

An Aberdeenshire Farmer's Diary

From The Transactions of the Banffshire Field Club

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William Walker



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TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 1930.

A meeting of the Banffshire Field Club was held at Banff this evening, Sheriff J. W. More in the chair. The meeting was called to hear a statement by Mr Wm. Barclay on the diary of an Aberdeenshire farmer that had come into his hands. The diary is of great length and could not be read, but there were given a synopsis of its contents and an account of the history of the diarist so far as is known. After these had been read, Mr Barclay, on the call of the President, was thanked for the contribution and the meeting unanimously agreed to print the diary in the Transactions of the Club in extenso in view of its highly interesting nature and of its increasing value with passing years.

A NORTHERN DIARY.

Mr Barclay said -

There has come into my hands the diary of John Allardise, who was tenant of Lower Plaidy. It is contained in two manuscript volumes. The first begins with the year 1768 and takes end (in two torn leaves) with 1807 Mr Allardise carries on the second volume until 1815, in which year, on September 4, he died. In circumstances detailed below, the diary was continued by his friend, who was also one of his executors, John Pirrie, farmer in Woodhead of Lathers, who takes up the narrative from the middle of 1815 and carries it on to 1826, when it ends. On the present occasion we deal only with the diary that was written by Mr Allardise, leaving the part that was compiled by Mr Pirrie for (possible) future treatment. The narrative that it provides will, we think, be found to be of more than ordinary interest.

The book is the property of Mr Alex. Ledingham of Fintry, whose family is of ancient settlement in the Lower Plaidy district. In the diary he notes of the experiences of the years are preceded by over a dozen pages in which the writer enters in much detail on his family history. The whole work is thus introduced-

Since the famous art of writing was introduced into the world, many occurrences worthy of keeping in record have been preserved. In the ante-deluvian ages before the Flood there was but little use for writing as the fathers lived to see eight or perhaps ten generations of their progeny and so could keep the most memorable events in mind by tradition. But since the lives of men were reduced to seventy or eighty years instead of eight or nine hundred there is a necessity of keeping a memorial in writing for various important reasons, such as Revolutions of States, of descents of families, charters of lands, and many things of great use and benefit to posterity.

But I must take leave here to reflect a little upon my country. The Scots of all nations of whose history I have read in this respect seem to be the most negligent, especially the common people. I have conversed with very opulent farmers in this my own native who seemed to distinguish themselves from their honest neighbours by a saucy indifference of employing a more extensive farm or having a few more pounds and yet could scarcely tell what was his grandfather's name or calling. Noble families indeed have, or ought to have, a genealogy of their ancestors to show the antiquity of their honours. Gentlemen of less note can prove their pedigree by the charters of their lands. But it, appears the common people have not yet attempted to keep a genealogy, at least in this place.

The Keeping of a Diary.

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The diarist goes on to suggest how the "common people" may set about the task. Of a man, he says, it should be written when he was born, also,

where he dwelt, what year he died, how old he was, how many children he had; what year his father was born, what year and to whom he was married, what year he removed from or came to dwell on such a farm, of such a name, in such a parish, &c. The next generation might add to this and so a third and fourth generation might add the like account. It would be in many respects useful, and, if not useful, sure I am it would be amusing. Another thing which is very useful to keep on record especially among farmers is the different seasons and transitions of trade, the prices of grain every year and the various rising and falls of the value of cattle and causes thereof. It was for the above reasons, to amuse myself and divert a leisure hour that I wrote the following journal, but if it shall be proven that I am mistaken in any date or particular I am willing to acknowledge my mistake. Neither do I pretend that the prices of grain which I record are a standard to the country in general as they will vary and differ a little at any time in a few miles or parishes. But this I will aver that the prices I record were the average within four miles of Banff as I had frequent recourse in that town from the commencement of the first date of this journal.

I do not intend to impose upon any man to believe the following journal, although I am conscious to myself that I have written nothing but truth and although some people may be apt to say I was too large of time, I shall grant that, and likewise the paper and ink was my own. There is an old proverb, "Better do ill than sit idle." If this poor scribbling shall remain when I am gone the way of all flesh, it will only share the fate of works of far higher esteem although it be committed to the flames. But if it shall fall into the hands of a friend, he will preserve it for my sake. And if he be a man of taste he will add to it or make a foundation of it for a more complete performance and leave it as a memorandum to his son or nearest heir. But if it falls into the hands of a man that despises everything of the kind, all I beg of him is not to destroy it, as it will take but a small corner of his house to contain it till perhaps it chance to fall into hands that will esteem it more.

There follows the signature, John Allardise, Lower Plaidy, January 25, 1795.

The Diarist's Family.

Then there occur several pages dealing with the family history of the diarist. The name Allardice or Ardis, "but more properly Allardis," seems to be derived, he says, from a gentleman's estate of that name in the county of Mearns, and he was told that "about the middle of the last century," that is about 1650, the name "was so plenty in the Parish of Auchterless that there were only seventeen families in that parish but either husband or wife was Allardis, and all of one stock of people, which, if true, was very remarkable. And now I myself am the only surviving male branch that I know of that can prove himself to be a descendant of that once popular name. I was told also that all my forefathers for generations unremembered were successively James Allardices." His great-grandfather, James Allardice, in the reign of King William, which began 1688, dwelt at Mill of Darley, near Burreldales, all the time of the famine, commonly called the ill years. In the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne, 1703, he was by the laird of Badenscoth forced to take the farm of Darley, partly upon what was called steel-bow. "My grandfather, James, was then only 19 years of age, and as that farm was what they termed a 20 oxen labouring, they were scarce sufficient to fill it without a supply, which my grandfather soon provided, for he, in the year 1705, married Betty Shirrefs, my grandmother, who was the youngest of six sisters and each of them had a 100 pound Scots [£8 6s 8d stg.] of patrimony, no small fortune in those days. He was in the 22nd and she in the 19th years of their age. My great-grandfather had 10 oxen and my grandfather 10, but in the year my great-grandfather died in the 83rd year of his age, and my grandfather's sister Madge Allardis laid claim to a great part of my great-grandfather's subjects. My grandfather was not

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sufficient to fill the other half of the farm without bringing himself under a burden. He, partly by advice and partly through necessity, took in to the other half of the farm, one Wm. Andrew, a brother-in-law, married with one of the six sisters, named Agnes Shirrefs."

The step was unfortunate, for, according to the writer of the diary, "the said Wm. Andrew was a rigid, unreasonable fellow, and did all in his power to dispossess my grandfather altogether, which he perceiving chose rather to remove than dwell by an ill neighbour. He in the year 1714 removed to a little farm on the land of Dorlaithers, named Carlincraig. There, in 1715, February 6, My father was born, the youngest of five children . . . On the 15th of March 1716 my grandfather died of a consumption in the 34th year of his age. My grandfather when he died left a full cover viz., eight oxen, three horses, sixty sheep, and all other things in proportion, without the smallest debt. This was a good subject and sufficient to bring up the four children who survived. In those days little notice was taken of children's patrimony, otherwise it would have fared better with that family. But as their mother was a widow of only 30 years of age she was soon induced to marry again, to the utter ruin of her first family. One John Robertson a sub-tenant in Easter Wheatrashes, in Turriff Parish, who had three daughters by two former wives, had the assurance to go and the insolence to decoy that unwary and seemingly wanton widow. He had three and she four children and they soon added three more to the number, and besides, he, the said John Robertson, had contracted a waste of debt which he paid with the goods of my grandfather, which brought all his first family to entire want. They were married 1721 and he died 1729 and so she was left a second time with a helpless family and in far worse circumstances than at first. He died in Lower Plaidy and she soon after removed to a croft in Sunnyside, under Auchmill, where she continued until the year 1756, when by age and other infirmities she went to her daughter, Margaret Robertson, at Tillybo, where she died December 22nd, 1759."

Father and Son.

My father," the diarist continues, "was only six years old when he came to this place with his mother. When she married again he was but a nonage and could do little for himself and so was greatly distressed even for the common necessaries of life until he came to age to keep cattle until he was able for more valuable service, but all the time of his youth and afterwards he continued to be his mother's best friend (even when the rest of her children deserted her) as long as she lived. My father was married in the 32nd year of his age to a Margaret Crawford and set up or plenished on a pendicle of Auchmill, near the Walkmill of Garnestown, where his oldest daughter, Ann, was born. At Whitsunday 1749 he removed to this place of Lower Plaidy where I now dwell. . . . My father brought but a small stock to this place with him, I presume not above £20 value, but as his family grew up he by and by got a piece of more land to cultivate and so by little and little he came to have in process of time a tolerable stock. . . . My father died in the 71st year of his age in a fever on the nerves. He fell sick on Wednesday the 7th of September and died on Monday the 19th and was buried at Turriff on Thursday the 22nd. His daughter, Helen, who was come home to his house only six days before his death, was in perfect health until Sunday the 30th of said month, when she was seized with a fever of the same nature and died on Tuesday the 18th and was buried at Alva by her husband on Friday the 21st, all in the year 1785. My father was a married man 39 years and three weeks and all the time he was not 48 hours at one time incapable of following his ordinary calling by reason of any bodily indisposition. He was 70 years and 7 months old when he died and all that time never had any use for a surgeon or physick, and what was more strange, although he never had any patrimony nor legacy nor any the smallest value but what he earned for with hard labour, yet in all his life time he never signed a bill nor bond for himself nor any other man, nor ever (except once that his pocket was pickt) borrowed a shilling from no man. To the last year of his life he could lend a £1 to a man and could say that he could do a year without it and yet he left a subject worth at least £100 sterling. I succeeded him in place and office 1785 and was married Saturday, June 30, 1787, to Margaret Wilson, daughter to George Wilson,

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first in Nethererton of Auchry, next farmer in Mill of Balmaud, and last in Hillhead of Haughs of Ashogle. I was aged when married 34 years 4 months and 10 days, and my wife was aged 28 years 10 months and six days."

Further Genealogical Details.

Thus are traced the descent and family of the diarist but that does not nearly exhaust the genealogical details that are provided in his writings. He gives particulars of grand-aunts, aunts, and uncles, his half-uncles, "and their posterity," and he provides similar information of his sisters. One of these married Alexander Thomson "who was bred a taylor and went to Edinburgh in 1773 and from thence to London in 1776, and although letters have been received from him frequently I never heard of his carriage nor miscarriage." Then he goes on to write of his mother's family of Crawford, a name borne by "the first-rate nobles in this kingdom. . . . I was told by a woman, a descendant of a Crawford, who is yet alive, that my forefathers of that name were the lawful heritors of the lands of Federate - in the parish of New Deer, as the coat of arms or the Crawfords' escutcheon was yet to be seen on the front of that old house. But granting it to be so, it is the greatest foolishness imaginable to pretend to be the descendants of such or such an opulent family when they have neither proof nor profit by it. Certainly it is that the Crawfords were heritors there and were dispossessed by the rebellious Covenanting party in the reign of Charles the First. But I cannot conjecture, if my forefathers had been put out of their place for their loyalty, how their heirs were not again replaced by Charles the Second as they surely wanted not friends to report their circumstances."

Dismissing the story as "foolish uncertainty," The writer of the diary finds his first known Crawford ancestor in Alexander Crawford, who in 1672 was grieve to the laird of Gask, "who in that days farmed all the lands of Turriff except the glebe. He, the said Alexander Crawford, attended the business in Turriff to the behoof of Mr Fordyce, Laird of Gask." He married Elspet Cowie, "an uncommon mettled woman and a midwife. Unfortunate for him there fell an old mud house upon him in Turriff which so bruised him that he kept his bed two years and so was disabled from following his business. He removed to Crossfields about the year 1690 and kept a publick there. Some time after he came to Wrea and kept a publick at the highway side called Tillyfar, The ill years coming on they removed to a croft in Lower Plaidy where they continued all the time of the famine. The family of Duffs were then on dwellers and heritors of Castletown, the forefathers of the present Duffs of Hatton, in Auchterless, and as the said Elspet Cowie brought home all the family, Alexander Duff late of Hatton retained a respect to all the name of Crawford as long as he lived. My grandfather, James Crawford, drove the plow on Plaidy to the behoof of the heritor all the seven years of famine, as there was no tenant upon it."

This Crawford grandfather married at Lower Plaidy in 1708 and soon after removed to Mains of Eden, but he returned to "the old asylum" at Lower Plaidy, where he died in 1749. His daughter, Margaret, became the mother, of the diarist, and another daughter, Barbara "married to a James Paterson, who first built a new town on Tillyfar on the west side of the town of Wrea." After her husband's death Margaret Crawford remained at Lower Plaidy until 1789, when, "almost a close bedal the last four years of her life," she went to her daughter Ann Allardise at Sealscrook. "Upon the whole," says the writer, "there are but four females of the name of Crawford that I know of alive in this country, so in all probability the name of Crawford will be extinct in this place, as there is not a male of that once numerous people alive. There was not in this country, I am told, a people of such high stature and big bones as the Crawfords were, yet they were naturally feeble and of a weakly constitution, and all more or less subject to an asthma. They were all of a dark complexion, and as to their disposition they were all scrupulously honest even to a punctillio, but extremely timorous and made themselves uneasy for things that perhaps would never reach them. But their strict fidelity, I hope, atoned for their want of patience and resolution, and I may add that no people

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are without their natural defects." Then commences the account of the diarist's experiences throughout the years of which he writes.

Contents of the Diary.

In the earlier pages of the diary there is an account of the heavy spate of **1768** which destroyed the first bridge over the Deveron at Banff. Before 1763 the river was crossed by fords and ferry boats and lives were occasionally lost in spates and storms. The bridge was built in 1763-65, but in a violent flood, on 16th September 1768, the arches became nearly choked with corn, hay, and branches, and the great volume of water carried away almost the whole of the structure; the present bridge was opened in 1780. The earlier part also takes notice of the opening of the bridge at Castleton, King-Edward, in **1771** - it was what is known as the old bridge - and of the great public benefit so provided. The war with the American colonies is also an item that affected the fortunes of this Aberdeenshire farmer, and he notes its effect on agricultural and other business, how it was the cause of new taxation and of Banff being provided with a battery of guns for the protection of the town and of shipping in the Bay. The diarist's farming notes cover the districts of Auchterless, Fyvie, Monquhitter, King-Edward, Deveronside, Banff, &c. His graphic accounts of great frosts snowstorms, rainstorms and hurricanes of these past centuries are very interesting. He tells of famines of grain and shortages of fodder, and anent the latter of an old woman who kept her cow alive by giving it the bed-straw from her own box-bed to eat, and of others using up the thatch from ricks and outhouses as fodder for the famishing cattle and horses. He speaks, too, of the wars of this period and shows in a graphic way how these were reflected in the home conditions of everyone.

Around **1783**, when, for a time, peace was again enjoyed, note is made of economic conditions that accompanied the experience. An interesting occurrence is spoken of in connection with sowing frosted seed, and, in the matter of snowstorms, those who think that our northern climate is changing will find here statements in support of their opinion, details being provided of storms of the severest possible character, such as that of **1784** when snow wreaths were encountered of a height of 30 feet; that year, the writer of the diary ploughed down the remains of a wreath that had lain four months and six days. In August that year oatmeal was 18s a boll, but the favourable harvest that followed saw it sold in Banff at 10s 6d. In another year the careful diarist takes note of how ministers of the Episcopal Church resumed prayers for the King after having been "a whole century under the most persecuting statutes that any description of Christians had been laid under for ages past. In **1789** we read of a spout of rain that "dang" down two houses in Gamrie and of another waterspout on the Hill of Mormond which "drove down pieces of moss bigger than castles some of which went whole bulk to the sea at Peterhead 17 miles distant." In another year there are noticed the new Government regulations for distilleries, one result of which was an increase in the demand for barley, which raised it to 16s a boll, "a price in time of plenty hitherto unremembered." Saints' days and days of Church festivals are often in mind: in **1791** harvest was "begun at Bartholomew's Day," which reference to the almanac shows to be August 24.

The French Revolution.

The part of the diary that immediately follows takes us some distance afield. Weather and prices and farming fortunes are noted as usual, but of equal interest is the picture that is drawn of conditions here following on the French Revolution. It was long since observed, wrote the diarist, that all our fashions especially bad ones, come from France. In accordance with that alleged tendency there arose a republican feeling here and the view was spread that "kingly government was in all respects tyrannical." The minds of the ignorant and lower classes became inflamed, so that all sorts of mechanics "held meetings and pretended to have as good a title to dictate laws to government as the Minister of State had," and in some towns they planted the Tree of Liberty, "as

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they called it," as a badge of the republican system of government that they desired. Troops were sent abroad, a wave of enlistment spread over the country, and wages rose. There are recalled the British reverses that were suffered under the Duke of York, for "these veterans of France . . . carried on in a triumphant manner and drove the last of our army to seek a shelter in the heights of Germany." As melancholy a disaster as is in British annals is how the Aberdeenshire writer describes it; they retired for some hundreds of miles in snow where the enemy traced the way they went by the dead bodies they found lying by the way. "The Dutch had joined the French this year and turned their weapons against the British - I hope to their everlasting infamy." At home there was much distress and collections in money and victual were taken up for the relief of the poor. It is a vivid picture of something of what the country came through nearly a century and a half ago.

The diarist speaks of the planting of the "Tree of Liberty" in a number of towns in those days of revolution. Curiously enough, while preparing this part of the diary for publication the eye happens to come across the following in a current periodical.

Efforts to save the "Tree of Liberty" in Dundee, a Tayside landmark for more than a century, have failed, and the tree is to be demolished under a street-widening scheme. It was originally planted by the citizens of Dundee, who demonstrated in sympathy with the French Revolutionaries, and the mob dragged the Provost of that day from his bed during the night and forced him to dance three times round the newly-planted tree, singing, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." The original site of the tree was at the Cross, but it was removed by the authorities and transplanted in the grounds of Belmont House, part of which the Town Council have acquired for street-widening purposes.

In a note on the diarist's family it was mentioned how his great-grandfather, in the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne, 1703, was induced - "forced" is the word used in the diary - by the laird of Badenscoth to take the farm of Darley "partly upon what was called steel-bow ." It is a term that is now seldom heard. It represents, goods on a farm which are the property of the landlord and may not be removed by the out-going tenant. In another work of reference it is said to be a word of doubtful origin, but "in Scots law it means goods, such as corn, cattle, straw, and implements of husbandry, delivered by the landlord to his tenant, by means of which the latter is enabled to stock and labour the farm, and in consideration of which he becomes bound to return articles equal in quantity and quality at the expiration of the lease." The business arrangement known as steel-bow is probably quite unknown in these days in the North of Scotland, but Mr Wm. Smith, solicitor, Banff, informs us that during the days that he spent in his profession in Lanarkshire the system, even at that recent time, was quite well known. It was certainly not common but the arrangement that it involved was well understood. It takes place in the case of dairy rather than of the usual type of feeding and grain farms, a circumstance that is natural when the more or less steady character of the stock of cows necessary at the dairy farm is considered in comparison with the "flying" stock of the ordinary arable farm. Leases made out on the steel-bow basis, Mr Smith tells us, are of an exceedingly elaborate sort, as is to be understood when there are noted all the numerous items of live stock, crops and buildings that have to be taken into account.

Bounty on Imports.

Parts of the diary that follow are full of interest. They take notice of not a few homely events such as the incident of the boy who lay buried in a snow wreath for 22 hours, and a great rise in the price of butter with a consequent large increase in its production so that cows doubled in value and the land became better cultivated to raise grass for them. For the most part, however, they have to do with the protracted French wars, when Great Britain passed through some of her greatest days. Wages rose all over the country and among farm servants were some "extravagant fellows" who would not be content with less than £7 per half year. An attempt was made, chiefly by

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women at northern sea-ports, to prevent the local export of grain with the result that some of them were tried before the Court of Justiciary in Aberdeen. Public subscriptions were raised for the emergencies of the war and by such means large sums were raised, and the ports of the country were opened for the import of grain with an offered bounty on wheat of £1 per quarter along with "the chance of the market," with the result that grain flowed into British ports in immense quantities.

There was ever before men's eyes the fear of a French invasion, and large sections of the Irish with their proneness to fish in troubled waters, added to Great Britain's critical difficulties by rising in rebellion against the British connection; of incidents connected with the experience, graphic accounts are provided. The one bright page in the lurid story of the Europe of the time is to be found in British victories at sea. One was Admiral Duncan's brilliant achievement at Camperdown which, the diarist comments, "humbled the traitorous and faithless Dutch." The other was Nelson's victory of the Nile, described as "a bloody battle of no less than 19 hours' duration" and as constituting "the most complete victory in all the British annals, and, I may add the most beneficial too for our country hitherto recorded." A large element of interest attached to these pictures of great world events as they passed before the eyes of a small farmer in a quiet corner of the county of Aberdeen and to the measures taken in this country to meet the exigencies of an occasion when European liberties threatened to be submerged by "a general called Bonaparte."

Heavy Floods.

Entries in the diary recounting events in **1799** and **1800** refer to not a few interesting incidents both of local and national import. In the North, at the beginning of the former year, there were three successive storms in the rigours of which many people perished. There were heavy floods in August and one Sunday that month at Banff saw boats being used to carry people from the bulwark to church, the route being along Bridge Street or by the Old Salmon Close. In autumn there was a heavy fall in the prices of cattle, stots and queys selling at £1 per head, cows at £2 and first-rate three year old stots which the year previously would have brought £10 now brought only from £4 to £5. The season of harvest was very unfavourable and in the uplands of the country there was neither bread nor seed, all being destroyed by frost and rain. Much is also said of the great Napoleonic Wars that were in progress on the Continent in which Great Britain was vitally engaged. Among the events noted in connection therewith is what the diarist calls "this unlucky expedition," the reference being to the expedition to the Netherlands by a large British force when the Duke of York, second son of George III., again displayed his military incapacity. The Duke in **1795** had been made commander-in-chief of the British Army, a position that he had to resign because of the shameful traffic in military appointments that was carried on by his friend, Mrs Clarke.

The year **1800** was also introduced in the North by a severe storm in which many people perished, including a strong young man on the Hill of Tillymauld, another at Millseat, and a young woman on the hill above Jackston, on the lands of Hatton Lodge. By sea as well as by land there was loss of life: between Montrose and Peterhead the coast was strewn with the wreckage of 30 ships, and in the short distance between Ythanmouth and Boddam 12 vessels were wrecked. It was a season of high prices for grain which were demand particularly by those "with a large conscience." Owing to the scarcity and dearness of provisions the King was petitioned to convene Parliament earlier than usual to concert means for the alleviation of the distress of the poor who were in the utmost difficulties for the necessaries of life, and on a December Sunday a proclamation by the King's authority was read in the parish churches of Scotland that all persons should abridge a part of their daily food allowance, so that what was formerly the allowance of three persons should now supply four; that all pleasure horses should be supplied with hay and not allowed corn, and that all means should be used to conserve grain. On 16th December the diarist was at a roup of grain at Todlaw

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where he saw oats sold at £3 7s per boll. Interesting notes are also provided of the coining of copper coins by different cities and burghs. More than 40 different copper coinages were in circulation and counterfeits were common.

Volunteer Forces.

A remarkable contrast that must inevitably strike one who goes over the diary with any care is found in the descriptions that are afforded of a war-stricken continent and the peaceful prosecution of farming labours that were in progress at the same time in such a typically agricultural county as Aberdeen. It occurs to the mind in an incisive way in the experiences of such a year as **1801**. The start of that year saw also the beginning of a new century, and it was introduced in the North in green, agreeable weather. In the feared invasion of Bonaparte, forces of Volunteers were formed. The diarist speaks of the uniform they wore; he thinks the movement was more popular in Banffshire than in Aberdeenshire, and on one occasion he saw 1200 Volunteer troops reviewed in the parks of Boyndie, all belonging to the shire of Banff. Bodies of militia were also brought into being. They were to take up arms during the war but were not compelled to go out of Scotland. By the original scheme every sixth man between the ages of 19 and 23 had to go or find a substitute; in its second year the Act was amended so that the ages of the second draught were from 19 to 30, but evidently there were those who thought that this was too severe and arbitrary. War taxes were put on such things as hair powder, armorial bearings and horses used for husbandry, but in the last mentioned item the diarist says there were farmers who put in their returns a smaller number of horses than they had, while some gave no return at all.

The war continued on the Continent with great fury between the French and the Austrians, each army contending as to which had had the most slain "as if it had been a banter to spill human blood." British alleged sovereignty at sea became a matter of strife. In November more than 300 British ships were detained in Russian ports and their seamen made prisoners, a scheme that had been devised by the three northern Powers of Russia, Sweden and Denmark. That sent Nelson to the Baltic where he destroyed the Danish fleet at Copenhagen. "Admiral Horatio Nelson long since lost his right arm and one of his eyes in his country's cause and ventured to the Baltic once more to try his fortune, and Providentially conquered the Danes in their own harbour." Then came the hostilities in Egypt when the British under General Abercrombie defeated the enemy in "the most resolute battle that the French had experienced with the British all this war." When the preliminaries of peace were being discussed, "Admirable indeed was this change," writes the diarist. "Instead of fighting and almost, famine now sudden plenty and peace prevailed in its stead," one result being that whereas early in August the price of meal was 2s 6d per 8 lbs. "and little regard had to quality," at Hallow Day the best oatmeal was selling at 1s per 8 lbs. At home the same year saw the new turnpike begun between Banff and Turriff and a new bridge built at Castleton, the one that continues to bear the traffic of to-day, and there is a note of remarkable personal injury and material damage by lightning at Easter Whiterashes, near the diarist's home.

The year **1802** saw the Peace Conference at Amiens where Great Britain was represented by Lord Cornwallis, who evidently made the journey in great splendour. On the signing of terms "there was a general rejoicing in all the great towns and villages for the happy return of the long wished for peace after so long and so bloody a war." The period of peace did not last just very long, for Bonaparte had not yet been sent to Elba nor was the Island of St. Helena yet in his horizon, and that British statesmen entertained their fears on the subject is to be seen in the fact that this year there was set up a body of standing militia of men between the ages of 18 and 45, particulars being given of a drawing for the force that took place at Turriff for that and surrounding parishes. In the previous year the first census of Great Britain was taken and now the results of the enumeration were available. On 11th October this year the new toll road was opened between Banff and Turriff and a toll bar was brought into use at Turriff the same day.

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Trafalgar Year.

A local event of **1803** that is noted in the diary is a wreck near the kirk of Gamrie, with the loss of all hands save one who was cast upon a rock. The same year a toll-bar was set up at Plaidy, and the first toll was drawn on 16th June. Much is said of the threatened invasion by the troops of Napoleon and of the measures taken here to meet it. Large militia forces were enrolled; every man from 17 to 55 had to learn the use of arms, and an army of reserve was formed; those on whom the lot fell for service had to go personally, find a substitute, or pay £20, a sum that saved them for one year from the chance of being drawn a second time. Volunteer forces were formed in almost every village, so that, says the diarist, "such a number of men in arms as was at the end of this year was not in all the British annals." A local event of **1804** was a fatal ailment among cattle, particularly among cows, while the year of Trafalgar, **1805** was ushered in with a New Year's Day eclipse. Of the battle an eloquent and moving account is given by this Aberdeenshire farmer, who speaks also of the historic character of the national thanks giving for the victory and of the large sums that were collected for widows, fatherless, and wounded.

The Napoleonic wars on the Continent continued to be a feature of the diary, of the Aberdeenshire farmer. In his account of the happenings of **1806** he speaks of the struggle between the French and the Austrians in which Bonaparte captured 60,000 of the latter "and sent them to France to cultivate the fields as slaves." The French also met the Russians and we are told that Napoleon demanded a truce which, it was said, was the first he had ever asked in his life. We hear also of the French Troops entering Vienna. We come, as well, to the death of Pitt and the beclouded days that then fell on Great Britain in course of which there was held a general fast and day of humiliation to implore divine protection upon our armies and fleets and restore peace to our country. We come in course to the battle that was fought on the plains of Weimar where France met Prussia under Frederick and where took place the bloodiest battle of a century. In the lapse of the years, as has been already stated, two pages at the end of the first volume of the diary have become torn, so that nothing that is intelligible has been left of the diarist's account of the events of **1807**.

The season of **1808** was late and stormy. "We had seen nothing," it is recorded, "But stern winter for eight long months." All over the north country there was great scarcity of fodder and many cattle died from starvation; numbers of cattle came down Deveron and Spey, "dead from hunger or distress." This was followed by an exceptionally warm July. It is stated that in Hull the temperature was 93 degs. in the shade and 125 in the sun, labourers dropped dead in the vicinity, birds dropped dead in the streets, the honey in beehives melted, ran out upon the ground, and stocks of bees were drowned. At Aberdeen the thermometer reached unwonted heights - "in short there was not such a hot July since 1770 in this Northern country." Then, we come to the beginning of the Peninsular War. In course of the narrative some vivid sentences will be noted, including the declaration of Napoleon that "God has given me strength and inclination to surmount all obstacles." Assuredly there must have been many in those distressful days who were fain to believe it.

A feature of the diary that must find emphasis in the minds of many readers is the wonderfully vivid and eloquent account that this Aberdeenshire farmer is able to give of the great and critical struggles that marked the rise of Napoleon to power and that made of Europe a blood-bath over a number of years. His description of the Battle of Corunna, an entry of **1809**, is a case in point. That year there was in the North of Scotland a frost that in its severity bore comparison with experiences in Norway and Canada and the water in the harbour of Macduff was frozen over. But those were times when one could never get very far away from the war, and accordingly we read of how the young men of the nation were formed into a Local Militia, meeting for the first time for drill on 25th June, and it is said that over the succeeding month 154,000 young men in England and Ireland

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and 41,000 in Scotland "were under arms learning to defend their country." An Austrian victory led to the formation of a British expeditionary force "the like of which never went out of Britain," But Before it landed Wagram was fought and the Austrians were defeated by Bonaparte with a loss of 20,000 prisoners. The British Welcheron expedition was attended by a cruel fate.

A Royal Jubilee.

The same year saw the celebration of the jubilee of the reign of George III and there is provided an account of the nation-wide rejoicings over the event. There are glimpses that go to show that the temperament of the diarist had little of pessimism in it, and he goes on to note in an emphatic way the great improvements that the long reign had seen. Notwithstanding the enormous taxes, the wealth of the country had risen in proportion. "I dwell in the same house as my father dwelt in at the present King's coronation and I pay more than one guinea annually of taxes for each shilling my father paid, and yet. I have a far better livelihood and more than five times the value he ever possessed." The year **1810** brings us to the separation of Napoleon and Josephine and his marriage to an Austrian princess, whose father "he had fought and conquered three times with horrible carnage. It was said that in the last 17 years he had killed six hundred thousand of the bravest German troops, the best soldiers in the world." Before the year takes end we hear of Sir Arthur Wellesley in Portugal, while at home there were such favourable harvest experiences that a national thanksgiving was ordered by royal decree.

Notable and interesting events are recorded of **1811** and **1812**. The usual full account is provided of the physical character of the seasons and of the prices of victual. With **1811** there are associated distressful conditions among the industrial population of the country due to the never-ceasing war and to trading restrictions imposed by one who is on several occasions described by the diarist as "the Great Usurper." In the manufacturing towns thousands were idle and almost starved in the midst of plenty the latter remark having a connection perhaps with an almost immediately preceding sentence that in the North "farmers' barns were choaked with grain of all kinds." Notice is also taken of the mental illness of the King and the appointment of his son as Regent. In September a comet appeared to the wondering eyes of the Aberdeenshire farmer. Books of reference will show that this was one of two notable comets of the first half of the 19th century - these describe it as a most brilliant object for many weeks in the Northern heavens. In May, as is noted in the diary, Wellington defeated Massena at Fuentes de Onoro, and in the same year General Beresford met Marshal Soult at Albuera. In **1812** the war was conducted on more violent lines than ever. At Salamanca, a very ancient town for Hannibal captured it in 222 BC, and the Moors were expelled from its walls in 1055, Wellington defeated Marmont, and the same Autumn saw Napoleon march into Russia with what the diarist describes as "the most memorable expedition of any hitherto upon record." The burning of Moscow is related and we hear again of how the snows of Russia resulted for France in, as is said in the diary "such a disastrous retreat as is not perhaps in the annals of history."

In April **1813** there was in the North of Scotland a violent storm when cottages were unroofed, sheets of lead were folded up like paper on the roofs of churches, and at Aberdeen five whaling ships were driven on shore, one of them, the Oscar, going to pieces with a loss of 42 lives. In Spain we hear of the Battle of Vittoria where Wellington "drove the French in all directions," and in September he passed the Pyrenees and invaded France. Napoleon himself had now to face a Europe in arms against him. After severe battles there was an armistice of six weeks at the close of which interval he published a manifesto "which was worded as if he had been God and not fallible man." Amongst those he fought were troops of his father-in-law of Austria. Bonaparte's defeat, we read, put a new face on the affairs of Europe so that trade revived, and, at the close of the year best oatmeal - at every crisis we come back to the value of oatmeal - was purchased at one half of what it was in July.

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Elba and St Helena,

The year **1814** was a period of momentous events. A matter of local interest was a long and severe frost in spring when for 42 days the Deveron was so frozen over that a loaded waggon could pass over the ice in safety. But we can never get very far away from the war. On the Continent a great and critical campaign was in progress and hostilities were prosecuted with the utmost vigour. Bonaparte was defeated, Paris surrendered to the Allies, and Napoleon found a temporary home in the Island of Elba. The Aberdeenshire diarist speaks of how the cities and great towns in Britain "illuminated all their houses in so brilliant a manner as no history relates such rejoicings. The effigies of Bonaparte were burnt in great bonfires in almost every village," and he commits to his diary the reflection that "History bears no records of such horrid destruction as had been in Europe the last twenty years, and all begun by a deluded multitude of French regicides and ended in the insatiable ambition of a bloody tyrant." The Kings and Plenipotentiaries of the Allied Powers meet at Vienna to draw up a Treaty of Peace, and in the first week of June the Tsar of Russia and the King of Prussia came to London, where "never was such opulence and splendour equal to what was visible on this occasion. It is not for a pen like mine to describe the smallest part of the grandeur exhibited that fortnight these illustrious visitors stayed in London." After peace in Europe the British armies were sent to America, where, in September, they reached Washington and sacked the city: at a period of only 116 years ago the capital of the United States was in the possession of British troops and a diarist in distant Aberdeenshire put it upon record how they "burned all the public buildings and arsenals in it and did vast damage."

The Diary Ends.

We come in course to **1815**, the last year of Mr Allardise's diary and the year of Waterloo when peace was restored to a war-distressed Europe on the surrender of Napoleon and his banishment to St Helena. The year opened in the enjoyment of peace and in such favourable conditions that our diarist tells us it was the belief of men of discernment that owing to the abundant crops of the two preceding years and the large importations of grain from abroad the price of victual would not exceed £1 10s per boll, even although no farmer in Great Britain sowed or reaped this year. Soon, however, came the news of Bonaparte's escape from Elba and in some graphic pages we are shown the concerted action of the European Powers to destroy Napoleon once and for ever, the short and historic campaign taking end in the field of Waterloo and in the banishment of the Corsican to the South Atlantic island. Here comes to an end the diary of the tenant farmer of Lower Plaidy.

From **1815** to **1826** the diary is continued by John Pirrie in Woodhead of Laithers who precedes his entries of the years with a statement concerning the affairs of John Allardyce, as is the spelling of the name by Mr Pirrie. Mr Allardyce died on September 4, 1815, and after stating the fact Mr Pirrie continues:-

"Mr Allardyce expressed a wish during his lifetime that if his Journal should be thought worth the while or could bear the expense of printing his desire was that it should be done, after verbally nominating people for that purpose to inspect it, and upon the above peoples' inspection they reported that they did not think it could bear the expense of printing as it behoove to be all transcribed over again and put in better language both with respect to Gramer and Diction, and if it should not be thought proper to print it the author wished me, John Pirrie, if I should survive him, to continue said Journal upon the former plan, which he said would be an amusement to me as it was to him, during my lifetime, and at or before my death that I would leave it to some of my relations or any other person whom I thought capable of continuing it in the same line, and the author said that at some future period it might fall into some person's hands who would think it worth the while of printing and then

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his Journal and what should be added to it perhaps might appear in public when we both should be no more."

The rest of Mr Pirrie's preliminary statement has to do with the winding up of Mr Allardyce's estate. He and Mr Wm. Thomson, farmer in Nethertown of Auchry, were the executors. The estate amounted to £817, and after paying wages, debts, expenses, &c., there was left £659. In accordance with the terms of the will, one-half of that was paid to Mr Allardyce's widow, then the wife of Robert Strachan, farmer in Cliftbog of Laithers. £50 was paid to Mr Allardyce's sister, Mrs Alex. Thomson, Sealscrook; and the balance, amounting after payment of expenses, &c., to £252, was given for behoof of the poor belonging to the Episcopal Church congregations of Turriff and Monquhitter.

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1768 - This year was in every way agreeable except for most part of June which was cold and unnatural. But what June lacked July supplied. The weather then turned warm and produced as fine a crop as there has been for many years past. Barley harvest began about the 24th of August and harvesting was general about the 6th of September. On Thursday, 14th September, there was a change of the moon at six a.m. and that night there were sudden signs of rain. The rain came early on Friday morning and the wind continued blowing from the South-East in a violent and extraordinary manner for 36 hours, until about three o'clock on the Saturday afternoon, when the sun appeared.

The effects of the rain were hurtful to many as the crop was almost cut down and little of it yarded. The spate rose higher than the oldest man alive could remember, the waters, in general, being at least three feet higher than had ever been seen before. All the barley and corn on low haugh ground was carried off by the uncommon deluge. I would only mention that the River Deveron covered all the Duff house greens or low haugh at Banff. There was over eight feet of water in the lower flat of Duff house and the inhabitants in the lower part of the town of Banff were obliged to quit their houses. Those near the bulwarks came out at the windows of the second flats of their houses and were rowed in boats and landed about, the old church stile within 20 yards of the Plainstones. The immense quantity of corn, hay and wood almost stopped the arches of the bridge over the river and with the amazing onrush of water, that fine structure, about 4 o'clock on the Saturday afternoon 16th September was borne down and totally demolished. It had stood only six years after it was finished. It had only six arches.

Cattle sold this year at fair prices. Best oat victual sold at 12s per 8 stone. Fodder was large except near the water banks. Victual was large also but a good deal of it not good owing to the uncommon soaking it got in harvest.

1769 - We had a snowy January and February. In March the weather turned seasonable and mild, which continued until June. Thereafter rain fell excessively and almost constantly. It was observed by some people that a peat or turf cast in the first of June and put on the top of a pole would not have been dry at the autumnal equinox, so extraordinary bad, rainy, foggy and unwholesome weather was it. There was plenty of grass on dry ground but on fertile ground the crop was little better than a heap of rotten straw. Cattle sold tolerably well. Victual sold this summer at 14s per boll. After the equinox the weather turned dry and some early barley was ready. It was a tolerable harvest. The last two months of the year proved drier than the three months of summer and some people got home drier fire the week before Christmas than they could have done at Lammas.

Hill of Luncarty Planted.

1770 - The first six months of this year were intensely cold so that in June there was not in some places of the country sufficient grass to keep cattle alive and had it not been for the rank crop of fodder the year before cattle would in many places have died in May and June when the grass in this part of the country was but in its infancy. So very cold was the month of June that a man could scarce keep himself in heat at his work in the fields. The corn at the end of June looked as blate as it does in the end of May by reason of a continued cold wind and some people conjectured that there would be no crop at all. Cattle sold cheaply. A three-years-old cow of a common breed in the June market at Turriff would be sold at from £1 5s to £1 10s; a three-year-old stot at £1 5s, and horses in proportion. The oat victual crop rose to 15s per boll and barley victual to 10s.

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On July 13th the wind turned South. A clap of thunder and natural showers came and warmed the air and afterwards there commenced the most uncommon growth that any man ever remembered. The month of July compensated for all that was defective in June. The growth was the next thing to perceptible and the heat was so excessive that it melted the honey on some bee hives and suffocated the swarms. A gentleman who had come from Jamaica to Aberdeen to visit friends declared that from the 17th to the 20th July the heat was as great as it is commonly in that island. In the Lammis market in Turriff, cattle sold at least one-third higher than at the June market. The crop turned out tolerable though late and very unequal. The hill of Lunarty (Luncarty) this year was enclosed and planted by Wm. Urquhart of Craigston and in time appeared a stately forest.

In those days the best labouring servants' wages were £1 10s per half year; women's, from 10s to 12s; herds, first rate, 13s 4d; second rate, 6s. The best harvest man received £1 and a first rate harvest woman 13s 4d.

The Bridge at Castleton.

1771 - We had a tolerable winter this year until April after which; every morning for 30 days the earth was covered with snow: It was a very mild summer and harvest began about the 24th August. Cattle sold much as last summer.

On Sunday 2nd September, there came a severe frost which did great hurt to the crop in some places, such as the lands of Byth and Auchry. This was the first time I remember hearing of frosted grain. Wholesome grain sold at 15s and frosted grain at 1s 11d per boll the next year.

This year the bridge at Castleton was built by James Robson, mason in Banff. It was a work that proved a great public benefit. But this year gave birth to a work far superior in consequences to this part of the country and likely to be of far greater value. Patrick Murray, son of Alex. A. Murray, farmer Slap, built a new town this year called New Slap and was the first in this place that sowed field turnips and laid down grass. All the neighbourhood followed his example and I may say with safety that it is in a great measure owing to this improvement in method that these parts have arrived at such a pitch of opulence as they have now done. Were it not a digression from my intended plan I would, for the amusement of the rising ages, give a brief hint of the manner or method of manuring the ground in my younger days. When a piece of outfield ground had lain by six or seven years it was faughed and limed and then the unskilful farmer would take ten or perhaps fifteen crops off it after one very slim coat of lime, and then when it was reduced to ashes he would let it out, as the term was, and then it produced a fine crop of red surak. It lay no doubt seven or ten years by and an acre would not have sustained on old ewe. How to improve that piece of ground again would be a question for the Board of Agriculture. The infield was little better used to advantage. It got indeed all the dung just as it fell from the cattle. A third part of the infields was always dunged and made bear, but it was never cleaned nor rested so that few had in good years three returns of bear and none, except on some singular farms, exceeded four. A third or fourth of that, too, was black oats. The bear root crop, as it was called, was the only crop to be depended on and the second, or aval crop as they called it, was sometimes little more than two seeds. So for want of skill and example there was not proper maintenance for cattle in summer nor such plenty of weighty grain as we now have to market by which means we are enabled to give better wages to our servants than our fathers could afford. Our cattle are higher fed and are of far greater value, by which means we lodge better, we clothe better, and we feed better.

Great Snowstorm.

1772 - As last year ended, so this one began with green agreeable winter weather until 6th January when there fell a great quantity of snow. Snow continued to fall with little interval until 25th

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March. This was easily the longest lasting snowstorm I could remember. Frost had set in about the 15th of January intense and severe and about the 26th there came a great deepness of snow as was for many years before. Those that loosed their plough on Old Christmas Eve did not yoke again until after Marnoch Fair. About the equinox there was some freshness and thaw again and then came ten days of frost. About the end of March people ploughed the middle of the ridge and the sides of it were furrow deep in snow. With great difficulty the oat seed ended with the month of April. It was cold and moist all summer and produced but a very bad crop. Cattle sold at fair prices but oat victual sold at 14s. The harvest in some places was not all concluded before the middle of November. The year ended in green agreeable weather.

1773 - As last winter was singular for snow so was this winter singular in its greenness, but what it wanted in snow it supplied with wind. It was certain that all through the winter there was not a shower of snow that lay 24 hours at one time. On Wednesday, 20th January about 7 o'clock in the morning, there arose a terrible west wind which did great damage in the country. It unroofed houses, tore up whole acres of woods by the roots broke corn stacks, &c. There was not such a hurricane in this place since the year 1743. The seed time commenced about the 12th of March and was in all respects agreeably carried through. The year was really one of fine seasonable weather but for the frequent high gales of wind especially in the spring and again at harvest time when the crop was much hurt. There was a general weighty crop of all kinds of grain and also of roots and fruit. The bad effects of 1772 showed only after seed time some farmers after sowing having little to mill and against the middle of July there was not one farmer in twenty that could help or lend another a boll. People came down from the Parish of Daviot, in the Garioch about Lammas and gave 18s for eight stone of old meal of a bad quality. The new crop soon put a stop to the general distress and at Martinmas fine oatmeal was sold at 10s per boll. The Year ended as it began green and windy.

The American War.

1774 - January and February were variable; and March, April and half May were dry. Thereafter rain broke out and continued little intermission till the middle of September when the barley harvest took place. This was a summer almost equivalent to 1769 with plenty of grass and fodder, but bad grain on fertile ground and what seldom fails in the like seasons ill-dried firing. Cattle sold this summer extremely well but with the appearance of a late harvest, oat victual sold at the end of June at 13s 4d. The crop was not all gathered until the middle of November. The year finished with frost and rain alternately.

I cannot help taking notice here that, this year the war with the American colonies began, as it long since was observed that high winds betoken war. Our British Court had proposed taxes on their American subjects as they do in Britain which they as positively refused, and accordingly our Ministers sent over some officers to the principal towns in North America to act as they do here. It happened that in April this year a ship load of tea arrived at Boston, the chief town of New England. The officers (or gaugers as we call them) seized the cargo in the King's name and thought to confiscate it for the use of the Revenue. All of a sudden the inhabitants took the alarm and deforced the officers of their booty. Not only that but the mob took the officers and besmeared them with tar and other combustible stuff and set fire to their heads after their hands were bound. This was a mortal affront to the King and an unpardonable injury to a haughty Court like Britain. As soon as the news came over, a general with a considerable force was sent over to subdue this insult. Alas for the consequences!

1775 - About the middle of January a dry south wind came and there followed a fine spring The oat seed took place about, the 24th of February. It continued warm and dry throughout all the summer but cattle prices fell very low. Barley harvest began at Old Lammas and all the harvest

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was finished before the time it began last year. There was not a shower of rain of any consequence from the end of May to the end of October. There was plenty of good victual but fodder was generally scarce. Best victual sold at 10s and corn with fodder, at £1 1s, but providentially it was a fine green agreeable winter, which made the calamity the less felt.

1776 - The year commenced mild and agreeable and continued so. Seed time began on March 12th. All vegetables grew and came to perfection, all kinds of grain were extremely well filled and weighty, and all kinds of fruit also did well. The harvest was all finished by the 12th of October and provided plenty for man and beast and that of the first quality. Apples were the best and cheapest I ever remember. I, myself, bought on the Glebe of Turriff at Cowan Fair, a quarter of a peck of real good apples at 4d. Cattle sold very cheap in the summer on account of the embargo laid on exports by reason of the American War. At Martinmas fine oat meal was generally sold at 9s 6d per boll. The American war was carried on during the year under the command of Wm. Howe with varied success, the Americans being aided by the French and largely supported with men and money.

New Taxes.

1777 - Although the end of last year was mild, yet this year was cold and inclement for the first five months. The Irish got a Bill passed in Parliament for Free Trade as they were meaning to revolt. This for a time put a final stop to the sale of our cattle. Victual was also very cheap as there was little market but among ourselves. The plentiful crop last year resulted in some people paying little regard to good wholesome provision but this year's crop not permit of such lavishing for the crop was at least one-third less and had it not been for the old store it would have been found very inadequate. Those in the country had all the labour and toil while those in the villages ate the fat, for victual was good and cheap and so were beef and butter.

All this stoppage of trade was due to the embargoes laid on all shipping lest it should go to America or France.

1778 - From the middle of December last year to the 12th of February there was snow and frost with little interval. March and April were tolerable and the three summer months were seasonable. Heavy rains in August, however, did great hurt to the crop as there had been little sunshine all the time the grain was filling. Harvest was consequently late and proved defective. Had there been a market any other way than among ourselves provisions would have been dear, but as all trade was locked up, all provisions were cheap. No cattle would sell, unless fed, and even then at prices far below what they might have been sold at but for that unnatural and bloody war. This year Frederick, Lord North, Minister of State, found means for the support of the war by laying additional duties on all the common necessaries of life such as salt, malt, coals, leathers as also upon rouns a tax before unknown legacies, receipts and discharges, bills and all public papers to be stamped now, which new duties have ever since been a great burden and offence to the public.

A Cow at 18s.

1779 - About the middle of January there arose a dry south-west wind which continued until the middle of June when Providence supplied us with a few showers of rain, otherwise on some pastures cattle would have been in hazard of perishing for want of water as well as grass. It was reported in the public papers that the bee-hives in the county of Kent in England had cast swarms and that the white pease was in full bloom by the 25th of April. It was reported also as a fact that a man in Marnoch parish burned lime with new peats the week before Easter. Some active people had all their firing at a settlement on the stack by the end of May. As an example of how cattle were selling, at the May market in Turriff I was a witness to the sale of a young cow, rising four years

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old, with her first milk and of fairly good breed, and probably fault free, price 18s! I record it as a fact as I and several others were witness to it. In after years some will no doubt scruple the above truth but it was just according to the times.

Constant harvest began at Lammas and all was finished in fine order by 15th September. Fine oat victual was sold at 9s per 8 stone. Cattle were sold to any man that would bid twice the price of their hides. Fine beef was generally sold at 2s per stone, fairly good beef at 1s 8d per stone, and some at 1s per stone. Any person in Banff that had a shilling to market would bring home for it 9 lbs. of fine oatmeal and two lbs. of good butter. Every denomination of people lived in great affluence except the farmers who laboured under the greatest hardships for money. The want of money and fodder was the only calamity of which the country complained.

About the middle of December there fell a storm of snow which continued all the remainder of the year. This was the first time I remember that whins were much used as fodder for horses and cattle. During the storm all the labouring servants were constantly employed in cutting, driving home, and beating whins which were a great support for horses and saved a deal of fodder.

1780 - The storm I mentioned continued until Candlemass all which time the whin business was much employed. In the middle of February a drought set in and oat sowing began about the 24th of February. The year like last was dry, hot, and early. There was a great scarcity of grass and fodder but plenty of well filled grain. The harvest was all finished by the 13th of September and all the land ploughed against the 22nd of December. But still the want of fodder made it necessary to apply to whin bushes for the support of the animals.

Five "Potent Enemies."

1781 - This was the third year of like nature and, by some, 1781 and its two predecessors have been called the three droughty years. January was variable but in February the drought set in, penetrating and severe. All the oat seed ended against 16th March and indeed victual and cattle were now of small account and money became extremely dear with ground labourers. Trade was almost at a total stand, as the Dutch had joined the French and Spaniards in aiding the Americans in carrying on their intended plan of independency upon Great Britain. Our British Court thought fit this year to declare war with the three afore mentioned Powers as also to keep up hostilities with our American provinces for which they fitted out an extraordinary fleet to sea. The Dutch intently fitted out a vast number of privateers to destroy our merchants, in which they but too well succeeded, for it was almost at the risk of life and property that a coaster could venture from Banff to Leith and escape those pirates. It was nothing strange to see a vessel captured within half-a-league of the port she belonged to, so our trade was at a stand both by land and sea. To prevent such depredations his Majesty was pleased to send to all those northern ports large pieces of cannon in case of an assault. The town of Banff erected a new battery above the harbour where six pieces of cannon, two of them 16 prs and four of them 12 prs., were placed to defend the town and shipping in the bay. Lamentable was the loss our country sustained by this ill concerted war. It is worth mentioning that our British Court at this period was at war with five potent enemies, France, Spain, the Dutch, the Nabob in the East Indies and their own American colonies.

But to return to the seasons. The weather continued dry until the 11th August when it turned to rain and moisture so that the first shorn barley began to grow in the stack. In this condition it continued until 9th September when all of a sudden there arose a brisk gale of wind from the west and the apparent rot turned to a general shake, which was the first prelude to the scarcity that afterwards succeeded. The harvest was all finished in fine condition before Michaelmas. Oat victual continued at 11s, but cattle always cheap by reason of the still scarcity of fodder.

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1782 - This year was the most singular that has been in this century, and I presume it will not be forgot for a century to come.

As last year ended this succeeded, no wise unreasonable until the 11th of March, when there fell a great deepness of snow. On the 12th there blew from the North-East a terrible drift. This storm lay until the 26th of March without interval, The snow was succeeded by frost and rain so that with the greatest difficulty the oat seed was ended with the month of April. In May it rained violently and sometimes three or four days together, with high cold winds. Hay was sold at 10d per stone. Fodder could not be got for money, and cattle in some places of the country died for want, Chiefly in the shire of Murray. As an instance of the scarcity of animal provisions in this place, I shall mention only a few. The three preceding years being all short crops, the country behoved to be run of all stock, especially after such an inclement spring. The four days after Brandon market in Banff was excessive rain and wind from the east, and as a grass was up, so no beast could stand without doors. I knew a farmer of no mean stock that kept four horses the above four days upon the thacking of two small stacks, with the old rapes that had lain rotting in his yard from Hallow Day. I knew another man tir a house that he had thacked in the autumn and kept his cattle alive therewith. And to instance but one more. I knew a woman that kept a cow and a quey alive three of the above days with her bed straw.

Soon after this the weather turned warm and the grass advanced surprisingly, for by the 24th of June the grass on strong ground was laid by reason of the heat and daily rains. There was a weighty crop of hay but much difficulty in curing it by reason of the extraordinary rains.

Naval Action.

But before I proceed further with the season I shall make a digression and take notice of the war.

I mentioned in last year the grand and formidable fleet that was fitted out against the French and Spaniards for aiding the provincials as they were called. The British fleet was commanded by one George Rodney and the French fleet by one Count de Grasse. On Friday the 12th of April the two grand fleets met in the Atlantic in Lat. 48 and fought the most desperate engagement that had happened since the reign of Charles the Second. It commenced at 7 o'clock in the morning and continued until the want of light gave the fugitive part of the French fleet, who took the opportunity of the night, an opportunity to escape. The French Admiral, Count de Grasse, was taken prisoner by Admiral Rodney, with five of the French first-rate line of battleships. Three more were sunk and many most terribly shattered. The killed and wounded were surely numerous, we may judge, as the Royal Sovereign, on which Admiral Rodney was aboard, who carried 100 guns, fired 80 broadsides.

Count de Grasse was brought to London in great triumph. But, the French, not bold enough to face Rodney again, would try their fortune on another expedition. They joined in league with the Spaniard to storm and besiege the important garrison of Gibraltar, for which purpose they sent thither a large fleet to block it up from all communications, and also sent there a land force of 40,000 regular troops who raised batteries of an amazing greatness and also they prepared a new construction of floating batteries at sea besides their combined fleets of ships. All these amazing forces by land and sea made a general assault on the 14th of September. General Elliot was governor of the garrison and made a glorious defence with a few soldiers. He caused hot cannon balls, red-hot in furnaces made for the purpose, which he caused fire upon their floating batteries which set them on fire. He, with a few brave soldiers, bravely defended that, ancient garrison from all the united forces of France and Spain both by land and sea. These were the two most important actions in this year that are best worth recording or in all that long continued hostility since known by the title of the American War.

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But to return to the season. On Wednesday, 8th, and Friday the 10th of August, there came from the East terrible storms of rain and wind and as the corn was then in great fragrance and only beginning to shoot, the said storms threw it all down and the most part of it on fertile ground lay flat and arose not again. The weather continued wet and foggy and the sun seldom appeared till after the equinox when it turned a little more agreeable and some early barley was ready against the 8th of October, but the night betwixt 3rd and 4th October there came a severe frost so that in the morning standing water would have carried a 4 lb. weight on the ice. This night gave the finishing blow to this crop which in July had the most promising appearance of any I ever saw. It was a mortifying sight that morning to see the corn half shot lying flat and green as at Lammas. At the same time white with frost, the pease was as if a tide of the sea had gone over them and potato shaws against 12 o'clock were as black as moss. On Deveron banks some oats were ripe before the frost and most of the barley was cut down but little or none of it was without a tint of frost. The oat harvest, generally, took place about 15th of October, and on fertile ground although a sheaf had been put into the fire it would not have cracked through a variety of rain, wind, frost snow &c. The shearing was generally ended about 20th November. Against the end of November it was all yarded in this place although in some remote places of the country it was not all in at Christmas. About the middle of December there came 16 days of calm, black frost and then all the unwholesome stacks of oats smoked like lime kilns. As there was plenty of fodder, although unwholesome, cattle began to sell a little better than for several years past, especially those that were in any degree fat. There was a general cry that there would be famine, for against Lammas victual sold at 15s and against Martinmas at 18s and against Christmas what was called oatmeal was publicly sold in Aberdeen at 8s 8d per peck which amounted to £1 6s 8d per eight stone as in some places three bolls of oats would scarce be eight stone of something more like dust than victual. Commissions were sent to England and Ireland for grain and many poor families were in great want.

The Coming of Peace

1783 - This year commenced and almost continued fine weather. A more favourable seed time was not for a century but then the want in this place was most felt. Providence, ever kind, ordered that peace was concluded with the Americans as Lord North was by a Cabinet Council laid aside from being Minister of State, and in his place the Earl of Rockingham and Lord Shelburn were conjointly put who it appears had the welfare of the nation more at heart. They concluded a joint peace with all the European Powers with whom they had been more or less nine years at war and confirmed a peace with the thirteen United States of America which before were the most extensive part of the British Empire.

The report of our distress for want of provisions induced the Government to send to our ports part of the supply intended for the use of the armies. In May white pease was imported at Banff. Eight Bushels or an English quarter of pease was sold at £2 2s. Four bushels amounted to 10.5 pecks of our barley measure. That was commonly a bag which cost £1 1s. They were generally ground unshelled and would have weighed when ground about 12 stone. In June there were few houses but used some foreign grain. Cattle sold well this summer as there was plenty of grass south and north. All the month of July there was an unusual redness about the sun and a mist all night and in the night it was sometimes tremendous thunderings and lightning but always serene and mild.

There was something quite strange appeared in the progress of this crop. Those people that dwelt in mossy, moorland places of the country, such as Byth and Auchry, &c., put no trust in their own corn as to depend upon it for seed. They came to Deveron-side and bought up all that could be spared at £1 per boll, but to their great loss one-third of what they thought good seed did not spring, and what was most astonishing those poor people that had not money sowed their own frosted corn which by far answered best. I wish this were attended to in after times lest a season

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equivalent to 1782 were coming again that people might prove their seed and not lose themselves as they then did.

As this summer was serene, on clean ground the corn stocked and in course came to be a tolerable crop, but on land not cleaned there were not two seeds. In April and May many people sowed barley among their oats meaning to fill the ground with some sort of a crop but few had much profit by that scheme. There was an extraordinary fine crop of barley this year and also all kind of roots. The current price of what was called oatmeal this summer was £1 per boll. There was always plenty of barley to sell, imported at Aberdeen from £1 2s to £1 9s per boll and many people went thither and bought to maintain their families. The year continued every way seasonable until Christmas Eve when an amazing deepness of snow fell which lay till the beginning of next May before it was all quite dissolved.

A Protracted Storm.

1784 - The storm I mentioned with which 1783 ended was the most severe and longest lasting I hitherto remember. On Saturday the third of January there came from the south-east the most violent hurricane of drift I or my father ever saw. Some houses were quite covered over with snow, some dens were filled level with the plains and on a brae lying to the west near this a wreath of snow lay computed to be thirty feet high. I was told by an old antiquarian, a native of Fyvie parish that there was not such a deep blown storm since that time a hundred years, 1684, in the latter end of the reign of Charles the Second. As an instance, said storm overblew the town of Mill of Caden, and next day all the men in the parish of Culsalmond came to search for it and when all hopes was lost, at sunset a man, either providentially or accidentally, put a pole in at a lum. This is a traditional story and my readers may or may not credit it. All I can say after what I saw in 1784 I don't scruple the truth of it.

This storm lay without interval until Sunday the 7th of March when a violent storm of wind and rain from the east thawed the thinnest of it. On Monday night the 8th, a large piece of a brae at Waulkmill of Auchmedden, in Aberdour, slid down and over turned the house of Thomas Torry, dyer, and killed his wife and one of his sons and his servant maid.

This was the most inclement seedtime I ever saw. About the middle of April people began to sow oats among dub and where the old wreaths of snow lay they awaited till they melted and then sowed where they lay. On the first day of May I ploughed down the remains of a wreath that had lain four months and six days and sowed oats on the spot and, what I thought more strange, said oats was fragrant brear as could be looked upon against 15 days. The seed being quite wholesome it sprung admirably even on gutters and, May turning out mild, the grain came up astonishing thick even in places where horses could not be put on to cover the seed in case of lairing. It was the middle of September or any barley was ripe but the harvest was fine until the 19th of October when there came a storm of hail from the north, after which there was great difficulty in getting in the remains of the crop.

This crop was almost a miracle. In August oatmeal was 18s and could not be had. In November fine oatmeal was so large that I saw carts driving through Banff loaded with it and men calling at all their acquaintances' houses if they wanted any at 11s or wholesale at 10s 6d. The year showed evidently the hand of Providence for this crop turned out beyond expectation every way it was handled. There was at least two full years' maintenance to all the people in this place. We were now blest with peace and plenty.

There was now something to settle when we had again got meal among us, the by-rest farms as they were called. The two preceding years many opulent farmers were unable to pay up their

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farms and maintain their families, so on some interest they lay by until now, and consequently the farmers behaved to be at the discretion of their landlords for the prices, as some of the heritors refused to accept of meal now as the price was far below times past. Some of an oppressive disposition took £1 1s per boll, some £1, some 12s, but Craigston, much to his honour, took only 10s.

1785 - As the end of last year was inclement so this for the first ten weeks was the same. When March began one-half of the oat land in many places was not ploughed. We were now accustomed with late seasons. This summer was rainy and plenty of grass. Cattle sold well and there was not a farm town but there was some old stocks of grain which was a strange circumstance besides the last five years. The first three were scarce of animal food and the next two as much so for human food and had it not been for the great crop of 1784 this would have been found a very defective crop as it was generally light, although plenty of fodder. The harvest was very unsettled and late. The crop was scarce got clean in when on the 1st of November there fell an uncommon deepness of snow all over the country as any man remembered at so early a period. It was computed to be 14 inches deep but in eight days it all thawed and the year ended in green weather. As the crop was defective, against Christmas old meal was worth 14s 6d per boll.

1786

In January was snow, in February was a severe and intense frost which perished the roots of all vegetables. March and April were tolerable. May, June and half July were one continued severe drought. There was a very poor hay crop and cattle fell one-third by what they had sold at the four preceding years. In the latter end of July the rains came, but too late to make any advance upon a shallow soil to raise fodder. On fertile ground the crop was tolerable rank but generally thin. The barley crop was far superior to the oats. The harvest was all finished against the 20th of October but cattle were low owing to the scarcity of fodder. Oatmeal sold at 15s and barley at 10s.

Ice in June.

1787 - This year began not only green but also pleasant and warm. In January and February vegetables grew and budded. It continued to the 5th of March. April and May were rain and frost alternately. In June it was as strange a nature of weather as I ever saw. It thundered very oft and rained all day and was frost in the night time. On the 6th of June, after seven o'clock in the morning, I carried in a piece of ice as thick as a bottle glass and the day before was as tremendous with thunder and rain as I ever remember. This year was all the summer months the most resembling 1782 that any I remember. There was an uncommon growth of grass and corn and everything that had a root behaved to grow with heat and rain. Cattle sold at least one-fourth part higher than any man ever saw them. On the 21st of September there came a violent storm of wind and rain from the east which laid all the corn flat and all the barley that was uncut was broke over at the middle of the shank.

The oat harvest took place about the 12th of October. This was a harvest (the frost excepted) as bad as 1782, dry and wet. It was all shorn against the 1st of November but no oats at all were yarded and few had in any pease. The 5th of November was as violent a day of wind and rain as could be in that season and not one sheaf of oats but was in hazard of rotting in the stook. On the morrow a cold north wind assisted us and we hauled together a deal of it in some sort or other, part wet, part dry. Before Christmas most of the stacks were hot and people were under a necessity of drying as oft as they threshed a crop at their kiln, or spread it like malt on the floor and turn it twice a day. Oat meal sold at 18s 8d and bear meal at 12s 6d and as fodder was large cattle was extremely dear.

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1788 - This year was almost the reverse of last, although the inclement spring did not suffer the seed time to commence early, no sooner than the first of April. Yet the summer months were so warm and dry that the crop advanced rapidly. I never remember a year that the crop was so short a time out. Little sown before April and little but was yarded in fine order within the month of September.

Ecclesiastical Events.

There was something worth taking notice of this year in the ecclesiastical affairs of Scotland. The Episcopal Communion who were cast off by the Prince of Orange from being the established Church of Scotland in 1688 for their attachment to the ancient Scottish kings or the Stewart family, as they are called, and since that time were thought disaffected to the present king, did this year, after mature consultation, on the 25th day of May publicly pray for King George by name, being a whole century under the most persecuting statues that any description of Christians had been laid under for ages past.

On the fifth day of November, the Right Revd. Bishop Skinner in Aberdeen appointed a general thanksgiving throughout his diocese of Aberdeen for the seasonable year and fine crop. On said day the Established Kirk held a thanksgiving for their being one whole century in possession of the churches and church livings as now established by law, being that day one hundred years after the Revolution or landing of the Prince of Orange.

During all this year oat victual sold at 16s and cattle sold equal as there was probably plenty of grass in the South, which was a lucky circumstance for this place, otherwise fodder would have been generally scarce. December was intense frost and snow.

1789 - It seldom happens but as the old year terminates, the new commences. So did this, severe frost and snow, which continued until Candlemass. February was tolerable but on the 9th of March there fell a storm of snow which continued intense and severe until the 5th of April. There was not one fresh day. The oat seed began about the 8th of April. The weather continued dry and windy until the first of June after which there came rain and thunder which raised plenty of grass. There was this year an uncommon weighty crop of hay. Cattle sold high but as there was little market for victual oat meal sold at 11s and barley meal at 6s 8d per boll.

There was not one dry day all the month of July, but heat and thunder and rain. In some places the rains did great hurt where it fell out in spouts. A spout of rain fell out at Gamrie and dang down two houses and in the same month of July a spout of rain, or rather a cloud fell on the Hill of Mormond which did amazing hurt to the mosses. It drove down pieces of moss bigger than castles several miles, some of which went whole bulk to the sea at Peterhead, 17 miles distant.

The harvest began about the 1st of September and was tolerable until the 19th when there was a new moon at 7 o'clock in the morning, after which there were not twenty-four hours at one time dry until the next change about the 11th of October. The corn began to grow in the stook but providentially the weather changed with the moon and the crop was got in. There was great plenty of fodder but a deal of it bad owing to the incessant rains in the harvest. In the beginning of December it broke up fine weather and all vegetables grew. As there was no frost the corn on houses was as green and fragrant as in May. It was not only fair but warm, dry, fresh pleasant and agreeable.

Grass in January.

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1790 - The forementioned fine weather was so singular that about the 6th January the cattle began to fall from eating enough of fodder by reason of the grass that was growing. I saw an instance more surprising and had it not been witnessed by many more than me (although they have not kept it so well upon record) I might be called a liar - upon the 22nd of February the bees were carrying home plenty of yellow work. This fine weather continued until the 1st of April after which all the winter buds were blasted. Until the month of July the weather was generally drought by day and frost by night. During the winter season oat meal sold at 11s but against July it sold at 13s 4d. The harvest took place about the equinox and was concluded against the 24th of October in fine and wholesome order and plenty to man and beast. The weather continued hazy and raw, without snow, to the end of the year. Cattle sold better in the autumn than in the summer months owing to the drought and no great plenty of grass.

1791 - This year began for the first two months variable - rains, frost &c., but chiefly high winds. On 4th January there was a terrible storm of wind from the south-east which did great hurt by sea and on the evening of the 17th there was a strong north west wind which did much hurt. The weather was green and generally high winds. Scarce can it be remembered that two so green winters succeeded other as this. The seed time began about the 8th of March and continued agreeable. After the 25th of April the weather turned extremely cold and dry which continued all the month of May. Cattle sold well in the first of May but against the first of June prices fell one-fourth part lower as after the 11th of June there came a north storm of wind, hail and frost which continued until the 23rd so violent and constant that few mind on such like in that season. In some places on the sea bank people ploughed down their pease which were blasted white, the corn was turned yellow and there was a general scarcity of grass.

There was a new source opened this year hitherto unknown which for some time did much good to the farmers in this place. Government thought fit to suppress all the small whisky stills, formerly called legal stills, and in place thereof they constituted a set of big stills which they licensed at a certain rate according to the size; a still that contained 40 gallons paid to the Government £40 per annum, and they got such or such a number of bushels of malt duty free. This new branch made a demand for barley which soon raised that commodity to the rate of 16s, a price in time of plenty hitherto unremembered.

After the above mentioned storm the summer was tolerable but a fuller crop advanced than could have been expected. The harvest was begun at Bartholemew's Day. There was much difficulty in getting the last of it in for after the 16th of October there came a rain and warmness, and about the 26th the stacks began to grow. Against the 1st of November it was all got in but not in so good order as could have been wished. About the 1st of December there fell a deep storm of snow which was succeeded by intense frost. On Saturday the 10th, being the day of the full moon, about 15 minutes past six in the evening, there came from the north-west a terrible hurricane of drift, which lasted about two hours, by means of which many people without doors perished and many more were in imminent danger. This storm continued all the remainder of the year. The last three weeks were so severe that all communication was blocked up by reason of the highways being as one continual sheet of glass. In the end of the year a market began for grain. Barley sold at 17s, without fodder, oats and pease at 12s, and with fodder proportionable higher.

1792 - As last year ended this took place, snow, frost intense. There was nine weeks that the earth was impenetrable by plow or pick. After the third of February the storm abated. The weather was seasonable until the 7th of March when there fell another storm which continued to the 17th, after which it turned fresh and the oat seed began about the 22nd. Afterwards the wind and frost alternately continued until Whitsunday. This unnatural Spring checked the hay crop so that this was the littlest hay crop that was since 1779. Cattle, owing to the cold Spring, would not sell. Victual, in June sold at 13s 4d. About the first of July the weather turned more agreeable and a

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fine second crop of grass arose after which there was a tolerable market for cattle. After Lammas the rains fell weighty and hurt the crop much so that on fertile ground oats and pease were generally light.

The harvest was rainy and inclement especially towards the end. About the 1st of November it was all trailed together in a very indifferent condition. About the 8th of November the weather broke up and then came 15 days of fine dry weather so that if people had had faith enough they might have had their crop in far better condition. On the 10th of December there came a terrible storm of wind and rain from the west which continued for about seven hours and did much hurt both by sea and land and on the 20th also was a high gale of wind from the north, and on the 29th there came another high wind. In short, this was the most inclement year, for all kind of weather, I ever remember, snow, frost, rain, wind and all excessive.

The French Revolution.

1793 - The month of January was variable but generally high winds. I shall take notice that our nation had now been at peace with all nations the last ten years. Since the peace with America, the French had been quarrelling with their King about arbitrary power and they had proceeded from better to worse as to take that prerogative from him and some years ago had formed a new system of laws which he condescended to sign. But soon after, by bad counsel, or not liking to be controlled he deviated or did not seem sincere in fulfilling his obligations. Whereupon his subjects having got the better of him in one point, were the more intent on getting out their point in another. After a formal indictment, as is usual, they sentenced him to beheaded, which they accordingly did on Monday, 21st January this year. This is a digression from my intended plan but as it was the cause of so much trouble to all Europe I shall take a little notice of the consequences as I go along.

It was long since observed that all our fashions, especially bad ones, came from France. As anarchy in France had prevailed over monarchy so our ill-affected people behoved to copy after them as it was the fashion. In England and the South of Scotland there were secret meetings or combinations of people of the lower ranks held committees and termed themselves the friends of the people. Seditious pamphlets were also published and artfully dispersed among the vulgar intimating that kingly government was in all respects tyrannical. One Thomas Paine, a professed atheist, published several pamphlets maintaining that the British government was in all respects oppressive, intolerable and base. Such like doctrine inflamed the minds of the ignorant and lower classes so that about Glasgow, Perth and even as far north as Dundee, all sorts of mechanics, such as shoemakers, tailors, weavers, &c., held meetings and pretended to have as good a title to dictate laws to government as the Minister of State had. Such were the prevailing principles of the times and so bold and insolent were these conventicles that they sometimes turned in large bodies in great towns and planted the "Tree of Liberty" (as they called it), a certain standard of a peculiar make which they exhibited as a badge of their republican system of government.

To check such impudent proceedings his Majesty called the Parliament to meet, the 26th of November, 1792 and as the French had over run Holland, our government, as allies to the Dutch, proposed sending over troops to drive these distracted people, the French, out of the Netherlands. At the same time as the King of France was murdered and the regicides declared France a republic, our government did not think themselves bound by former treaties to acknowledge any other government in France but monarchy. After Long debates in the Parliament it was at last carried by a majority of votes that war with France was just and necessary. About Candlemass, the Guards and a vast number of other troops were sent over to Holland, and so confident were they of victory that the regiments pitched upon for the work thought themselves honoured for being first called to the war. The Duke of York went over as General and in a few months drove the French out of Holland. Against the middle of June our forces entered French Flanders and besieged

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several towns, chiefly Valciennes, which employed then until Lammas, after which they thought to drive all before them but after laying siege to Dunkirk in the end of August, they met with a repulse. I shall leave them there and return to the seasons.

The Season at Home.

This was a very inclement spring. The oat seed began on the 27th of March. Snow did not lie long this Winter but there were frosts and high gales of wind. So very bad was this spring that on the 15th of April the ice was as thick as lozen glass at 12 o'clock mid-day, and after the frost the drought was as great. So cold and unnatural was May that on Wednesday the 28th the drift blew so thick that none could see the next town, nor was a pile of grass seen until after 12 o'clock. This was the littlest hay crop that had been for many years. Cattle were cheap as there was little grass until after the middle of June. But what the months of May and June wanted, July supplied. For heat and rain none was like it since 1790. Oatmeal sold this summer at 17s. Had August been dry there would have been a fine crop but the heavy rains destroyed all the pease and the oats on fertile ground was light. We had a fine harvest. Those people that were diligent got in all their crop in fine condition. The rains broke about the 6th of November and continued more or less till the 5th of December. All the said month there was not a sheaf got in, many people had not all their crop in at the 22nd of December. One thing was observable of this Autumn - there was not a frost from the end of May until the end of December that would have congealed the surface of standing water.

1794 - This year began and continued almost throughout every way agreeable. Only the last week of January was there intense frost and snow and afterwards, the 7th of April excepted, when there was an easterly storm of rain, there was not a year I presume this century of so continued fine weather.

The new kirk at Turriff was built this summer and it was observed that (the above 7th of April excepted) no mason nor day labourer that wrought about her lost an hour's work from the first of March to the 22nd of November by reason of the inclemency of the weather. Only in June, the drought was rather severe.

Cattle sold equal in June. Raw oats sold at 8s per stone and oat victual at 16s 8d per 8 stone. Constant harvest began about the 22nd of August and all was finished in fine order against Michealmass. This was the most memorable year for sunshine and a fine filled crop I ever remember. Fruit of all kinds was large and good, all kinds of roots and vegetables were singularly good but of all products this year honey was the largest and best I ever remember. Grain of all kinds was allowed to be at least one stone on each boll weightier than ever remembered. On the 19th of November a public thanksgiving for the good crop and fine year was observed by the Established Kirk and also by the Episcopal Church, by orders of Bishop Skinner. There was great plenty of grain this year and that of the best quality. Barley market commenced against the 12th of November at 8s per stone and 15s for pease. The wether continued until the 31st of December serene. On said day there was a black frost and so ended this most serene, seasonable and fruitful year I ever remember.

1795 - As I hinted that 1794 ended with frost so '95 succeeded. For the first 15 days of January it was calm and foggy with great falls of snow. About the 22nd the frost turned intense and severe as was remembered for many years. From the 12th of January to the 6th of March there was one continued deepness of snow and penetrating frost that was, as some old people say, since the year 1740. All roads were blocked up and communication stopped. The rivers were frozen over six weeks so that a load waggon might have gone safe over at any place without danger. Those people that had a stock of fodder and fuel were counted the only happy individuals. Against Candlemass, barley with fodder, sold at £1 8s and oats from £1 1s to £1 9s per boll. Many people

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of extensive farms as well as sub-tenants, against the end of February, had little but what they purchased at the above prices.

British War Reverses.

Until this deep storm thaw, I shall return our armies lying before Dunkirk, where I left them in August 1793, but shall hint first that in 1793 there rose an uncommon spirit among the young fellows in this place of enlisting to the army as there were so many recruiting parties set on foot. This was the first cause of the uncommon wages which about this time began to be given labouring servants. All the heritors that held a commission in the army were now called abroad to personal service and many of them raised a company of volunteers to go with them. The Duke of York now felt a little of adversity on a foreign soil. Sympathising with his brother soldiers he ordered or petitioned government to double all their wages. This was another great inducement to young fellows to enlist.

Our army at Dunkirk was harassed with a superior army of French republicans, were obliged to raise the siege and were forced to retire and relinquish all their projects and act only on the defensive. Vast numbers were killed and many more died of fatigue and floges. Our heritors who had landed over, partly voluntary and partly reluctant, did all they could to get home again at any rate.

The Emperor of Germany who fought longest and truest, as it was a family quarrel, his sister being Queen of France, whom the republicans beheaded in October, 1793, was joined with Prussia and Spain. These veterans of France carried on in a triumphant manner over all the separate and united forces of all the above powers. In this long storm they came over two large rivers named the Maas and the Waal upon the ice and discomfited and entirely drove the last of our army to seek shelter in the heights of Germany. This was a melancholy catastrophe as is in the British annals - our fugitive army worn out with duty and fatigue forced on so extraordinary a season to retire for some hundreds of miles in snow where the enemy traced the way they went by the dead bodies they found lying by the way. The Dutch had joined the French this year and turned their weapons against the British, I hope to their everlasting infamy. The Statholder was obliged to leave his country and come to Britain for shelter.

But to return home. Penetrating as the frost was, it did not freeze the hearts of the rich in this north country. The nobility and gentlemen was not forgetful of the poor in this cold season. Upwards of £450 was subscribed for and distributed among 1500 distressed individuals in Aberdeen; £45 was collected and distributed among the poor in Banff; in the town and kirk of Turriff was collected to the poor £10. Many gentlemen gave liberally, some 10 bolls, some 30 and some 50 bolls of victual to the most distressed in villages and on their estates.

For the first ten weeks of this year a plow did not break the soil. In May cattle began to sell as there was a great appearance of grass, but in Aiky Fair in Old Deer the sale of cattle began and continued for some time above all that was ever known. For instance, a three-year-old stot that would give £4 would now give £6 6s; a cow that gave £3 10s would now sell at £5 5s; a year old, formerly sold at £1, would now give £2 10s; cattle of a high breed still higher proportion. Large oxen that were formerly sold for £9 to £12 were now sold from £16 to £20. Horses and sheep in proportion.

There was an extraordinary weighty crop of hay this year and a man that had black cattle in store was rich. The harvest was late but agreeable until the 7th of October when there came a great storm of rain from the east and it soaked the stooks to the heart. The weather afterwards turned extraordinary warm and against the 15th all the stooks set a-growing as rapid as malt. This was

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the most uncommon growth any man ever saw, for against the 22nd not only the stooks but the standing corn uncut was growing to an astonishing degree. The greater part of the oat crop was all in this perishing state at once. But on Sunday the 25th the winds turned to the south-west and we soon got relief. All the crop was got in better condition than expectation in that week.

The weather continued variable but generally windy until the 29th of December when about 4 o'clock in the morning there arose a terrible gale of wind, flat west, which unroofed houses and levelled corn stacks. It raised the sea at Gamrie so that the back of the harbour was greatly damaged. The fisherpeople in Crovey was obliged to flee their houses and betake themselves to the braehads. And so ended this memorable year for snow, frost, rain and wind, and I may add war, and also trade in the farming line.

A Note About Butter.

1796 - This year commenced as last concluded, fine, dry, green weather, as also with high prices for all kind of provisions and necessaries; barley at 1s 2d per stone; oats at 16s 6d per boll; beef from 4d to 6d per lb. All this was not for want of provisions in this place but chiefly to vast fleets and armies kept up by Government, and defective crops in England. It is worth taking notice of here the uncommon rise of all kind of necessaries since about 17 years ago. In the time of the American War all sort of provisions were cheap, so on the contrary in the time of this war all provisions were as dear. I shall take notice of one branch in particular which of late has arisen to an amazing height, both quantity, quality and value - that is butter. About 30 years ago butter was sold from 4d to 5d per lb; it now sells from 9d to 10d or 11d, and within the bounds there is now 10 or perhaps 12 times as much of that commodity made now, and that of a far superior quality. Until seven or eight years ago there was little market for butter in public towns like Aberdeen or Banff; but now it is exported to other places in large quantities and become a fine branch of trade both to farmers and merchants. It brings yearly to our country many a thousand pounds, where about 15 years ago it scarcely supplied the inhabitants. By means of this new branch, the cows are of double value and the land is far better cultivated to raise grass for them.

On Friday the 15th of January, we had a gale of wind as high as the 29th of December and on Saturday the 23rd a strong gale of wind from the south which did much damage. At eight at night the wind was as high as any west wind that was since January 1773. This was a green winter and had it not been those violent hurricanes of wind it was in all respects as agreeable as last winter was severe. Against Candlemass oatmeal sold at £1 1s per 8 stone; mixed ditto at 19s 6d; raw oats, indifferently dressed, independent of weight, sold at 18s; barley at 1s 3.5d per stone, which if weighty, amounted to £1 5s without fodder. This was the farmers' golden age.

On Sunday the 27th of January an intimation was given in the kirk of Turriff by the Rev. Wm. Stewart, and likewise in the chapel by the Rev. John Cruickshank, that on Tuesday thereafter, all the farmers in the parish should meet in the kirk to concert about reducing meal for the poor of the parish. This intimation was generally well attended and every farmer signed a few bolls, some more, some less, according to their ability. In whole they reduced 100 bolls of oatmeal at 1s per boll and the merchants and tradesmen in Turriff collected also £10 in money which reduced said 100 bolls to 14s per boll.

Grain Riots.

So amazing was the demand for grain that about the month of February the people in the sea-port towns assembled in vast mobs, chiefly women, and stopped or interrupted the merchants and their agents from shipping the grain. So insolent was those women that they came aboard the ships

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and threatened violence to the agents, until a military force was called. Many of the insurgents were imprisoned and stood a trial at Aberdeen before the Court of Justiciary next April.

Owing to the above influx of money all tradesmen highted their wages. Some charged double wages by what they were before. Day labourers, formerly at 4d and victuals a day, now charged 6d and some 8d per day. Even taylors doubled their wages; wrights, formerly 6d or at most 8d, now charged 1s; masons, from 10d to 1s 6d. But the labouring servants wages in those times turned most extravagant of any. A servant man of 30 years ago at £1 10s would now draw £6 per half-year and some extravagant fellows who took the opportunity of the times asked and got £7 per half year. Harvest men's wages, £3; women per half year £2 2s; harvest £1 10s. Herds, first rate, £2 10s; second £1 5s. A cow herd, 15s.

The seed-time commenced about the 12th of March and except a very smart snow about Easter it was a fine seed-time. Only about the middle of April there came a penetrating drought so that those that employed a clay soil had much ado to break the surface but on the 22nd of May the scene altered and the three summer months there was scarce three dry days. Consequently there arose a fragrant crop of grass and corn. No peats were drier at Lammas than in the first of June so that some people imagined about the end of July that there would be no fuel that year and that the crop would be as late as in 1782. But on the 10th of August the weather broke up pleasant and extraordinary warm so that the peats against the 1st of September was all home better than expectation. The crop, too, filled and ripened exceedingly well. Barley harvest began about the 12th of September and against the 24th of October all the crop was got in in fine condition. This was supposed to be the best and most substantial crop (1784 excepted) that was since the year 1750. It was rank, wholesome, excellently filled, and perfectly win, so that every man had reason to thank the Almighty Giver for plenty to man and beast. I forgot to mention that a very early market for cattle began in April and continued all the season. But in the autumn when so fine a crop was safe in, cattle was higher than ever by at least a fourth part. In Cowan Fair in Turriff stots of 30 month old sold at £8 to £10 per head, all other cattle in proportion. Never was a year on record that so much money came to the North of Scotland for grain and cattle as this.

The weather continued suitable to the season until the 30th of November, St Andrew's Day. On said day the Episcopal Church in this diocese and the Synod of Aberdeen kept a public thanksgiving for the fine crop and good harvest.

Boy in Snow Drift.

On Monday the 5th of December about half past ten o'clock mid-day there came from the north-west a terrible hurricane of drift which lasted until 7 o'clock in the evening. As it happened in the middle of the day many people without doors were in imminent danger. A boy in this neighbourhood returning to his father's house was overset with the tempest and driven on to a ditch within a bow shot of his father's house. He caught hold of a whin hedge and lay below the snow from Monday at 12 o'clock to Tuesday at ten - 22 hours below a wreath six feet deep and came out alive without assistance. This storm with little interval continued severe until the 22nd of December when a sudden thaw came and melted it and so this year ended green. Upon the whole this year was a year of extraordinary extreme seasons (and an excellent crop, too). The spring was violent drought, the summer was as excessive rain; the harvest was as dry, the winter as entirely smart as any year I remember.

1797 - As last year ended this commenced green, pleasant and dry. This fine weather continued so agreeable that some people sowed pease in January and in February some people sowed all their oats. As the season was so good people sowed at any time they inclined but all was sowing against the 12th of March.

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War on Land and Sea.

As I have hinted nothing relating to the war these past two years, I shall here take notice that our armies in Flanders being entirely routed and all our great men come home that survived shock, our government saw fit to rig out immense fleets at sea to defend our country. At the same time the Austrians fought with admirable bravery and many thousands of them were slain. After all, they were forced to make a peace with this infatuated people, in the same manner as was Spain and Prussia. The French pushed their conquests through Italy and in the spring this year drove the Pope out of Rome, under the management of an enterprising general called Bonaparte. It were endless to relate the devastations and massacres they committed in those countries.

Admiral Howe with a large fleet gave then sundry checks at sea but they always gave out that they would come over to Britain and plant the Tree of Liberty at London. Our republican people wished earnestly that they would come but behaved to speak below their breath as all public men were on the outlook to catch such vipers.

On Sunday the 19th of March a proclamation was read in all the kirks to the farmers and all others to give an exact account of all their cattle, the number of bolls of grain, threshed and unthreshed, also the account of all their men servants, &c., to the Deputy-Lieutenants or their agents, in case of a landing of the French, i.e., an invasion that government might make restitution, as was given out. This order was obeyed but with reluctance with some as they feared some secret design of levying money upon every man's property according to his value.

A Bounty of Grain.

As the whisky stills was stopped in July last year on account of the dearth so now government put an extraordinary high duty upon them in April this year and many of them was not able to support it. By means of that, barley sold in March this year at 18s and oatmeal at 14s 6d and against Whitsunday all dealers in grain stopped, partly for fear of the French but chiefly as the country was full of grain and no market for it anywhere. In December when the parliament met, his Majesty, among other matters in his Speech at the entry of the session mentioned that some scheme should be set on foot to reduce the exorbitant price of corn owing to the defective crops in England. The Minister soon proposed a remedy. It was enacted that the ports of England should be continued open to all nations until the 20th of September next to bring in all kinds of provisions, and not only so but government were to give £1 of bounty for every quarter of wheat imported and their chance of market. This was the cause of our high market the Candlemass before; as the Baltic was frozen, consequently we were first at the market. But against the middle of May the ports of England were glutted with all kinds of grain from Dantzic, the Baltic and America, and so large was it that the London merchants bought it so cheap on account of the premium offered and paid by government that they were under a necessity of erecting temporary granaries on the banks of the Thames to stow it. This ill timed Act knocked down the grain here a long time until that store was consumed. By the end of May barley was sold at 9d per stone and oatmeal at 12s. But never was seen more stacks of old grain than this summer. In some big farmers' yards were eight, in some six and in others four large stacks of the very best quality, so abundant a crop was 1796.

In June this year government sent over to the continent Lord Malmesbury as plenipotentiary or in other words to make peace with the French. By this means a secession of hostilities commenced for some time. He continued there two months without effect as the French demands were, it appears, exorbitant. In the end of August he returned and all was now worse than ever. The Dutch this year had fitted out a formidable fleet against us and on Wednesday the 11th of October, Admiral Duncan, now Lord Duncan, fell in with them on their own coasts and fought a bloody battle. He entirely conquered a superior number of ships and also brought to our ports nine of the

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largest of their ships and also brought their admiral captive, named De Winter. This humbled the traitorous and faithless Dutch.

The summer was variable but generally heavy rains and much difficulty in getting firing prepared. Constant harvest began about the equinox and although the weather was always variable those people that were active got in all their grain in fine condition. But the sluggards smarted, for upon Saturday the 2nd of October there came as violent a storm of rain as was since 1768 and soaked all the stooks so that with the greatest difficulty the remains of the harvest was got in. On Wednesday the 22nd of November there came a storm of wind and rain from the north and so the winter set in severe and intense. There was three weeks of snow and ice that with the greatest difficulty man or beast could look out as the earth was like a sheet of glass.

On Tuesday the 19th of December, his Majesty proclaimed a general public thanksgiving to be in all the churches of Great Britain for the victory obtained by his fleets, which was unanimously complied with.

As this crop was far inferior to last, against Martinmas old barley sold at 1s per stone and oat victual at ditto, but against Christmas all market was stopped on account of the high duties laid upon distilleries in this highland districts as government terms them. Cattle sold high through all this year.

An Irish Rebellion.

1798 - January continued green with frequent high winds which continued until the 9th of February when there came a storm of frost and snow which continued with little interval all the month of March. No season was until the 5th of April after which it was fine and agreeable. Oat meal sold at 12s and barley meal at 8s but I may say there was no market at all for grain during the winter season. In February all heritors and farming societies in Kinkardine, Aberdeen, Banff and Murrey shires were unanimous in petitioning government to repeal a bill that had passed in the beginning of this session allowing foreign grain to be imported and also to open the whisky stills which had been stopped since July last on account of a high duty imposed upon them.

There was also another new affair commenced in March which was differently received according to the different humours of the people - a voluntary subscription for money to supply the exigencies of the present year, as the French was still making preparations to invade our country. Vast was the sums that were contributed in cities and great towns to this purpose and every parish subscribed in the most remote places of the country. This was a method which tried how people were affected to government, the best of any method that could be tried, but the republicans were very reluctant to this proposal.

As the Irish who are always weary of the English yoke takes every opportunity of resisting, so they took this. They had corresponded with the French all along the time of this war and had secretly prepared vast stores of weapons of different constructions and as they are generally, all the common people at least, papists by religion, they united themselves by solemn oaths not to rest until they destroyed the last protestant in Ireland. Accordingly, about the middle of May, they broke out in a terrible manner, especially about Dublin and the county of Wicklow, and in a few days massacred vast numbers of protestants of all ages and sexes. So bold and daring were they that they gave battle to the King's forces and killed vast numbers both cavalry and foot. Thousands of these desperate wretches assembled in bodies with halberts and all kind of destroying weapons and killed all except their own banditti which they termed United Irishmen. Such a havoc was not in Ireland since the reign of Charles the First. Vast numbers of these infatuated people were cut down by the King's forces and many of the chiefs or ringleaders who were caught were hanged, or

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banished at their own request. And all was with a view to get the French principles established in Ireland as they sent over word that they would be at hand to second them.

In the beginning of May cattle sold well and as the cattle trade had been so flourishing for three years past dealers used to take parks at gentlemen's seats and graze cattle, by which means of which they made ample profits. Gentlemen saw a profit by letting their enclosures, which, the three years past, on two or three year old grass sett from £2 to £3 per acre, and as the vast fleets and armies consumed so much beef and all kinds of provisions trade of this way was surprising good. But as the contractors with Government for beef to the Navy had found that they could purchase beef at one third cheaper in Russia they sent over factors this year to buy Russian beef and supply the British Navy therewith. Also a vast of the troops quartered in England were sent over to quell the insurrection of the Irish rebels. This stopped the demand for our cattle this summer so that they fell more than one-third of what they gave in May against Lammas as the forces in Ireland lived upon the rebels' cattle at pleasure.

About the month of April a market began for oats at 11s per boll but against June came to 14s.

From the 5th day of April to the 10th of September, there was not one stormy day. There was plenty of rain until 19th of May after which until the 21st of June there was neither rain nor dew, day or night, the above 32 days. Consequently the hay crop was checked and the corn on a thin soil was short. Constant harvest began about the 24th of August. Against the end of September all was finished in fine order. This crop was much the same with 1776, generally satisfactory to all south and north.

The Battle of the Nile.

This and last year we were made believe that the French would invade us. Month by month accordingly the celebrated general, Bonnaparte, who had overrun the most of the continent with his victories, planting the Tree of Liberty, after refreshing his troops and fitting out a formidable fleet at Toulon on the Mediterranean, on purpose as was supposed to invade Britain, after congratulating his armies on former victories, now told that they had one important act as yet to achieve. Our troops were in readiness and expected that they would actually come over, but instead of coming here they set sail south. All our fleets were duly on the outlook after them and now it was supposed that they intended to go to our East Indy settlements and surprise or take them.

Admiral, now Lord Nelson, came up with them near the mouth of the River Nile on the coast of Egypt on the 1st day of August when a bloody battle was fought of no less than 19 hours duration. The French admiral was killed and his ship burnt who carried 80 large guns and 1010 men. Eleven of their first rate-ships were taken; in short, none but two ships and two frigates escaped our fleet, but what they took burnt or sunk. This was the most complete victory in all the British annals and I may add the most beneficial, too, for our country hitherto recorded. Admiral Nelson had 995 men killed and wounded and the French upwards of 5000. In the month of August a squadron of the French landed in Ireland and did some hurt but was soon taken by our troops and in October another fleet of them was destroyed and captured by our fleets upon the Irish coast.

For the above victories his Majesty proclaimed by his Royal Authority that upon Thursday the 29th of November, a general thanksgiving to Almighty God should be solemnised in all the churches and chapels of Great Britain, which was generally well obeyed. Never was a day in my opinion more solemnly observed, especially by the episcopal communion who were never the last in observing such institutions. The Rt. Rev Bishop Skinner in Aberdeen composed and caused print

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and disperse to all the congregations in his diocese an excellent form of prayer and thanksgiving fitted for the day, and included an excellent collect for the good harvest.

About Martinmas a market for old oats began at 10d per stone and old barley ditto, but against a month, new oats sold at 13s 6d per boll, exclusive of weight, and barley at 10d per stone. On the 24th of December there fell a storm of snow which continued the remainder of the year.

1799 - The storm with which last year concluded made very great difficulty with the ice to go to the Shores with grain as the prices were every day augmenting but when the ice was gone people came to Banff from the parishes of Premnay and Inch and Kennethmont, as two companies in Banff were contending who would give the best price and so intent were they that they sent men out to catch all that came in. Some of them came as far as Turriff and bought all they met with at 14s 9d per boll, if it was clean of chaff, but against the 24th of January the country choaked the market so that they could not find granaries to hold it. So it fell to 13s 4d per boll.

Three Successive Storms.

On Sunday the 27th of January there fell a new storm of snow which increased daily with severe and penetrating frost. The wind seated in the south-east upon Thursday the 7th of February. On Friday there came a blowing of drift but on Saturday the 9th there came a terrible tempest from said airt that there was none like it in my memory, 1784 excepted. It was more dangerous than 1784 as the frost was more severe. Consequently, the drift was smaller and penetrated more into houses. Dismal were the accounts of this hurricane. Many people perished, some in the fields and some old people in their houses. Some cattle perished in houses. About the 20th of February the weather turned moderate and plowing was carried on, but the wreathes of snow on some north-west exposures lay and turned hard and interrupted the cultivation.

About the 12th of March, most people sowed pease and a few sowed some oats but the week after Easter there came from the south-east a storm of wind and rain which ended in snow. Upon the 28th of March the drift made up the old wreathes almost as great a height as they were six weeks before. This third storm continued severe and penetrating until the 9th of April when there came a little freshness. The oat seed season took place generally about the 15th of April, but the old wreathes of snow was lying on some ground of a north-west exposure upwards of six feet deep. Probably some of them would lain until the 12th of May had they not been cast. With difficulty the oat seed was ended about the 2nd of May and in some interior places not sooner than the 10th. There was not one day of seasonable weather sooner than the 13th, after which it was tolerable. About the beginning of May, hay sold at 8d per stone, and fodder in some places of the country was very scarce. Against Whitsunday, raw oats without fodder, independent of weight, sold at £1 1s 6d and some people that asked it got £1 2s 9d per boll. Barley sold at 1s 1d per stone. Against the end of July oats sold at £1 4s per boll, independent of weight.

The three summer months were cold and dry so that the hay crop was generally light. Pasture grass was very scarce both south and north, by means of which cattle sold very dull all the summer season. Prices were at least one-third less than about three years past. On Thursday, August 1st, at one o'clock in the morning the moon changed and the rain also came the same hour. All the month of August was rain and cold and sometimes high winds along with the rain, yet there was no growth of grass. Corn on some ground did grow ranker than was expected, but generally thin.

Flooding at Banff.

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On Saturday, the 31st, the moon changed at three o'clock in the morning (two new moons in one month and both easterly changes). Said morning, the 31st, there came from the east one of the violentest storms of wind and excessive rain that has been in that season for many years past. The River Deveron against six o'clock in the morning arose to the greatest height that it ever was seen at (1768 excepted). At Banff the people that saw both floods allowed that this was about one foot lower than 1768. The water was round the Duff House and drowned a number of Earl Fife's sheep upon his greens. The Bridge Street was at the Market Place four foot deep of water and boats were used all the Sabbath Day to carry people from the bulwark to church along Bridge Street or by the old Salmon Close. One thing was very remarkable of this deluge. One James Ironside, a farmer in Fyvie parish, who drowned near the House of Forglen on the 22nd of December last year whose body was never found, this spate cast it up at Earl Fyfe's [different spelling of Fife/Fyfe in book - Wllm] ground after it had lain eight months and nine days in the water, and what was most strange, the body was almost entire and whole, and was carried on a hearse and interred at Fyvie.

Barley harvest began about the equinox, but the weather was always bad, frosts and rains alternately and no barley was yarded sooner than the 10th of October and then but in a very indifferent condition. Early oats were cut down about the 15th of October but no common oats was sooner ripe (or what was called ripe) than the 22nd of ditto. Rain and frost always severe and alternate. About this time, best barley at Haddington sold at £1 13s 6d per boll; best oats at £1 8s ditto. At Banff, old barley sold at 15d per stone; oat meal at 15d per peck. At Aberdeen new oat meal sold at 1s 6d per eight lbs. But what was the most afflicting stroke the country felt was the entire fall of the prices of cattle. About the end of September common year-old stots and coys was sold at £1 per head; common country cows at £2; first-rate three-year-old stots, which three years ago would draw £10, sold now from £4 to £5. Horses still cheaper in proportion and with difficulty to get rid of them at any rate.

The first day of November being Friday, the medium prices of provisions in the market of Aberdeen, as the news reported, was, new oat meal, 2s per peck; barley, ditto, 1s 3d; eggs, 9d per dozen; beef, 4d per lb.

About this time the rains were excessive and every sort of grain was in hazard of perishing. About the 12th of November, the earliest of farmers got done with shearing, but little but early oats and barley was yarded. Afterward the weather during the remainder of the month turned more agreeable but little drought so that the wet corn began to heat and rot. The 28th, 29th, and 30th were the only harvest days we had seen for two months past and relieved the remainder that had lain exposed in the fields all the season. When the crop was proven at the mills the best boll of early oats would bring 12 pecks of meal and common oats about eight pecks and that not of a fine quality. About the end of November a market began at Banff for new oats at £1 per boll but soon fell to 18s and the oats they accepted would not exceed nine pecks of meal at an average. Reports circulated that in the interior parts of the country there was neither bread nor seed, but all was destroyed with frost and rain. In short, it was most like 1782 I ever remember.

British Reverses in Holland.

I have not taken notice of the progress of the war until now since the gallant victory gained by Admiral Nelson on the 1st of August last year. On Sunday April the 7th there came 20 State prisoners through Turriff on their way to Fort George, mostly Irishmen, conveyed in four coaches and escorted by fifty hussars all armed, guarding them, and attended by two King's Messengers - an unusual sight to the people in this place.

Early in the spring the Emperor of Germany, who had made parley for temporary peace with the French for some months, rallied his armies again upon the Rhine and fought most courageously

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all this summer and succeeded more than all the six years before in victories, and many a thousand gallant soldier fell on both sides. The French, this campaign, were less fortunate than in years past and were generally worsted by the Germans in all quarters. They were driven out of Rome and Italy and were almost forced to abandon the most of all the strong cities and fortifications they had conquered and for some time had tyrannically insulted over.

Britain, too, was not idle in the common cause. They called and paid 45,000 Russians to assist who fought with undaunted bravery. Our own seditious folks and the Irish rebels being at present tolerably quiet, our Court, hearing how all was going on in Germany, would venture on what they called on a secret expedition. They fitted out a great fleet with a vast number of transports and 30,000 land forces, with a vast number of cavalry and ordnance of all descriptions, etc. So about the first of August they set sail for Holland, almost confident of victory and determined to reinstate the Statholder and then replace the monarchy in France once more.

The Duke of York went as General-in-Chief, General Abercrombie, a Scots-man, was second-in-command; one Admiral Mitchal, commanded the fleet. About five days after they sailed, they came to the mouth of the Texel where the Dutch fleet were all riding at anchor. Our admiral summoned them in the name of the King of Great Britain to submit to their ancient master, the Statholder, or take the consequences. After some hours reluctance, being afraid to risk an engagement with a superior force, he capitulated and delivered up all his fleet without firing a gun. Eleven first-rate ships of war and a number of frigates were immediately seized by the British and brought to the English ports.

Soon after, our transports with the land troops on board made a landing, with much difficulty as the Dutch and French met them as soon as they came on shore with sharp shot. They began to land at 5 o'clock in the morning and as soon as they set a foot on land they entered a hot resolute battle which continued until six at night when our army drove the enemy some distance and entrenched themselves until reinforcements came to their aid. About the beginning of September a second division of English went over and joined. At the same time, 12,000 of the Russian allies came through lower Germany and joined the British, so now they penetrated about 20 miles farther up the country.

By this time the French had collected a vast force and came to meet them. Upon the 19th of September a bloody battle took place which continued 24 hours when the English got the advantage but at the expense of the lives of many a gallant man. They pursued their victory still further into the country and stormed and took several forts and towns but the French still collected more strength, having as yet the Dutch forces all at their call. So upon the sixth of October both armies met when a horrid slaughter on both sides took place. This, I presume, was the most bloody engagement the English had experienced all this war. Many a brave officer was killed and wounded, and thousands of soldiers were killed and taken prisoners. In short, our officers were obliged to ask six weeks of a parley from the French to give them time to retire to the coast to embark for England again after three months' slaughter and hunger in Holland. Against the end of November all that survived this unlucky expedition arrived in Britain and vast numbers of Russian soldiers along with them and vast numbers of Dutchmen who had joined the allied armies, who behaved to come over here with the English to save their lives.

The last month of this year to the 18th was calm, fresh, moisty, foggy, and almost every corn stack that was not turned was half rotten. The last 13 days of the year was calm, intense penetrating frost.

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Perished in a Storm.

1800 - Wednesday, January the 1st, was serene but pinching frost. On the morning of Thursday the 2nd it began to blow drift from the south-east which increased as the day advanced. Against three in the afternoon, it turned to a terrible hurricane, which by its consequences has proved to be the most fatal of any tempest that has hitherto happened in this place I presume in this century. It continued 48 hours without the least interval so that many people without doors perished. One Alexr. Simpson, a strong young man, perished on the hill of Tillymauld; one Alexr. Garvioc, in Millseat, perished near his own house; one Bell Ord, a young woman, perished in the hill above Jackstown in the land of Hatton Lodge. Numbers more too tedious to enumerate lost the life in this dismal hurricane. But the loss by land was little in comparison of the losses by sea. Suffice it to relate that between Montrose and Peterhead no less than thirty ships were wrecked and, dismal to record, but a very few of their crews but perished, and as a newspaper reported, in the small distance between Ythanmouth and Bottom no fewer than 12 wrecks were driven on shore in pieces. The wind continued in the same airt twelve days, strong and penetrating, so that it was impossible to get off any ship that otherwise might have been partly preserved had the weather been more favourable.

The wreathes of snow was little lower than last year on the 9th of February. This storm, I presume, was the most adverse both at land and sea I hitherto remember. So scarce was victual in Banff that on Sunday, January 19th, an advertisement was published at all country kirks within 15 miles round that any farmer or other that would bring 16 bolls of meal, either oat, mixed, or barley, to Banff should receive the highest price and one guinea of premium over and above the current price. About this time the prices of grain at Haddington were best barley, £1 14s; best oats, £1 12s. At Aberdeen, oat meal, medium price 2s per 8lb.; barley ditto, 1s 6d. In Banff, oat victual sold at £1 5s per eight stone; barley ditto, 18s, exclusive of the above premiums. Upon the 31st of January, I witnessed a roup where oats with fodder sold at £1 17s 6d, and common barley with fodder at £2 7s per boll. About the 15th of February, oatmeal sold at Banff at £1 10s; mixed meal at £1 7s 6d; barley ditto at £1 1s per boll. At Haddington best barley sold at £1 19s; best oats at £1 19s. On the 5th day of March I witnessed a roup of corn fodder which sold at £2 4s 6d and barley with fodder at £2 8s, Banff measure.

From the 18th of December to the first of March, ploughing was in general laid aside (except on the sea banks that a few got ploughed). By extraordinary frosts and great wreathes of snow, there was many large farms that had little and some none at all plowed for the seed when the month of March began and what made that circumstance the more alarming was the general scarcity of animal provisions. Hay was selling at 1s 4d per stone and fodder in proportion, and hardly to be got at any money. On the 6th of March a severe black frost set in and snow, which interrupted the plowing until the 17th. At the equinox the wether turned agreeable and people began to sow pease and oats about the 27th upon what was plowed. But taking the country in general at this time the half of the oat land was not plowed and in the mountainous places, only beginning to plough. At Haddington best seed oats at this time sold at £2 2s; at Aberdeen, oatmeal, £ 2s 2d per eight lb.

High Priced Grain.

This seed time was the most agreeable and dry that was since 1783. The month of April was employed with the utmost exertion and against the 12th of May, the barley seed was generally sown. And the poor animals against that time was almost spent out. But the dearth still augmented. Against the first of May at Haddington oats sold at £2 17s and barley at £2 11s; at Banff oats, that would not turn out ten pecks of meal, sold at £1 16s 6d; at Aberdeen, oat meal was generally in the market, 2s 6d, and barley meal 2s per eight lb.; and in this place some people took 2s 6d for mixed coarse meal.

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I shall here record a paragraph verbatim from a newspaper of date June 2nd - "While we are happy to say that the present season is uncommonly fine and from the genial warm showers we have lately had vegetation is advancing rapidly, we must add with regret that lands sown after ley have suffered much from a destructive insect which in some places has totally cut off the young blade and left the fields in all nakedness of winter. Some farmers have reploughed these fields and sown in barley; while others are preparing them for turnips."

About this time the oats were in appearance in this place the most variable than any person ever remembered. Early oats was generally on good ground tolerable; common oats in most places was scarce half thick as had wont to appear at the second growth, and in some fields and on moorland farms not a root where should be and that too of a poor diminutive appearance. As this year was singular for dearth, I shall once for all take notice that the general price of meal this summer was £2 and some people sold at £2 5s per eight stone and the half of it barley meal, people I mean who had a large conscience.

This was a generally agreeable summer, excessive warm and dry all the summer months, There was a very light crop of hay and pastures upon dry soil was entirely burnt. Cattle fell extremely low in price of all descriptions. Hay was sold out of the cole a 1s 3d per stone in July and what was stacked was sold at 1s 6d to be delivered against Candlemass. Early barley was cut down in many places of the country before Lammas but on places where the ground was of a sandy bottom the crop was hastened and not so well filled as it appeared. In the middle of July new potatoes sold in Aberdeen at 1s 6d per pint and on the 24th of August they were advertised to be sold at 10d per peck. Corn on the ground sold in some places of the country at £2 per boll and upwards at appreciation. So short and thin was the general appearance of the crop and so little market for cattle, the apprehension of scarcity of fodder generally prevailed.

Harvest took place generally about the 1st of September, and the three first weeks of September was extremely fine. There was no rain or dew day nor night. After the equinox the weather turned rainy. This six months from the 22nd of March to the 22nd of September was the most serene, dry warm, agreeable weather that was of such a long duration since 1794. About the equinox new oat meal was selling in Banff at 2s and barley meal at 1s 4d per eight lb.; potatoes at 1s; beef from 2d to 4d; eggs, 6d; butter 1s 6d.

After the equinox the weather was, until the 14th of October, rain and frost alternately (or time about term as we term it), so that the corn that was early cut and standing in the stook turned black and began to grow, especially in the laich of Buchan where the rains it seems, were heavier than in this place. But against the 20th of October all the crop was got clean in, but in the Boyn they were not half harvested at that time owing to the cold soil which kept their crop green.

Parliament and the Scarcity.

So scarce was provisions (or rather so dear) that upon the 2nd of September a Common Council was held at London by the Lord Mayor and Eldermen petitioning the King to convene the Parliament sooner than usual in order to concert some means to alleviate the distress of the poor who were in the utmost difficulties for the necessaries of life, although the harvest was finished all over England against the middle of September.

A providential circumstance happened about Michaelmas. Cattle began to fall quicker than they had done for twelve months before. Although prices were not so high as in years past there was a tolerable demand, otherwise thousands would have inevitably perished for want of winter provisions. After the harvest owing to the rains and the heat that was in the earth, vegetation advanced as if it had been a new spring so that pasture was clothed with verdure and in many

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places cattle was better fed upon the fields at 1st of November than they were at Lammas. This is a paradox but a certain truth.

About the 1st of November a market began for raw oats at Banff at £1 10s per boll, indifferently dressed; mixed meal at £1 12s; best ditto for private families, £1 15s. In the market at Aberdeen oat meal sold generally at 2s 6d per 8lb.; in this place oats with fodder £2 6s, barley with fodder £2 10s, hay 1s 6d per stone.

Sunday 21st December, a proclamation was read in all Parish Churches by the King's Authority that all persons should abridge part of their daily allowance, that what was formerly the allowance of three persons should now supply four, that all pleasure horses should be supplied with hay and not allowed corn; in short, that all means should be used to preserve grain. On the 16th of December I witnessed a roup of grain at Todla where best oats sold at £3 7s per boll, Banff measure; and said day, £2 2s was promised for meal, mixed two part and third.

Coinage of Copper Coins.

There was this year something worth remarking. About eight years ago an act of Parliament passed that certain cities in Britain and several royal burghs should have a licence to coin copper in order to make the copper currency plenty besides the Royal Mint and every city and burgh impressed the coat of arms of their respective city or burgh and motto on their halfpence. So soon after, Edinburgh, Inverness, Leith, Liverpool, Coventry, etc., issued out their copper coins; in short there was current about the year 1798 upwards of 40 different copper coinages. Consequently a vast number of counterfeits was soon intermixed with this influx so some cities that had not erected a copper mint found fault with this multiplicity of copper currency. They rejected all except the old Mint halfpence and soon after the confusion prevailed to such a pitch that all the copper currency was utterly rejected; even the old Scotch halfpence that had passed currency for centuries and an entire new coinage took place. Before this there was no penny pieces.

1801 - This new century began upon Thursday with green, agreeable weather and ushered in with the union of Ireland to the British Empire in a strict and better constituted manner than in times past. Since the days of one of the English Henrys the title of King of France was annexed to the Kings of Great Britain but now for State reasons, too intricate for me to relate here, said title was laid aside and the title of "King of the United Kingdoms of Britain and Ireland" was constituted in its stead.

Although the three winter months was generally green, only some falls of snow which was but of short duration, none above three days at one time, yet the grain and fodder always augmented in price. On Friday the 16th of January, oat meal in the market of Aberdeen sold at 3s 2d per peck, barley ditto at 2s 1d, and in this parish oats with fodder, not of the best quality, sold at £3 12s and barley with fodder at £3 19s per boll.

Volunteer Forces.

There is something I shall relate here which I have hitherto omitted. About the year 1795 when the war was spreading over Europe like flames, our Government was alarmed with a report of the French invading this country month after month. It was advised in the Privy Council to arm all the young men that was fit to learn the military discipline, especially in the seaport towns, that if an invasion should happen the people might be in some measure prepared to defend themselves. Accordingly the generality of all men below 50 years of age in the seaport towns, both married and free, armed and were taught the military discipline. They paraded twice a week and got from Government arms and 2s of pay weekly. They also got from Government uniforms and colours.

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Their uniforms were blue with a red colour and trimmed at the hands and breast with red; somewhat like the uniforms worn by the train of Artillery. Not only the seaport towns but also in the inward parts did this new system of military prevail called volunteers, and all tradesman apprentices, farmers' sons, and labouring servants enlisted and were taught the use of arms. They had £5 str. Yearly from Government and once in three years a suit of new clothes. This prevailed more in Banffshire than in Aberdeenshire, and every year in the month of July they were reviewed by a General at some place where all the volunteers of one shire could with most convenience meet. I have seen 1200 reviewed in the parks of Boyndie all belonging to the shire of Banff and were allowed to go through all their evolutions and firings in as exact a manner as regular troops. Their use was chiefly to be ready upon call if any invasion or disturbance should happen, and supply the absence of regular forces when called abroad.

Another sort of military took place in the time of this war. In the Parliament of 1796 it was enacted that a militia should be raised for the internal defence of this country. Accordingly all the young men betwixt the age of 19 to the age of 23 were ordered to be reported from the baptismal records of the kirks and in Scotland there was reported of young men from 19 to 23 years of age, 24,500, out of which the Government enacted that 6000 should take arms during the war but not to go out of Scotland. Accordingly the sixth man including the above age behoved to go or find a substitute. Three thousand were drawn by lot in the month of July 1798 and next year a complaint was reported to the Court that the included age was too limited. The Act was amended and all the young men from 19 to 30 years were included in the second draught provided they had not three lawful children. This was at the time loudly complained of as an arbitrary like Act and was a means of disaffecting many otherwise well-meaning people to Government.

War Taxes.

Hitherto I have taken no notice of the taxes imposed in the time of this war. Although a number of taxes were laid upon superior ranks with which the lower classes were little affected, such as the hair-powder tax, armorial bearing tax, additional window duty tax, &c., &c., there was a tax laid upon all horses employed in husbandry, if above 13 hands high, of 2s each and as every man was desired to give in an account of the number of his horses, they gave it in partially. Some gave account of two who employed four and many were concealed and gave no account at all. So the sum expected by Government to arise from that resource fell infinitely below expectation. It was enacted in 1797 that all horses employed in husbandry or otherwise of such a height should pay yearly 6s each and all those paying for horses and not liable to window duty shall pay yearly 2s 6d for their house or lum. All this and many such like burdens were imposed upon the common people in the time of this horrid and distracted war.

I have mentioned nothing relating to the war since the expedition to Holland in 1799 which ended in an entire disaster. Next campaign the Austrians were less successful than in 1799 and the French regained in 1800 almost all the places they had lost in 1799. Those two mighty powers fought this campaign with undaunted valour and many a thousand were slain on both sides; nay, the slaughter was so great that both parties did boast and contend who had most slain as if it had been a banter to spill human blood. About the end of October there was a battle at a place called Hohenlinden where seventy thousand French fought with a superior number of Austrians complete three days without interval, where the Austrians were put to the worse. This battle may be said to finish the war between these two contending resolute powers and an Armistice was set about at the request of the Austrians, which terminated in a peace which was signed on the 9th of February, 1801, at a place called Lonvellie - this unhappy war which arose first between the above mentioned powers in 1793 and in which all the powers in Europe were more or less concerned and involved.

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This was the most agreeable winter that was since 1790. It was reported in the public papers that hay was made at Portsmouth about the middle of January. Be that true or not, sure I am that about that time hay sold here about 1s 8d per stone and I was credibly informed that in the parish of Boyndie it sold at 2s and in Moray it sold at 2s 6d per stone. The oat seed began about the 12th of March and all the land ploughed and in fine mould for the seed, and the weather was about that time exceeding agreeable and pleasant as could be expected or wished.

Upon the 14th of March there fell a storm of snow with frost and rain which interrupted the seed season until the 26th when it broke up agreeable. The first three days of April were so warm that cattle could scarce work. Upon the third, in the afternoon, being Good Friday, the heat contracted a cloud of thunder and lightning which produced a fine warm shower. Few instances of thunder so early could be instanced by the oldest people in our country.

Nelson at Copenhagen.

About the end of last year by the instigation of the French, all the powers in Europe conspired against Britain upon pretence that, they the British, assumed a sovereignty at sea over the rest of the European powers. The Emperor Paul of Russia formed a confederacy with Sweden and Denmark, his neighbours, to embargo and make prizes of all British ships and property in all their ports and elsewhere contrary to the laws of neutral nations. Consequently about the month of November, 1800, upwards of 300 British ships were detained in the Russian ports and all seamen made prisoners. Sweden and Denmark acted in conjunction with Russia. The Court at London saw that war was in a manner declared by the northern powers as well as the southern powers and as Admiral Lord Nelson was come to England it was advised to send him to the Baltic with a squadron of ships in order to demand restitution or try his fortune once more in the North seas as he had done in 1798 in the south seas. Accordingly he set sail to the Baltic with 22 sail of the line and other inferior frigates and fire ships, &c. He forced his way on the 30th of March down a narrow passage called the Sound of only three miles broad whilst a number of land batteries on both sides bore upon his ships with the utmost fury. Upon the second of April he stationed before the city of Copenhagen where he burnt and took almost the whole of the Danish fleet of 23 ships and frigates. He burned and took 18. He had in this enterprise 234 killed and 640 wounded.

Admiral Nelson declared that he had been in 105 battles but this one was the terriblest of them all. The Danes after their decks were swept of men, three times reinforced their ships with fresh men from the shore and for four hours from land batteries they bore upon the British ships with 150 from 32 to 40 pounders, with the utmost violence. The Danes had 1300 wounded but the account of their killed we got no report. The British took 2000 prisoners, all Danes, and had they not capitulate the city of Copenhagen had all been burnt as the British fleet threw a number of shells in to it. This brave Admiral, Horatio Nelson, long since lost his right arm and one of his eyes in his country's service, yet ventured to the Baltic once more to try his fortune and Providentially conquered the Danes in their own harbour.

The months of April and May were extremely pleasant and agreeable so that the crops advanced rapidly and was in every part of the country talked of to be the most promising that was remembered for many years past. About Whitsunday, oatmeal fell to 2s per peck which was thought a moderate price, and as there was a tolerable appearance of grass, cattle about the first of June sold at as high a price and as good a demand as was in 1795 and milk cows were higher priced by one-fourth part than they were ever seen.

Upon Monday the 8th of June there arose a north storm of wind and showers of hail which checked the progress of the crops. It continued until the 28th without interval. There was nothing like it since 1791 in that season; the grain, except upon fertile ground, turned yellow and the clover

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was withered and all pastures was changed from green to a russet, while the hay crop was much hurt by this severe cold drought and the victual advanced in price 4d per peck.

Hostilities in Egypt.

About the commencement of the year 1799 the celebrated French General, Bonaparte, by some means or other made his escape out of Egypt and returned to France where he made another new revolution and constituted himself by the title of First Consul. He in the year 1800 made several overtures for peace with the British but his terms were such as could not be accepted. He left in Egypt a considerable army of French troops, between fifteen and twenty thousand, who under the command of a General Moren fought with the Turks and thought to conquer Egypt and afterwards proceed to the British East Indy settlements to storm and take them. Our Cabinet well aware of their design, concerted a plan of an expedition to Egypt with about 14,000 of the best of the British troops in order to put, if possible a stop to these desperate veterans. One Ralph Abercrombie, a Scottishman, got the command of this expedition. They landed near a place called Ambuckar upon the 21st of March 1801, where as soon as they set a foot on land were attacked by the French army with the utmost vigour, both cavalry and infantry with a vast of field pieces of all descriptions. Our army, as in Holland in 1799, entered a hot and resolute battle as soon as they set a foot on land and notwithstanding all the valour of the French, the British army drove and beat them to a considerable distance that day, but with the loss of many a brave officer and soldier on both sides. On the 28th of March, the French attacked the British army by five o'clock in the morning with all their whole army, which it appears was the most resolute battle that the French had had experienced with the British all this war, for after all the exertions of Moren, the British fairly got the victory although the French were far superior in numbers, beside their cavalry. Vast was the slaughter of this battle on both sides and of all descriptions. Bonaparte had dignified a brigade or what we call a regiment with his own name and termed the Invincible. They broke several of our regiments with the bayonet until the 42nd Regiment or Royal Highlanders were ordered to sustain the shock who killed the last man of these called Invincible. The Invincible legion standard or colours were brought to London as a trophy. There were 48 of the 42nd regiment killed and 276 wounded but to the great regret of all the famous General Abercrombie got a wound which proved mortal against seven days after the battle.

About the eight of July the weather turned more agreeable, warm showers and mild, which continued until the first of September about which time the first of the barley was ready for reaping. This summer was generally dry, yet all vegetables thrived extremely well, turnips excepted. Corn sold upon the ground at the supposed rates of £1 15s per boll at an average although there was a general appearance of plenty of fodder as well as of grain. Cattle of all descriptions sold higher by at least one-fifth part than in 1795 owing to the scarcity of cattle and the appearance of winter provender.

Barley harvest began generally about the 25th of August and all was finished in this place against the end of September in fine condition; plenty of grain and plenty of fodder. Friday October 2nd, new oatmeal sold in Banff at 1s 4d per peck and barley meal at 9d per 8lb.

Upon the first day of October the preliminaries of peace was signed at London between France and the United Kingdoms of Great Britain, by one Otto in the name of the French people, and Lord Hawksbury in the name of the King of Britain. This change, although long in agitation, came unexpected to both nations in a sudden. Admirable indeed was this change. Instead of fighting and almost famine, in a sudden plenty and peace prevailed in its stead. All ranks were overjoyed with the news after so long a bloody war of eight years' and eight months' duration and so expensive to all denominations of people in the United Kingdoms.

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About the first of August, the price of meal was 2s 6d per 8lb. And little regard had to quality. At Hallowday best oatmeal was generally sold at 1s per 8lb, in the markets of Aberdeen and Banff and almost all cities and villages in the Kingdom.

Upon Wednesday the 11th of November there was a general thanksgiving for the good crop and fine year in all the kirks within the synod of Aberdeen, and also in all the Episcopal chapels in said diocese by orders of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Skinner.

This autumn was singular for fine weather. There was several reports in the public papers that in different parts of the country wild birds had laid eggs in October and I saw on the 4th of November in open fields several turnips shot and yellow flowers on the top of them as fragrant as it wont to be in the middle of May.

A New Turnpike.

There was this year something took place entirely new in this place. Two years ago a grant was obtained from the Government to make turnpike roads through the county of Aberdeen. Accordingly a new line of public road was begun between Banff and Turriff this year and was almost completed as far as Castleton and a new bridge was built this Autumn over the water at Castleton of a far greater elevation than the former bridge which was built thirty years ago by the same architect, James Robson, mason in Banff.

About the 26th of November the weather turned stormy with smart frost which continued until the 8th of December when three days of fresh weather entirely cleared off the snow. On the 11th there came a new storm from the north-west. Upon Sunday the 13th (being the third Sunday in advent) about a quarter before 11 o'clock in the forenoon we were alarmed with a flash of lightening from a cloud of sleet and hail. In a few seconds after, a loud peel of thunder succeeded; in less than three minutes after another more awful flash and immediately a tremendous clap of thunder as if a number of artillery had been discharged at once. This last shock struck upon the dwelling-house of William Nicholson, farmer in Easter Whiterashes, about a mile south-east of this. Providentially all the family were out except himself and his youngest daughter, a girl of about 17 years of age, who was in the kitchen. The lightning burnt her face, neck and arms in an affecting manner. The farmer was in a room about 40 feet from the kitchen. The shock drove all the wooden floor under him to splinters as also the ceiling above him in pieces. His left foot was hurt as the sole of his shoe fell off immediately. All his furniture was broke in pieces or removed from the place where it stood. The roof of his kitchen was blown up and what was not blown up continued to burn until it was extinguished by men's hands. His windows were all broke in bits and some of the frames were driven a considerable distance from the house and all was done and all silent in less than three seconds.

This storm continued during the remainder of the year. All highways were blocked up and no carriage could pass as the storm was generally deep, attended with penetrating frost.

About the middle of December a market for grain began at Banff at 1s 4d for each stone of barley and 1s for each stone of oats. The current prices of oatmeal at that time were 1s 2d per peck and 10d for barley, ditto.

1802 - The storm with which 1801 ended continued severe and intense until the 25th of January after which high winds succeeded which continued alternately with black frost until the 16th of March. The oat seeds began generally about the 22nd of March but in some places of the country the ploughing was not so well advanced as last year owing to the severe winter.

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Since Candlemass best oatmeal in the market of Aberdeen did not sell above 1s per peck, and barley meal 8d. Merchants' prices were 14s per boll for oatmeal and 14d for a stone of barley for the distills.

The Temporary Peace.

The Marquis of Cornwallis was sent over in great splendour from the British Court to a city in France called Amiens to settle a definite treaty with the rest of the European powers, who met there for that purpose. On the 27th of March 1802 the articles were signed by all the plenipotentiaries there present. They were 22 in number but too intricate to insert here; but in general they seemed more in favour of the British than might have been expected. The news arrived here on Friday the 2nd of April and there was a general rejoicing in all the great towns and villages for the happy return of the long-wished-for peace after so long and so bloody a war. His Majesty, by Royal Proclamation, ordered Tuesday the 1st of June to be a day of public thanksgiving in all churches and chapels within the United Kingdoms for the peace but on the account of the sitting of the General Assembly it did not hold in Scotland until Thursday the 17th.

All the spring was seasonable until the 12th of May when there came a storm from the north of snow which continued nine days with penetrating frost. It was as winter like as in January, the length of the day excepted. In some places of the country the snow lay 8 inches deep several days, and after said storm there came two weeks of excessive drought which almost perished the hay crop.

It was ordered in Parliament in 1801 to take particular account of all the people in Great Britain, male and female by number, and this summer the sum total was published in the Aberdeen Gazette. Ireland was not numbered but was supposed to contain upwards of four millions and including all the islands of British Empire was supposed to contain upwards of fifteen millions of people.

The summer months were cold and wet and the grass was most plenty on pastures about Lammas. Cattle sold all this summer at extraordinary high prices. Upon Friday the 10th of September there came a hurricane of wind with hail from the west which in many places did shake the bear and injure the oats and pease. Barley harvest began in this place in general about the 15th of September. By reason of the lateness of the harvest oatmeal began to sell at 18s per boll by retail and 16s 8d wholesale. This harvest, although late, was very agreeable and good, for against the 20th of October the greater part of the grain was yarded in fine condition. This crop was not so bulky as last year nor so well-filled but may be allowed to be an average one. The new toll road was opened past this place upon Monday the 11th of October and a toll bar erected at Turriff said day.

An Act of Parliament was passed this year that all men in Scotland (seamen excepted) from 18 to 45 years of age should be enrolled and 8000 of them drawn for a standing militia in Scotland. Those who had three lawful children and swore that they were not possessed of £50 str. Of personal property were exempted and all that were lame or had any bodily infirmity. 55 were drawn at Turriff upon Saturday the 19th of December for the parishes of Auchterless, Fyvie, Monquhitter, King-Edward and Turriff.

About the 1st of November the fine harvest weather changed to heavy rains. In many places in the high country more than the half of their crop was in the fields all that month of November and the greater part of it was rendered useless to man or beast. The weather turned favourable the 1st of December and continued seasonable to the end of the year. Cattle at the close of this year were 10

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per cent. higher than oldest man remembered; oatmeal 1s per peck retail and 15s 6d wholesale; barley 1s per stone, if lighter than 18 stone, 11d only, and dull sale in general.

1803 - January began upon Saturday with a violent storm of wind and rain from the east. It continued with little interval seven days and then from the same point sleet and wind succeeded. All the months of January and February and until the 17th of March were variable but noways unseasonable as field labour was generally carried on with some intervals of a week's frost now and then. The oat seed began generally about the 22nd of March as the weather about that time broke up very dry. About this time there was little or no sale for grain except to private families in towns or villages. The prices in general were from 14s to 16s for the very best oat meal and barley meal at 9s 6d per boll. Scarce any bigg or common bear would sell at any price as Government in April 1802 had almost made the duties on malt three times what they were before. Also they added to the duties on work horses 2s 6d so that every horse used in husbandry, if entered, and the owners rent amounted to £10, was now 12s 6d, and on every house with less than seven windows, 4s.

Wreck at Gamrie.

This seed time was singular for drought such as 1796. Upon Tuesday the 19th of April there blew a hurricane of wind from the west which did considerable hurt. It continued with little interval upwards of 30 hours. It tore the roofs of vast numbers of houses both in town and country. A fine ship from Newcastle coal load bound for Jamaica by the Pentland Firth was drove upon the rocks by west the kirk of Gamrie and all hands perished except one who was cast upon a rock. The crew were eleven in number and the vessel was all broke in pieces.

All the spring months were excessive cold winds and generally frost in the night. Consequently the hay crop was generally very light. Pastures were poorly clothed in June except where sheltered with woods. Notwithstanding, cattle always sold at advanced prices owing entirely to the still scarcity of them since 1799 and 1800. Milk cows, in particular, sold at above all precedent.

Upon Wednesday the 15th of June the toll bar was set up at this place and the first toll drawn upon the 16th.

It will seem strange in after times that war should commence so soon again after a peace of only 14 months. That restless bloody Bonaparte, Chief Consul in France, never satisfied that Britain should be sole masters of the ocean and enjoy a free and independent trade, begun in March this year to use the British Ambassador in a scurrilous manner and claim the island of Malta in the Mediterranean from the British contrary to the treaty of Amiens. Accordingly the matter was agitated between the two courts until the 5th of May when war was declared. The first expedition the French made was to Hanover which surrendered to them by capitulation upon the 12th of June. Accordingly Britain made great preparation to withstand the assault. The supplementary militia was called out, 4000 added to the 8000 drawn in December last for Scotland. 31 men were drawn for the Turriff district upon Monday, the 27th of June.

This summer was singular for drought especially the month of July. There was in some places of the country not a shower of any consequence for six weeks. Against the first of August there was a general scarcity of grass as all pastures except in low damp murages were as white as if burnt with fire; and a great part of the grain was whitened, both barley and oats. There was wells dry, the first of August that was not dry for fifty years before and the oldest man that was alive on Deveron banks declared he never saw it so low as at that season.

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Barley harvest began generally about the 25th of August. About this time all demand for cattle ceased on account of a general scarcity of grass. Oat meal sold about this time at £1 per boll.

The Threatened Invasion.

An Act of Parliament was passed July 6th that every man from 17 to 55 years of age should be enrolled to learn the use of arms as the French were making preparations in every seaport to invade Great Britain. Also an Act to draw 6000 more men between the age of 18 and 45 in Scotland, called army of reserve, those on whom the lot fell to go personally, or find a substitute or pay £20stg. which sum saved them only one year from a chance of being drawn a second time.

Upon Tuesday the 20th of September, I yarded the last of the crop and I impartially adjudge it to be one half of the bulk of a good crop and two parts grain of a good crop. So short was the generality of it that it would with the greatest difficulty bind or big, and at least one-fourth part of it, the grain, both barley and oats, upon shallow soils were burnt with heat and drought so that there was no victual in it. The same 20th of September was wind and rain from the east, the only shower of consequence we had seen for five months before.

After the said rain upon the 20th of September the weather turned dry and serene which continued until the 4th of November. So very dry was it that with the greatest difficulty mills could grind victual for present use, as in many places water was as scarce as in August. The month of November was seasonable until the 4th of December when there fell a great storm of snow with penetrating frost which continued 20 days. On Monday, the 19th, it blew a strong gale with drift from the south-east by means of which five ships were wrecked between Montrose and Newburgh, and few of the crews but perished. The remains of the storm thawed against the 24th and the last week of the year was green, pleasant and mild.

As I mentioned war with France, great preparations were made in all parts of the British Empire this autumn. Almost every village fitted out a number of volunteers for the defence of the country. Such a number of men in arms as was at the end of this year was not in all the British annals.

A General Fast.

His Majesty proclaimed a general fast to be observed by all the inhabitants of England and Ireland upon Wednesday the 19th and Scotland upon Thursday the 20th of October to implore the Divine protection and assistance against the most formidable armies that were convening at Brest and Boulogne and other parts of the French and Dutch ports, making preparation with the utmost exertion to invade Great Britain with upwards of 150,000 troops and were expected week after week since the first of November.

I forgot to hint that a lucky circumstance this autumn for the farmers happened when the extreme drought in July destroyed all the grass and rendered the grain extremely short of fodder. All market ceased for two months for cattle of all descriptions (except fat) yet in the end of September, cattle dealers from the south came to our markets and bought up a deal of lean cattle at one-third less price than what they would have given six month before. Many a farmer sold a fourth-part of his stock that he used to keep at reduced prices rather than let them die for want of fodder. Fat cattle continued scarce and dear all the winter. In December best oat meal sold at 18s per boll; barley, ditto at 11s; butter at 1s 3d per lb.; beef at 6d per lb.

1804 - This year commenced green. January and February were variable; no less than five storms of snow in the above two months but none of them above a week's duration. Grain of all sorts fell in value as the winter advanced. At Candlemass current prices for oat meal were 15s 6d and

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barley meal 9s 6d. The month of March was very inclement - rain, frost and sleet until the 29th at which time the first of the pease and oats were sown. All the month of April was inclement, frost, rain and sleet with little interval, but the month of May began with an extraordinary growth. The first week the grass was on some land in high order waving with the wind. It surpassed anything I ever remember in this season of the year.

A Cattle Ailment.

There was something very remarkable this spring, a disease among cattle, especially cows, of which vast numbers died. It seized them sometimes before and sometimes after calving. They generally turned stiff and lost the power of their limbs. Some of them died instantly, others struggled long but few of them recovered. About the first of May there was few towns but there was either some dead or in a dangerous way.

The three summer months were singular good and seasonable, especially May and July. Had not some frosts and drought in June checked the growth the crop would have been too rank. There was a general weighty crop of hay this year, far more so than any since 1798, and pastures in general were through all the summer season extremely fragrant. Notwithstanding the plenty of grass cattle sold very dull owing chiefly to want of money among dealers as the banks would give no credit but upon the best landed security.

It is a common observation that an inclement seed-time betokens a bad harvest, but this year proved quite the reverse. From the first of May to the conclusion of harvest which was in general about the 10th of October there was not an unseasonable day but three, viz., the 20th, 21st and 22nd of September, when there blew a strong wind from the north-west which in some situations of the country did shake a deal of oats, especially where showers of hail came. In short, there was no shake in this place until this year since the 9th September, 1781. But in general in this place the crop of all sorts was good; plenty of grain of all kinds and wholesome; plenty of hay and an abundant crop of all kinds, roots and garden fruits and want of nothing so much as thankful hearts to the bountiful Giver.

Although cattle this summer did not sell so high as last year, yet an unexpected market began for all sorts of grain about Martinmass. Barley sold at £1 5s; oats, 18s and old oats £1; oatmeal, £1; and all other sorts of grain in proportion. Upon the whole of this year, after an inclement seedtime, proved to be from the first of May to the end of December one of the most fragrant, fruitful and mild years which I have recorded. The farmer had plenty, and a good market; the labourer's wages afforded him all the common necessaries of life; (and except still threatened with invasion by a foreign foe) we wanted nothing.

A New Year's Day Eclipse.

1805 - This year began upon Tuesday with the singularity of a new moon and an eclipse upon the sun upon New Year's Day, and also the first year of the Golden number. The winter until the last week of January was fine, mild and seasonable, when a storm of frost and snow fell which continued until the 20th of February, but no ways the last ten days severe.

The prices of grain at Candlemass this year were oats 17s; barley or bigg without weighing, £1 6s 6d; oatmeal, 19s per eight stone.

Upon Thursday the 28th of February about 4 o'clock in the morning there arose a terrible hurricane of wind from the north-west which did great damage both by land and sea. It unroofed houses and levelled cornstacks in many places of the country. It was reported in one newspaper

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that there was none like it since 1773 in this place. It did not last above an hour otherwise the havoc would have been much greater.

The oat seed began about the 15th of March, the land in fine condition and the weather extremely pleasant, which continued until 22nd April when it changed to frost, sleet and rain, which checked every vegetable, especially the grass. This extreme cold unnatural weather continued with little interval until the 1st of July. Consequently, cattle sold at one-third cheaper than some years before.

July commenced and continued with the most fragrant growth; heat and thunder and rain daily and sometimes very weighty. The hay crop amended beyond all expectations. In a few days pastures also vegetated beyond all precedent. Oats came forward amazingly. Upon Monday morning the 5th of August there came from the south-east a violent storm of wind and rain which lodged a great part of the oats, not third shot at this time. The hay crop in general was lying in the bouts, some of it 15 days almost rotten; the peats also lying in the mosses in as bad condition.

The foresaid inclement weather continued with little interval until after the autumn equinox, when the barley harvest commenced. This harvest turned out (after so inclement a summer) far beyond expectation. The weather for three weeks was dry, pleasant and serene. In short, all in this place was safely secured by the 25th of October. The bear or bigg was in general uncommonly bad but the oats was above an average crop, and a more bulky crop in general was not for twenty years past. Potatoes, turnips and all sorts of roots were extremely good, but garden fruits were bad in quality and scarce.

Trafalgar.

I have taken no notice of the war since autumn, 1803. Until now little worth recording has transpired. The extraordinary armies and fleets at Boulogne always threatened to invade our country until August this year. The Corsican Usurper, Bonaparte, was with great solemnity crowned at Paris Emperor of France on Sunday the 2nd of December 1804 by his holiness Pope Pius the Seventh. Last year the British Cabinet expostulated with the Spanish Court for aiding and assisting Bonaparte with men and money contrary to former treaties, but the Spaniards not being able to resist, or being tributaries in a manner to the French by former treaties, our Court declared war with Spain as well as France. Consequently, France and Spain joined in combination against Great Britain in an association offensive and defensive. The French had a large fleet at Toulon in the Mediterranean which the famous Admiral Nelson watched the two by-past years and stormed in at Toulon. The Spaniards fitted out a formidable fleet at Cadiz and in April this year, 1805, Admiral Nelson's fleet was by an extraordinary gale of wind driven off their station to the Sardinian coasts. The French fleet took the opportunity of his absence and got down the Straits of Gibraltar and was joined with the Spanish fleet of Cadiz.

This combined fleet set sail to the West Indies to surprise and take the British colonies and settlements there. Lord Nelson as soon as informed set sail after them and chased them through most of the American coasts but never got sight of them as they fled from port to port when they heard that he was pursuing them. The combined fleet returned to Europe and Nelson always at their heels but never within a week's sailing of them. On their return, Robert Calder, Admiral of the Channel fleet, fell in with them and gave battle and took two of them, but they escaped into Cadiz again to take breath.

Admiral Nelson watched the port of Cadiz with great attention. Upon Monday the 21st of October, the spy ship advertised Lord Nelson that the combined fleets were out and intended going up the Straits. They consisted of 18 French and 15 Spanish ships of war, all of first rates. Admiral Nelson

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came up with them opposite a place called Trafalgar on the south of Spain with 27 British ships opposed to 33 where was the terriblest battle as by its consequences will be recorded in the British annals to the end of time. Twelve of said combined fleet were captured by the British fleet and the French Admiral, Villeneuve, taken as also the Spanish admiral, Don Alvia, who died soon after he was taken. But to the great regret of all true British subjects the famous, and ever to be lamented Lord Horatio Nelson was killed about the middle of the action with a musket ball through his body. The battle began at 12 at noon and lasted four hours. The ship that opposed the brave Nelson carried 136 guns and contained 1600 men. She was called the Sanctissima Trinidad. She struck her colours a few minutes before Admiral Nelson expired and soon after sunk with all her crew of 1600 men.

So much is said in praise of Admiral Nelson that it is not for me to add anything, but what will be allowed by all is that he was in all respects the bravest admiral that ever lived. He had only completed his 47th year and had been in the navy since his 12th year. After the battle of the Nile in 1798 his Majesty dignified him with a coat of arms peculiar to his services and it was attested in the rolls of the Admiralty at that time that he had been in 120 honourable achievements. Since that time he has fought the battle of Copenhagen in 1801, he has delivered the West Indies, and last of all destroyed the combined fleets.

Rear-Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood took the charge of the British fleet after Lord Nelson fell, and his returns of killed and wounded aboard our fleet amounted to 1587 inclusive. The carnage aboard the combined fleets was not known but Collingwood reported that he had in custody 16,000 prisoners of French and Spanish and 1700 pieces of cannon. All the wounded of the enemy he sent ashore to the Governor of Cadiz who received them gratefully.

On the 6th of November, Admiral Richard Strachan, a Scotsman, fell in with and took four of the fugitive ships who fled on the 21st of October. He chased them three days and brought them to an engagement. They had a Spanish admiral who was wounded at the commencement of the action. Before the last ship struck she has 365 men killed aboard. Admiral Strachan had in this battle 24 men killed and 111 wounded. These four ships who were entirely new were brought to Plymouth in great triumph.

For the above glorious victories, his Majesty proclaimed a public thanksgiving to Almighty God to be solemnised in all churches and chapels throughout the United Kingdom upon Thursday the 5th of December, and on said day a collection was made in all religious assemblies for the benefit of the widows and fatherless and the wounded who had fallen in these glorious achievements of war. Never, I think, was an order proclaimed in my day more punctually attended to than this was by all ranks and denominations of people throughout the United Kingdom. At Lloyds coffee house in London, it was reported in the public papers, that against ten days after the proclamation no less a sum was subscribed by individuals than £158,343 5s 10d and 21,000 three per cent, consolidated annuities. The collections in all parish churches and chapels in this country exceeded anything of the kind ever remembered.

The extraordinary fine weather that broke up at the autumnal equinox continued in all respects mild, warm and dry and pleasant until the 12th of December when there came from the north a sudden and penetrating storm of wind and snow which continued five days. Afterwards the weather turned more mild which continued to the end of the year.

1806 - The mild weather with which last year ended continued until the 25th of January when there came a deep and penetrating storm of snow which blocked up all communication for eight or ten days. Afterwards it thawed by degrees upon high situations but about the middle of February more than a third of the snow was lying in low grounds. As there was last year so plentiful a crop of

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all kind of grain south and north so the market all this winter was extremely dull. At Candlemass none was shipped off and but few merchants in the way of buying. Current prices were best oatmeal, 16s; barley, ditto; oats, 1s per stone; and barley that season could find no merchant.

Bonaparte's First Truce.

I shall here take notice of the circumstance which at this time affected the country not a little. During the year 1805 our British Cabinet used every argument and persuasion with the foreign powers, viz. Austria, Russia, and Prussia, to unite and take up arms against the growing intrusions of the French Emperor, Bonaparte. Accordingly they succeeded so far that against the month of August, 1805, the Emperor of Germany took the field with 80,000 men. At the same time, Alexander, Emperor of Russia, came to Germany with an equal number. But for all the rhetoric of words and temptation of money, Prussia kept neutral. About the end of August, 1805, the great French army that had lain at Boulogne two years waiting an opportunity to cross the Channel and invade Britain was called off to Germany and all the French forces that could be raised in France went and also the French army that had invaded Hanover was called to Germany and the invincible Bonaparte at their head. At the same time 15,000 of the choice of all the British troops and 6000 cavalry were sent over to assist in the common cause. Bonaparte, aware of this combination, marched his army, consisting 'twas said of 140,000 strong, to the place of action, and gave battle to the Austrians before the other two powers were come. He, after several skirmishes with one, Mack, an unskilful general of the German army, captured all his remaining forces to the amount of 60,000 men and sent them to France to cultivate the fields as slaves. This happened October 23rd, 1805. Soon after the Russians arrived and the great Emperor, their master, at their head. When the French and Russian armies met they fought three days successively with horrid slaughter on both sides. The Emperor of Russia's troops were worsted the first day but the second day the Emperor in person mounted horse and cheered his troops who broke the French armies with the bayonet, and 'twas reported that they devoured that day 18,000 French with cold iron. This happened about the 26th of November, 1805. The third day, Bonaparte demanded a truce which 'twas said was the first he ever asked in his life. Soon after the Austrians clapt up a peace but Bonaparte entered the city of Vienna in triumph and all Germany fully conquered, the Russians were allowed three weeks to march off the German Empire, and our British armies (after a terrible storm upon the coasts of Holland where a great number of men and horses and ships were wrecked and captured) arrived in Hanover.

This dismal news came to Britain at the same time Mr Wm. Pitt, who had been Prime Minister twenty years before and was said to be the ablest statesman in Europe, died on the 23rd January, 1806. All this just together (no doubt) put a damp upon the face of British affairs at this time. His Majesty, who always put his trust in Providence, proclaimed a general fast and day of humiliation to be strictly observed in England and Ireland on Wednesday the 26th of February and in Scotland on Thursday the 27th to implore divine protection upon our armies and fleets and restore peace to our country.

The first week of March was extremely pleasant but on Sunday, the 9th, there came a violent storm of wind and snow from the north-west. The storm of snow continued till after the equinox. Afterwards the weather continued raw and hazy so that no oats were sown sooner than the 1st of April, and the land but in a very wet condition at that time. This inclement weather continued until the 12th of May. Afterwards there was ten days of hot weather which raised grass and made an excellent barley season.

About the middle of April there came a little more demand for grain. As the Baltic trade was stopped on account Prussia had declared war against Britain by influence of Bonaparte, oats sold at 1s 2d per stone, and best barley at one guinea per boll. Oats in general was worth 17s 6d to

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18s per boll all the month of May. This summer there was a great quantity of old grain owing to the abundant crop last year. Cattle sold well in May, but owing to drought in June, markets were on the decline in July. The hay crop was much lighter than last year. In July oats sold at 18s 6d and potato oats (which about this time took place here) was worth £1; best oatmeal £1. About the 10th of July the weather changed from drought to rain in an extraordinary manner. Such awful thunderings and torrents of rain as fell in July and August the oldest people scarcely remembered; not only in this place, but as the public papers reported, over the most part of Britain. As the weather was always warm an unexpected rank crop of grain arose but against the 24th of August a deal of it was lodged and although grass was plenty, black cattle was dull on account that there was all the three summer months speculations of making peace with Bonaparte as all the European Powers, Britain excepted, had done. Notwithstanding all the tremendous thunderings and floods of rain the crop came forward in an unexpected manner. Barley harvest began in general against the 12th of September and against the 15th of October all the harvest in this place with a few exceptions was finished. Such a fine dry harvest was not for many years. The grain of all kinds was excellent, perfectly ripened and win to perfection and in general in this place bulky. These two years, 1805 and 1806, were most alike in the summer and harvests of any I have recorded. For the late abundant harvest the Synod of Aberdeen ordered a general thanksgiving in their bounds to be kept upon Wednesday the 12th of November, which was observed by all denominations in this northern district. About this time, old oats sold at Banff at £1 per boll.

An Abortive Conference.

As I hinted that proposals of peace with the French last summer were in agitation, the Earl of Lauderdale was sent over to Paris in June to treat with that power on permanent peace, but returned in October unsuccessful, as the French articles were what our kingdom could by no means comply with. Consequently the war was continued.

I observed last year that Bonaparte conquered Austria. He made it his business this summer to new mould into petty kingdoms all the empire of Germany and gave then to his brothers and friends, but all of them subject to himself. Accordingly parceling out his acquisitions and new divisions in those countries where his victories made him arbitrary, he parceled out a large division of the Kingdom of Prussia to one of his vassals although that monarch had always observed the strictest neutrality with him to the great loss of all the other European powers.

Accordingly, after expostulating with him for his breach of good neighbourhood (as I shall term it) both parties, irritated at each other, took the field to end the quarrel with the sword. The Prussians, a brave and warlike people, were arduous to fight, as all 13 years of war in Europe they had been silent spectators. Accordingly about the end of September the invincible Bonaparte set out from Paris to try his fortune with a nation noted for valour about 46 years ago. He entered their territory with, 'tis said, 200,000 troops. Frederick came to meet him with 150,000 arduous to engage. After skirmishing some days with various success, both grand armies met in a place called the plains of Wiemar on Tuesday the 14th of October, Bonaparte at the head of his army and the King of Prussia in person at the head of his army where the bloodiest battle was fought that had been for a century,

1807 - [The two pages of the diary that follow have unfortunately got torn and we are unable to reproduce the writer's account of the meeting between the Prussians and Bonaparte's army nor his description of the year 1807 with which the manuscript of the diarist's first volume ends.]

Whins as Cattle Food.

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1808 - The first 15 days of January were tolerable. Afterwards frost and sometimes drifting snow succeeded which continued during the remainder of January and all the month of February. The snows were not deep but the ploughing was always retarded by intense frosts. Since 1800 the ploughing was not so far behind as it was this year at the beginning of March and what added the more to this circumstance fodder was in general scarce and dear. Candlemass prices were in this district as follows:-oats, with fodder, £2 2s per boll; bear, ditto., £2; merchant meal, 8 stone, with no scruple what extent of mixture, £1 5s; potato oats, clean, £1 5s; common oats, £1 1s; bear without fodder, £1 5s; potatoes, £1 per boll, and, retail, 2s per peck; butter, per lb, of 24 oz., 1s 6d; clean oatmeal, £1 10s, but little of it to be found, the oat crop being in general very defective especially in the Western counties. More whins was used here this season for cattle by people who were scarce of animal provisions than had been used any season since 1779, as hay was 1s 2d per stone.

March began serene and mild and continued so the first 15 days. Some people that had got their ploughing advanced sowed a great part of their oats the said 15 days, but the last two weeks of March turned very inclement with frost and sometimes drifting snow so that the oat seed season did not commence in general sooner than the 4th of April. On Saturday April 16th the snow drifted the whole day so that the next town was scarcely seen. In Marnoch parish and in Banff parish before this date a considerable number of black cattle had died for want of fodder, a circumstance I never before remembered so near this place. It was owing entirely to the neglect of their owners as there was no want of fodder, although dear and perhaps at a distance. I shall add that this storm continued in the most dreadful manner until the 25th of April. The snow was so deep that it was reported in one newspaper that the mail was stopped on the turnpike road within four miles of Montrose from the 6th of September last year to the first of May. We had seen nothing but stern winter eight long months. The oats sown the first week of March had shown no braird the first week of May, nor at that date was the oat seed near concluded. The last week of April was cold, frost, wind and as little appearance of grass as in January.

No Fodder for Cattle.

In this week there arose an extraordinary cry for animal provisions as the oldest man in this place ever recollected. Many extensive farms had not a week's provender and many more had none at all. People came 20 miles distant and purchased oats with fodder, not of the best quality, at £2 10s per boll; bear, with ditto, £2 15s. In four days there was not a stone of hay to spare but was sold within 30 miles at 1s 2d, 1s 4d, and some took 1s 6d per stone. Stots that about 12 years ago would draw £9 was cheerfully parted with at £4 10s per head, and cows still less in value, although butter sold at 1s 7d per 24 ounces. The 30th of April, oatmeal sold in Banff at £1 12s per eight stone, and barley meal at £1 1s 4d.

Upon the 26th of April the snow thawed and all the rivers and rivulets swelled to a great size which flooded all the haughs and low lands and swept off both soil and seed, but what was more awful, numbers of cattle came down the Deveron dead for hunger or distress many more came down the Spey as it was reported that there was few farmers in that Western districts but lost some cattle. After so disastrous and so distressing a season I would hint a caution to all farmers and ground labourers never in times of plenty to abuse or 'wantonly destroy fodder, for it is the first and staple article for making dung. In times that it is in plenty it is in general little regarded but as it is every third, and at longest every fourth year always needed; so of course it should never be abused, for no commodity, I observe, when plenty is so little regarded, so when it is scarce no produce in our country is of more value.

I shall conclude the history of this dismal season with transcribing a paragraph from one newspaper of date May 4, 1808:-

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"Many of the farmers in this country particularly in the Highland districts, have been reduced to the greatest distress for want of fodder for their cattle from the uncommon severity and length of the past winter. A vast number of cattle have died in the Highlands and a few in the low country. No less than 47 carcasses which had been thrown into the Spey were carried down at one time. We are sorry to add that this calamity is general over all the Highlands in many parts of which fodder is not to be had at any price, so that black cattle and sheep are dying in hundreds; nor is there any prospect of immediate relief, the internal parts of the country being completely covered with snow."

The Justiciary Court which sat at Inverness the 25th of April, the Lords of Session could not penetrate through the high road from Inverness to Perth for deep snow. They were under the necessity of returning round by Aberdeen.

The month of May commenced and continued serene and mild. A more pleasant May was not since 1784. But as the grass grew it was immediately eat up to save the cattle alive, so that little could be preserved for hay. At Whitsunday, prices for victual were - oatmeal, £ 12s per boll; mixed, half oats, half bear £1 8s 6d; bear 2s per stone; bear meal £1 1s 4d. Many extensive farms after sowing had little to mill. I shall again transcribe a hint from a newspaper of date June 1st, 1808 - "In a letter from a correspondent at Caithness that on three small farms alone, nor exceeding a square mile in extent, in the parish Latheron not less than 184 black cattle besides a number of horses had died for want." Another paragraph of the same date says - "We have of late had repeated occasions to call the attention of our readers to the lamentable scarcity of corn which at present prevails in some northern districts. It is with pain we now mention that this dreadful scarcity has risen to so alarming a degree that in many parishes of Inverness and Ross-shires the inhabitants are reduced to a fortnight's consumption and unless something is speedily done for their relief numberless families must leave the country or starve."

Against the middle of June meal with a considerable part of mixture was sold in quantities in Banff at £1 15s per boll and some bolls of clean oatmeal, £2. All the month of June and until the 17th of July was drought and heat. Pastures were parched and cattle as cheap at Aiky Fair as at Whitsunday.

A Warm July.

In the London newspapers of date July 21 a paragraph was inserted - "On Wednesday last the 13th current at Hull, in York, the heat was so intense that the thermometer was at 93 in the shade and in the sun at 125. Five or six labourers in the field dropped dead in the vicinity. Several others in the neighbourhood were hurt by the heat. Dogs and lambs fell victims to it; birds dropped dead in the streets; the honey in some bee-hives melted and ran out upon the ground and most of the bees were drowned." At Aberdeen it was observed that the same day the thermometer was 13 degrees in the shade and 19 in the sun above what was remembered. In short there was not such a hot July since 1770 in this northern country.

Barley harvest began in general about the 22nd of August, although in some early situations some oats and barley were cut before the 12th. After Lammas, cattle began to be a little more in demand, although prices were always low. Victual, too, fell at Lammas 6s per boll in one week with the prospect of the new crop. The heat and rain continued until the 15th of September. Afterwards good harvest weather began. The harvest ended almost with the month of September and a tolerable bulky crop of fodder; but the grain was generally light and badly filled. It was difficult to give a reason for the deficiency of both barley and oats for from the 17th of July to the equinox no man ever recollected such a heat and growth. Pastures was far more clothed with grass at Michaelmass than they were at the middle of July. This fine weather did continue until the 16th of

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December when there came a storm of snow with which the year concluded. This fine weather put forward all field labour as there was not such a continuation of a green agreeable autumn since winter 1790. About Martinmass at a market for oats began at Banff at £1 1s per boll, and clean oatmeal sold £1 4s per boll, retail 1s 7d per peck. But prices of cattle far below years past; best beef, 4d per lb, and a deal of the inferior quality, 3d About Christmas - butter, 1s 5d in quantities, 1s 6d in the market. Turnips was in general a good crop but potatoes exceeded any year I have recorded both for bigness, richness and fine flavour. Current price - 10s 6d per boll or 8d the peck by retail.

The Peninsular War.

At the expiry of last year I hinted that Bonaparte out of contempt of Britain had laid an embargo upon all the commerce of Europe. He also sent an order to the Prince Regent of Portugal to raise an extraordinary levy of money to support his armies, which that Prince was unable or unwilling to do and refused. Bonaparte immediately sent an army of 150,000 who marched through Spain to Portugal to enforce his tyrannical injunctions on that Prince. The Prince Regent, hearing of this extraordinary army of French veterans coming to invade his country, immediately convened all the fleets and transports he could muster and set sail to his dominions in South America, called the Brazils, and a great part of his Court and nobility accompanied him. The foresaid French army came to Portugal and finding no opposition as the King was gone they insulted and tyrannised over the inhabitants in a manner too shocking to relate by plundering and imprisoning and torturing such as they thought ill affected to them. This happened in the end of 1807.

The Portuguese and Britain was at peace at this time but Spain and Britain was formally at war by the influence of the great usurper and tyrant, Bonaparte. The foresaid mighty conqueror, not satisfied with the old Royal Family of Spain, he deposed them in March 1808 and sent his brother Joseph Bonaparte to be crowned King of Spain and form a new constitution in that ancient kingdom. Spain and Portugal at this time were strongly garrisoned with French armies. The generality of the people of Spain not willing to see their old Royal Family so ill-used and disgraced, and being daily oppressed with French cruelties and depredations, and hearing of Joseph Bonaparte's coming to Madrid to be crowned on such a day, the inhabitants of Madrid broke out in a great tumult on the 18th day of May this year against the French garrison in Madrid and great numbers were killed and wounded on both sides. This insurrection continued several days and murders, massacres and pillaging was terrible. The French at last got the better of the inhabitants and on the 26th of May executed six hundred of the chief inhabitants of the city of Madrid in the public streets. Joseph Bonaparte came to Madrid about the 12th of June but finding an unwelcome reception by the populace in general he stayed only a few days and returned the road that he came.

The foresaid riots at Madrid irritated the Spanish nation in general against the French tyranny; the populace took to arms and resolve to drive the French out of their country or perish in the attempt. Two first-rate noblemen were sent from the Spanish patriots (as they called themselves) to Britain to implore help and make a definite peace with Britain. Immediately the British Cabinet complied with their request and promised them all the aid of money and men they could spare. But it was thought most advisable to send the British forces to Portugal first and help the deserted people in that Kingdom and make Gibraltar the chief rendezvous of the British army. Accordingly, about Lammas, 40,000 British troops were embarked for the continent once more with a vast number of artillery and cavalry. They succeeded so well that against the end of September they after several bloody engagements with the French assisted by the inhabitants drove the French out of Portugal. But one Hugh Dalrymple, the British general made a very dishonourable treaty with the French, with one Junot, the French governor in Lisbon, capitulated and retired home. Bonaparte, hearing what was going on in Spain and Portugal went to Eurfurth and met Alexander the Russian

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Emperor and settled matters with him to keep the peace in the north until his return. He set out from Paris about the 1st of November with, it was said, 300,000 at his back to cross the Pyrenees and crown his brother Joseph king of Spain and retake Portugal. The British armies entered Spain about the end of November and fought several battles with parties of the French troops. Bonaparte reached Madrid on the first day of December. He immediately summoned that great city to capitulate or take the consequences. A strong army being in the city they refused. He immediately erected a battery and bombarded it and made such a breach in one day that a thousand Spaniards were killed in a few hours defending one breach. The Spaniards immediately capitulated and the Conqueror entered Madrid in triumph on the 6th of December. On the 7th, he published a manifesto to the people of Spain, "That as they refused his brother to be their king he would take the crown of Spain upon his own head and he would cause it to be respected by the wicked, for God, said he, has given me strength and inclination to surmount all obstacles."

Battle of Corruna.

1809 - After this Invincible Conqueror had settled a garrison in Madrid, he lost no time in pursuing the British army who were in the interior of Spain. With an immense army, he, by forced marches, came within a few days' march of them (who when they heard of his success at Madrid, retired as expeditious as possible to the sea on the north of Spain to embark again for England). Our armies came to the sea coast on the 11th of January after a terrible march in mountains in the depth of winter. Unfortunately for them the English transports were not at the place where they chanced to come to the sea. On the 13th of January, Bonaparte's advanced posts overtook them waiting the transports. Our troops drove them in all directions with the bayonet. But soon after his main force appeared who, it was said, covered the country on the 16th of January. At a seaport called Corruna, the French and British fought a desperate and bloody battle. It was said in our journals that the British defeated the French but there is a great difference between a defeat and a defence. The sea was on one side of the British and Bonaparte's immense army on the other. Consequently the conflict must have been terrible. Our troops, no doubt, fought with enthusiasm and defended themselves beyond all that could have been expected considering the great inferiority of numbers they had to oppose the French. The battle began at eleven before noon and continued until want of light gave the British an opportunity of embarking as the transports were come into the bay in the time of the action.

The carnage was terrible. The Commander in Chief, Sir John Moore, a Scotsman, was killed; the Second-in-Command, Sir David Baird, lost one of his arms; upwards of 40 officers of rank were killed and many more wounded. The slaughter among the privates was deplorable; for instance, it was reported that one full regiment came off with only 20 men and their colours. Of 6000 cavalry who went over to Spain, the returns were only 850; upwards of 5000 died or were destroyed at Corruna. When the remainder of the troops embarked all their baggage was lost, and in short everything that could not be put on board at midnight in the greatest confusion. It was said with the greatest confidence that whatever slaughter was in the French army that upwards of 9000 brave British troops fell below the walls of Corruna, and if this was defeat, I leave it to posterity to judge. All that survived this dreadful battle came home, and vast numbers died of wounds and fatigue at sea, and after they came home numbers died in hospitals. In Portsmouth and Plymouth the hospitals were crowded and doctors were called to assist from most towns in England.

Macduff Harbour Frozen Over.

The storm of snow which began on the 16th of December continued with little interval until the 15th of February this year. From the 15th to the 26th of January there was the most intense frost that has been since the year 1740. Some gentlemen that had been in Norway and in Canada

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affirmed that the frost here at the time above mentioned was as severe as ever they felt it at Bergen or Quebec. A native in Macduff, ninety years of age, declared he never saw the water in the harbour of Macduff frozen but in 1740 and 1809. In short, the frost in January was as extraordinary as the heat was in July, 1808.

Candlemass prices of grain at Banff were as follows:- common oats, without fodder, £1 2s; potato oats, £1 5s; oatmeal, £1 8s; merchant meal, mixed two part oat and one part bear, £1 5s 6d; hay 1s 3d per stone. Little grain with fodder to sell as for some years past the custom with displenishers was to roup their crop in the ground. But such as was sold in the Laich of Buchan in January was at the exorbitant price of £2 10s per boll, and in this place in the extreme time of the storm, £2 5s; and in the beginning of March it fell to £2 and £1 15s. Hay fell to 1s per stone against the middle of March, although at Candlemass it cost 1s 4d.

The month of March began and continued dry and pleasant, yet the generality of farmers in this place did not sow oats sooner than the 20th of March. Those that were active and got all their oats sown against the 25th of March employed a good season. But afterwards until the 10th of May it was almost frost, sleet, or wind daily so that many people that began to sow the 15th of March had not their oat seed all sown the first week of May. Consequently animal provisions sold again at the Candlemass prices and with difficulty could be procured about the first of May.

Cattle began this spring to sell at a fourth part higher prices than the two by-gone years, although grass in this place at the first of June had no better appearance than in the two years by-past. In June oat victual sold at £1 8s per eight stone, and mixed ditto at £1 5s; butter 1s for 24 oz. The three summer months of this year were extraordinary for rain and growth. About Lammas the fields were in general covered with the weightiest crop of grain, especially oats, that was for twenty years past. Pastures were excellent and cattle sold as high at Lammas as in 1795. Dealers that bought cattle in April against Lammas got a third more and some doubled the price; horses and sheep still more in value in proportion.

Local Militia.

In the end of the session of Parliament, 1808, an act was passed that all young men from the age of 18 to 30 should take up arms 28 days and be gathered to the county towns and seaports to learn the military discipline and receive £2 sterling of listing money and clothes from Government. They were called the Local Militia. The 25th of June this year they convened for the first time and it was reported that from the said 25th of June to the 25th of July that in England and Ireland, said month, that no less than 154,000, and in Scotland 41,000 of youths were under arms learning to defend their country.

At the commencement of this year that ancient and brave people the Austrians once more took the field in order to rescue themselves from their oppressor, Bonaparte. Accordingly they collected a vast army on the Danube near Vienna. The Great Usurper also convened an immense army of his vassals and conscripts as they were called. After various skirmishes with much blood shed on both sides both armies met at a village called Aspern, near Vienna, on the banks of that great river, the Danube. They fought the 21st and 22nd of May where the Archduke Charles defeated Bonaparte, where he is obliged to re-cross the Danube on the 23rd and leave the field of battle to the Austrians. The carnage must have been deplorable for the Austrians declared that, not to mention the numbers of killed, they picked up no less than 6000 wounded French on the field of battle.

News of this victory came to Britain. Immediately they mustered out an expedition that, it was reported, its like never went out of Britain. All the possible troops were collected at the ports of

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England. Upwards of 45,000 regulars and 5000 artillery with the most of all the heavy ordnance in the nation, 34 ships of the line and frigates and fire ships and transports to the number of 300 set sail from Ramsgate about the middle of July and left the fore mentioned Local Militia and Regular Militia to keep the country. But before this expedition reached their destination news of a different turn came to Britain.

Bonaparte had collected 200,000 French and allies from his conquered countries and the German likewise were as active in convening from all parts of their ancient empire all the forces they could possibly draw together. These two armies of 400,000 met at a place called Wagram on a field planned out for the purpose where they fought with great vigour on the 6th, 7th, and 8th of June, where the Austrians were totally defeated by Bonaparte with the loss of 20,000 prisoners. It was called a battle memorable in which from three to four hundred thousand men and from twelve to fifteen hundred pieces of cannon contended for the greatest interests. The number of Austrians killed are not ascertained, but the French gave out that they picked up 12,000 wounded on the field of battle and near 400 officers. The consequence was the Austrians were forced to ask an armistice of Bonaparte which ended in a dishonourable peace. The grand expedition sent from Britain in a few days arrived at and laid seige to the island of Welcheron in the mouth of the Scheldt which soon surrendered to this extraordinary army and navy. They next proceeded to Flushing, which after two days bombardment surrendered next. But soon after they were in possession of these places an epidemical fever began among the troops which was ten times more fatal than the taking of both garrisons. For upwards of a month, from 15 to 20 died daily in each regiment, so that after settling governors and troops to keep them, the rest made all speed imaginable to return to their native country, leaving, it was said, 15,000 dead or sick behind them.

A Royal Jubilee.

The rain and fragrance of this summer continued until the equinox. About the 15th of September people in general began to cut barley. Against the 1st of November the harvest with few exceptions was concluded in dry situations. This crop exceeded for bulk any I ever saw. Some old people concluded that there was not such a general full crop in this place since 1750. The month of October and until the 15th November was dry, serene and pleasant, so much so that the bees wrought as in the month of May and flowers budded and vegetation of all kinds was fragrant, and the peats was drier, and more of them was led from the mosses after harvest, than before harvest.

On Wednesday the 25th of October his Majesty, George the Third, entered upon the fiftieth year of his reign. A Jubilee was holden on that account in all the cities and great towns in Britain and Ireland. On that day public worship was solemnised and in almost every town and village public entertainments was prepared and attended by magistrates and clergymen of all denominations. Prisoners for debts were released and vast collections were made for the poor. It was a singular occurrence a king to reign 50 years, but more remarkable that since 1788 all the sovereign princes in Europe were dead, murdered, or deserted or assassinated or poisoned, George of Great Britain only excepted, at the time this Jubilee was solemnised.

Nor can I help observing at this period, as I recollect the day of his Majesty's coronation as well as the day of the Jubilee of the commencement of his 50th year, the extraordinary alteration of this place in the country to the better in this reign. Notwithstanding the enormous amount of taxes, the opulence, grandeur and value has risen in proportion. I dwell in the same house my father dwelt in at the present king's coronation and I pay more than one guinea annually of taxes for each shilling my father paid, and yet I have a far better livelihood and more than five times the value he ever possessed.

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At this jubilee the British Isles in general concurred in addressing his Majesty in the highest flow of words. Cities, burghs, corporations, societies, presbyteries and all denominations of British subjects vied with each other in high commendations of his present Majesty's paternal and mild reign.

From the 15th of November to the 15th of December the weather was in general frost and very inclement. The last fifteen days of this year was uncommonly pleasant, green, mild and serene; plenty of provisions to man and beast and no general calamity complained of.

1810 - Until old Candlemass the winter was uncommonly mild. On said day a storm of snow fell accompanied with frost but of no great severity, which continued all the month of February.

Candlemass prices of grain in this place were as follows :- best oats, with fodder, £1 4s; best oatmeal, £1 2s 6d; barley meal, 15s; merchant meal, mixed with only of fifth part of bear and four parts of oats, £1; hay, 7d per stone. It is worth remarking that an average of the country at large at Candlemass this year there was as much animal provisions in the stackyard as was at Hallowday any of the two years by-gone. Butcher meat was from 5d to 8d per lb. and cattle of all descriptions were at as high prices as in 1795; horses dearer than ever known.

It has been observed by old people that a fair January and a fair month of March was never seen in one year. It held good this year for all the month of March was either frost or sleet. Some people sowed the last three days of it but the season did not commence sooner than the 12th of April which was the first seasonable day.

Napoleon and Josephine.

In this month of April a circumstance happened which astonished all Europe. The Usurper and Great Conqueror, Napoleon Bonaparte, who was married and had lived with his wife, Josephine 15 years, seemingly in good harmony but without issue, in December last, for reasons of state, want of a male heir to possess his unbounded domains, resolved to part from her. They parted by mutual consent and their marriage was formally dissolved by the Pope, and on the 5th day of April he was married with great pomp and splendour to Maria Louisa, daughter of the Emperor of Germany, which was surprising as he had fought and conquered her father three times with horrible carnage. It was said that in the last 17 years he had killed six hundred thousand of the bravest German troops, the best soldiers in Europe.

After the seed-time commenced, April 12th, constant drought began and continued upwards of two months attended with frost by night. Notwithstanding, cattle sold at high prices owing to the scarcity of them. Oat victual in June sold at £1 4s; merchant meal, £1 2s. The stackyards in June this year were fuller than ever seen since 1754. At many farm towns at the first of July there was more fodder than any of the two years by-gone at the first of January.

Owing to the extreme drought in May and June the hay crop was very light. About the 1st of July moderate rain began which improved the grain crops far beyond expectation. About Lammas great torrents of rain fell in many places attended with thunder which raised an unexpected crop of oats. Cattle sold as high as ever remembered all this summer season. Barley harvest began about the Equinox but oats in general was not sooner ripe than the 12th of October. The month of September was uncommonly mild otherwise the crop would have been by far too late.

I witnessed a circumstance September 22nd somewhat singular. Oat victual sold at £1 6s per boll and best oats with fodder sold at £1 3s which would yield whole eight stone of meal per boll. So variable is the times since 28 months past when a boll with fodder cost £1 5s. The pleasant

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harvest weather continued until the 22nd of October. Most of the early districts got all harvested by the 1st of November, but on many large farms and in late moorland places, great quantities was in the fields after a month of rain among snow and frost the first week of December. It was a general good crop over all Britain and Ireland. His Majesty ordered his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury to compose a collect of thanksgiving for the abundant harvest to be said after the general thanksgiving in all the churches of England and Ireland, to begin upon Sunday the 18th of November and to continue until Sunday the 25th, the same to be observed by the established Kirk in Scotland and the Episcopal communion in that part of the British Empire.

The crop, where harvested dry, was not one-fifth part less in bulk than last year, but all kinds of grain more full and weightier than last year. If 1807 and 1808 were defective both for human and animal, 1809 and 1810 made ample amends. The month of November was almost rain daily and December was as singular for frost.

Sir Arthur Wellesley.

I have hinted nothing concerning the war since the Welcheron expedition. In April, 1809, one Sir Arthur Wellesley was sent with 25,000 British troops to Portugal to assist the natives in that kingdom against the French. In July last year, he with an army of 15,000 Portuguese to assist him, gained a victory over a superior number of French troops at a place called Tallavera, for which he was dignified with the title of Lord Wellington. In spring, 1810, he was reinforced with 10,000 more of the best British troops and 5000 cavalry and 5000 artillery. In September this year he fought three days with one of Bonaparte's best generals, called Massina, on a mountain in Portugal called Braseca. He killed 2000 and wounded 2000 French, besides prisoners. The French army was said to consist of 80,000 strong. At the end of this year he, General Wellington, was lying within 20 miles of Lisbon and with 15 miles of the French army.

On account of the high prices of cattle and grain this year in particular, lands was let at extraordinary high rents above what former times ever experienced and labouring servants' wages extravagant - £8, £9, and £10 per half year to a man to work two horses; all other in proportion. Also Government taxes hitherto unknown were imposed on farmers - 16s for each boll of malt. 12s 6d for each work horse, besides house duty and 10 per cent added.

1811 - The month of December last year was penetrating frost and the same continued with little interval, but little snow, until the 22nd of February this year. At that period field labour was very far behind in general, but plenty of provisions of all kinds.

As there was an abundant crop south and west, grain of all kinds since the month of November was on the decline. About Candlemass a market commenced at M'duff for oats which continued a few weeks - potato oats 18/6, common oats 17/-. Against the first of March it fell to 17/- for potato and 15/- for common - no market for bear nor meal of any quality. In the Banff market retail of oatmeal was 1/2, barley meal 10d, best oats with fodder £1 2/- per boll. Farmers' barns was choaked with grain of all kinds and no purchasers wanting it. The stackyards in many places as full at the first of March as some years past at first of November.

Distressful Conditions.

There was also at this time a great outcry among the manufacturing people for want of occupation. Bonaparte had issued a decree to burn all English goods and property that could be found on his territories on the Continent and also prohibited all imports of flax from Holland and elsewhere. Consequently most of the manufacturing people was discharged in the great cities and thousands

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were idle and almost starved in the midst of plenty. So the circulation of money ceased both with manufacturers and farmers and a greater cry was than when victual was at £1 15s per boll.

Another alteration took place at the commencement of this year. In December last his Majesty fell into an indisposition which made him incapable of managing the royal Government. Consequently his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, after long debates in the Parliament, on the 7th of February this year took the office of Regent under certain regulations to act for his father during his indisposition and to depart from said office if his Majesty should again recover so as to be capable to govern as in time past.

March began and continued dry and warm, no shower of any kind all that month. The oats was sown on as dry a soil as was for twenty years past. Vegetation of all kinds started in this month to a degree past memory. The oats were in general all sown in March. About this time oats was sold 14s per boll and oatmeal in Banff market at 1/- per 8 lbs. On Saturday the 6th of April a sudden storm of snow came. On the 8th curt. the frost was three inches deep of ice on all standing water and drifting snow. This storm continued only five days but was succeeded with frequent heavy rains all the months of April and May which raised a great growth of grass. Consequently cattle sold in May at high prices.

In June oatmeal sold at 16s per boll. There was plenty of grain in the stackyards and barns. Cattle and sheep and horses as high as last autumn. The summer was variable, drought and rain alternately. A tolerable hay crop but the grain far short in point of bulk than either of the preceding years. Barley harvest began about the first of September. Cattle always maintained high prices. Best oat meal 18/- and barley ditto 12/-. The month of September was not only dry but hot. Barley and early oats was got harvested in fine condition but on Tuesday the first day of October a storm of wind and rain from the south-east soaked all the corn which was generally cut and in the stuck (stook). It stood ten days wet and the early cut began to spring. About the 10th people that had all cut took the west side of the stuck (stook) to the stackyard and set up the remainder in the fields, but on Sunday the 13th there came a violent storm of wind and rain from the north-west, bordering upon a hurricane. With difficulty the remainder of the oat was gathered together against the 22nd of October, but much of it not in good condition. This harvest was like 1792 - want of faith and patience made the generality of people spoil their crop, for after all was in the stackyards and gathered to high situations a tract of fine dry weather commenced which would have made it in excellent order.

A Comet.

About the first of September a comet appeared in the north-west at evening with an extraordinary blaze and it moved to the south-east against morning. Its train or tail ascended like a fan it was far more luminous and awful than the comet that appeared in 1807 and many conjectures were published concerning it.

Notwithstanding of the inclement harvest the crop in general kept well in the stackyard and yielded well at the mill. About the beginning of November a brisk market began for old grain - potato oats £1 3/-, common oats £1 1/-, barley £1 10/-, oatmeal £1 1/-, merchant meal £1. Against Christmas the market turned a little duller as all the granaries were choaked. Such an influx of money was seldom remembered as came to this place in two months. Until the 21st of December the weather was uncommon fine. The last 10 days of the year was intense frost and snow but a sudden thaw ended the storm with the year.

The Peninsular War.

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At the end of 1810 I mentioned General Wellington with his army lying before Lisbon near a large army of French. In April this year the French Army decamped and Wellington pursued several weeks' march with 25,000 troops. On the 5th of May at a place in Spain called Fuenras a bloody battle ensued when Wellington with half the number of his opponent Massena defeat them with a terrible carnage. Another army of British and Portuguese and Spaniard allies, commanded by a General Bereysford, on the 16th of May, at a place in Spain called Albuera in the neighbourhood of Badajoz fought a most desperate battle with 23,000 allies against 25,000 French commanded by Marchel Soult. After five hours' hard conflict the Allies beat the French off the field and left a carnage too deplorable and tedious for me to relate. Little more action worth recording was done this year but always Government sending over to Spain large reinforcements of foot and cavalry and draining our country of its troops and treasures and distressing it with additional new taxes.

1812 - This year began and continued green until the 6th of March when there came an unexpected severe storm of snow and penetrating frost which continued during the month of March. The oat seed commenced on dry situations about the 8th of April. Candlemass prices of grain were £1 for merchant meal with one-sixth part of barley mixture, best oatmeal £1 2/-, bear or bigg £1 8/-. Against the first of April owing to the severe storm in March, oats with fodder sold at £1 10/-, potato ditto with fodder £1 15/-. In some places of the country where fodder was scarce, potato oats with fodder gave £2 2/- and bear £2 5/-. The month of April was inclement, frost and sleet, so that there was more grass on the fields the 31st of January than on the first day of May. Owing to so severe a spring, victual in April rose 10/- per boll all at once. Best oat meal on the first day of May I witnessed give £1 12/-, mixed ditto £1 10/-, potato oats £ 15/-.

The 8th day of May was the first spring-like day. Until then the best laid out grass field was as white as a publick road. Afterwards vegetation commenced to an astonishing degree. The months of May and June it rained almost daily. In some places on low ground the seed was drowned. Plenty of grass arose on dry ground and cattle in good condition sold high. Against the first of July scarce an old stack of grain was to be seen. Prices of all kinds of grain advanced weekly. Merchant meal at the first of July with little regard to mixture sold at £1 15/- and common oats at £1 16/-, potato ditto at £1 19/-, barley £2. Poor people in towns and villages were half-starved from want of employment as the trade of all kinds of manufacturers was almost annihilate and all sort of provisions were exorbitant dear.

Battle of Salamanca.

This summer the war was carried on in Spain with great vigour. The Earl of Wellington, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies of British, Spaniards and Portuguese, on the 18th of July came up with Marmont, head general of the French army, where a severe battle was fought. On the 22nd both armies engaged near Salamanca. Wellington's army consisted of 32,000 and Marmont's of 49,000. This was said to be the bloodiest battle fought in Spain all the four years of war bygone. Wellington got a compleat victory over Marmont, who lost his right arm, one of his Generals was made prisoner, 6000 French were killed and 5000 taken prisoners. Eleven pieces of cannon and seven eagles or standards were taken, with most of all the French ammunition and baggage. The report of the allied army was 664 killed, 4270 wounded, 256 missing.

About the 1st of September the rains began to dry up but little bear ready for cutting sooner than the equinox. About this time victual became very scarce and dear. At Haddington on Friday the 21st of August prices of barley and oats were - best barley £3, 2nd £2 16/-, 3rd £2 10/- per boll; oats £2 15/-, 2nd £2 9/-, 3rd £2 5/-. Oatmeal was generally £2 and some people took £2 8/-. The barley harvest was got in tolerable condition and some early and potato oats, but all the common oats suffered as they were not ripe sooner than the 16th of October. On Monday and Tuesday the 19th and 20th of said month there came an extraordinary rain from the east which soaked all the

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grain both cut and uncut. Every day it rained during the remainder of October. Sunday, November 1st, was dry and three days following were dry, which was occupied with admirable exertion. Most of the grain that was cut was drawn together on the fields where it grew and built in small stacks. The last three days of said week were constant onding of sleet and rain. The day this report was wrote, November 10, the frost was so great that a spade would not penetrate the ground at 12 o'clock and the fields everywhere standing thick with stucks (stooks) and many remainders to cut in every direction. By accounts from the South country all was in good order finished in September. About Martinmas the frost was so intense that no plough could penetrate the soil and in many places remainders of corn to cut. This crop when tried at the mills was very variable. Some early and potato oats would yield from 12 to 16 pecks of meal, some common oats from 10 to 12 ditto, but more generally 8 pecks and not of fine quality. In the high country it was reported that their corn did not yield 4 peck of something more like dist than meal. In the month of December prices were - £1 10/- for meal half bear, £1 10/- for potato oats, and common oats that would yield 4 stone of bad meal sold at £1 6/-, bear £2, if 18 stone £2 6/-.

The Snows of Russia.

This year the great Usurper. Bonaparte made an expedition the most memorable of any hitherto upon record. For some years past the Russians were extremely weary of his intolerable yoke upon their trade. The merchants refused to pay taxes to the Emperor as no commerce could be had with Britain. A revolt was the consequence with France and war was determined upon both sides with vigour. Accordingly, in spring months, Bonaparte roused all his vassals, France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Prussia, Poland, &c., each nation to prepare and meet him on the Russian borders with all haste. About the 12th of June they all convened at the place appointed and were reviewed by himself. They consisted of 270,000 infantry and 30,000 cavalry, all in high spirits. The Russians were not idle but had collected a vast army. The French marched north into the Russian country and the Russians retired before them, always collecting large reinforcements who daily joined the Grand Army.

The French burnt and spoiled all around and marched against the 1st of September 600miles into the Russian territories, within 16 miles of Moscow, the ancient metropolis. The army made a stand on the 7th day of September and a battle commenced which continued three days without interval at a place called Boradino. It was said that all the battles fought for twenty years were but children's play to this. The French acknowledge they lost 40,000 and the Russians 35,000. Both armies claimed the victory. The Russians kept the field and the French marched to take possession of Moscow for winter quarters, but was highly disappointed, for the Russians who had retired into Moscow for safety heard of their coming and set fire to the city and before the French reached it three-fourths of that ancient and extensive city was reduced to ashes. It was supposed that there was one million and a half souls in Moscow when it was burnt. The French being so justly disappointed burnt the remainder and retired as was supposed to besiege and take St Petersborrow, but to their great misfortune, on the 12th of November there fell an extraordinary storm of snow and intense frost; they were obliged to look south for shelter, but by far too far from home in such a cold climate. The Russians like men of valour pursued them in rear and flank and destroyed and took immense numbers every day. The French horses died by hundreds a day so that they could not carry off their baggage from the pursuers. They buried their artillery in the earth and blew up their ammunition chests. In short, such a disastrous retreat is not perhaps in the annals of history. Besides all that died of fatigue and hunger and cold, the Russians had 30,000 of prisoners.

Bonaparte himself about the end of November left his fugitive army and arrived at Paris in disguise on the 13th of December and left the shattered remains of his army to shift for themselves. The official account of the loss of the French army from the 22nd of June to the 31st of December

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given at St Petersburg - prisoners, privates 143,000, generals 34, officers 900, taken 746 pieces of cannon, 49 stand of colours, 1200 baggage waggons, 2000 carriages of different kinds; supposed killed, drowned and starved 130,753 privates, 40 generals, 1805 officers. Such was the campaign of the war with Russia this year, deplorable indeed to the French. About the end of January 1813 about 14,000 miserable wretches, the remains, came to Poland.

Whalers Wrecked at Aberdeen.

1813 - January was almost frost without snow. February was pleasant but high winds the last fortnight especially. On Saturday, the 27th it began to blow hard from the west-north-west about four o'clock in the morning and continued until six at night without interval, with violent rain along with the wind. Such a hurricane was not since the 25th of December 1806. So fair was the weather that some people sowed oats against the 20th of February, but a ploughing was greatly retarded by the autumnal rains and the January frosts the generality did not begin to sow until the 12th of March.

Candlemass prices of grain at Banff were :- best oatmeal, £1 15s; merchant oatmeal, £1 13s; bear £2 to £2 5s; potato oats £1 14s; common, £1 8s. Seed oats, potato £2, common £1 14s. Potatoes 1/6.

The month of March was the driest perhaps that was for twenty years, and the greater part of the oats sown. We had seen little snow all the winter, but on Thursday the first day of April it began to blow snow from the north-east about 7 o'clock in the morning. As the day advanced the wind and snow increased. Against 12 o'clock it turned to a hurricane, dismal in its consequences. Many cottages were unroofed. Sheets of lead were folded up like paper on the roofs of churches. Several people perished without doors. At Aberdeen five whale-fishing ships were lying at anchor in the bay on their outward passage. They were all driven on shore. One named the Oscar was driven on the rocks and went to pieces. Of 44 men, only two were saved. She was valued at £10,000. Against three in the afternoon the snow in some places of the country was blown from four to eight feet deep and highways blockaded. The mails were carried on men's shoulders. After this violent tempest the months of April and May were very cold. Consequently the hay crop was generally light; also in many places of the country the oats were very thin as the seed was hurt by the inclemency of last harvest. Also in many places where the seed was good on the best fields in May a destructive insect worm destroyed and cut up great quantities of corn. Cattle sold high in May, but in June they fell much duller owing to the circumstance of the war.

The Weary War.

In March this year the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia joined in league against Bonaparte to fight offensive and defensive. The Russians had followed the French and driven them into Germany. These powers collected immense armies in the Prussian dominions and erected their headquarters at Dresden. In April, Bonaparte left Paris and hastened to organise an army to defend himself. On the first day of May they met a place called Lutzen where a very bloody battle was fought of 16 hours' duration. It was said the allies had the victory, but as is usual the French claimed it also. The allies lost 10,000 men the French 15,000. Again they fought three days at a place called Boradina, where again none could say which of the armies had the advantage. The carnage was immense. The consequence was an armistice was set on foot for six weeks to commence June 1st.

On the 21st of June Lord Wellington gained a complete victory in Spain over a French army, where Jerome Bonaparte was personally present, at a place called Vittoria where he drove the French in all directions. He took 151 pieces of cannon, 413 ammunition waggons, all their

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baggage, cattle, provisions, treasures, the colours of the 100th regiment and the baton of the Chief General, Jordoun. The British loss was 501 killed and 2807 wounded. The French lost upwards of 10,000. General Wellington was created a Field Marshall.

July commenced and continued so serene that the oldest person alive never recollected such fine weather. It continued until the 16th of August so mild day and night that every vegetable prospered beyond expectation. The pastures were clothed with verdure and the grain of all kinds came forward to an unexpected degree. Cattle at Lammas sold at advanced prices, but the poorer classes suffered most on account of the dearth of victual - Oatmeal £2; inferior qualities £1 16s; barley, ditto £1 5s. Early barley was cut at Lammas, but in this place barley harvest did not generally commence before the 25th of August. The harvest was extraordinary pleasant and seasonable until the 4th of October against which time many active people got completely done. Afterwards until the 25th the weather was rainy and with some difficulty the remainders were gathered in.

This crop was as plentiful as last year was defective. Grain of all kinds was weighty and full against the 22nd of October. Best oat victual was generally sold at £1 4s per eight stone, and with some exceptions where the seed was bad, it was an excellent crop both in Scotland and England, as appears from the reports from almost every district. On the 20th of September the Prince Regent in Council at Carlton House gave orders to observe a public thanksgiving for the abundant crop and fine harvest in England and Wales, also in Scotland both by the Establishment and those of the Episcopal communion, and a collect was composed and published for that purpose to be added after the general thanksgiving on Sunday, the 10th or on Sunday, the 17th, of October, in all the churches of England and Ireland and the Episcopal Church of Scotland. The weather the last two months of this year was pleasant, serene and mild until the last week which was intense black frost.

God and Not Man.

During the six weeks of the Armistice a proposal for a general peace was holden at Prague where assembled the Emperor of Russia, King of Prussia, Emperor of Germany, and many other potentates. Bonaparte had his agents there who despised all overtures that meant to diminish his great empire. When the proposed time was spent, Bonaparte published a manifesto which was worded as if he had been God and not a fallible man. On the 16th of July hostilities commenced again. The Emperor of Germany, Bonaparte's father-in-law, solemnly declared at Prague that he sincerely desired peace and whoever was for war he would oppose them with all power. Accordingly these allied powers all collected their forces in the neighbourhood of Dresden, Bonaparte's head quarters, and what added not a little to their assistance, one Bernadotte, one of Bonaparte's favourites who he had set upon the throne of Sweden, revolted and joined the allies. All these powers united as one man to ding down this tyrant. Only the King of Saxony adhered to Bonaparte. On the 23rd of August Bonaparte came out of Dresden, with 150,000 at his back to vanquish his combined enemies, accompanied by his allie the King of Saxony. A terrible battle ensued where as formerly both armies claimed the victory. The carnage was inexpressible. He pushed his way to Leispick, where on the 16th of October all the allies were collected both in front, flank and rear. Horrid was the slaughter on that day on both sides without a decisive termination. On the 18th day of October, the battle was renewed near Leispick, where, it was said, half a million was engaged. Bonaparte was entirely defeat and with great difficulty made his escape with a few attendants owing entirely to the swiftness of his horse. Besides killed and wounded, 40,000 of his troops were made prisoners. The Allies pursued the fugitive French army to the Rhyne, taking all their baggage, artillery, and destroying all things and persons that opposed them. Bonaparte got safe to Paris, but his troops suffered an irrecoverable blow. It was impossible to give a narrative of their overthrow.

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This memorable battle put a new face upon all the affairs in Europe. Immediately the Hollanders who were the first that suffered by the French roused and sent to Britain for the Stateholder who had been in England taking refuge 19 years. He went over to his own country and was gladly saluted by his countrymen on the 1st day of December. Also, Hanover, the hereditary property of our King, declared themselves free and all the French people who had for many years triumphed and tyrannised over them, withdrew with much reluctancy home. Our trade with Holland, which had for many years been totally shut up was now opened to the inexpressible joy of all the people in Britain. Trade and manufacturing which had been blockaded to the distress of many a family began again to dawn and what added more to the joy of the manufacturing classes, at the close of this year best oatmeal was purchased at one half of what it was in the month of July last. Such an alteration of times was not since 1801.

I forgot to mention that the brave Marquis of Wellington, who had fought the French in Portugal and Spain upwards of five years, about the 1st of September passed the Pyrenees and entered the Kingdom of France with his army where he made several victories in the three last months of this year. Also owing to the influence of Bonaparte war had been carried with various success the two years by-gone between Britain and the United States of America.

Deveron Frozen for 42 Days.

1814 - As last year ended with frost this year succeeded. On Sunday the second of January snow began to fall in great quantities. This storm, although not so deep as has been seen, was as severe and intense as any since 1795. From the 28th December to the 11th February there was one continuation of penetrating frost and snow. For 42 days the Deveron was froze so that a load wagon was in no danger to pass on the ice in safety. This storm interrupted the ploughing in the earliest districts till after the 20th of March and in the uplands little could be ploughed for snow until the 1st of April. On Thursday the 13th of January a general Thanksgiving was ordered to be kept in all congregations within Great Britain and Ireland by order of the Prince Regent in Council for the victories obtained by His Majesty's armies and his allies the by-gone year.

Candlemass prices for grain this year was as follows:- best oatmeal into families, £1; merchant meal with no allowance of mixture 18/6; potato oats, 18/-; common oats, 15/-; bear 1/4, per stone, if not 18 stone 12lb not marketable. So dull was all kinds of grain that little was sold but by men in present want of money. Farmers of capital stored up their raw grain in granaries or their victual in girnels in February as there was great plenty of the best quality in all parts of the country both South and West.

All the month of March was foggy and unseasonable and little oats was sown until the first of April. The first, three weeks of April were as fine a season for any kind of field labour as was for many years; also grass started in said three weeks to a degree unequalled to any growth since 1795. But the drought and frost in May entirely cut up all the early growth and brought people to the necessity of pasturing on what they intended for hay to keep their cattle alive.

Napoleon at Elba.

I took notice at the end of last year that the French were pursued to the Rhyne by the Allies whilst Bonaparte fled to Paris. The Allied sovereigns at two different parts in two armies came over the Rhyne in December and marched to invade France. Bonaparte, hearing of their intention, called all the great chiefs and magistrates in Paris to meet, him in the Grand Square in Paris and made a most eloquent speech, that as those insolent powers were minded to invade his sacred empire HE would entrust the care of his beloved Empress and his son, the nominal King of Rome, to the

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citizens of Paris until he should go and destroy those bold invaders who he would not allow to pollute old France by one of them setting a foot upon it.

Accordingly about the first of February he left Paris with it was said 150,000 all French men and proceeded towards the Rhyne to meet the Allies who were on the way to meet him. I shall not detail the battles between them as they were both obstinate and bloody, nor the names of the generals. But so it was in fact that the army he met first fled before him back to the Rhyne, whilst at the same time by a pre-concerted stratagem the other and far greater army got between him and his metropolis, Paris. He returned and was followed by the army which he beat and soon found him self between two fires in the mids of France. He overtook the grand army in which was the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia within 40 miles of Paris where was a terrible battle of three days' duration.

Notwithstanding all the exertions of this bloody tyrant he was obliged to fly with, it was said, only 15,000 of his troops. The Allies came forward to Paris where all the city guards and all the forces that could be mustered came out to the heights in sight of the City and gave them battle. Terrible was the carnage in all those battles, no doubt, but the Allies overcame all opposition and what was the most happy event, the magistrates of Paris when they saw that their army was like to be overthrown sent out a flag of truce to the Allies and surrendered up the city on conditions of not destroying it, which was gladly received by all the allied sovereigns and they entered Paris in peace upon the 27th day of March, 1814. And now as fortune had fled, Napoleon Bonaparte, that mischievous mortal, he resigned or abdicated the crown of France at Fontainebleau on the sixth day of April and was decreed to be banished to the island of Elba and to have 30,000 pounds of pension yearly. Louis the 18th, brother to Louis the 16th, who was beheaded 21st January 1793, was proclaimed in France and was generally hailed by all rank of Frenchmen. And also peace was proclaimed with France and all the allied powers instantly.

On the 18th day of April all the cities and great towns in Britain illuminated all their houses in so brilliant a manner as no history relates such rejoicings. The effigies of Bonaparte was burnt in great bonfires in almost every village. It was said that such a revolution in Europe had not been perhaps for, a thousand years, as history bears no records of such horrid destruction as had been in Europe the last 20 years, and all begun by a deluded multitude of French regicides and ended in the insatiable ambition of a bloody tyrant.

Since the first of November 1807, Louis the 18th had been in England taking refuge as an exile. He took an affectionate farewell of the Prince Regent on the 24th of April and sailed to France. He entered Paris on the third day of May in the mids of loud acclamations of his people. On the 30th of May the preliminaries of peace were signed at Paris by the Emperor of Russia, Emperor of Germany, the King of France, the King of Prussia and Lord Castlereach and Lord Aberdeen signed for Britain.

Never since the invention of printing is to be found in all the annals of Europe such a cordial unity and such a solemnity of potentates in one place. A definitive treaty was agreed to set down at Vienna on the 16th day of July to settle peace on a permanent basis. Peace was proclaimed in all the cities and royal burghs and on the seventh of July a day of public Thanksgiving by order of the Prince Regent in Council to be solemnised in all the churches and charges in Great Britain and Ireland.

Potentates in London.

After peace was signed at Paris the first week of June. Alexander Emperor of Russia, and Frederick, King of Prussia, came to England to visit the Prince Regent and the Royal family. Never

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was such opulence and splendour in London equal to what was displayed on this occasion. It is not for a pen like mine to describe the smallest part of the grandeur exhibited that fortnight those illustrious visitors stayed in London. Suffice it to relate that the Lord Mayor and Common Council had the honour to dine the Prince Regent and those great potentates at Guildhall. It was said the dinner cost £25,000 and the table Furniture not less than £200,000. They visited Oxford, Woolich, Portsmouth and all the curiosity worth notice in and near London and were highly pleased with the people and the place.

I shall here take notice of a narrative which appeared in a newspaper of date 29th August 1813 - "The following is the accounts of the wars between England and France with the terms of their duration since the one which commenced in 1110 and continued one year :- 1141, one year; 1161, 25 years; 1211, 15 years; 1224, 19 years; 1294, 5 years; 1339, 21 years; 1368, 52 years; 1422, 29 years; 1492, one month; 1512, two years; 1521, 6 years; 1549, one year; 1557, two years; 1562, 22 years; 1627, two years; 1666, one year; 1689, ten years; 1762, 11 years; 1744, 4 years; 1756, 7 years; 1793, 3 years; 1803, 11 years, making in the course of 703 years 267 years of war."

[1762 - wrong all rest in chronological sequence should be 1702 4th May 1702 until Treaty of Utrecht 1713 - Wllm]

The fine appearance of grass I mentioned in April was all totally blasted in May. During all that month and until the 14th of June frost by night and drought by day without interval. Consequently all the early grass was consumed against the first of June and had there not been fodder cattle would have been starved. Owing to so severe a drought and the stop of the war cattle fell in price every week in June. Cows last summer which would draw £10, sold at £6; stots, last summer £15, this year £10; small lean cattle unsaleable and at the first of July in many places half-starved for want of grass; best meal retail 1/3 per 8lbs., 18/- wholesale and little demand. Owing to the extraordinary drought in May there was a very light crop of hay in general as was for many years. After the 14th of June the rains continued plenty in this place until the 1st of September. Afterwards there came five weeks of fine dry harvest weather. There was neither rain nor dew night nor day until the 7th of October when there came a sudden storm of wind and hail from the North-West which in some places did shake a considerable part of the uncut oats. The crop was generally got in in good condition against the 25th of October and in this place was as bulky as last year but not so well ripened owing to the late rains. Prices of victual kept pretty steady during all the summer and harvest months. In August, prices of cattle advanced a little but far short of the prices of last year.

The War in America.

After peace was made in Europe the British armies were sent to prosecute the war in America. In September our armies penetrated up the navigable rivers and burned and destroyed towns, cities and villages. On the 9th of September they reached their fine metropolis, Washington, and burned all the public buildings and arsenals in it and did vast damage. The consequence was a peace was concluded in the month of December and was proclaimed here on the 31st of December.

At the end of this year, eight lbs of oatmeal would not purchase one pound of raw sugar nor was it adequate to the price of two ounces of tobacco. Merchant meal, 16/-; best barley, 19/-, and if not 19 stone, unsaleable; butter, 1/-; and eggs, 1/- in this place.

1815 - As last year ended moderate so this year began also, no ways unseasonable until the 28th of January. From the 18th frost had been very intense but snow commenced on the 22nd. The wind blew from the South-East five days with drifting snow which raised the sea at Aberdeen to an

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amazing tempest. Three of the merchant ships belonging to that port were entirely broke to pieces at the mouth of the harbour and 44 persons lost their lives in sight of their friends and the ship owners which could lend them no aid. A Danish vessel was also made a wreck at the back of the harbour but the crew were saved. Such a loss (the Oscar excepted) was not at Aberdeen since January, 1800.

Candlemass prices for grain was as follows: - best oatmeal, 16/-; merchant meal, with one-eighth part of barley mixture, 15/6; bear meal, 9s 6d; bear, if 19 stone Banff measure, 19/-, if under 19 stone unsaleable; best potato oats 16/6 if 15 stone; common oats, 14/-. Since the general peace grain fell in value every week. It was reported in the public papers that from the first of June last year to the end of December not less than 330,000 quarters of wheat had been imported at London from France in seven months, besides what was imported at other cities in the United Kingdoms. About the first of March men of discernment supposed that owing to the two abundant crops of 1813 and 1814 and the extraordinary importation from foreign countries victual would not exceed £1 10s per boll, although no farmer in Britain did sow nor reap this year, 1815. Such a distress for money among the farmers was not for many years by-gone. The high rents and exorbitant taxes and wages of all sort of labourers bear very hard upon the ground labourers at large.

The spring months were extremely seasonable. The month of March and half April were dry and half April and May were rain so that grass arose in great plenty almost North and South, and the genial rains in May and half of June produced a weighty crop of hay. Cattle sold at advanced prices in June but not equal to the prices in times by-gone. Best oatmeal this summer did not exceed 15/- per 8 stone. The country was full of grain threshed and unthreshed and many thousands of bolls of fine meal could find no market South nor West.

Napoleon's Escape.

A circumstance occurred this year more unexpected and more remarkable than I have hitherto recorded. When the sovereigns of Europe were at Vienna in the month of March settling a definitive treaty of peace to all the European powers an unexpected circumstance alarmed them before the treaty was signed. Napoleon Bonaparte, who was banished to the island of Elba last year, set sail down the Mediterranean with, it was said, only three ships and 200 men and landed on the 2nd of March at Toulon. He advanced towards Paris and increased in numbers daily; an army of his old French soldiers joined at every stage. On the 20th day of March he came to Paris with 10,000 French veterans at his back. This alarming news put France in a great consternation and as soon as Louis the 18th heard he left the metropolis in great haste the night before his rival came. King Louis fled first to Lisle with a small retinue but in six days after Bonaparte entered Paris he was advanced to the throne without a man losing his life. This was a sudden and a strange revolution as ever was recorded in the annals of history.

On the 25th of March the treaty of peace was signed at Vienna and as the potentates and their agents was not dismissed they bound themselves by a solemn league to support one another with life and fortune to assist in driving that bloody usurper from the throne of France and re-establish the rightful sovereign thereon. Accordingly all the powers in Europe prepared once more for war and that with all speed. Vast were the armies that were raised again. It was said that about the end of May not less than a thousand thousand were in arms on the Continent besides Britain. Bonaparte hearing of all this prepared also with all speed and cheered his soldiers that he had conquered all Europe before and he would for the love he bore the people of France conquer Europe again. Accordingly he mustered an army of 150,000 men. The greater part of his officers were his old associates.

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Battle of Waterloo.

The Duke of Wellington commanded the British army and Marshal Blucher commanded the Prussian army. Britain had 35,000 of the flower of the British forces and Prussia had 80,000 valiant men of war. Bonaparte left Paris on the 8th of June to meet the British and Prussians first who were near Brussels in the Netherlands. He fell in with Marshal Blucher first on Friday the 16th of June when a bloody battle was fought. That famous general, Blucher was overpowered with numbers and obliged to retire with the loss of 20,000 killed, wounded and prisoners. On Saturday the 17th Bonaparte fetched about to intercept Wellington from falling in with Blucher. On Sunday the 18th (which may be called the Bloody Sunday) the French and British armies engaged at 10 before noon and fought until half-past seven at night. Bonaparte hoisted the black flag at the commencement of the battle, indicating that no quarter was to be given.

It is not for a vulgar pen like mine to describe the memorable battle. Suffice it to say that the British had but one man for three against him and yet stood nine hours and a half and kept their ground against fresh columns of French cavalry, artillery and musketry. At three in the afternoon Bonaparte sent a carrier to Paris that the victory was undoubtedly in his favour. He stood on an eminence in view of his troops and gave orders when one column was beat to bring up another. Both parties fought desperate. As Bonaparte's whole honour depended on this day he exerted all his valour against a British general who had beat the most of his best generals in the last seven years but had never before met with Bonaparte until that day. At half eight o'clock Wellington perceived the French fire begin to abate. He called such officers as were alive and proposed to make an assault upon the French. Bonaparte sent out what he called the Old Guards or his Invincibles to turn the left wing of the British infantry. At first charge the Invincibles were turned and broke. A cry was given that the guards were beat and a panic struck the French army. Immediately they turned and retreated in confusion. The British immediately took the advantage of the retreat but were unable to pursue through fatigue and loss of men.

But providentially Blucher, the Prussian general, was come to the field a few hours before and as his troops were fresh he immediately called to his army that every man and horse must pursue with vigour. The Prussian cavalry followed all night and cut down without mercy all in French uniforms and gave no quarter. It was moonlight which was greatly in the victors' favour. They pursued them through three villages. At eleven at night, Bonaparte, like Sisera of old, lighted down from his chariot and betook him to horseback and, in a hurry, left his sword and hat on his carriage. The Prussians took 210 pieces of cannon and all their baggage, ammunition, their treasure chest and many eagles (or what the British call colours). In short it was a complete overthrow. Bonaparte was the first in Paris that brought the news of his own defeat and on the morrow after his arrival at Paris he called all his Court together and formally abdicated the throne of France in favour of his son who he named Napoleon the Second - but more afterwards.

Surrender of Napoleon.

This battle was said to be the most bloody that had been all the war. The British had 13,000 killed and wounded. Six hundred brave officers were killed and wounded of the first rate of all the British troops. No accounts of the French loss could be ascertained but it was supposed that not less than 50,000 were killed besides wounded. It was said that the French on Friday the 16th cut the ears of the Prussian prisoners. In return the Prussians on Sunday night the 18th gave no quarter to the French. The remains of the French army were all broke and dispersed.

Bonaparte behoved now to skulk in Paris as Wellington followed directly at his heels to the gates of Paris as also Blucher and his Prussian troops. As soon as the tidings of this glorious battle came to England immediately orders were given to blockade all the French coasts lest the tyrant

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should escape to America. This was duly attended to and on the 7th of July Bonaparte had prepared two frigates to convey him and his companions with their treasure to America but seeing he could not escape the English ships he put up a flag of truce and surrendered himself to a Captain Maitland, a Scotsman, who brought him to Plymouth. Bonaparte wrote to the Prince Regent to allow him to reside in Britain and made many eloquent speeches that he would confide more on the honour of the British than on all the powers in Europe, but all in vain. He was not allowed to set a foot on land but waited in the bay of Plymouth until a sure convoy was prepared to transport him and twenty of his partisans to the Island of St Helena in the Atlantic sea between Africa, and South America, being upwards of 1000 miles distant from any other land and about 16 degrees South of the equinoxial line.

Louis the 18th, who had waited at Ghent to see the issue of the contest, returned to Paris and was again restored to his crown, with a great solemnity of monarchs who were personally present, but not with the consent or concurrence of half of the people of France. But as the Bonaparteans durst not stir so long as the allied armies were in France let future times determine what their aversion to their King will come to.

the end - Wilm

From The Concise Scots Dictionary

boll a dry measure of weight or capacity varying according to locality eg a **boll** of oatmeal =140 lbs [approx. 63.5 kg]

firlot the fourth part of a **boll**

peck a dry measure in Scotland equivalent to a quarter of a **firlot** but varying according to district and commodity

Everybody's Pocket Companion & CGA Diary

Feb. 2	Candlemass	
May 15	Whitsunday	Scottish Term Day
Aug. 1	Lammas Day	
Sep. 29	Michaelmas Day	
Nov. 11	Martinmas Day	Scottish Term Day