

# PARISH OF LAURENCEKIRK.

PRESBYTERY OF FORDOUN, SYNOD OF ANGUS AND MEARN'S.

THE REV. JOHN COOK, MINISTER.

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## L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE ancient name of this parish was Conveth; but in the course of the last century, it came to be known only by the name of Laurencekirk, originally applicable only to the Kirk-town,\* and derived from the dedication of the church to St Laurence. When the old church, built in 1626, was taken down in 1804, there were found in different parts of the wall, stones apparently of even an older date than the building, on which the figure of a man lying on a gridiron was carved, representing, it was supposed, the martyrdom of St Laurence. Some of the stones were inserted in the walls of the new church.†

\* The Kirk town, which stands on the estate of Haulkerton, is thus described in the old Haulkerton title-deeds: "The lands called Diracrost, alias Belaker, with houses, biggings, yards, tofts, crofts, and whole pertinents thereof, called the Kirk-town of Conveth, alias St Laurence, lying within the regality of St Andrews, lordship of Rescobie, and sheriffdom of Kincardine."

† It has been supposed that the site of the proper church or chapel of Conveth was at one time in a different part of the parish, nearly two miles farther east. Not many

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The parish extends in length from west by south to east by north about 4 miles, varying in breadth from about 3 miles at the western extremity, to less than a mile at the other, and contains about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  square miles. It is situated in the How of the Mearns, the eastern part of the great valley of Strathmore, and is bounded on the south-west by Marykirk; on the south-east by Garvock; and on the north-east and north-west by Fordoun. The boundary with Garvock is somewhat indistinct, following the line of an old earthen fence, known by the name of the Rae or Deer Dike, of which many traces are still visible, and which probably enclosed the forest of Garvock.

*Topographical Appearances, &c.*—The figure of the parish is irregular, somewhat resembling, however, that of a triangle. The greater portion lies on the lower part of the north side of the hill of Garvock, sloping down to the Luther, and rising again with a very gradual declivity, on the other side of that stream. In the north-east corner of the parish, the ground again declines slightly towards the east, so that the water of what was formerly a large morass is divided, and flows, partly westward to the Luther, and partly eastward to Bervie Water. The Luther thus divides the parish into two sections, of which the one on the southern side is intersected longitudinally by the great north road from Edinburgh to Aberdeen, on each side of which thoroughfare, in the south-west part of this section, stands the village of Laurencekirk. The whole parish is rather flat. The Luther is about 180 feet above the level of the sea; the highest ground in the northern section about 220; and in the southern, adjoining Garvock, about 450.

The temperature of the district on the whole is mild. From observations, more or less regular, made during a number of years, the average height of the mercury in a thermometer in the shade throughout the year, appears to be about  $46^{\circ}$  at 8 A. M., and about  $45^{\circ}$  at 10 P. M. The easterly *haars* seldom come across the hill of Garvock; and the cold air of the Grampians is considerably mitigated by the distance of several miles. The prevailing winds are south and south-east. In spring, these winds are often accompanied by long tracts of dry weather. In summer, there are frequent south-west winds, which are rather rainy. In

years ago, there were dug out in a field there what seemed to be the foundation walls of such a building. A circular tumulus of rock immediately adjoining is to this day called the "Chapel Knap;" and the "Mill of Conveth," the only place which retains the ancient name of Conveth, is scarcely half a mile distant.

harvest, westerly winds prevail; but in the month of August, this district is occasionally visited by severe northerly storms, which break down and injure the crop.\* The climate is favourable to health. There are no prevalent distempers in the district.

*Hydrography.*—There is a mineral spring at Johnston, the waters of which are chalybeate and of considerable strength. The small stream of Luther, which runs through the parish in a direction from north-east to south-west, takes its rise in the lower ridge of the Grampian hills in the parish of Fordoun; and about three miles below the mill of Blackiemuir, which is in the north-west corner of this parish, it falls into the North Esk. In its course, the Luther has formed several considerable fields of alluvial deposit, of which great part were brought into cultivation a good many years ago, and have been found extremely productive. About eighty or ninety acres remain uncultivated, in consequence of circumstances afterwards referred to.

*Soil.*—“The whole of the district to the south of the Luther may be described as a deep clay loam, incumbent on clay and freestone, generally rich and productive. That part below the village of Laurencekirk, is rather a cold clay on a retentive sub-soil. The haugh ground on each side of the Luther consists of alluvial deposits of clay and sand, which being incorporated with

\* In regard to this peculiarity, I have been favoured with some observations, which I shall here transcribe, from George Robertson, Esq. Haugh-head, a gentleman to whom I have been greatly indebted in making inquiries with a view to this report, and whose acquaintance with all subjects connected especially with agricultural matters, renders his information highly valuable. “These northerly storms,” Mr Robertson says, “do not extend more than fifteen or twenty miles to the southward into Forfarshire, at least they are not felt with the same degree of severity. The intensity of these gales may perhaps be accounted for by the situation and *lye* of the Grampians, and more particularly by that of the Moray Frith, and the mountains and headlands along its shores. The storms which blow from the north and west, descend with great force from the mountains and glens of Ross-shire, sweep along the Moray Frith, to which they are confined by the high land on the south, until they reach Trouphead; after which, finding no obstacle, they take a more southerly direction over that comparatively level country east of Trouphead, Bennachie, and the hill of Fare. Their velocity and strength are rather increased by the interruption offered by the low and narrow ridge of Grampians lying between the Dee and the How of the Mearns. Farther to the south and west, the Grampians increase both in width and elevation, there being in fact a screen of three ridges, which completely protects the western part of Forfarshire, viz. the southerly range between the How of Angus or Strathmore and the Dee,—the elevated ridge between Dee and Don,—and the still wider range of hills between Don and the lower districts of Banff and Morayshire: These successive ranges of hills, being not less than forty miles in breadth, prove a great protection to the country lying immediately south of them, and naturally turn the wind in a south-easterly direction, until it reaches the level districts of Aberdeenshire, over which it sweeps, increasing in velocity as it approaches Kincardineshire. Whether the cause here assigned for the violence of the northerly gales in this particular district be correct or not, their effects are severely felt, and much complained of; by the tenantry.” I may here mention, that, in preparing this Account, I have also received obliging information from John Peter, Esq. Factor for the Earl of Kintore.

the original soil, clay, is well adapted for agricultural purposes. The section of the parish north of the Luther is inferior, in every respect, to that already described; the soil is generally cold and moorish, and is incumbent on a retentive bottom, or on clay mixed with coarse gravel, strongly impregnated with iron. The land has been partially drained; but much still remains to be done in this respect. From the retentive nature of the subsoil, the operation is rendered expensive, and the success is by no means certain."\*

*Plantations.*—The plantations in the parish consist chiefly of larch, spruce, and Scots firs, generally on inferior moorish ground. The soil appears rather favourable to the growth of hard wood. On the grounds where the old mansion-house of Haulkerton was situated, there is a good deal of old wood of various kinds, and there are several oak trees at Johnston; hedge-rows of ash, elm, and beech appear to do well, where attention is paid to pruning and protection.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

There are no ancient records connected with the parish, or antique relics belonging to it. A good many years ago, there was found in a field, near Johnston Lodge, a small Roman coin, with a different head and inscription on either side, but the only words legible are Aurelius on the one side, and Antoninus on the other. It is in the possession of Mrs Farquhar. About twenty years ago, a considerable number, nearly forty, of large silver coins were found on the farm of Northhill, about the foundation of the old dwelling-house. They were mostly, if not all, Spanish, and in excellent condition. A good many of them are still preserved in the neighbourhood, and have dates 1616, 1622, 1623. The only plans of the parish are those of the different estates belonging to the several proprietors, besides that included in Mr Garden's general map of the county. The first remarkable fact in the history of the parish may be considered to be the erection of the Burgh of Barony in 1779.

*Eminent Men.*—Among the eminent characters with which the parish may claim connection, may be mentioned Thomas Riddiman, the grammarian, who was settled parochial schoolmaster in 1695, at the age of twenty, and continued in that office till 1700, when he was taken to Edinburgh by the well-known Dr Pitcairn.

The name of Francis Garden, commonly called Lord Gardenstone, as one of the Lords of Session, is intimately associated with the history of this parish. He was the second son of Garden of Troup, and was born June 24th 1721. In 1765, he began to

\* Mr Robertson's Notes.

build a new village on the estate of Johnston, which he had recently purchased, and, in 1779, he got the village erected, by royal charter, into a burgh of barony, and, on occasion of presenting the charter, he addressed "a Letter to the people of Laurencekirk," afterwards published, in which he gave them salutary admonitions as to their conduct, strongly exhorting them to cultivate habits of industry, frugality, and sobriety. It was chiefly at his expense, that, during his lifetime, an Episcopal chapel was built, for the minister of which he provided an endowment. Other two public buildings were erected, of which the one is now used partly as a mason lodge, and partly as a town-hall, and the other formed a neat library adjacent to a very commodious inn. In various other ways, he took an active interest in promoting the prosperity of the burgh, the inhabitants of which reached the number of 500 before his death in 1793.

The most eminent individual connected with the parish by birth, is Dr James Beattie, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Marischal College, Aberdeen, and author of "The Minstrel," and of "the Essay on Truth." He was born in 1735, on the farm of Borrowmuirhills, which is closely adjoining to the village of Laurencekirk, and of which his father was at that time tenant, and the descendants of a sister of Beattie are still in possession. His nephew, James Beattie, Professor of Natural History in Marischal College, was likewise a native of this parish. It is also worthy of note, as connected with the history of this parish, that, for the third part of a century, it was under the pastoral care of Dr George Cook, the eminent historian of the Church of Scotland, who was ordained minister of Laurencekirk in 1795, and remained till 1828, when he became Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of St Andrews.

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners among whom the property of the parish is divided, are four. The Earl of Kintore, to whom, as Lord Falconer of Haulkerton,\* extensive estates belong in this

\* Chalmers in his *Caledonia*, Vol. i. p. 541, says, "The Falconers of Haulkerton derive their origin from Walter, who obtained from David I. the lands of Loukyir, (Lungair, parish of Dunottar,) in the Mearns. His son, Ranulph, was appointed *Falconer* by William the Lion, who gave him Luthra, Balbegno, (parish of Fettercairn,) and other lands," near the Castle of Kincardine, (parish of Fordoun,) where King William often resided. From this office he assumed the name of Falconer. Among the lands thus acquired by the family, those of Haulkerton (as the name itself may seem to indicate) appear to have been part. By intermarriages and otherwise, the lands belonging to the family, were, in succeeding times, extended in this neighbourhood. It was in 1540 that they obtained the barony of Middleton in this parish, of which they are also still in possession. In 1647, the representative of the family was created Lord Haulkerton, and in 1778, by female descent, Anthony Adrian, the eighth Lord Falconer, became fifth Earl of Kintore.—See Douglas's *Peerage*.

part of the country, has upwards of 4000 acres in this parish; Alexander Gibbon, Esq. of Johnston, has under 700 acres; Redmyre, extending to about 280 acres, belongs to Mr Allardyce in Aberdeen; and the small property of Mill of Conveth, consisting of about 25 acres, belongs to Dr Alexander Crombie, chief proprietor in the adjoining parish of Fordoun, the distinguished author of the "Gymnasium," and of other well-known works, on "Philosophical Necessity," "Natural Theology," &c.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers have been, on the whole, regularly kept, and contain tolerably minute records of the proceedings of the kirk-session, of the management of the poor funds, and of baptisms and marriages. The earliest entry is April 3, 1702.

*Modern Buildings.*—There are no remarkable edifices in the parish. The church—to which the Episcopalian Chapel on a smaller scale is not dissimilar—has too much the character of most Scotch churches, more remarkable for plainness than for elegance or ornament. Johnston Lodge, the seat of the proprietor of Johnston, is a neat modern structure, and stands on a site commanding an extensive and happily chosen view of the Valley of Strathmore, and the Grampian Hills. It was built partly of stones quarried on the estate;\* but the materials usually employed in the parish are driven from Lauriston quarry, in the parish of St Cyrus, distant about six miles,—of which the stone is of a brownish colour, and sufficiently durable.

### III.—POPULATION.

According to Dr Webster's calculation,—the earliest on record,—the population of the parish amounted, in 1755, to 757 souls. If the accuracy of the registers of births and marriages could be depended on, an estimate might be formed of the population in earlier times. The registers are very imperfect from 1707 to 1716, partly in consequence of a vacancy in the ministry of the parish for three years previous to 1711, from the parties concerned repeatedly disagreeing as to the person who should receive a *call*, and partly in consequence of the seizure of documents from the schoolmaster, during the Rebellion in 1715.† The following is an abstract of the entries from 1716 to 1732.

\* Quarries were at one time opened on two different parts of the estate, but they have been found of little value, and have been discontinued.

† The following entries relative to the Rebellion are somewhat curious:

"The register of Baptisms and marriages since my entrie to this place was taken away, and torn by the Highlanders in time of the late Rebellion, which was in the

	No. of births.	No. of Marriages.	
		Both parties in the parish.	Only one party in the parish.
1716,	10	1	5
1717,	13	0	4
1718,	7	2	2
1719,	8	2	3
1720,	9	2	8
1721,	31	5	5
1722,	23	4	7
1723,	27	6	4
1724,	26	4	9
1725,	19	1	8
1726,	24	4	9
1727,	25	4	12
1728,	26	1	10
1729,	16	4	10
1730,	22	3	5
1731,	22	6	4
1732,	22	1	6

From the state of the country after the Rebellion, the first seven of these years may be omitted.

Number of illegitimate births in the course of the last three years, 14 or 15.

During the last ten of these years, the average number of marriages, in which both parties were in the parish, is about  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , and of the others about  $7\frac{1}{2}$ , of which the half, or  $3\frac{3}{4}$ , being added to  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , gives  $7\frac{1}{4}$ , the number of marriages corresponding to the population of the parish. If we take 1 to 110, as the proportion of marriages to the population at that period, and multiply  $7\frac{1}{4}$  by 110, we have 795 as the population of the parish. It is not unlikely, and there is appearance on the register which renders it probable, that the births were not registered so regularly as the marriages:—we may safely, however, take 25 as not less than the average number of actual births between 1723 and 1732; and if we suppose 1 to 30 to have been the proportion of births to the population, and multiply 25 by 30, we have 750 as the population of the parish. These calculations, though founded on somewhat uncertain data, seem sufficiently to

moneth of September jai vij and fifteen years. This is attested at Conveth Kirk, Febr. 1st 1716, by (Signed) "R. MORTIMER, Seas. Clk."

Again in the minutes of session, "Sept. 25 (1715)—No sermon here this day, in regard of the confusion and disturbances in the countrie." There appears to have been no sermon till February 19th 1716. The session had in the meantime taken "care of the session box, with the money and papers therein, and laid it up in a secure place," (minute of October 10;) and of date February 1st, there is the following entrie: "The elders, finding that the box and cuppes are under the ground, did think fitt to look them, to see if they were spoil'd: which they did accordingly, and delivered the two cuppes to Alexander Cowie," (one of their number,) "to keep. As for the box, they delay the ordering of it till Sabbath next,—but there being a confusion in the countrie before Sabbath, the elders mett, and putt up the box in a private place." "March 9th, It was thought fitt to lift the box and the cuppes, being beneath the ground, which was done accordingly."

indicate, that the population towards the beginning of last century was not under—probably above—what Dr Webster made it in 1755, 757 souls.

Population in 1801,	-	1215
1811,	-	1309
1821,	-	1515
1831,	-	1886

According to a census taken by the minister in the beginning of 1835, the population amounted to 1938, of whom 1391 were within the limits of the burgh. The following numbers, according to that census, will show the description of persons of whom the population of the parish chiefly consists. Of hand-loom weavers there are 68; day-labourers, 46; married farm-servants, 39; shoemakers or cobblers, 16; wrights or carpenters, 8; masons, 8; tailors, 7; all of whom are heads of families. Of weavers there are also 44 unmarried men and boys; 35 unmarried females, including widows, besides a few married women. Along with these may be mentioned 7 men and 25 women employed at the spinning-mill of Blackie-muir.

It will be observed that there has been a continued diminution in the number of inhabitants in the rural portion of the parish. There can be no hesitation in ascribing this diminution, in great part, to the altered mode of letting farms, by which several are united under one tenant. The tenants, partly from this cause, and partly from others, now employ unmarried servants more frequently than those that are married,—a system which contributes to send into the villages a large proportion of the married agricultural labourers,—a valuable part of our population, but not likely to be improved in such a situation. This system tends further to destroy, in a great degree, the connection between master and servants,—the unmarried class being more changeable, and more independent of their masters. The character of this connection is greatly injured, also, by the universal practice of engaging the unmarried servants only at the term-day market, when previous good conduct will be of less avail to the servant for procuring another engagement, than a plausible exterior. The increase in the village population, arising in part from the circumstances just adverted to, is mainly owing, in this parish, to the establishment of the agencies of several weaving companies. The general effect of such establishments has been, to draw to the towns and villages all who are engaged in manufacturing employment. At a former period, not yet beyond the recollection of persons alive, there was carried on, in this quarter, an extensive domestic manu-

facture of linen, which was commonly known in the markets by the name of "Mearns linen," and the spinning of the yarn, and manufacturing of the cloth, afforded employment to many hands in the families both of tenants and of crofters. This system is now entirely done away: at the old markets which used to be held several days in succession, the day formerly appropriated for the sale of linen is a blank; all those employed in weaving have, with scarcely an exception, gone to the villages, and there, at least in Laurencekirk, by far the greater part work, not at home, but in public weaving-shops. The population of the village increased very rapidly from the earlier part of this century, till about seven years ago, but since that time it has been making less rapid progress, in consequence of the state of trade, and of the wages which hand-loom weavers now earn being exceedingly low,—frequently 8s. a-week, by working fifteen or sixteen hours a-day. The yearly average of births may be stated as about 60, and that of deaths about 38; that of marriages in which both parties belong to the parish, 9; and 8 where either party is of a different parish.

The average number of persons of the following ages may be stated as under.

Under 15,	.	790
16, and under 30,	.	460
30,	50,	428
50,	70,	206
70 and upwards,	.	112

1938

There are only 21 males of fifty years of age or upwards, who are unmarried, all of them being widowers except 5. There are about 112 females above forty-five who are unmarried.

According to the census in 1835, there were 467 families (including in that number single individuals living alone,) 366 in the burgh, and 101 in the country. In the character of children in these families, *i. e.* of unmarried persons, of any age, living in the houses of their parents, there were 625 and 192 respectively, in burgh and in country, in all, 817. According to this calculation, the proportion of children to a family, in the burgh is 1.7 to 1, in the country 1.9 to 1, and over the parish, 1.75 to 1. If we deduct from the number of families the number of single unmarried persons, widowed or not living alone, there remain in burgh 272, and in country 83 families, among whom the same number of children has to be divided, making the proportion 2.3 to 1 in the burgh, and 2.31 to 1 in the country: and if we deduct farther

the married persons, who either have had no children, or with whom none of their children are now residing, there remain 217 and 67 families, to whom the 817 children actually belong, making the proportion 2.88 to 1 in the burgh and 2.87 to 1 in the country. There are 315 houses within the burgh, and 100 in the country, of which all, with the exception of five of the former, are more or less occupied.

Each of the four proprietors draws more than L. 50 of rent from land in this parish. None of them reside in it; but Mr Gibbon of Johnston resides in the neighbourhood, and Johnston Lodge is occupied by Mrs Farquhar, the relict of James Farquhar, Esq. of Johnston.

There has of late been scarcely any building in the parish, except where new houses have been erected in place of such as were decayed: indeed, so small appears to be the demand for additional dwelling-houses, that several portions of ground which were feued some years ago still remain without any building upon them. The situation of the village affords no peculiar advantages for increase. It is about six miles from any quarry of suitable building stones; there is little or no command of any other fuel than coal, which is all sea-borne to Johnshaven or Montrose, and from the latter there is a land carriage of ten miles and from the former upwards of seven. Notwithstanding these circumstances, and the rapid and superabundant increase of population, the inhabitants may be said to enjoy, in a reasonable degree, the comforts and advantages of society;—and, notwithstanding the difficulties with which many of them have to contend, they appear in general to be contented. The diet of the labouring classes consists, usually, of meal, milk, and potatoes. Fish is had in considerable abundance; and the use of wheaten bread and of butcher meat is by no means uncommon, as is vouched by the fact, that there are in the village three bakers, and as many butchers, though all of them may not be fully employed in their profession. There are two surgeons resident in the village. The habits of the people are cleanly: their houses, for the most part, are kept in good order, undergoing generally more or less of a weekly purification: and it both improves the appearance of the place, and promotes the health of the inhabitants, and their taste for order, that there is attached to almost every dwelling-house a small piece of garden ground, in keeping which neatly, neighbours have a spirit of becoming emulation. The people are at-

tentive to religious services, although the want of church accommodation is unfortunately producing a visible change on the individual attendance on divine worship. On the whole, if the trade of hand-loom weaving were a little better, the church somewhat larger, and the public-houses two thirds less in number, and less frequented, Laurencekirk might present a favourable specimen of a thriving Scottish village. The general healthiness of the situation has already been noticed.

It may be added, that while there are three or four individuals, who can scarcely be said to possess soundness of mind, there is only one insane person connected with the parish; but three others reside, as boarders in a family who have long had the care of persons in this unfortunate condition. There are two aged women quite blind, and two young boys affected with nearly total loss of sight. There is no deaf and dumb person in the parish.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

In regard to the particulars connected with agriculture, the following valuable information was supplied by Mr Robertson in 1832.

“ The contents of the parish amount to 5381 imperial acres, classed as under.

1. Arable,	5000
2. Waste, or in pasture,	120 (of which 90 are improvable.)
3. Roads,	41
4. Plantations,	220
	5381

“ The whole of the woods in the parish have been planted. The plantations consist chiefly of larch, spruce, and Scotch firs, with a few deciduous trees intermixed. The hedge-rows and detached trees are chiefly ash, elms and beech, with a few oaks, birch and sycamore. None of the fir plantations are supposed to exceed sixty years of age, the greater part not much more than thirty. Some of the old trees about Johnston Lodge, and the site of the mansion-house of Haukerton, those near the manse, and a few in the hedge-rows and gardens of the different farms, may perhaps be from eighty to a hundred years old. The fir plantations are carefully pruned and thinned, and the hedge-rows and hardwood trees have, for some years past, been pruned and attended to.

*Rent.*—“ The average rent of the arable land is about L. 1, 3s. per imperial, or L. 1, 8s. 6d. per Scots acre. In the vicinity of the

village, the land, though poor, is let at the rate of from L. 2 to L. 2, 16s. per imperial acre.

“ There are no cattle or sheep grazed in the parish by the season, all the pasture being consumed by the cattle reared or fed by the occupiers of land.

*Rate of Labour.*—“ The following are the usual rates of the wages of agricultural labourers :—Married men-servants are engaged by the year, and generally get a house and garden, a cow kept, and six and a-half bolls of meal, and some potatoes, besides several barrels of coals, some brush-wood for fuel, and from L. 6 to L. 8 yearly of money wages. Unmarried ploughmen are engaged half-yearly, and their wages vary from L. 5 to L. 6, 10s. (for the six months,) with two pecks of oatmeal weekly, an allowance of milk, and a quantity of potatoes, with lodging and fuel. Boys are from L. 1, 10s. to L. 3, 10s. half-yearly, with the usual allowance for keep. Men in harvest get about L. 2, -10s. with victuals and beer. Labourers by the day receive in summer 1s. 8d. to 2s., in winter about 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d., and in harvest, besides victuals, 2s. 6d. to 3s. Women-servants' wages are about L. 2 for winter half-year, and from L. 3 to L. 4 for summer half-year. When engaged by the day for working in the fields, they get 7d. in winter, and 8d. or 9d. in summer. When engaged for harvest they get from L. 1, 15s. to L. 2 with victuals. Reapers get for cutting per threave, 3d. or 3½d. without victuals.” (For eight or nine years past, however, almost all the farmers have cut down their crops with the scythe.)

“ In regard to the prices of different articles of produce, or materials employed in agriculture, and the wages of country tradesmen, the following particulars may be stated :—Flax per stone of 14 lb. 7s.; wool from 7s. to 9s. per imperial stone; yarn, hand-spun, none made; yarn mill-spun, *see Manufactures*; linen cloth, home made, none made for sale; lime per boll, 2s. 11d.; dung per double horse load from Laurencekirk, 6s.; slates, Dunkeld, L. 2, 5s. per 1000; slates, Easdale, L. 3, 3s. per 1000; slates, Turin, 10s. per 100; tiles, L. 4 per 1000; masons per day, without victuals, in summer, 2s., in winter, 1s. 8d.; carpenters, without victuals, in summer, 2s. 3d., in winter 1s. 8d.; rubble mason work, per rood of 36 ells, including carriage and price of materials, from L. 6, 10s. to L. 7, 10s.

*Live Stock.*—“ The horses used for agricultural purposes are generally bought in the west country markets, particularly in those of Stirling, Lanark, and Ayrshires; but, of late years, the greater part

have been reared in the parish, to which branch of rural economy much attention is now paid. Colts reared in the parish resemble the Lanark or Clydesdale breed, but have less bone. The colours preferred are black or dark bay.

“The cattle are generally a mixture of the Angus and Aberdeen breeds, but nearer the Aberdeenshire; the colour black and polled; they have the deep and broad chest of the Aberdeen ox, and are not so long in the spine as the Angus breed. Great attention is paid to the rearing of black-cattle; and great care taken in selecting the animals to breed from. Part are generally sold in the autumn, when rising three years old, for the road, *i. e.* for the English market, and part fed in winter and sold for the Glasgow market, where they fetch the highest prices.” (Some of the best animals have lately been sent, by the Aberdeen and Dundee steam vessels, and more lately by the Montrose steamer, to London, where they find a ready sale, and generally bring a remunerating price.)

“No sheep are reared in the parish, and very few are grazed or fed.

*Husbandry.*—“The convertible system of husbandry is universally followed; and as the soil is best adapted for the grass and turnip husbandry, what is called the shift course is generally adopted. The four-shift course is followed where the soil is a deep loam, and even in inferior soils near Laurencekirk, where there is a command of manure. Where manure is at a distance, a seven-shift course has been tried by some farmers, two successive white crops being taken after the land has been in grass for three years; but this course is by no means common. The drill husbandry, as applicable to the cultivation of green crops, is universally followed; but after some slight trials, this mode of sowing white crops has been abandoned. Lime has until lately been applied to fallow land; but as the prices obtained for produce are now ‘peace’ prices, while the rents paid are still ‘war’ rents, the quantity of lime applied is diminishing yearly, and, it is to be feared, that a diminution of the produce must be the consequence.”

“The usual duration of leases is nineteen years, and the conditions of lease are those now generally introduced over Scotland. Although the tenant is bound to a certain rotation of cropping, yet this is seldom strictly attended to, and he is generally left free to exercise his own judgment, and to follow what course may seem to himself most advantageous.

“Of the farm-houses many are of two stories and slated, but they

are of inferior size and accommodation ; the offices are slated, at least partially. At entry the buildings are made over at a valuation, and a small sum is given out of the first rents for making additions and repairs ; sometimes wood is also given upon inventory. At expiry of leases, the houses must be left of the same value, and of the additional value of the money and wood allowed by the proprietor at entry. Sometimes the tenant is allowed to meliorate to a certain extent over and above this, for which he is paid at his removal. No allowance is made to the tenant for carriages. This mode of keeping up, and of making additions to the farm-buildings, by throwing the principal part of the burden on the tenant, is objectionable in many respects, and particularly as compelling him to apply capital for the purpose of building and repairing houses that ought to be used for the improvement of his farm, and in making a profitable return.

“ The parish is only very partially enclosed. About fifty or sixty years ago, after Lord Gardenstone purchased the lands of Johnston and Blackiemuir, the village was laid out on a regular plan, the whole estate was divided into regular fields, enclosed with hedges and hedge-rows, and plantations were also made with much taste on different parts of the estate. Except for the purpose of shelter and forming marches, between the different allotments of land, these hedges are now of little value ; but still with the hedge-rows, they give the village and adjacent ground a rich and wooded appearance. Part of the adjoining lands appear to have been enclosed with thorn-hedges about the time when Johnston had been enclosed ; but to the hedges little attention has been paid, and few, if any, additional enclosures have since been formed. In this respect much remains to be done.”

“ Few or no improvements have lately been made ; what has been done is chiefly in opening new roads through the parish, which is well supplied with what are called parish roads. The communication with the coast has been greatly improved by the opening of two leading lines of road, which pass at the eastern and western extremities of this parish, of which the one was made only recently, and the other about thirty years ago. Within the last twenty-five years about 80 acres of marshy grounds have been well drained ; but there is still a piece of land of nearly the same extent, standing greatly in need of the same improvement. This, however, cannot be effected without the removal of a dam-dike, of which the privilege belongs to the mill

of Blackiemuir, and the formation of a new channel for the Luther, by the overflowing and stagnation of whose waters the marsh is occasioned. It is understood that arrangements have been in contemplation, with a view to this improvement; and were it accomplished, the whole district would be benefited, the hoar-frosts would be in a great measure prevented, which so frequently rise on these marshes, and to a considerable distance injure the surrounding crops, and much land, which at present is subject to be flooded, and thus unfit for tillage, would be rendered of considerable value. The remainder of the waste ground in the parish does not exceed 30 or 40 acres.

“ The great obstacles to improvement are felt chiefly in the want of enclosures, of planting for the purpose of shelter, and of sufficient and substantial accommodation in the farm-buildings. There is no supply of proper building stone for dikes, and the only substitute is hedges, yet, although the soil is well adapted for the growth of thorn and beech, the farms are generally open and unenclosed, and the whole district, though naturally fertile, presents rather a bleak appearance.

“ Although there are serious and well grounded objections to throwing land into too great farms, yet there is a class of farms that are neither great nor small, varying from 100 to 130 acres, commonly called four horse farms, which are objectionable in many respects. Of this description a considerable part of the farms in this parish consist. It would be perhaps better, that after the croft of four acres, and the small farm of 40 or 50, there should be no intermediate class, until the extent amounts to nearly 300 acres; of this class there are only three or four in the parish.

*Gross Produce.*—“ In order to ascertain the gross produce, it is necessary to show how the 5000 arable acres which the parish contains are cultivated.

1. <i>Fallow and Green Crop.</i> Pease and beans, 80 acres, yielding 3 quarters per acre.			
	Potatoes,	160	} 20 bolls of 37½ imperial stones per do. 12 tons do. do.
	Turnips,	640	
	Fallow,	120	
		1000	
2. <i>Grain Crop.</i>			
	Wheat,	80	yielding 3 quarters per acre.
	Barley,	760	3½ do. do. do.
	Oats,	1160	4½ do. do. do.
		2000	
3. <i>Grass.</i>			
	Hay,	500	yielding 170 imperial stones per acre.
	Pasture,	1500	24s. do. do.
		2000	

*Produce.*—

Pease and beans, 240 quarters at 28s.*	-	L. 336		
Wheat, - 240 - 52s.	-	624		
Barley, - 2660 - 30s.	-	3090		
Oats, - 5220 - 22s.	-	5742		
			L. 10,692	0 0
Straw, - 8360 - 5s.	-		2090	0 0
Potatoes, - 3200 bolls, at 8s.	-	L. 1280	0 0	
Turnips, 7680 tons, at 7s.	-	2688	0 0	
				3068 0 0
Hay, 85000 imperial stones of 14 lb. at 4d.		L. 1416	13 4	
Pasture, 1600 acres at 24s.		1800	0 0	
				3216 13 4
Wood sold yearly,				80 0 0
				L. 20,046 13 4

To which should be added the produce of gardens not ascertained.

*Bestial.*—

<i>Horses.</i> —Used in agriculture,		140		
Carriage, post, gig and saddle horses,		40		
Carriers' horses,		9		
Foals reared annually,		16		
			Total,	205
<i>Cattle.</i> —Cows,		287		
Young cattle of 1, 2, and 3, years old,		756		
Calves reared,		280		
Do. fed, <sup>a</sup>		25 at 40s.	L. 50	0 0
Cattle bought in for grazing and feeding,	136			
		1484		
<i>Other animals.</i> —Pigs reared and fed, 250, 100 lb. each at 4d.			416	13 4
<i>Poultry kept.</i> —Hens, 687,				
Chickens reared, 1374, at 5d.			28	12 6
Ducks, 150,				
Ducklings, 300, at 6d.			7	10 0
Eggs produced, 3600 dozen at 6d.			90	0 0
Butter made, 11200 lb. at 7d.			326	13 4
Cheese do. 8400 lb. at 3d.			105	0 0

Yearly produce of dairy, poultry, and pigs, L. 1024 9 2

*Disposable produce.*

Pease and beans, 180 quarters at 28s.		L. 252	0 0	
Wheat, 180 - 52s.		468	0 0	
Barley, 2090 - 30s.		3135	0 0	
Oats, 2088 - 22s.		2296	16 0	
Potatoes, 1000 bolls at 8s.		400	0 0	
Hay, 20000 imperial stones at 4d.		333	6 8	
				6885 2 8
<i>Cattle sold.</i> —Fat cattle, 151 at L. 10, 10s.		L. 1585	10 0	
Lean do. 254 at L. 7, 10s.		1905	0 0	
Calves, fat, 25 at L. 2.		50	0 0	
				3540 10 0
From which deduct 136 cattle bought in at L. 5, 10s.		748	0 0	
				2792 10 0
<i>Pigs.</i> —230 sold, 100 lb. each, at 4d.				366 13 4
<i>Dairy produce.</i> —Cheese 4000 lb. at 3d.		50	0 0	
Butter, 7500 lb. at 7d.		218	15 0	
				268 15 0
<i>Poultry sold.</i> —Hens 343 at 1s.		17	3 0	
Chickens 344 at 5d.		7	3 4	

\* The prices of grain have been reduced from those of the original calculation in 1832, to suit in some degree the fall of prices since that time.

Ducks 50, at 1s.	L. 2 10 0
Ducklings, 100, at 6d.	2 10 0
Eggs, 2400 dozen, at 6d.	60 0 0
	89 6 4
Total disposable produce,	L. 10,402 7 4

*Rental.*—The yearly rental of the parish is about L. 5775 Sterling, and the valued rent is L. 4294, 19s. 8d. Scots.

*Manufactures.*—“The principal manufacture in the parish is that of yarn from flax, and the weaving of linen. The only spinning-mill in operation is that of Blackiemuir, which employs about 7 men and 25 women, who work generally fourteen hours a day, including an hour and a half for meals. The yarn manufactured at Blackiemuir is nearly as under :

24000 spindles, 3 lb. at 2s. 1d.	L. 2500 0 0
13500 do tow yarn, 6 lb. at 2s. 3d.	1518 15 0
	L. 4018 15 0

“The other branch of the linen trade consists in hand-loom weaving, the yarn for which is supplied chiefly by the great manufacturing houses in Aberdeen. The number of pieces and yards made annually may on an average be as under : Pieces 5812; yards 416,440, value, L. 13,106. The average sum obtained for weaving, being at the rate of 1½d. per yard, is L. 2168, 19s. 2d. The weavers in general work about fifteen hours a day, and the most able and industrious seldom earn more than 7s. or 8s. a week.

*Snuff-Box Manufacture.*—“The only other branch of trade requiring to be noticed is that of the well-known Laurencekirk snuff-boxes. These were all originally made by Mr Stiven, the inventor, and the business is still carried on by his son; but there are other tradesmen in the village also employed in the manufacture.”

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Markets, &c.*—There are no market-towns in the parish, and there is no village except Laurencekirk. In terms of the charter procured by Lord Gardenstone, the village was “erected into a free and independent burgh of barony,” the limits of which were declared to be 838 yards on each side of the King’s highway, as far as it passed through his Lordship’s lands, that is, for about three-quarters of a mile. A bailie and four councillors are triennially elected on the first Wednesday of June, all resident feuars of legal age having the privilege of burgesses, and right to vote at elections: and the charter farther authorizes the holding of a weekly market, and of a free annual fair for three days successively, beginning the first Wednesday of November. This fair

is now held only on the Thursday. A weekly market was attempted some years ago, and has again been proposed, and there seems reason to think that it should succeed, if all parties concerned cordially joined in the attempt, as there is no market-town nearer than Montrose, which is upwards of nine miles from the nearest part of the parish, and thirteen from the most remote.

*Fairs.*—There are seven annual fairs in the parish; five of these are held within the burgh,—one in January, for engaging married farm-servants,—one at each of the terms of Whitsunday and Martinmas, for hiring unmarried servants,—and two cattle trysts, in April and November; the other two fairs are on Laurence muir, (about a mile and a half from Laurencekirk), viz. the old established market of Laurence Fair, for the sale of cattle, horses, and sheep in August, and a cattle tryst in September.

*Means of Communication.*—The parish enjoys abundant means of communication. There is a daily post; and two different stage-coaches, the one by Dundee, and the other by Perth, pass every lawful day between Edinburgh and Aberdeen, from which latter place Laurencekirk is distant twenty-nine miles. There are likewise several carriers passing weekly to Aberdeen, Perth, and Dundee, besides others to neighbouring towns and villages. There are four carriers to Montrose, each of whom goes two or three times a week. The length of the turnpike-road in the parish is four miles.

The situation of the parish church is, on the whole, very convenient, closely adjoining the village, and also the turnpike road. Three-fourths of the inhabitants are within a mile of the church, and there are only three families who have to travel so far as three miles to it. It was built in 1804; and was enlarged in 1819, at the joint expense of the poor funds, and Mr Farquhar, the rents of the seats in the additional part being drawn by these parties. It is in tolerable repair, but is much too small for the congregation,—a misfortune under which it seems the lot of this parish to labour. In 1792, Mr Forbes, the writer of the former Statistical Account, says, “The church is by much too small for the congregation;” yet no addition was made to it, till it was rebuilt in 1804; and fifteen years afterwards an enlargement became necessary. The present church is calculated to hold about 760; but on this calculation less than eighteen inches are allowed for each sitting, of which the inconvenience is peculiarly felt, when the sitters are chiefly grown persons, as must be the case when a church

is too small. The number of those actually communicating at the dispensation of the Lord's supper generally exceeds even the number of these calculated sittings by 120. All the sittings are either in the hands of heritors and their tenants, or let and occupied.

The manse now consists of what were two successive additions, the one built in 1796, and the other in 1805, when the old manse was taken down, and the addition of 1796 left standing. Since 1805, no farther changes have been made, except what were necessary to keep the building in ordinary repair. The glebe consists of nearly 9 acres of arable land, which may be valued at about L. 20 per annum. The minister has also possessed, from time immemorial, a piece of ground of about 9 acres, at present let for L. 1, 3s. per acre, a mile distant from the manse, and surrounded by Lord Kintore's lands. This possession, it is understood, was bestowed on the incumbent of the parish in times of Popery, and escaped only by its insignificance, from the hands which seized so large a portion of the Church property, at the period of the Reformation.

The stipend consists of 16 chalders of grain, half barley and half meal, with L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements; and on the average of the last six years amounted to about L. 236. For crop 1826, the stipend considerably exceeded the teind. The minister has the right of digging peats on a piece of ground called the Minister's Moss, on the top of the Cairn of Mount, one of the Grampian Hills,—on which hill also the farmers on Lord Kintore's estate were in use to avail themselves of the privilege of digging peats; but for some years the practice has been much discontinued.

The patronage of the church belongs to St Mary's College, St Andrews, to whom Archbishop John Hamilton, the last Roman Catholic Primate, gave the teinds of the parish, for the endowment of the recently erected college.\*

\* The following extracts from the deed may not be uninteresting. The title is, "Donatio Ecclesie Parochialis de Conveth per Joannem Archiepiscopum St Andrews in favorem Magistrorum, Regentium, Capellanorum, Bursariorum, et Studentium Novi Collegii." "Junii 26. 1550." The rectory was vacant at the time of the donation, as appears from the following clause: "Cum itaque parochialis ecclesia rectoria nuncupata de Conveth nostrae Sti Andree diocesis quam nuper bonae memoriae Magister Willielmus Lamb dum viveret obtinebat per obitum ejusdem Willielmi extra Romanam curiam et in partibus defuncti vacaverit et vacet ad presens," &c. Another extract shews the provision made for the performance of the pastoral duties in Conveth, and also affords some illustration of the general views at that time expressed by the Romish Hierarchy as to pastoral superintendance, "Volumus autem quod propter perpetuam unionem, annexationem, et incorporationem prefatas parochialis ecclesia de Conveth unita hujusmodi debitis propterea non fraudetur obsequiis

Lord Gardenstone having obtained funds, to which he himself largely contributed, for building an Episcopalian chapel in the village of Laurencekirk, he attached to the lands of Johnston the burden of upholding the building,—of paying to the minister of the chapel (who is presented by the proprietor of Johnston) L. 40 and 40 bolls of meal annually,—and of maintaining a house for him. He likewise assigned a garden and three acres of ground to the minister, who draws nothing from the congregation, which is by no means numerous. There had formerly been an Episcopalian chapel near the village or Kirktown, on the south-east side of it, of which the remains are remembered by persons yet alive; but it is not known when it was discontinued. There were also two small chapels about three or four miles distant from the village to the east and west, of which one was within this parish. These were used for some time after the Laurencekirk chapel was opened, but it is now many years since they were taken down. There are 159 persons in this parish connected with the chapel, (according to the census of 1835,) viz. 85 adults and 74 children.

There is also a Berean meeting-house in the village, in which divine service is performed by a person, who follows a mechanical profession, who resides in the parish of Fettercairn, and officiates also there. It is attended by very few persons, the individuals of the Berean connection in this district being but scattered remains and descendants of the followers of Barclay, by whom the sect was founded in 1773. In this parish there are only 17 Bereans, all persons of advanced years, except 7, who compose one family. There is no other dissenting place of worship. The only other Dissenters are 13 Independents, (two families and two single individuals,) who attend at Sauchieburn, in the parish of Marykirk; 9 Associate Synod Seceders, (7 adults and 2 children,) who generally attend at Luthermuir, in the same parish; and 1 Glassite.

The average number of persons communicating at the dispensation of the Lord's supper, in the Established Church, is about 880: the actual number of communicants in the parish (accord-

*et animarum cura in eadem et illi imminens nullatenus negligatur sed per vicarium pensionarium jam forsan institutum et in futurum per nos et successores nostros Sti Andreæ Archiepiscopos pro tempore instituendum que de fructibus dictæ parochialis ecclesiæ unitæ sufficientem portionem pro sua annua sustentatione una cum mansione et orto habeat percipiat et possideat juxta formam et tenorem statutorum et decretorum tam provincialis quam synodalis conciliorum per nos novissime celebratorum editorum et promulgatorum in divinis debite deserviat et ejusdem congrue supportetur onera consueta," &c.*

ing to the census of 1835) is 915; there being, after deduction of 159 Episcopalians, 17 Bereans, 13 Independents, 9 Seceders, and 1 Glassite, 1739 persons in connection with the Established Church.

*Education.*—Besides the parochial school, there are three other schools conducted by male teachers, and four schools conducted by females; but of the seven private schools none are endowed, or supported in any way, but by the school fees, excepting, perhaps, in the case of the male teachers, occasional assistance towards defraying the school-room rent. At the parish school, the master, who is a licentiate of the church, is qualified to teach all the branches usual at the better parochial schools of the country. The branches which he has actually taught are, English reading and grammar, writing, arithmetic, mathematics, mensuration, navigation, geography, and Latin. The school is attended by about 70. The salary of the schoolmaster is only L. 20 in money, and 10 bolls, 1 firloft, and 3 pecks of meal in kind, which is considerably less than the maximum salary. The school fees received by him in the year amount to about L. 30. He has neither house nor garden, but receives L. 8 instead of the former, and L. 2, 2s. in place of the other. He receives also annually L. 3, 6s. 8d. from the Glenfarquhar mortification, and the interest of L. 50 from the Charles donation; and for these he teaches seven children *gratis*. The other three male teachers instruct their pupils (in all about 100) in English reading, and grammar, writing, and arithmetic, and occasionally in one or two other branches. The females are employed chiefly in teaching younger children to read, and in giving instructions in various kinds of female handiwork. There may be nearly 70 in all at their four schools. All the private teachers except one are of the Established Church, and in all the schools suitable attention is paid to the religious instruction of the pupils. The fee for English reading at the parochial school is 2s. 6d. per quarter, and for the other branches in proportion. At one or two of the private schools, the fees are somewhat higher, and at others lower. Children usually go to school when five years old, so that it can hardly be said that there are any between six and fifteen years of age who cannot either read or write, and there are scarcely any, not more perhaps than three or four, above that age who cannot read. There is no family distant more than about two miles from a school, either in this or in some adjoining parish, and few more than a mile. The inhabitants

in general shew a desire to avail themselves of this advantage. The proportion, however, of children attending schools to the whole population is not above one to seven and a half or eight. It is the practice in not a few cases that children of a numerous family get a quarter or two at school in rotation,—sometimes even that two of them go alternately each day or meeting,—an imperfect system, to which it may be said, that poverty consents rather than their will. Frequently the children are sent to herding or to service in the summer half-year, the winter months being reserved for farther education, if thought necessary, or found convenient. When they are sent to the loom, as is the case with a very large proportion of the children of the village, they are generally taken from school about the age of eleven or twelve, and seldom return to it at all; and they too often enter on a life of busy care, with nearly as imperfect furniture in their minds, as their early marriages too frequently allow them to gather for their dwellings, before they are involved in the expenses of a house and family. The chief advantage of education is derived from the encouragement of right principles, and the infusion of religious knowledge, and not from the mere acquisition of the faculty of reading, which may readily be turned to an improper and unprofitable use. But it is to be feared, that young persons are often supposed to have received sufficient education, before they have reached an age when those impressions can be rightly made, which alone will preserve them against the influence of the varied temptations among which they are to be speedily thrown.

There are two foundations connected with the parochial school on which children receive education *gratis*. By a deed executed in 1716, Sir Alexander Falconer of Glenfarquhar (whose representative is now the Earl of Kintore) mortified the sum of L. 140 Scots annually, of which L. 40 should be paid to the schoolmaster for teaching poor children, and the remaining L. 100 (or 24 bolls of meal, in the option of his representative,) should be divided among four boys of the name of Falconer, or born in the parish, who were also to be taught *gratis*. The same benevolent individual mortified (by deeds of date 1712 and 1717) L. 500 Scots annually, for the education of seven bursars, at the King's College of Aberdeen, of the names of Falconer, or Ramsay, or born in the parishes of Conveth or Fordoun, of whom three should receive L. 60 each, and the others L. 80 each; the presentation now belonging to his heir (Lord Kintore,) and Sir Alexander Ramsay,

**Bart. of Balmain.** It is only the later of these deeds that is acted on, according to which there are four bursars. The Rev. John Charles, minister of Garvock, from a benevolent regard to the parochial school at which he received the rudiments of education, presented to the kirk-session in 1825, the sum of L. 50, of which the interest should, in all time coming, be paid to the parish school-master; as the fees for his teaching two or more poor children to be named by the kirk-session.

**Libraries.**—There are three libraries in the parish, more or less of a public kind. One belongs to the Episcopal clergy of the diocese of Brechin, and is deposited in the Episcopal chapel. It is indebted for its origin, and for most of its contents, to the late Bishop Abernethy Drummond, and now consists of upwards of 1000 volumes, of which the greater number are theological, and some are of considerable value. Persons of literary education or pursuits in the neighbourhood have always experienced much liberality in obtaining access to the library. Lord Gardenstone founded what he calls, "The Public Library of Laurencekirk," and from various quarters he obtained donations of books for it. In the small but neat building, which was erected to contain the library, a few rare shells, minerals, and stuffed birds were deposited, as the commencement of a sort of museum. His designs, however, were not prosecuted after his death, and the books and other contents have in various ways been greatly diminished. There has also been for several years a parochial library, consisting of about 300 volumes chiefly for the use of the young, many of whom make frequent application for them.

**Friendly Societies.**—There are four Friendly Societies in the parish, which survived the unfortunate and ill-founded panic, produced by the late act of Parliament, for the regulation of these valuable institutions. Since 1830 a species of Friendly Society has existed here, which is dissolved and renewed at the term of Whitsunday yearly, each member depositing weekly a fixed sum, and also a small sum additional, to form a benefit fund for allowances, in case of sickness or death of members. At the annual dissolution, each member receives back the whole amount, with interest, of his fixed weekly deposits, and also his share of the remainder of the benefit fund, after payment of allowances and necessary expenses. The plan of the society is well fitted for those who receive their earnings from time to time, by enabling them to meet large term-

ly or other stated payments, or to gather such a sum as may be afterwards deposited in an institution of a more permanent kind. As connected with this parish, there may also be mentioned the Mearns-shire Farmer Society, which holds its meetings at Laurencekirk. It was instituted in 1792, for making provision for the widows and children of deceased members, each widow receiving L. 10 annually. It has now a capital stock of upwards of L. 7000, and includes among its members, in number about 120, persons of various professions in the surrounding country. The present preses is the Viscount of Arbuthnott, who, with his well known public spirit, has taken a very active interest in the welfare of the society.\*

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—There are, at present, 38 persons receiving a stated allowance out of the poor funds,—at an average of about L. 2, 10s. a year each,—and at least as many others receiving occasional supply in sums of various amount, up to L. 1 annually. About one-fourth of the regular paupers are males, the others being chiefly aged women. The class of destitute women is rapidly increasing from the discontinuance of employments, by which females advancing in life were wont to earn some livelihood; yet such is the inevitable result of the extensive use of machinery. There is a pauper lunatic maintained in the Montrose asylum, the expense of whose board is paid by the heritors. The ordinary collections in church throughout the year amount to rather more than L. 60; from the letting of seats belonging to the poor funds, (see p. 145,) there is drawn annually about L. 10; the dues for mortcloths, and other small sources yield from L. 7 to L. 10; the two principal heritors usually send donations, of which the average annual amount has for some years been about L. 25; and, after payment of all expenses falling on the funds, there is fully requisite, in order to keep both sides of the accounts duly balanced, a sum of about L. 30, being the interest arising from several legacies and other sums belonging to the funds. Of these legacies one was bequeathed in 1646, by William Lawson in Powburn, who mortified “300 merks to the kirk of Convay,” the principal to remain in the hands of the kirk-session of Montrose. In 1825, Mrs Shank, relict of the Rev. Alexander Shank, minister of St Cyrus, left L. 100 to the kirk-session in aid of the poor; in 1832, Alexander Crombie, Esq. of Phesdo, left L. 19, 19s., for the same purpose; and in 1833,

\* This was written in 1836. The present present Preses is the Master of Arbuthnott.

James Farquhar, Esq. of Johnston, many years M. P. for the Aberdeen district of burghs, left to the kirk-session, in aid of the poor funds, the handsome sum of L. 500. Agreeably to the known views of the generous donors, the managers of the funds consider that it is only the interest arising from these sums that they are warranted to apply annually in aid of the poor.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the former Statistical Account was written, the population of this parish has increased very considerably, having been at that time about 1200, and being now nearly 2000. The whole of this increase, and more, has been in the village,—the rural population having diminished about 100. It is from this accession of inhabitants that the parish now takes its character. Its interests are more closely connected with trade and manufactures, than with agriculture; but such improvements as would increase the comforts of the tenantry and of their servants, would benefit the villagers, by producing a greater circulation of money in the neighbourhood, and enabling them in turn to pay a better price for their food. It is, however, to be feared, that the employment of machinery necessary, in the artificial state of this country, to preserve its commercial prosperity, must prevent any rise in the wages of hand-loom weaving, on which so large a part of the population of this parish are dependent. Formerly, little weaving was done except by the order of private customers; now there is little done in this way. Almost the whole work is sent by the companies in Aberdeen, and any depression in the trade is first and most sensibly felt in a place such as this, at a distance from the seat of employment, and possessing no natural advantages for its prosecution. In these circumstances, it would be beneficial if any means could be devised for checking the number of young people that annually flock to this profession, which, in a great degree, unfits them for any other in future life, and which, while they are encroaching on the profits of others, affords but a scanty pittance for themselves. And it is desirable, that no inducement should be afforded to persons to come from other quarters for employment here, by which work is taken from those who are already settled in the place, and have some claim upon it, and an encouragement is given to persons who are careless about their character and conduct, and unsettled in their habits, and who, leaving undischarged many of the obligations of social life, migrate, as they list, from place to place.

*Revised April 1838.*