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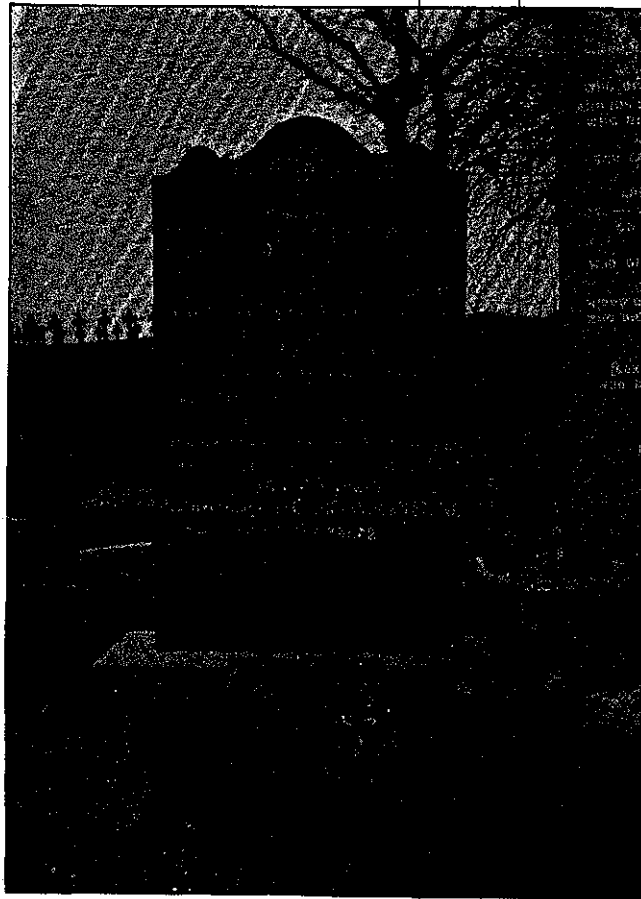
“KATIE:”
REMINISCENCES OF AN ECHT
NONAGENARIAN.

by
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Katie's Tombstone in Echt Churchyard.

"KATIE:"

REMINISCENCES OF AN ECHT NONAGENARIAN.

"Closed is the e'e, and pulseless noo,
The hairt that throbb'd sae leal,
An' pass'd for aye the aged form
We lo'ed sae lang an' weel."

TO those who have left home, and mayhap country, there come at times moments when the homely incidents of bygone days are recalled with realistic vividness. Trivial as many of the scenes incidental to our young days appeared at the time, their memory is the source of genuine pleasure. Just as the modest daisy and the blue-bell by the wayside are sweeter to the poet than the gaudy flowers in the rich man's conservatory, so we appreciate the simple unsophisticated folk we knew in our early years more than the consequential nobodies who, in our journeyings through life, have crossed our path and passed into oblivion.

The recent removal by death of one whose life was an illustration of all that is best in the national character, and who, for well nigh a century, pursued the "noiseless

tenor of her way" in her native parish, revives many almost forgotten associations.

Miss Johnston, Whitehill Cottage, Echt, the worthy villager who forms the subject of these musings, having been endowed with an extraordinary memory, and an inexhaustible fund of humour, was at all times an agreeable companion. The precise date of her birth, as attested in the parish register, was the 8th of July, 1806, and she was thus at her death, on 12th December, 1900, in the 95th year of her age. Miss Johnston was the sole survivor of a family of four sons and four daughters, and, when she died, she was the oldest inhabitant of the parish of Echt, being a few months older than her neighbour, Meggie Ha'—Meggie and our deceased friend being, as the latter put it, "ae year's bairns." Those who knew Miss Johnston intimately usually styled her "Katie." By this name she liked best to be addressed, and with no shadow of disrespect we shall so call her in this brief sketch.

THE JOHNSTONS.

Katie came of a good stock. Hailing originally from the adjoining parish of Midmar, her forebears settled at Whitehill in the year 1729, her grandfather being then only two years old.

At the close of the 18th century there was a numerous colony at Whitehill, including no fewer than thirty members of the Johnston family, all of whom—with the exception of one, who is said to have kept a Dame's School—were engaged in the weaving industry. One of the weavers was Katie's father, and, in the long narrow dwelling adjoining Whitehill Cottage, where our old friend breathed her last, he pursued his peaceful calling. The reeking lums in this corner of the parish are sadly thinned in these days, and

one cannot fully realize the busy scene of the rustic toilers in the golden age of the loom, which inspired the poet to sing—

"Oh, ravishingly sweet the clacking noise
Of looms that murmur in our quiet vale."

Beginning with the lark, ere the fleecy mist had risen from the Howe, the shuttles flew fast, telling of the eident workers within, the monotony of whose toil was sweetened only by the half-hours spent in the "yard" tending the homely flowers and the toothsome vegetables. As a family, the Johnstons were noted for their sterling honesty, straightforwardness, and rugged independence of character, and the quaint words of a local rhymster may be quoted in support of this statement—

"They were widely known, the Johnstons,
As men honest and upright,
Men skilful in their calling,
Men who could read and write."

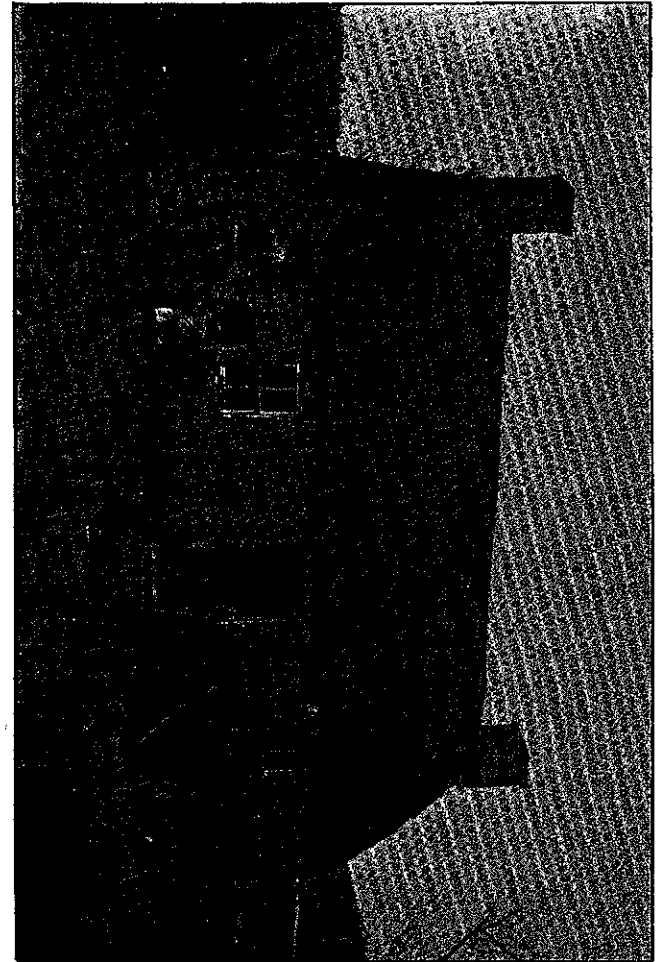
Katie's father was, as has been indicated, born in the parish, but her mother was an incomer from the Highlands, although she had been resident in Echt for some time as a servant with the farmer of Sunhoney. The family of this worthy couple were long livers—Alexander, Katie's favourite brother, having died in New Zealand on 31st July, 1896, at the patriarchal age of 82; while another brother, William, exceeded this age by three years, he having, at his death on 12th August, 1894, attained the age of 85. The death of Alexander was a sad blow to Katie, and from the effects of it she never fully recovered. He never forgot the ties that bound him to the parish, and his unremitting kindness to Katie during his long sojourn in the land of the Maoris, and his testamentary thoughtfulness, which amply provided for all her wants as long as she lived, were worthy of the family, and deserve kindly mention.

THE COTTAGE.

Whitehill Cottage, the home of our aged friend, is so well known to those living in the neighbourhood that little need be said in describing it. The "hoosie," as Katie called her humble cottage, consists practically of a "but" and a "ben," and was erected some 50 years ago, when the former dwelling, the ruins of which are still discernible, became uninhabitable. Situated in the extreme west of the parish, it is reached by what is locally known as the "lang straucht," a particularly rough road leading in a slanting direction from the Echt and Midmar turnpike, at a point near the farm of West Mains. At the entrance to the cottage is a rustic arch, formed by the outstretched branches of rowan trees, entwined with ivy and sweet-scented honeysuckle.

The garden in front of the cottage contains many of the flowers with which we were familiar in our boyhood—the sweet-smelling thyme, the pinks, the carnations, and cabbage roses, which are now-a-days looked upon as old-fashioned. There are also white and peony roses, fragrant balm, and peppermint, and southernwood, or "aiple-ringie," as the last-named was usually called, or sometimes the "old wives' scent bottle," which the old women were wont to take to church in their Bibles, to be used as antidotes to the soporific tendencies of the sermon. The rose, which grew in profusion in the garden, was Katie's favourite flower, and, who knows but that in choosing this floral emblem with its thorn, she thought of her own cross, which only one with her deeply religious nature could have borne so uncomplainingly throughout her long life.

The prospect from Whitehill Cottage is interesting and varied. Towering in front rises the Hill of Fare, which in



Whitehill Cottage.

the day of doubt and sorrow, may have brought to Katie's mind the opening lines of the Psalm—

“I to the hills will lift mine eyes.”

Not far off is the less pretentious, but not less interesting, Barmekin Hill, with its fort, whose history is still wrapped in the obscurity of an early era. Near by, in a clump of trees, is the Sunhoney Stone Circle, one of the most perfect specimens in the north-east of Scotland of these interesting monuments of the early inhabitants; and bridging the past and present is Midmar's battlemented castle—

“Bosom'd high in tufted trees;”

the origin of which is lost in the mists of antiquity. To the cottage, Katie's friends were always sure of a hearty welcome; and to the younger generation what an interest there was in the “routh o' auld nick nackets” which the owner fondly termed her “memorials.” These “memorials” were souvenirs of a diverse nature, all of which she reverently treasured. Here the wondering visitor was shown some pressed flowers from John Brown's grave in Crathie Churchyard, and, side by side, some Maori ornaments from New Zealand. The walls were literally covered with “precious links” of more or less interest, and formed ample topics for lengthy observation and explanation. Among Katie's curios was one that never failed to hold the eye—namely, a sampler which hung on one of the walls. What a fine old-world flavour clings to these once fashionable specimens of needlework, with the wonderful representations of trees and shrubs, and peacocks with spreading tails and high crests, varied by specimens of ornamental lettering and numerals, in which the ladies of a former generation showed such proficiency and took such pride. Neatly sewed in what had once been bright-coloured silks, we find following the heading, “A family record,”

interesting details regarding various members of the Johnston family.

KATIE'S ALBUM.

Katie's album, which every visitor was certain to have submitted for examination, gave evidence of the cosmopolitan character of her friends. At the outset we are shown her name, with the date on which the album was purchased, written, as Katie explained, by one of her "laddies"—Mr. George Thomson, then accountant in the Town and County Bank, Limited, Echt, but now, like many more, across the "herring pond." A glance through the album emphasises the reality of the numerous changes which time has silently brought in the parish, and to Katie, with such reverence for the past, the thought of so many "broken friendships" must have been extremely painful.

"How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces."

A VORACIOUS READER.

Within the cottage, too, one saw many evidences of the occupant's proclivities. There was her humble library, the books of which were few, but carefully selected. And let it here be said that, although Katie never attended a school, her education was not as a consequence neglected, for her father, who was a man of fine character and more than ordinary intelligence, was assiduous in teaching her reading and writing in the evenings. She was throughout her life a voracious reader, and kept herself abreast of the times by a systematic perusal of newspapers and magazines. Every moment snatched from work found Katie absorbed in some book, and at meal times it was a long-standing custom of hers to have a book propped up in front, "jist to keep me

company," as she explained. Katie having had a deeply religious nature, one was not surprised to find that theological works mainly made up her collection of books. Chief in the collection was a large volume of "Henry's Commentary," stoutly bound in leather, the most highly prized family relic in the cottage. The volume belonged originally to Katie's grandfather, and was one of six, each son having a separate part of the Commentary. On the title page is a printed statement to the following effect:—

This copy of Henry's Commentary belongs to Andrew Johnston, who was born in the parish of Midmar, A.D. 1727, and was married in 1759 to Elspeth Smith, who was born in the parish of Echt, 1737; to whom were born six sons and one daughter, as follows:—

1. Robert,.....born 2 June, 1760.
2. John,....., 3 April, 1762.
3. James,....., 4 July, 1765.
4. William,....., 26 Oct., 1767.
5. Andrew,....., 2 July, 1769.
6. Alexander*...,, 5 Sept., 1773.
7. Ann,....., 29 Nov., 1781.

It was the unanimous desire of the above-mentioned family, equally to join in the purchase of this book for a help to family devotion.

Behold how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well,
Together such as brethren are,
In unity to dwell.

Ps. 133, at the beginning.

Christmas day, 1795.

Side by side with her Bible, a portion of which she read daily, were to be found the "Pilgrim's Progress," "Baxter's Saints' Rest," "Howe's Redeemer's Tears," and other

* Katie's father.

strong food of Puritan faith, beloved by the sterner minds of our forefathers.

AN INTELLIGENT LETTER-WRITER.

Not only was Katie a great reader, but she used her pen to good purpose. Doubtless the romantic surroundings of Whitehill Cottage helped to nurture our old friend's literary tastes, and it did not surprise those who know the place to learn that Katie's pen took poetic flights, her greatest effort in this field having been written in 1833, and dedicated "To the memory of Sister Isabella." The poem extended to no fewer than 231 verses of four lines each.

Katie's proclivity to use the pencil led her to underline any sentences in a book which particularly pleased her, a practice that on more than one occasion led lenders of new books to humorously stipulate that there should be no markings.

As a letter writer, Katie had few equals, her composition being characterised by a grace of diction, lit up with a sparkling native wit, which made her "pigeons," as she humorously styled her letters, highly prized by the recipients. In her letter-writing her methodical habits were well illustrated, all her correspondents' names and addresses, and the dates of the despatch and receipt of letters, being carefully entered in note books, while it is a fact that during her long life she never burned a letter. Katie's correspondents were located in all quarters of the globe, and to these friends it must not be supposed that she sent all the "clash of the countryside" Far otherwise. Her "pigeons" were the genuine outpourings of head and heart, the exchange of mutual tokens of regard, written in a strain which showed that she took a kindly interest in the affairs of those addressed. Looking over some of these effusions of the aged pilgrim, one is tempted to reflect

that in these days of modern education we rarely find such sympathetic sentiments, which justly evoke admiration. The Rev. Mr. Scott, Camelon (a son-in-law of the late Mr. Malcolm, schoolmaster, Echt), whose wife was a long and valued correspondent of Katie, informed the writer that he frequently felt constrained to read from the pulpit extracts from some of Katie's letters—a tribute indeed to one of her advanced years and limited education.

To a friend who had paid a visit to her native parish, and who had met Katie under the hospitable roof of Mrs. Philip, Nethermain, she wrote, while in her 89th year, as follows:—

"29th May, 1895.

"This is a sort of remembrance of the happy meeting I had with my dear and esteemed friends on Tuesday last. It was a red-letter day to me. I would fain attempt to render my heartfelt thanks for all the kind attention paid to me by you all, and for good Mr. and Mrs. Philip's kindness in including me in their invitation to old friends and neighbours in times past. I am at a loss to express all I feel, so will just leave you to imagine how very happy I felt for the all too short time we enjoyed that (to me) ever to be remembered time when seated in the group of beloved friends. Short as the time was, it stamped a lasting mark on my old heart, only to be effaced by the withering hand of time. Ah, yes! it seemed to me a look beyond the veil, and there I saw part of the 'innumerable company' in that land—

'Wherein the weary, exiled heart,
With loved ones of the happy past
Shall meet again no more to part.'

Another of my dear old friends has been called away—
when will poor old Katie's turn come?

"I was reading a very beautiful hymn to-night, a few verses of which I will trouble you with—

'Weary of earth, and laden with my sin,
I look at heaven and long to enter in;
But there no evil thing may find a home,
And yet I hear a voice that bids me "COME."

'So vile I am, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that holy land?
Before the whiteness of that throne appear?
Yet there are hands stretched out to draw me near.

'It is the voice of Jesus that I hear,
His are the hands stretched out to draw me near,
And His the blood that can for all atone,
And set me faultless there before the throne.'

In another and later "pigeon" she makes a touching reference, which is well worthy of preservation, to a visit she paid to the churchyard of Echt—where, it may be stated, there are no fewer than five tombstones referring to the Johnston family—

"I was down seeing the hallowed spot where so many of our dear ones sleep in their long and lonely bed till the morning of the great awakening. As I walked slowly along the walks I seemed to be surrounded with dear old friends; but at the same time there were recalled to my memory these words:—

'They cannot hear our footsteps come,
They do not see us pass;
They cannot feel the bright warm sun
That shines upon the grass.

'They do not hear when the great bell
Is ringing overhead;
They cannot rise and come to church
With us, for they are dead.'

The very clods of these dear mounds, now covered with

grass, look up to us as if with a sweet and silent smile to say, 'Ah! my dear ones, kept in the busy world, we cannot grasp your hands now; you must think of us, not as we were, but as we are—gone away on our long holiday to that blessed country beyond the bounds of time—that happy country where death-divided friends shall meet to part no more.' Oh! the blessed meeting of dear ones gone before, now numbered in that happy company of the Redeemed. Oh! the blessedness of that long and endless eternal holiday beyond the borderland of time! May we all be permitted, through the peace-speaking blood of Christ, to join heart and hand with loved ones gone before—no dread of being recalled to the old and once loved place of sorrows, disappointments, and tears. But excuse me. I seem to have been wandering as if listening to the echo of voices. I must now say farewell—that cruel word. With a bagful of love from Katie to divide among you all."

The post-bag to Whitehill Cottage was, as can be gathered, no light one, and the honour of taking the letters to Katie was coveted by the school lads, as was also the penny, Katie's reward to the messenger.

Her love of writing led Katie to preserve, in numerous memoranda books, interesting events which occurred in the district. An entry in one of the books, bearing date 22nd June, 1887, runs—"My house entered by robbers between eleven and twelve o'clock at night. All my money and many valuable articles stolen." This untoward event occurred, it may be explained, while Katie was ministering to a sick relative. The door of the cottage having been left unlocked, the thieves had ample opportunity for escaping undetected.

In another of her numerous memoranda books are copied a number of her favourite poetical pieces, mostly re-

ferring to the land beyond, such as "Heavenly Rest," "Gone Before," "Christian Dying," and "The Borderland," while in her Bible is the following verse in her own hand-writing from Cowper's beautiful hymn "There is a fountain filled with blood"—

"Dear dying Lord, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed sons of God
Are saved to sin no more."

A TRAGIC OCCURRENCE.

Thus Katie retained in her possession practically a history of the parish of Echt for two generations. It was not given to her to chronicle epoch-making events, but the tragedies and comedies of the district were carefully noted. It is impossible to mention many of those things, but one tragic occurrence may be specially referred to, as it happened on the turnpike road, within a short distance of Katie's cottage. At the time (1834), Katie was 28 years of age, and the event in question, which caused great excitement in the district generally, made a special impression on her mind, and the facts concerning the tragedy may thus appropriately be referred to.

For some years previous to 1834, Mrs. Cruickshank, widow of the late Dr. John Cruickshank, H.E.I.C.S., lived at Midmar Castle with her only son, a promising young man. This young gentleman was of rather a reckless disposition, and it is probable that carelessness was the cause of his tragic end. Sitting one day in a hunting machine with his chin resting on a double-barrelled gun, he accidentally touched the triggers, when both barrels went off, shattering his face and scattering his brains. His mother, who was possessed of considerable means, soon after erected a villa, which she called

"Greentree Lodge" (her own maiden name being Greentree), on a site commanding a view of the spot where the tragic event took place, and likewise of Midmar Churchyard where her beloved son was buried. She herself was, upon her death in 1856, interred in the same grave, which is marked by a table-shaped monument of white marble.

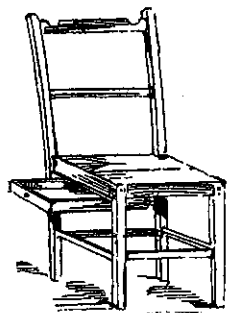
TAKING THE "RISE" OF "TOLLY."

One of the amusing incidents of the parish recalled by Katie also referred to the young man who met so terrible a death, and the story illustrates the reckless character of young Cruickshank. His mother regularly drove down to the village in a phaeton, with her son on a spirited horse as outrider. When passing through Echt toll-bar, then leased by John Forbes, who was rather a character in the district, the young outrider one day after getting through, in order to tease "Tolly," refused payment of the toll. Next time the turn-out made its appearance, John closed the gate, and, having no time to lock it, he put his back against it and held it fast. This was just what the young rogue wanted. Stopping the phaeton at a short distance from the toll, he set spurs to his horse and cleared the bar in true Dick Turpin style. Forbes held on until he saw the leap was to be taken; and his feeling at the time, his description of the speed of the animal, and the skill of the horseman were worth hearing. After riding a hundred yards or so, Cruickshank returned, clearing the bar a second time, and then, as John said, "He ca'd me an auld Scotch d—l, and threw me five shillings." "Tolly" and young Cruickshank understood each other better after this incident.

A PROFICIENT SEAMSTRESS.

But reading and writing were to Katie only recreations. She had work to do, and her favourite occupation was sewing,

her enthusiasm leading her at one time to keep a school for this class of work. Her efforts in this respect were highly appreciated, large numbers of girls receiving instruction at Katie's hands.



Katie's Chair.

Her proficiency in sewing brought her under the notice of the Lindsay family at Dunecht House, from whom she received for a long period many acts of kindness and attention. An interesting relic of Katie's sewing-school days remains in the cottage in the shape of a short-legged chair. It was made by her father, and has a drawer under the seat, used for the storing of "pins" and other indispensable adjuncts of her calling. When any of these sewing materials were exhausted, it was Katie's invariable custom to walk to and from Aberdeen in order to replenish them, the journey—fully 27 miles—being accomplished without the pedestrian feeling greatly fatigued.

HER SENSE OF HUMOUR.

In the course of Katie's conversation, the visitor was frequently struck with the old lady's keen sense of humour. It burst out at unexpected moments, as the writer was once reminded on returning to the cottage after a hurried inspection of the stone circle at Sunhoney. "Weel," inquired Katie, "did ye see the stanes?" To this an affirmative answer was given, whereupon the aged humorist asked, with an air of pretended surprise, "An' didna' ye bring ony o' them wi' ye?" When it is remembered that most of the boulders are many tons in weight,

the force of Katie's sally will be readily understood. Again, when the writer was taking his departure, Miss Skinner, Katie's relative, applied a clothes brush to some whitening that was transferred from the cottage wall to the visitor's coat, and the old hostess quietly remarked—"Eh, he's richt feared that he tak's onything awa' fae Katie's hoose."

THE KIRK AND THE MINISTER.

Possibly Katie's favourite topic of conversation was with reference to the Parish Church, where, she proudly reminded her friends, her father and mother were the first couple to be proclaimed, and to the many godly men who had filled the pastorate since her childhood, her memory carrying her back to the time of Rev. Mr. Henderson. Although she had no distinct recollection of Mr. Henderson, who was minister of the parish during her youthful years, Katie had often heard the older parishioners refer to him in terms of the highest esteem. He took a keen and intelligent interest in agricultural affairs, of which he had a good practical knowledge, being for many years tenant of the farm of North Kirktown, which then consisted of 140 acres. Mr. Henderson died at the Manse of Echt on 30th May, 1813, in the 57th year of his age and 22nd of his ministry, "much and justly regretted by his parishioners and acquaintances." Rev. John Glennie, son of the Rev. Dr. Glennie of Maryculter, who succeeded Mr. Henderson, was translated from Garvock to Echt in October, 1813, but as he remained only about eight months in the parish—being translated to Dunnottar in June, 1814—Katie had no recollection of this minister beyond his name.

Mr. Glennie was succeeded by Rev. W. Ingram, who was translated from South Ronaldsay, Orkney, to Echt in November, 1814. As a preacher, Mr. Ingram was highly

esteemed, his pulpit discourses being always carefully prepared and impressively delivered. To use Katie's words he was a "muckle thoct o' man and great on the Revelations." When preaching on his favourite theme, he seemed carried away as he spoke in glowing language of the "New Jerusalem." With the young folks especially, Mr. Ingram was a great favourite, for he knew how to reach their hearts. He had a habit of tenderly patting children on the head, after addressing a few kindly remarks, and rejoiced the heart of the expectant juvenile with a brand-new penny. After a faithful and fruitful ministry of 35 years, the venerable servant "fell asleep" on the 16th May, 1849, in the 80th year of his age—

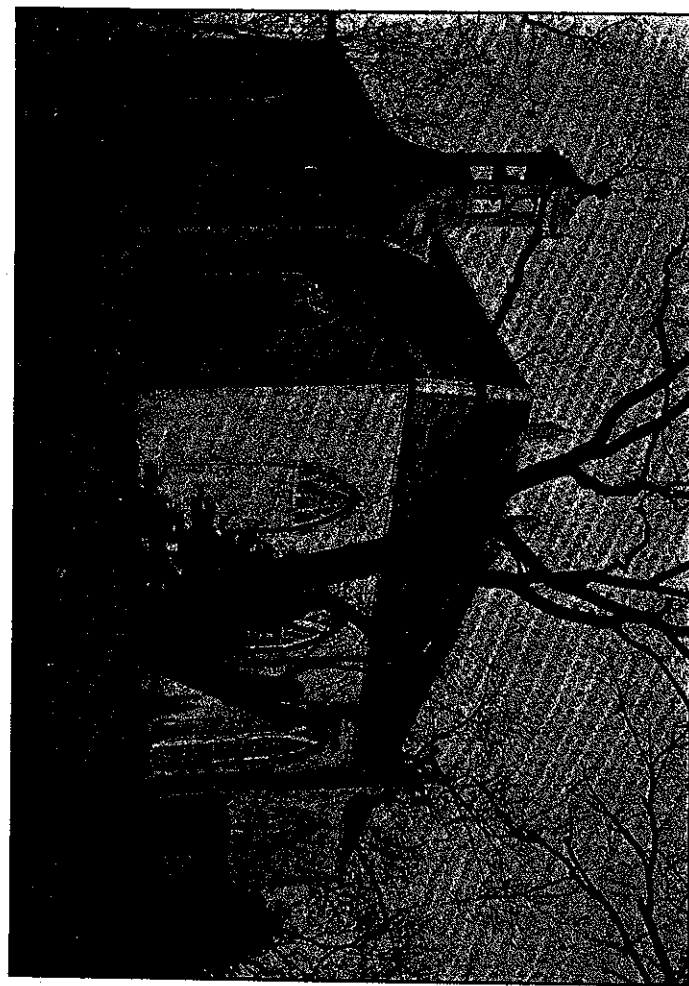
"Through all this tract of years,
Wearing the flower of a blameless life."

The remains of the aged minister were consigned to their last resting-place in the churchyard of Echt on a beautiful day in May. The funeral was just such an one as the worthy minister would have liked. Lining the churchyard walks, and standing among the grassy mounds that marked the place where

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,"

were the school children—the boys reverently bare-headed, the girls with their snow-white aprons, looking on with full hearts, for they had lost one whom they had learned to love.

To one who was so devoted a member of "Old Zion," the "placing" of a new minister was naturally a matter of the utmost importance, and the various incidents in connection with the settlement of Rev. Maxwell Wright, who succeeded Mr. Ingram, were quite fresh in Katie's memory till within a few years of her death. It so happened that Mr. Wright was the last of a long list of candidates who



Echt Parish Church.



came to preach their trial sermon, and, in consequence, unusual interest centred around the youthful preacher. Mr. Wright, who based his discourse on the words, "My God shall supply all your wants," created a profound impression, and the general comment of the worshippers as they eagerly discussed the situation at the close of the service was "the hindmost ane's the best."

The services following the selection of Mr. Wright were deeply interesting, and were thus referred to in the "Aberdeen Journal" at the time :—

"ECHT, Feb. 11, 1850.—The Rev. the Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil met here on Thursday last, the 7th inst., according to appointment, for the purpose of ordaining the Rev. Maxwell Wright to the work of the ministry in this place. The important duties of the occasion were conducted with great ability by the Rev. John Middleton of Glenmuick, who, from the words, "Who is sufficient for these things," delivered an appropriate and eloquent discourse. Mr. Middleton's addresses to pastor and people were very solemn and faithful, and the whole services evidently made a deep impression on the large and crowded congregation assembled to receive the minister of their choice. Yesterday, Mr. Wright was introduced to his charge by the Rev. Dr. Glover of Edinburgh in a powerful and eloquent sermon from Romans 1st and 16th, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." The Rev. Doctor's admirable discourse was listened to by a delighted congregation with earnest and thrilling interest, as was also Mr. Wright's own address, delivered immediately afterwards, from Ezekiel xviii. and 4, "Behold, all souls are mine." In regard to this settlement, it can be said with truth, never were unanimity and harmony more conspicuously blended together than they have been on the present occasion. Mr. Wright's call was signed by above three hundred of the parishioners spontaneously, as a moiety of those anxious to do it, but who had not opportunity."

Mr. Wright was a talented, accomplished, and earnest pastor, one who magnified his office, and ever had the interests of his parishioners, both temporal and spiritual, at heart. He resigned the charge in 1872 on account of

ill health, after a ministry for which, in respect of the indefatigable efforts put forth, it would be difficult to find a parallel—one of those sweet seasons of refreshing that even yet linger as a pleasant memory in the hearts of those who sat under him. This beloved minister of Echt, who was a frequent and welcome visitor at Whitehill Cottage, died in London, on 1st April, 1900, at the age of 77.

Katie's interesting ecclesiastical reminiscences bring us down to the time of the present incumbent.

An attached member of the Church of Scotland, Katie regularly worshipped, as long as she was able to undergo the fatigue of the journey, in the Parish Church. Anon of a hallowed Sabbath morn we can picture Katie lifting the door "sneck," and emerging from her humble abode full of the thought—

"This is the day God made, in it
We'll joy triumphantly."

IN THE CHURCH.

Ere the last toll of the "third bell" had died away, the sight of the closely-veiled figure entering the sacred building, carrying her bible rolled up in spotless linen, along with a few sweet-scented flowers, was so familiar that the service would have seemed incomplete without her presence. Katie went to the church to listen. Like Apollos, she was "mighty in the scriptures," and could criticise and analyse a sermon like an expert. Possessed of a truly marvellous memory, which, with long practice she developed to the utmost, she jotted down on her return home the substance of each discourse, and when any one particularly impressed her, she committed almost the entire sermon to paper. In connection with the church, Katie stated that, in her young days, many of the old women were picturesquely arrayed in scarlet cloaks, and high-peaked white mutches;

and by right of deafness, sat near, and some even upon, the pulpit steps. A regular attendant at Communion seasons was Katie Marnoch, the Midmar post-runner, who, on these occasions, occupied a seat in the pew set apart for the Manse servants. Her annual visit was attended with a certain amount of self-advertisement, which showed that in her own eyes she was a person of more than ordinary importance. At the close of the service she discharged what she doubtless considered was her bounden duty in turning round and patronisingly shaking hands with the occupants of the minister's pew, thereafter taking up a position outside where the minister himself was in turn similarly honoured. Her hands were encased in black gloves of roomy dimensions, and, from the convenient loopholes between the outstretched fingers on which her head reverently (?) rested, she was able to roll her eyes from seat to seat, mentally taking keen note of any "fairlies" for future comment.

Some strange mortals were seen in that old fane, and one of these was a sturdy worshipper from the north side of the parish, who had a liking for sitting on the stair leading to the west gallery, and who on cold Sundays did not deign to remove his broad bonnet from his head for fear of catching cold. Then there were the precentors, worthy men in their day. The last of the old school—those who read over the lines before the congregation repeated them with music—was a Mr. George Pirie, who resided in Midmar. Besides reading the lines, he was also obliged to call the names of the Psalm tunes. Mr. Pirie's predecessor was Mr. Alexander Snowie, Garrick, who held the office for fifteen years. He was a brother of the late Mr. James Snowie, tenant in Finarcy. Innovations in the matter of church worship Katie could not tolerate, and the discontinuance of the Monday service after Communion Sunday

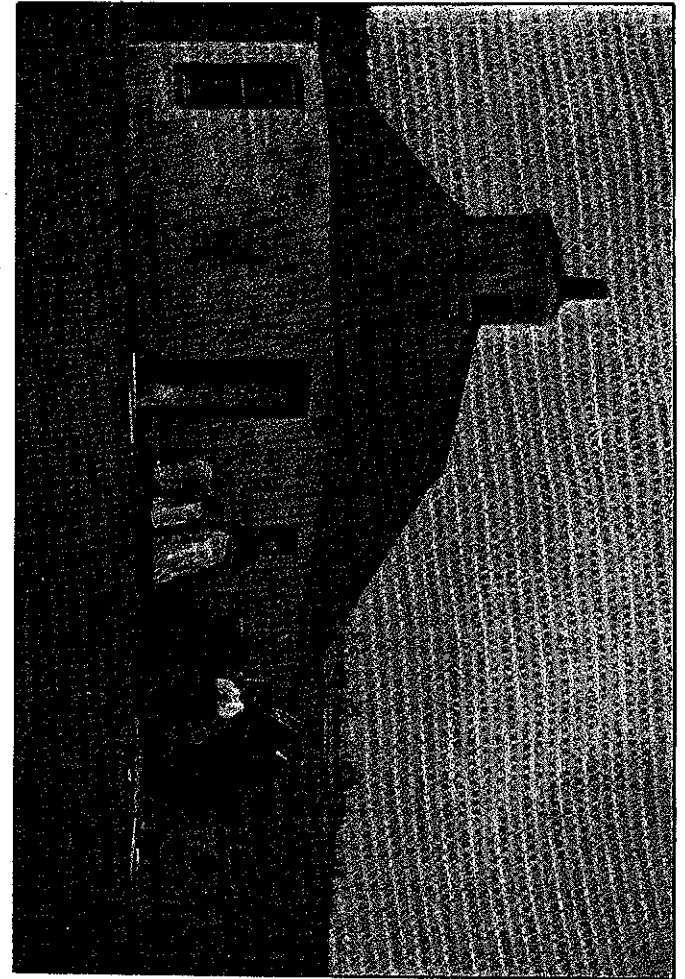
greatly disturbed her, and she was heard one day to remark that she would go and sit at the kirk door at the time public service ought to be conducted within.

A LOYAL DAUGHTER OF THE PARISH.

Katie was loyal to her native parish, and, during the whole of her lifetime, she was rarely absent from home for more than a day at a time. On one occasion, however, she paid a long-promised visit to her relative, Mr. Clark, at Bridge of Gairn, near Ballater, where she spent the greater part of a week. A Sunday being included in this holiday, Katie attended divine service in Crathie Parish Church, and, before her departure, inspected with much interest the Royal pew. The similarity of the architecture and internal arrangements of the church to those of the Parish Church of Echt struck her—a similarity, doubtless, due to the fact that both edifices were erected about the same time. Katie's most prolonged absence from home occurred about thirty-five years ago, when she had the misfortune to fall and break her arm, necessitating her removal to the Royal Infirmary, Aberdeen. Although wearied with the change from the routine of her daily life at Whitehill, Katie always spoke kindly of the attention shown her by the doctors and nurses; and a friendship formed with one of the patients in the ward in which she was located, resulted in a life-long correspondence.

PASSING AWAY.

But Katie loved her village and her cottage, and it must have been comforting to her to know, after her long life spent there, that the last scene of all was to be enacted in the homely building. Her death was unattended by any sudden sickness. She spent her last birthday in July,



Old Toll-House, Echt.



1900, and was able to enjoy the love-tokens which it brought her. Her strength, however, gradually gave way, and in November she was failing fast. On Monday night, two days before the dissolution came, she kept repeating portions of the 8th Paraphrase, the closing verses of which were indicative of her desire to depart and be at rest—

“ Oh, may the grave become to me
The bed of peaceful rest,
Whence I shall gladly rise at length,
And mingle with the blest.

“ Cheer'd by this hope, with patient mind,
I'll wait Heav'n's high decree,
Till the appointed period come
When death shall set me free.”

Thereafter consciousness ceased ; and it seemed as though some STRONG ONE had lifted her in HIS arms that she might not feel the touch of the cold river of death.

Katie has gone for ever from the strife of mortal tongues, the bickerings, divisions, and imperfect communion of the church below, and has, we doubt not, joined that innumerable company in the New Jerusalem, and the perfect fellowship of the General Assembly and Church of the First-born who are enrolled in Heaven, where the ransomed of the Lord see eye to eye, and nothing is found to hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.

“ How calm her exit !
Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft.”

Peace to her ashes ! May the grass ever grow green on Katie's grave in the “ Auld Kirkyard.”

J. A. C. Cootts.