

PARISH OF OATHLAW OR FINAVON.

PRESBYTERY OF FORFAR, SYNOD OF ANGUS AND MEARNIS.

THE REV. ANDREW CROMAR, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name and Boundaries.—THIS parish appears to have been formerly known under the name of Finhaven. In the acts of the Parliament of Scotland, and in other old records, it is variously spelled, Fynnevin, Ffinheaven, and Phinheaven. The name is evidently compounded of two Gaelic words, *Fin*, signifying white or clear, and *Avon* or *Aven*, signifying a water or a river. At what time, or for what reason, the change of designation from Finhaven to Oathlaw took place, no very distinct trace can now be discovered. From some circumstances, however, it would appear that there had at one time been two churches within the parish. The foundations of an old church, called the church of Aikenhauld, are still visible on a beautiful point of land, a little below the Castle of Finhaven, at the junction of the Esk and the Lemno. From its situation in the immediate neighbourhood of the castle, this would appear to have been the original parish church; and the present church of Oathlaw, which is two miles distant from it, may have been at first, perhaps, a chapelry belonging to it. In the *Retour of Service* granted in favour of Lord Kinnoull, 16th May 1635, among other properties and rights belonging to the barony of Finhaven, there is mention made of the “*Villa de Othlaw*,”—“*cum advocacione ecclesie de Phinheaven vocatæ Oathlaw*.” The probability, therefore, is, that when the old church near the castle fell into decay, the church of Oathlaw became the parish church. In the *Session records*, which commence only in the year 1716, the parish is called Oathlaw, and spelled “*Outhlaw*.” It may be remarked, that at present there is no particular hill in the parish bearing this name, and, therefore, when it is considered that the barony of Finhaven constitutes four-fifths of the parish, and that the Hill of Finhaven, with its celebrated vitrified fort, and the Castle of Finhaven, so conspi-

cuous in the history of Scotland as the residence of the Earl of Lindsay and Crawford, are the most prominent objects in it,—it must be admitted that the ancient name of Finhaven is by far the best and the most characteristic. On these accounts, it is the wish of the present chief proprietor and patron of the parish, the Earl of Aboyne, to have the old name Finaven restored.

Extent—Boundaries.—This parish lies about four miles north from Forfar, on the south bank of the South Esk, which in some places forms the boundary line. From east to west, its longest direction, it extends about 6 miles, not being anywhere above 3 miles broad. It is bounded on the north by the parish of Tannadice, which chiefly lies on the opposite bank of the Esk; on the east, by the parish of Aberlemno. The parishes of Rescobie and Aberlemno bound it on the south; and the parish of Kirriemuir lies on the west.

Meteorology and Hydrography.—The climate of this parish was formerly very damp, owing principally to the retentive nature of the soil, which occasioned much stagnant water, and consequently made the atmosphere very cold and moist. But since the extensive agricultural improvements, especially in draining, which were carried on in the parish during the time that Mr Ford was proprietor of Finhaven, and more recently under the direction of Mr Hillocks, factor to the Earl of Aboyne,—there is now little stagnant water left, and the climate has in consequence been of late years very much improved.

The River Esk runs along the parish, intersecting it in some parts. It is here about 140 feet broad, and in more than one place is easily fordable. Its banks in this neighbourhood, and for several miles to the eastward, are in general low; and the lands, in consequence, suffer considerably from the winter floods. The great flood in August 1829 did injury in one place to the extent of L.160. Embankments are accordingly required at some points; and during the last year a very considerable sum has been expended in embanking. The tenantry of Finhaven are bound, by their leases, to afford horse-labour, when necessary, on such occasions. It may be remarked, that in some places the river has slightly changed its course; and on one farm, the Haughs of Finhaven, it is now about a quarter of a mile distant from its old track. The former bed is still visible, but has of late years been brought into cultivation. The only other stream in the parish worthy of notice is the

small rivulet called the Lemno, which takes its rise on the south side of Finhaven Hill, in the parish of Aberlemno. This small stream, having made a circuit of twelve or thirteen miles round the Hill of Finhaven, empties itself into the Esk, about a mile due north from its source. It runs beneath the walls of the Castle of Finhaven, and joins the Esk at the point of land where the foundations of the old church are still visible. There is a very powerful spring of excellent water at the east end of the parish, which comes up through the borings made some years ago by the late proprietor of Finhaven, Mr Ford, when in search of coal. These borings were carried down about 160 feet, and no coal having been found at that depth, the work was abandoned. The borings still remain, and, from their great depth, the water rushes up with considerable force, and in great abundance. This spring, however, is not now visible. Being in the midst of a corn-field, and the tenant being much annoyed by people coming from curiosity to view it, the water has been conducted into a drain, and the whole closed up from sight.

Geology and Mineralogy.—The parish may be said to be flat, and as there are few rocks or cliffs in it, it presents no very striking or interesting feature to the geologist or mineralogist. The Hill of Finhaven is the only eminence worthy of notice. It skirts the southern boundary of the parish, and runs in a direction from east to west about ten miles. It consists of a kind of sandstone, very thickly imbedded with water-worn pebbles, presenting the appearance of conglomerate. On the north side, which belongs to the parish, it rises with a gentle sweep to the height of about 1500 feet above the level of the surrounding country. On this side the rock is very little exposed, as the soil covers the whole. It is cultivated almost to the summit, which is covered with a thriving plantation of larch and Scotch fir. On the south side, which belongs to the parishes of Aberlemno and Rescobie, there are some steep cliffs, covered with a kind of grayish moss. Near the top, there is very good pasture for cattle.

The soil of the parish is in general of a clayey retaining nature, having what is commonly termed a "pan" bottom. Marl, which is obtained from the neighbouring parish of Rescobie, has been used, but is not found equal to lime. The distance from the latter article forms a considerable drawback to cultivation here. Much of the surface-water has been removed by draining, and the soil is

in consequence improved; but were lime more easily obtained, a still greater improvement would be effected.

Mr Ford, the late proprietor of Finhaven, made an unsuccessful attempt several years ago to find coal in the parish. It has already been mentioned, that in the east end of the parish a boring was executed to the depth of 160 feet, but that it failed. This attempt cost about L. 150. But even this was not without its advantages. A quarry of excellent freestone was thereby discovered in the neighbourhood, which is now regularly wrought, and which will prove of very essential benefit to the lands of Finhaven. Major Wilkie has also opened a quarry near to this on his property of Newbarns, which will also be very advantageous to him in the improvements he is now carrying on.

Botany.—There is an old tradition, and I believe it to be perfectly correct, that a great part of the parish was at one time covered with a forest, called the Forest of Platon, which extended from Finhaven Castle to Kirriemuir. It was probably a royal hunting forest. The names of some of the farms in the parish seem to indicate this; “King’s Seat,” “Forester’s Seat,” “Birkenbush,” “Drakemire,” “Wolf-law.” The forest has long since disappeared; but the roots of hard-wood trees have been dug up lately in several places where the forest is supposed to have been. Within the last forty years, plantations have been executed on a very considerable scale, to the extent of 700 acres. These consist principally of larch, spruce, and Scotch fir, and are in part distributed in belts, and give to the parish a rich and covered appearance.

This parish was at one time celebrated for containing the largest tree in Scotland. This was a chestnut that grew beside the old Castle of Finhaven. It was killed by the severe frost in the winter of 1740; but for twenty years, up to 1760, a great part of its trunk and branches remained standing. It was measured in the presence of some Justices of the Peace in 1745, and an attested copy of its measurement taken. When it was cut down, the late Mr Skene of Carraldstone caused a table to be made of the wood of the tree, on which there is an engraved plate of brass containing the following inscription and statements of its dimensions:

“This table is made out of the chestnut tree which grew at Finhaven, in Angus-shire, whose dimensions, as taken and attested by several of the justices of the peace of that county on the 20th April

1745, were as follow, although at that time the tree was mostly divested of its bark,—being killed by the severe frost in the winter of 1740: “Root end of the trunk half a foot above ground, 42 feet, 8½ inches; middle of the trunk, 30 feet, 7 inches; top of the trunk where the branches broke out, 35 feet, 9 inches; the biggest branch, 23 feet, 9 inches; the smallest branch, 13 feet, 2 inches.” From these measurements the tree would appear to have been upwards of 500 years old—most probably planted at the time of the building of the castle—and, therefore, in truth, one of its “contemporary trees.” The roots of it are still to be seen in the court-yard of the castle. The table is now in the possession of the Earl of Aboyne at Aboyne Castle.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Antiquities.—This parish seems to have been a place of considerable importance in the earlier and later periods of the history of Scotland. Judging from the extent and magnitude of those military works,—Caledonian and Roman,—the remains of which are still visible in the parish, it must in early times have been the residence of some very powerful tribes. These works always bear a proportion to the strength and resources of the people among whom they are situated; and not only this parish, but the whole neighbourhood for many miles round, is rich with the traces of these ancient monuments of their power.

Vitrified Forts.—The earliest and most conspicuous of these in the parish, is the celebrated vitrified fort, on the Hill of Finhaven. This hill, as has already been mentioned, rises to the height of about 1500 feet above the level of the surrounding country, and commands a very rich and extensive prospect. The top of it is completely occupied by a work evidently constructed upon military principles, so as completely to command all the points of access, and nowhere to permit the enemy to approach under cover. It is in the form of a parallelogram, extending from east to west by recent accurate measurement about 476 feet. At the east end the breadth is about 83 feet, and as the ascent is here easier than at other points, it is at the end defended by a sort of outwork about 52 feet distant from the wall. At about half the length of the whole, it widens considerably, and there are here the slight vestiges of an inner wall. Towards the west end, which is somewhat lower down the hill, the breadth is about 125 feet, and at this end there are the distinct traces of a well, which must have been made

for the use of the garrison. It is now impossible to ascertain the exact height and thickness of the walls, owing to the rubbish, both on the outer and inner sides, being covered with a thick crusting of moss and turf. Even in their present state, however, they are in many places upwards of ten feet high above the ground.

The masonry of these walls is now exposed in comparatively few places, owing to that covering of turf which has already been noticed. But enough is visible to demonstrate that they must have been subjected to the action of a very powerful fire. Indeed, a stranger that knew nothing about the place, carefully looking at it, and walking over it, could hardly fail to be struck with the very different and unusual sound which the stones have under the feet. It is exactly the sound produced on walking over a heap of large cinders. Large pieces of the walls, consisting of stones of different varieties, run together in a kind of imperfect vitrification, may be seen lying about. Some parts are more or less vitrified than others, and several of the stones have been comparatively little affected by the fire. Among these, mineralogists have discovered seven or eight varieties of stone, which are not to be found on the hill at all, and which must have been brought together for this purpose. The most fusible stones are placed indiscriminately in the wall with others, in order to bind them together. Dr Jamieson states, that the stones are placed in regular courses and banded, but that they have been very irregularly affected by the fire. This, however, cannot be very distinctly ascertained in its present ruinous condition, when so much of it is completely concealed from the sight.

It has been maintained by some, that these vitrifications are merely the results of the great beacon fires, which were wont to be lighted up on the summits of those hills, to alarm the surrounding tribes, in the time of danger and invasion. It is hardly possible, however, to look at a work of such magnitude as the present on the Hill of Finhaven, and hold this opinion. To suppose that a work of such extent as that which we have now described was erected merely for the purpose of a beacon-fire, is preposterous. That such signals may have been exhibited from it is perfectly true, as they were at that time the only methods in use for alarming the country. But here is a work evidently raised at a great amount and expense of labour and skill, constructed upon military principles, for the holding of a numerous garrison, with walls and

outworks for their defence, with a well for their use, and capable of resisting not only a sudden attack, but a lengthened siege. That it is one of the forts or strongholds of those early tribes, who inhabited the county about the time of the invasion of the Romans, seems to be put beyond all doubt.

Analogous methods of building walls of great strength by the action of fire, among tribes as rude as they, have been discovered in Tartary and in India. The present is evidently one of a chain of forts, erected in the heart of a rich and fertile territory for the defence of its inhabitants. From the walls of this fort may be seen, at a glance, the two strong fortresses on the Caterthun, lying to the north-east. To the west there is the fort on the Seedlay Hills, called Denoon Castle, about five miles beyond Forfar, along with the Barry Hill, in the parish of Meigle. These fortresses must be regarded as the strongholds of the population that dwelt in the rich vales below, and were, perhaps, the means of defending them, not only from foreign invasion, but also from the attacks and invasions of each other.

Roman Camp.—In farther proof that such places as the present on the Hill of Finhaven were not mere signal stations, but the forts and strongholds of the early tribes, it may be mentioned, that in the immediate neighbourhood of such, there is generally found a Roman camp of proportionate strength, placed so as to watch, to check, and to overawe them. This holds good here. On the low grounds, about two miles and a-half to the north-west, on the sloping banks of the Lemno, there are the remains of a Roman camp of very considerable magnitude. This is called the camp of Battledykes. The mean length of it is about 2970 feet,—its mean breadth about 1850 feet. It encloses a space of about 80 acres, and is now the site of a well-cultivated farm called the farm of Battledykes. The prætorium is the only part of it now visible; and in trenching over some part of it lately, there were found some small urns, which are now in the possession of Mr Hillocks, factor on the estate of Finhaven. A coffin of stone was also found: and in the possession of the present incumbent there is an iron instrument resembling the flourish of a flint or steel, which was found there on the same occasion.

Judging from its size, this camp must have been a place of great strength. The celebrated camp at Ardoch is not much above a third of its extent; and, if the estimate be correct, that it was ca-

pable of containing 20,000 men, the camp at Battledykes must have contained more than double that number. The station here is indeed one of great importance. It is situated at the entrance of the great valley of Strathmore, commanding the whole of the lowlands beneath the base of the Grampians; and at the same time it guards the passes of the Highlands through the neighbouring valleys of Glen Isla, Glen Prosen, and Glen Clova. This camp at Battledykes communicated with the camp at Ardoch, by means of the Roman Iter, which passed through the parish. There are no traces of this Iter now to be seen here. In Maitland's History of Scotland, it is stated, that, about a hundred years ago, "John Webster, the farmer of Battledykes, turned up with the plough the foundation of the road in divers parts in its course through the camp." Passing through the camp, the Iter continued its progress for about eleven miles in an east-north-east direction on the south side of the Esk, under the fort of the hill of Finhaven, and across the moor of Brechin, till it came to another camp at Wardykes. This latter camp was so placed as to command the fort of Caterthun. The camp at Battledykes communicated also by a smaller Iter with another camp at Haerfaulds, about eight miles distant, which commanded the whole entrance of Forfarshire.

The extent and magnitude of the camp at Battledykes, connected, too, with the other camps in the neighbourhood, clearly show what we formerly stated, that there must have been a strong and numerous body of the tribes at that time in this quarter. Most likely, some powerful chief occupied the fort on the Hill of Finhaven. We can scarcely conceive of any thing more perfect than the method thus employed for keeping all such in awe and subordination, when we consider that the dwellers in the fort must have seen the Roman legions continually passing and repassing at the foot of the hill, from camp to camp. And how strongly and how constantly must they have been reminded of the presence of their masters, when we consider that the Roman Camp was full in view of the fort, and that they must have heard every day the sound of the trumpet at the setting and the relieving of the watch.

Finhaven Castle.—There is in this parish another interesting relic of the ancient times, belonging, however, to a much later period of the history of Scotland. On the north side of the Hill of Finhaven, stand the ruins of the Castle of Finhaven, once the residence of the Earl of Lindsay and Crawford. It is very beauti-

fully situated on a bank of the south side of the Lemno, which runs immediately at the foot of the castle. There is now remaining of it little more than the two sides of a high square tower, much rent and shattered. It does not appear to have been at any time of great extent. The period of its erection is quite uncertain. No dates are anywhere visible on its walls, but it most probably belongs to the twelfth century.

This castle is chiefly conspicuous in the history of our country, as the residence of that Earl of Crawford who took such an active part in the conspiracies which were formed during the turbulent reign of James II., and who, from his ferocity, was commonly called the "Tiger Earl." The iron spokes on which he used to hang his prisoners are still to be seen on the castle walls. In the year 1445, during the lifetime of the old Earl, his father, he was engaged in a desperate feud with the Ogilvies of Inverquharity,—a family belonging to the neighbouring parish. He had held for some time the office of Justiciar or High Bailie of the Abbey of Arbroath; but the peaceful monks having found the "Tiger" somewhat obstreperous in his conduct, deposed him, and elected Ogilvy of Inverquharity Justiciar in his stead. This was the occasion of the quarrel. The Ogilvies were joined by the Earl of Huntly, who, being at that time on a visit at Inverquharity, was obliged to take part with his host, in conformity to an old law of Scottish hospitality, which obliged every visitor to do so as long as his last meal was undigested in his stomach. The two clans of the Lindsays and Ogilvies accordingly encountered near Arbroath. The old Earl of Crawford, wishing even at that late hour to avert the strife, galloped up between the lines to confer with the opposing party, but was accidentally slain by a soldier, who did not know him, and who was enraged at any one thus meddling to mar the combat. The Crawfords, now infuriated at the death of the Earl, fell upon the Ogilvies with increased desperation, broke their ranks, and scattered them in great disorder. The latter resisted so strongly that they were almost cut to pieces, and 500 men, including many of the Barons of Angus, were left dead upon the field. The Crawfords afterwards pillaged the lands of the Ogilvies, burned their castle, and took captive their women and children.

In the year 1447, the Tiger Earl joined in a league with the Earls of Douglas and Ross, with the intention of opposing the

Earl of Huntly, at that time commander of the royal army, on his passage over the Grampians. They met in an engagement near Brechin, where the Earl and his party were completely defeated. The principal cause of the defeat was the desertion of the laird of Balnamoon with 300 men, during the heat of the contest. The Earl was hotly pursued to the Castle of Finhaven, where, when he entered, he gave vent to his rage and mortification at his defeat in the horrible oath, that he would endure seven years' torment to have gained the honour, which had that day fallen to his old enemy the Earl of Huntly.

The Castle of Finhaven was afterwards the scene of a singular spectacle, which, in its mixture of meanness and magnificence, is very characteristic of the times. Being completely humbled by the battle of Brechin, the Tiger Earl thought it best to submit to his sovereign, and to sue for reconciliation. With a view of striking terror into the hearts of the Earl and the other turbulent nobles and barons in this quarter, James II. came with the royal army into Angus-shire. Accompanied by several noblemen and gentlemen, the once proud Earl came forth from the Castle of Finhaven, bare-headed, and clad in sackcloth, like one guilty of a great crime, and in this plight threw himself on the road before the King, falling on his knees, weeping and beseeching him to forgive him his offence against him. The old historian, Lindsay of Pitscottie, has put a long speech in his mouth, recounting all that his family had formerly done for the state. The historian adds, that when the Earl had ended, the noblemen and gentlemen of Angus held up their hands to the King, most solemnly crying for mercy, "till," as he says in his old quaint graphic language, "their sobbing and sighing cutted their words so sore, that almost their very prayers could not be understood." The consequence of all this piece of pageantry, for such it was on both sides, was, that the King absolved him from his crime of lese-majesty, and restored him to his dignity. The King was then brought by the Earl to the Castle of Finhaven, and was there "banquetted right magnificently."

The castle was on another occasion the scene of great festivity. In 1545, Lindsay, the Master of Crawford, was married to the daughter of Cardinal Beaton. The dowry of this lady is stated to have been 4000 merks,—a very large sum at that time. The Cardinal himself was present in the castle on the occasion, and honoured it with all his ecclesiastical pomp and magnificence.

Land-owners, &c.—The estate of Finhaven has passed out of the family altogether. In the year 1635, we find a *retour* granted in favour of Lord Kinnoull, making over to him the whole of the lands and barony of Finhaven. From a notice in the acts of the Parliament of Scotland, of the year 1686, we find it at that time in the possession of Sir James Carnegie, a branch of the Northesk family. In the year 1728, James Carnegie, then Laird of Finhaven, was indicted for the murder of the Earl of Strathmore, and as in this trial, through the manly confidence and overpowering eloquence of Dundas of Arniston, counsel for the prisoner, jurymen for the first time shook off their timidity, and emancipated themselves from the intimidation then exercised by government, I may be pardoned for mentioning the circumstances of the case. On the 9th May 1728, the Earl of Strathmore, Mr Carnegie of Finhaven, and Mr Lyon of Brighton, happened to be present at a funeral in Forfar, and as in those days intemperance in drinking was very common even on such occasions, these gentlemen with some others had indulged rather freely in liquor before the interment, and after the ceremony adjourned to a tavern. Here Mr Lyon of Brighton abused and insulted Carnegie with the most impertinent language, and after coming to the street, pushed him into the kennel. On recovering himself, Carnegie drew his sword, with the intention of taking immediate vengeance on the Laird of Brighton, and was in the act of aiming a thrust at him, when the Earl of Strathmore, stepping in between them, received the sword of Carnegie in his body, and died in the course of forty-nine hours.

Previous to this trial, the verdicts of jurymen had uniformly been *proven or not proven*; but now they found Carnegie *not guilty*, by a majority of twelve to three. This same James Carnegie, laird of Finhaven, appears afterwards to have been out with Prince Charles in 1745, and, notwithstanding these crimes, he kept possession of the estate till his death. The last laird of this name died at Lisbon in 1775, and the estate was purchased at a judicial sale in Edinburgh by the Earl of Aboyne, for the sum of L. 19,500. It was sold by one of this family in 1805, to Mr Ford for L. 45,000. It was again purchased in 1815, by the present Earl of Aboyne, for the sum of L. 65,000.

Major Wilkie, H. E. I. C. of Newbarns, being the only resident landed proprietor in the parish, may next be noticed. This property at one time belonged to the Honourable Thomas Lyon, a

branch of the Strathmore family. It was then called Auchinday; when purchased by the present proprietor's father, the name was changed to Newbarns. It has undergone very considerable improvements since it became the property of Mr Wilkie, and the present spirited proprietor shows an excellent taste for carrying out the improvements of his property. Besides these two land-owners, there are five others who have property in the parish:—Mr Lyall of Kinnordy; Mr Kinloch of Logie, who possesses the property of Bankhead; Mr Kerr of Wolflaw; Mr Gray of Carse. Mr Ogilvy of Tannadice possesses a small portion lying in the vicinity of his mansion house.

Parochial Registers.—The parochial registers are rather meagre, being but indifferently kept and in an indifferent state of preservation. They commence only in 1716. They contain a notice of the de-forcement of the minister of Oathlaw, Mr Anderson, during the time of divine service, in his being dragged out of the pulpit by four women. This took place in the beginning of the rebellion of 1715. It is not stated how long the minister was prevented from officiating in the church, as the register commences only on the 12th August 1716.*

Old Church.—It has been already mentioned that the foundations of an old church, called the Church of Aikenhould, are still to be seen a little below the old castle. From its situation, this must have been the church where the family of Finhaven attended,—and, in all likelihood, at that time the parish church. Being almost at one end of the parish, it is probable that when it fell into decay, the other church at Oathlaw being more centrally situated, became the parish church. Within the last fifty years, the church-yard walls were standing, in which were a number of monumental stones. These, however, have since then been taken down, and applied to the purpose of making an embankment on the Lemno, that runs immediately below.

III.—POPULATION.

In the old Statistical Account, the population of this parish is

* There is a minute of date 24th August 1716, giving an account of a meeting of session, by appointment of presbytery, which meeting appears to have consisted of Mr Weems, minister of Fearn, with one elder, and the whole session of Oathlaw. The four women having appeared before this meeting, and acknowledged their crime, were ordained to stand each in a white sheet, on the pulpit stairs, in the very same place where they attacked the minister, and then be rebuked in face of the congregation. This sentence was put in execution. The rest of the records contain nothing worthy of notice, consisting chiefly of an account of the weekly receipts and expenditure for the poor.

stated to have been nearly the same for several years past. At that time it stood thus : males, 217 ; females, 213 ; total, 430. From the year 1805 to 1815, the population decreased, principally owing to Mr Ford, at that time proprietor of Finhaven, taking the farms into his own hand for the purposes of improvement. Since that time, however, it has been on the increase, partly in consequence of the establishment of a spinning manufactory in the parish.

The present population is 533, and may be stated thus:—

Number of persons under 15 years of age,	150	
betwixt 15 and 30,	170	
30 and 50,	140	
50 and 70,	58	
upwards of 70,	15	
		533
Gross amount of population,	533	
Yearly average of births for the last seven years,	-	12
of deaths,	-	7
of marriages,	-	4
Unmarried men, bachelors and widowers, upwards of 50 years of age,	-	9
Widows and unmarried women upwards of 45,	-	6
Average number of children in each family,	-	5
Fatuous persons,	-	1
Insane,	-	1
The number of families,	-	91
chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	45
trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	20

There is only one heritor of independent fortune resident in the parish, viz. Major Wilkie, H. E. I. C. of Newbarns. There are six proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards.

Character of the People.—In the appendix to the last Statistical Report, Mr Raiker, the latest incumbent but one, who was minister of the parish for sixty-three years, describes the people as being sober, frugal, and laborious. He states, “ We have neither brewers nor beggars, nor bastards, nor bankrupts, nor idlers, nor drunkards ; every family brews their own beer ; no sectaries.” The character of the people is still sober, frugal, and laborious ; but, with respect to the other statements of the reverend gentleman, I cannot say that they all hold good at the present day. It may be added, however, that there is no poaching, nor smuggling, nor pawnbroking. The people, in general, are cleanly ; and, with respect to most of the comforts of life, they have partaken in that progressive improvement, which is now so general over the land. They are better clothed, better lodged, and better fed, than formerly. Their fare is the common fare in this quarter of the country ;—the different preparations of oatmeal, sometimes flour-

bread, potatoes, and butcher-meat occasionally. On the whole, they seem contented and happy with their lot.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture and Rural Economy.—The number of acres in the parish, either cultivated or occasionally in tillage, is 2850. The land under wood may amount to about 900 acres, besides which there are about 120 lying in a state of waste. The total number of acres in the parish thus amounts to 3870.

Rent of Land.—The average rent of arable land is about L. 1, 3s. per acre. The average rent of grazing per ox or cow is L. 1, 12s.; per ewe or full-grown sheep, 8s.

Rate of Wages.—The yearly wages of farm-servants is from L. 10 to L. 12, with their meal and milk. Daily wages, winter and summer, about 1s. 7d.

Price of Raw Produce, &c.—The average price of wheat for the last seven years has been L. 2, 16s. 6d.; of barley, L. 1, 10s., and oats L. 1, 3s., all per imperial quarter; potatoes, per boll, (32 stones) 9s.; hay per stone, 6d.; butter per lb. 7½d.; cheese per stone, 5s.; eggs per dozen, 5d.; mason work per rood, all materials supplied, L. 1, 12s.; carpenter work per day, 2s. 3d.

Live-Stock.—The common breed of cattle in this parish is the black Angus-shire. There are but few sheep, and these of the common black-face, with a few of the Cheviot, Leicester, and South Down breeds.

Husbandry.—The general character of the husbandry in this parish is now excellent,—the tenants being all bound to a rotation to suit the quality of the land. All the waste land, in any respect fit for tillage, is improved; and all the arable land is properly drained, or in process of being drained, by sewers, not less than five feet deep, and by open ditches of a proper depth, to take off the water from the covered drains. There are about three or four miles of embankments on the Rivers Esk and Lemno, to prevent them overflowing the adjacent grounds. The general duration of leases is nineteen years, and this is supposed to be the most favourable term for the tenant. Farming, on the whole, is carried on in the parish after the most approved plan. Since 1805, few parishes have made a more visible improvement in husbandry than Oath-law, and previous to this few were more backward.

Improvements.—Within the last thirty years, much waste land has been reclaimed, and a great deal of draining has been execut-

ed under the encouragement of the principal proprietor. The state of farm-buildings and enclosures is now very good. The enclosures chiefly consist of thorn hedges, which are calculated to be of not less than 75 miles in extent upon the estate of Finhaven; and Major Wilkie, on his property of Newbarns, pays equal attention to this kind of ornamental enclosures. During the time that the estate of Finhaven was in the possession of Mr Ford, it underwent very considerable improvement both on the arable and the waste lands. Many ornamental belts of wood were then made on waste lands, and the present proprietor, the Earl of Aboyne, has followed up these improvements, of draining and planting, under the personal superintendence of Mr Hillocks, for many years his Lordship's factor,—he having planted upwards of 80,000 trees, so that now there are upwards of 750 acres of plantations on the estate.

The principal obstacle to improvement in the parish is the great distance from lime and manure;—Montrose, the nearest sea port town, being 16 miles distant. Every encouragement to improvement has been offered by the Earl of Aboyne, by giving both lime and manure to many of his tenants during the first six or seven years of their leases,—by binding himself to open up drains where necessary,—and by enclosing with paling those fields where the hedges do not form a sufficient fence. And, it may be remarked, that he has built excellent houses and steadings for the comfort and advantage of his tenantry,—the tenants in such cases being only required to make good the carriages.

Quarries.—Another circumstance which has contributed to the improvement of the parish has been the opening up of that quarry of freestone which has been already alluded to. Until this was discovered, the parish was but ill supplied with building stones,—the nearest quarries at that time being at Forfar and Kirriemuir. This has greatly tended to make the houses and steadings in the parish more substantial, comfortable, and neat in their appearance than they formerly were.

Fisheries.—There are no fisheries in the parish. The Esk formerly abounded with salmon in this part; but, as is stated in the old Statistical Account, there are now few to be found. A very few are now and then killed with the rod.

Spinning-Mill.—Within the last few years a spinning-mill has been erected in the parish, which employs about 60 hands. In

reference to the number of hours, and other particulars, they are of course under the operation of the late Act of Parliament. The health of those employed in them is in general good, and the wages which they receive are quite sufficient to secure them the comforts of life, if they were managed with proper care. It is, however, a matter of regret that families who receive so much for their labour should make such a bad use of it. It is melancholy to see the misery that often is amongst them, arising from habits of intemperance and prodigality, with all the other evils that proceed from these sources, such as husbands deserting their wives and families. There is certainly no necessary connection between this kind of labour and habits of intemperance and mismanagement, and it is to be hoped that, in the course of time, a progressive improvement will be witnessed amongst them.

Produce.—Average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish, as nearly as can be ascertained :—

Wheat, 493 qrs. at L. 2, 16s. 6d.	-	-	L. 1392	14	6
Barley, 1336½ qrs. at L. 1, 10s.	-	-	1999	15	0
Oats, 2677 qrs. at L. 1, 3s.	-	-	3078	11	0
Potatoes, 1726 bolls of 32 stones, at 8s.	-	-	690	0	0
Turnips, 276 acres at L. 4 per acre,	-	-	1104	0	0
Hay, 250 acres at L. 4 per acre,	-	-	1000	0	0
Pasture, 414 acres at L. 1, 5s. per acre,	-	-	582	10	0
Butter, 14,352 lbs. at 7d.	-	-	418	12	0
Cheese, 897 stones at 4s. 6d.	-	-	201	16	6
Produce of woods and plantations.	-	-	250	0	0

L. 10,717 19 6

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Towns.—There is at present no market or market-town in the parish. In the acts of the Parliament of Scotland 1686, there is a warrant granted to Sir James Carnegie of Finhaven, to hold two free fairs at the Kirk town of Finhaven, yearly, together with a weekly market there. These seem to have fallen into disuse, as there is now nothing of the kind in the parish. The nearest market-town is Forfar, distant rather more than four miles.

Means of Communication.—There is no post-office here, but a daily runner from Forfar to Brechin passes through the parish. There are three public coaches that pass and repass during the day. There are four miles of turnpike road in the parish in excellent order. There is one bridge over the Esk, and there are five small bridges over the Lemno, all in good condition, and executed within the last twenty-five years.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church is a neat modern build-

ing with a tower, situated almost in the centre of the parish: it is very conveniently placed for all parts of the population, the furthest extremity of the parish not being much above three miles distant. It was built in 1815, and, save that the walls are in some places rather leaky, it is otherwise in very good repair. It contains accommodation for upwards of 200 sittings. There are no seats set apart for the poor,—indeed the whole is too small for the population. A petition was presented to the session about six months ago, signed by forty individuals, requesting accommodation in the church, and the Earl of Aboyne has given his consent to have a gallery erected at the west end, which it is expected will be accomplished this spring.

The manse was built in 1814, and received an enlargement in 1833. The glebe was formerly about seven acres and a half in extent, arable land. When a commony was divided many years ago in the west extremity of the parish, a portion of this was set apart for the minister, amounting to about eight acres. As this lay at a considerable distance, it was comparatively of little value to any incumbent. An arrangement has, however, been lately made, by which this portion of commony belonging to the minister has been exchanged for a portion of arable land, amounting to two acres and a half, and adjoining the rest of the glebe. The glebe is, therefore, now about ten acres of arable land. The amount of the stipend is L. 155, 7s. 6d. in money, including the sum given for communion elements, and 6 bolls, 3 firlots meal, and 2 pecks, 1 lippy barley.

Divine service is on the whole well attended; and when the addition of a gallery is made, it will conduce much to the comfort of the parishioners, and take away that excuse which some are apt to make, that they cannot attend public worship, as they have no seat in church. The number of families attending the Established church may be stated to be 40; persons of all ages, 200; and the average number of communicants about 200; of Dissenting individuals there are in the parish, 2; Seceders, 5; Episcopalians, 3; and Roman Catholics, 4.

Benefactions.—In March 1833, the parish received a benefaction of L. 100 from Alexander Hanton, many years tenant in the parish, to be called “Hanton’s Bequest;” the interest of the money to be laid out for the poor of the parish, at the discretion of the minister and elders.

Upwards of ninety years ago, a handsome silver basin for baptisms, 20 oz. 7d. weight, was presented to the parish by Mr Dick of Pitkerro. It bears this inscription,—“ Ex dono Johannis Dick de Pitkerro, in usum parochiæ suæ nativatis de Othlaw, A. D. 1742.” One of the communion cups was also presented to the parish, and bears this inscription,—“ Ex dono Eliz. Smith, in usum parochiæ de Oathlaw, 1789.”

Education.—The parish school is the only one in the parish. The branches commonly taught are, reading, writing, arithmetic, Latin, and geography. The salary is the maximum, L. 34, 4s. 6d. and the amount of school fees may at present be about L. 18. The teacher has rather more than the legal accommodation. The general expense of education per year may be about 15s. There are comparatively few between 6 and 15 years of age unable to read or write, and fewer still above that age. There is no part of the parish so distant as to prevent attendance, and no additional schools are required. The people are in general very much alive to the benefits of education, and have made very considerable improvements in many respects, since the facilities for education have increased.

The total number of scholars at the school is 53; their attendance is generally for a period of six or seven years.

Library.—There is a Parochial Library, which was instituted some years ago. It received a large contribution of books from Mr Douglas of Cavers, and now consists of several hundred volumes, chiefly religious.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of poor on the poors' roll is 5,—the highest rate being 1s. 9d. per week, the lowest 1s. There is one woman, a lunatic, in the Montrose Asylum, at an expense of L. 16 per annum board, and L. 2 per do. clothes. Since 1824, there has been one foundling on the parish, at an average expense of L. 7 per annum.

The annual amount of contributions for the poor may be thus stated: Church collections, L. 19, 2s.; money at interest, L. 5; “Hanton's Bequest,” L. 4, 10s.; total, L. 28, 12s. The average annual receipts thus amounting only to L. 28, 12s, while the annual disbursements are L. 41, occasioned by the expense of the lunatic in Montrose Asylum, and the foundling,—the heritors have agreed to give a yearly donation to make up the deficiency, so long as these expenses remain upon the parish.

In the old Statistical Account of the parish, Mr Raiker has stated, that the average number of poor in the parish at that time was 2. This statement seems to have been doubted in some quarter, for in the Appendix, Vol. xxi. p. 58, he says, "To satisfy you concerning the number of our paupers,—that we have no more than two receiving charity, is a certain fact, both old women and widows: and what is still more, one of these does not properly belong to us, but to a neighbouring parish, and came to reside with a daughter married to a labouring man here." He adds the reason for this, which we have quoted above; and continues, "We have a family or two with a number of young children that we occasionally relieve with small sums, and it is sometimes with difficulty that they can be prevailed upon to accept of them, but no longer than they can do for themselves, which is often at a very early age."

We cannot help stating, that it is matter of high satisfaction to find that the same disposition not to be burdensome to the parish still prevails. As a proof of this honourable trait in the people's character, it may be mentioned, that one man, several years ago, being under the necessity of removing to Dundee to undergo the operation of lithotomy, the parish contributed several pounds to assist him; and the operation having been successful, he, after resuming work, repaid the whole into the funds, though, from its having been bestowed as a gift, this was neither wished nor expected.

Alehouse.—An alehouse has been established in the parish since the date of the former Account. The tenant and his whole family are among the most sober, quiet, and industrious individuals in the parish; but this much I am bound to notice, that all such houses in the neighbourhood of spinning-mills or large works of any kind tend to keep up and cherish those habits of intemperance which may have been previously formed in towns and large communities. It is also a general observation, that all such houses are too highly rented, especially if there be land attached to them; and this is by no means conducive to their regularity, or to the benefit of society in their neighbourhood.

Fuel.—Although peat is found in abundance in the neighbouring parishes, there is comparatively little here. The moss of Balenshoe is the only one on which the estate of Finhaven has a claim, and it is nearly exhausted. The principal fuel in the parish is coal and wood,—the wood being procured in the parish, and the coals being brought from Montrose and Arbroath.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

In the present depressed state of agriculture, the farmers having great difficulty in paying their rents, the Earl of Aboyne, at the last collection, being for crop and year 1833, was pleased to accept of the rents according to the fiars prices of the grain, by which means the tenantry received a reduction in their money rents of twenty per cent.

At the time of the last Statistical Account, much of the land in the parish was in a state of waste,—the appearance of the country was bare and bleak,—the climate cold and damp, owing to the quantity of surface water on the land. Most of the houses in the parish were at that time of the rudest and the meanest kind, built of unhewn stone, and covered with thatch, scarcely one of mason work, or covered with slates. Now the farms are all laid out and enclosed,—draining is carried to great perfection,—and farm-houses and steadings are neatly and substantially built and covered. Thriving woods and belts of plantations are rising up, and giving a rich and clothed appearance to the country. Along with all this, it is gratifying to observe, that the habits of the people are improving. There is now a greater neatness and cleanliness in their dwellings, and a greater share of the comforts of life amongst them; and, though last, not least, there is evidently an increasing desire of information, and, generally speaking, a higher and better tone of moral feeling.

February 1835.