

tions for their relief is L. 28, 16s. The proportion of this sum arising from church collections is L. 13, 3s. 8d.; and from other funds, L. 15, 12s. 4d. There is now little disposition among the poor to refrain from seeking parochial relief. The days when application for such relief was reckoned degrading have long ago passed away.

Fuel.—The expense of fuel, which is coal, is the same as in the adjoining parishes.

Alehouses.—There is only one alehouse in this parish. The number of inns, in many other parishes, has, undoubtedly, a very pernicious effect on the morals of the people.

April 1836.

PARISH OF DYSART.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKALDY, SYNOD OF FIFE.
THE REV. DAVID MURRAY, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—As far back as there are any records of this parish, Dysart has been called by its present name. It is said to be of Gaelic origin,—signifying *the Temple of the Most High*.

Extent, Boundaries.—The parish is situated in the county of Fife, on the Frith of Forth, and is about twelve miles from Edinburgh. Its extreme length is about 4 miles, its greatest breadth about 3, and it is about 10 in circumference. Its form is irregular. It is bounded on the east by Markinch and Wemyss; on the west by Kirkaldy and part of Auchterderran; on the north by Kinglassie; and on the south by the Frith of Forth.

Topographical Appearances, &c.—The coast, which in general is bold and rocky, extends about two miles, and rises with a gradual ascent from the sea above a mile northward.

From its situation, Dysart is much exposed to winds from the east; still it is allowed to be one of the most healthy districts in the county. There are few or no diseases peculiar to it. Epidemics are not frequent. When they come, they prove most fatal in Pathhead, not so much from the situation of the village, which stands high, being partly on a rocky and partly on a sandy foundation,—

but chiefly from the crowded state of the houses, and perhaps from want of sufficient attention to external cleanliness.

Prognostics of the Weather.—The following prognostics of the weather have been collected from individuals employed in the collieries and ironstone works, viz. that before a storm of wind, a sound not unlike that of a bagpipe or loud buzz of a bee comes from the metals in the coal pits, but that previous to a fall of rain, the sound is much more gentle; that about twenty-four hours before a storm of wind or rain, there is a black damp at the bottom of the ironstone pits, and through the waste; a damp so great, that a lamp will not burn; but that, before frost, the air below is clear, and that a candle or lamp will burn easily.

Hydrography.—There are two mineral springs in the parish, both of which are perennial, and have been in high repute. The one is to the eastward of the town. It is much frequented by strangers who come for sea-bathing, and has been found peculiarly beneficial to individuals labouring under stomach complaints. It proceeds from the iron mines which are every where in its immediate neighbourhood, and is strongly impregnated with iron. The stones on that part of the beach over which it runs into the sea are of the colour of yellow ochre. This spring is generally called the Medicine Well, and such is the estimation in which it was once held, that great quantities of the water were taken away, and sold not only in Fife, but in other adjacent counties. At different periods, it has been warmly recommended by gentlemen eminent in the medical profession. The other mineral spring is a little to the westward of the town. It is impregnated with vitriol; it has been long celebrated for curing soreness and weakness in the eyes, as well as sores on other parts of the body; and it is still the resort of strangers who have those kinds of complaints. Such is its repute, that it is frequently put in bottles and sent to a considerable distance, and numbers who have used it do not hesitate to bear testimony to the great benefit they have derived from it. It is generally called the Alum Well.

There are two small streams or rivulets which run through the parish, viz. the Oar, and the Lochty. The Oar, says Mr Chambers in his Gazetteer, originates in a rivulet in the parish of Dunfermline, which, along with others, once formed a small lake called Loch Oar, which is now drained, and the space converted into productive land. The rivulet pursues its way, and is joined by a stream from Loch Fittie, and further down by one from Loch Gellie. Thus

increased, the small river Oar continues an easterly course for some miles, till it joins the Leven in the parish of Markinch.

According to the same author, Lochty is a small stream rising in the parish of Kinglassie, which after flowing in an easterly course eight or nine miles, falls into the Oar, a short way above its junction with the Leven, which falls into the Frith of Forth.

Mineralogy.—The minerals of the parish consist of limestone, sandstone, coal, and ironstone. For a long time, the limestone was thought to be of inferior quality, and was not much used except by those in the immediate neighbourhood of the quarry. Now, however, it is in considerable demand. The sandstone, though not so beautiful in appearance as that which is found in an adjacent parish, is allowed to be of very superior quality. The claystone is certainly inferior to that which is brought from Angus-shire; still it is in great request, and is very generally used for pavement, hearths, &c. The coal mines which are on the estate of the Earl of Rosslyn consist of fourteen beds, most of which, however, are thin, and have been wrought out above the level of the sea. Three of the thickest of these beds are now working. The uppermost is five feet thick, the second eight feet, and the third five feet thick. At present, these beds are working about sixty or seventy fathoms below the surface. The metals cut through, in getting to the coal, are a sort of brownish stone, a clayey substance called by the workmen till; freestone; a hard bluish stone; and a hard coarse kind of coal mixed with stone. Dysart coal was amongst the first wrought in Scotland, operations having begun upwards of 350 years ago. It has a strong heat, but being rather slow in kindling, and leaving much ashes, is not so pleasant for rooms as some lighter coals. Like most of the minerals on the sea coast of this parish, it dips to the south-east one fathom in three near the shore; but is flatter as it goes north. It has been repeatedly on fire, the effects of which may still be traced by the calcined rocks from the harbour more than a mile up the country.

There are five beds of ironstone. They lie below the coal, and as they dip in the same direction, are wrought to the west of it, where they come nearer the surface. The ironstone when quarried is generally shipped for Carron; and it is understood that a ton of it yields about 12 cwt. of iron.

At different periods, numerous petrifications have been found in this parish;—and it may be noticed, that, for many years there were three petrified trees in the very heart of a rock, a little way to the westward of the town, the bark or skin of which resembled

pitch. Two of them were cut out of the rock lately, and carried away by some unknown person; and the other, which has been converted into a pedestal for a sun-dial, is to be seen in a garden in the town of Dysart.

Woods.—The plantations in this parish are not numerous. Altogether there are about 400 acres occupied by different kinds of trees, such as fir, oak, elm, &c.—300 acres of which belong to the Earl of Rosslyn, and contain some trees of considerable age.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Had the Burgh records, and other documents once in the possession of the Sinclair family been preserved, it is probable that they would have thrown much light upon the early history of Dysart. The former, however, are not preserved prior to 1623, and the latter were consumed in 1715,—when, by the negligence of a servant, Lord Sinclair's house was burnt to the ground. From the want of well authenticated sources of information, therefore, little can be said of the ancient state of Dysart. Indeed, there are no traces of its history prior to 874, when the Danes invaded Fife; and even then, little that can be depended upon is known. About that time, the Danish fleet, anchored off Dysart, landed their troops on the sea-coast: in marching into the interior of the country, they fought a battle in a field about a mile and a-half north of the town.

Dysart was originally a Burgh of Barony and held of Lord Sinclair, but in an act of Parliament dated 1506, ordaining the burghs on the shores of the Forth to expend their revenues on their walls and ports, Dysart is included; and from this it appears that it was then a Royal Burgh.

It has been ascertained that salt was made here as far back as the year 1450; that the salt works at that time were of great extent; that not only many of the principal towns in Scotland were supplied with salt from this port, but also that large quantities of it were then exported to Holland. About that time, too, and for nearly two or three centuries afterwards, the shipping interest was considerable; maritime and domestic commerce flourished exceedingly; malting and brewing were carried on to a great extent; and Dysart is allowed to have been one of the principal, if not the foremost trading town in the east of Fife. Prodigious quantities of merchandise, we are told, were regularly exposed to sale under the piazzas, which then pervaded the central street; and a square in the middle of the town is represented as having been in those days,

what with goods and what with the merchants who attended them, a sight of no ordinary splendour. As an illustration of the extensive commerce carried on in Dysart, and of the general importance which was attached to it as a commercial port, it may be mentioned, that, about the year 1640, when part of the eastern pier had either fallen or was in danger of falling, money to repair it was not only subscribed by merchants in the parish and neighbourhood, but collections for the same purpose were made at the church doors throughout the bounds of the presbytery at Dunfermline, and several other places in the county.

The quarrel of the Parliament of England with Charles I. which took place about the middle of the seventeenth century, and which extended to this part of the kingdom, suggests a few particulars connected with the history of Dysart which are not uninteresting. The inhabitants of the parish generally entered warmly into the views of the Parliament. Numbers of them, especially of the seamen "amongst whom were thirty skippers" volunteered into the army of the Covenanters, and were engaged in the memorable battles of Kilsyth, Philiphaugh, Tibbermoor, and Aberdeen. Public prayers were offered up for the success of the army, and public thanksgivings were returned for every advantage gained. The Solemn League and Covenant, which at this time was publicly sworn and subscribed at Kirkaldy, was also sworn and subscribed at Dysart; and if any were known to be indifferent in the national cause, they were immediately summoned before the kirk-session, and were dealt with as their case seemed to deserve. The people of Dysart did not abandon the cause they had espoused. Not only did they raise money to assist in carrying on the war, but furnished their proportion of horses, carts, and such other things as were necessary. The number of those belonging to the parish who were killed in the different battles already mentioned is stated to have been 98, and the number of those who were wounded is mentioned as considerable. In these circumstances, Dysart appears not to have been behind in its sympathies. Large contributions were made for the support of the wounded. Even the parish funds were devoted to the same purpose; and the surviving friends of those who had been disabled or slain had their exigencies supplied.

From the period which has thus come briefly under our review till the time of the union between the two kingdoms, there is (from the imperfect information contained in the records) a blank in the history, which it is not in our power to fill up, at least with facts

sufficiently authenticated. It is well known, however, that although the advantages which Scotland has derived from the union with England, have been long and deservedly acknowledged, it was at first lamented as an era of misfortune to the Scottish nation. The trade of many of the towns on the coast of Fife was greatly depressed by it, and in almost all of them it began to languish. Dysart was involved in the common fate. From this time its shipping, which had far exceeded that of any other port on the coast, fell rapidly into decay,—its general commerce declined,—its trade with the low countries in particular fell off gradually: even the coal and salt trade is small in comparison of what it once was; and Dysart by no means holds that rank in the scale of merchandise which it formerly did. *

Eminent Men.—Among the eminent characters connected with the parish, the following may be mentioned. The first Earl of Dysart was son of the Rev. William Murray, minister of Dysart; and this nobleman is represented as having taken a conspicuous part in the counsels of Charles I.

In Calderwood's History of the Church of Scotland, the Rev. William Hog, who was deposed for non-conformity in 1619, is represented as a man of considerable eminence. The Bishop of St Andrews tried every method to gain him; sometimes he used threats, and at other times promises. On one occasion, he promised him the richest living in his gift if he would engage not to preach against Episcopacy, but finding that every effort was in vain, he passed sentence of deposition and even of banishment against him. It appears, however, that Mr Hog did not leave the kingdom, but was afterwards admitted minister of Kennoway, in which parish he died.

The Rev. Mungo Law was celebrated in his day, both as a preacher and as a man of talents. During his incumbency in the second charge of this parish, he had calls to various places. After a keen contest, he was chosen representative of the Presbytery of

* Besides the records of the burgh, the kirk-session and the presbytery, from which the above information has been chiefly collected, there is a manuscript containing many curious facts respecting the antiquities of Dysart, of which Sir Walter Scott largely availed himself in his *Tales of a Grandfather*. It is the property of the Earl of Rosslyn. Another is alluded to in a small publication by Mr Charles Mackie, entitled *Historical Description of the Castle and Chapel of Roslin*. And about two years ago, Mr William Muir, parochial teacher in Dysart, collected, and at the request of a few friends, printed a small book containing many interesting facts respecting the parish, the church, and the school. This gentleman, who is a distinguished scholar and antiquarian, has in possession many curious coins, old receipts, and autographs of eminent persons in public life.

Kirkaldy, for the famous Assembly held in Glasgow in 1638. He was in Edinburgh Castle in 1650, when that fortress surrendered to Cromwell, and was one of the six ministers who protested against the surrender. He was, for some time after, a prisoner in England, and died in February 1660.

Robert Beatson was born at Dysart in 1742. He was educated with a view to the military profession. He obtained an ensigncy in 1756. He was at the taking of Martinique and Guadaloupe, and also served in the expedition to the coast of France, and during the American war. He is the author of many publications, among which are the following:—Political Index to the History of Great Britain and Ireland; Naval and Military Memoirs; Essay on the Comparative Advantages of Vertical and Horizontal Windmills; Chronological Register of both Houses of Parliament. The University of Aberdeen conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. He died at Edinburgh in 1818.

Land-owners—The principal land-owners in the parish are, the Earl of Rosslyn; the Earl of Rothes; Sir John Oswald of Dunnikier; and John Fergus, Esq. of Strathore.

Parochial Registers.—The parochial registers go so far back as 1619. They consist of about twenty volumes, and are in good order except one volume, which, being reckoned of importance, was, at the request of the session, lately transcribed by the session-clerk.

Antiquities.—Among the antiquities connected with Dysart, may be noticed the Red Rocks. These are nearly a mile eastward from the town. They bear the memorials of some dreadful convulsion, and are associated with the superstitions of former times. Tradition still points them out as the place where witches were burnt; and in different records, there are allusions to circumstances which render it more than probable that tradition is correct. The scenery all around is truly picturesque.

About half a mile to the westward of Dysart, is the Castle of Ravenscraig. It stands on a steep crag fronting the sea. It, with the adjoining lands, was given by James III. to William Sinclair, Earl of Orkney, when he resigned the title of Orkney; and ever since, has been the property of the family of Sinclair. Although in a ruinous state now, it was inhabited in Oliver Cromwell's time; indeed, it was the place where Lord Sinclair used to hold his court meetings; and the copy of a summons which his Lordship sent to the bailies of Dysart to appear before him is still preserved.

Near the Castle of Ravenscraig, three old trees stood together,

respecting which two traditions have been handed down. The one is, that three brothers of the Sinclair family had encountered each other there during the night; that, mistaking each other for robbers, they fell by each others hands: that they were buried there; and that the three trees were planted on their graves. The other is, that all the ground about Dysart had been originally under wood, and that when the wood was cleared away, these three trees were left as a memorial of its former state. It is questionable, however, whether the present trees are the same which tradition refers to. It is more than probable that, having fallen into decay, three others were planted in their room. The arms of the town of Dysart bear one tree; and there has long been a proverb here, "as old as the three trees of Dysart."

About a mile north from the town, there is to be seen a large stone in the middle of a field, said to be a memorial of the battle fought by the Danes to which we have alluded. About half a mile north from this field, there is a farm called Carberry, where the Romans are said to have had a station, and where it is reported there was once a Roman camp, but no traces of it now remain.

Towards the south or lower part of the town of Dysart, there was anciently a small chapel, generally said to have been dedicated to St Dennis; it is still called St Dennis's Chapel: part of the original wall is standing; but the building has long been used as a smithy.

Near to St Dennis's Chapel, stands the old church of Dysart. Its remains bear all the signatures of its having been a splendid and venerable building. On one of the windows, the date 1570 has been observed. The steeple and porch, however, are evidently of more ancient workmanship, and the heavy stone roof of the latter, and two sculptured stones above the door, where the statue of some saint was probably once placed, refer the time of their erection to an earlier period than 1570. Nearly in the middle of the harbour, there is a high rock called the Fort. It is said to have been fortified by Oliver Cromwell, but no remains of any work are discernible on it. A receipt of Cromwell's for money received was lately found amongst the town's papers, and was in possession of the treasurer; but, in consequence of being handed from one to another as a curiosity, it cannot now be found.

In the middle of the town of Dysart, stands the town-house. It was built in 1617, and contains the hall in which the magistrates and council assemble for conducting the ordinary affairs of the

burgh. Under the same roof, are the prison, the public weigh-house, the guard-house, and the black-hole. The whole is a plain building of strong rubble work, ornamented with a tower and spire. Part of it was occupied as a barrack-room by Cromwell's soldiers, and part of it as a magazine. Some of the soldiers, however, having entered the magazine with a lighted match, while in a state of intoxication, the whole building was almost reduced to a ruin, and was not rebuilt for several years afterwards.

Mansion-house, &c.—The only mansion-house now in the parish is that of the Earl of Rosslyn. It stands to the westward of the town of Dysart. It is a plain, but neat and commodious building, and commands a most beautiful view of the Forth, and of the picturesque scenery to the eastward of the town.

About five or six years ago, a mill for spinning flax was erected in the parish, which employs from eighty to an hundred individuals, most of whom are resident in the town. There is also a factory for stone-ware, which gives employment to nearly an hundred individuals. And there is a small factory for making ropes, at which three or four individuals have constant employment.

III.—POPULATION.

From want of proper documents, little information can be given of the ancient state of the population of this parish. With the exception of Dunfermline, it has long been reckoned the most populous in the county. So far back, indeed, as the year 1619 or 1620, the inhabitants were so numerous, that one minister was not sufficient to do the work of the parish, and in consequence of this a second charge was established, and another minister introduced. According to Dr Webster's report, as quoted in the former Statistical Account, the number of souls in 1755 was 2367, and, as will be seen from the census of 1831, it is now upwards of 7000, exclusive of sailors, which amount to a few hundreds more. This great increase may be fairly traced to the different public works which have been established in the parish; to the facilities afforded to feuars; to the low rate of house-rents, and to the cheapness of fuel.

A more particular account of the different villages in the parish will afterwards be given; but in the meantime the following state of the population may be depended upon:

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|---|------|
| Town of Dysart, | 1801 |
| Pathhead, including Sinclair Town, | 8330 |
| Hawley Muir or upper part of Sinclair Town, | 434 |
| Gallaton, | 1058 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------|
| Boreland, | | 184 |
| Country part of the parish, | | 302 |
| | | <hr/> 7104 |
| Males, | | 3291 |
| Females, | | 3813 |
| | | <hr/> |

The only family of nobility residing occasionally in the parish is that of the Earl of Rosslyn: but there are many families of independent fortune, and five or six proprietors of land whose income from that source varies from L. 200 to L. 300 or L. 400 a year.

Dysart can boast of at least as many instances of longevity as any parish in Fife. There are a good many instances of people above eighty years of age, attending church regularly twice a day, not only in summer but during winter; and not many months ago, a respectable old man in his ninety-fourth year, not only attended church but sat in session with his brethren, and his recollections were as distinct as at any period of his life.

The number of lunatics known to belong to the parish is only two, and they are supported in an asylum by the heritors. The number of fatuous persons does not exceed three or four at most.

The great body of the people are of industrious habits; and although from the pressure of the times, they have not had it in their power to enjoy those comforts which they did a few years ago, it would be great injustice to conceal that they have borne their privations with more than ordinary patience—and that, upon the whole, they are contented and happy with their situation and circumstances. There are a great number of very intelligent individuals amongst them, and not a few who are distinguished both for religious principle and good moral practice.

At one time, smuggling prevailed to a very great extent, and the common impression was, that there was no harm in it. In many of the old houses, indeed, the smuggling holes where sea-faring people concealed tea, gin, and other articles, are still to be seen; but this degrading and sinful practice is not now known to exist.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—This parish contains 3054 Scotch acres, the whole of which are arable, and under the plough,—except about 400 acres of plantation ground, and a park here and there let for grazing cattle.

The trees belonging to the different plantations, as formerly mentioned, are fir, oak, elm, &c. all of which are regularly thinned and pruned, and the management of which is understood to be ex-

cellent. As farm rents are generally paid partly in grain, and partly in money, it is difficult to say precisely what is the actual rent of arable land. It varies from L. 1, 5s. to L. 6, 6s. The average of the whole, however, as nearly as can be calculated, is about L. 2, 5s. or L. 2, 6s. per acre.

Rent of Land.—The usual rent of grazing an ox or cow for the season is L. 4, and of grazing a ewe or full-grown sheep about 16s. yearly.

Improvements.—It is generally admitted that in no part of Fifeshire have greater improvements been made in agriculture than in this parish. Much land formerly waste has been reclaimed, drained, and embanked. The farm-buildings are generally in the highest order, being mostly all new within these few years. The system of husbandry pursued is that which has been most generally approved of by those qualified to judge. The general duration of leases is nineteen years; and although there is no public association in the parish for the encouragement of agriculture, great attention has been paid to the improvement of farm stock.

As the farms are all under the plough, there are few sheep in the parish. The breeds of cattle generally preferred are the Fife, Ayrshire, and Teeswater breeds. Great attention has also been paid to the rearing of horses.

The estates on which the above-mentioned improvements have chiefly taken place, are those belonging to Mr Fergus of Strathore and the Earl of Rosslyn. On these estates as well as throughout the parish, the leases are for nineteen years, except the burgh roods or acre land, which is let from year to year.

At the time the leases were granted, they were reckoned favourable to the tenants; but from the low prices of grain of late years, the tenants complain that they are unable to pay their stipulated rents.

Wheat, barley, oats, potatoes, hay, and turnip are raised in large quantities and in regular rotation; but the exact amount of raw produce raised in the parish could not easily be ascertained.

Manufactures.—About forty years ago, there were about 100 smiths employed in the manufacture of nails. It is said that about 12,000,000 of nails were made by this number of men, and that their value was not less than L. 2000. These were generally sold in Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as in all the principal towns of the north of Scotland; and a large proportion of them were used for ship-building. This branch of nail manufacture flourished ex-

ceedingly for upwards of a century; but nail factories having been established in other parts of the country, greatly diminished the profits of the merchants here, and now the trade itself is almost totally discontinued.

The same thing may be said of the manufacture of linen cloth. Formerly, great quantities of it were made in the parish; but very few now.

The principal branch which flourishes at present is the manufacture of checks and ticks. This branch of trade was introduced into the parish between 1710 and 1720; it continued to increase till 1776; but about that time scarcely brought L. 9000 of yearly value. It is very different at present. The number of looms employed in the manufacture of this kind of cloth is about 2088; the quantity of cloth made is supposed to be 81,006,720 yards; and the annual value of this quantity not under L. 150,236. A large proportion of this is sold in Glasgow, London, Manchester, Liverpool, Nottingham and Leeds. A large proportion of it is also sent to other parts of Europe, to the Cape of Good Hope, and to the East and West Indies. The number of hands employed in this department of trade, including weavers, winders, and warpers, may be fairly estimated from 5000 to 6000. Several of the manufacturers have agencies in different parts of the country, in Ceres, Strathmiglo, and Perth; and it appears from their testimony that the number of looms employed by them out of the parish is above 1000.

The weavers are engaged all the six days of the week, when they can find employment. Some of them, indeed, are obliged to work from four or five in the morning till ten or eleven at night; and after all their industry, will not earn more than 5s. or 6s. per week. It is almost needless to add, that this is but a poor remuneration for their labour; that the effects of such long hours on their health are any thing but good, and are very adverse to mental improvement.

At the mill where flax is spun, the work people are employed from half-past five in the morning till eight at night, half an hour being allowed for breakfast and the same for dinner. The earnings of the female mill-spinners are from 6s. to 7s. weekly. It deserves to be mentioned that the proprietors of this mill are men of great respectability; that they take an interest in the morals of the young people; and that they will not allow the most distant approaches to anything like vice.

Navigation.—Formerly the shipping interest of the Port of Dysart was considerable, by far the greatest of any in Fife. Now, however, there are only a few brigs and a few sloops, and there are no foreign vessels to the port, except now and then one from Holland or from the Baltic, or when coals are ordered for the Northern Lighthouses.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Burgh.—The only town in the parish is the town or burgh of Dysart. It consists chiefly of three narrow streets, with a species of square in the centre. The central or High Street is full of antique substantial houses, the fronts of which are generally decorated with inscriptions and dates, and in one part of it with piazzas. The piazzas are places in which the merchants in olden times exposed their goods to sale, but the greater number of them are now built up, so that the houses themselves scarcely retain a vestige of what was thought no small part of their ancient grandeur.

The burgh was lately disfranchised, owing to some informality in the Michaelmas elections; and its affairs at present are under the superintendence of three managers, nominated by the Court of Session. The revenue of the burgh is about L. 500 or L. 600. The nearest market-town to it is Kirkaldy.

Villages.—There are three villages in the parish, Pathhead, Gallaton, and Boreland. Pathhead is in the western extremity of the parish, at the head of a steep descent leading to Kirkaldy called the *Path*, and from thence it derives its name. It is divided into Pathhead Proper or Dunnikier, and Sinclairton. The former or old town, which is of very ancient date, is built on the estate of Dunnikier. It consists of three principal streets, the Back, the Middle, and the Nether Street, at the end of which last street, is the house long inhabited by the family of Dunnikier. The latter, or New Town, is built on the estate of the Earl of Rosslyn, and is separated from the former by the great road leading to Dundee. The building of it commenced about seventy years ago, and extends about a mile north, where it joins the village of Gallaton. The population in this part of the parish, as will be seen from the last census, is 3764.

Gallaton is a village of considerable extent. It is divided into Easter and Wester Gallaton. The population of both is 1053. There are two traditions respecting the origin of the name. The one is, that under the feudal system, the field on which the first house was built was the place where criminals were executed. The other

and more probable of the two is, that about two or three hundred years ago, a noted robber or house-breaker suffered the extreme penalty of the law here, and that, from this circumstance, it got the name of Gallowstown, afterwards of Gallaton. It was long a place celebrated for the making of nails: and when Dr Adam Smith resided in Kirkaldy, he frequently came to converse with the more intelligent nailers in this village respecting their mode of barter.

The village of Boreland is the most inconsiderable of the three. It is about half a-mile to the south-east of Gallaton; it was founded about a century ago, and is inhabited by those who are employed in the coal works. About twenty years ago, there were fully 300 individuals residing here; but by the last census the population does not exceed 184. This arises from the coal works being carried on on a less scale than formerly.

Means of Communication.—The parish enjoys ample means of communication with almost every part of the country. It has two post-offices or rather sub-offices; Kirkaldy being the nearest post-town. The turnpike roads are in excellent condition. There is one which leads to Dundee and Aberdeen, about four miles and a-half in length; another leading to St Andrews by Ceres, about three miles in length; and another which branches off from the great road to Dundee and leads into the interior of the country, north from the village of Gallaton. Besides two steam-boats which ply regularly to Newhaven, a packet which plies three times a-week to Leith, and an occasional one to Dundee, no fewer than six public carriages travel on the turnpike roads,—two to Aberdeen, one to Dundee, one to Perth, one to Montrose, and one to Crail.

The only two bridges in the parish which need to be mentioned are those on the water of Oar and Lochty. The one is about two miles and a-half from the cross of Dysart, and the other about three miles.

The harbour of Dysart, the revenue of which belongs to the burgh, has been long and well known not to be one of the safest on the Frith of Forth. In winter, when the wind is easterly, it is extremely dangerous. The swell inside of it is so great that ships have been frequently driven from their moorings, and have been almost wrecked in it; indeed, it is no unusual thing to be obliged to scuttle them. This arises not so much from the situation of the harbour, as from the construction of the east pier. Several eminent engineers and naval gentlemen have repeatedly given it as their opinion, that, were part of it taken down and carried out in a different direction, Dysart might not only be made

the safest and most commodious harbour on the coast, but might be rendered capable of admitting ships of almost every burden, and might even admit vessels drawing fifteen feet of water when the tides were at their lowest ebb. As this, however, required more funds than the town-council could command, it was resolved a few years ago to convert a quarry adjacent to the west pier, into a wet dock,—an undertaking which has been lately completed; so that Dysart can now boast of a harbour to which none on the coast of Fife can be compared. The depth of water it contains is fully eighteen feet, and it will hold about seventeen or eighteen vessels of different burdens, exclusive of what the old harbour will contain.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church was built in 1802. It is a neat plain building, is seated for 1600 examinable persons, and cost from L. 1800 to L. 2000. Its situation, which is at the top of the town, is fully as convenient for the parishioners in general, as any other which could have been selected, none of them being more than twenty minutes walk from it, except those living in the country, many of whom are above five miles distant. The seats are all private property, except a few which belong to the kirk-session. These last are let every half year at a very low rate, and the rents given to the poor. There are no free sittings for the poor. Dysart is a collegiate charge. The stipend of the first minister, as lately augmented, is $17\frac{1}{2}$ chalders of victual, half meal, and half barley, payable according to the highest fiar prices of the county. He has also a chalders of salt yearly, the value of which is L. 3, 12s.; $10\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of coals weekly; L. 10 for communion elements; and 15s. 11d. from some old buildings, called the Teind Barns, which, with the consent of the presbytery, were feued to Lord Sinclair about sixty years since. The minister has also a manse and glebe, and a right to the fish teinds. The glebe consists of four acres, and would bring at present L. 20 of yearly rent. It is only about eleven years since a glebe was given. Although the house which the minister occupies is about forty years old, it is not more than five years since it was made a manse. The former one, which was built in 1777, requiring some repairs,—it was thought more advisable to purchase the present house, which is considerably larger; to which exchange the presbytery consented. The stipend of the second minister is 10 chalders of victual, half meal and half barley, paid in the same manner as that of the first. He has L. 50 of money, part of which are included in the 10 chalders of victual; $10\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. of coals in the fortnight, and L. 5 for communion elements. He also receives L. 25 yearly, being the interest of money mortified in the town's

hands upwards of two hundred years ago. He has neither manse nor glebe, nor any allowance for them. The Earl of Rosslyn is the patron of both charges.

Large and increasing though the population of Dysart be, there are no Chapels of Ease attached to the Established Church. But about thirteen years ago, seven or eight individuals connected with the village of Pathhead, agreed to erect a place of worship at their own expense. It cost about L. 3000, and they have no return for their money but the seat rents, which are far from being an adequate remuneration. The house was opened in November 1823,—ever since which time the ministers of Dysart have preached in it, and dispensed the ordinances of religion, without asking or receiving any emolument. The building is neat and elegant; it is ornamented with a spacious tower, and is seated for 970 persons.

There are two dissenting chapels in the parish, the one belonging to the synod of Relief, and the other to the Antiburghers. The stipend of the minister in the Relief chapel is very small, and that of the Antiburgher does not exceed L. 100 yearly. Both are dependent for their livings upon the seat rents, and the Sabbath days' collection made at their church doors. These cannot amount to much, when it is considered that the usual congregation in both places does not exceed 800 or 900 people at most.

A few years ago, the parish was divided by authority of the Presbytery, so that each minister has now a district under his own immediate superintendence. In the east division, which includes the town of Dysart, the villages of Gallaton, Boreland, and the country part of the parish, the state of matters with respect to the Church is as follows:

| | <i>Belonging to the Church.</i> | <i>Other deno- minations.</i> | <i>Unknown to belong to any.</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Dysart, - | 1262 | 364 | 58 |
| Gallaton, - | 910 | 255 | 144 |
| Boreland and country, | 337 | 90 | 29 |
| | <hr/> 2509 | <hr/> 709 | <hr/> 231 |

The number usually attending the parish church is from 1200 to 1300; and at Pathhead it is about 600. There are about 1800 names on the communion roll; but of this number not more than 600 or 700 communicate in the parish church, at each sacrament; and not more than 400 at Pathhead.

There are several religious societies in the parish, viz. a Bible and Missionary Society, which occasionally gives part of its funds to the Gaelic and Hibernian Societies; a Sabbath Evening School Society; and a Society for the Education of Children. This last

society does not educate the young people gratuitously; but only pays one-half of the school fees, upon condition that the parents pay the other half. Hitherto, it has been supported by individual subscriptions among the heritors, and by the parishioners at large, and also by collections at the church doors.

Besides these, there is a society in the town of Dysart for the support of indigent old women. It has existed for nearly half a century, and has been the means of doing much good. Its expenditure has been about L. 40 yearly.

The exact amount of contributions for religious and charitable purposes cannot easily be ascertained; but, including collections made at the church doors, it is not less than L. 100 yearly. Last year it was nearly L. 200. Owing to the dulness of trade, and the low rate of wages among the labouring classes of society, and owing to few of the heritors residing constantly in the parish, the collections made at the church doors are not so great as formerly.

Education.—There are 14 schools in the parish,—two of which are taught by females,—viz. at Dysart, 4; at Pathhead, 4; at Sinclairtown, 2; at Gallaton, 3; at Boreland, 1; total, 14. The parochial or rather the burgh school is conveniently situated only for such children as reside in the town of Dysart. The master is elected by the town-council, who pay his salary, amounting to L. 43, partly from the burgh funds, and partly from money mortified for this purpose. He has no dwelling-house nor garden, but he receives an allowance for them from the town. Besides the usual branches of education, he teaches Latin, book-keeping, and mensuration. All the other schools are supported by school-fees alone, except two,—one in Pathhead, which is endowed, and the master of which receives L. 120 in the year for teaching 150 children reading, writing, and arithmetic; and another in Boreland, the salary of which is L. 8, besides free house, school-house, and coals. The total number of children attending the above-mentioned schools varies from 700 to 800.

Notwithstanding the facilities for education that this parish affords, it was lately ascertained, that there are nearly 60 persons above the age of fifteen who cannot read or write. Judging, however, from the eagerness with which many parents have availed themselves of the advantages which have been more recently held out, it would, perhaps, be unfair to say, that the people in general are not alive to the benefits of education; and the number of uneducated children in the parish can, in very many instances, be traced to the low wages

which the labouring classes receive, and which render it almost impossible for them to educate their children without assistance.

It was already said, that the burgh school is conveniently situated for those children only who reside in the town. But it ought to be mentioned, that although the present teacher is a distinguished scholar, the youth, even within the town, are so numerous, that they could not be educated at all were it not for the private schools which have been opened. And in the landward or country part of the parish, which is 4, 5, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant from Dysart, the youth would not be educated at all, were it not that a school-house has been built by subscription in a corner of the parish of Markinch, supported partly by school fees, and partly by a salary paid to the teacher by the Earl of Rosslyn and Mr Balfour of Balgonie. At the last examination of this school there were 70 children present, amongst whom were four Latin scholars.

The expense of education in this parish is in some cases 2d. per week, but more generally 3d. weekly, or 3s. per quarter for the ordinary branches. It is almost needless to add, that in each of the villages in the parish, especially in Gallaton, Boreland, and the landward part of the parish, an established master is required.

Libraries, &c.—There are two subscription libraries in the parish, consisting of books of history, voyages, travels, &c. There is one called the Mechanics' Library, and there is another consisting of religious books only. The subscription to the three former is 1s. quarterly, and to the latter 1s. yearly, or a penny per month.

There are two public reading rooms in the parish, where most of the usual newspapers of the day may be seen.

The only friendly societies now in the parish are those among the sailors, the maltmen, and the bakers. These have been long in existence, at least two hundred years. The funds belonging to each of them are extensive, and are entirely devoted to the support of indigent or decayed members.

Savings' Bank.—There is also a savings' bank in Dysart, the accumulated fund of which is about L. 1200. The deposits in it are chiefly from the labouring classes.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons who receive aid from the parish funds is 120, and the average allowance to each is 2s. 6d. per month. In some cases, however, 3s. or 4s. are given. The fund is made up by collections at the church door, amounting on an average to L. 90 per annum; by seat rents belonging to the kirk-session, amounting to about L. 30 in the year; and by an annual contribution among the heritors, which varies from

L. 150 to L. 200 yearly. Out of this fund, two lunatics are supported in an asylum.

It must be admitted, that now and then application is made to the kirk-session for parochial aid, which they cannot sustain; yet there is no particular disposition in this parish to seek such relief; and it is but justice to mention, that there are many instances in which widows, with large families, and in which other individuals, have come forward and thanked the kirk-session for what had been done for them in their day of need, and have respectfully declined farther assistance.

Prison.—Dysart cannot certainly boast of having a well-secured prison; but there is seldom a prisoner in it.

Fairs.—Formerly there were six annual fairs in the parish, for the sale of wool, white cloth, lintseed, and black cattle. These were attended by merchants from Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Stirling. Now, however, little remains of them but the name. They are almost completely deserted.

Inns.—There are by far too many public-houses in the parish,—not fewer than 150,—and it is almost needless to say, that their effects upon the morals of the people are most pernicious.

Fuel.—Coal is in great abundance, and very cheap. Twelve hundred weight, including carriage, may be had for 5s. in almost any part of the parish; and in some parts of it for less.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The most striking variations betwixt the present state of the parish and that which existed at the time when the last Statistical Account was made out are these: great improvements in agriculture; much waste land reclaimed, drained, and embanked; farm-buildings greatly improved; almost total giving up of the nail trade; and prodigious increase of the manufacture of checks and ticks; comparatively little ship-building; great diminution of shipping; fairs or public markets given up; a new church and schoolhouse in Dysart, and a new church and endowed school in Pathhead; a greatly improved harbour; the erection of a mill for spinning flax; a patent slip for repairing vessels of large tonnage; a complete and safe harbour; friendly societies diminished in number; and a prosperous savings' bank. Formerly almost every female was taught to spin lint, but for many years past, this practice has entirely ceased.

Revised April 1836.

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