

## PARISH OF TRINITY-GASK.

PRESBYTERY OF AUCHTERARDER, SYNOD OF PERTH AND STIRLING.

THE REV. ALEXANDER H. GRAY, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

TRINITY GASK, generally pronounced Tarnty, occupies a beautiful situation in Strathearn, extending principally on the north side of the river, about four miles east from Crieff, and two straight south from Auchterarder.

*Name.*—The word Gask signifies, I am told, *slope* or *brae*, and this description is perfectly applicable to the parish, as the amount of level ground in it is comparatively very small. There is another place bearing the name of Cow or Coul (*i. e.* behind) Gask, in the parish; and when Kinkell was joined, the united parishes got the name of Trinity-Gask, or the three united braes, which it still retains.

*Extent, &c.*—There are about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  square miles of the parish extending westward on the south side of the Earn; on the north, it is about 5 miles long by 3 broad,—giving a total of  $18\frac{1}{2}$  square miles.

*Hydrography.*—The only remarkable spring is the Trinity Well, a little south of the manse, of great renown in Popish days for the performing of miraculous cures, fortifying against plague, witchcraft, and such other evils. I have heard it said that a prohibition of such practices is to be found in the records either of the parish or of the presbytery, but I have not hitherto been able to discover it. The right of bleaching at this well is one of the privileges of the minister. The Earn is our principal river, flowing along the whole length of the parish, from west to east, in windings beautifully diversified. In many places, its sloping banks are richly wooded by the hand both of nature and of art.

*Mineralogy.*—The parish presents few features of interest to the mineralogist. At Colquhalzie, in the western extremity of the parish, the Earn flows through a deep ravine or chasm of red claystone rock of a soft quality, crumbling by the action of the sun and frost. To the westward, it becomes gradually intermixed with

micaceous particles, assumes a hard and durable quality; passing into red sandstone; quarries of which have been worked near Millearne, and at Lawhill, near the church. The trap dike, so conspicuous at Drummond Castle, traverses the county from west to east parallel with the northern boundary of the parish, occasionally rising into rugged ridges. Specimens of a heavy grayish stone, found at Denburn, on the property of Sir Thomas Moncrieff, were, I am told, sent some years ago to skilful mineralogists, who reported that they contained a small proportion of copper; but the distance from coal is so great that the return never could have compensated the outlay. The parish contains soil of every variety.

*Zoology.*—We have many varieties of cattle. The short-horned breed, recently introduced by the patriotic exertions of the Viscount Strathallan, are rising rapidly in estimation, and very high prices are given for bulls and bull calves of that valuable stock. There are few sheep pastured. The Leicester kind seem the general favourites. The beneficial practice, however, of feeding off turnip with sheep, is rapidly extending, for which purpose the black-faced are most commonly used. The fish found in the Earn are salmon, yellow and sea trout, pike and perch. The Earl of Kinnoul, the Viscount Strathallan, Sir Thomas Moncrieff, Mr Home Drummond, and Mr Hepburn, have a right to fishings, but the operations of the stake-nets on the Tay have for many years rendered the upper fishings of little value.

*Plantations.*—There are no very uncommon plants found in the parish. The extent of plantation is about 1000 acres, principally upon the properties of Mr Oliphant of Gask, Sir Thomas Moncrieff, Viscount Strathallan, Mr Graham Stirling, and Mr Hepburn. The oldest woods consist entirely of Scotch firs, the more recently planted of larch, spruce, and oak, all of which seem to agree well with the climate and soil. The largest hard-wood trees are found around Millearne House and Colquhalzie, but they are in no respect remarkable.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—The Session records of the parish contain accounts of baptisms, fines, collections, distributions, and discipline. They commence in 1641. The most memorable facts mentioned are “on Sunday, the 5th of November 1643, the covenant was read, explicate, and public intimation made that all be present the next day to swear and subscribe it.”—“On Sunday, the 12th November, this day all did swear and subscribe the covenant.” We have also an account of the first provision made by

the kirk-session for a parochial teacher, ordering his salary of 100 merks yearly to be exacted of the parish. The rebellions in 1715 and 1745 are not noticed in any manner. In 1774, there were no less than twenty-four table services; now they seldom exceed five or six.

The parochial registers are very full in some respects, and equally scanty in others. From 1770 to 1834, they have been very correctly and neatly kept, especially whilst under the charge of the late schoolmaster, Mr John Macintyre.

*Eminent Men.*—I am not aware that any eminent characters have been connected with this parish, either by birth, residence, or burial. Dr Kemp, who afterwards became too notorious, was ordained minister of this parish in 1770, and was translated to Edinburgh. Dr David Ritchie, now of St Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, was schoolmaster here for several years; and my immediate predecessor Dr James Burgh, ordained in 1794, died 1834, from his great natural talents, learning, shrewdness, kindness of heart and of demeanour, would certainly have made no inconsiderable appearance in the church, had he not, for many years previous to his death, been incapacitated for much exertion by bodily weakness and infirm health.

*Land-owners.*—The proprietors of the parish, arranged according to the rental of their properties, are, Sir Thomas Moncrieff, Bart.; The Viscount Strathallan; Thomas Graham Stirling, Esq. of Strowan; J. G. Home Drummond, Esq. of Abbotsgrange; J. Stewart Hepburn, Esq. of Colquhalzie; The Earl of Kinnoull; J. B. Oliphant, Esq. of Gask; Anthony Murray, Esq. of Crieff; William Muckersey, Esq.

*Antiquities.*—The only antiquities are the ruins of an old castle, at the eastern extremity of the parish, called "Gascon Hall," said to have been the place where Sir William Wallace encountered the ghost of Faudon, as narrated by Blind Harry; but its appearance would not justify any such remote origin. No one can furnish any information regarding it; the idle traditions of the country are every one more absurd and contradictory than another. It stands close upon the north side of the Earn; but there are no inscriptions nor monuments of any kind from which its origin and history can be ascertained. The real Gascon Hall is said to have stood about a mile and a half north-east from this, amongst the present woods of Gask. There is also a peculiar-looking stone standing on the high ground, about a mile west, and north from this:

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ruin, called the "Borestone." It has borne an inscription, but age has so completely obliterated the characters, that it is impossible to decypher a single word. The figures of animals, among which the boar, stag, and elephant predominate, may still be traced. Some maintain that it was a trysting-place for the hunting of the wild boar, others that it was an instrument of punishment, with which idea the stone corresponds. It is about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, with two holes at the top, through which the arms of the delinquent might be thrust, and be kept there in a sort of pillory. There are many traditions and legends connected with this relic also, but they are too absurd to be committed to writing. There was a chapel in former times upon the present farm of Cow or Coul Gask. The place still bears the name of Chapel-hill; but it was trenched over some time ago, and not a trace of it is now to be found. Dr Ross, the present tenant, who was born upon the farm, has no recollection of ever having seen crosses or any other curious relics. We have about four miles of the Roman road from the Stormont to the camp at Ardoch in this parish. Two of these are in a dreadful state of disrepair,—in winter indeed totally impassable. The other two, through the active liberality of Lord Strathallan, and other proprietors and tenants, have lately been very much improved, and in a short time will form part of an excellent road to Perth. Some coins have been found in the parish, but none, I believe, of any great antiquity. About six years ago, a tumulus, about 3 feet by 2, consisting of four large stones, and covered with a fifth, was discovered upon the property of Lord Kinnoull, containing a considerable quantity of decayed human bones. It was supposed to be a relic of the Romans, but there was nothing from which this could be positively determined. The remains of the skulls lying at the eastern end would indicate an origin prior to the introduction of Christianity. Around the sarcophagus, and mingled with the stones of the cairn which covered it, were ashes and burnt bones, as if animals or captives had been sacrificed on the tomb of the chief.

*Modern Buildings.*—The only modern building deserving particular notice is the mansion of J. G. Home Drummond, Esq., built in the style of an embattled manor-house. It is in the late or Tudor Gothic style of Henry VII. and VIII. The carving in stone and wood is beautifully executed, and almost entirely by workmen in this and the neighbouring parishes. The grounds are also laid out with the greatest taste, and, aided by its commanding situation, Millearne House constitutes one of the chief attractions.

of the surrounding neighbourhood. The gardens and hot-houses contain an extensive collection of exotic plants.

### III.—POPULATION.

There are old people in the parish who speak of the population of Trinity-Gask in their early days as having been double its present amount.

In 1755, Dr Webster's report makes the population	918
1796, it was	795
1831,	620
1837,	554

This rapid decrease is caused by the converting of a number of small into one large farm, and the dislike which the tenants have to keeping up the cottages upon them, both from the expense which it occasions, and the annoyance and loss to which they are subjected, by their occupants persisting in keeping poultry, which support themselves at the farmer's expense, and greatly aid the poor people in paying their rents.

The yearly average of births is	8
deaths,	10
marriages,	4
The average number of persons under 15, is	162 churchmen; 71 dissenters.
betwixt 15 and 30,	137 62
30 and 50,	40 31
50 and 70,	8 14
upwards of 70,	9 11
Episcopalians, 8; Roman Catholic, 1.	8 1
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	364 190

The only resident proprietors are, J. G. H. Drummond, Esq. residing at Millearne House; and J. Stewart Hepburn, Esq. whose mansion of Colquhalzie is beautifully situated on the south side of the river. All the proprietors, with the exception of Mr Muckersey, are possessed of lands yielding far more than L. 50 of yearly rent.

The number of unmarried men, bachelors and widowers, upwards of fifty years of age is 9  
unmarried women upwards of forty-five, - - - - - 14

There are 86 families with an average of 4 children. There are only two houses at present building, and three uninhabited. There is only one insane person in the parish; no blind, deaf, nor dumb.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

Trinity-Gask is entirely an agricultural parish. We have two or three weavers, as many masons and carpenters as are required for the work of the parish, two shoemakers, but no tailor.

The number of arable acres is 4290. Perhaps 2000 more might be brought in, and they are now in the course of being so. The expense, however, is very great, from the amount of draining requir-

ed. The number of acres under wood is nearly 1000. The trees are, Scotch firs, spruce, larch, and oak, with a few beeches here and there. The management of them is most skilfully conducted.

*Rent.*—The average rent of arable land in the parish may be rated at L. 1, 5s. per acre. It is impossible to hazard any opinion upon the rate of pasture; some of it is worth L. 2, 10s. and other parts again not worth 1s.

Considerable attention seems to be paid to the breed of cattle, and with great success. The character of the husbandry pursued upon the principal farms justly stands decidedly high; draining and embanking are carried on to a great extent; but irrigation, from the steep and unequal surface of the country, cannot be adopted. The leases in general are for fifteen, seventeen, or nineteen years, the last the most common. The farm-houses and steadings are in excellent order. All our landlords are actuated by a praiseworthy desire of seeing their tenants as comfortable and prosperous as possible. The great obstacles in the way of improving the moorish lands are such as no capital nor industry could surmount with any prospect of a reasonable remuneration, arising as they do from the nature of the soil and climate. There are two quarries, both supplying stones for the building of farm-houses, steadings, dikes, &c. They are of an inferior quality. The stone for Millearne House was brought from Dollerie, in the parish of Maderty.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount of raw produce, as nearly as I can calculate, may be,

Grain of all kinds,	L. 7050	0	0
Potatoes and turnips,	4700	0	0
Hay and pasture,	2900	0	0
Gardens of the cottagers,	120	0	0
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	L. 14770	0	0

The only association in the parish is a society for the encouragement of good ploughing. It assuredly is productive of good, though sometimes giving rise to feelings of jealousy among the competitors, to say nothing of a little excess among the judges when deciding upon the rival claims.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There is no market-town nearer than Auchterarder, fully five miles south from the centre of the parish. There is certainly a boat by which passengers cross the Earn, and save nearly a mile; but, except in very dry weather, the roads are so fearfully bad that the near way is sure to prove the most fatiguing and vexatious. Crieff is six miles west from the centre of the parish. Auchterar-

der is the nearest post-town. We have, however, no regular communication with it, so that our letters sometimes reach us the very day of their arrival, and at others lie for five or six days. The country road from east to west extends for about four miles, and from north to south much the same. There are no public conveyances near us; none, indeed, in the parish. The bridge of Dalreoch, in Gask parish, is the nearest point of the passage of the Perth and Glasgow coaches, and it is fully three miles distant. Kinkell Bridge is the only one in the parish. It was built about 1793, by subscription, consists of four arches, and is kept in good repair.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church stands a little to the east end of the parish. If situated more to the west and south, it would have been more convenient for the great majority of the people. The south end of the parish is worst accommodated. The people are within a mile and a-half of Auchterarder, and generally attend there, except during the dispensation of the Lord's supper at Trinity-Gask. It is about four miles from the western and two from the eastern extremities. It was built in 1770 to contain 350. The seats, however, are so crowded, that it is impossible either to sit or stand in them with comfort. It has not received any considerable repairs since, but the heritors have now agreed to make it decent in appearance, and somewhat more comfortable—the cold during winter being excessive. The sittings are all attached to the farms; no money is ever paid for accommodation. The manse was built in 1772, greatly enlarged in 1820, and is now one of the largest in the country. It is charged with twenty-one window lights. The glebe contains  $14\frac{1}{2}$  acres, and is rented at present for L. 26, 10s., but is worth considerably more. In addition to this, the minister has from 8 to 10 acres of wood, self-planted with Scotch firs. This was originally his peat-moss, but the seeds from the surrounding plantations having taken root, have converted it into a straggling forest, worth at present nearly L. 100. Were it drained and properly planted, it would certainly constitute no inconsiderable addition to the living. The garden and ground around the manse may amount to an acre. The minister has also the privilege of bleaching at a well north from the manse, and of a path for his horse to the ford of the Earn, when travelling that way to the Presbytery.

The stipend consists of meal, 85 bolls, 1 firloft, 1 peck,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lippies; barley, 42 bolls, 2 firlofts, 2 pecks, 3 lippies; money, L. 41, 13s. 4d. There has been no augmentation for the last forty years. We have, however, reason to believe that Trinity-Gask will ere

long be put upon a level with the neighbouring parishes. There is one Dissenting chapel, in connection with the United Associate Synod, in this parish. The first was built almost immediately after the Secession took place, and the present about 1790. The present minister (Mr Forrester) came with the understanding that he was to have L. 65 a-year; but the very utmost the congregation can accomplish for him is to pay the rent (L. 39) of the farm upon which he resides, and to give L. 5 a-year, raised by two collections, to defray the sacramental expenses. The congregation, gathered from the surrounding parishes, consists, I am informed, of about 100 hearers, and 84 members. The chapel is seated for 800, but might contain 1000, and in former days was crowded every Sabbath, people coming from distances of twelve and sixteen miles. The number of families in connection with the Established Church is 50, and the average number of persons attending the parish church about 150;—many of the church people, except at the sacrament, attending the Established Church nearest them; those at the east end going to Gask,—at the west, to Muthill,—and at the south, to Auchterarder. The number of communicants, last two years, was 183.

The number of families connected with dissenting chapels in Kinkell, Auchterarder, and Dunning is 36.

The average amount of collections in the church is L. 18; proclamation of banns, 10s. 6d.; mortcloth, fines, &c. L. 1, 11s. 6d.

*Education.*—The parochial school is the only one in the parish; and the branches of education taught are, reading, writing, arithmetic, elements of practical mathematics, English grammar, geography, and Latin. The present schoolmaster is also qualified to teach Greek and French; but these are not demanded by the heritors. His salary amounts to L. 35, 9s. 4d. He is also precentor, and session-clerk, with a salary of L. 2, 10s., and his school fees will make his income fully L. 50 a-year. He has a good house and garden. I have not yet met with any of my parishioners betwixt six and fifteen who cannot read and write. There are 50 upwards of fifteen who cannot write,—none, I hope, who cannot read. The people are deeply sensible of the infinite importance of education, and are willing to make many sacrifices to secure it for their children. The great distance of the west and south ends of the parish must make it inconvenient for young children to attend the parish school at any season of the year, and for all in those quarters during the winter. They there-

fore attend the schools of the neighbouring parishes in preference. Three additional schools, in the south, west, and east ends of the parish would certainly be a great convenience; but there could not possibly be a sufficient number of children to fill them.

*Literature.*—There is no library of any description in the parish as yet; but there is every reason to hope that we shall be able to establish one in connection with the Sabbath school, to which the parents all seem anxious to afford every countenance and support.

*Poor's Funds.*—The average number of paupers is 8; monthly allowance, 4s. When they have no relatives willing or able to take care of them, the house rent is also paid, generally L. 1, 10s. a year. We at present have 5 paupers, and only one house rent to pay. The collections amount to about L. 18 a year. The heritors for some time past have annually given a voluntary contribution of L. 50. In addition to this, we have the interest of a capital sum of L. 80. Allowances of coals are very general. This is assuredly a very heavy charge for so small a population, but there is an insane pauper, boarded at the rate of L. 15 a year, and his clothes; one illegitimate child at L. 4, 16s. and his clothes; and till very lately another at L. 9. There is now good ground for believing that the heritors may be spared nearly one-third. The people do, generally speaking, feel a reluctance to apply to "the box;" and one woman six weeks ago voluntarily gave up her allowance, her health having so much improved that she was able to work for herself.

*Inns.*—We have one public-house, the toll-house at Kinkell bridge, which, perhaps, could not be dispensed with.

*Fuel.*—The want of fuel is perhaps the very greatest drawback upon the comfort of Trinity-Gask. Dollar, at the distance of twenty miles, is the nearest coal-hill. Tillicoultry, of which the coals are of a superior quality, is four miles farther, so that when driving and other expenses are paid they cost 2½d. a stone,—a present 2d.

Subscriptions are being raised just now in this and all the neighbouring parishes, to sink a shaft at Tullibardine, in the parish of Blackford, on the property of the Viscount Strathallan, with the confident hope of finding coal. The subscription is advancing with great spirit, and, should the attempt prove successful, it will prove the greatest of blessings to all the neighbourhood.

Peats cannot be got nearer than Methven moss, a distance of seven miles from the centre of the parish, and they cost 4s. 6d.

a load. Wood is consumed in considerable quantities,—principally the useless branches of the firs used for country purposes.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

From the last Statistical Account of this parish, we are warranted to infer, that much has been done to advance the style of agriculture pursued, to reclaim lands, and improve them by draining, embanking, &c. The lands close upon the north side of the Earn are now never, I believe, flooded by the river, though often kept for a considerable period under water by the rain and melting snow from the higher grounds. There is now a considerable quantity of bone dust and lime used. More of both would be employed, were not the distance from Perth (thirteen miles) so great. Should any railway ever come near us, it will be a great encouragement to attempt reclaiming many parts of the moor lands which now lie hopelessly waste. Every great farm has a thrashing-mill attached to it, and there are grinding mills, driven by water, at an easy distance from every part of the parish.

The principal road through the parish is very good, and now 100 stones of coal are not considered an unreasonable load, even for so long and continuous a journey. It would add greatly to the beauty of the parish, were more hard-wood trees planted along the hedge-rows, and the fences of every description kept in better repair.

September 1837.

## PARISH OF BALQUHIDDER.

PRESBYTERY OF DUNBLANE, SYNOD OF PERTH AND STIRLING. \*

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name is compounded of the words, *baile-chul-tir*, signifying the town or territory at the back of the country.

*Extent, &c.*—The parish is about 18 miles in length, and between 6 and 7 miles in breadth, and comprises many straths, glens, and valleys, and a vast number of hills and lofty rocks. It seems proper to mention some of these.—Strathyre, signifying in Gaelic the *warm strath*; Glenbuckie, signifying *the glen where roebucks*

\* Drawn up by the late incumbent, the Rev. Mr M'Gregor.