

## PARISH OF AUCHTERHOUSE.

PRESBYTERY OF DUNDEE, SYNOD OF ANGUS AND MEARNS.

THE REV. GEORGE WINEHOUSE, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—The name of this parish is supposed to be derived either from the Gaelic word *Achter*, “the high ground on which the church, the House of God, stands,” or from *Achadh Torr*, pronounced *Ach-tor*, “the house with the tower in the field,” which is descriptive of a ruin near the manor-house of Auchterhouse.

*Boundaries.*—The parish is bounded on the east by that of Tealing; on the south-east, by Mains and Strathmartine; on the south, by Liff; on the west and south-west, by Lundie and Foulis; on the north-west, by Newtyle; and on the north and north-east, by Glammiss.

*Figure and Elevation.*—The figure of the parish is that of a triangle, the base of which forms its south boundary, and rests on the narrow valley through which Dighty water runs; and the two sides, indented in several places, rise to a bend in a hill-stream, on the north side of the south ridge of the Hill of Sidla, by which it is separated from Strathmore. Its exposure is to the south, and its surface is varied by undulating acclivities, which point east and west, and increase in elevation and steepness from south to north. The acclivities to the south of the church, and that on which the church stands, are accessible, and under cultivation; but that to the north of the church, which forms the Hill of Sidla, is precipitous, and available only for pasturage and forest planting. The elevation of the summit of the south acclivity is 500 feet; that on which the church stands is 800 feet; and that of the White Sheets of Sidla, which is the highest ground in the parish, is 1400 feet above the level of high water mark at Dundee.

*Extent and Geology.*—The superficial extent of this parish is about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  square miles, or 5448 imperial acres. Of that extent,

3567 acres are under cultivation, 1406 under wood, and 475 are hill pasture.

The cultivated land is in general a black mould, mixed in some places with sand, over a stratum of till or clay, or a bed of marl, and incumbent on rock. Under judicious management, it produces good crops of turnips and potatoes, and oats and barley; but wheat has been found, for several years, not to afford an adequate remuneration, and has, on that account, not been extensively sown.

The uncultivated ground is, with the exception of a few small patches, a thin surface of moorland over a bed of retentive till, resting on rock; but, to the elevation of about 900 feet, some kinds of forest trees grow on it very freely, and to a considerable size. Scotch fir and spruce thrive well on this soil; but larch, from some cause not yet well ascertained, has, for several years, been found subject to disease and decay, within a few years after being planted on it.

Sandstone rock lies at or near the surface of almost the whole extent of this parish, and is raised and prepared for several useful purposes at a moderate expense. The Hill of Sidla is a mass of the oldest series of sandstone, intersected in some places with trap dikes, and in others overlaid with trap. In some places, the sandstone is in thick beds, and of gross texture, with a dip to the west of about one foot in six, and affords durable materials for building; in other places, it is in thin beds, and of fine texture, and is formed into pavement and coarse slates. In these thin beds are found wedges of calc, and impressions of organic remains of the vegetable kingdom.

*Rivulets.*—The rivulets in this parish have their sources in the lochs of Lundie, on the west, and in the springs near the base of Sidla, on the north. One of these rivulets runs five miles from west to east, along the whole line of the south border of the parish, and is called, for part of its course, the Burn of Dronly; but, at the village of Dronly, where it receives the Burn of Auchterhouse from the north-west, it assumes the name of Dighty Water for the rest of its course eastward through the parishes of Mains and Strathmartine, and Monifieth, till it falls into the Tay, near the influx of that river into the German Ocean. The Burn of Dronly, before its junction with that of Auchterhouse, is the moving power of one yarn washing-mill; and the Burn of Auchterhouse, before its junction with that of Dronly, is the moving

power of two corn-mills and one yarn washing-mill. The numerous springs, which rise in all parts of the parish, afford, in ordinary seasons, an adequate provision of excellent water for all domestic and agricultural purposes.

*Climate.*—The climate of this parish is particularly healthy. On the low grounds, it has of late years been greatly improved, by extensive and judicious draining, which has purified the air of miasma and milldews; and, on the high grounds, though sharp, it is generally dry and cool, and bracing. The temperature is moderate and equable, the thermometer in the house seldom rising in summer above 80°, or falling in winter below 45°. The barometer, at an elevation of 800 feet, generally ranges from 28½ to 30°.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parish registers are, 1st, a very old one, recording texts and acts of church discipline, commencing with May 1645, and closing with May 1692, much mutilated, and almost illegible; 2d, a cash-book, in good preservation, extending from December 1722 to December 1740; 3d, a cash-book and records from December 1740 to August 1804; 4th, baptismal registers from 1707 to the present time; 5th, a cash-book, with some minutes of session from 1804 to the present time; 6th, a sessional record from 1818 to the present time.

*Manor-Houses and Antiquities.*—The House of Auchterhouse is the only manor-house in this parish. It is an old building, the property of the Earl of Airhie, and inhabited by Lady Helen Wedderburn and family; and, with its orchards almost close to it, is the best specimen now in this part of the country, of an old baronial residence. Near it is a ruin, from which, it is the opinion of some people, that the parish takes its name. It is a square tower, of great thickness of wall, part of a strong building, which, when entire, had occupied a much larger space than the present house. It is called Wallace Tower, and that name had perhaps been given it, on purpose to perpetuate the remembrance of a visit paid by the great Scottish patriot to his contemporary and particular friend, Sir John Ramsay, the proprietor at that time of the barony of Auchterhouse. That Sir William Wallace did visit Sir John Ramsay at Auchterhouse, there can be no doubt; for it is particularly recorded, that, on landing at Montrose with his French auxiliaries, for the recovery of his native country from the English,

Good Sir John Ramsay, and the Ruthven true,  
Barclay and Bisset, with men not a few,  
Do Wallace meet,—all canty, keen, and crouse,  
And with three hundred march to Ochterhouse.

At no great distance from the House of Auchterhouse, and in other parts of the parish, some of those subterraneous abodes, called *weems*, have been found, one of which contained the stones of a hand-mill and some bones, and a brass ring, and another the bones of some animal, and a parcel of the ashes of burned wood; and near the bottom of the south declivity of the Hill of Sidla, stands a Druidical altar in a very entire state. On a farm in the south-east district of the parish, several traces of a battle have been recently discovered. In one place, the spade and mattock were opposed by a strong plate of vitrified stones. The stones were of the same kind with those on the surface of the contiguous corn-field. The plate was of a circular figure, of four yards diameter, and on it lay a bed two inches thick, of nearly decomposed human bones, covered by a surface of the ashes of burned wood; and, in other places, stone coffins, containing human bones, have been disinterred in the prosecution of agricultural improvements. May we suppose that these human bones and ashes of human bones are part of the sad remains of the last sanguinary struggle betwixt the Scottish and Pictish nations for the ascendancy in Scotland, which commenced at Restenet, and closed at Pitalpie?

*Proprietors and Rent.*—No landed proprietor resides in this parish. The proprietors are, the Earl of Airlie; the Earl of Camperdown; the heirs of the late Mrs Knight; Mr Patrick Millar; and Mr George Millar. And their valued rents are,

The Earl of Airlie's,	L.1168	6	8
The Earl of Camperdown's,	491	13	4
The heirs of the late Mrs Knight,	166	13	4
Mr Patrick Millar,	200	0	0
Mr George Millar,	10	0	0
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	L.2036	13	4

Their real rents are,

The Earl of Airlie's,	L.3000	0	0
The Earl of Camperdown's,	1455	15	3
The heirs of the late Mrs Knight,	365	0	0
Mr Patrick Millar's,	360	0	0
Mr George Millar's,	10	0	0
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	L.5190	15	3

The Earl of Airlie is proprietor of the barony of Auchterhouse; The Earl of Camperdown, of Easter and Wester Adamstown, and Dronly, and Templeton; the heirs of the late Mrs

Knight of Scotstown; Mr Patrick Millar of Balbeuchly; and Mr George Millar of Templelands. The extent of the farms varies from about 500 to 100 acres; and the rent from L. 1, 5s. to L. 2 per acre for cultivated land; and all the tenantry are reputed to be in easy circumstances, and some of them to be wealthy.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population of this parish was, in 1831, 715, and in 1841, 769, showing an increase of 54 in ten years. Of that population, 200 live in three hamlets, 100 in the Kirktown, 60 in Dronly, and 40 in Bonitown; and in the parish there are 2 corn-millers, 2 yarn-millers, 2 shoemakers, 1 tailor, 2 blacksmiths, 2 carpenters and cart and plough-wrights, 6 quarriers, 30 male and female weavers, 8 keepers of public-houses, one of whom is a toll-keeper; the rest of the population belong to the agricultural class, or are dikers, or ditchers, or day-labourers.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Value of Produce.*—The extent of the cultivated land in this parish has already been stated to be 3567 imperial acres. The following is given as an approximation to the value of its produce, when the land is cropped, as it now generally is, according to a rotation of five years:

Oats, 1108 acres, at L. 5 per acre.	L. 5540	0	0
Barley, 290 acres, at L. 5, 10 per acre,	1595	0	0
Wheat, 28 acres, at L. 8, 10s., per acre,	235	0	0
Turnips, 460 acres, at L. 5 per acre,	2300	0	0
Potatoes, 255 acres, at L. 7, 10s. per acre,	1912	10	0
Grass, 713 acres, cut or pastured, for 1st year, L. 3,	2139	0	0
Grass, 713 acres, pastured for 2d year, at L. 1,	713	0	0
Produce of dairy,	1000	0	0

L. 15,494 10 0

*Improvements.*—All the farms are inclosed and subdivided by stone fences; and the farmers' houses and farm steadings, with very few exceptions, are nearly new, and substantial, and commodious. And, in proof of the liberality of the landlords, and of the industry and enterprise of the tenantry, it may be stated, that of the extent of land at present under cultivation, nearly 500 acres have been reclaimed, within these forty years, from moor, and moss, and bog, and rendered sound productive soil. And these improvements have been accomplished, either by the landlords themselves, or by the tenants, encouraged by aid given them, directly or indirectly, by the landlords, though opposed by deeds of entail in favour of heirs-male, restricting the leases on the Earl of Airlie's estate to fourteen, and on the Earl of Camperdown's to nineteen

years duration. And in prosecuting these improvements on damp thin soils, incumbent on a tilly bottom, the till-plough is now used, and Smith of Deanston's system of furrow-draining is practised, with the best effect. The sickle and scythe are generally employed for cutting down the grain crops, but on one farm, Bell's reaping-machine has been used for several years. When propelled by two horses, it cuts and lays in lines neatly and regularly at the rate of an acre per hour,—but it is not adapted to uneven surfaces, nor to crops much laid down.

*Planting.*—The Earl of Airlie and the Earl of Camperdown have planted on their estates in this parish to a great extent. The Earl of Airlie has planted on Sidla hill, nearly 800 acres; and the Earl of Camperdown, on the moors of Dronly and Adamstown, nearly 300; the plants were of larch, spruce, Scotch fir, rowan, elm, ash, plane, beech, on the hills and moors; but of these only the spruce and Scotch fir promise to do well; in hedge-rows and for ornamental plantations, plane, ash, elm, beech, chestnut, and lime have been planted and are growing rapidly.

*Mining.*—For several years previous to 1889, and after the railway to Dundee was opened, mining in three different places on the barony of Auchterhouse was actively prosecuted, and yielded above L.100 of rent annually to the proprietor, and gave constant employment to fifty masons and labourers. But for the last three years, all operations in these three quarries have been suspended, in consequence of the demand for building materials being nearly extinguished by the pressure of the times. At present only one quarry, on the estate of Scotstown, gives a little employment to five or six men, at a rent of from L.30 to L.35. But the expense of working can hardly be provided for by the value of its produce. Under circumstances, however, that might give encouragement to building, the prosecution of mining, with the facilities for conveyance to Dundee, which the railway affords, would prove a source of considerable revenue to the proprietors, and give employment to many industrious labourers.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Town; &c.*—Dundee is the nearest market-town to this parish. Easy access is obtained to it, either by the Dundee and Newtyle turnpike road, or by the Dundee and Newtyle Railway. The turnpike road takes a direction for about four miles from the south to the north extremities of the parish; it crosses two streams by good bridges, and is always kept in the best state of repair.

The railway, after crossing Dighty Water on the south-east, pursues its course for four miles to the north-west extremity of the parish. It has a depot, for the accommodation of the neighbourhood, established near the Milltown of Auchterhouse, and affords conveyance for 2500 tons of goods and 3000 passengers annually to and from Dundee.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church of this parish was erected in 1775; the architecture is partly new and partly old. On the west end of it, is a bell-house in the form of a steeple, and on the east end is a cemetery of very old but very entire workmanship, in the vault of which lie the remains of some members of the family of Buchan, of the family of Strathmore, and of the family of Airlie, the proprietors in succession of the barony of Auchterhouse. If repaired, and more regularly seated, and better lighted, the church would be a very comfortable place of worship, adequate to the accommodation of the parish. The number of communicants varies from 370 to 400, and there are no seats let by the landed proprietors, and only a few by the kirk-session for very small sums in aid of the poor's fund.

The stipend of this parish, which was augmented in 1831, is 111 bolls, 3 firlots, 1 lippie of meal; 104 bolls, 3 firlots, 1 peck, 2 lippies barley, 3 bolls wheat; and L.45, 0s. 4d. of money. The manse, which was repaired in 1827 and 1828, is a commodious and comfortable house; and the glebe, which, besides a small garden and the stance of houses, is about seven acres in extent, has been valued at L.15. The Earl of Airlie is patron of the church, and titular of the teinds of the parish.

There is one Roman Catholic family, and one Roman Catholic individual, one Episcopalian family, and two individuals of the Independent Congregational persuasion in the parish; but all the rest of the people belong to the Established Church, and are in general attentive to religious observances, and devout in their deportment in the house of prayer. They fear God and honour their sovereign, and meddle not with those that are given to change.

The estate of Balbeuchly is held by the proprietor *cum decimis inclusis a trunco nunquam separatis*, and has no right to church accommodation in this parish. It is said to have been part of the church lands belonging to the Bishop of Dunkeld, and to have been alienated from him and attached about the middle of the eleventh century by a Pope's bull to the parish of Caputh, at ten or twelve miles distance. Pastoral services, however, have been, and are per-

formed for the people resident on it by the ministers of Auchterhouse.

*Education.*—The parochial school-house was erected in 1789, and has been frequently repaired since that time, and is a well-lighted and well-furnished teaching-room. The schoolmaster's salary is L.34, 4s. 4½d. subject during the present teacher's time to a deduction for payment of a precentor; his dwelling-house is commodious, and his garden not less than the legal extent. His fees amount to about L.20 per annum. The schoolmaster is session-clerk, and receives L.2 of salary and L.2, 6s. 8d. of perquisites for the duties of that office. Besides the parochial school, there is another in the parish. The school-house of this school is paid for by subscription, and the schoolmaster receives the school-fees, amounting to L.20, in remuneration of his services.

*Poor.*—The capital of the poor's fund amounts to L.440, and is formed entirely of savings of collections, and of interest of capital, and of small sums obtained for the use of the mortcloth, and by the letting of a few seats in the aisle of the church. Bank interest is obtained for L.300, and 4 per cent. for L.140. The average of weekly collections is 4s. 6d. The highest sum given to a pauper is 16s., the lowest 5s. per month; and there are, at present, eight paupers on the roll, besides a lunatic patient for whom 6d. per day is paid. For a provision for these, small as that provision is, large draughts, in addition to the weekly collections and contingencies, must be frequently made on the capital of the fund, by which, in the course of a few years, it must be exhausted, and then there will be no alternative for the support of the poor but the imposition of an assessment, which never fails of extinguishing benevolence on the part of the giver, and gratitude on the part of the receiver.

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