

now be estimated at from L. 300 to L. 400, and some have brought as much as L. 500. Scarcely any improvement in the system of husbandry can be suggested, which is not already in progress. As regards the town, it would be very desirable that it were lighted with gas, and that some of the streets were better paved. It is proposed to establish immediately a carpet-manufactory, which will materially increase the means of employment. And the Glasgow and Ayr railway, the terminus of which is to be in this parish, will immensely increase the facilities of communication. On the whole, as respects local advantages, there is much cause for congratulation. But it is to the extension of our educational and religious institutions, and a higher appreciation of them by those for whose benefit they are designed, that we chiefly look, as calculated, under the Divine blessing, most effectually to promote the happiness and comfort of the labouring classes, and of all ranks of the community.

May 1837.

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## PARISH OF OCHILTREE.

PRESBYTERY OF AYR, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

THE REV. JAMES BOYD, MINISTER.\*

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—OCHILTREE is derived by Chalmers, in his *Caledonia*, from the British *Uchle tree*, signifying the high town, or dwelling-place; by others, from the Gaelic *Uchle*, Camp, to which tree is annexed, thereby forming *Uchle-tree* or *Camp-tree*, or from *O'Chaaltearan*, which signifies a district of a country covered with trees of all kinds. Which of these derivations may be the proper one, it is difficult to determine; but any of them may be well applied to the situation of the place. The first name given answers to the site of the old castle of Ochiltree, which is upon the brow of the high rocky banks of the Lugar, and the others may have arisen from a place called the Camp, and the rising ground, now occupied by the houses and gardens of the village, where there

\* Furnished nearly in its present form, by Robert Pettigrew, Esq. of Polquhain.

were at one time many large trees, probably of several hundred years of age.

*Boundaries and Extent.*—Ochiltree is bounded on the south by the parishes of New Cumnock and Dalmellington; on the east, by Old Cumnock and Auchinleck; on the north, by the parish of Stair; and on the west, by Stair and Coylton. Taking the extreme points, it extends about 8 miles in length, by 5 in breadth, and contains, by the admeasurement of the several estates in it, 15,387 imperial acres, or  $24\frac{2}{3}$  square miles.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The greater part of the land lies on an elevation of from 400 to 1000 feet above the level of the sea, with a northern exposure, forming ridges of different lengths and heights, running in general from east to west, and connected with flat pieces of land composed of meadow and moss.

The temperature is very variable, with considerable falls of rain.

The soil is chiefly of a clayey nature, and the air often damp and chilly. It frequently happens that the crops are late in ripening, and not well filled.

*Hydrography.*—There are many springs of excellent water in the parish. There are two lochs,—one of them about 27 acres in extent, and from 2 feet to 20 feet in depth, and the other of smaller dimensions. They are only useful as reservoirs for cattle in very dry seasons.

These lochs, which lie quite open, with gently rising grounds around them, could be easily drained; but it may be questionable whether the land to be thus gained would repay the expense of the necessary outlay. The Lugar runs between the parishes of Ochiltree and Auchinleck; and Coila divides the parish of Ochiltree from that of Coylton. The Burnoch Water, and several other small streams or burns, fall at different points into the Lugar or Coila, which run into the river Ayr.

*Geology.*—Although it be known that there are several seams of coal within the parish, none is raised, from the impression that they could not be worked to advantage. No limestone has been discovered. There is plenty of freestone in various places, particularly on the banks of the Lugar, and at Garrochhill. Ironstone, in thin beds, has been discovered in the hills of Polquhairn and Greenhill, but not in such quantities as to encourage any work to be carried thereon.

From the declivity of the different ridges already referred to, which mark the appearance of the parish, there has been much

alluvial deposit carried into the lower places, which has formed meadows and marshes; but, being of a clayey nature, it continues soft, and induces the growth of rushes, sprets, and other grasses usually found in wet places. The greater part of the land consists of a clayey loam, resting on a stiff clay subsoil, and, without draining to a great extent, unfit for the new mode of husbandry, where green drilled crops enter into one of the rotations. The uplands are generally mossy, resting on clay of a yellow colour, covered by moss of various depths, which often break into what are called hags, or flow-moss.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The author of *Caledonia* mentions, "that, as early as the year 1498, there had been a feud between Hugh Campbell of Loudon, the sheriff of Ayr, and Sir William Colville of *Uchletree*, Knight," when the King granted an exemption to Sir William Colville and his tenants and servants from the jurisdiction of Hugh Campbell and his deputies, "because it was notoriously known that there is a deadly feud betwixt them." Again, "after the disastrous battle of Flodden, many violent acts were committed in Scotland, particularly in the south. In Ayrshire, the strong houses of Cumnock and Uchletree were both violently taken possession of; their owners having fallen on Flodden field."

From the same author we learn, "that in 1296, Symon de Spalding, the parson of the church of Ochiltree, swore fealty to Edward I. at Berwick. During the reign of Robert I. Eustace de Colville granted to the monks of Melrose the church of Ochiltree with all its pertinents—a grant which was confirmed by a charter from Robert de Colville of Oxnan and of Ochiltree in 1324. Down to the Reformation, the monks of Melrose enjoyed the tithes and revenues, whilst the cure was served by a vicar, who had a fixed salary from them. In 1527, James Colville of Ochiltree granted an annual rent of L. 10 for the support of a chaplain to officiate at St Mary's altar, in the church of Ochiltree, and the grant was confirmed by the King in 1527–8. In 1530, Sir James Colville transferred the barony of Uchletree to Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, in exchange for the barony of East Wemyss in Fife. In 1534, Sir James Hamilton transferred the barony of Ochiltree to Andrew Stewart, Lord Evandale, in exchange for the barony of Evandale, and in consequence of this exchange, Stewart was, in March 1542–3, created Lord Stewart of Ochiltree."

His son, Andrew, Lord Ochiltree, a zealous reformer, whose daughter was married to Knox, appropriated to himself the whole of the lands which belonged to the church of Ochiltree. He also obtained from David Crichton, vicar, with consent of the Comendator of Melrose, the patron of that church, a charter of fee farming of all the church lands of Ochiltree, except the vicar's manse and garden, and this charter was confirmed under the Great Seal on the 10th May 1567. His grandson, Andrew Lord Ochiltree, obtained, in 1601, a grant of the kirk lands of Uchletree, called the Vicar's Holm, and also the advowson, donation, and patronage of the parsonage and vicarage of Ochiltree, and this charter was ratified in the Parliament of 1606. In 1653, the western part of the parish of Ochiltree was detached from it, and formed into a separate parish called Stair. The barony of Ochiltree, as well as the patronage of the church, went through many hands, and eventually into the possession of William, the first Earl of Dundonald, who granted them to his second son, Sir John Cochrane, who lost them by forfeiture in 1685. His son, William, having obtained a grant of them from the Crown in 1686, they continued in the Cochrane family until about one hundred years ago, when they were purchased by Governor M'Rae, who left them to Miss Macquire, afterwards married to the Earl of Glencairn. The barony was again sold about twenty years ago in lots, which were purchased by different neighbouring proprietors.

There is another barony in the parish—namely, that of Traboch, which signifies *the dwelling place of the tribe*, the property of Sir James Boswell, Bart. On this estate there is a farm called Hoodstone, which the ancestors of the present tenant have rented from about the middle of the thirteenth century. About that time, three brothers of the name of Hood came from England, and settled, one of them, in Hoodstone, and the others, in the neighbourhood. According to the tradition in the family, the death of their renowned progenitor, Robin Hood, was the immediate cause of their emigration.

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners, few of whom reside in the parish, are, the Most Noble the Marquis of Bute; Sir James Boswell of Auchinleck; Dowager Lady Boswell; David Limond, Esq. of Dalblair; James Pettigrew Wilson, Esq. of Polquhairn; Robert Campbell, Esq. of Skerrington; Andrew Hunter, Esq. of Bonnieton; Robert M'Dirmet Fergushill, Esq. of Burnockston; John D. Boswell, Esq. of Garallan, &c.

*Parochial Registers.*—The registers of baptisms and marriages go back to the year 1641, but there was no register of deaths till about forty years ago. The registers began in 1641, were regularly kept for a considerable time, but were afterwards for a long period very much neglected. For the last fifty years they have been kept in a most regular manner. The first volume having been written in an old hand, and difficult to be made out, the present schoolmaster was induced to copy the whole thereof into a new book, which copy was, by the late Rev. William Thomson, then minister of the parish, compared with the original, and attested by him on the 3d November 1803.

*Antiquities.*—A part of the village is built on what was formerly a camp, but of its history there is little or nothing known. At the toll-bar, on the road to Ayr, there is a place called the Moat, where, a few years ago, was found an urn with calcined bones, and, last spring, a ploughman, in turning up the soil, found a crown piece of James I. of England, in good preservation, the inscription quite legible, and within it the sword and mace.—Of the old castle of Ochiltree that stood on the banks of the Lugar, nothing remains but the foundation; the stones having been taken away at different times to build houses and dikes on the adjoining farms. There are the ruins of an old castle at Auchincloch, but by whom, or for what purpose it was built in that hilly district, is not known. There is, detached from the rock on the banks of the Lugar, a large stone about 60 feet high, by 40 feet in length, and 20 feet in breadth, partially covered on the top with shrubs, heather, and grass. It is regarded as a great curiosity, and called, from its peculiar form, Kemp's Castle.

### III.—POPULATION.

By the returns made to Dr Webster in 1755, the population of the parish was 1210; and by census taken in the year 1792, there were 1144 persons; in the year 1801, 1308; in 1811, 1548; in 1821, 1588; and in 1831, 1562; which shews a decrease since the previous census in 1821, of 26 souls.

The number of families in the parish at the census in 1831, was	320
dwelling-houses,	271
males,	739
females,	829
Of persons residing in the village,	642
country part,	920
The yearly average of births for the last seven years was	34
deaths for the same period,	27
marriages,	13

Number of persons under 15 years of age,	586
from 15 and under 30,	451
30            50,	296
50            70,	170
upwards of 70,	59
Average number of children in each family,	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
insane and fatuous persons,	10
deaf,	1
blind,	2
Of the proprietors of land of the value of L. 50 of yearly rent and upwards,	14
Of farmers and holders of land on lease,	101
Of grocers and other shopkeepers,	9
Of mechanics of various descriptions both male and female,	214
Of innkeepers,	6
Numbers of families in the parish,	320
chiefly employed in agriculture,	121
trade, manufacture, or handicraft,	118

• Within the last three years there were seven illegitimate births in the parish.

*Character of the People.*—The inhabitants of this parish are very cleanly in their persons, and generally appear at church and market in substantial fine clothes. Indeed, it has been observed that the young females, particularly the servant girls, are rather fond of dressing finely. It is not unusual to see persons of this description arrayed in silk gowns, with other parts of their dress corresponding. Their wages are in this way almost wholly spent, instead of providing, by the earnings of youth, for the wants of age, or for seasons of affliction. The food of the peasantry is generally oatmeal porridge and milk to breakfast, broth, with butcher-meat and potatoes to dinner, and porridge or potatoes with milk for supper. In addition to these articles, they often use, at their meals, milk with cakes of oatmeal, or a mixture of oatmeal and bear meal, made into scones. In the families of most mechanics, tea is used, generally twice a-day, but the practice does not prevail amongst farm-servants to any extent. The inhabitants of this parish are entitled to rank high for their intelligence and respectability. Availing themselves of the advantages which the system of our parochial schools affords in early life, and improving the opportunities which afterwards occur for acquiring information, by reading and conversing with one another,—they are generally well acquainted, not only with the business of their own profession or trade, but also with the speculations and measures that bear upon the agricultural and commercial interests of the country. Recent events have given an importance to politics which the people of this district deeply feel; and the state of parties they observe with a watchful eye. It is only doing the inhabitants of this parish justice to observe, that they are strictly honest in their dealings; that they shew a commendable anxiety to bring

up their children to habits of industry and integrity; that they give a regular attendance on the public services of religion, and generally manifest a correctness of conduct in the different relations of life highly creditable to their principles and character.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—The extent of land under cultivation, or occasionally in tillage, is about 10,242 imperial acres; of hill pasture, plantations, and waste lands, 5145 imperial acres. Perhaps 1000 acres might be added to the present cultivated land, but such an improvement, in order to be advantageous, should be made at first on a limited scale, and under the most economical management. Without adverting to the kind of soil, the distance from lime, and the probable additional value imparted to the land, it is not unusual for theorists to commence their operations on a large scale, and thus create disappointment to themselves, and bring ruin on those with whom they may be connected.

*Rent of Land, &c.*—The rent of land called arable ranges from 10s. to L. 2 per acre, but the true average of the whole is about 15s. per acre. The grazing of a cow or ox is L. 3; of a sheep, 5s. per annum.

*Wages.*—The wages given to men-servants who are fit to do all kinds of work about a farm, average L. 12, 10s. per annum; and to female servants of the same description, L. 7 a-year. These servants lodge in their master's houses, and get their food and washing. Day-labourers get in summer about 1s. 8d., and in winter 1s. 3d. per day, without food; masons and wrights get about 2s. 6d. per day, when working from home. For building houses and walls the charge is L. 1, 10s. per rood; and 3d. per foot for hewn work.

*Live-Stock.*—The sheep kept are mostly of the black-faced kind, with a few of the Leicester, Bakewell, Southdown and Cheviot, with crosses from all these descriptions. There are a few of the black Egyptian breed, at Burnton, and other farms in the parish, which are much admired for their fine wool. The breed of cattle is of the Ayrshire dairy kind, and the farmers are beginning to take greater care in the improvement of their stock, by the selection of superior bulls, and attending more particularly to the keeping of the cows in the winter and spring.

*Husbandry.*—The arable lands in the parish are divided into farms of various extent from 10 to 300 acres; and, according to the usual system of management, a third or a fourth of the farm is put into white crop at the same time. Before breaking up any

land for a crop, it is generally manured with a compost of lime and earth, or with dung; then two white crops are usually taken, with the last of which grass seeds are sown, which yield a crop of hay the following season; then the land remains in pasture for five or six years, before it is broken up again. This is the ordinary rotation. Other modes of management are adopted, but only to a very limited extent; and, therefore, need not be particularized. The mode taken for reclaiming waste or hill land is by first liming the same at the rate of 120 bolls to each acre; or by paring the surface and burning it into ashes, which, with about 50 bolls of lime to each acre, are spread over it. After two white crops are taken, it is sown down and kept in pasturage for sheep three or four years. Furrow-draining is not carried on to any great extent in the parish. Mr Tennant of Creoch has lately drained, according to this system, about 100 acres, at the expense of from L. 5 to L. 6 per acre. These drains are made about twenty inches deep, and filled up with small broken stones at least ten inches in depth.

The advantages that arise from this system are very great, but a tenant under an ordinary lease, would not be justified in attempting it to any considerable extent. As such improvements add permanently to the value of the lands, they should be carried on at the expense of the proprietor, and the tenant charged with a fair interest on the money laid out on the draining.

*Leases.*—Many farms on the estate of Ochiltree were on life-time tacks, but these are now nearly all expired by the death of the tenants. The leases of other lands in the parish are from nine to nineteen years. Short leases are extremely injurious to the interests of the proprietor and tenant. As the lease draws near to a close, the occupier generally does as little as he can to improve his farm, and becomes quite careless about the state of his house and fences, being fearful were he to act otherwise, that some other person might reap the fruit of his labours. It would be for the advantage of both landlord and tenant, that the occupier, if industrious, should have a preference and obtain a new lease, before the expiration of the old one, by a fair valuation of the farm. By this plan, the tenant would be encouraged in carrying on his improvements, and the land always kept in good condition. The farm-houses are mostly covered with thatch, a few with slates, which is considered a great improvement, by giving less harbour to rats and mice. The fences are partly made by ditches with

white thorn planted on the bank of earth cast out of the ditch, and partly by stone dikes; the former costing 2s. 6d. per fall for making with plants and paling; and the latter from 4s. to 10s. per fall of  $18\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length.

*Annual Produce.*—The value of the different kinds of produce raised in the parish is as follows, viz.

White crop, with pease and beans,	L. 9734	0	0
Green do.	1290	0	0
Hay, cultivated and meadow,	2284	0	0
Produce from 1043 cows, at L. 5 each,	5255	0	0
140 fat cattle at L. 3,	420	0	0
1089 young do, at L. 1,	1089	0	0
3448 sheep, at 6s.	1034	0	0
167 pigs, at L. 1, 15s.	292	5	0
young horses reared,	300	0	0
gardens and orchards,	150	0	0
wood sold out of plantations,	50	0	0
	<hr/>		
	L. 21,898	5	0

*Manufactures.*—In the village there is a manufactory for making reaping-hooks. Those made and finished by Hector Walker are sent to different parts of the kingdom, and held in high repute. There are box-makers, smiths, wrights, masons, shoemakers, tailors, coopers, a baker, customary weavers, and cotton-weavers,—the latter class employed by the manufacturers of Glasgow and Paisley. A considerable number of the young females in the village, and in some parts of the country, are employed in sewing muslin,—an employment which in most instances unfits them for other occupations, and, besides, it frequently injures their health, and leaves them very helpless when they get houses of their own, as to the management of their domestic concerns.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There is no market held in the parish. The nearest market-town of any importance is Ayr, which is  $11\frac{1}{2}$  miles distant from the village. There are about 7 miles of turnpike roads in the parish, and 16 miles of other public roads, made and upheld by the statute-labour converted into money, amounting annually to L. 75 a year. These funds are very judiciously applied in making and repairing roads, throughout the different districts of the parish.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church stands in the middle of the village. It was built in 1789, and is capable of holding 900 persons. It is divided amongst the heritors according to their respective valuations, and again amongst the tenants according to the size of their farms. The families, in the village, though many sittings are attached to their feus, complain, with great reason, of the want

of accommodation, and it is hoped that some plan will be adopted to remedy this evil. Built nearly at the eastern extremity of the parish, the church is rather inconveniently placed to a great part of the population. This, however, has not hitherto prevented even the most distant from giving a regular attendance.

The manse and office-houses were built about forty years ago, and underwent a complete repair in 1833, when an addition was made to the manse. The extent of the glebe is about 9 acres, which may be valued at about L. 20.

The stipend previously agreed upon between the heritors and the present incumbent, as awarded by the Court of Teinds in January 1835, for crop 1834 and thereafter, is sixteen chalders of victual, half meal and half barley, with L. 10 for communion elements.

The first minister recorded in the session books of the parish is the Rev. John Blythe. He succeeded Mr Fergushill\* on the 27th

\* The following memoranda, respecting the late Rev. John Fergushill, were sent to me W. J. Duncan, Esq. of Glasgow.

"He was the son of David Fergushill, a merchant at, and for some time provost of, Ayr; and of Janet Kennedy, the sister or near relation of Hugh Kennedy, provost of Ayr, the 'same excellent person whom Livingston mentions in his Characteristics.' John Fergushill received the first part of his academical education at the University of Edinburgh, where he remained for three years, but the plague having caused a temporary interruption of his studies, his father resolved to send him to France to be educated at the Protestant Academy of Montauban, where the well-known Robert Boyd of Trochrig was then a professor.

"His father's wish was, that his studies should be superintended by Boyd, who was his relation or connection; but I have not been able to ascertain whether he ever entered upon his education there. He appears to have resided for some time with Gilbert Primrose, the minister of the Protestant Church at Bourdeaux, but as the plague reached that place in the early part of the next year, (1605,) he probably determined on returning to Scotland. By a letter to Boyd dated September 1650, we find him residing at home. For several years after this period, he seems to have remained in great uncertainty, as to the course which he should adopt, having, on the one hand, the opportunity of following out his father's business of a merchant, and, on the other, the desire to study for the ministry, which seems to have been in a great degree rendered impossible by the weakly state of his constitution. In December 1608, he wrote to Boyd, requesting his advice: from his letter it appears that his health had so much improved that he was able to prosecute his education, but a diffidence of his own ability for the profession which he had so long desired, still harassed him, and kept him in doubt. I do not know what answer Boyd returned, or by what means Fergushill's resolution was ultimately fixed. His name appears twice in the register of matriculations of the University of Glasgow, first in March 1605, and second in 1611. About three years afterwards, (July 31, 1616,) the presbytery of Glasgow 'ordanit that Messrs John Haye, Thomas Boyde, *Jhone Fergushill*, for their farther qualificatioune befor admissiounne to ye hollie ministrie suld mak ane lang lessoune upons some place of Scripture, and sustain the disput upon some controvertet heid,' and Fergushill had for his subject, 2 Cor. 1. 12. his controversie, De bonis Operibus. On September 11, 1616, it is recorded that these 'maide thair Lattein lessouns upon the texts befor prescribed.' From this period I have met with no notice of Fergushill till march 1620, when, as minister of Ochiltree, he was cited before the Court of High Commission, at Glasgow, for non-conformity to the Perth articles. He declined the jurisdiction of the court, and was suspended and sentenced to confinement within the town of Perth, but, by the good offices of Trochrig and Mr

May 1641. And the following is a list of the gentlemen who have since been ministers: The Rev. Robert Miller; the Rev. Matthew Cooper, admitted from Lilliesleaf in 1695; and afterwards translated to Kinfauns; the Rev. Samuel Lockhart, who died in 1724; the Rev. George Reid, who was ordained on the 16th June 1725, and died on the 6th April 1786; the Rev. David Grant, admitted from Ettrick in December 1786; the Rev. William Thomson, who was ordained in April 1792; the Rev. John Lindsay, admitted from Auchinleck in June 1818; and the present incumbent, who was admitted from Auchinleck on the 18th April 1833.

The inhabitants of this parish are very regular in their attendance at church. By the last census taken in 1831, the population amounted to 1562, and on an average throughout the year, a congregation, from about 800 to 900 persons, assembles on the Sabbath day in the house of God. With the exception of five or six families, all the parishioners belong to the Establishment, and even of those families, some are in full communion with the church. There are 764 communicants. Collections are occasionally made for religious purposes, at home and abroad; and although there are no residing heritors, the regular collections for the poor amount to about L. 62 Sterling yearly. From Whitsunday 1834 to Whitsunday 1835, they amounted to L. 68; and in the year that closed, Whitsunday 1836, to L. 75—shewing a gradual increase very creditable to the people.

*Education.*—There are two schools in the parish. The parochial school in the village is attended by about 100 scholars, and the branches taught are, English reading, grammar, writing, arithmetic, Latin, Greek, and geography. The salary is the maximum, and the schoolmaster receives the produce of a mortification, (left by Mr Patrick Davidson, on the lands of Shield, in the parish of Stair,) that yields L. 6, 3s. 4d. yearly. The school fees for read-

John Chalmers, the last part of his sentence was modified, and he was allowed to return to his parish of Ochiltree, under certain restrictions. Little is known of him for many years after this time. He seems to have continued to preach notwithstanding his suspension, for we find, from the records of the kirk-session of Ayr, that he supplied the kirk with a sermon, 'and held session there January 10, 1625, the parish being then vacant. He was appointed minister of Ayr in August 1639, on the translation of Mr Robert Blair to St Andrews, and was received by the Presbytery in the following November. Nothing of importance is recorded of him after that time, except the administration of the Solemn League and Covenant to his people, which was performed with great solemnity in November 1643. He died on the 11th of June 1644.

"The works from which the preceding memoranda are taken are, the records of the Presbytery and University of Glasgow, and Wedrow's MS. Lives of John Fergushill and Robert Boyd of Trochrig; the latter of which is at present in preparation for the press under my care."—W. J. D.

ing English and grammar are 2s. a quarter; with writing added to the above branches, 2s. 6d.; with writing and arithmetic added, 3s.; with Latin, 5s., and for geography, &c. no extra charge is made. The amount received by the teacher yearly may be L. 30: he has also L. 6 a year as session-clerk. There is a private school at Sinclairston, on the west side of the parish, without any salary attached to it, and usually attended by about 40 scholars. The inhabitants of this parish are very much alive to the advantages of education. They make every effort to send their children to school, and though some of them have to go a considerable distance, they are regular in their attendance. There are no children in the parish above eight years who cannot read, and there is good reason to believe, that a single grown up person of a sound mind cannot be found who is not able both to write and to read.

Since the appointment of the present teacher, Mr Patrick Simson, to his charge, which was forty-five years ago, many have gone forth from the school of Ochiltree who now occupy respectable stations in society, as ministers, doctors, merchants, &c. whose attainments reflect much credit upon the instructor of their youth. There is a small library connected with the parish school. Some time ago, there were three friendly societies in the parish; but as they were founded upon erroneous calculations, they did not answer the purposes for which they were instituted, and they are now given up altogether. There is a savings bank, which was established in the year 1831, and is found to be a great benefit to trades-people, farm-servants, &c.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—There are generally about twenty persons on the poor's roll, who receive a stated monthly allowance of from 4s. to 8s., according to their individual circumstances, with a part of their house rent paid. There are many more who receive occasional aid in money and coals. The sum distributed amounts to about L. 114 yearly, which is made up by collections in the church L. 62; by proclamations and mortcloth, L. 2; by a voluntary contribution from the heritors, L. 50,—last year it amounted to L. 127. The burden of providing for three insane persons who are taken care of in the village presses very heavy upon the funds, and accounts for the largeness of the sum annually expended. The persons on the roll are generally old and infirm. They never resort to public begging. They do all they can for themselves, and trust to the help given by the kirk-session, and to the spontaneous charity of their neighbours and friends.

The inhabitants of this parish having determined, about three years ago, not to supply vagrants, contributed a small sum to pro-

cure lodging for the night, and a little bread, to persons who were found, upon strict inquiry, to be in want. Whilst by this arrangement, provision was made for the really needy wanderer to help him on his way, the artful impostor, who was wont to make a lucrative trade of begging, found the sources of his gain cut off, and was led, in some instances at least, to abandon his improper calling altogether. For some months past, this rule has been departed from, and the consequence is, that vagrants are making their appearance in great numbers. It is desirable that all parishes should join in the adoption of some plan for putting an end to this great and crying evil.

*Fairs.*—There are two fairs held in the village of Ochiltree during the year—the one on the second Wednesday of May, and the other on the first Tuesday of November. At these fairs, horses, and black-cattle of all kinds are sold, servants engaged, and such other matters transacted as are usually settled by farmers, &c. at similar meetings throughout the county.

*Inns and Alehouses.*—There are six places of this description in the village, but none in any other part of the parish. These have had no visible effects upon the morals of the people. At the same time, it is much to be wished, that fewer of such houses were licensed. The opportunities and enticements which they offer to the idle and thoughtless for spending their evenings together, may lead to the most injurious consequences.

*Fuel.*—Coal is the principal article of fuel. Some peats are used. The coals which are procured from Drongan, in the parish of Stair, and at Garallan, in the parish of Old Cumnock, cost at the pit about 5s. per ton, and the carriage of a ton to the village is 6s.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the Statistical Account given by the Rev. William Thomson, the parish roads have been very much improved, and a better and more regular system of cultivating the land has been adopted, from which the best effects have followed. Great improvement has taken place in the stock of horses, cows, &c. and especially in the management of the dairy, which has given the very first place in the market to the cheese of this district. The rental of the parish has increased from about L. 3000 to L. 8176, 10s. Sterling, and the inhabitants undoubtedly enjoy, in a much greater degree, what are usually considered the comforts of life. Much may be yet done in the way of improvement, by draining, fallowing, and planting, which in the course of a few years would be a great benefit to the proprietors and tenants of the parish.

July 1837.