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DUNDEE AND THE  
AMERICAN CIVIL WAR,  
1861-65

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

This paper is the first publication of the Abertay Historical Society and the work of one of its members. Financial circumstances permitting, it will be followed by others of similar character, produced to a uniform size to simplify binding into convenient volumes. Preliminary arrangements are in hand for further papers, ranging in scope from archaeology to very recent social and economic developments. Whilst its papers will always have a strong local flavour the Society aims to avoid undue parochialism and seeks to set its studies against the wide backcloth of general historical development.

Mr Carrie's paper is in a sense experimental in method. He has endeavoured to see the impact of the American Civil War on Dundee through the eyes of the editorial and reporting staff of a single old-established newspaper, *The Dundee Advertiser*. Through this medium he portrays the boom conditions produced in Dundee: conditions sharply contrasting to those in the cotton areas of the Clyde and Lancashire. His paper therefore is both an examination of local newspaper opinion and an exercise in economic history, and seems to fulfil the aims of the Society which sponsors its publication.



## DUNDEE AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, 1861-65

AT 4.15 a.m. on the 12th of April, 1861, Confederate guns opened fire on the Federal garrison stationed on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbour. With these shots the Civil War formally began. And what, in mid-April, 1861, of the city of Dundee ? The national census had just been completed, and the citizens were proud of the fact that the town now had a population of 91,664—an increase of 11,000 in ten years. If there is any truth in the old saw—"The clartier, the cosier"—our ancestors in 1861 were undoubtedly cosy. The growth in Dundee's population had been rapid—too rapid—since 1821 ; the increase from 30,575 then, to 91,664 in 1861—an increase of 200%—had thrown upon the city a strain with which it could not cope. That the citizens paid dearly for the desperate overcrowding of their homes is abundantly clear. In May, 1861—and any month of the period has much the same story to tell—of 233 deaths in the town, 118, more than 50%, were of children under five years old (the comparable proportion today is only a quarter of this) ; the town had actually the worst infant mortality record in Scotland. Of the deaths, 9 were from smallpox, and in this Dundee stood alone ; it was the only town in Scotland where that dreaded plague remained epidemic. For one other ignoble record it competed all through the war with Aberdeen and Forfar—the highest percentage of illegitimate births, which at times in Dundee reached more than 15%.

In examining social life in Dundee at the time, one feels immediately conscious of a clear-cut stratification of the classes. At the top of the pyramid is the manufacturing group ; possessed, some of them, of wealth on a princely scale, only a tiny minority took any discernible interest in local civic affairs. Perhaps, though, there is some excuse for that; an *Advertiser* leader of 1862 speaks frankly on municipal government: "If there is any place under the sun," it states, "so afflicted with

quarrelsomeness as Dundee, it is to be pitied. What a scene there was yesterday, for instance, in the Town Council, with regard to the New Burying Ground (the Eastern Cemetery)—a scene quite characteristic of our Dundee boards, and one of the class which deters the majority of respectable men from having any connection with them."\*

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The second social layer consists of the merchants and professional men. From the merchants came the chief figures on the Town Council and the Harbour Board; of the professional group, easily most influential were the prominent clergymen like Gilfillan, a spirited but verbose orator of considerable local repute. Next come the skilled tradesmen and their foremen. On wages of 20 to 25 shillings per week—and their wages were to fluctuate little during the war—they represented the aristocracy of the working population. If the skilled tradesman's wage of fourpence or fivepence an *hour*—and he worked sixty hours a week—seems trivial enough to our ideas, it was wealth indeed compared to the wages paid early in the war to more than 20,000 men and women employed in the flax and jute factories in the city, constituting the broad base of the social pyramid. In April, 1862, a male weaver's wage fluctuated between eight and ten shillings per week; increases were to come during the war, but these in the main were small. The picture is darkened, too, by the extensive use of child labour. A compensation case of 1862 deals with a claim for the loss of an arm in Logic Works by a boy of nine years.

Worst sufferers of all in the town's staple trade were the calender workers, whose hours, because of a loophole in the Factory Act, were not yet limited by law. On their request for a shorter working week, *The Advertiser* has this to say: "In the calenders men, as if by way of testing the endurance of the human frame, are often made to work 14, 15, 16 hours—

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\*As this, like the bulk of the local material, is derived from the files of *The Dundee Advertiser*, detailed references have not been thought necessary. Sources generally are listed in Appendix B.



aye, at times, 20 hours per day. This is monstrous and calls loudly for reform. . . . The pale, tallowy faces of the workers prove only too plainly that they are, as a class, suffering from an exhaustion of their vital energies." The calender workers, in submitting to their employers a memorial, were somewhat subtle in their approach : " When our physical strength is overtaxed, as it is too often with late working," runs the document, " we are brought to such a state of mental and physical prostration that the temptation to recruit them by resorting to intoxicating stimulants is almost irresistible, and, we are sorry to say, too frequently yielded to."

Unskilled occupations outwith the textile trade were little better off; a town scavenger, working 55 hours a week, received twelve shillings weekly; a railway pointsman at Broughty Ferry, on trial at the Sheriff Court for neglect of duty, was found to be working 84 hours per week for 14 shillings.

I have made no attempt to show the budget of a Dundee millworker's family during the Civil War, but, before the wartime wage increases came into operation, it is clear that the margin between security and starvation was a very narrow one. During the war, the long period of regular employment may have produced a measure of greater security, but prices were never low enough to provide luxurious living; the rent of a two-roomed house ranged from £5 to £5. 10s., a 4-lb. loaf cost eightpence, sugar fivepence to sixpence per pound, steak ten-pence to a shilling. It is, of course, easy to pick at random prices which, in comparison to our day, seem fantastic—eggs, sevenpence per dozen, a haircut for threepence, the finest sherry at 25 shillings per dozen bottles ; but the health statistics make it clear that the standard of living was wretchedly low. Even as late as December, 1863, after two years of unbroken prosperity in Dundee, a certain Rev. H. Teape, quoting, during a lecture in Edinburgh, from the records of the Dundee Savings Bank, pointed out that amongst its depositors the total of factory workers was—one. It

is only fair, perhaps, to set against that an *Advertiser* comment of the same period (December, 1863): " It is a pity to see prosperity and profligacy going together, but the police statistics seem to show that as people are waxing fat, so they are beginning to kick. Drunkenness, disorderly conduct, and assaults are all greatly on the increase, and the amount of fines paid last month is nearly three times more than in the corresponding month of 1860."

It is easy to join with *The Advertiser* in bemoaning the toll of the Dundee mill-and factory-worker of. this period—easy, that is, if you care to ignore the sordid and soul-destroying pattern of his life. He lived in a town whose streets, quite literally, stank to high heaven. Only certain parts of the town disposed of their filth through sewers, and the Press is full of complaints of the foul condition of even prominent streets where household and human refuse was dumped to await the attentions of a meagre force of scavengers. Late in October, 1862, an observer named Banks came from Preston to examine the possibility of transferring to Dundee some of the Lancashire workers who were unemployed because of the North's blockade of the cotton ports.

His report, as delivered to a large audience in Preston, is damning in every way—and not least on the town's sanitary conditions. " It is the worst town (for sanitary conditions)," he stated, " I ever saw. . . . It is a disgrace—a most abominable and everlasting disgrace—to the authorities in Dundee to have matters in such a state." We need scarcely feel slighted when he goes on to say that Dundee mill-girls " had very slovenly habits and appearances," and of Dundonians in general that " it appears to me they are a dirty lot altogether," And foul as the streets were, the homes of the workers were little better. Much of the worst housing in Dundee had arisen in the boom period of the Crimean War, but during the Civil War the slum-builder was also very busy. An *Advertiser* leader of December, 1863, points out: " . . . the average life of a man in the western half of

Dundee is but 33 years and a fraction, while in Glamis it is 62½. . . . The disposition to obstruct sanitary measures, the eagerness to get up a clamour . . . against the adoption of any law for so regulating the construction of houses so as to secure healthy homes for the poor . . . are but so many signs of the narrow-minded policy to which we owe the construction of whole streets, in which every house has been built in utter disregard of the laws of health." It goes on to argue that, on economic grounds alone, the loss of labour represented by so many premature deaths was harmful to the prosperity of the industry, and closes with the grim words : " We are dealing with hard facts for hard men." Before examining the actual impact of the war on Dundee, it is of interest, to consider the Press attitude towards the Civil War. Almost alone amongst Scottish newspapers, *The Advertiser*, unlike its recently-resuscitated rival *The Courier*, championed the cause of the North.

In common with most British opinion, then and now, *The Advertiser* tended to see the struggle as one in which the only real issue was that of slavery, and Lincoln's cautious attitude was regarded as unworthy humbug. The significance of the South's fear of being swamped by the alien, industrialised and " free " civilisation of the North and its consequent determination to break away from an association which it could no longer control, and the vital importance to the North of the theory that no state could secede from the Union were little appreciated in Britain in the 1860s. Yet, throughout the war, if that very able leader-writer, William Leng, who assisted his editor-brother John for three of the war years, had little good to say of the Southern cause, his attitude towards the North was often cool enough. In part, of course, this was a reaction against American criticism of the British forces in the Crimea some years earlier. *The Advertiser* leaders are often brilliantly written, in a prose which is admirable and which often echoes the best in Macaulay. It is difficult to do justice to it in a short quotation, but here is part of a leader on Robert E. Lee, the great Southern commander who, more than

any other individual, had come so near to destroying the cause which *The Advertiser* supported. Three days after reporting the fall of the Southern capital, Richmond—an event which made it clear to the world that the South was defeated beyond any hope of recovery—the paper carried these words in its first leader : " The Confederate Commander is a man—every inch of him—an honest, truthful, high-principled man. . . . Modest and scrupulous, and gifted as modest, and brave as gifted, we have in the great soldier of the Confederacy a man who took up arms with reluctance, and who, if he could have had his way, would . . . have had no occasion to take up arms. . . . To make up for weakness in numbers by advantages in position ; so to handle a minority as to make it the majority on the point assailed, and to surprise, confuse and intimidate the enemy by movements as rapidly executed as they were admirably conceived, were the things he studied and in which he excelled. He has proved himself a master in the art of war."

When the Lungs came to describe the more personal side of war, they were not always so calm and dignified ; both, at times, seem to wallow in gore. Their sentimental work—like that of their contemporary, Charles Dickens—is often turgid and strained. Here, for example, is a comment on the humiliating Northern defeat of First Bull Run : " All through the land, fond hearts, which yesterday beat high with hope, today beat funereal marches over the slain ; eyes, which yesterday ' spoke love to eyes that spoke again ' are now gushing with tears ; and, hair, yesterday adorned for the stirring pageant, when the tallest and bravest marched forth in all the pomp and circumstance of war from the towns that had reared them, hangs damp and dishevelled over temples that burn in the agonies of grief."

Much space was devoted to bitter attacks on the menace of the Confederate commerce-raiders such as the " Alabama " and the " Georgia." John Bright, in a speech in the Commons, quoted Milton neatly in describing the " Alabama " as " . . . that fatal! and perfidious Bark, Built in th'eclipse, and rigg'd with curses

dark." The phrase " rigg'd with curses dark" seems to have been most appropriate ; almost all of the " Alabama's " many prisoners, as quoted in *The Advertiser*, described her commander, Captain Semmes, as the most profane man they had ever met. That *The Advertiser's* anxiety over the activities of the commerce-destroyers was justified was made painfully clear in November, 1863. Driven off the trans-Atlantic trade by fear of the " Alabama " and her sisters, many Yankee vessels, some of them very fine clipper ships, sought employment in Britain's Far Eastern trade, or were sold outright to British owners. In August, 1863, there arrived in Dundee Harbour the American clipper " Bold Hunter," with 7,000 bales of jute from Calcutta. For the outward voyage she loaded a cargo of coal from lighters off Tayport, and sailed for Calcutta in September. Unfortunately for her, the " Georgia" had deserted the American coast for the more profitable beat from the Canary Islands to the English Channel. The " Bold Hunter " met her off Cherbourg, and the fine clipper ship went to the bottom.

One final note on the Press reports dealing with the war— its occasional references to Scotsmen who took part in the actual struggle. The Federal forces recruited heavily from recent immigrants, and the obnoxious system whereby, under the Draft Laws applied in the North, it was possible to hire a substitute to do one's military service, must have induced many poor arrivals from Europe to take service in the Federal forces. Carl Sandburg, in his life of Lincoln, points out that, in New York in August, 1863, of 292,441 men called to the colours, 39,877 failed to report, 164,393 were exempted, 52,288 bought exemption at 300 dollars apiece, 26,002 hired substitutes, and that, eventually, from the total of almost 300,000, just over 10,000 became soldiers. Artemus Ward, the American humorist, summed up the situation neatly in a public lecture : "I have already given two cousins to the war, and I stand ready to sacrifice my wife's brother. . . . And if wuss comes to wuss, I'll shed every drop of blood my able-bodied relations has got to prosekoot the war." In such circumstances, then, it is scarcely surprising to learn



that at least one Dundee seafarer was shanghaied at New York and forced to serve for over a year in the Northern forces before making his escape ; a letter from a former Dundonian, William Peterkin, to *The Advertiser* in March, 1865, mentions that there were serving with him on the Northern flagship " Shamrock " eleven other Scots ; and a paragraph in August, 1863, speaks of a hero from Forfar, Lieutenant Milne, who gave an overrun Northern battery confidence to recover by hurling shot at the enemy with his own hands. : Leaving aside these examples of editorial opinion we turn to the chief effect of the American War on Dundee, namely, its momentous impact on the jute and flax industries. When the Civil War broke out in April, 1861, Dundee was in the throes of a serious trade depression. The boom years of the Crimean War had been followed by a violent reaction, and the uncertainty of the 'normally important American market, plus the effect of the heavy Merrill Tariffs which had imposed a duty of from 15 to 20 per cent, on jute goods entering America, saw several large Dundee firms involved in serious difficulties. Exports of linens from Dundee to the U.S.A. in April, 1861, were only one-third of those for April, 1860, and one-fifth of those for April, 1859—a catastrophic fall. A whisper of what might yet be forthcoming was heard in May, 1861, when the commercial editor noted : "It is thought not unlikely that a considerable quantity of Dundee goods may be wanted for army purposes in America—especially burlaps for sandbags." But that was still only rumour in what must have been an unhappy summer, and it is with a sense of relief from the prevailing gloom of the market reports that one reads of an excursion by Cox's workpeople on the 8th June, when 600 people departed in the first passenger train to leave Lochee Station—a long train of 25 carriages, with the Lochee Flute Band occupying an open carriage—to visit Blairgowrie, where, as the local correspondent later reported : " The strangers mixed kindly with the natives and vice versa. The Rattray Flute Band accompanied them through the streets, serenading them *con amore*."

The late autumn months of 1861 saw trade fall into almost

complete stagnation, as—with the famous "Trent" case—the threat of war between Britain and America came perilously near. By the close of the year, though the uncertainties of the "Trent" affair had not been dispelled, trade in Dundee had briskened slightly, though a voluntary soup kitchen had to be opened in the New Year to relieve the worst destitution. However, American orders for linen were beginning to come in, and the end of January, 1862, saw heavy buying of flax in the Dundee market (see Appendix A). The reason for the American demand was, of course, twofold : the Federal Army needed large quantities of canvas for equipment, while, as a result of the tight blockade on Southern ports cutting off cotton supplies, the demand for an alternative fabric rose sharply. Jute goods were as yet little affected ; in February, 1862, Seafield Works, whose financial difficulties had been patched up in the previous autumn, suspended payment owing to the impossibility of realising the firm's American assets. Perhaps the shortage of money in the town explains why an opera called "Once Too Often," which had opened in the Corn Exchange, lived up to its title and vanished after one performance.

By late April, 1862, the tide of trade began to flow more briskly, and a Dundee trade report noted "a large increase in the shipment of bags of almost every description." "Some suppose," the report goes on to say, "that the present civil war in America has created this demand, which is perhaps partly the truth, but the high price of cotton has probably much to do with it, and still more the gradual introduction of our cheap jute bags into new markets."

By the summer of 1862, while applauding the patience of the Lancashire operatives, who bore with great fortitude the rapid running-down of the cotton industry, as new stocks of the raw material failed to arrive, *The Advertiser* drew attention to the rapid revival of trade in Dundee : by mid-June it was able to report the re-opening of Seafield Works (with the name Thomson reinforced by a new partner, Shepherd) and the imminent

re-opening of Douglas and Anchor Mills. In July the general improvement in trade began to have a powerful effect on the jute market. In one month, jute rose £2 per ton, and sales rose to three times the normal quantities ; one healthy sign was the winding-up of the fund for the unemployed.

In early August, 1862, *The Advertiser* reported: " An excellent demand continues for the different kinds of goods," and later in the same month was to speak of unprecedented shipments of Jute goods to the Northern States for war purposes. **By** this time, indeed, nearly 700 tons of linens were leaving Dundee every week by the Perth Railway—the largest proportion of it for shipment from Glasgow to America. The shortage was, presumably, the cause of these increases, and indeed, as indicated earlier, some inquiries were made in Glasgow and Lancashire as to the possibility of obtaining power-loom weavers. There is no evidence of any considerable influx of the Glasgow weavers to Dundee, and the Lancashire overtures; thanks to Mr Banks of Preston, came to nothing. It seems certain that at this period the greater part of the additional labour force required was drawn from the neighbouring counties, where handloom weaving was dying. For example, later in the war, in May, 1864, *The Advertiser* reported that Kirriemuir, " not content with the large numbers of her natives sent within the last twenty years, is increasing her quota ; no less than 22 families, comprising some 70 individuals, are preparing to leave for Dundee at the coming term." The implication of such specific cases is confirmed by a comparison of the 1861 and 1871 Census Report. The following table shows the geographical origin of the main groups in Dundee's population at these two dates :—

	1861	1871
Total Population .....	91,664	119,141
Born in—		
Angus (including Dundee) .....	56,441	74,801
Ireland .....	14,366	14,195
Perthshire .....	6,823	9,818
Fife .....	3,944	5,620

Aberdeenshire .....	2,041	3,245
England .....	1,311	1,920

Perhaps a minor pointer to the growing prosperity in late 1862 may be noted in the re-opening of the Theatre Royal; an advertisement appeared in *The Advertiser* of 24th' October, 1862 : " Theatre Royal, Castle Street. Under the management of Miss Goddard (thoroughly cleaned, newly-painted, papered and decorated) will open on Saturday with a full and efficient company." Incidentally the openings and closings of the Theatre Royal during the Civil War are bewildering ; one cannot but feel that the public of Dundee was as fickle towards, the theatre then as it is still.

By the end of 1862, Dundee was being appealed to for aid for starving Lancashire. In his book on the Cotton Famine, Dr. Henderson describes *how* in November of that year 200,000 people in Lancashire were being assisted by Relief Committees— two shillings per head per week for food being the usual allocation—while in the same month only 7,000 of Glasgow's cotton workers were in full employment, nearly 17,000 being idle or only partially employed. " In a time of calamity," wrote *The Advertiser*, " Dundee is prosperous. Let our prosperity be taken to heart, and let our gift be a noble thank-offering." Most of the important local firms contributed generously—over £6,000 was collected in a few weeks—as the year drew to a close on a note of ever-increasing activity. The harbour arrivals in November were twice those of the previous November, and among the vessels were 88 bringing flax alone ; the total of linen goods leaving the town weekly by rail had now reached 1,000 tons—the largest quantity ever known. Proposals were circulating for the opening of a steamer service from Dundee to America, and *The Advertiser* could say with justice of those customers across the sea : " (It is they who) are the employers of the employers of the larger portion of our Dundee working folk, and it is they who . . . provide the . . . weekly wages of half of the people we meet in our streets." One shadow lay across the scene, though few Dundonians could realise what it was yet to mean. On the last day of the year, a small paragraph commented on the fact that there

lay in Dundee Harbour a vessel named " George Croshaw," loading machinery for a new jute mill at Barnagore, near Calcutta.

1863, with business greater than ever; opened with some tragic footnotes to the record of 1862. Drunkenness was so common in the town in the first week of the year as to draw general comment; the criminal statistics for the previous year, published in January, showed that offences had risen steeply over pre-war figures ; the illegitimacy figure for December—15.3—was the highest for Scottish burghs ; and the death rate for children under five years was the worst in Scotland. These figures are echoed again and again during the war; it is clear that as trade boomed, immorality, insobriety and death—as has been the common experience of mankind—boomed with it. By the end of January, the last idle spinning-mill in the town was again producing ; thereafter, increased production was to be obtained only by extension of old premises and the erection of new ones.

Throughout that spring, the briskness of trade continued unbroken ; even angry protests by the North against the building in Britain of Confederate war vessels, even vague threats of an ultimatum, failed to disturb the markets. *The Advertiser* pointed out the possible effects of an American war in grim words : "In brief, a war with America means, in this town at least, half-time, half-wages, and half-meals." The export figures for May, 1863, show that this was no idle talk ; of linen goods, Britain exported to the U.S.A. in May, 1861, f of a million yards ; in May, 1862, 2| million yards ; and May, 1863, 6£ million yards. By the summer, with 10| oz. 40 in. hessian selling at 3|d.—exactly the same price at which it was selling on the 1st September, 1939—and all manufacturers with many months of order in hand, the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, in reviewing the state of trade, could declare : "I think the community of Dundee would be well satisfied to have a perpetual lease of the present state of things."



So brisk was trade in late summer that *The Advertiser* was moved to one of its periodic homilies : " We have . . . in the course of a few years seen so many ' ups and downs ' in Dundee . . . that we may be excused for acknowledging some anxiety lest there be too large and rapid an extension of mills and factories. . . Then with regard to the workpeople, it is a good time for them. There is plenty of work, and wages have not been so good for a long time past. . . . Sooner or, later, bad times are sure to come again ; . . . now is the time to save a little for a rainy day." By August, the scarcity of labour was so acute that two wage increases of 3d. per week were granted within a month. The boom is reflected in a holiday rush ; with a, holiday break which, for the workers, consisted of only two or three days, few of those hardworked souls obtained much more than a day or two in the country, but *The Advertiser* reports many Dundonians on holiday in Blairgowrie, St. Andrews, Carnoustie, Birnam and—Newport. For the less fortunate, the official opening of the Baxter Park in September provided a measure of compensation.

One striking feature of the autumn was the decision of the Cox and Gilroy firms to avoid heavy freight rates by becoming shipowners themselves. Cox bought from American owners a ship which was named, appropriately enough, "Lochee," and Gilroy a ship named " Alpide." Direct importation of jute from Calcutta developed rapidly during the war, especially after the Cox firm established their own jute presses near Calcutta in 1863. Only one ship arrived at Dundee direct from Calcutta in 1862—the " B. L. Harriman," later owned by Gilroy ; eight arrived in 1863, 18 in 1864 and 12 in 1865. As *The Advertiser* saw it, the chief advantage of direct shipments was that the price of raw jute could not be subject to the evil machinations of London speculators. In September, 1863, a leading article pointed out that one serious objection to shipping jute direct to Dundee in earlier years had been that, since jute was a light cargo, ships had to carry unprofitable ballast such as

stones ; now, with the conversion of the Stannergate Corn Mill to an oilcake factory, linseed could be carried instead. That the direct importation of jute was profitable is made clear by an *Advertiser* comment of 27th September, 1863 ; remarking on the arrival at Dundee of an American clipper, the " Anna Kimball," with 5,656 bales of jute, the paragraph states : " We understand that several thousands of pounds will . . . be cleared on the cargo of this ship." The fall in the last year of the war was at least partly caused by the serious delays experienced by earlier arrivals. Camperdown Dock had been begun in 1857 and was meant to be completed, along with Victoria Dock, in 1861.

A fantastic mess of litigation between the contractors and the Harbour Board, akin in complexity and expense to the contemporary Stipend Case which bedevilled the Town Council, led to a delay of many years, in which East End housewives used the grass-covered bottoms of the incomplete docks as drying greens, and the Camperdown Dock was not opened until July, 1865. During the war years, therefore, almost all the fine jute clippers spent weary days unloading into lighters in midstream. That this was a costly process is made evident by the fact that several cargoes of jute were shipped from Calcutta to Greenock and railed thence to Dundee. Practically all of Dundee's jute at this period came to the town in small coasters after trans-shipment at London. Only the provision of good facilities at Dundee Harbour made possible the regular importation of jute direct from India.

Meanwhile the autumn of 1863 saw the demand for Dundee linen and jute proceed unslackened. By late September, the market reported that some firms had ceased to take any further orders. With gratification *The Advertiser* recorded what it called " A Curious Proof of the Increase of Wealth in Dundee. Last week there arrived in Dundee in the London Shipping Company's steamers no fewer than twenty pianofortes to one firm alone." In November, 10½ oz. 40 in. hessian reached the unparalleled price

of 5<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d.—more than twice the 1861 figure. In summing up the picture of the year 1863, *The Advertiser* could report with a smug complacency : " The spindle has busily revolved, and the shuttle has noisily sped ; and to master and man their music has been sweet, for it told of a business beyond all precedent, of a profit far exceeding the anticipations of a few years ago ; and of a comfortable subsistence to all employed. The evidences of success are apparent to all."

The opening months of 1864 saw a short-lived check to the rising prices of Dundee goods, not because of any real slackening in the American demand, but because of vast increases in the production of jute in India, and the uncertainty produced by the outbreak of war between Denmark and Prussia—a war watched with anxiety and a sense of tragedy by a Britain which had undoubtedly encouraged Denmark to expect aid, but which, in the absence of any reliable ally, decided to revoke its pledge. The prosperity of the jute trade was, of course, by this time affecting certain other trades linked to its rapid development. In April, when the Press devoted space to lengthy descriptions of great extensions to Gilroy's works in Lochee Road—surmounted by its 10 foot 3 inch statue of Minerva—slaters and painters obtained wage increases (1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. per hour in the case of slaters), and even the then deeply depressed class of scavengers, emboldened by the example of others, asked for an advance in wages. The revolution in the attitude towards the working man since the 'sixties is made startlingly clear by the way in which the Police Commissioners, the predecessors of the modern Cleansing Department, decided on granting a wage increase. But let *The Advertiser* tell the story : " With a view to enabling the Sanitary Committee to come to a proper decision . . . by having a view of the men and estimating their weekly value from their appearance, the whole cleansing force— 86 men and 17 carters—were yesterday paraded on the ground in front of the Commissioners' stables . . . ; the general opinion seemed to be that they were really a very decent and respectable though, of

course, unsavoury fraternity, and that they deserved an advance." The advance finally granted—after a short strike—was to the extent of one shilling per week.

The summer of 1864 saw many more extensions to the premises of Dundee firms—a large mill in Brown Street (now part of South Mills), a machine shop for Baxter's (now Eagle Mills), a power-loom factory for John Duncan near the top of the Hilltown, a new calender in Trades Lane, a new foundry for Provost Parker on the Clepington estate, and many minor additions. The employment position in Dundee had clearly never been better; " . . . few indeed," says *The Advertiser* of late May, " can complain they are not sharing in the prosperity with which the town is being favoured." And later that summer, the paper speaks of how a walk in the West End of the city reveals the prosperity of the manufacturers. " Palatial mansions and handsome villas, maintained in a style of elegance in all their appointments which in each case betrays the possession of a fortune, strike the eye on every side."

The closing months of 1864 were, industrially, overshadowed by the imminence of the Presidential election in the Northern States. The failure of the Northern Armies to knock the South out of the war, the appalling casualty lists as Grant's forces closed grimly on Richmond, the seemingly endless nature of a struggle which was using up the finest manhood of America—all these and other factors made Lincoln's re-election doubtful, while it was certain that a win for Lincoln's former General, McLellan—the one-time Little Napoleon—would produce some sort of compromise peace. The uncertainty of the outcome caused hesitancy in British commercial circles. In the event, the re-election of Lincoln stimulated the Dundee market very briskly. *The Advertiser* in late November commented : " The market has been very considerably influenced by the intelligence received of the result of the election in the United States. It may be said that the protraction of the civil war is certain."

In its summing-up for the year, *The Advertiser* was able to congratulate all classes on a year of continued prosperity. It mentions the near-completion of the Baltic Linen Works in Annfield Road ; in noting wage advances, it points out—" with provisions at present prices, our operatives were never before in a like favourable position as regards material comforts." The most astounding piece of evidence to show how much money was being made in Dundee is contained in a little paragraph printed just after Christmas Sunday, 1864 : " In a small church in Dundee which is crowded when 400 people are present, the collection received at the door on the morning of Christmas Sunday almost exceeds belief—it having amounted to the extraordinary sum of 1,400 pounds." That, I think, needs no comment; unfortunately, the writer has not identified the church.

In these years of virtually unbroken prosperity, it is of interest to note that something of the buoyancy and vigour which characterised the industry of the city is reflected in various features of its social life. A fondness for enormously long, very tiring and often fantastically mismanaged processions is clearly evident; the marriage of the Prince of Wales and the formal opening of Baxter Park were celebrated with great energy in this way. Even a royal visit—the Prince of Wales and Princess Alexandra embarked at Dundee for Denmark on 3rd September, 1864—could not inspire a sense of decorum in the excited citizens, and Lord Duncan, who accompanied the royal party, had to use force to hold off enthusiastic spectators who wished to show their loyalty by climbing on to the royal carriage for a friendly handshake. Prize fighters, professional runners, visiting celebrities of many kinds—all found it easy to draw large and often noisy audiences. What little time a sixty-hour working week left for relaxation was used to the full, and at times with a zest which is astounding. *The Advertiser*, for example, notes that, though May Day, 1864, fell on a Sunday, many groups of young people climbed the Law as early as 5 a.m. to celebrate



the first day of summer.

The last year of the war, 1865—opening disastrously with the loss of 20 lives in a tragic accident at Springthorpe's Music Hall in Bell Street—was to show little change in the demand for Dundee goods. The protracted negotiations for peace across the Atlantic caused uncertainty in British markets and not least in Dundee. Merchants studying the export figures for 1864 could not escape the fact that of all Dundee's linen exports, one-third went to the Northern States, much of it to satisfy specific military requirements which peace might cut off immediately. Prices for Dundee goods were lower than they had been for almost two years, but even these lower figures represented a satisfactory profit margin. Strangely enough, on 25th April, when Dundee received news of Lee's dignified but tragic surrender 16 days earlier at Appomattox—an incident which to all intents and purposes ended the war—the markets showed signs of considerable briskness; indeed the remainder of the year, as if to confound the gloomier prophets, showed no evidence of a break in Dundee's long run of prosperity. To look ahead a trifle, that break, of course, was *to* come, and come it did with a vengeance some 18 months later. In 1867, the American Government put on the open market its enormous war stocks of jute and linen goods, and, to ensure their sale, clapped an additional stiff duty on imported burlaps ; a rapid fall in the price of cottons further added to Dundee's tale of woe, and a general trade slump did the rest. By 1868, wages were reduced in the town, short time was introduced, and the inevitable and pitiful accompaniments of slump—the soup kitchens—were once more open.

Yet it is obviously impossible to dismiss the Civil War period as merely one of Dundee's typical wartime booms. The money which had been made out of America's need did not all vanish into West End mansions or, on the other hand, into the tills of the town's 474 public houses. In actual stone and lime, the town still

bears heavily the imprint of the period; even from the year 1865 alone we have the following additions to Dundee's industrial capacity:—Important extensions at Cox's, a mill in Douglas Street for Henderson, the well-known Coffin Mill in the Pleasance, Baxter's King Street Mill, the Cowgate Calender, and other smaller buildings. Many of the old-established Dundee firms of the period, in making extensions, developed along lines of vertical integration, endeavouring to bring under their own control as many processes as possible, from baling the jute in their own presses in India to calendering the finished product in Dundee.

On the technical side of the industry the sharp rise in power weaving in the war years reflected increased overall demand coupled with some scarcity of skilled labour. There was also a very great increase in tenement building, and it is worthy of note that the greatest absolute increase in population in the city's history falls in the 1861-1871 period. The harbour was vastly improved by the opening of Camperdown Dock in the last year of the war, and a belated interest in things of the mind was evidenced by the beginning of work on the Albert Institute and on the Morgan Hospital. The same year, 1865, saw the beginning of work on the Dundee-Forfar Railway, and, much more important, several meetings of influential business men to gather support for the building of the Tay Bridge. These represent positive and solid achievements ; what more might have been done for the future of this city if less of its Civil War wealth had gone to India and to North America is problematical. What is certain is that these years gave to Dundee much of its modern industrial and geographical pattern ; that much of that pattern is deplorable is something which we may regret; yet, given the industrial and social outlook of the 1860s, it could scarcely have been otherwise. *The Advertiser* of 4th May, 1864, displayed remarkable powers of introspection:

" . . . We fear that we are too hard-headed and money-making

a community to patronise to any great extent the fine arts with our money." And that is not merely the voice of *The Advertiser*—it is the authentic voice of all influential citizens of Dundee in the period of the Civil War.

## APPENDIX A

### IMPORT OF RAW JUTE AND FLAX AT DUNDEE

<i>Year</i>		<i>Jute (Tons)</i>	<i>Flax (Tons)</i>
1860	....	36,965	28,644
1861	....	35,716	23,801
1862	....	38,277	32,102
1863	....	46,983	22,945
1864	....	56,404	29,902
1865	....	71,000	36,200

## APPENDIX B

### PRINCIPAL WORKS CONSULTED

- The Dundee Advertiser* (April, 1861-May, 1865).  
 Carl Sandhurg—*Abraham Lincoln : The War Years*.  
 W. O. Henderson—*The Lancashire Cotton Famine* (1861-1865).  
 F. L. Paxson—*The American Civil War*.  
 O. Graham—*The Dundee Jute Industry, 1828-1928* (unpublished thesis).  
 D. Chapman—*Development of the Linen and Jute Industries* (British Association Handbook, 1939).

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