of the Word. "And no ways prevailing but resaveing rather disdanefull answers . . . and in speciall of the said Gilbert," the presbytery

ordained them to the censures of the kirk. In a list of papists from the Synod in May 1624, Gilbert Gray and Mr. Patrick Gray, brothers of the Laird of Scheves, are mentioned as apostates about to be excommunicated, and soon after Mr. Gardyne of Tarves reports that they "war baith past south as he hopit not to return schortlie"—which hope seems to have been fulfilled for there is no further mention of them for years. But in August following, "James Gray of Scheves" (and no doubt this is the James first mentioned) having been summoned, appears and pleads that he has but lately returned to the country to see to his worldly affairs, and asks that in "Christian humanitie he micht be overseen till ye nixt Martemes," when he will either conform or again leave the country, and meantime he will "nather ressoun, rail nor trafique, bot cary him selff calm and pieceable without offence to ony." This request was to be considered. He had likely departed again—his name disappears. In 1623, John Turing of Foveran, meantime residing in Belhelvie, comes up as a papist, and soon after the Bishop is dealing with him, but to no avail, as in a list of papists subsequently sent out by the Synod are "John Turing of Foveran, apostate, and Jane (in other places given as Barbara) Gordoun, his Lady, recusant." Soon after he promises "to be ane ordinar heirer of the Word," and is to be kept to his promise, but in the following month the Minister of Foveran has to report that he has "found no fidelitie" with him, and soon after he and his Lady go south. On their return the process against them is "walknit" (awakened) but on the 15th Dec. 1624 "Compeirit . Alex. Udny of Ochtirellon and eirnestlie travellit with the brethren for contineuation of proces against John Turing of Foveran and Barbara Gordoun his spouse, till he suld assey his travells with them for their conformitie; whereunto the presbyterie gladly yeildit and desyrit him to report the succes of his travells at the nixt meitting." However he has to report that he has small hope of him, but asks for delay in the case of his Lady. At next meeting there is notice that communications have been passing between the Archbishop of St. Andrews, the Bishop, and Turing, regarding his case, but their purport is that two members of the presbytery should first see him, and failing his conformity the process to go on. This is all of him.

"George Gordoun, younger of Gicht, Recusant, and his Lady, apostate," are in the Synod's list of 1624. These would be the son and his wife of the young Gicht of 25 years ago, whose case was of such duration. The Lady's name is Ogilvie. The Minister reports that they have promised conformity and to be ordinary hearers of the Word. At the same time the brethren are warned to accept no promises from recusants, but after this to summon them to bind themselves judicially before the presbytery; also to accept no verbal excuses through another. They are evidently very reluctant to commence attendance at church, but after some weeks the Minister gets another promise from them that they are to commence on Sunday first. Then comes a plea of sickness on the part of young Gicht—one often called into use by his father, and after a

lapse of two years the Minister can only say that he was still "travelling with them, and was in hope of their conformity becaus they did now and then resort to the heiring of the Word."

Thomas Cheyne of Ranistoun, being pressed, comes up reluctantly to swear and subscribe to the confession and give bond to the Bishop to communicate, in 1609. But 14 years after this it is found that he is again apostate, and when he is about to be excommunicated his minister says "he was labouring diligentlie ather to bring him hame, or else to mak him inexcusable." In Nov. 1624, his excommunication was announced from every pulpit.

Walter Cheyne, given in Nov. 1626, as "sum tyme of Arnedge, now in Tillidesk," is summoned as a recusant at that time. When he appeared and was accused that he absented himself as a recusant from Divine service and "contempnit thair meittingis . . . he maid sundrie excuses, pretending his age and inability." Being ordained to swear, subscribe, and communicate, he stood out to the verge of excommunication, but in the following March, Mr. Mercer of Ellon reported that he had come up to the church on the two preceeding Sundays, and that he had promised to communicate.

Gilbert Stevinsoun in Ogstoun, Slains, was a Recusant with whom the presbytery had frequently to deal. He was excommunicated in 1608, but eight years after he came up and promised to conform. The duel betwixt him and the Minister of Slains was noted before.

Patrick Con, sometimes given as of Arthrachie, sometimes as of Crawley, and Helen Kinard, his spouse, are pressed as recusants and apostate papists in 1623. Soon after it is reported that he has gone south with his master, the Earl of Erroll, and he is absent for some time. He and his wife are in the Synod's list of papists in 1624. He was a Commissioner or factor for the Earl, and there seems to have been some reluctance to go to extremities with him; indeed the Ministers of Cruden and Slains had to apply to him to get warrant from the Earl to poind the goods of delinquents where needful, and got promise from him that he would cause his officer to accompany the kirk officers and assist them. Of the Earl himself there seems to be continual distrust as to his orthodoxy, and there is frequent mention of papists in his household or service.

Besides the above, many others are given in lists of papists sent out by the Synod. In 1603 there are: Mr. John Kennedie, a Reasoner and railer after Communicating, James Chien, Pitlachie, Patrick Chien of Essilmont, Alexr. Kennedy, James Annand, brother to the Laird of Ochterellon, "reasoner, communicatts not." In 1611, James Robertson, servitor to Agnes Sinclair, Lady Erroll, a papist excommunicated by the presbytery of Lithquo (?). In 1617: "Patrick Con of Auchry, younger, and his wife: Helen Kinard, wife to Patrick Con, younger, and Margaret Chein, spouse to Patrick Con, elder: Helen Thom-soun . . . in Ulaw: the whole household of Wm. Hay . . . commoun coun . . . heg (?) of Jesuitts and in special of father Ogilvie, Jesuitt," In 1624:

Margaret Gordoun, spouse to Patrick Hepburn at the Little Mill of Essilmont, recusant: Isobell Chein, spouse to John Bruce at Mekill Mill of Essilmont, apostate (the presbytery had much to do with these two): David Sym, Chamberlain of Slains, apostate: Hew Hay in Teuchan, and his spouse, apostates. "Concerning my Lord of Erroll and his household, it is reportit that ye hail familie wes gane south to Erroll to remaine:" James Wischart of uncertain residence, "Recusant, railling trafiker and conveyer of Jesuits."

"William Setoun of Udney"—of him, in Octr., 1624, "it was reported that he had purposlie sent his sone out of the country (without Licence), and that to be traynit up in ye College of Jesuitts in West Flanders. As also John Bruce at the Mill of Essilmont had done the lyk with his sone." And Mr. Thoris, Minister of Udney, "complaneit grevouslie that notwithstanding dew intimatioun maid to Wm. Setoun of Udney, that he and his Lady, with their servands past away at the ringing of the second bell to Murray, on the day of the Fast." In connection with this the following notices may be given here. On whatever grounds, William Setoun is now given as "of Udney," and "William Udney of that Ilk" no longer so, but merely as "sum tyme of that Ilk," and in Tilliave. The latter had been dealt with by the presbytery for different delinquencies. His father, who showed such good will to the kirk when the parish of Udney was newly set up, would now (in 1622) be some time deceased. On 21st July, 1622, "William Udney of that Ilk" and Sara Chein, daughter to Walter Chein in Tillidesk, are accused of unlawful cohabitation: and on 3rd Jan., 1623—"Wm. Udney sum tyme of that Ilk and Sara Chein, dochter to Walter Chein, sum tyme of Arnedge, being excommunicat. The said Wm. for contravening his band given to the bischop to put the said Sara out of his hous and companie, as they wha war grytlie sclanderit . . . scho being his wyiffis sister. And the said Sara for hir contumacie." Intimation of their excommunication is to be made out of every pulpit. For the October Synod of 1625, it is to be remembered to ask the Bishop to interpose his authority that order be taken with "Wm. Udney in Tilliave, and Sara Chein there."

With notices of Papists within the bounds may be given; 9th Jan. 1628, "John Sym in Slainis being called . . . compeirit and . . . accused for railling against religioun and saying publictly he saw never ane guid work done sen the beginning of this religioun as thair wes done in former ages." denied the same and was summoned to next meeting with witnesses.

About the same time the Guidman of Brunthill being both aged and deadly sick, and being suspected of papistry, the Ministers of Cruden and Slains, along with his son, were appointed to confer with him. They reported at next meeting that they had done so, and found him "wilfull in mynd and weak in bodie."

THE LAST PATRICK CHEYNE OF ESSLEMONT.

There have been notices of him in the Presbytery Book before, and the few that remain agree with the former in showing that he led a dissolute and unsettled life. When he would venture to return to Esslemont the hounds of retribution and Nemesis, that were continually on his trail, would arrive soon after and hunt him adrift again. It is not said directly here if the "Dame Helen-or Bruce, Lady Essilmont," who was in power in his absence, was his mother, or rather step-mother; but she could scarcely have been any other—his wife bore a different name as seen after. In March, 1608, instructions came from the Synod to proceed against Essilmont so soon as he returned into the country, and he having done so in July, compears not, although personally summoned, to answer "for contempt of the Word and Sacraments, never cuming to ony kirk on the Saboth day: for recepting in his service John Chein, excommunicat papist, son to John Chein, Claymires. And Lykwys to heir and see ye proces of Excommunication lawfullie led agains ye said Patrick, as he wes decernit giltie with Elspet Couper in Tawartie, and convict of contumacie . . . in refusing to satisfie." All the Ministers are to proceed against him with Excommunication on the three following Sundays. At the meeting on 8th Sept. following Wm. Cheyne in Essilmont presented a letter to the presbytery from Annand of Ochtereillon, in favour of Patrick Cheyne. As the monument in Ellon kirkyard still shows, Annand was married to a Cheyne of Essilmont, probably sister to Patrick. At this meeting he is "reportit to be out of the country in Schetland" (there are Cheynes in Shetland at this day who claim descent from those of Essilmont, and Patrick's harbouring there would tend to corroborate this). Annand's letter follows: "Rycht honorable, forsamekill as I sie Mr. Robert Mersir, and I dout not bot ye remanent brethren of ye presbyterie proceeding with proces of Excommunication agains ye Laird of Essilmont, he being absent and out of ye countrey, wherein gif thai pronounce ye sentence it will be thocht not onlie be him selff but also be uthers to be verie rigorus and hard Deilling. Wherfor I have taken occasioun heirby to earnestlie request you to continew (suspend) ony forder Deilling agains him to his hame cuming that we quha are his freinds may have occasioun to confer and ressoun with him for moveing of him to obedience and he maid inexcusable in case he contempne. Quhilk my ressonable request I assure my selff ye will not refuse. Lyk as I will promise be thir presents in cace he give not obedience within 20 days efter his hame cuming, he being citit, I sall clois my mouth and never heirefter request in his favors in yat eirand, nather befor ye sentence nor efter. Quhilk with all forder I will refer to the sufficiencie of the beirar. Committing you all and your travells most hartlie to God and restis—Essilmont, ye 7 of September, 1608 yeirs at all pa . . . (?). Et sic subscribitur Alex. Annand of Ochtereillon." It is agreed to accede to this request.

The following paragraph is in the Instructions from the following October Synod. "The Laird of Essilmont is presentlie in Scotland, sa sane as he returns the presbytery to conclude the proces of Excommunication agains him, in case he satisfie not." This is the last mention of him in life. He was being drifted fast to a country from which there is no returning, and before a tribunal from which there is no turning fugitive, and the Orcadian tour by which he stayed the hand of the presbytery for a time, so far as can be judged, had led directly to his doom. If in the term, Scotland, the Synod included the Shetland and Orkney Islands, cannot be said, but it is likely that Patrick never returned from there, and that his murder took place in the Orkneys. The Earl of Orkney at the time was Patrick Stewart. His father, Robert Stewart, who was Earl before him, was an illegitimate son of King James Vth. The father bore a bad character, but in the history and legends of Orkney this Earl Patrick was an incarnation of cruelty, lust and all evil, and the doing to death of the vagabond Laird of Essilmont, if he crossed his path, would have sat lightly on his blood-blackened conscience. There is no mention of Patrick Cheyne for an interval of five months, and then the following paragraph suddenly appears: "8th March 1609. Comperit conforme to his citation Wm. Chein, Indweller within the paroche of Drumblait, and being accusit for sklanderung Magdalen Fraser, relict of umqll. Patrick Chein of Essilmont, of adulterie in hir husband's tyme with the erll of Orkney, and as airt and pairt of the murdering of hir said umqll. husband. Denyit ye sklander. and wes sumond (as also promiseit) to compeir ye nixt meitting of ye presbyterie." There is no mention of this at next meeting, nor can another word on the matter be found in the Records of the Presbytery. It was a question if it was meant that Wm. Cheyne denied having uttered the slander, or that he meant that it was no slander and that he could prove what he had said. This tragic end to one of the last Cheynes of Esslemont does not seem to be known to any writer giving an account of them. Colonel Wolrige Gordon of Esslemont says that at one time all the writs and papers of the house, old and new of every kind, were gathered together and consigned to London for examination and arrangement. After every endeavour to recover them he has, to his great regret, been forced to the conclusion that they are irretrievably lost. This isolated paragraph is thus perhaps, like a lurid flash into the darkness, all that can be had to give a glimpse and trace of some deed of tragedy and crime. There is ample evidence here to show that this last Patrick Cheyne was a loose and unprincipled liver, and the above paragraph would give grounds for suspecting that his wife, Magdalen Fraser, (whoever or whatever she may have been), was no better. Of course Patrick is now heard of no more, and what little there is in this volume further relating to the Cheynes may be given here, though it relates to a period much later. In 1620 there is mention of "Walter Sinclair, sum tyme servitor to the Laird of Essilmont, and now fugitive." In Oct. 1625, there is a projected marriage between Alex. Hay in "Erll's Seit," Cruden, and

Magdalen Cheyne in Aberdour," docher to umqll. Patrick Cheyne of Essilmont. As Hay is a Papist the Presbytery refuse to celebrate the marriage. They get married somehow, probably by a Roman Catholic priest, were living together, and were processed by the Presbytery. In the end, though after refusing for a time and evidently with reluctance, they promised to satisfy the kirk, and Mr. Rattray was ordained to marry them.

3rd Feb. 1608. Mr. Rattray, accused of absence from two last meetings, answered "he haid ane sair fuit, and wes not able to travell—as also for ye stormy wedder: this excuse wes admitted." Mr. John Mersir, accused of absence, said he went to Pitsligo the Monday before the dyet, "to dissuade the Laird from presenting the charges against the presbyteries of Mar and Garioch tuiching his admission to Coldstane," and as the Laird was not at home he tarried till his return on Thursday. There is a letter from the presbyteries of Aberdeen and Kincardine asking that of Ellon to attend a meeting of the presbyteries of the province, "and requyring them to cite Mr. John Mersir to said dyet to answer for ye charges gevin to ye presbyteries of Kincardine and Garioch, as author therof." "John Hay in Stonehoushill, Alex. Hay, his son, John Robertson, his servand . . . summondit . . . for schedding ye bluid of Gilbert Cok in Ashalloche upon Sunday ye saxt of December last, at ye kirk styll of Cruden half ane hour efter sermone . . . compeired not." The Earl of Erroll having been spoken to is to take order with them.

Gilbert Fiddler in Auchmacoy, Alex. Barnat in Mekill Auchmacoy, Gilbert Barnat in Birness, and John Harigarie in Ellon, are before the presbytery for "tulzeing and schedding each other's bluid . . . and ye bluid of . . . Lind in Bomacasie," on Sunday. On 6th Oct. Gilbert Fiddler produces the finding of a court held by Annand of Ochtrellon, extracted by Gilbert Talyeour, notary public, in which the said Gilbert Fiddler is convicted as being the "persewer" or assailant, and in the wrong. He is ordained to pay 10 merks, and to make repentance 6 Sundays in the kirk of Ellon.

2nd March. Mr. Rattray who "teiched, is admonished to teich with ane better methode in tyme cuming and not to pass ye bounds of ye hour appointed."

Mr. John Mersir, Mr. Alex. Bruce and Mr. Thos. Mitchell "regraited the Meanes of thair provisoun, and ye said Mr. John and Mr. Alex. desyrit ye presbyterie to request ye assemble in Abdn. to travell with ye principall of ye Colledge of Auld Abirdene for ane augmentatioun of thair stipends!" and Mr. Mitchell craves for the same, or "libertie of transportation." At next meeting, "the Laird of Haddo younger having send ane letter . . . desyring that Mr. Thos. Gardyne might be sent in commission . . . to travell with the principall and Colledge of Auld Abirdene for Augmentation of ane stipend to Mr. John Mersir," it was agreed to.

The Synod instructs the Presbytery to require the Earl of Erroll to communicate on the first Sunday of April at either Cruden or Turriff, as he prefers.

13th April 1608. "Mr. Thos. Mitchell being appointed to teich and Mr. Robert Mersir to adde. The said Mr. Thos. taryit sa lang till ye time wes spent, and being accused . . . answerit he wes retained be the Laird of Auchmacoy against his will. And ye said Mr. Robert wes lying bed seik, sa thair wes na teiching."

5th May. Patrick Annand in Fechil craves delay in the process against him till next meeting, when he will appear "gif he war in this countrey out of Edinburgh with his aittis (oats) quhilk he wes to sell thair."

THE STIPEND OF UDNY.

There is continued difficulty in getting sufficient provision for the Minister, and in 1608 the Synod send instructions to the Presbytery to use their endeavours for this. The Ministers of Ellon, Logy, Foveran and Tarves, undertake to supply one half of a competent stipend (which is reckoned at four chalders) provided the heritors make up the other half. At the Visitation of Udney, in Nov., 1609, when the Bishop and his brother are present, it is stated that Mr. Mitchell has been preaching every alternate Sunday at Bourtie in order to eke out a living, and the presbytery of Garioch wish him to settle at Bourtie, in which case they would provide for him, or to desist from serving there in order that they may plant another. The heritors present, after conference among themselves, promise, through Mr. Thos. Maitland of Auchincrive, to make up half the stipend, "bot refuseit to give their wreitt thereupon." At the Visitation in July, 1610, the heritors, headed by Udney, undertake to provide, in 200 merks money and in victual, the two chalders required of them; but some of them are hanging back. Mr. Mitchell, who has had a call to Alford, is urged by the brethren to remain. However, after a lapse of six years the matter remains unsettled. On 8th May, 1616, Mr. A. Blackburn and Mr. J. Ross, ministers in Aberdeen, come out to the Visitation of Udney (which however on this occasion is held at Ellon), in virtue of a Commission they hold from the Archbishop of St. Andrews, of date, 20th Dec., 1615, as also a Commission from "ane reverend father in God, Peter, bishop of Abdn."—no date. A number of Udney heritors are present—Tolquhon, Pitmedden, Cairnfechil, Schethin (for his lands in Udney) and Dumbreck. Tolquhon promises yearly, as had been his wont, (for Bonakettill—two ploughs paying 6 chalders) two bolls meal. Patrick Leith of Rayne, Commissioner for Udney, his father-in-law, shews that Udney had given freely the Manse and Gleib, and would give yearly as before two bolls victual for the Mains of Udney and Tilliave, and would give in augmentation the vicarage of Mains of Udney, Kilmorthe and Ardmuir. Patrick Maitland of Cairnfechil would give

yearly 10 libs. silver, Scots, beyond what his tenants payed. Mr. Jas. . . . of Drumbreck promises 4 bolls, as my lord Elphinstoun payed. Alexr. Setoun, apparent of Pitmedden, says the Minister had a bond from his father and himself for 4 bolls, which bond he requires back and then will give his answer, "and could be na intreatie be inducit to agment or continew that quhilk he haid gevin befor, notwithstanding he haid 30 chalders victuall lyand within the said parochie, and with all haid in his awn possessioun baith teind schaf and teind vicariage of his haill lands." The Minister of Tarves promises 1 boll meal for the wodset of the Miln and Miln lands of Udney during his wodset, "and being delt with as he wha haid bocht lang takis of ye vicariage of ye . . . Miln lands of Udney from ye Abbot, to ye kirk's prejudice, wherof he haid only ye wodset to demit ye same in favours of the Minister, refusit, affirming that he had gevin the same in wodset to ye tenent occupier . . ." George Seatoun of Schethin promises to pay *pro rata* with the others so soon as he gets a place "for building of a Deiss in the said kirk." The heritors who are absent, and such as had not conformed, are to be summoned before the Bishop. It will be seen that the victual promised comes much short of the two chalders or 32 bolls required from among the heritors. The Commissioners, regretting that their efforts had availed little, took to be advised of the Bishop, and are to acquaint the Archbishop of their diligence, in order to a remedy, "and that in respect they knew the haill heritors to be sic whom God had blissit beyond utheris in outwards, and . . . for the maist part haid in thair awn possessioun baith personage and vicariage of thair haill lands."

In August, 1617, as there is lack of room in the kirk, there is a request for a meeting of heritors to sanction the erection of lofts, on the part of Shethin, Barclay of Tilliecorrhie, and the Minister on behalf of Menzies of Pitfodels. These heritors are allowed to have done their part towards a provision for the Minister.

Seven years after this, viz. at the Visitation of Udney in Sept., 1624, and when another Laird of Udney has arisen who is less generously disposed towards the kirk than his predecessor, the miscellaneous perquisites of the Minister are given with some minuteness in order that they may not lie unclaimed and fall into disuse. Mr. Thos. Thoris (the minister at the time) being enquired of, said he had got possession of the Manse and gleib, but not of the other privileges. Mr. Mitchell, former minister, being asked what these were, said he had been Minister at Udney for 18 years and should tell all truly. From the first designation of the gleib he was put in possession of ample privileges and kept them all the time. "He had ever ane hors, twa or thrie ky, ane dusson or saxtein yewis gangand with the Laird's and Lady's showeit guidis (show cattle or sheep) in haynit girss. Lykwayes of yeild cattell sax or sevin heid with sum tymes 20 or 30 yeild scheip gangand throw the toun with the common guidis keipit be the common hird, payand his pairt of the hird's feis." He had also faill, divots and

peats, in most commodious manner after the Laird was served. Mr. Thoris is ordained to take possession of all these privileges, and no ways allow the kirk to be dispossessed thereof. There is a good report of the Minister given by his elders, but both he and they complain that for want of means he cannot be resident among them, in respect the heritors who should have special care thereof were backward with help.

26th May, 1608. "James Duncan in Karnebrogie . . . sworn . . . deponit that Wm. Johnstoun in Drumbrek, and Simon Elphinstoun thair lay in wait in ane valley ane Sunday as ye said James wes passing to the kirk, and thair persewit him and strak him to the eird, and that the said William Johnstoun held him while he tuik his wappinis fra him, and that he red him self of ye said William, and that ye said Simon bad ye said William strik ane gardie fra him, and ye said William strake him with ane battoun and persewit him of his lyff." They are summoned to Udney, compear, and are convicted and sentenced to pay 5 merks and to repentance on thrie Sundays. There is a good deal to do about this time in censuring and punishing parties for receipting the "Egyptians" or gypsies, and from the Synod there come repeated injunctions against them and those who harbour them, over a number of years.

TILLIELT AND THE MINISTER.

19th July, 1608. Tarves Visitation. An excellent report in all points is given of the Minister by his elders, but there is a complaint and counter complaint as between him and old John Gordon of Tillielt. In the first place, Tillielt says that, order being taken in the Session of Tarves against vagabonds and such like, he himself had declared one, Boghous, a servant of his own, to be "ane ydill vagabond . . . drunkard . . . tuilzeor and nicht walker, quhilk (said he) I spake then rather to threitten (or frighten) my servand nor delait him;" and he complains that Mr. Gardyne had "Imbuikit ane act" upon this as a delation, and given extracts to others to the intent that Boghous might be apprehended and delivered to the Sherriff. The presbytery hold Mr. Gardyne blameless, seeing it was done by advice of the Session, and subscribed by some of the elders. Mr. Gardyne's complaint against Tillielt is that one Sunday when he was in the pulpit and had ended the sermon, but before he had said the prayer and blessing, Tillielt had openly, in audience of the congregation, accused him, "saying he had put in bluidie acts in his book of Discipline . . . to ye intent to apprehend Boghous, his servand as a thief, and to deliver him to the Sherriff to be persewit of his lyif"—and more about giving "furth sic bluidie acts." "The brethren efter advysement Dischargeit and Depryvit ye said John from

being ane elder in ye session of Tarves, and summoned him *apud acta* to compier at Methlick ye tent day of August to heir and sie ye finall sentence pronounceit anent ye injurie forsaid, quha being sumond as said is be ye moderator, answered The Devill a fuit would he come, and so past away." On 10th Augt., at Methlick he compears not in answer to his summons, and is to be processed with excommunication, but there is no further mention of that. The matter had been compromised somehow though it does not appear here.

At Cruden, on 25th August, Robert Kailman, piper, with others from about Artrochie, are up for drinking, piping and dancing openly in the fields three several Sundays. He has to appear again on the 22nd, and then he pleads when accused of "convening ye countrey to Dansing in the fields on Sundays," that "there wes the lyk sensyne on Sondag . . . in John Alleis hous in Westertoun in Cruden, at ane mariage there quhilk wes solempnizit be Mr. David Rattray . . . and that he wes able to prove . . . that there wes drinking in housis and fuitball and playing and dansing opinlie in the fields—the people of the paroches adjacent convening in gryt numbers." Mr. Rattray said he only consented to make the marriage on condition there should be no profanation of the Sabbath. He is rebuked, and the piper is sentenced to pay 13sh. 4d. and make repentance at Logie, "as ane fornicator in all poynts."

At Slains there is complaint that order cannot be taken with breakers of the Sabbath. Julius Anderson, kirk officer there, is deposed "for his misbehavior and irreverent language befor the presbyterie and elders," and Andrew Robertson, schoolmaster, is admitted as Reader and kirk officer.

James Walker in Drumquhendill, for "bringing claith and receaving claith to walk" at the kirk of Tarves on Sundays, has to appear. He pleads that it is his craft, and asks that a day be appointed to him. The presbytery give him Saturdays and debar him from Sundays.

Patrick Findlay, fisher in Newburgh, accused for "giving his bairne (being an infant, and the mother thair of depairtit this lyif) to be nurischit be ane vagabund auld beggar . . . confessed, and was ordaneit to get ane nurse and milkwoman to foster ye chyld under paine of excommunication."

"Comperit Gilbert Kintor, reider and officiar at ye kirk of Foveren, and being accusit of Drinking extraordinarie, playilg at Cards and Dyce with infamous persounes, and of prophane misbehaviour in speiches, for ye quhilk he haid satisfeit at ye kirk . . . and yet wes alledgit to continue in these uyses notwithstanding. Wherefore he band . . . him self in cace he was convict be thair wisdomes again of extraordinar Drinking in ailhouses, playing at Cards or Dyce, or prophane misbehavitour, he suld be depyveit *simpliciter* of all office . . ."

6th Oct. 1608. "Comperit Wm. Lesk of that Ilk and Adame Gordoun, brother german to Geo. Gordoun of Gicht, Desyring mariage to be grantit to ye said Adame . . . and Isobell Lesk, dochter to the said Wm. . . . Ye said Adame wes willing to satisfie for entyceing ye said Isobell out of hir father's

hous." They are to pay 5 merks each and make repentance at Ellon kirk in the first place.

The Minister of Ellon submits process of Excommunication against Geo. Watson in Bomacassie for assaulting and wounding another on Sunday, and for subsequent contumacy. It is approved.

Among the Instructions from the October Synod of 1608 is one to look out for Witches and delate them; and a notice as to the "personage of Methlick, of lait annexed to the colledge"—that the Principal will be urged for the dissolution of that, which failing, appeal to be made to an ordinary Judge.

2nd Nov. 1608. A Newburgh piper is again convicted and sentenced for piping on Sunday, and George Gardner for dancing to him.

Mr. Mercer of Ellon states that when he was reproving one of his parishioners for Sabbath breaking, he cast up that the Minister of Cruden was a greater offender in that. On Mr. Rattray being called on to say if it was true that "upon Sunday preceding Lowren fair, he with his wyf and sum servands tuik Jorney fra his hous in the morning agetwards towards Lowren fair, and left his charge and travellit that haill day," he confessed it was so. "Inquyrit gif he haid sanctifeit the Saboth that day be repairing to ony kirk, answerit that he purposit to have sanctifeit it at the kirk of Belhelvie, but the pepill war disolveit and the Doctrine ended befor he cum thair. Always he schew that he wes greiveit with his fact of ye prophanation . . . to the evill example of utheris." He is rebuked meantime and judgment is deferred, and the matter having been submitted to the Synod it is ordained that he shall make a public confession of his offence after sermon—Mr. Bruce of Slains to be witness.

7th Decr., 1608. James Innes in Chapelton of Scheves, accused of receipting John Marr, excommunicated vagabond, says that when he was lying so sick as to know nothing, his wife took him in "to big his corn, and affirmit the same be aithis and attestatiounis." He is admonished and his wife is to be summoned. After this others in Drumkindle and Tillidesk are taken to task for harbouring this John Marr—others for harbouring the "Egyptians."

11th Jan. 1609. John Christell delinquent, at Orchartoun is sentenced "to satisfie 12 Sondagis in Jogis and gones, bairfuitted and bairleggit in sackcloth, with his half-heid and beird schaven . . . at the kirk of Udny . . ."

Robert Keith in Newburgh, who had before been interdicted from keeping a school, now craves and obtains leave to open one on his setting caution to obey the kirk.

8th March. Thos. Robertson in Slains complains that John Barrie and Robert Mitchell there, and others, had upon Sunday, 19th Feb "under sylence of nicht persewit him of his lyif, woundit him in the face, and mutilat his wyiff." The accused, who had been summoned, appear not.

The following refers to some old Scottish mummary or show now out of knowledge. The "gay meir" or mare (spelt "meir" elsewhere here, where that

animal is clearly meant) would appear to have been one educated to dance to music. The practice of "thigging" (here spelt queerly)—some needy crofter perambulating the country with a sack and getting corn in driblets to sow his land—is perhaps not yet extinct. Wm. Low, in Stanehouse of Gicht, piper, and Robert Watsoun in Wodhead of Fetterletter, are summoned for profanation of the Sabbath "be gaming with a gay meir and fiddlers within the paroche of Methlick." When the piper comes up he sets caution in 10 merks "not to do the lyk againe," and is dismissed with an admonition. Watsoun accused of "profanatioun of the Saboth be dansing with ane gay meir . . . confessit that being ane pur man haveing ane croft and peis Land he devysit this play and dansing of ane gay meir to be ane motive to him to get corne be thihging to saw his Land, as he gat in deid." He is ordained to repentance at Methlick, and in case of failure Mr. Jerome Innes (Minister of Fyvie) is to get notice to proceed against him.

Elspeit Tailyeour in Watertoun alleges that George Bannerman of Watertoun (lately deceased) was the father of an illegitimate child for which she craves baptism.

Andrew Elmslie in Mynnes and Catherine Vaus in Saak, delinquents before the presbytery, are summoned to appear again at next meeting. "The said Catherine answerit scho wald not be sumond about with sic a sturgit knave fra kirk to kirk."

"Janet Scheves, spouse to John Polsoun in Clayhills, with mourning and teiris schew that George Bannerman, son to umqll. Wm. Bannerman in Clayhills, under sylence of nicht at bed tyme (hir husband being fra hame) brak up ye duris upon her . . . scho crying aloud and folks of the toun behalding, heiring and leuking at the duris and lum, durst not cum in for him. The said George, summoned, compeirit not . . ."

Among Instructions from the Synod are: 4th. "The Laird of Haddo elder, his Lady, and the Lands pertaining to them, belonging of auld to the kirk of Meithlik, are appointed to resort to thair awn paroche kirk."

5th. "Ye Lands heritable pertaining to the Lairds of Lesk annexit to ye kirk of Slaynis, the assemblie ordains them to resort to thair own paroche kirk of Ellon."

At the Visitation of Logy, 12th April, 1609, measures are taken for "theiking and sklaitting" of the kirk. The slates to be brought by sea from either Caithness or Dundee as they may best be had.

Ellon 24th May, 1609. The Bishop and his brother, Archibald, are present. Perhaps at the Bishop's instance, "baith the teichers and the adders war rebuikit for tediousness and extending ye tyme appointed for the exercesers to speik." The usual verdict has been—"The Doctrine having been censurit wes allowed." It is ordained here "that in tyme cuming the first speiker sall onlie expone ye text, resolve ye Douts aryissing upon ye same, vindicate ye errors, reconcile ye

places. And ye secund speiker sall rais the Doctrine, apply the same with the uses therof, and that they exceid not the tyme appointed." The Bishop and brother, as Commissioners from the Burgh of Abdn, ask for a contribution for reparation of the Bridge of Don, which it is agreed to raise. At next meeting—"Thair wes na Doctrine because Mr. Thos. Mitchell wha suld have teichit wes absent, being withdrawn be the bischopis employment in ane secreit errand . . ." Other evidence shows that Mr. Mitchell of Udney was a personal friend with the Bishop.

28th June. "Mr. Thos. Mitchell teichit upon ye controversie, *utrum consilii possunt errare*. Efter prayer the Doctrine beand censurit, he wes fund falt with, that in teiching ye contraversie he haid hippit sum questiounis. And thairfor *in penam* wes ordaneit to teich againe the dew questioun quhilk he suld have teichit ye next tyme that ye contraversie beis teichit."

Mr. Mitchell asks leave of absence to go on a visit to his mother. He has got word from her that his two sisters are dead, and she wishes to see him.

12th July, 1609. Visitation of Methlick. "The presbyterie having enterit in tryall of Mr. John Mersir and elders of the congregation. Sic wes the unrewlines of the said Maister Johne and he and Mr. Robert Maitland of Auchincrive enterit in sic contentious raillingis fra ye quhilk nather of them could be restraynit be ye voce of the presbyterie, that Mr. Robert Maitland depairtit and with him a number of the elders, that the presbyterie throw thair contentiounis and depairting forsaid war compellit altoggider to leif matteris belangand to the said congregation and visitation therof." At last meeting there were complaints and counter-complaints betwixt the Minister and his kirk officer. They were to have been taken up to-day but there is no mention of them. The Minister and Maitland are to be summoned before the Synod.

Ellon, 26th July. Wm. Udney, fiar of that ilk, to be summoned before the Synod, for making a disturbance in the kirk of Foveran in time of Communion Service on the 23rd—"Injuireing (not personally—rather insulting) Thomas Tullidaff, Minister . . . publictly in audience of the congregatioun . . . perturbing the order of the kirk in tyme of Devyne Service and making a tumult," and causing his servant to do the same. He has also to satisfy for his delinquency with Marjorie Gordoun, spouse to Charles Scheris.

17th Aug. Foveran Visitation. A good report. The kirk officer is again severely rebuked for his drunkenness, and young Udney's servant for his part in the irreverence at the late Communion. A case of great brutality on the part of a husband is before the Presbytery. The manners of the people were evidently rude and rough, but it should be remembered it was the worst manners the presbytery had to deal with. Thomas Umphray in Foveran complains that his wife, Margaret Hardy, had deserted him, and that Gilbert Tailyeour in Birness had taken her into his service. His wife complains that she was struck and abused by him, often to the effusion of her blood, "and wes brydillit and dung

be him, and that he wald draw his quhinger and sword to hir, bosting to slay hir gif scho tauld that scho wes brydillit, and thairfor scho durst not byd with him . . . for feir of hir lyif." A number of witnesses are examined, Wm. Vaus in Saak depones that "oft and dyvers tymes he saw the said Margaret mourn for the strais that scho haid gottin when the said Thomas dang hir, and saw ye weds and bluidie and bla strais on hir body bot saw them not laid on." John Foularton depones that "He saw Margaret Hardy cum to the Lady Foveran in Saak . . . with hir hair about hir ein, greitting, wha haid bluidie and bla strais on hir body." The Lady bade this witness go back with her to her husband, and reprove him in her name, but he had been frightened and refused. Then she sent with her Mage Mar, her servant, who reported on her return that "when she reprovit the said Thomas in the said Lady's name, he tuik ane staik of ane byre and threitinit to give hir als mekill gif scho spak mony words." Catharine Jamesoun deponed that twice she saw the said Margaret have the "Wedds and bla strais on hir body and . . . mourn that scho wes dung, and ains . . . scho saw the said Thomas cuf her." Wm. Barnat in Birness deponed that "as he was passing to ane market he saw the said Thomas cast the said Margaret ower ane gutter and strak hir with his neaffis, and tuik his knyf furth to have cuttit her claes, and the said Thomas sister stayit him and tuik ye knyf fra him." Gilbert Barnat deponed that he heard the said Thomas say "he suld cut ye said Margaret in collops with his knyf." Elspet Grieve in Birness deponed that while she was working in John Anstein's barn she saw the said Thomas enter Gilbert Tailleur's house where his wife was, and as Gilbert and his wife were from home and she feared violence, she went to the house. The said Thomas after threatening his wife, who gave "myld answers," said "Quhat wald ye say to tak you presentlie be the hair—she answerit, he nicht—it wes not ye first tyme . . . And then he rais and thryse drew her but and ben be ye hair and strak hir with his neaffis, the deponer standing trymling for feir and durst not red. Thairefter he traillit hir out at the dur be the hair and thrie times swakit hir to the eirth on the stanes and ower gutters to the pealls of the hous, then utheris cam by and beheld him draw ane knyf to have cuttit her claes, and his sister being besyd threw the knyf out of his hand or els he had cuttit them." The Minister and elders of Foveran, being enquired of, affirmed the said Thomas to be a cruell and barbarous striker of his wyf, a drunkard, ane waster . . . and bruittit ane theif." James Reidfurd, an elder, said that when the said Thomas was in Knapslesk, on the land of Wm. Lorimer, burgess of Abdn., Lorimer offered him 100 libs to get the said Thomas out of his land, "and tak him fra him: and gave him ane firlat of salt and ane stane of yrn" (iron). They all witnessed likewise that his wife was "ane meik and myld persoun, and weill instructit and brocht up in hir youth." She had told the minister secretly that she feared to keep house with her husband not only for his cruelty but for his character as a thief as well. It is ordained that

she live apart from him, either at her father's or at Gilbert Tailleur's. The savage gets no sentence.

At this meeting there is an end of a protracted case. Gilis Keyth of Fechil, who "corrected" the Ellon schoolmaster so vigourously five years before this, has been again in evidence. She was excommunicated, but the sentence must have been relaxed else the present suit would not have been entertained; but that might well have been, and have been recorded in one of the wide intervals of which the Records are lost. There have been some aspersions cast on her virtue by parties in Fechil, John Reid there being the principal offender. For months back she has been present at meeting after meeting, in a state of resentment and vengeance, pressing for redress of the slander with extraordinary pertinacity. There are subterfuges resorted to by her slanderers—evasion and evident fear to confront her before the Presbytery, and they can give no good grounds for their allegations. John Reid had said Gilis could do strange things when she put on her mask. John is convicted of the slander at last and sentenced to pay a fine of two merks, to make repentance in the kirk of Ellon, and crave forgiveness of Gilis. Her name is here spelt "Geills." Her husband, Andrew Ross, is scarcely mentioned in the proceedings, and seems to have been of little account.

At the Visitations of the kirks in the latter part of this summer (1609) all is well. The Minister of Ellon complains that some of the elders are lax in their duties, and that certain of the townsmen of Ellon drink, "and browsters sell aill" in time of Divine Service. At Tarves the kirk officer has to be reprov'd for his drunkenness. Complaints of Sunday labouring at Cruden, "leiding, scheiring, milling, killing, windowing and siclyk." At Slains, Wm. Anderson in Clochtow is sentenced to "repentance 10 Sondays in Jogis and goneis, cled in sackcloth, bairfuttet and bairlegit, with his half-heid and beird schaven."

The "half-heid" was what would now be called "the side of the head." Occasionally it is mentioned here that one struck another on the "half-heid." The grotesque punishment of shaving one side of the head from the crown downwards (in the case of men to the point of the chin) must have made the delinquent a marvel from whichever side looked at. It was inflicted but seldom on men—this Clochtow man is only the third that has been noted up to this time. To women it was administered more freely. To be "bairfuttit and bairlegit" and draped in the sinister sackcloth was a necessary accompaniment to the shaven "half-heid," and the prospect of the spectacle of some well known delinquent in such a case, though it could not have conduced to solemnity, may have done more to swell the congregation than all the eloquence of the preacher, and might have tempted even Gicht himself "to repaire to Doctrine."

In the case of a brawl on a Sunday between Norman and Wm. Udney on one side, and Andrew Duncan on the other, a witness from Craibedona deponed that "they war all drunken and full of drink—that Wm. Udney wes persewer and strak Andrew Duncan with a Durk . . . he saw Andrew cast a stane at Wm. Udney,

and mist him and strak Norman with it and bled him, and the said Norman strak nane." Norman is absolved and the other two sentenced to repentance.

19th Octr. 1609. Andrew Elphinstoun and James Milne in Dumbrek, accused of Sabbath fighting and bloodshed, shew that they were absolved thereof "in my lord Elphinstoun's court haldin at Dumbrek."

When two women in Dumbreck who have been repeatedly summoned come up for trial, it is witnessed by one that "Janet Elphinstoun strak first at Christen Leiper with a number of keyis, bot quhidder scho missed hir or not he culd not tell. Then the said Christen strak hir with ane stoup upon the heid to the effusion of hir bluid." The said Janet as "persewer" is sentenced to repentance at Udney.

6th Decr. Two cases of fighting and bloodshed on Sunday. Helen Smyth in Greenmyre (somewhere in Ellon parish) accused of refusing to marry John Wobster in Dorbshill after their banns had been proclaimed, says—"The said Johne had persuadit hir with fair words to consent to their contract when scho knew him not, and now scho knawis him and lyks him not, and wald never marie him." She is ordained to pay 5 libs *ad pois usus*, and to repentance at Ellon.

26th Jan., 1610. "Mr. Thos. Gardyne teichit . . . The Doctrine beand censurit the said Mr. Thomas was admonishit not to use sic oft repetition and drebiling of the word Lord, and to forbeir sic gesture as he useit be elevation of his voce, and to keip methode according to the former ordinance set down . . ." Compeared George Greve in Auchincrive to answer for shedding the blood of David Wilson in Culcaikis (Quilcox) of Scheves. A Decreet Arbitrall was produced to shew that the matter had been settled. It is dated at the "Cobill Staik of Auchincrive." There are two friends chosen by each party. Geo. Greve, who acknowledged that he had shed "the said David's bluid in gryt quantitie," had offered him first an ox in compensation, which was refused. The arbiters decree that he shall pay 10 libs, and with this both parties are content, and had promised to abide by the decision before the Session of Methlick, viz. "George Gordoun of Haddo, Mr. Jas. Maitland in Brakla Andet, Wm. Chalmer in Colynie," and a number of others. One of the Arbiters has to get his hand led at the pen by the notary, "becaus I can not wreitt my self," and this the notary, Jacobus Maitland, as with a flourish of trumpets, announces immediately after in Latin. Nevertheless, as the said George had at first denied the assault, and as it took place on a Sabbath in harvest last, about sunset, he was sentenced to penalty and repentance at Tarves.

31st Jan. "Mr. Thomas Gardyne teichit upon the contraversie . . . It was ordanit that in all tyme cuming ye exercecer sall put in wreitt that quhilk he is to teich, and bring ye same with him . . . and that baith of ye contraversie and ye ordinar exercece, to the end that gif he speik ony thing whereof he may be censurit he sall schew his diligence in studie, and warrand of his doctrine." The addition at next meeting to be by Mr. Robt. Watson, schoolmaster at

Auchmacoy. There are several notices at this time of a skirmish in Newburgh on Sunday between two women, Annable Deirie and Bessie Fraser. The witnesses are Patrick Findlay and his wife, Margaret Anstein. They depone that Annable was the first to begin in words, and Bessie in blows. However, Annable "drew the said Bessie's bluid," but, as Patrick said, "the said Bessie come thairefter to cast ane stane at the said Annable, and he himself stayit hir." They are both convicted and sentenced to pay 10 merks and make repentance at Foveran "as fornicators in all points."

Another brawl in the parish of Udney, where women are chiefly concerned, comes up this day. The evidence shows that Elspet Duncan, spouse to Wm. Udney in Makterrie, had followed up a servant who ran away from her to Bogfechil. As she had given the girl clothes, she stripped these off her back when she got hands on her, and Patrick Robertson came, and "strak hir to the ground with his hand on the heid." Then his wife, Margaret Hill, "raif the clais quhilk the said Elspet haid takin af hir fugitive lass," and when Elspet tried to hinder hir, she "strak hir to the eirth and dang hir;" and Janet Rikkard, her mother, would suffer none to interfere, "bot violentlie stayit all redders. The said Patrick lykwyse drew ane durk with intentioun, gif he haid not been stayit be the bystanders, to have strukin ye said Elspet." Another witness said he saw the said Margaret above the said Elspet striking her, while her mother would suffer none to interfere, but he did so at last in spite of her. The said Patrick is sentenced to repentance and to pay 10 merks, and as his wife and her mother have not come forward they are to be processed.

There is a letter from "Mr. Peter Blackburn, bischop of Abdn., in favour of the Commissioners," asking for a return of the deaths within the parishes since last return was sent in. Calls similar to this for "Returns of Defuncts" come from time to time through the Bishop, but there seems to have been considerable laxity in giving them in.

DAME AGNES GORDON (Lady Haddo, elder)—1610.

On 14th Feb., 1610. Agnes Gordoun, Lady Haddo, elder, having been delated by the Minister and Session of Methlick as guilty of infidelity to her husband, (James Gordoun, elder, Laird of Haddo,) with Patrick Barklay, their servitor or retainer, appears before the presbytery. Being accused, she denies the charge upon her oath, and after an admonition to her "to avoid suspicious societie" with him, she is ordained to remove him at Whitsunday from their service, under pain of being held confessed to the charge against her (which is repeated again and again with downright and other iteration). Her name here is given as Jane, but that is a mistake which is corrected in the subsequent entries. At the previous meeting, Patrick Barclay had been up on this charge, which he

had likewise denied upon oath, and he had been similarly admonished and ordained to remove. It is now 11 years since the peculiar marriage of Agnes Gordoun (daughter of Tillielt) to James Gordoun of Haddo, took place, and a few years after that a charge similar to this, against her and "George Gordoun, son to Robert Gordoun," led to a tumult in the kirk of Cruden. Since then till now, a period of six or seven years, her name has not appeared here. At the time of her marriage to the elder Laird, a widower, the young Laird was married, and he and his Lady had a separate residence and establishment—most likely the "Place of Kelly" mentioned here. The entries are scattered and of considerable prolixity, and if their substance be given here it will be enough. The original is sufficiently legible, scattered over the year 1610, and on to April, 1611. As usual, the quarrelsome and litigious Minister of Methlick is in the thickest of the fray—a bitter enemy to Dame Agnes, and having considerable influence over the young Laird, between whom and his stepmother there seems to have been no good feeling; indeed she accused the Minister of having bewitched the young Laird, so that he could not keep away from his company. The old Laird is little heard of at this time.

The term of Whitsunday had well past, but Patrick Barklay was not removed, and therefore both the Lady and he are again charged to appear. Neither of them pay heed to the summons, given again and again, until the excommunication, which is threatened, be coming dangerously near. Both appear at a Presbytery meeting at Foveran, on 18th Sept., and Dame Agnes takes the initiative in the inevitable battle by making an accusation against Mr. John Mercer, the Minister. She is told that it will not be heeded until she set caution "to obey the voice of the kirk" in other matters. George Barklay of Auchreddie comes forward and offers this—100 libs. Scots (the servitor or squire, Patrick Barklay, had likely been of this family—that of Towie-Barclay). James Birnie, notary public, obliges himself to relieve the said George, and the Laird of Haddo, elder, obliges himself to relieve the said James Birnie; and this is accepted. Then the Dame is taken to task on the old charge. Inquired at if she was not admonished on 14th Feb. to avoid suspicious society with Patrick Barklay, and to have him removed at Whitsunday, and if he was not still in their service, she said all that was true—"it was the Laird hir husband that held him in service, and not she—it was his deid." Inquired if she had not only consented but "gevin counsell and persuadit ye Laird, hir husband, to reteine him," she said she had, "and wald reteine him still in service yit." "Being inquiryt gif scho haid riddin on horsbak behind the said Patrik betwix touns, and namelie betwix Kellie and Haddo, sen ye admonitioun, confessit ye same, bot alledgit ther wes ever companie with them. Being inquiryt gif scho lay ane nicht in ane barne of Kellie, the Laird, hir husband, being in the Place of Kellie, the said Patrik lay in that barne also, confessit scho lay that nicht in that barne, and ye said Patrik lay in ane uther Bed there besyd and uther men with him." Nō

explanation of this latter adventure is asked for or given. Patrick Barklay had been examined immediately before this, but the questions put to him, and his answers, are nearly identical with the last. "Being accusit that he haid his cloak cassin ower hir" when she was on horseback behind him, he denied it.

The battle between the Dame and the Minister comes on next. The Minister's complaint is taken first, and it was that she had called him perjured, and also that he was a Witch and had bewitched the Laird of Haddo, younger, "in sic sort that he culd not fle the companie of the said Mr. Johne." She had also said of him "that gif a chayne wer away Mr. Johne Mersir culd gar a cock craw under a cauldron to get it agane." There is a puzzling complexity about this latter impeachment. Some gold chain of value might have gone amissing from young Haddo's household or elsewhere, but how it was to be recovered by the crowing of a cock under a cauldron, is one of the lost arts, and a mystery of witchcraft seldom, if ever, mentioned now. The *status* of the cock would have been that of one darkened up and completely over-canopied by the cauldron set on its mouth. This being so, perhaps the procedure meant was that when the skilled person approached the place where lay the missing article, or in the case of theft touched or named the delinquent, the cock would crow beneath the cauldron—but this is only surmise. Being called on to answer, Dame Agnes denied that she had called the Minister a perjured man or a witch, but granted that she said "the haill servants and countrey said he had bewitchit the Young Laird." She granted also that she said she had heard that Mr. John Mersir said "gif ony thing wer away he culd gar a cok craw under a caudron to get it again." The Minister asks for no further proof, and she now gives in her complaint against him, viz. that he called her a "Deboshit harlat," and that he should prove it. George Barclay of Auchreddie and Lawrence Chein in Braklay, who were with her, affirmed on their conscience that, so far as they understood, the said Agnes had just cause to pursue the said Mr. John. The Minister, called on, confessed that having been sent for by the young Laird, who retained him against his will, and being at "godlie conference" with him and with James Ogilvie, apparent of Glass, George Gordoun, brother to Lesmoir, and others, "Scho cam to flyt with him" (or "have it out with him") "of purpose, beand hir errand there, and efter many railling speiches utterit be hir agains him when scho callit him deboshit screinger, he grantit he callit hir deboshit harlat." The young Laird of Haddo and young Ogilvie of Glass, being present, were called on. Haddo stated that he did call her so, but after great temptation and railling speeches uttered by the said Agnes. Ogilvie deponed that he heard the said Agnes say "that althocht scho haid not been invited be ye Lady, scho wes of mynd to cum and flyt with Mr. John Mersir." In the end, the Minister, Dame Agnes and Patrick Barklay are "summoned *apud acta* to compeir ye secund Wednesday of Oct. next in ye Sinodall Assemblie of Abdn. To heir and sie ye finall sentence of ye assemblie there in the materis above wretin."

It was characteristic of the daring and apparently unscrupulous daughter of Tillielt that she should break in upon her enemy and arraign him in the midst of his friends. When her resolute step had been heard in the passages of the "laigh bigging," and perhaps some sharp toned enquiry at a domestic, and she introduced herself into the apartment in a state of anger, there had ensued a "conference" of a different description from what was in progress before. The term "deboshit" exchanged between them, when Turk confronted Tartar, is an olden way of spelling "debauched"; it is a good many times used throughout the Records. The epithet "screinger," applied to the Minister, is still sometimes used in the district. It seems to have some affinity with "ranger," and from its Doric connexion to signify one who drifts about the country side, eating and drinking at large, and gathering in or retailing malicious gossip. It would, however, more readily be applied to a dog of skulking and ranging habits than to a man.

After this there is no reference to the matter for months, but on 2nd Jan. 1611, it is set down that the Presbytery are surely informed that Patrick Barklay still continues in the service of Lord and Lady Haddo since the Synod held in Abdn., notwithstanding all the admonitions that he should remove. "Wherefore, in respect ye Assemblie then croceit (crossed or arrested) the process of ye presbyterie. It wes thocht meit that the said mater suld be altogidder referrit to ye said Assemblie in tyme cuming." There had been some friction between the Synod and the Presbytery about it. Only one other entry on this occurs in the Records, and after that neither the name of the elder Laird of Haddo, nor that of his Lady, appears again at all in connection with any matter—at least, up to the year 1628, beyond which the Records have not been explored at the time of writing this; but that is a period of 17 years. An instruction from the Synod comes in April: As Patrick Barklay, they are informed, is not removed by Lady Haddo according to her promise—"Ellon presbyterie to call the said Lady and the said Patrick befor them and accuse them, and in case they be convict heirof, to caus them mak their publict repentance on their kneis befor the pulpit, and forder to proceid against them in case the said Patrick be not removeit." The end can only be surmised. As if in sheer wilfulness and in a spirit of defiance to the presbytery, or rather to Mr. John Mersir, Dame Agnes had caused their servitor to be retained in the teeth of every injunction against it. If she could have been prevailed upon to consent to his dismissal it looks, from the procedure of the Ministers as if they would gladly have let the matter drop; and probably something like this was the case. Had the lioness-rampant been brought to her knees as proposed, it would almost certainly have been recorded; but that was not at all likely. In judging of her the manners of the time have to be taken into account—as also that the Minister of Methlick was her bitter enemy, and would have set forth every charge against her at the worst. To every challenge she entered half-way up the lists against her accuser. She was certainly

a "gay Ladye" and reckless of appearances; if she was anything worse it is for every one to judge for himself. It was almost necessary to summarize the many different entries on this—often little else than repetitions, but all has been extracted that seemed worthy of it. "The rest is silence."

14th Feb. 1610. As the country is infested with profane persons, strangers and beggars with false testimonials, these are not to be accepted until first examined by the presbytery.

Christen Forrester in Benagoak accused of "murdering hir bairne and burying it in ane kairn."

28th Feb. "The said day . . . ane ordinance wes made . . . that quha sa ever of the brethren of the presbyterie halds purpos with his nichtbor (talks with his neighbour) in ye tyme of thair Judicature, and is attachit of ye same, and cannot answer directlie to the questioun that sall be speirit be the moderator, becaus they ar uthir wayes occupeit in talk with thair nichtbor, sall pay 40 . . . toties quoties."

29th. Mr. Al. Innes, schoolmaster at Ellon, to preach at next meeting. Mr. Samuel Tullidaf, son to the Minister of Foveran, to add.

23rd May A number of persons in Tarves (Cairnbrogie, &c) are delated for "superstitioun and Idolatry in passing in pilgrimage to the Chapell of Meldrum and the well callit our Lady well of Park." The names of 18 are given—13 being women and 5 men—a good part of them mentioned as servants. At a following meeting at Tarves there is an examination of several of them, but little is elicited save that they journeyed to the well (and not all in one body) about noon and returned before sunset. One party having a sick child with them washed it in the well. They all drank of its waters. Their sentence is referred to the Bishop, and soon after there is an ordinance by the Bishop against this pilgrimage.

27th June. Andrew Reid of Collistoun craves room for a "Deiss" in the kirk of Methlick, and it is referred to the discretion of the Laird of Haddo, younger, by whose arbitrament the said Andrew is willing to abide.

19th July. Mr. Patrick Maitland, apparent of Auchincrive, and Andrew Wod at the Mill of Ardo, crave the benefits of the kirk—Baptism, marriage, &c. "to them of that syid of the Watter Ythen callit ye baronie of Scheves and Gicht," at the kirk of Methlick. This is granted to parties having a testimonial from Tarves.

Methlick, 9th Aug. The Bishop and his brother are out. Andrew Wood is to be called upon to give an account of the money of the kirk of Methlick received by him, and "to delyver the key of the kist." Should he refuse the Session "wes ordaneit to brak up the said kist, tell and number ye money . . . publictlie . . . and to mak a new key thairto and use the same as they sall

think meit and expedient." The Minister of Tarves to undertake the charge of the barony of Scheves. A long entry follows relating to the differences that had long existed in the parish owing to the disjunction of Scheves from Tarves, and its annexation to Methlick, and the disturbance raised at a former meeting by the disputes between the Minister and Robt. Maitland of Auchincrive. The matters had gone up to the General Assembly held at Glasgow on 11th June, and there the recommendation had been approved of, that for the peace of the kirk the barony of Scheves should remain united to Tarves till there were signs of greater concord. A number of Ministers at the Assembly had signed their names to the ordinance, and finally "the Bischop wreat with his awn hand upon the bak of ye act," ordaining it to be obeyed—"Et sic subscribitur. P. Bischop of Abdn." There is mention of the "trubling and molesting of the presbyterie be unreverent behaviour and reveilling speiches utterit mutualie be everie ane against uther in face of ye presbyterie, and of the said Mr. Robt. Maitland of Scheves and ye tenents of . . . Scheves, his followers, their unreverent departure from ye meitting efter their misbehaviour, and efter tryall to judge in ye said mater . . . for ye piece of ye kirk . . . and of ye presbyterie quhen they happinit to repair to that kirk for visitatioun. The pairties being sumondit . . . comperit, viz., Mr. Jo. Mersir, Minister. . . Mr. Robt. Maitland, and Andrew Wod, Chamberlain to the Laird of Gicht. And . . . being accused for trubling the presbyterie at the Visitatioun . . . be unreverent, prophane and revilling speiches, sic as—'Ye will be hangit' and 'Ye will be hangit' . . . be ressoun of ye quhilk . . . ye presbyterie wes compellit to dissolve *re ineffecta*." The parties owned to their fault and were ordained to make confession thereof before the pulpit. The Presbytery, clearly understanding that there had been trouble ever since Scheves was disjoined from Tarves and annexed to Methlick, ordained it to return to Tarves. They find the "evills to proceid cheiffie fra Mr. Robt. Maitland and ye tenents of Scheves . . . causit pairtlie be thair awn insolencie, and pairtlie be ane cauldness betwixt ye twa housis of Haddo, and ye auld parochiners of Methlick and of Gicht, to whom ye barounie of Scheves apperteins, and that ye annexatioun wes suspendit be his Majesty's Commissioner, umqll. Sir Patrick Murray, and ye Commissioner of ye General Assemblie, Mr. Jas. Nicholsoun, till . . . the cauldnes betwix the said housis suld be removit, quhilk as yet remaneis" Again on 17th Oct. there is a meeting at Methlick on this matter. There have been sent as Commissioners from the Synod to assist the Presbytery, Forbes of Tolquhon, here styled "richt honorable:" Mr. Geo. Hay, "persoun of Turriff," Mr. D. Rait, Principal of Old Abdn. College and Mr. Jas. Ross, Minister in Abdn. Maitland and his son Thomas, and Andrew Wod have again been petitioning that the barony of Scheves be annexed to Methlick, but the Commissioners cannot see their way to grant this meantime owing to "a misliking betwix the twa housis of Gicht and Haddo, and ane misliking betwix" the Minister and Maitland. The

Minister does not want it as he has no benefit from it. All parties are appointed to appear at a sub-Synod in Nov., and Tillielt, who is present, is to warn Reid of Collistoun and others having an interest in the barony of Scheves.

At the Visitation of the other kirks this summer there are good reports. There is "slowness in discipline" and Sunday labouring in Slains—lateness in convening to church at Logy, and it is ordained that there the hour of convening shall be 10 o'clock in winter and 9 in summer. Every kirk officer to have 40 pence for every baptism, marriage, testimonial, "Imbuiking" for marriage, and burial, and every delinquent that makes satisfaction; and 6sh. 8d. for every burial within the kirk.

Robert Makkie at the Miln of Watertoun gives in a complaint upon Isobell Stewart, spouse to James Lindsay, gardner in Auchmacoy, that she called him a common thief "in steilling of cornes to mak his stacks grytter nor they suld be, and calling his wyif witch, and briggands and Lymers in generall." Thomas Blak in Eisterellon, witness, said he only heard her call them "brigganis and Lymaris, and that the said Robert his wyif micht have haid a reid petticoat lang sen syne."

The following is an example of many enteries. 21st. Nov. 1610. "Compeirit in sackcloth in maist humble manner, bairfuitted and bairlegit, John Arthor in Auchnacant. Schawing that he haid satisfait at the kirk of Foveran as he wes enjoinit in penaltie and repentance . . . Quhilk wes testifeit to be of treuth be Thomas Tullidaf, Minister. The said John therefore receavit sentence of absolution and wes receavit be ye brethren, and ordaneit to be receavit at ye kirk of Foveran be his awn minister and elders there."

By different entries it is seen that the winter of 1610-11 must have been a severe one. On 12th Dec. "Thair wes na exercese be ressoun of the evil wedder;" only two members present—some were sick. On 2nd Jan. there was "scharp stormie wedder," and only the Ministers of Ellon and Logy convened. On the 9th it was stormy; Mr. Mercer of Ellon was in Abdn. at the marriage of his brother's daughter. On 6th Feb. "Thair wes na exercese be ressoun of the cereveniens of Mr. John Mersir, wha wes excusit be ressoun of ye stormie day and travelling on fuit" (perhaps because the snow was too deep for horseback). The word "cereveniens," several times used at this period, had meant being late in arriving.

DEATH OF MR. BRUCE OF SLAINS—1611.

It must have been about this time that Mr. Bruce, Minister of Slains, died; but so far as the Records go he simply drops out of sight—left to pass away with the forgetful roll of the German Ocean in the gully leading up to the old kirk and manse. It is only by looking a long way ahead that it can be definitely

known that he died in 1611 and probably in the early part of it. There seems to be a leaf wanting between 26th Feb. and 1st April. At the first of these dates a meeting was fixed for 12th March, and it is not here. Whether it would have given any information of Mr. Bruce is doubtful; there has hitherto been a remarkable absence of direct information as to the death of a Minister or appointment of another. Slains had its last Visitation in September, and after it came Foveran and Logy, from both of which he was absent. On Jan. 9th he is mentioned as absent—sick—and his name does not appear again. One Stephen Masoun is found to be Minister of Slains after an interval. The Minister of Behelvie held the same name up to this time, and he was probably the same man; he is more than once spoken of as aged. The title of "Mr." is withheld from him. A meeting was appointed to be at Slains on 10th Jan. 1612, for designation of the gleib, and this likely had to do with the entry of a new minister, and had the proceedings been entered in the Book there might have been more certain information. But while the scribe set down in his fine "black letter" writing the heading, "At Slains convenit the brethren" &c. near the top of a page, intending afterwards to copy in the proceedings from a temporary scroll, he had never done so—the page remains a blank. It was of a piece with the easy way of taking things which prevailed in the presbytery for some years about this time. Mr. Bruce was one of the original Ministers of the Presbytery. If he had not himself, at least many of his congregation had witnessed from the cliffs of Colliestown the broken squadrons of the Grand Armada driving northward in their dire distress, one of their number at least, unable to weather the coast, reeling in and foundering on the rocks below the Manse. According to the testimony of the Records there ought to have been a measure of sympathy with the expedition on this part of the coast, and signals of intelligence may have been flying from old Slains Castle. But no aid could be given or taken—the brilliant seamen of England, let loose, were hounding them from the south, and there was no help for the Spaniard but to drift on to yet more pitiful disaster. Of this, although so recent, there is not a word in the Memoranda of the Presbytery. Of course it did not lie directly in their line to have anything to say about it, but to much less important side events there is incidental allusion. Neither is there a word of reference to an event still more recent and of more local importance—the destruction of Slains Castle. They must have been days of dread and wonder to the homely inhabitants of Slains, when they witnessed the domains of their great lord invaded by the force of a yet mightier power—horse, hagbutiers, and baggage animals, some laden with the many "stane-weicht" of gunpowder laid in at Aberdeen—their drawing in upon the grim strength that had been abandoned to them, and no doubt their plundering and uplifting of every article of value from vault to turret, and lastly, the dull roars of the saltpetre from the depths of masonry sounding the doom of the castle of Slains over the parishes.

Stephen Masoun, soon after he came to Slains, got Mr. Samuel Tullidaff, son to the Minister of Foveran, and a graduate in Divinity, to live with him as Assistant. He was his "oy" or grandson. He remained with the old man until his death, which was in 1618, after a Ministry in Slains of seven years. Both seem to have been much liked and respected in the parish.

3rd April, 1611. Mr. Mitchell taught upon the "contraversie"—"quhidder Peter wes at Rome or not." On 6th March, Mr. John Mersir had taught on—"quhidder gif Peter wes prince of the apostles."

Mr. Rattray is fined and severely rebuked for repeated absences without sufficient excuse.

There are many cases of fighting and bloodshed on about this time. They are invariably given as on a Sunday, so it would appear that fighting on week days could be indulged in without risk to the combatants of being sackclothed.

The indwellers of Archaidlie, North Seit, Overhill and Thorn rone, complain that when there was an excambion between the parishes of Tarves and Methlick, they were ordained to keep to Tarves, and now they are ordained back to Methlick. They wish to remain with Tarves; 1st. Because two great waters lie betwixt them and Methlick, and they can pass to Tarves "without ony burne." 2ndly. When they go to Methlick the men of the barony of Scheves "wald rais them, and tak them be the sleve, saying gang to your awn kirk." 3rdly. That they are charged to build up the kirkyard dikes of Methlick, whereas they had been charged for those of Tarves already. They are ordained to bring their complaint before the Synod.

Among the Instructions from the April Synod are. "Ilk Minister ingageing him self for cautionrie to be depyrit:" and "Ilk Minister, upon the commoun guid of the kirk, to bye ane of the new printed bybills."

24th Ap. Alex. Gordoun in Craighall, having been summoned, sends word that "he wes under deidlie feid and desyrit the Ministrie to give him safe conduct for the day of his compeirance," which is to be granted. T. Tullidaf is appointed "to travell with my lord Forbes" to get a safe conduct for him, but on 5th June Gordoun is reported as "depairtit out of the country."

5th June. "Mr. Wm. Mill . . . authorised to teich a scuill and be reider at ye kirk of Tarves."

None to reset Elspet Carmichell, *alias* Maiggie . . . except the parish of Slains.

"Dyonis Watstone in Wetretchmuir and Jeane Gray in Petmedden, summondit . . . for bakslyding from mariage, bannis being proclaimit." The said Jeane took the fault on herself but gave no relevant reason, only "affirming that she wald not marie ye said Dyonise." She was ordained to pay 5 libs. and make repentance at Udney "for hir levitie."

14th Aug. George Andersoun in Newburgh, his wife and daughter, are sentenced for "tuilzeing, striking, and bluiding" Janet Forester on a Sunday after they had attended Communion.

4th Sept. "Jas. Annand in Ellon and Alex. Reith in Knokothie . . . accusit for prophanation of ye Saboth be bloodsched . . . James Annand affirmit that the said Alex. drew his bluid with ane sword, and referrit it to his aith. The said Alex. being sworne confessit . . . and wes ordanit to satisfie . . . becaus he sched ye blood in ye kirk toune on ye Lord's day in ye tyme of ye efter non prayers." On this day two men from Methlick are sentenced for bloodshedding on Sunday.

7th Oct. The teaching this day is on "ye contraversie quidder or not the paibe may be deposit." For several meetings back it had been on the Pope—whether he was the successor of Peter—whether appeal should be made to him or not—whether he should be subject to any or not—the original of his primacy, &c.

Mr. Rattray of Cruden is like to get into trouble again for repeated absences and neglect of other duties, but he is excused on 13th May, "becaus he yied south with the bischopis advyse to Sanct Androis."

The Meetings begin to be less frequent and the entries to be brief and apparently more prefatory.

8th July, 1612. "Andrew Wilsoun, commoun hird in the town of Kellie, compeirit and gave in ane complaint upon Wm. Cantlie in Littill Ardo, that when he wes keiping the guids (cattle) upon ane Sunday . . . he came in his furious Ire and strak ye said Andro and brak his heid with the Gairdis of his sword, and tuik his awin staff and brak twa ribbis of his syd." Cantlie is mentioned as "under the king's charge" and the case is deferred. Eventually he is sentenced by the presbytery to repentance and to pay 20 merks.

Thos. Cruickschank in Candelland, accused of "bluiding and striking" John Moris in Watertoun, says it was in self-defence. Referred to the Laird of Caskieben, who had newly bought the Watertown lands.

4th March, 1613. Andrew Reid and James Schirreffs in Tolquhon complain that Geo. Maitland in Methlick had assaulted them with a drawn sword and hurt the said Andrew, and Alex. Mar is accused of being the chief instrument in the matter by giving advertisement to the said George.

17th March. "Mr. D. Rattray gave his excuse for his absence be convoying his guid sone to Abdn. to cure him of ane sair ee, and gaive his aith thairupon."

"Archibald Hog alledgit that his wyff and the Wagabond knaiffe quha . . . haid her away, intended upon ane nicht to have murtherit him while he wes sleiping in his bed, and offerit to prove ye same."

John Johnstoun of Mostoun, accused of drawing sword on Michael Clarke in the kirkyard on Sabbath, alleged that he drew in self-defence—that Michael had drawn sword first and hurt him in the hand.

14th July. Mr. Mitchell of Udney "being newlie cum from the town of Abdn. to keep the meitting, he haid resavit a letter that his Wyif wes deidlie seik, and therefor had gottin leif . . . to depairt hame."

John Robertson in Stanehoushill, Cruden, appears to answer for his backsliding from marriage with Girsal Smyth, after a contract and proclamation of banns. He answers that he is willing to go on, but Girsal says "hir hart is alienat fra him be ye ressoun of his misbehaviour towards hir baith privatlie and publictly; for a Saboth day being appointit to marie them, her friends and herself com to ye kirk and there to have compleittit ye . . . marriage . . . the said John com not, whereby scho and hir friends gat a disgrace, and that he wes not willing at na tyme sen syne to marie hir althocht he pretendit utherwayes."

Mr. Rattray being referred to, altogether blames the man, who is sentenced to repentance and to pay the penalty specified in the marriage contract.

6th Oct. A long charge in the form of a summons is given in against John Lowrie, kirk officer at Udney, who had got outrageous in the hands of the Session there. He had snatched up the accounts of the "commoun guid" of the kirk for the past half-year, and "raif them in pieces" in face of the Minister and Session—no other copy being extant, and the money being in the hands of different elders and part in the hands of John himself—"making this his contemptuous deid with dyveres reproachfull speiches and threittnings, as namelie he suld caus ye best of us to rew it befor that day towmound. And forder, on 12th Sept., being the Lord's day, he com in presence of the Session and there appinlie challenged them as corrupt and unrichteous Judges in affirming there wes nothing there bot volo Judge and placebo man of Law, and daylie sen syne censuris ye same be his malicious raillings against ye Minister and eldership be himself and his wyif throw out ye congregation." John appeared before the Presbytery in a humbled mood, and submitted to a sentence of repentance before the congregation of Udney, and craved to be reinstated as kirk officer, which however was remitted to the Session of Udney.

2nd Feb. 1614. A deputation of Slains parishioners, headed by Wm. Lesk of that Ilk, crave of the Presbytery that as their Minister, Stephen Masoun, is aged and unable to discharge all his duties, Mr. Samuel Tullidaf might be appointed as "a help to his guid Sire;" with which the brethren accord.

"Compeirit Johne Couper in Balgerscho (now Pitgersie) and being accusit of charming for the feveris in dyveres pairts of Foveran, confessit that he charmit sundrie . . . viz., ane dochter of Janet Tabak's . . . ane dochter of Robert Innes . . . Margory Forsy, spous to Patrick Aiken, cadger . . . ane bairnie . . . and utheris . . . He learnit ye charme fra ane sister of his callit Elspet Couper . . . They wha haid the feveris wald have ane blew rim about the quhyt of their eyen . . . he knew ye fever to be weiring away gif the rim wes weiring away, and declarit he charmit ilk ane of them thrie tymes . . . he gat 4od. or 4s. fra ilk ane he charmit. The presbyterie understanding the simplicitie

of ye said Johne Couper, ordaneit him to satisfie as a fornicator" (the logic of this is not apparent). He gave oath and promise to stop his charming under pain to be held confessed of Witchcraft. He had kept true to his promise for the long period of 12 years, at least so far as to keep out of the hands of the presbytery, but in 1626, led away by the love of his science, he fell again into a trap. He is given this time as in Davyshill, but no doubt it is the same "charming" Johnny Couper—the "newsy" and affable manner of the delinquent and his willingness to communicate the details of his science to the presbytery being so much alike in both cases. Johne Couper in Davyshill, accused for charming John Hendrie in Foveran, sick "of the fevers." He confessed that being twice sent for, he came "and Orisounit him, as he termit it, and tauld ye said charm afoir ye brethren of the presbyterie. The said Johne, in respect he wes convict of charming befoir . . . obliged him to be content to suffer Deith gif he did the same againe," and meantime he was sentenced to "Jogis and goneis and repentance in sackcloth."

2nd March 1613. Mr. Rattray excuses his absence from last meeting by shewing that he was sent for to Turriff by the Earl of Errol anent his provision as Minister of Cruden.

13th July. "Na teiching be ressoun of the absence of Mr. Thos. Gardyne, quha wes seik as wes reportit, and be ressoun of ye slawness of ye cuming of utheris . . . The nixt meitting appointit to be . . . the 3rd August, becaus the Wappinschaw is . . . on Wednesday, 27 day of July."

There had been a bad harvest in 1614. Sept. 20th, 1614. "Be ressoun of ye lang continewance of ye evill wedder in ye harvest tyme, and this day being a fair day for the harvest, the brethren convenit not . . . ye meitting" to be on 5th Oct. But on that day the weather is so bad again that many of the brethren are absent, and there is no Doctrine.

19th Oct. Mr John Mersir sick—Mr. Mitchell at the burial of Robert Maitland of Auchincrieve.

23rd Nov. "George Jak in Ellon . . . summondit . . . for prophanation of ye Saboth be tuilzeing, striking and hurting Arch. Gib in Ellon . . . and that in tyme of Devyne Service, to ye effusion of his blood, wherethrow he is becom impotent in his legis and body. This being done sittand on ye pulpit of Ellon in tyme of preiching. The mater wes referrit to be tryit be ye sessioun of Ellon." The meaning would be that they had been sitting on the pulpit stairs and supports, on which there might have been room for a good many if they were so constructed. It was a fashion that had not quite died out at Ellon in the middle of the 19th century (the sitting there, not the fighting). A "puir wife" or two, perhaps somewhat deaf, would take a seat on the steps of the pulpit.

On this day too, Isobell Davidsoun or Wricht in Dumbrek, accused of assaulting Wm. Forsy, "schew ane bluidie claith befoir the presbyterie," about

which there is no explanation, but there is to be further inquiry. At every alternate meeting there is "teiching on the contraversies," such as—"that the paipe is Anti-Christ—the Degreis of the Clergy—the originall of ye Cardinalls, thair names, uprising, and abuisse—upon the power of the keyis concerning binding and lousing—concerning the mariage of kirkmen—quhidder teind suld be possessit be kirkmen, or to whom they pertain"—&c.

Every Minister has been ordained by the Synod to have a Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths; and a Return of "Defuncts" within their bounds, giving their residence, date of death, and the name of the intromitter with their goods and gear, is called for in 1615, by the Bishop.

A GREAT DESERT.

To the traveller trudging faithfully "on foot" the varied pilgrimage of the Records, it must be apparent by now that for some time back he has been crossing a region that is mainly desert. Like some deserts in physical geography, the limits are not sharply defined, but since the year 1610, there has been a steady increase of barrenness. The meetings get rather further between, the business transacted and the entries thereof more and more perfunctory—the case of some miserable delinquent in Andet, or such like, taken up and staved off from time to time. Even the time-hallowed institution of the "Exercise," or sermon at the Meetings, comes to be tampered with, and oftener and more often (and there are those who will not judge them severely) it is set down—"Ther wes na Doctrine," owing to some excuse—the absence or late arrival of the appointed preacher, or the press of other business, though this latter does not come in evidence; and when there is Doctrine, there is no comment upon it of the racy and uncomplimentary character bestowed in livelier times. And in the weary land there is no shadow of a great rock, such as the Visitation of a kirk, which often led to some information of interest. Since the summer of 1610 the Visitations have been suspended with two exceptions. Once, by order of the Synod, the brethren had to meet at Methlick for the settlement of some of Mr. John Mersir's "flists," and another time at Slains, for designation of the glebe there, and of this latter only the heading is entered in the Book. Most of the original Ministers of the Presbytery were still alive, and their energies may have been so far spent, but what seems the most likely reason of the stagnation was the enfeebled state of the poor old Bishop (Blackburn), no longer the tower of strength and counsel he was to the Presbytery in its earliest days. He was himself acknowledging his short-coming, and pleading his age and infirmity. In this unhealthy calm each minister was very much free to do as seemed right in his own eyes. Since Mr. Herriot's death, Mr. Read of Logy seems to have been regarded as the father of the Presbytery; but he was old and within a few years

of his end, as was also good Stephen Masoun at Slains. Mr. Robert Mercer at Ellon and Mr. Mitchell, Udney, were at the best of their powers. Tho. Tullidaff at Foveran would have been doing his duty "according to his abilitie"—a phrase often applied to him, but neither he nor Mr. Gardyne of Tarves were likely men to take a strong initiative. Up in Methlick Mr. John Mersir would have been "screinging" hither and thither (to use Lady Haddo's phrase) with a somewhat mischievous activity, while at the other extreme, in the far north-east, Mr. Rattray would have been having his own worldly-minded and careless way in Cruden. On a Sunday morning—Mr. Rattray himself had to allow to the truth of it—there would assemble beside the kirk a veritable country market, with all its sights and sounds and sordid bargaining—the cottar with his "yow" and lambs—the lowing of a yoke of primeval looking oxen, "fitt in fur," &c.; while a group of hoddin-gray parishioners sagaciously commented on their merits, or on those of some shaggy pack-horse or roadster. Among the dead stock, homely implements and "iron wark" from Smiddies, and household plenishing would be set out to the curious scrutiny of the dwellers in Teuchan or Ardendrat. Mr. Rattray himself, in virtue of his office, might perhaps hold aloof, perhaps not. As the hour for service drew near, the officer would have to turn aside and ring the bell, and perhaps take another turn through the market in the intervals, for there were, or ought to have been, three bells. Then such of the concourse as were so minded would enter the church, and Mr. Rattray mount and drawl through his service, and, eloquent as the kirk bell, deliver the arid Doctrine of which his brethren so often and so bitterly, but ineffectually, complained. This being over, the latter day market would come on with its refreshments and whatever fighting was ado, for indeed it looks as if Sunday afternoons had been specially reserved for the fighting out of enmities, so frequent is the mention of "tuilzeings" and bloodshed on that day. In making extracts, many of these cases have been passed over where it seemed as if nothing worse than bloody noses had been agoing. But even within the Church, and during Mr. Rattray's sermon, it is a question whether the market was quite shut out. At Ellon, about this time, it was found necessary to pass an ordinance against such as should "crack together," or "clatter," in time of sermon. The seats in the Churches, a great part of them at any rate, were not fixtures; a certain space or room of the floor was allotted to each division of the parish, and the people provided their own seats or "Deisses," and these, instead of being set to face the pulpit squarely, may have been "slewed" to such angles as would favour a quiet conversation between neighbours. Of course it would have to be under breath, but occasionally a word or syllable might "crack" through the thin film, especially if the conference touched on debateable ground. A case of downright "tuilzeing" in the kirk, in time of Divine Service, occurred at Cruden, and, as was lately seen, a similar one at Ellon on the pulpit stairs.

THE BISHOPS.

Peter Blackburn, the first Bishop, died, according to one account, in 1614; according to another, in 1615; and to yet another, in July, 1616. [Any evidence to be got from the Ellon Presbytery Book is in favour of the last date being the correct one.] In May, 1616, two ministers from Aberdeen, who join the presbytery at Ellon, state that they bear a Commission from St. Andrews, and from "ane reverend father in God, Peter, Bishop of Abdn." Had the Bishop been dead he would likely have been given as "umqll" or deceased—at least such was usually done. He was succeeded by Alexr. Forbes, formerly Bishop of Caithness, whose only visit to the Ellon presbytery was in September, 1617, when a rather searching inquiry into affairs took place. But his time was short; he died about the close of that year. Calderwood, in whose hands the blackening of everything Episcopal may be safely left, says he lost some important appointment about that time through over-fondness for his game of cards. His successor was duly consecrated in the spring of 1618—Patrick Forbes, Laird of Corse, who had studied Divinity, and was at the time Minister of Keith. He is not mentioned as visiting Ellon presbytery until he did so at Logy, in Septr., 1620. Making due allowance for the panegyrics pronounced on him at the time of his death, he must have been an earnest and faithful Christian, and wise and moderate in counsel as a Bishop, and the Diocese was fortunate in being under him. Like Bishop Blackburn, he suffered much in his last years from illness, and had partial paralysis. He died in 1635—taken away from the evil to come. With the installation of an efficient Bishop there is seen returning energy in the presbytery.

6th Sept., 1615. A complaint comes from Patrick Maitland of Cairnfechil against the Minister of Methlick. It is awkwardly worded, and nothing distinct is specified. He says that whereas the presbytery had been dealing "for away taking of certane glestis" betwixt him and Mr. John Mersir, the latter had suborned Geo. Gordoun of Gicht, "excommunicat papist," to his (Patrick's) hurt and prejudice. Certain overtures had been made to him by the presbytery, which he was willing to accept, but Mr. John Mersir, without authority, had on 4th Septr. passed to Gicht, and accomplished that with him which he had promised to leave to a Commission to settle. Mr. Jo. Mersir, called on, said he met with Gicht, but only at Gicht's request, and that he had done the complainer no wrong. There is much more to do in the matter, but further hearing of it is in Aberdeen.

Novr. 22nd, 1615. Mr. Mitchell asks leave of absence, as he would pass south to the "plat" if it sat down. At next meeting he had gone to the "plat," and on 27th Decr. had not returned from the "plat."

22nd March, 1616. Mr. Rattray has been often absent and is so to-day. Mr. Samuel Tullidaff is appointed to go to Cruden and examine his Discipline book "gif he ony hes," and report. He has to report on 3rd April, that when he asked for the book "the said David answerit it wes not neidful, as also he haid bene often south this yeir, and thair war certane thingis in it unbuikit. Always it suld be presentit befor the Assemblie gif the brethren thocht guid." Mr. Rattray, who is present this day, being accused for his absence from last two meetings, said he was south at the time of the first, and at the time of the second he was "seik through cald, not abill to heir his awn voce." He was accused likewise that he acted not conscientiously in his ministry, "and gif he did onything it was rather in schow nor uthirwayes (for appearance sake only)." Inquired at if he made his house a tavern on Friday and Saturday last, "being ye market day at ye kirk of Cruden—Confessit that some friends cum and drank with him out of uther paroches, and that his wyf and dochter gadderit ye Lawing."

3rd Ap. 1616. At this time a strong effort was made for the building of a Bridge over Ythan at Ellon. The Lairds of Tolquhon, Buckie, Ochterellon, Birness, Petfichie, and Mr. Robert Gordoun of Fechil were voted specially for the carrying it out, and from the Synod there comes a recommendation to the Presbytery "to hauld hand thairto at thair visitatiounis," and from the following Synod the same. But it had not been found practicable to raise the means, and the work was doomed to lie over for 180 years.

Other matters called attention to by the Synod, are—"that na tak of teinds auld or new be privatlie subscrivit be ony of ye Chapter without speciall warrand of the assemblie"—that order be taken with the poor and beggars; the Bishop to represent to His Majesty that the Justices of Peace neglect their duty in this—that all kirks in the Diocese be visited once a year between Ruid Day and Lammas—that the ministers sue for a contribution in relief of John Mortoun, skipper of Leith, and his crew taken captive by the Turk's "galhis" (galleys)—Many of the "tikketts of ye names of Defuncts" sent in, are informal.

24th Ap. 1616. "Mr. David Rattray teichit, 1 Cor. cap. 2. Mr. Thos. Gardyne addit . . . ye Doctrine being censurit they war baith admonished to be mair sensibill, and to follow the licht of God's word."

This is the first adverse notice of the Doctrine for years. At next meeting Mr. Rattray is admonished "to teich with zeal and affectioun." From the next two meetings he is absent, though "peremptorlie summondit."

June and July, 1616. Complaints that the school in Ellon has dropped—the heritors will not contribute. James Lidgertwood in Fornatie cannot appear, as he "behoveit to be present at ane Court of my Lady Sinclar's." Cases of fighting and bloodshed on Sunday continue.

26th Feb. 1617. A servant at Tolquhon, and another, to be summoned for ringing the bell of Udney at midnight on 11th Feb.

John Christie, who had begun to teach an "Inglis Scole" at Drumquhendall without licence of the minister is ordained to bring testimonials of his former life and conversation; as he does not do so the school is to be shut up.

From the April Synod there comes an order to the Presbytery to visit the kirk of Cruden and report thereon, and Mr. Rattray is inhibited to set any tack of his benefice in prejudice thereof.

After this there follows an Act of Parliament given at full length and covering two closely written pages. It is "Anent ye beggiris, 1617." It is addressed by King James to his Shirreffs and others in Scotland, and had probably been supplied to every Presbytery. It enacts that whereas the country is swarming with idle and sturdy beggars, none are to be suffered to ply that trade between 14 and 70 years of age—that strong vagabonds, "counterfeit bards and fuills that rymes athort the countrey extorting alms sall be put in stoks or yrnis (irons) and lyve thair sa lang as they have ony thing of thair awn to lyve on, and whan they have not . . . that thair eirs be naillit to the throne (thorn) or sum uthir trie and be cuttit off and they banishit the countrey, and gif thairefter they be seen begging againe that they be hangit to the deid." None are allowed to beg in a different parish from that they were born in, and those so allowed are to be provided with a "taiken" (token or medal) granted to them by the proper authority, which they must carry with them. There is a special clause put in as if by request of the King himself, and as if he dreaded lest he should be put to shame in his native country amidst his train of English courtiers, for he is about to revisit Scotland after 14 years' absence—the only visit he paid after he was called to the throne of England. "And it is verie likely that now when we sall com to the countrey that numberis of thir vagabund theiffs and lymars sall follow our royall court and importune the nobill men and utheris that will accompanye and attend us with thair schameles exclamatiouns and cryings to the gryt scandall of the haill kingdom, without (unless) remeid be provydit." Wherefore strong measures are to be taken to suppress this, and there is a repetition as to nailing the vagabonds' ears to the thorn tree and cutting them off; as to scourging them and branding their cheeks with a hot iron, and hanging them outright—idle and sturdy "maister" beggars and vagabonds, counterfeit bards and fools, "lymars," &c.

Then follows another Act, directing that Register Books of baptisms, marriages and deaths, be kept in every parish, on account that much litigation and needless cost is entailed on parties through uncertainty of these and their dates. Every Minister is to procure a new Book, and before he write anything therein he is to send it to his Bishop who is to mark every leaf with his own hand and re-deliver it to the Minister, and he, or his Reader under his direction, shall keep the Register correctly.

2nd May, 1617. According to ordinance of the Bishop in the late Synod, there is enquiry made at this meeting of what each Minister is presently teaching

on in his kirk. Mr. Gardyne is on the Epistle to the Hebrews, and at the 11th Chapter, and is ordained to go on with it. Mr. Mitchell is upon Genesis, Stephen Masoun on St. Matthew and Mr. Samuel Tullidaf, his "oy," on Thessalonians, &c. All are admonished to continue and that there be Catechizing in their churches on Sunday afternoons. The Visitations are resumed after a cessation of 6 years. At Tarves there is morning prayer in the kirk "ilk oulk Day" (every week day). Thomas Moir, the kirk officer, is "often tymes Drunkin" and has to be reprimanded at Udny, "Cupis of silver, basynis and Laver of fyn tyn, and clothes for Ministratioun of the Sacraments to be providit be ye heritors befor Candilmes nixt."

Ellon, 6th Sept., 1617. . . . convenit the brethren . . . Alex. Forbes, bishop of Abirdene, being present." It is this Bishop's only visit to this Presbytery. There is a general review of matters, but it is minuted with unusual and clear conciseness. The Presbytery Book is examined. In answer to questions it is told—they meet every fortnight; the "controverted heids are handled" monthly: "Theses in disputatioun not useit . . . ar ordaineit to be keiped . . . : " Communion was at Pasche last.

The names of Papists are given in—these have been told elsewhere. It is ordained to take up a stent of the ploughs in each parish for a schoolmaster, as only Methlick is provided with one at present—13sh. 4d. or 1 firloft meal for each plough. No ruinous kirks. The glieds and manses are fully designed and possessed unless Mr. John Read's "wha affirms that thair is na mair kirkland in ye parochie" (Logy). "They (the kirks) have all bells but not bears—ordaines bears to be made." "Everie kirk hes ane commoun Bybill. Ordains them to have commoun clothes for baptisme, with cupis of silver and basins of fyne tyn." The Bible to be read twice a year by every brother. Every Minister to make a house to house visitation in his parish at least once a year—twice if possible.

The Ministers individually are finally taken "private tryell" of by the voice of their brethren. Mr. Read of Logy, moderator, "gat ane guid universal report." Mr. Robt. Mersir, Ellon, "receaved ane guid testimonie." Stephen Massoun, Slains, "gat ane guid and honest report." Thomas Tullidaf, Foveran, nathing in him to be admonished." Mr. Mitchell, Udny, "wes ordained to attend to his calling, and that he eschew distractioun, trysting, and being from hame in tyme cuming" (on the margin applying to this is witten—"quhilk bygane absence wes that he wes ever labouring for a Stipend to his kirk"). Mr. John Mersir, Methlick, "nathing concerning him, bot fra this furth to byd at hame, wait upon his buik and calling, seeing in his stipend he is sattilled." Mr. Gardyne, Tarves, "ower . . . familiaritie in him with his parochiners—to be admonished and amend fra this furth." Mr. Rattray, Cruden—"hes not keipit ye meittings and exerceses sen ye last Sinode, nather is him self nor the brethren moveit be his teiching—Denied (refused to have) ye Visitatioun—careles of Discipline—no

amendment—denyed to produce his buik of Discipline. Ordaines his kirk to be ye first kirk that sall be visited."

16th Sept. 1617. Cruden Visitation. Mr. Rattray being removed his elders do not say much against him—"he teiched ilk Saboth when he is at hame, bot hes been abstracted thir two yeirs bypast." There is delation that the Sabbath is profaned in Cruden universally by shearing and leading in harvest, and other handiwork. Stranger vagabond beggars are taken in, the burial silver is not duly taken up, the kirk is ruinous and the kirkyard dikes down, and Mr. Rattray himself "putts his cattell and hors in the kirk yard." Ordinances are laid down *seriatim* for the remedy of all this—Among others, that the Minister do not put his cattle and horse in the kirkyard, that he do not intromit with the penalties and burial silver but by advice of the Session, &c.

The cups of silver, &c. as in the other churches, are ordered to be provided before Candlemas here, as also at Slains where the Visitation is in the following week, and when a good report is given of Stephen Masoun—"he wes honest in lyf and conversatioun . . . visitts the seik . . . teiches . . . catechizes . . . the commoun guid collected in a kist."

"Patrick Con of Auchry, elder, being present promiseit to caus outlyeres . . . from the kirk to obey . . ."

At the Visitations there are complaints from nearly every parish of vagabond beggars.

Again—no tack of teinds to be set by any member of the Chapter "till ye constant plat be endit."

At Ellon "twa abill men to be chosen for putting ydill briggens out of ye parochie."

30th Dec. A walker of cloth at Yondertown of Ochterellon is summoned for bringing cloth and taking cloth to walk every Sunday at Ellon. Another at Drumwhindle has been doing the same at Udny—to be warned.

The Minister of Methlick is in trouble again. Three of his elders come up here with a complaint that, whereas the Session had agreed on building a loft in the kirk for the commoun use, Mr. Mersir had, without consulting them, moved the Laird of Ludquharn to erect the loft (for his own exclusive use probably is meant). They altogether dissented from this. The Minister is gravely admonished to "travell" with Ludquharn for a "calming and satilling" of the evil, seeing his "bussiness" or interference had marred matters; failing which the brethren will witness against him as the "worker of all" (the mischief).

This is the first time that the Laird of Ludquharn has been mentioned here, and he is seen for a period of seven years or more as having control over the Haddo lands. The only reason apparent is that George Gordon, hitherto mentioned as the "Laird of Haddo younger," must now be dead, and that

Ludquharn, a Keith, has been appointed guardian of his young son, afterwards Sir John Gordon. George Gordon is given as having pre-deceased his father, James Gordon, whose first wife was a Keith, sister to the Earl Marischal, and who, as is incidentally told in these Records, had at the Earl's instance made over all his lands to his son, no conjunct fee being reserved for himself. Ludquharn works adversely to the kirk of Methlick apparently all his time. Possibly the Minister, Mr. John Mersir, had personally contrived to keep in favour with him; it looks like it in the case just mentioned; and five years after Mr. John left Methlick he had been on a visit to Ludquharn, for he pleads as excuse for his absence from a Meeting that, being at Ludquharn in the morning (and he must needs have been there the previous night), his horse ran away from him, so that he could not be in time.

25th Feb. 1618. A case in which Wm. Cantlie in Ardo is accused of severely wounding Wm. Sangster in Auld Miln of Schethin (of course on a Sunday) which has been several times called, comes on for probation this day. Alex. Smith in Raakstoun, "ane man of fiftie years," deponed—the language is awkwardly put, but the following seems to be meant. There had been some dispute and a fight threatening at the door of Sangster's house, and Cantlie was "etling" or attempting a blow at his son, as Sangster was pressing to put his son inside the house, and missed the son and struck the father "so that his bluid burst furth in gryt abundance." Another witness in Raakstoun and one in Kelly depone to the same effect."

Ellon, 27th Oct. 1618. Stephen Masoun, Minister of Slains, is dead, but there is no direct announcement of it.

The Bishop has sanctioned the presentation of Mr. John Mersir, Minister of Methlick, to the kirk of Slains. A strong body from Slains is in attendance at the Meeting this day—Patrick Con of Auchry in name of Lord Erroll, David Sym, chamberlain, the Laird of Lesk, and "ye haill parochiners of Slains." Mr. John Mersir produces an Edict from "Patrick, be the mercy of God, bischop of Abdn"; it sets forth that Mr. John Mersir has godpresentation to Slains by the Principal and members of King's College, as patrons, and "to the locall stipend therof modifeit be ye lords of plat." The Bishop gives his charge accordingly to Mr. Robt. Mersir, to pass to the kirk of Slains, and charge the congregation there to appear at Ellon on 27th Oct. (this day—the Edict had been read at Slains on the previous Sunday), and see the said Mr. John admitted as their Minister, or else to alledge reasonable cause against it—"Et sic subs. Abdn." On which "the saids Gentilmen and parochiners (of Slains) all in ane voce opponit to accept the said Mr. John Mersir." They desire that Mr. Samuel Tullidaf be continued as their Minister—"the young man now with us thir sevin yeirs bygane . . . whom we love in the Lord," and who has "Godlie recommendatioun

. . . be that reverant father of worthy memory" (old Stephen Masoun). They have also special reasons against accepting Mr. John Mersir and assert them plainly. "He is ane sawer of seditioun betwix sundrie nobill persounis within his paroche being ane bissie body without, in uther men's affairis, and also ane perturber of ye peice of his awn congregatioun within, ane Dilapidator of thair awn commoun guid, ane Invertar of thair Acts of Discipline according to his pleasure, and we heir he is ane cauld gospellar, not giving edification to his flock . . . as we are sufficientlie instructed be them—with mony uther sundrie poynts." They altogether oppose the presentation, appeal to the next Synod and pray the presbytery to represent their case favourably to the Bishop, and ask that he would continue with them "their own minister, Mr. S. Tullidaf." This Remonstrance from Slains having been heard, and the Moderator having had conference with Con of Auchry, it was resolved by the presbytery that the matter should stand still till they saw the Bishop in the Martimas week.

Among instructions from the Synod of October, 1618, are: Every presbytery to deal with noblemen, barons and heritors, that they "schift the halding of ony oppin markett upon ye Saboth." No marriage to be made by any Minister in the Diocese on a Saturday or a Sunday of "persouns wha mak penny bridells." Charmers and charming to be put down, and receptors of "Egyptians" to be punished. Mr. David Rattray, Minister of Cruden, is ordained to appear at Crimond . . . "thair to satisfie for the scandall gevin be him in the said parochin be labouring his cornes on the Saboth day . . . and to report a testimoniall from the Minister of Crimond" (he had been farming some land there). Differences betwixt the Minister of Tarves and Tolquhon to be dealt with.

16th Decr. "Na teiching be ressoun of the evill wedder, and not mony convenit. And the caus of thair sa lang tyme not convening wes that the brethren haid twyse met laitlie in Abdn. . . . as also the evill wedder haid hinderit thair meittings, for they culd not ryd burne nor wattir the last tua . . ."

17th March, 1619. "Ordour taking with certane glestis among ye parochiners" of Methlick. Mr. John Mersir to give notice to Ludquharn, and Mr. Mitchell to Auchincreive, of a meeting appointed.

Here, although there be no leaves awanting, comes a blank in the Records for a period of six months. The proceedings had been set down probably in either the Synod or Presbytery Book of Aberdeen. The explanation is given in the opening paragraph of next meeting, which shows that in teeth of the unanimous protest from Slains, the unwelcome Mr. John Mersir has been thrust upon it. "At Ellon the twentie twa day of Sepr., 1619, convenit the brethren of the Presbytery of Ellon. This being the first meitting at Ellon sen ye Assemblie in Abdn., the second Tuysday of Apryll last; the ressoun wes becaus

of the transportatioun of Mr. John Mersir fra Methlick to Slaynis, and of the planting of ye kirk of Methlick with ane uthir Minister; for ye quhilk caus ye brethren for the maist pairt convenit at Abdn. ilk meitting with the bishop and presbyterie thair for the causis forsaidis."

From the October Synod again come strong injunctions against the sturdy beggars and gypsies who had been a veritable pest over the country.

There is still disorganisation in the parish of Methlick, owing to the ex-cambion between it and Tarves, and now Ludquharn has set himself altogether against the Church, and ordered the tenants on the Haddo lands to keep away from it under pains and penalties. A meeting is held there on 4th Novr. to attempt a settlement of the differences, and a minister from each of the presbyteries of Turriff, Deer and Garioch, are present to assist that of Ellon, of which, however, only the Ministers of Logy, Udney and Tarves are present. The new Minister of Methlick is Mr. Adam Reid. "The elders . . . convenit except sic as war in the Laird of Haddo's ground, wha war forbidden to cum to this meitting be the Laird of Ludquharnis officiar passing throw ye lands of Haddo forbidding any of the land to cum to the kirk this day at the Laird of Ludquharnis command under gryt paneis, and it wes reportit that the tenents and indwellaris in that Land wer sorie therat, and it wes sair agains thair will to byd fra thair paroche kirk." However, such elders as were present gave their promise with uplifted hands to do their duty and assist their Minister. The new Minister represented that it was an agreement between the late Minister and him that the bigging and Manse should have been "sichted and prysit" (valued over) before now, and at farthest on this day. But Mr. John Mersir had not come up, wherefore he made protest that it should be done before Martimas. This valuation does not take place until 13th Decr., 1620—more than a year. George Setoun of Schethin, Forbes of Tilligonie and the Minister of Foveran are the valuator with consent of both parties, and "eften lang and advysit travells they estimate ye same at aucht scoir ten (170) marks." This to be paid at Whitsunday, and Mr. Adam Reid gives bond for the same to Mr. John Mersir.

24th Novr., 1619. Two married women in Ellon, for "striking and revylling" one another on Sunday, are referred to the Session of Ellon.

8th Decr. Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Gardyne excuse their absence from last meeting by showing that both their wives were dangerously ill—Mr. Gardyne's wife has since died.

26th Jan., 1620. It is explained that the delay in meeting for so long at this time was owing to the baptism of the Minister of Udney's "bairn, where the bischop and brethren war present," and the next day fixed was so stormy that none might travel.

1st March. "Absent Mr. John Mersir, wha is reportit to have been lang seik."

The "Referris" from the April Synod are mainly a repetition of those of

last. A number of markets have their days altered so as not to interfere with Sunday. Most of them are ordained to begin on a Tuesday—St. Sairs—Bartholl fair—Lowren fair in Rayne—Tainglen fair in Tarves, &c. "Candills and bon-fyres on Peter and midsummer evin to be repressit, and pilgrimages to chapells and wells in tyme cuming."

The Minister of Tarves to summon Harie Gordoun in Haddo for the slaughter of umqll. John Johnstoun, son to Robert Johnstoun in Corshill. On 24th May, to which he had been summoned, he sent a letter to the presbytery to show that he had set caution to underly the law at Edinburgh on 16th June, for the slaughter. In his letter, which was in very respectful terms, he deplored the deed and promised to satisfy the kirk when it was in his power; but meantime, without evident peril of his life, he could not appear at the place of meeting, which was Ellon. He asked the prayers of the brethren on his behalf. The letter was read and entered in the Book without comment. The Presbytery learn after this that he had never appeared at Edinburgh to stand his trial, and had been denounced rebel and "put to the Horn." Turning fugitive he drops out of sight. Although given as in Haddo, there is nothing to show that this Harie Gordoun was one of the family of Haddo or Tillielt. There is another case of slaughter at this time by George Cruikshank, whose father is in Ardifferie.

There has been little or no mention of repentance with bare feet and legs and shaven "half-heid" for years. Now it is being dealt out freely again—shaven "half-heid" and all. One man is among the delinquents.

28th June, 1620. Mr. John Mersir is absent. He is again in trouble, but this time through his family. His daughter, Margaret, has gone astray with Patrick Smyth in Slains. Smyth had got sentence by the Session of Slains to "pay 10 merks and mak repentance in Sackcloth, bairfuittit and bairlegit sax severall Sondagis at ye kirk of Slaynis." He appeals to the presbytery against this sentence, which they only confirm. There is no appeal by Margaret Mersir, who doubtless had got a very similar sentence. While on this sore subject, it is best to make an end of it. Some three years after this, viz. on 5th Novr., 1623, Margaret Mersir's name again appears ominously on the index margin. This time she has transgressed with George Black in Birness, a married man. Both confess and are ordained to six Sundays of stern repentance. In case they fail, the Minister of Logy to proceed in excommunication against the man, and Mr. John Mersir to do the same by his own daughter. Yet again three years, and on 30th Novr., 1626, there is a like charge against her with John Beidie at the Myln of Brogan, but this time it is not proved. The delinquent with her in the first case, Patrick Smyth, had stood out against his sentence, and on 27th Decr., 1620, Mr. John Mersir submitted a process of Excommunication against him which he had drawn out. It was approved and ordered to be submitted to the Bishop for his ratification.

At the Visitations in the summer of 1620, save at Cruden, there are fairly

good reports. The Bishop is present at Logy and Cruden, on 5th and 6th Sept. At some of the kirks the silver cups and other articles formerly ordained had not yet been provided, and are again ordained to be procured. At Foveran there is strong complaint that able men and women "keist them sellfis lous out of Service," and repaired to the sea-coast and employed themselves gathering "dilce." "This enormitie is to be taen order with . . . and ilk brother caus punisch sic dilceris as are within his awn paroche." Lord Erroll is to be appealed to, to appoint captors to apprehend them.

The Minister of Logy had been residing elsewhere than at his kirk, his reason being want of peats, or liberty to transport them through Auchmacoy's lands—also he had not sufficient gleib. An effort is made for a remedy. It is deemed that 6 leits of peats should be sufficient, "of 2½ fuit of length and 12 fuit of breid, with hicht effeirand. The paroche being 48 plewis—ilk aucht plewis to leid ane leit of ye said peitts." Patrick Con of Auchry, for the lands of Mekill Arthrachie, undertakes to lead one leit: Al. Buchan, for Auchmacoy and little Arthrachie will lead two leits to the side of the river, and will give "peit-get" and ground to build them on and cobles to transport them. The rest of the parish to be dealt with for the remainder. The Laird of Lesk (who appears to have owned land on the south side of the river in Logy) is to serve the Minister "within the town of Logy" for his part of the said leits, and will consider as to granting land to make a full gleib. But to the Minister himself all this had likely been of little interest now—the hand of Death was near.

At Udny it is told that the Reader enters the kirk every Sabbath at the second bell and reads to the people convening till the third bell. He has also taught an English school there for last six years. A loft is to be built in the west end of the kirk.

At Slains there is complaint of the fishers gathering bait on Sundays—drinking and fighting. It is ordained that there be bought for the kirk "ane gryt commoun bybill . . . also a psalme buik and a sand glas . . . Peter Bonar, kirk officiar . . . sundrie tymes drunken and negligent . . . wes scharplie admonischit."

At Cruden, the elders give some "faint praise" to Mr. Rattray. He preaches every Sabbath, examines before the Communion, visits the sick, and is of good life and conversation. He was admonished by the Bishop to be more diligent in discipline, to catechize every Sabbath, and as it was shown by the elders that there was no account of the common good kept for two years, he was admonished to be more diligent therein, and for burial within the kirk to take up payment "befoir the eird be brokin." "The glasin windois being brokin and down war ordaineit to be glassit of new. Also the said Bischop reprehendit the said Mr. David for his teiching that day, namelie that he had not licht nor grace in his teiching, that he spak not to the edification of his heirers with motioun of feeling."

The "Referris" from the October Synod are mainly a repetition of last—injunctions against penny bridals, gypsies and sturdy beggars. "Na picturis, p . . . sells, armis nor epitaphs of defunct persouns "to be allowed in any kirk." "Ilk brother to recommend the miserable estait of the distressit companie of Robert Cuming, Master of the Schip callit the Johne of Bruntyland, quha wes tane be ane Turkish navie, and sald as slaves to the Moiris (Moors) for sum support for relief of them furth from their hands."

"It is statut that na minister travell upon ye Sabboth, and that thai be very sober in their apparell and dyet, and in their studies to have buiks and helpis—and siclyk for eschewing of all publict sclander that na Minister hant tavernis, and gif thai be fund therein and mak ony offer or receive ony Scoll (?) of drink fra ony persoun . . . for the first he sall be censurit, for the second fall simple deprivation."

The Methlick and Ellon Visitations are delayed until December, in 1620. At Methlick, Ludquharn is still going against the church, keeping back the elders and people on the Haddo lands. The people are well content with their new Minister but wish that he would reside in the parish, and he was ordained to do so, "and cleith him with his Ministrie," and attend the Meetings of Presbytery.

At Ellon, there is complaint that the people are backward in attending. The school is enquired into. Mr. Samuel Tullidaf (assisted by his brother, Alex.) is schoolmaster. A man to be appointed in the parish for "halding out ye dogis (dogs) and vagabond beggars. The school is called a "gramer and Musik scuill," and there is a good report of it, but the schoolmaster and certain elders with him complain that there is no fixed or certain salary. Those present are asked what they would contribute yearly. No heritor seems to be present save Irving of Fortree, who promises 1 boll meal; a number of others, given by name, promise a contribution; nearly the whole is in meal, and though none promise less than one firloft, few promise more. Altogether, 20 firlofts = 5 bolls meal, and 6sh. 8d. in money are promised, and the Minister is to apply to the heritors and others not present for more, and he reported afterwards that he had done so with good success. The school fees per quarter, called "The Raith's Colledge," are then fixed—"sic as leirnit to wreitt and reid to pay 13sh. 4d.—sic as leirnit gramer, 20sh.—sic as leirnit Musick onlie, 20sh." There is complaint on the kirk officer: 1st. "That he neglected the key of the scole Duir (door) and leit the scuill be tane." He explains that before school time the scholars stole another key from him whereby they opened another door, and got into the school without his knowledge. On other counts the officer gets an admonition. There is something of mystery about this "taking of a scole" or school. Mr. Mercer, the Minister, in giving his excuses for absence from a former Meeting, said "he wes awaittand that the scole of Ellon suld not be tane then." Possibly if the scholars got in and had undisputed possession they would have wrought general havoc.

11th Jan. 1621. Mr. Rattray, who made the addition in the preaching this

day, was reproved "for unnecessar prolixitie, and ordanit to be mair sumar and schort in tyme cuming."

One, Ronald Hay, in Overtoun of Straloch, gets a severe sentence for practising something that looks like "black art," but now forgotten. He is accused of "turning the syns and the scheus," and confessed. In answer to questions he said it was on Sunday, when people were passing to the kirk. He repeated the names of a dozen persons "befoir it turnit"—he spake every person's name three times. "For practising this unlawfull thing" he was ordained to repentance, Jogs, sackcloth, bare feet and legs, three Sundays.

23rd Jan. "Thomas Tullidaf gave in his grief that he culd get na obedience of them who prophaneit Devyne Service at the Chapell of Newburgh befoir Pasche last." There had been some mockery of Divine Service.

Death of Mr. John Read, Minister of Logy. On 21st Feb. 1621, there is: "Memordum, the caus that the brethren convenit not on 13th Feb. as wes ordaneit wes becaus the said 13 day of Februar Mr. John Reid, Minister at Logy-buchan wes buryit." On 19th Oct. it was noted that he had gone to England for his health, and on 11th Jan. "Mr. Johne Reid, wha resaveit the buik of Cruden, wes out of the countrey and haid the same buik in his study, sa that the same culd not be visited be ony uther." It is a question if he had ever returned in life, but apparently his body had been brought north in order to be buried at his own kirk, which had been the custom then as now. At least it is seen that Stephen Massoun was buried at Slains by a gruesome incident that occurred some years after. Logy remained in an unsettled state for a minister for five years. There is word soon that Mr. Mitchell from Udney is to have the kirk, and this comes about, but he is very much absent, and does not seem to have taken up his residence in the parish. In the following November, when the Bishop had appointed to be out for "taking order with the destitut estait of that flock," he was prevented by an "excessive storme." At the Visitation in July, 1624, there is mention that Mr. Mitchell is like to be transplanted elsewhere; and this comes about. In Oct. following he resigns the Moderatorship, having been called by Lord Erroll and the parishioners of Turriff to be Minister there. He is mentioned by Spalding, in giving an account of the Trot of Turriff in 1639, in no complimentary manner. Logy again lies unsupplied for long, and in Aug. 1625, the elders state that for the last four years they have scarcely had a quarter of a year's preaching. Auchmacoy, as patron, said he had ever been most willing to advise with the presbytery for a suitable Minister, and asks them to nominate one. Mr. Robert Mersir, schoolmaster at Ellon is like to be appointed at first (he was son to the Minister of Slains), but this is fallen away from. In the following year, 1626, Mr. Patrick Guthrie is given as Minister. His name appears first on 10th May, (and that would probably have been close on the time of his appointment), when he is ordained to teach at next meeting, and does so—on "Esey" (Isaiah?) last chap. 8 verse. On 12th Oct. he was appointed Moderator.

2nd March, 1621. Mr. Adame Reid of Methlick, repeatedly absent, is written to in strong terms.

The following paragraph, to appearance at least, is written in a spirit of levity out of keeping with the subject, which is grave and deplorable enough; but it is hard to say if in reality there had been any vein of humour in the learned scribe. It is entitled—"Anent ye drinking in Tilliecorthie when tua men drank them selfis deid." The Ministers of Foveran and Udney state that at a public house on the boundary between their parishes, three men indulged in excessive drinking—a tailor and a gardener in Tilliecorthie, and another man from Belhelvie. They "haid drunken so extraordinarie . . . that not onlie haid they drunken sic drink as wes on ye gantreis there for the time, bot haid also drunken a geill fat (vat) full of new beir wharthrow tua of them wes deid, for they never drank mair"—the tailor and the gardener. The Belhelvie man staggered homewards and "fell in a pley with his brother wha brak his heid and sched his bluid, and so vomitam aperiunt lyk pheria Jasoni. So that he lyvis. This being a grievous accident and sin, it is refarit to ye bischope and assemblie what sall be the censure of the man that lyvis, and of them wha sald the drink." The Latin used may be a quotation from some classic, signifying that in the collision with his brother the besotted delinquent had been set a-vomiting mightily—"and so he lyvis."

4th April. "Ther wes na Doctrine be ressoun of ye stormie wedder and ye wattirs and burns gryt." delaying the brethren.

Two elders from Methlick come forward with complaint against their late Minister, Mr. John Mersir. He had taken away their common psalm Book and Book of Discipline; their charges for collecting silver for buying and making their vestments and vessels for the communion; he had appropriated sundry houses made at the common charges to be schools, and on the green, and now occupied by Helen Guthrie as tenant to the Laird of Ludquharn, and another house in his own "clois," dispoed to Mr. Adam Reid; also, they want their "rubors" that brought home wine to the Communion. He had also given no compt nor reckoning of the common good or Session funds with which he had intromitted. Mr. Jo. Mersir, called on, says the Psalm Book and Discipline Book will be delivered up before next meeting—"also their letteris for their charges." As for the two houses—he said he had often made request for the house built on the Laird of Haddo's heritage, of the Laird of Ludquharn, but could not get it. He promised to restore the other house "buildit on the Manse." The "rubors" also he will restore before next meeting. He will submit his accounts to the Presbytery.

1st May, 1621. Mr. Adam Reid "wes not sattillit as yet in his dwelling and Ministrie" at Methlick.

Wm. Dickie, piper, confessed he was convicted in Lord Erroll's Court of bleeding a wife in Ellon.

7th June. Mr. John Mersir in Abdn., "at his sone's away passing out of ye countrey."

At the Visitations of 1621 all is fairly well in the reports as between Minister and elders, save at Cruden, where the elders renew their former complaints on Mr. Rattray—Discipline and the poor neglected, and the kirk unrepaired "lyes deformit," and there has been no compt of the Funds for six years bygone. By the brethren at next meeting, Mr. Rattray is found to be "the same man he wes befoir, and his Discipline buik informall in mony points."

At Foveran, the incorrigible kirk officer has again to be admonished for his drunkenness, and Lord Arthur Forbes, who is present, becomes caution for him. Here also, Robert Folay in Mekill Ythsie gets a sentence of repentance in all its full blown horrors of sackcloth, bare feet and legs, and "half-heid" and beard shaven, and, in addition, to have "ane cream of paper on his heid." This last has not been ordained before. At Methlick there are few elders present—only those from the lands of Gicht and Auchincrive, and Geo. Gordoun in Burngraynis. They give a good testimony of their Minister, but there is division and distraction, as all the dwellers on Haddo's lands are still keeping away from Church under compulsion. At Slains, Discipline cannot be enforced, and the Minister gets but small obedience. At Ellon, the elders are somewhat negligent. The schoolmaster, Mr. Samuel Tullidaf, is diligent. Patrick Chein, kirk officer, is admonished for remissness in collecting penalties—"and that he mantainit ane number of Dowis (doves) to big in the end of the kirk." At Tarves, the Visitation of which is on 14th June, the "gentillmen" of the parish are strongly represented—Forbes of Tolquhon, Geo. Setoun of Schethin, Jas. Forbes of Tilligonie, John Gordoun of Tillielt, John Setoun of Mynes, "chamberlan," Andrew Meldrum of Auchneif. Besides the other duties mentioned as performed by the Minister, "he reads ye prayers ilk oulk day at sax hours (6 o'clock) in the morning." About 60 years after this, in the second Episcopal period, it is recorded that there was week day service of prayer in the Church of Tarves. It is the only one in the Presbytery up to this time (1621) mentioned as having such. As Mr. Gardyne keeps his Session Book himself, and his writing is not "sa perfect as wes neidful," it was thought meet that some one capable of teaching a school in "gramer and Musick," should be got who would also be Reader and Session Clerk. Towards a provision for him, Tolquhon promises a firloft of meal for every plough, the other heritors promise to contribute, and the Minister will give a boll. The schoolmaster to have 20 lbs money from the kirk funds "and the College fee to be 10sh. for Inland bairns, and 16sh. for buirders." Tillielt's "grievous complaint" on his son, John, follows.

JOHN GORDON, YOUNGER, OF TILLIELT—*circa* 1620.

Perhaps as clear an idea of the half-settled state of the country at this time is got from the notices that had to be taken of this renegade, as from anything in the Records. The house of Tillielt has come into frequent mention—not always a favourable sign for one however—and there is cause to think it was a more or less graceless one. It will be remembered that Agnes Gordon, who led captive the widowed Laird of Haddo, was a daughter of it, and it was this John's brother, James, then a youth, who, at the instigation of his father and mother, forged the certificate which enabled the precipitate marriage between Haddo and his sister to be carried out. With such morality instilled into them by their parents, no wonder if it ripened into evil fruit, and recoiled upon them in their latter days. Twenty-three years have passed since then, and John Gordon would now be in middle age, and he is one of the most notorious profligates and bullies in the district—one of a type that has no redeeming trait. At last his father in helpless despair throws himself on the compassion of the presbytery, in hopes of some relief, and it is from his "grevous complaint" to them upon his son that most details are given (14th June, 1621). The evening of life has become clouded with sorrow and trouble for poor old Tillielt, reckless and graceless in his day, and though it may be only the faults of his younger years coming home upon him now, one cannot help feeling for the old and dilapidated sinner as he gives his doleful tale to the presbytery, now that their other business is over, and appeals to them for help and advice. Perhaps it was the knowledge that this was to come that brought so many of the gentlemen of the parish to this meeting. The statement of Tillielt and proceedings connected with it occupy two closely written pages. He says he had often complained of his son, John, to the Justice of the Peace and other Judges of the land, and had lately written to the Marquis of Huntly, Sheriff-Principal of Aberdeen, very earnestly—he was sick and unable to go to him in person. All his admonitions and threatenings had been ineffectual to restrain him; he daily waxed worse and worse. For fourteen years bypast he had been "ane nicht walker and extraordinar drunkard," and guilty of other iniquities that may be imagined—"committing daylie very mony ryotts be tulzeing and oppressing of all quhom he may overcum, and that he wald cam within his awn hous of Tillielt, and thair in presence of his parents wald miserable abuse the haill familie, and so vilipend and disdane his auld father in his face that mony nichts throw greif of hart he wald be forced to ryis fra his tabill, and go to his chalmer and bed unsoupit. In quhilk ungodly maner the said John spent his lyif . . ." Tillielt earnestly appeals to the Presbytery, to the Justices of the Peace and gentlemen there present, and it is agreed that some of these latter, with the Minister of Tarves, should join Tillielt and wait on the Marquis. Here again Tillielt complains that the Minister had shown "over mild countenance, and sufferit ye said John now and then in his societie and

wald eit and drink with him." But it appears the jovial Minister could not well help himself. Gordon would lurk in the village until such time as he judged that dinner or supper would be being served up in the Manse, when, as Mr. Gardyne said in answer, "he wald peirtlie cum in at the durs (doors) and sit down at the heid of his buird, and wald not be restraynit except he wald have swaggerit with him or useit violence—quhilk wes very far to the said Thomas (Gardyne's) discontentment." No doubt—for in his post of vantage at the head of the table, the rogue would have seen to it that John Gordoun should not want for the best of the Minister's viands and strong ale, however it should fare with his host.

The Minister and elders brought another notable charge against John Gordon. He had, as accomplices, John Mill, one of the Commissioner's officers, and John Lowrie, schoolmaster in Tarves. They had passed through divers parts of Buchan practising an imposture, which is specified in the case of John Beg, in Braklay, Tarves, to whom Gordon produced a parchment with a seal attached, which he alleged was a Commission to himself from the King and the Earle of Engye (?) to raise soldiers to go to Bohemia, charging the said John Beg to pass along with them forthwith, or to pay down 3 libs. as ransom. Lowrie, the schoolmaster, being at hand (the meeting was in the kirk of Tarves), was called in and examined upon this and confessed all. He said that at one time John Gordon had got a "Remission" (equivalent to a Permission or Licence) to wear pistols, (which Licence had thus been necessary), having the king's seal attached and inscribed on the back, "Remissio Johannis Gordoun de Tillielt." "They changed the word Remissio into Commissio, quhilk the said John Gordoun schew to them whom he charged." Lowrie confessed that he acted as witness to the said charge, but said he was forced thereto by John Gordoun "be ane bend (equal to cocked) pistoll haldin to his breist, and that the said John Mill wes officiar to the execution of the said charge." If the Presbytery cannot meantime get amends of the Arch Impostor, they have at least a good hold on Lowrie, the Tarves dominie, and they ordain forthwith that he be discharged from office and his house cast down and demolished.

This rascal trio—Gordon, as deputed by the king, Mill, as officer from the Commissioners, and the sycophant Lowrie, as witness (conform to law) to the delivery of a charge—had been plying their trade industriously for some weeks, and, to judge from the narrative, a good deal under cover of night, so as to make sure to lay personal hold on their victims. Any young and adventurous spirit would not have been in their line, but when they could lay hold of some small farmer with a little substance, such as John Beg in Braklay, the chances were altogether in their favour. With the choice put to him of buying himself off, or of forthwith bidding adieu to friends and fireside, oxen, barn and flail, and marching along with them to cross the seas and shoulder a pike, and, as likely as not, in no long time, to become food for the wolves and ravens in far Bohemia, they might reckon safely on their victim seeking out the old stocking, however

reluctantly, and paying down as many of his hard-earned merks as would keep the triumvirate roystering merrily for a time in the alehouses of Buchan—for Buchan was given as their main hunting ground, and young Gordon of Tillielt, with his myrmidons, and no doubt with his rapier and sinister-looking pistols of the olden time conspicuous in his belt, had become a terror down to the coast, and at word that he was on his rounds the peasants were flying from their homesteads to the "mountains" (these are rather humble in Buchan, but the hills of Dudwick or such like might have been a sufficiently secure and desolate retreat at the time), to the mosses, which were then much more numerous and extensive than now, and even to the sea in boats where near the coast. "This sort of deilling put the haill countrey pepill, specialie of the commoun sort, baith maisters and servands, in sic feare that for the space of 14 or 20 dayes they ran fra thair awn houssis in the nicht tyme to the montains, dens, mossis and craigis of the sey (sea), and in fisch boitts remaneit on the sey in gryt multituds, as is notoriouslie knawn." The intellects of the people with whom he had to deal, dour and peaceful, would have been slow to comprehend that they were being imposed upon, but if he had returned among them once too often with his Bohemian Commission they might have ground him exceeding small. Doubtless there had been a sense of coarse humour in him at the thought of the people thus scattering out before him, as also when he was an unbidden guest at the Minister's suppers. His tampering with the superscription on his pistol licence calls to mind his brother James's earliest recorded exploit of forging the testimonial for the marriage. He must have got what might be called a liberal education for that time, to have been capable of drawing out the latter, and it had likely been owing to old Tillielt's incapacity for it that he had been called in to turn his learning to account. There is no mention of James, who was the oldest son, at this time. After this comes the worst charge of all. It was shewn that John Gordon, along with Robert Johnstoun of Corshill and others, came to the house of Robert Johnstoun in Tarves, on 7th June last, and there at noon-day perpetrated an outrage that cannot be mentioned. "The Presbytery thocht it sic a obshenous actioun" that they suspended proceedings until its truth could be tried, and as it was alleged to have taken place in the village of Tarves, hard beside, that could be done at once. Accordingly the Minister, along with old Tillielt and "William Craig, Rothesay herald in Tarves," were sent out to make inquiry, and after a time returned to confirm the truth of the report. The Presbytery in the end ordained that they should advertise the Bishop of John Gordon's enormities, and thought it incumbent on the Justices that they should apprehend John Gordon and John Mill "for thair alledgit commissioun of Bohemia."

With these united efforts directed against him Gordoun had found it necessary to make himself scarce in his native district for a time—a common practice with delinquents. When their misdeeds were about to raise a hurricane

about their ears they would remove elsewhere, and hither and thither as pressure required, and when the storm had blown over they would feel their way and venture back out of the unknown fog. Gordoun is not mentioned again here until nearly five years after this, but there is nothing to show that he had been in Bohemia. Had he only gone there himself and left his bones to whiten on some of the great charnel fields of the Thirty Years' War, there would have been much to say in his extenuation. But he was altogether a son of Belial. Before 12th April, 1626, he had returned to his old haunts, no better man, for on that day there was a memorandum that there is to be remembered at the coming Synod, "the inordinat walking of John Gordoun sone to . . . Tillielt, and that the Bischop would interpone his authoritie that the Justice of the Peace might apprehend him, conform to the letters of captioun alreddy raisit." He had likely avoided caption, however, and departed again for a space, but by the following January he had been back to ruffle it, debauch, bully and bluster among the quiet dwellers in Tarves and its neighbourhood. He had been summoned before the Session of Tarves to answer for delinquencies cognizable by them, and been sentenced to penalty and repentance. Against the sentence he appealed to the Presbytery, and Mr. Gardyne sends a report of the finding of the Session to the Presbytery meeting of 3rd Jan., 1627. It states that John Gordoun "being cum back to the parochen of Tarves as he wha wes removeit out of the countrey," had been summoned and appeared before them. The names of four women are set down against him, "and now lastlie sa far as we know . . . Annas Abircrombie." He fails to appear in support of his appeal, and Mr. Gardyne is ordained to process him with excommunication. On 29th May, it is noted that he had given caution to satisfy the kirk in penalty and repentance, but had not done so; the process therefore is to go on. And so he stands in the year 1627—a bloated reprobate of at least nearly 50 years, with the ban of the kirk hanging over him. His father is still alive and must be a very old man. There has been no mention of his sister, Agnes, Lady Haddo, since the last ebullition between her and the Minister of Methlick, seventeen years ago. If the pistol-belted ruffian could only make a Van Winkle re-visit to his former haunts in the present day, and begin again as he left off, it would be interesting to note his experiences.

27th March 1622. Mr. Adam Reid, in excuse for his absence from last meeting, said he had heard that his brother, Mr. Thos. Reid, was at the point of death, and had posted into Abdn. to meet his brother Mr. Robert, who awaited his coming for the purpose of going to see their brother. From their title of "Mr." it looks as if both his brothers had been Ministers or in Divinity as well as himself.

Thos. Fiddes in Little Arthrachie "for raising a Deis in the kirk of Logy pertaining to Patrick Innes of Tippetie, and setting it under the stuill of repent-

ance, confessit that throch ignorance he had done the same. Wha being scharplie rebukit . . . that being ane elder durst undertak sa heich an attempt, begged pardon . . . and promiseit to set the said deis in the awn place thair of that same night.

21st July. Visitation of Tarves. The Bishop is present, and a strong endeavour is to be made for sustaining a school, which had been awanting in Tarves for some time.

18th Sept. Cruden Visitation. "The said day ther wes na Doctrine nor Discipline becaus of Mr. David Rattray his seiknes to Deith for ye present without foir warning ye brethren thair of, as also becaus of na conventioun of elders nor pepill." And being in Cruden, the Ministers of Tarves, Ellon and Foveran "past to the dwelling place of James Ogilvie of Blerack, according to the former ordinance, to give admonitioun to Marjorie Gordoun, spouse to the said James to avoid suspicious behavior with George Hay, son to the Guidman of Brunthill" (there have been repeated notices of this before). They reported that they found her personally, and "after lang and tedious expostulationis and recriminationis with her . . . gave her publict admonitioun . . . Quhais answer wes that at ye returne of hir husband (whom she alleged to be absent) she with hir said husband suld pas to Abdn. and give full satisfactioun to the Bischop thairanent." Nearly two years after this Mr. Rattray has to report that notwithstanding all the admonitions given by the Bishop and brethren the scandal between young Hay of Brunthill and the wife of Ogilvie of Blerack continues, and is worse than before. Hay has possession of a room in the house, and Ogilvie has made disposition of all he had to him. More than three years after this (10th Feb. 1627), and when Ogilvie appears to be dead, Mr. Rattray is ordained to "try cairfullie the scandalous conversatioun of George Hay and . . . Gordone, guidwyff of Blerack," and sharply rebuked for being negligent of doing so in time past.

13th Feb. 1623. Mr. Rattray has not succumbed to his deadly sickness of September last. It befell opportunely at that time for staving off the annoyances of a "Visitation." He has still several years of uselessness and perversity before him. The Records about this time may be said to be Mr. David Rattray. On this day he is "exhortit to mak conscience of his calling—to keip the meittings in tyme cuming"—and to pay 10sh. for recent repeated absences; also to bring to next meeting his payment due "to the Devyne and to the Bursers Divinitie, and siclyk to bring with him fifty ane merks to be payit to Mr. Robert Reid, Minister of Banchorie, for certane buiks coft by him fra ye said Mr. Robert . . . and this under ye paine of suspensioun.

5th March. "Mr. David Rattray taucht of ye contraversie of ye sacrifice of ye mes (Mass) . . . and becaus ye said Mr. David satisfied not ye brethren. Thairfor he wes ordanit to proceid in ye mater of ye said contraversie, and end ye samen ye next meitting." He had not brought up the money for the books,

neither does he do so to next meeting on the 19th. He is exhorted on this day, after his preaching, to be diligent in his study, and to speak with feeling to his hearers.

At the end of the minutes of this meeting a half page had been left blank, and nearly 50 years after some of the scholars at Ellon had got access to the Book, and unwittingly put their names on Record more imperishably than if they had graven them deeply on the hardest stone in the kirkyard, for after the lapse of two centuries and a quarter the writing, which is good, is as clear as at first—the spelling has a wonderful variety. “John Middleton Scollowr at Ellon (1670)—John Black scholler at Ellon—Arthur Millne Scoller att Ellon—they wer good lads and I true they weer—1670 yeirs.”

23rd July, 1623. Mr. Thomas Thoris, student in Divinity, presents a letter from the Bishop to the Presbytery to the effect that as Udney is now vacant, they make trial of the said Thomas, according to the canons concluded by the Bishop and Assembly. He had been settled at Udney soon after this but there is no regular mention of that. A copy of the above Canons for the trial of candidates for the Ministry is here entered. It is of date 1620. Thoroughly good testimonials of former life are required—a knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew—4 years at Divinity course—to be “weill seen in Contraversies—usit in the reiding of Eusebius and uther ancient ecclesiasticall wreitters of best credit—lykwayes sum of our recent recorders.” The Candidate is to be of grave and sober carriage, “in apparel grave and stayed, not chasing fulischlie the fond fassiounis of the countrey, not a Dancer, Carder, Dyce, nor contentious and quarrelus. Lat him not be a venter of ower new opinions contrair ye receaved Judgment of the Church, whairin gif he continew efter admonition he sall be rejected *ipso facto*.”

MR. DAVID RATTRAY.

6th Aug., 1623. Mr. Rattray, who has been twice fined of late for absence, gives as excuse for his last that his son was sick of the “Gulset,” and he had gone with him to Kinmundy for cure of medicine.

At the Slains Visitation, Mr. John Mersir says of his elders that they “are weill aneuch willed,” but that he and they get small obedience. He is instructed to appeal to Lord Erroll.

At Cruden, on 4th Sept., the report does not improve. Mr. Rattray is “the same man that he wes befoir, even as he wes when the Bishop visited the kirk last. He taucht on the Saboth day befoir none even as he did, keeps Sessiounes and exerceses Discipline as of befoir. Thair wes na Catechesing, the kirk yaird dykes war down, the kirk ruif ruynous, the kirk windois nather broded nor glassed. The penalties not taken up nor na compt maid of the commoun guid.

The Sessioun buik wes not delyvered to Mr. Robt. Mercer befoir the Visitation as wes enjoyned. He is fund lying registrat at the Horn” (for debt). He is ordained to get himself released therefrom under pain of suspension, and the brethren considering that all things were as they had found them for many years, and rather tending to worse than better, took to be advised until their meeting at Logy next day. Accordingly there—the want of a “powerfull Ministrie” at Cruden was deplored, especially as the Earl of Erroll made residence in the parish, and “my Lady Hay and sum of his Lordship’s awn bairnis and dyvers of the servants of the hous war sinceirly affected to religioun, as also sundrie of the ordinar parochiners war secreitlie bemoning when thai durst utter them selfis for the want of a powerful Ministrie thair.”

There had also been word that the brethren of other presbyteries were grieving at the state of things in Cruden, seeing, through defect in Mr. Rattray that “not only wer his ordinar parochiners sterving of spirituall famyne, bot mekill mair be ressoun of resort thair to my Lord’s hous baith of enemyis and freinds to religioun.” It was resolved therefore that at least during the residence of the Earl and his family at Bowness, the other Ministers of the Presbytery should preach by turns at Cruden, Mr. Rattray to supply their place in their own pulpits. This was communicated to Mr. Rattray, to whom every consideration seems to have been shown, “in most loving manner,” and he at first willingly agreed—then he would take till next Sunday to consider. Meantime Mr. Mitchell is appointed to preach at Cruden on the 13th, which had been appointed a day of Fast by the Bishop. However by next meeting on the 18th things had taken a turn for the worse. Mr. Mitchell would not appear to have gone to Cruden on the 13th, and he now reports that he had written to the Bishop respecting the arrangement proposed, and had got his entire approval. Moreover the Bishop in his letter to Mr. Mitchell said he had written a private letter to Mr. Rattray to acquiesce, and to this he had got no answer. He therefore now addressed a letter to the presbytery which was produced and read. It was to the effect that if Mr. Rattray did not give way willingly, he should be suspended till next Assembly or Synod. “Whairupon the brethren delt most earnestlie with the said Mr. David yet to give way to the edificatioun of his own flok and to obey his ordinance as becam him, quhilk the said Mr. David altogidder refusit to do, and insted thair of threatenit the brethren with my Lord of Erroll his wrath, assuering them that motioun suld breed commotioun, and that he wald on na conditioun suffer ony man to enter his pulpit, vantage very liberalie of his awn giftis and graceis with dyvers very insolent and disdainfull speiches, to the gryt grief of all the brethren present.” So they resolve to send a commoun letter subscribed by them all to the Bishop, informing him of how matters stood. To repeated orders by the Bishop to appear in Aberdeen, Mr. Rattray gave no heed or answer. At last being summoned judicially he gave for answer that he was “registrat at the Horn and captioun agains him, of the quhilk he feirit execution.”

It is in vain that the Ministers of Logy, Ellon and Foveran offer to bind themselves for a safe conduct to him—"he culd not be induced to compeir." Mr. Mercer of Ellon, who had been appointed to examine the Session Book of Cruden, reported "he haid fund the same very informall, viz., It was onlie sewed not bund, sundrie leiffis revin out and patched in with threid, here tua and there thrie leiffis . . . na Session for five or sax oulks sundrie tymes . . . Mentioun of penalties payit bot na mentioun by whom or how bestowed. Sundrie payit onlie 40sh. for a relapse, and yit na mentioun how employed. Ane Catherine Rainye satisfieit on ye stuill, bot na mentioun of hir penaltie . . . The haill papers ar full of Blanks to be filled up when and how he pleisis. Thair is na mentioun maid of sum penalties taken up for reparation of the kirk windois wherof nane is repaired."

"The said day the brethren being severallie removed and censured—everie brother as neid requyred wes admonished and steired up be exhortatioun to tak heid to them selffis and to the floks committed to their charge in this so dangerous a time. Mr. D. Rattray being removed, the haill brethren, all in ane voce but (without) exceptioun lamented his case, and the case of that pepill where he servit, affirming that they never knew him to cleith himself as becom him in his Ministrie, and that he had done na guid bot much evill in his calling in that place. And because there wes ane process sen the last visitatioun of his kirk depending befor the Bischope and his Assessors, thai referred his forder censure to ye ensewing Assemblie."

5th Nov., 1623. This is mentioned as the first meeting after the Autumn Synod, and some settlement had been come to there in the case of Mr. Rattray, by which he continued in office, as he is given here as taking part in the business and being appointed to teach at next meeting.

This winter, in the beginning of 1624, had been one of very tempestuous weather, rather through storms of rain, and floods, than snow, apparently. On 22nd Jan. very few of the brethren convened owing to "extraordinar tempest," and on 4th Feb. a day of Humiliation was appointed, "and that in respect among many gryt caussis the hand of God is sensiblie stretchit out against the land be ye present extraordinar tempest." "Spaitts of watter" are spoken of.

March 4th, 1624. Mr. George Robertson, "pedagog to Patrick Innes of Tibbertie his bairnis," craves to be allowed to take a share in the "Exercise," or preaching at the Presbytery Meetings, and is appointed to "eik to ye Exercise" at next Meeting. At that Meeting Mr. Rattray, who made the Exercise, was exhorted "to labour to speik to the hart of heirers," and the said Mr. George "wes incuraged to ga forward in his studies."

The brethren are severally gravely exhorted to fidelity and carefulness, "and to tak heid to thair particular walkings in this ill tyme."

16th June. Mr. Gardyne excused his late absence "be ressoun of his diseis of Sciatik."

22nd July. Mr. Rattray sends his officer to excuse his absence from this and last meetings, "be ressoun he wes under danger of captioun, being registrat at the Horn at the instance of Wm. Forbes, burgess of Abdn., whom he haid narrowlie eschapeit within thir few dayis. The brethren war offendit thereat and willit him with expeditioun to purge him of that Horning under paine of deprivation fra his Ministerie." "The brethren are informit to thair gryt grief that everie Saboth day there is a market at the kirk of Cruden, upon the quhilk, the officer Patrick Clark, being present and posit, confessit the same . . . ? A letter from the Bishop asking for a contribution to the town of Dumfermling, a great part of which had lately been destroyed by fire. 20 libs. 3sh. from Foveran were delivered to the collectors for this, "at thair byganging."

5th Augt. Tarves Visitation. There is complaint here, as also at Slains and Logie, that order is not taken with the poor and for putting down vagabonds. The schoolmaster, Mr. Robt. Thomsoun, is giving satisfaction, but his living is so scanty that he must give up if it be not helped. There is also need for a schoolhouse, and Robt. Johnstoun in Tarves takes in hand "to big ane hous of ane cuppill," for which the Session will pay. Tolquhon is the main impediment in providing the salary, and Mr. Mercer of Ellon takes in hand to move him to do his part, and Mr. Gardyne will deal with the other heritors. Tolquhon was now Laird of Watertoun in Ellon.

18th Augt., 1624. Methlick Visitation. The accounts are out of order, and for enforcing penalties the baillies for the Barony of Scheves and for the Lands of Haddo promise assistance. The latter (or rather Ludquharn) would appear thus to be in accord with the Church again. There is complaint that Ludquharn retains a house that was built at the public charge for a school, and Mr. Gardyne is to see him about having it restored. Mr. Rattray still absents himself, pleading fear of Caption, and there is a letter from the Bishop on this, enclosing one with a complaint against Mr. Rattray, which he had got from the burgess of Abdn. who had put him to the Horn. The Presbytery is enjoined to ordain Mr. Rattray peremptorily to clear himself of this, before the Visitation of his kirk on 1st Sept.

1st Sept. Slains Visitation. This should have been on the previous day, but it was rendered impossible by "extraordinar spaitts of watter." And as the brethren have to pass on to Cruden, proceedings are shortened. Only two elders are present, though all the others have been warned. They give a good report of the Minister, but say that he "getts no obedience of his parochiners, bot contempt, nor na executioun of Discipline." Gilbert King, a seaman, for "contempt of his Minister and oppin revylling of him on the Saboth Day befor the congregatioun," is sentenced to repentance in "Jogis and goneis," and to crave forgiveness of the Minister and congregation.

The Presbytery pass on to Cruden. The elders there give the old testimony of Mr. Rattray—that he goes on as before. There is neglect all round, and there has been “sum market on the Saboth day at the kirk befor the preiching” for some time past. The Church is in a forlorn condition, neither wind nor watertight. “The ruif revin above,” the windows “nather glassit nor brodit. The walls nather cassin nor set. The commoun guid lying ower uncomptit this mony yeirs. Sua that all things war fund out of order. Whereat ye brethren war exceidinglie greiffit.” Mr. Rattray was called in and all this shown to him, but there is no reply recorded. The Reader and officer, Patrick Clark, complained that he had lacked 10 libs. of his fee for five years by past. It was ordered to be paid up; also the Collectors to make up their accounts and shew them at next meeting at Ellon. Mr. Rattray was ordained to bring there the money owing to the bursars, as also what was due to “Mr. John Reid’s bairns for buiks coft be him,” probably at the sale of the Minister of Logy’s effects after his death.

At the Foveran Visitation of 1624, the Minister is reported “very faithfull and diligent according to the measure of his talent”—a verdict very similar to this is repeatedly given of him. Both he and his whole elders represent that he has now become aged and weak (“ageit and waik”), and put in a request for an assistant, which is to have the support of the Presbytery.

At Ellon, the school has again been suspended, and there is a stirring-up for having it resumed. The Laids of Kermuck and Ochterellon, who are present, promise support. The Laird of Kermuck is now John Kennedy, son to the James Kennedy of Kermuck, excommunicated as a papist some 20 years before this. Ochterellon is Alexr. Udny, related to Udny of that ilk. The Annands are departed from there.

It may be noted that where, here and there, there are pieces of paper torn out of the leaves of the Book, the writing is seldom amissing—shewing that the rents were made before the pages were penned.

15th Decr. Mr. Rattray made the addition to the Exercise, and was admonished “to be mair pertinent in his Doctrine in tyme cuming.”

1st June, 1625. “. . . Na Doctrine be ressoun of the small conventioun of the brethren for mony causis—specialie—Mr. Thos. Gardyne wes seik, as also Mr. Adame Reid, as thair severall letters sent in with thair kirk officers testi-feit—the burial of Auchincreifi’s wyif—the wairding of Mr. David Rattray, and only four of the brethren convenit, viz.: Mr. Robt. Mercer, Mr. Jo. Mercer, Mr. Thos. Thoris and T. Tullidaf.” So caption has overtaken Mr. Rattray after all, and he is now in “Waird” or prison. He had been laid hold of when in at the April Synod in Abdn.; as on 29th June, he excused his absence from recent meetings “that he wes newlie cum hame fra his waird, quhilk wes the caus of his absence the dyetts bygane sen the last Assemblie haldin in Abdn., in Apryll.” He had thus been in durance about two months.

Some cases of charming come up about this time. A man and his wife from Andet were lately before the Presbytery, accused of having got their bairn charmed; and Patrick Couper in Monkshill, and his daughter, Barbara, are up to answer a similar charge. They confess, and the particular charm put in practice by them is given in circumstantial detail. In the first place they had employed Thomas Smyth at Caldwell’s, in the parish of Ellon, to charm “thair bairne that wes seik,” and it would appear as if they had carried the child all the way to Caldwell’s, because they confessed that afterwards “they useit forder charming at hame. They maid ane graif (grave) under the cradill, in the place whare the cradill rokkit that the seik bairn wes in, and cuttit ye bairnis cradill belt in nyne peices, and tuik ane quik (live) cat and ye said cradill belt cuttit in manner forsaid and buryed in ye said grave. They wer ordanit ilk ane of them to pay 10 merks, and make repentance in sackcloth, bairfuitted and bairlegit. . .”

The Charmer, Thomas Smyth, comes up at next meeting, having been summoned, and confessed that he was guilty of charming in the case of what was called the falling sickness in children. In answer to inquiries he said, “That sic as haid seik bairnis inquyrit for a Smyth to charm their bairn, callit ane Schyre Smyth, that is to say ane Smyth whais father, guidshire and grandsire wes Smyths, and himself wes ane of them. And when sic bairns cam to him, he laid them naikit on the study (anvil) and with his gryt foirhamer drew and mintit thrie tymes to them on the study, saying thir words thrie tymes—‘Ather pair or mend in the name of the Father, Sone and Halie gaist, in God’s name.’ The said Thomas wes ordanit to pay 10 merks and mak repentance sax Sundayis in sackcloth, bairfuitted and bairlegit . . . he was also admonisheit not to use ye lyk charming in tyme cuming under ye paine to be persewit of his lyif as ane witch.”

At the same meeting another Thomas Smyth, Cordener in Darforkie (a reason for their names being alike is given in the last case) is accused of charming and confesses. He had charmed bairns at Craigie of Tarves, Bartholl Chapell, &c. “Being inquyrit wha leirnit him to charm answerit ane puir woman wha is now deid, and repeittit ower the words of the Charm befor the brethren of ye presbyterie.” The said Thomas was sentenced as the last, and admonished that if he continued in further Charming he should be pursued to death as a Witch.

28th July, 1625. Slains Visitation. There is the former complaint of no obedience from delinquents. It is shown to the Presbytery that Helen Kinaird, “ane apostat-papist, spous to Patrick Con of Crawley” (this Patrick Con seems to have been a Commissioner or factor for Lord Erroll) had come to the kirk of Slains and caused take up the body of Stephen Masoun, umqll. Minister of Slains, where he had been buried six years before, or thereby. Lord Erroll had wished to build an aisle for himself on to the kirk, but, as was reported, had ordered the masons to avoid disturbing Stephen Masoun’s grave. “Notwithstanding, ye said Helen cum to ye kirk of Slaynis ye 24th July, and maist barbarouslie causit

Patrick Bonar, kirk officiar, George Ritchie, James Fiddeller and John Ritchie, ficheris in Colliestoun, tak up the body of ye said umqll. Stephane, kist and all, out of ye grave, and causit brak up the lid of the kist with ane Eich and luikit and beheld the body of ye said umqll. Stephane. As also the said Helene left him there unburyed againe. The said . . . kirk officiar confessit that the said Helene Kinaird said maist maliciouslie—'An he war the best Minister that ever preichit in a pulpit Devill a bit of him suld ly there.' The officer confessed that the Minister had forbidden him to have anything to do with taking up the body. The brethren, after advisement, thought it best to acquaint the Bishop.

11th Aug., 1625. Tarves Visitation. It was shown that John Gordon of Tillielt was under an obligation "to put up the north Ile in the kirk of Tarves," in respect that he had had in his hands the sum of fourscore pounds and the interest of the same for 16 years. But he refuses to put up the said "Yle." The Minister has the obligation in his possession, and is ordained to cause registrate it and put it to execution. Two years after this, at the Visitation of Tarves, "Tillielt, being present . . . gave the promise . . . that in case the Laird of Haddo put not up the Yle on the north side of the kirk, quhilk is alreddy walled, he suld put it up him selff next somer following." The Laird of Haddo here must now be young John Gordon, come of age; and as Ludquharn has not been mentioned for some years his Regency will be over.

"Complaint wes gevin in that the kirkyaird (of Tarves) wes abuseit be Cattill and hors of the toun of Tarves that cam in and eat ye girss thair of." Intimation from the pulpit to be made that if any beast be got in the kirkyard in time coming the owner will have to pay two merks.

At Tarves Visitation in the summer of 1626, the elders gave a good report of Mr. Gardyne, but "bemonit his Waiknes and Infirmitie." And at Foveran, though the need of an assistant for Thomas Tullidaf is represented at every Visitation, nothing is done for years. At that of 12th June, 1627, the brethren agreed that when the Laird of Frendret and Sir George Hamiltoun were in the country some of them should see them in order to get, if it might be had, a maintenance for a schoolmaster who should be also an assistant to the Minister.

At the Visitation of 1626 and the following year, save at Cruden all goes well. At Methlick—"Forsamekill as ther wes collectit silver to mak silver cupis and Basynis to the use of the kirk, restand in the hands of John Reith, now . . . in Fyvie, John Bannerman in Colynie is ordanit to persew that silver befor the Civill Judge . . . and to be ansrable . . . for ye same."

In May, 1627, Communion is ordained to be twice a year. In October of that year, Mr. Patrick Guthrie, Minister of Logy, is continued Moderator. At Slains, a seat in the end of the "quier" is to be built for the elders: George Clark, schoolmaster, is admitted Reader.

26th March, 1626. Mr. Thoris of Udney absent from last meeting having been sent for out of Abdn. as his mother was at the point of death. On 10th

May there was no exercise owing to the absence of Mr. Thoris, whose mother had sent for him. "She being reddy to depairt this life."

12th Ap., 1626. Margaret Stevin in Tarves—delinquent with John Gordoun, son to Tillielt.

Meantime Sunday fighting does not languish. Amongst others, James Longoneill at Miln of Culie is sentenced for "schedding the bluid" of Thomas Yrnside in Culie on the Sabbath; and Thomas Mitchell at the Miln of Carnfechili, John Findlay there, and Robt. Mitchell in Culie, are sentenced to pay four merks each and make repentance for profanation of the Sabbath "be drawing swords and persewing the lyif of Andrew Gray in Auld Aberdeen, at the kirk of Udney."

MR. DAVID RATTRAY OF CRUDEN, AGAIN.

4th Oct. 1625. Visitation of Cruden. The elders give the old story of carelessness all round on the part of their Minister. That he preaches on Sabbath forenoon and examines before Communion is all there is on the credit side, and on the other—Windows not glazed as yet, "nor the kirk set within—they knew not what guid their commoun guid did—na compt wes maid sen the yeir 1619—na Jogis nor gones for punishment of trespassers." Neither are penalties paid, because, as the Minister alleges, the kirk officer is controlled by Lord Erroll's baillie to this, notwithstanding the Earl's promise against it. There is no mention of comment by the Presbytery, or of admonition to Mr. Rattray at this time. Save, indeed, the following paragraph which is entered on the same day may have been held as sufficient comment on the whole state of matters in Cruden. "Compeirit Wm. Murray in Braka, and being accusit for his prophane behaviour and tuiizeing in the kirk of Cruden in tyme of Divine Service, confessit ye same, and wes ordanit to satisfie in Jogis and goneis at ilk kirk of ye presbyterie."

5th July, 1626. Mr. Rattray is sharply admonished on the complaint of the Minister of Slains, that he had given the Communion and baptized a child to a delinquent in Slains who had not satisfied the kirk there—and had made a vaunt of it.

21st Sept. 1626. Cruden Visitation. Mr. Rattray is again complained upon bitterly by his elders. Although he preaches twice on Sundays it is without "motioun and power." When goods are pointed for the penalties of delinquents Lord Erroll's baillie takes them and restores them to the parties. Such penalties as were got in Mr. Rattray took possession of and used according to his pleasure, giving no account—"as the deformed windois and walls of the kirk did proclaime;" for repairing of which sundry of them had offered to contribute from their own purses. Discipline was altogether irregular. Some paid their penalties and neglected their repentance; others began their repentance and never finished it,

as the Book would show. When Mr. Rattray is called in there is "Contestatioun" between him and his elders, and these desire to be freed from office that he may have his way. For remedy, the brethren appoint that there should be a box with two locks and keys prepared—that the receipt of all penalties should be in face of the Session—that they should be put in the Box by two elders, each of whom should have a key, "and twyse onlie in the yeir the kist to be oppinit and the commoun guid distribute be the sicht of the pastour and elders." "And where-as the said Mr. David did not answer his elders with sic modestie as becum the gravitie of a pastour," he was sharply rebuked, and both he and the elders were charged to be in readiness to give account of their common good at a meeting to be held for the purpose. On 13th Dec., Mr. Rattray, who made the addition to the Exercise, got "an Exhortatioun to studie to be mair plain and sensible." At the Visitation of 1627, there is a better report—indeed no shortcoming is specified. The report of the whole Meeting is brief. On 26th Sept., Mr. Rattray, who made the addition to the Exercise, "wes fund falt with as speiking impertinentlie and not raising the Notts of Doctrine as he suld have done."

8th Jan., 1628. "Mr. David Rattray taucht the Contraversie of the Interpretatioun of the Scriptures . . . and wes exhortit to be mair diligent in studie and meditatioun and prayer to delyver the Word mair powerfullie and plainlie."

THE GORDONS OF GICHT AND HADDO—1597 TO 1627.

Two ancestors of the much and justly esteemed family of Aberdeen come into notice in the early Records of the Presbytery—James Gordon of Haddo and his son, George. In common genealogies of the family, they appear but as mere names. The Presbytery Records have the merit that where they make mention of individuals some light is thrown upon their personal character—to be sure, in many cases it is not "honourable mention" they obtain. These two, and others, belong to a period so far back that what is said of them may be considered as merely historical, and matter that may be freely stated and commented on without offence. Of James, who comes early into notice, and apparently not many years after the death of his first wife, sister to the Earl Marischal, the conclusion cannot well be avoided that he was a gentleman of rather loose and easy going principles, but, unlike his kinsman, Gicht, he made no attempt to defy the authority of the Reformed Church, but submitted himself to its satisfaction and censures with as much readiness as could have been expected in the circumstances. One would be led to think he was facile minded to the verge of weakness, seeing he was influenced by the Earl Marischal to make over his whole estates to his son, while as yet he had a prospect of a considerable term of life for himself. Several casual allusions shew that he was under the rule of the

wilful daughter of Eve with whom he linked his lot after the death of his first wife.

Of his son, George, the little that is said leads to the belief that he was a man of quiet and retiring disposition, and of a serious and religious cast of mind, from the reports that had currency during his lifetime as to his close association with the Minister of Methlick. Mr. John Mersir indeed could not have been held a safe spiritual guide, but the fact of his being Minister gave him a strong title as such at the time, and it is possible that with all his great inconsistencies he may have had fits of strong religious enthusiasm; but even this could not be granted to him if there was truth in one of the many objections given in against him by the parishioners of Slains, viz. that they had heard he was but "a cauld gospellar." George Gordon must have been witness throughout to the angry scene betwixt his flaming step-mother and the venomous Minister, for it took place in his own house; and his conduct, to judge from the Record, was marked by great prudence and a desire for peace, and even when called upon to give his evidence he said as little as possible. The date of his death does not seem to be known; it is only said he died before his father whose death is given as being early in 1624. The first mention of the Laird of Ludquharn having control over the lands of Haddo is on the 30th Decr. 1617: so that George Gordon had been dead before then, if the reason for Ludquharn's having such control was that, owing to the death of George Gordon, he had been appointed guardian for his young son—no other reason is apparent.

Of the Gordons of Gicht personally little can be gathered here, save that from father to son they were persistent adherents to the Old Roman Catholic faith for long after the Reformation. It is seen that there is an old Laird living in the Castle at the close of the 16th century, while young Gicht and his Lady, Isobel Wood, reside at Little Ardo. A quarter of a century later another young Gicht has arisen, with an Ogilvie as his spouse. Like his father before him, he is an outstanding Papist and has to be looked after by the Presbytery. The lands of Gicht with their silent ruin form now but a small portion, though the most interesting, of the wide domains of Haddo House; but at the period with which we are dealing Gicht and Haddo were separate baronies, and, of the two, Gicht, with its occasional visits from the great Marquis of Huntly, to whom the family was closely related, seems to have ranked rather highest in dignity and importance, and its tower fortalice on its commanding situation, standing complete with all its attachments and defending walls, would have dwarfed "the laigh bigging" of Kelly, the residence of the Lairds of Haddo. A stronghold of Popery—the denizens of Gicht down to servants and retainers seem to have been of one accord in their antagonism to Mr. John Mersir, and in regarding the harrassing attentions of the Presbytery as an unrighteous Inquisition. Protestantism, now so long

established, was then so new in the north east of Scotland, that probably they were looking forward to a time when the sacrilegious schism (as they deemed it) would have run its fleeting day and the ancient Church have regained its power. Meantime they could no longer go down the valley and hear Mass in the old kirk, but within the seculsion of the court yard walls of Gicht the ceremonial worship of Rome had gone on unbroken, though it had to be kept shrouded in mystery from the outer world—the priest with crucifix on breast gliding towards the candle lighted chapel or apartment dedicated to worship—the statutory masses for the soul's peace of departed Gordons, or at Christmas Eve in the gloom of winter,—and, amid the wild surroundings of Gicht, an awesome gloom, "when the wind was raving in turret and tree," with its under roll in the deep gorge of the river. There is frequent mention of a misunderstanding and bad feeling between the two houses at this period—"a misliking betwix the tua houssis of Gicht and Haddo"—which led to a want of harmony and jarring in the parish of Methlick, and the Minister was not a man to throw oil on the troubled waters. The old friendship was restored in the next generation, when the Troubles of Scotland befel.

The second Volume of the Records closes with a fragment of the proceedings of 30th Jan. 1628. On the last page are mutilated Rules as to Candidates for the Ministry, and how choice should be made. They seem to be much of a repetition of those given some years before. There are about 430 pages in this Volume, and with the exception of a few leaves at the end it is in a remarkably good state of preservation.
