

## PARISH OF ABBOTSHALL.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKALDY, SYNOD OF FIFE.

THE REV. JOHN MURRAY, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THE whole of Abbotshall, with the exception of three farms, Easter and Wester Touch, belonging to Kinghorn, and Wester Bogle to Dysart,—was disjoined from the parish of Kirkaldy in the year 1650.\*

*Name.*—The newly erected parish was called Abbotshall, a name obviously derived from the circumstance of one of the abbots of Dunfermline having built a house here, in which he occasionally resided. The situation of the house, or hall of the abbot as it was styled, was about a quarter of a mile due west from the present church, and near to the centre of the Raith gardens, or what are still sometimes called the Abbotshall gardens. A fine yew tree which grew in front, and which has already stood the blast of centuries, will probably long serve to mark out to the inquirer the spot on which the mansion of the abbot was placed. †

\* This disjunction originated in an application made to the presbytery by several of the heritors of the landward district of Kirkaldy, in consequence of the great extent of the parish, and distance of a considerable part of it from the church,—praying that they would appoint some of their number to visit that part of the parish, and report whether or not another church should be built. The records of presbytery bear that they willingly received this application, and appointed certain of their number to visit the bounds of the said landward district, and to report their judgment of the necessity of separating it from the other part of the parish; as also what was the fittest place where a new church should be built, in the event of their opinion being favourable to the disjunction. It also appears from the records of presbytery, of date October 31st, 1649, that this visitation was made, and that a report was given in favourable to the wishes of the petitioners. The consequence was, that the presbytery recommended to the Commissioners of Parliament for Surrenders and Tithes that a disjunction should take place, which the commissioners authorized, and the whole was completed the following year.

† At what time the lands of Abbotshall ceased to be the property of the Abbey of Dunfermline we are not aware, but it appears probable that they were disposed of about the same time (the year 1450) that the town of Kirkaldy and lands in the immediate neighbourhood were disposed by the commendator and convent to the bailies and community of Kirkaldy. Be that, however, as it may, it is certain that Abbotshall was for a great length of time the property of the Scotts of Balwearie, and that it afterwards became the property of the Ramsays (of Abbotshall,) who sold it to the ancestors of the present proprietor, Mr Ferguson of Raith. Sir Robert Sibbald, in his *History of Fife*, which was published near the beginning of last

*Boundaries—Extent.*—The parish being a good deal intersected by other parishes, is of an irregular shape; but its greatest length, from the coast to the north-west, is not less than 4 miles, and its breadth, which varies much at different points, may average 2. It is bounded on the north-east by Kirkaldy; on the south-east by the Frith of Forth; on the south-west by the parish of Kinghorn; and on the north-west by that of Auchterderran. The parish of Auchtertool touches it on the west.

*Topographical Appearances.*—Along the coast, the grounds are flat and level to the distance of more than half a-mile from the sea, when they begin to rise into fine sloping banks, with occasional interruptions, for the distance of three miles; afterwards they gradually descend till they reach the extremity of the parish.

*Soil, &c.*—The soil, as may be expected, is different in different parts; but on the average is greatly superior to that of most parishes in Fife. Near the sea shore, it is free and healthy,—being very generally the soil arising from decomposed whin or trap rock, and is particularly favourable for raising crops of barley and turnips. Further back, and where the grounds begin to ascend, the soil is richer and stronger, being for the most part of a clayey or dark loamy substance, and well adapted for wheat, beans, and other heavy crops. Towards the extreme points, and furthest from the coast, the soil is, for the most part, of a cold tilly bottom, and consequently less productive. It is very susceptible, however, of improvement, and is in the immediate vicinity of coal and lime, though less favoured in regard to other kinds of manure than the rest of the parish.

The climate throughout the whole is good, and no diseases of an epidemic nature can be said to prevail. To this, the washing of our shores by the Forth twice every four and twenty hours doubtless contributes, as well as the many dry and inviting walks on all hands within reach of the inhabitants. At present the parish furnishes no very remarkable instances of longevity; but there are 123 persons who have outlived three score years and ten,—of whom 24 are upwards of eighty, and 2 upwards of ninety. The most prevalent winds are the westerly, and the quantity of rain which falls is 33 inches, a larger quantity than usual, 31 inches (accord-

century, speaks of the mansion-house of Abbotshall as at that time "a large and fine new house," which house must have been built by the then proprietor, Mr Andrew Ramsay, and the remains of which were standing not more than forty years ago, on the same spot, there is reason to believe, on which the original house or hall of the abbot stood.

ing to Sir John Sinclair) being the average that falls in the course of the year throughout Scotland.

*Hydrography.*—There is no stream or water of any consequence running through or connected with this parish. The streamlet flowing from Loch Gelly, in the parish of Auchterderran, and which afterwards falls into the water of Oar in the same parish, touches it for a little distance on the north-west, as does the Tiel on the south-west, and both waters are useful in turning the different mills which are situated on them. The small brook that runs from Camilla Loch, in the parish of Auchtertool, also bends its course through this parish, where it joins the Tiel previous to its falling into the sea at the west bridge. In its way, the Camilla stream serves as the principal feeder to that beautiful and picturesque sheet of water known by the name of the Raith Lake. This lake, which is situated in the heart of the Raith pleasure-grounds, and at the base of the hill on which the mansion-house is placed, was formed by the present proprietor in the year 1811–12, and is one of the finest artificial constructions of the kind that is anywhere to be seen. It is somewhat of an oval form, about a mile in length, and at certain points almost a quarter of a mile in breadth. The extent of ground it covers is not less than twenty-one acres, and the water is at some places twenty-five deep. It was originally an extensive hollow, as if scooped out, in some measure, for the purpose, by the hand of nature;—and by filling it up at some places, and deepening and extending it at others, the work was in a short time completed; a sluice is left at the centre, by which the lake can be filled or emptied at pleasure. The whole is finished in a masterly and ingenious manner, and the expense was very inconsiderable, considering the surface it covers, and the quantity of water it contains. The lake abounds in a variety of fishes, such as trout, perch, taimel, and eel. There are several pleasure boats on it belonging to the family, and the angler may find abundance of amusement. It is graced by some beautiful white swans, which may now and then be seen floating majestically along, and wild ducks are flying about in various directions. On every side, the lake is surrounded with delightful walks,—which, as well as the other walks about Raith, are, through the liberality of the proprietor, at all times accessible to the more respectable portion of the community. To strangers and others, who, during the summer and autumn months, come from different quarters of the country to view the fine scenery and highly decorated grounds of Raith, the lake is a principal object of attraction and admiration.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—The greater part of this parish, in common with the district around Kirkaldy, is composed of rocks of the two great formations, that of the carboniferous limestone and the coal strata, with an intermixture of trap rock. The carboniferous limestone is well displayed in the quarry of Innertiel, which, although not in Abbotshall, deserves notice in this place, as affording the best section of that strata which runs through the parish. In that quarry, the carboniferous limestone is in thick beds, with interposed seams of dark-coloured calcareous shale. The limestone is quite full of encrinural remains; and many of the rarer portions of encrinurites, viz. the bases, fingers, and even the bodies in a pretty perfect state, may be extracted from the loose shale. Trochites shewing great variety and delicacy in their markings are also abundant. The following species of encrinurites (following the nomenclature of Miller) were met with, after a careful search in the shale, by a scientific friend of the writer of this Account, who lately resided for a short time in the parish.—*Cyathocrinites planus*, *C. tuberculatus*, *C. rugosus*, *C. quinquangularis*, *Platycrinites lævis*, *P. rugosus*, *Poteriocrinites tenuis*, and *Rhodocrinurites*. Of all these *Cyathocrinites tuberculatus*, which Miller states to be rare in England, was the most common. There is, in the limestone, also abundance of *Orthoceratites* and *Terebratulites*, and a variety of other shells. The Chapel quarry, which is the principal one of the kind in this parish, is of limestone of the same formation, and exhibits large encrinural columns, sometimes an inch and a-half in diameter, and *Orthoceratites* nearly two feet long. Some rare forms of calcareous spar are also to be met with in cavities in the limestone. The carboniferous limestone is much interrupted and disturbed by trap rocks, which rise here and there to the surface. Upon it, rest the coal strata which run through this district, and which contain valuable seams of coal. Amid this variety of fossils, freestone is also to be met with, and is used for the common purposes of building. For the better sort of houses, however, and the more ornamental parts of buildings, the Collelo stone, or some other of a similar kind, is generally preferred. Coal being profitably worked by some of the proprietors in the immediate neighbourhood, there are no pits open at present in this parish. The inhabitants, however, are well supplied with that article of fuel, and at an easy rate. The nearest colliery is that at the back of the town of Kirkaldy, belonging to Sir John Oswald, where the price of coal is 7s. 7d. per ton of 21 cwt. At the colliery of Dysart, belonging to the Earl of Rosslyn, the price is 7s.; and at the colliery of Cluny, belonging to

Mr Ferguson of Raith, the price is 6s. 5d. The Cluny coal, though the most distant, is generally preferred. The price of lime at the different quarries is from 2s. to 2s. 4d. per boll old corn firloft, and the quantity sold annually is very considerable.

*Botany.*—The only plants that may be called rare are *Campanula rapunculoides*, *Listera ovata*, and *Drosera rotundifolia*. The first of these is to be found on the farm of Balwearie, the others on the farm of Torbain.

The trees most commonly to be met with are, the oak, beech, sycamore, chesnut, spruce, ash, walnut, elm, larch, Scotch fir, &c. all of which thrive well, except the larch, which seems impatient of the soil, and soon becomes chaffed, and sometimes even rotten at the heart, against its thirtieth year. In the Raith plantations, all these kinds of trees and many more are to be seen in great beauty and perfection. Immediately in front of the mansion-house, there is a fine beech, which measures in circumference 14 feet; on the south side of the house, there are two chesnuts likewise of large size and dimensions. The girth of the one is  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and of the other  $9\frac{1}{2}$ . A hawthorn, which stands on the east side of the garden, is well worthy of notice, being of great age, size, and beauty. Near the same place, and about twenty yards from the approach, is to be seen what is considered the purest purple beech in the county. Evergreens of every variety thrive well about Raith, particularly the Portugal laurels, many of which form fine trees of 5 feet in girth of bole and upwards. The whole of the plantations there, are under a good system of management, both as to pruning and thinning, and the thinnings, though seldom large, are readily purchased for the excellent quality of the timber.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Antiquities.*—The antiquities of the parish are few and easily told. On Cormie Hill, or that eminence on which the Raith Tower stands, there have been found, at different places, several rude stone coffins, similar to what have been found in other parts of Scotland. Some urns have also been dug up containing human bones. On the part where the Tower stands, there was a small artificial mound, on removing which it evidently appeared to have been a burnt mould and many fragments of deers-horns were found in it. From several appearances, this hill is supposed to have been in former days a military station, or at all events a place of national rendezvous.

The ruins of the tower of Balwearie, anciently the property of the famous wizard, Sir Michael Scott, are still preserved. From what re-

mains, it must have been originally of great strength, and of considerable importance. The walls measure in thickness six feet and a-half, and the dimensions within walls are thirty feet. It is reasonably supposed to have been a square. All that is now preserved is the east wall, which is entire, and part of the north and south walls. The lower part of it has been arched, and it was probably used as a defence for cattle. In these more peaceable times, it is used for feeding cattle, which purpose it is made to answer well. The height of this tower or castle could not be less than from fifty to sixty feet. On the roof of the building, according to tradition, the white-haired and venerable sage was accustomed to sit, observing the face of the heavens, and conversing with the stars.

*Eminent Men.*—Sir Michael Scott was born at Balwearie,\* according to the most accredited accounts, near the beginning of the thirteenth century, and from his earliest youth discovered a remarkable thirst for knowledge. After receiving such scanty rudiments of education as his native country at that time afforded, he went into England, where, at the University of Oxford, he devoted himself with deep application to the study of philosophy. Completing his studies at Oxford, he repaired, according to the fashion of the age in which he lived, to the University of Paris, where he prosecuted with so much ardour the study of mathematics, as to acquire for himself the name of “Michael the mathematician.” Nor did he, in the midst of these avocations, neglect the study of the sacred letters and divinity; but gaining in these branches a high reputation, he received the degree of Doctor in Theology. With these learned distinctions, Michael Scott determined on farther travels, and visited many other countries and universities. Amongst these, he first sought the far-famed College of Padua, where such appears to have been the impression created by his talents, that his essays were no longer, as in France, confined within the walls of a university. His fame became noised abroad, and he began to publish to the world those predictions of future events, which were remembered in later times with awe and reverence in Italy.† From Italy, Michael Scott,

\* Balwearie, according to Sibbald, was in possession of the family of Scott for at least 500 years. To the same family belonged also Scotsraig and many other lands in the county. The family of Scott of Balwearie is said to be now represented by Scott of Anerum.

† Vellani, a historian who wrote long after the reputed prophet was gathered to his fathers, records a prediction of Michael Scott's, which he declares had been rigidly fulfilled; and Dante has given him, in his character of a magician, a conspicuous place in his *Inferno*.

“Quel altro che ne fianchi e così poco  
Michele Scoto fu, che veramente  
Delle magiche frode seppè il gioco.” *Inferno, Canto 20th.*

still unwearied in the pursuit of knowledge, made his way into Spain, where, at the University of Toledo, he had the best opportunity of cultivating the occult sciences, under the patronage of the Emperor Frederick the Second. Having perfected himself in the study of alchemy, he turned his thoughts to the study of medicine, and for this purpose went into Germany, where he resided for several years previous to his return to his native country. He arrived in Scotland just at that critical juncture when the nation was plunged into grief by the death of Alexander the Third; and, along with Sir David Wemyss was appointed to proceed to Norway to bring home the young Queen,—the result of which expedition is well known. This is the last occasion in which the name of Sir Michael Scott appears to be mentioned. Of his death nothing is recorded; but he must have died soon after his return from Norway, and in extreme old age. It is a curious fact, that in his native parish, there are fewer stories current amongst the people about this extraordinary character, and his name is less frequently mentioned than in most other parts of Scotland.

“Fama . . . . .  
Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo.”

From the time of Michael Scott, there does not appear to have been any character of note connected with Abbotshall, till the year 1538, when we find Thomas Scott, † a Lord of Session, under the title of Lord Abbotshall. In the year 1671, we find Sir Andrew Ramsay mentioned as a Lord of Session, under the same title. Sir Andrew continued to hold the office of a Judge till 1674, during which time he was twice Provost of Edinburgh. It was while he filled the civic chair in the year 1667, that Charles the Second (by whom he was probably knighted) ordered that the Provost of Edinburgh should take the same precedency as the Mayor of London, and that no other Provost should assume the title of “My Lord.” Sir Andrew died, and was buried at Abbotshall in 1688. ‡ In the year 1690, we find George Melville of Raith

\* Sir Walter Scott tells us, in a note to the Lay of the Last Minstrel, in which romantic poem the name of the magician is embalmed, that amongst the peasantry in the south of Scotland, any work of great labour of antiquity is ascribed either to the agency of Auld Michael, of Sir William Wallace, or the Devil.

† This Scott was doubtless a descendant of Sir Michael Scott. Abbotshall, Sibbald mentions as “anciently the possession of the Scotts of Balwearie.” Both Balwearie and Abbotshall have long since formed part of the Raith estate, and are now of course the property of Robert Ferguson, Esq. of Raith.

‡ Sir Andrew Ramsay seems to have purchased Abbotshall from the Scotts. Mr Andrew Ramsay, father of Sir Andrew, and one of the ministers of Edinburgh, is noticed as having died at his son’s house at Abbotshall in the year 1659; thus intimating, as it were, that Sir Andrew Ramsay was the first of the name to whom Abbotshall belonged. “Sir Andrew was succeeded in Abbotshall, according to Sibbald, by his “nevey Mr Andrew Ramsay, and a grandson of the Laird of Whitstoun in the Mearns.”

mentioned as one of the Peers of Scotland, under the title of Lord Melville, Lord Raith, Monymeal and Balwearie, Viscount Kirkaldy, and Earl of Melville. The family and titles are now merged in that of Leven, and the estate of Raith soon after passed into the hands of the present family.

This parish had the honour of giving birth to William Adam, who arrived at the greatest eminence as an architect, which the limited opportunities at that time afforded by his native country would permit. Hopetoun House and the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, the one a splendid, the other a plain structure, are specimens of his abilities. William Adam, it need hardly be mentioned, was the father of Robert and James Adam, still more distinguished for their genius in architecture, and who reared that splendid monument of their taste and names, "The Adelphi." The family is now represented by the Honourable William Adam, late Chief-Commissioner of the Jury Court.

It would be improper to omit, that that distinguished soldier and patriot, Sir Ronald C. Ferguson, is a native of this place. He was born at Raith, the seat of his family, in the year 1771.

*Land-owners.*—These are five in number, and two of them have their principal residences here. Raith, anciently the seat and possession of the Earls of Melville, now the property of Robert Ferguson, Esq. M. P. is by far the most considerable estate in the parish, being more than equal in value and extent to all the rest of the parish together. The mansion-house was originally built in the year 1694, by Lord Raith, Treasurer Depute, and must have been at that time a substantial good house. Its length is 72 feet, and its breadth 40. To the original house were added two wings, during the time of the late Mr Ferguson, which made the accommodation very complete, and such as became the mansion-house of so fine an estate as Raith. A few years ago, the present proprietor attached to the front of the house a fine Ionic portico, which gives to the whole a light and elegant appearance. In the interior of the house, what principally claims attention is the library, which contains a well chosen assortment of books, both ancient and modern,—and a cabinet of minerals, which, for richness and extent, is surpassed by few private collections of the sort in the kingdom. The situation of the house is noble and commanding, and the extent of plantations and pleasure grounds which surround it is very considerable. Near the summit of the hill on which the mansion-house is seated, and perhaps 400 feet above the level of the sea, stands the tower, which is a square building, with an inside

stair of 54 feet in length. From the top of this tower so extensive is the view, that not less than parts of fourteen, some say sixteen, different counties can be distinctly pointed out in a clear day. In the near vicinity of Raith, and a little further up the country, stands the mansion-house of Wester Bogie, the property of Miss Thomson, only child of the late James Thomson, Esq. of Wester Bogie. The house of Bogie is modern, and was built after a design by Mr Gillespie Graham, in the form of a castle. The plan of building is well suited to the situation, which is high, and surrounded with some fine old trees. The extent of ground is limited; but, for its size, Bogie is considered one of the most desirable properties in the county. \*

### III.—POPULATION.

Population in 1755,	1348
1791,	2196
1821,	3267
1831,	4206
The number of inhabitants residing in towns is	3607
in villages,	197
in the country,	408
Number of persons under 15 years of age,	1618
between 15 and 30,	1820
30 and 50,	930
50 and 70,	515
upwards of 70,	123
of unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers, upwards of 50,	49
of women, maids, and widows above 45,	111
of families in the parish,	942
Average number of children to each family,	4
The number of inhabited houses is	494
of houses uninhabited or now building,	2
of insane persons,	2
of blind,	3
of deaf and dumb,	1

The following table gives a pretty accurate division of the inhabitants according to their respective occupations in life.

Proprietors residing occasionally, 2; non-residing, 3,	5
Proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards in other parishes, but residing here,	3
Number of wholesale merchants and capitalists,	25
clergy and other professional men,	5
farmers,	13
cottars,	42
farm-servants,	50
men employed in manufactures or making machinery; masters,	23
workmen,	56
weavers; heads of families, 206; apprentices and journeymen, 288,	496
men employed in retail, trade, or in handicraft, masters,	110
workmen,	137
labourers, not agricultural,	120
miners,	21
fishers,	48
male-servants above 20, 17; do. under 20, 2,	19

\* Bogie was formerly the property of Sir James Wemyss of Bogie.

Number of female servants,	102
weavers' looms in the parish,	506
of these not working,	58

In manners, the inhabitants of the parish are civil and discreet, and their external deportment is decent and respectful. They are inquisitive and fond of knowledge, and reading occupies a considerable portion of their leisure time. What relates to politics and religion chiefly engages their attention, in this way. They are fond of speculation in the one, and of controversy in the other.\* Notwithstanding, they are good and peaceable subjects, and live together in friendly and Christian intercourse.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—

The number of Scots acres in the parish,	3166
under tillage,	2631
under wood,	535

They are thus divided :

	<i>Acres.</i>	<i>Roods.</i>	<i>Falls.</i>		<i>Acres.</i>
Mr Ferguson of Raith has in culture,	1444	0	0	in wood,	457
Sir J. Oswald,	447	1	35		4
J. W. Melville of Bennoch,	202	0	7		
J. A. Thomson of Charleton,	379	0	0		58
Miss Thomson of Bogie,	159	0	0		16
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>		<hr/>
	2631	2	2		535

*Rent of Land.*—The land rents are different in different parts. On the coast and about the town L. 5, and even L. 6 per acre are nothing uncommon to pay for land. Further back, and a little way up the country, the rent may be from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3 per acre, and in the more remote parts, the land rents are as low as L. 1, 10s. and L. 1. The average of the whole may be L. 2, 10s. The valued rental of the parish is L. 798, 9s. 9d. The real rental may be about L. 7500.

*Husbandry.*—The rotation of crops generally practised is summer fallow or potatoes, after which comes wheat, then beans drilled and hoed, or grass pastured two years, or the first year hay, and the second pasture. Grass is generally succeeded by a crop of oats. The rotation, however, necessarily varies according to circumstances, and the taste of the grower; but, with a very few exceptions, the alternate cultivation of leguminous and culmiferous crops is strictly adhered to; and so superior, indeed, is this method of cropping to that anciently used, of taking successive corn crops, until poverty

\* Within these few years, several controversial writings on religious topics have been given to the world from this parish, exhibiting powers of composition not to be expected from persons in the situations of their authors. It is certainly to be regretted, however, for themselves and families, that a love of idle and useless disputation, should call off the attention of individuals from their honest and lawful vocations.

and weeds had gained full possession of the soil, that one would imagine that nothing but the most imperative necessity or the worst motives should induce a farmer to depart from it. In the immediate vicinity of the town, summer fallow is now little practised, and potatoes generally come instead,\*—a crop which always meets with a constant and ready demand. Turnips, too, are very frequently substituted for beans,—after which, uniformly follows a crop of barley. Throughout the whole of this parish, agricultural operations are carried on with spirit and assiduity, and nowhere during the last forty years has the face of the country undergone a greater change. The farmers are, generally speaking, men of capital and skill, and there is no tried improvement in modern farming which has not been adopted and pursued with success. The situation of the parish is favourable for agricultural improvement and enterprise. The populous community of Kirkaldy, with its weekly markets, makes a ready demand for all kinds of farm produce, and there is no part of the parish distant from coal and lime. To those near the towns, the stables and streets afford a regular supply of dung at a moderate expense; and sea-weed is occasionally to be had for the trouble of collecting and driving. But if the farmers in this parish are thus favoured in regard to situation, they are no less so in regard to their respective landlords, who are men of liberality and discernment, and afford every encouragement to honest and persevering industry. The farms are all of that size which is favourable to improvement, and the leases are uniformly of nineteen years duration. † The dwelling-houses and offices are likewise good, and for the most part new, and the fields are all well enclosed and subdivided with stone walls or hedges.

There are no sheep bred in this parish, and none to be seen in it except a few scores kept in the enclosures about Raith, and belonging to Mr Ferguson. They are of the Cheviot breed, and seem to thrive well on the fine pasture on which they are fed. There are also but few black-cattle reared in this parish,—the land being too valuable to be kept long in pasture. Those preferred are of the Fife breed, which, in their pure state, are known by their black colour, length and fineness of their horns, shortness of their

\* The profit arising in the neighbourhood of the town is very great;—L. 12, L. 16, L. 20, and sometimes even L. 24 per acre have been received for potatoes, before they have been dug up.

† To this, the fields in the neighbourhood of the town form an exception,—which are frequently parcelled out for the convenience of persons residing in the town, who wish to cultivate only a few acres, and are generally let from year to year without any lease or written agreement.

legs, and beautiful symmetry. The pure Fife breed, however, is seldom met with, and the cattle reared in this parish are for the most part a mixture of the Fife and Angus or Ayrshire. The amount of bestial at present in the parish is as follows: horses of all ages, 114; milch cows, 104; black cattle, 203; calves, 30; pigs, 81.

*Manufactures.*—The staple manufacture of this place is that of bed-ticks; to which, of late years, has been added a species of coarse half-white linen called Dowlas, both for home and export trade. Linen checks for foreign consumpt have fallen into decay, from the greater cheapness of a similar fabric now made from cotton in other places. There is one manufactory for sail-canvas; one bleach-field for whitening and preparing linen yarns,—a branch of trade that has of late years entirely superseded the use of hand-wheels, which were formerly so common in this and all other districts of Fifeshire, and which gave employment both to the older and younger members of families. The introduction of machinery into this branch of manufacture has not only materially increased the quantity, but has considerably diminished the expence of labour, it being produced at about two-thirds less than when spun by the hand labour. There is one factory, worked by a steam engine, for weaving a thin sheeting from linen yarn. It is considered to be well conducted, and is the only one of the kind in the county. The low rate of weaving by the hand is probably the cause why this branch of enterprise has not been more generally adopted. A brick and tyle-work of considerable extent has been very long established in this parish. At the same place, a pottery for making brown earthen-ware is carried on. A coal gas-work, for the purpose of supplying the town of Kirkaldy, Linktown of Abbotshall, &c. with gas, was erected in this parish, about two years ago. The quality of gas is considered good, and the quantity used throughout the year may average 5000 feet each night. The work is capable of affording a much greater supply; but as yet gas has not been introduced as a general light for dwelling-houses,—being principally used for the lighting up of streets, public works, and shops. There are a variety of mills which go by water, and are employed for making flour, barley meal, &c. At one of these, not less than from 10,000 to 15,000 bolls annually are made. There is also one mill which goes by water for grinding flint, and belongs to the same gentleman that has the pottery. Brewing was formerly carried on to some extent, but now there are only two breweries in the parish, which manufacture nothing strong-

er than small beer. This is certainly to be regretted, as good malt liquor is a more wholesome beverage than whisky, which is now so common, and the cause of so much wretchedness and crime. The high price of wheaten bread gave rise, a number of years ago to the establishment of two Societies, by which the inhabitants might be supplied with that important article of life at a cheaper rate than by the regular bakers. In so far as the cheapness of the bread is concerned, these societies have answered the purpose intended; but if it be the case, as some allege, that they have been the means of depreciating the quality of bread throughout the community (the regular trader being unable to compete on equal terms with a joint stock company) it is not so evident how far they ought to be encouraged, or whether in one way they have not done as much harm as they have done good in another. There is also a meal Society on a similar plan, which is of advantage to the public, by affording a ready supply of meal at all times, and generally at a reasonable price.

In the conducting of the different public works in this parish, there is nothing particular claiming to be noticed. The usual hours of labour at all of them are ten, excepting the spinning-mills, where twelve hours are common. All the people employed at the different works receive a fair remuneration for their labour, and, if careful, live comfortably, and frequently rear large families. The wages of certain operatives, however, have of late years been much reduced. An ordinary weaver, for instance, on the best paid fabrics, will not receive above an average of 8s. per week for his own labour. None of the public works here are considered prejudicial to the health of those employed in them; the linen manufacture in all its branches being more wholesome than that of cotton, from the absence of any artificial heat or damp. Although it cannot be denied that the congregating together of so many young people of both sexes at spinning-mills and other public works, naturally tends to a corruption and depravity of morals, yet it can hardly be said that the morals of those so employed are worse than the morals of the aggregate number of others in the same grade of society in the parish. This may be owing to the steady-principle of the gentlemen to whom the works belong, and the good discipline introduced by them into all the different departments of the business. The increase of commerce and manufactures in this parish and neighbourhood gave rise, in the year 1825, to a Society known by the name of the Kirkaldy Chamber of Commerce,—the intention of which was to unite the influence of the merchants and manufactures, and

thus render them more useful to the communities to which they belonged. It is managed by a committee of directors; and some of the leading members belong to this place.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Villages.*—The principal town or village in the parish is what is called the Linktown, which is situated on the west side of the bay of Kirkaldy, from which it is only separated by the intervening beach. The Linktown has only one street, which is about three quarters of a mile long, and forms a continuation on the west to the principal street of the town of Kirkaldy. It is a burgh of regality, and governed by a baron-bailie, appointed by Mr Ferguson of Raith, who is superior of the whole.

The street and the lanes of Linktown are narrow, and the original houses are mostly low and uncomfortable. Many of the houses, however, have been rebuilt, and many new ones erected; all of them, in point of convenience and accommodation, far exceeding the old ones. Some of the principal manufacturers in the parish reside in Linktown, and, according to their success in business, it must prosper or decline. About the centre of the town, and at a proper distance from the street, stands the mansion-house of John Pratt, Esq. of Glentarkie, surrounded with its fine garden and shrubberies, and which is at once a credit and an ornament to the place. There are a few very good shops in this part of the parish, and more of an inferior description, which supply the inhabitants with the necessaries and conveniences of life. Two annual fairs of old standing are still held here, one on the third Friday of April, and the other on the third Friday of October. The spring fair was formerly principally kept up by the sale of lintseed; and the autumn fair, by the sale of black-cattle. Both fairs are now on the decline, and the principal commodity at each of them is shoes, which are frequently brought from a considerable distance, and sold at very low prices. In the Linktown, there is a jail or rather lock-up-house, to which the baron bailie has the power of consigning offenders. It is in bad repair and little used.

The flourishing condition of trade and consequent increase of inhabitants induced the late Mr Ferguson of Raith, about the year 1790, to feu property for building on a regular plan a street running nearly at right angles with the east end of Linktown, in the direction of the parish church. This line of building, which has never been completed, is known by the name of the New Town, and contains about 780 inhabitants, of whom, with the exception of a

few respectable families, almost all are operative weavers. Here are situated the spinning-mills of Mr James Aytoun, a gentleman of much enterprise and usefulness in the place. At Mr Aytoun's mills, not less than 120 individuals are constantly and regularly employed. There are, besides the Linktown and New Town, several villages in the country district of the parish, of minor note, containing in all about 197 souls.

*Means of Communication.*—To all parts of the parish Kirkaldy is the post-town. It may also be said to be the principal market-place, where all the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life may be had of the best description, and on reasonable terms. Throughout the whole of the parish, there is an easy communication by good roads, which are always kept in good repair. The turnpike roads may be about twelve miles in different directions, and the statute labour roads about two. There are three bridges in the parish; one of them lately built, and the other two in tolerable condition, besides several small arches of less consequence. In addition to the ordinary carriages which frequent the different roads, there are three four-horse coaches which run daily through our streets from Edinburgh to Dundee, and four coaches of the same description from Dundee to Edinburgh; a two-horse coach from the east of Fife to Edinburgh and back again; and a two-horse coach which runs from Glasgow to Kirkaldy, and from Kirkaldy to Glasgow, every lawful day alternately.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—It does not distinctly appear where the inhabitants of this parish first assembled for public worship; but it was probably in some place connected with the old mansion-house of Abbotshall. The date of the last church, which was the only one previous to the present, is 1674, twenty-four years after Abbotshall became a separate parish. The present church was built in the year 1788, and on the same spot on which the former stood. It is a substantial and comfortable edifice, though now too small for the increased population. The situation of the church, which is on an eminence at the back of the town, is very pretty, though not very convenient for the bulk of the inhabitants. It is nevertheless well attended, and the congregation is very respectable. The average number of communicants is nearly 700. There are no free sittings. The Laird of Raith is patron by a charter granted by the Crown so far back as the time of Charles II. The manse was built in the year 1772, and is the first that was in the parish. Till that time, the clergyman had an allowance of only L. 5 for a house.

An awkward addition of two good rooms was made to the manse, at the induction of the last incumbent, now upwards of twenty years ago, at an expense fully equal to the half of what it would have cost to build a substantial new house. The house has ever since been in need of repair of some kind or other. An addition was made to the offices attached to the manse, in the course of last spring, which renders them very comfortable. The stipend annexed to the cure by decret of the Court of Teinds in 1811, is 100 bolls, 2 firlots, 2 pecks, 3 lippies of barley; 88 bolls, 2 firlots, 2 pecks, 3 lippies of meal; 36 bolls of oats, and such a further quantity of victual, half meal, half barley, as shall be equal to 100 merks Scots money, together with L. 100 Scots money for communion elements. The stipend awarded by the Court has never been realized, owing to a deficiency of teind, and the clergyman has never been paid more than a sum equal to 13½ chalders, out of which he has to defray the expense of communion elements,—a sum totally inadequate to the nature of the situation and the great population of the parish. The glebe consists of 6½ acres, and is worth about L. 30 Sterling per annum, although it has sometimes been let for more.\*

Besides the Established Church, there is one dissenting or Seceding chapel, now in connection with the United Associate Synod. The congregation belonging to it was originally formed for the reception of Mr Thomas Nairne to be their pastor, who, we have already mentioned, was deposed from being minister of Abbotshall in 1740, in consequence of espousing the principles of the old dissenters, relative to the existing civil government. Mr Nairne afterwards withdrew from the communion of the Seceders, and joined the Reformed Presbytery. He at length deserted their communion, and returned to the fellowship of the Established Church, after making humiliating confessions to the presbytery of Kirkaldy,

\* The following is a list of the different clergymen who have successively filled the cure at Abbotshall, with the date of their admission, &c. so far as can be ascertained from the imperfect registers of presbytery and kirk-session. The first found on record is Mr Patrick Wemyss, who was ordained November 4, 1650. He was the son of the Laird of Foodie. Mr Wemyss became a landed proprietor, after which he seems to have abandoned the ministry. The next mentioned is Mr Robert Forrest in 1664. Mr John Bowes was deposed from the ministry at Abbotshall, on the 15th October 1691, for heterodoxy in opposing the Assembly's Catechism. Mr Alexander Fraser was admitted 5th January 1692, and seems to have died in 1709. Mr Thomas Nairne was admitted 7th September 1710, and was deposed in 1740, for adhering to the secession, which was begun by Erskine and Monroieff. Mr George Gib was admitted 1742, and died 1756. Mr Alexander Spiers was admitted March 1756, and was translated to Kirkaldy in 1768. Mr George Shaw was admitted 1769, and died January 1809. Mr William Anderson was admitted August 1810, and died August 25th 1825. The present incumbent was admitted in the end of March 1826.

and submitting to their admonitions. In 1881 the old house belonging to this congregation was razed to the ground, and a commodious new one built near the same spot. The minister's salary is L. 125 per annum, besides a good house and garden. His salary is paid from the seat rents, &c. Till lately, there existed a remnant of that old sect of Christians, the Cameronians, or Mountaineers as they were sometimes termed. The house or rather barn in which they assembled is now occupied by a handful of individuals, who call themselves *Christians*; but what their particular tenets are, the writer of this account has not been able to learn. They have no stated pastor, and are irregularly supplied with sermon by itinerant preachers of various descriptions. There are some Baptists and Independents, and also a few Episcopalians who have their places of worship at Kirkaldy. A very few individuals attend a Relief meeting at Dysart, and it is believed there are two or three individuals of the Roman Catholic persuasion, natives of the sister isle.

The only general parochial society for religious purposes is what is designated "The Abbotshall Bible Society," the sole object of which is the raising of a fund for the circulation of the Scriptures. It is managed by a committee chosen from amongst various classes of Christians, who adopt whatever measures they consider best calculated to promote the object of the society. An annual sermon is preached for the benefit of its funds, alternately in the parish church and dissenting meeting-house, which, together with the other stated contributions, may bring about L. 10 or L. 15 per annum.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The number of poor in this parish is very considerable. Abbotshall proceeds upon the good old plan of supporting the poor, so far as is practicable in so populous a parish, and exhibits a proof of the excellency of the system. The funds are made up of the collections at the church doors,—rents of a few pews in the church belonging to the session,—and a small annual contribution made by the heritors. The whole disbursements to the poor do not, on an average, exceed L. 130 per annum. There are at present 12 ordinary poor on the Session roll, and 7 extraordinary,—all of whom are supplied weekly according to their several necessities. In addition to each of these weekly allowances, each of the poor on the session roll receives twice in the year, a certain sum to assist in paying house rent, and providing coals. Several others who have not as yet been admitted on the roll, receive occasional assistance. Many more are prevented from

becoming burdens on the parish, by the liberality of the Raith family, to whom the poor of this parish are under many obligations. The distributions are managed by the kirk-session without any expense to the fund, except a small pittance to the session-clerk. The minister has always acted as treasurer, without fee or reward. The whole disbursements are examined, every year, at a meeting composed jointly of heritors and minister,—a practice which is satisfactory to all parties, and by which any subject which seems to be of importance to the interests of the parish can be considered with advantage and effect. There are only two or three poor belonging to the parish that beg within its bounds. These are supplied with badges by a society, which was formed about a year ago, for the purpose of preventing vagrant begging, which the inhabitants of this parish formerly felt as a great nuisance. Were a society of this nature formed in every parish, and none allowed to beg but those poor belonging to it; the real objects of charity would be much better provided for than they generally are, and much idleness and worthlessness prevented.

*Education.*—The total number of schools in the parish is 6,—which may be attended, at an average, by 500 children. The parochial school has generally attending it from 150 to 200, and sometimes upwards. The branches therein taught are Latin, French, mathematics, arithmetic, navigation, English reading and writing. The schoolmaster's salary is the maximum, and he has L. 5. more for teaching a limited number of poor children. This sum is the interest of L. 100 which was bequeathed for the purpose by a Mrs Dundas, who once resided at Raith. At the other schools, the more common branches of education are almost solely taught, and the fees for these branches are perhaps a little less than at the parish school. At one of the schools, which is entirely a charity school, the branches taught are specified by the will of the donor. The number of the children (100,) as well as their ages (from six to fifteen,)\* are also prescribed. Sunday schools have

\* This charity was bequeathed by the late Robert Philp, Esq. of Edenshead, who left his whole fortune, equal to not less than L. 70,000 or L. 80,000 Sterling, for the purpose of educating a certain number of children in the parishes of Kirkaldy, Dysart, Abbotshall, and Kinghorn. The schools in each district are under the management of a committee appointed by the inhabitants from amongst themselves, and the whole are subject to the control and direction of a set of governors in Kirkaldy, some of whom are chosen for life, and others, like the local managers, chosen biennially. Besides the education which the children at these different schools receive, which is simply English reading, writing, and arithmetic, they are furnished from the funds with books, paper, pen, ink, and slates for that purpose. They are moreover provided with clothing during their continuance at school; and on leaving school they re-

been for a considerable time established both in the town and country part of the parish; institutions that have become the more necessary since the introduction of spinning mills, which engage children before they have been properly educated, and which constantly occupy their time throughout the week. The people in general are alive to the benefits of education, and, with a few exceptions, give their children an education according to their respective circumstances. It may be remarked, that amongst all classes here, as well, indeed, as in the whole of this neighbourhood, classical education is much less an object of attention than formerly. This evidently arises from the mercantile spirit of the people, which leads them too little to value any acquisition, but as it connects itself immediately with pounds, shillings, and pence. The consequence is, that from this community there are comparatively very few young men sent to the university, or destined for any of the learned professions. Last winter there was only one young man from this parish attending a university, and seldom at any time is there more than two or three.

*Literature.*—There are no public libraries in this parish, except one of an inferior description. At Kirkaldy, however, there is a good suscription library, a circulating library, and mechanics' library, all of which are open to the inhabitants of Abbotshall on the same terms as to the inhabitants of Kirkaldy. To Kirkaldy the inhabitants of this parish are likewise indebted for a public reading room, which is well supplied with the newspapers of the day, together with the army, navy, and commercial lists, &c. &c.

*Inns.*—The number of licensed alehouses in the parish is nearly 30, a number by far too large, and which certainly ought to be reduced. Restraint, too, ought to be put upon them as to the hours during which they ought to be kept open. The justices have power to do both. The steady exertion of these powers is what is wanting.

ceive a sum between L. 2 and L. 5, or whatever more the fund will afford, the better to enable them to begin the world. Of the advantages to be derived by the different parishes from this large and benevolent bequest, it is impossible yet to speak with any precision. The schools have been established little more than a year, and all that can be said is, that the funds are managed with fidelity and economy,—that zealous and efficient teachers have been appointed, and that the children are well taught in those branches which they are allowed by the will of the donor to learn. A few years more will probably tell whether these institutions have not been the means of introducing into the different parishes in which they are established a number of poor families, who will soon obtain a legal claim to be supported by other funds besides those appropriated for educating and clothing their starving children. "Where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

## MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

It is obvious to the most cursory observer, that since the last Statistical Account was published, this parish has made great progress in agriculture, commerce, and all those various improvements connected with them. The consequence is, that wealth is much more generally diffused, and all classes enjoy in a greater degree than formerly the comforts and conveniences of life. What must ever be best calculated to promote the happiness of the labouring classes is, to improve their morals, and to found their virtue on its true basis, religion, not on metaphysical speculation, or the nice formed theories of state policy, but on the grand, solid, and substantial principles of Christianity. This will be found in the end not only the best means of promoting the individual happiness of the people, but the true secret of good government,—the surest bulwark of the state.

*Revised April 1836.*

P. S.—Even since the above was written, it is necessary to state that the parish has undergone many important alterations. Trade has increased considerably, and so has the population. The number of poor has in consequence increased, and of course the expenditure in behalf of the poor. The congregation which met in the place of worship formerly belonging to the Cameronians is now dispersed, and the house converted into a warehouse for flax. A new church in connection with the Establishment is in the course of erection, to supply the surplus population of this and the neighbouring parish of Kinghorn.

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## PARISH OF AUCHTERDERRAN.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKALDY, SYNOD OF FIFE.

THE REV. ANDREW MURRAY, D. D. MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Boundaries—Extent.*—THIS parish is of an irregular form, about 5 miles long and 3 broad. It is bounded by Auchtertool on the south; Abbotshall on the south-east; Dysart on the east and south; Kinglassie and Portmoak on the north; and Balingry on the west.