

labourer is under the hardship of providing safes for the graves of his friends.—Forty years ago, thrashing machines were unknown to us; now, they are become general and so beneficial that it is difficult to believe how farming could be carried successfully on without them.—Forty years ago, the different ranks in society were distinguished from each other by their dress; at present there is little distinction in dress.—Forty-nine years ago, I was the youngest minister of the presbytery, now I am the oldest.

*Revised May 1836.*

## PARISH OF BEATH.

PRESBYTERY OF DUNFERMLINE, SYNOD OF FIFE.

THE REV. JAMES FERGUSON, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name of the parish was anciently spelt *Baith*, and signifies, in Gaelic, birchwood,—of which there is not a vestige now to justify the etymology.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The parish is about 4 miles long, and 3 broad, and is of an irregular figure. It is bounded on the west by the parish of Dunfermline; on the south by Dunfermline and Aberdour; on the south-east and east by Aberdour and Auchtertool; on the north-east by Auchterderran; on the north and north-west by Ballingry and Cleish.

*Topographical Appearances.*—Its surface is rugged and hilly; but there are no mountains. The beautiful hill of Beath, in regard to the excellence of its pasture, and the fine and extensive view it affords, is well entitled to the description given of it in the last Statistical Account. The *Saxifraga granulata* is found on it in abundance.

Owing to the elevation of the parish, and to the quantity of wet land in and around it, the climate, during the greater part of the year, is cold and humid. The only lake in the parish is Loch Fitty (not Tilly, as, by mistake, in the last account.) It is about three miles in circumference, rather shallow, adorned with little scenery, and contains pike, perch, and muscle.

At present there are three collieries in operation in the parish. The rocks in the hills and plains are, so far as known, of whin and free or sandstones. Some years ago, a lime rock was discovered in the west end of the parish, and partially wrought. The soils, all untransported, are brown earth upon whinstone, till, and moss.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—There are thirteen land-owners connected with the parish, all of whom, except one, possess property in it above L. 50 a-year. The principal proprietors are, the Earl of Moray, patron; Mr Dewar; and the Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam. Several others have lands of considerable extent and value. Only five of the heritors are at present resident.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers, consisting of minutes of session, records of marriages, births and burials, have been pretty regularly kept. The earliest entries were in 1642, and were prefaced with a very curious and interesting account of the causes which led to the rebuilding of the church,—which it is thought proper here to subjoin.\*

\* “*A short and fine Naration concerning the Kirk of Baith, 1640.*—The kirk of Baith, a most fitt and convenient place for the situatione of a kirk, being upone the roade way, and in the just midis betwixt Kinross and Innerkethine. Sua it is to rememberit that tho’ it be amongst the smallest, yit the name of it is amongst the antientest par-roches in Scotland. Wherefore, a most reverend and worthie brother, Mr William Scott, sometime minister at Couper, reported that the first place of meeting that ever the Protestant Lords of Scotland had for the covenante and Reformatione at the kirk of Baith. This kirk in some sorte myght be compared to Gideon’s fleece, which was dry, when all the earth was watered.

“When all the congregations of Fyfe were planted, this poore kirk was neglected and overlooked, and lay desolate then fourtene yeeres, after the Reformatione eighty yeeres. The poore parochiners being always lyke wandering sheep without a sheeph-hard, and whairas they should have convened to hear a pastoure preiche, the principal cause of the people’s meetinge, wes to heere a pyper play upone the Lord’s daye, which was the daye of their profaine mirth, not being in the workes of their calling. Which was the caus that Sathane had a most faire name amongst them, stirring many of them up to dancing, playing at foot-ball, and excessive drinking, falling out and wounding one another, which wes the exercise of the younger sort, and the older sort played at gems and the workes of their calling without any distinction of the weeke daye from the daye of the Lord, and thus they continued, as said is, the space of eighty yeeres: this poore kirk being always neglected, became a sheepe hous in the night.

“And becaus some of the poore people desyred to have yr poore little ones (being young maydes for the most part) brought up at school, what abominations was committed by the profaine Mr, I will not expresse: let it suffice the world to know, that the poore criminall, after his flight, was overtaken and brought to justice, for such ane vile and hard misdemaner; this which hath been wreatten, may be sufficient to make any hart melt for the most abominable estate of this poore kirk. In end, recourse wes hadd to the Yerle of Moray, lord and patrone of the lands of the parroch, to try if it might pleis Lo. to kntribute any thing to the building of that poore kirk, or iff he would pittye the poore people, and such a long soul murther that hadd been amongst them. The Countess of Home, his mother-in-law, was also dealt with to the samine purpose, but both refuissed. Sua when that poore people hadd been so long excluded from all hopes to gett their kirk builded, or any pastoure to speake a word of comfort to the parrochiner’s souls, it pleased the Lord to put it in the hart

## III.—POPULATION.

In 1821, the amount of population was 729. By the census of 1831, very accurately taken, it was 921,—males, 459; females, 462. Of this amount there were 23 above 70 years of age. About 400 of the population live in the villages of Kelty and Oakfield.

of Mr Alexander Collville of Blair, having no relations to doe for this poore people, but being only their neere neighbour, and beholding from his own windowe their pypping and dancing, revelling and deboshing, their drinking and excesse, thair ryote everie Sabbath day, was moved by the Lord, and mightilie stirred up to undertake something for that poore people, and having assembled some of the speciall men of the parroch, at the village of Sheills, sounded thair mindes, if they might be bold to adventure to assist and helphim with horses for drawing of timber and stones, (he and they both fearing the oppositione and discountenance of the lord and patrone of the parroch,) the parrochiners present did give this comfortable answer, that they woud both doe and adventure to kntribute thair best endeavores with men and horses, for building of their kirk, but becaus of their povertie, they were not able to kntribute anie of their owne private monnie, but amongst others that were present, none was found more forward with his horse and assistance than Mr Johne Hodge, tennent in Leuchat's Baith, of whome I made electione to oversee the worke and the workmen, and did presentlie advance him some monnie for that effect.

"It pleased the Lord, so he blessed our endeavores that the worke prospered in our hand, and was brought to great perfectione in a short tyme, even to the admiratione of the people and passengers, who marvelled to see the worke goe on so sudanlie, neither knowing the way nor the instruments. And becaus it wes impossible, when the walls were up to get the kirk slaitted in such haist, the slaittes being at Tippermoore, which was at sixtene miles distance; thairfor it wes thought expedient for the present yeere, that it should be sarked with dealles, which being done with very great diligence, I thought good to send for ane old reverend brother, Mr John Row Law, minister at Carnocke, who after some refusalls, without the consent of the minister of Aberdour, (becaus into his kirk, the parroches of Dalgetie and Baith were annexed,) he could not undertake to preach, yet after mucche intreattie he was moved to come to such ane effamished congregacione, in such a retyred place. The people understanding that sermone was to be at the kirk of Baith so unexpectedlie, and so suddenlie builded; did resort from all places, and much out of everie sitie, being new fangled with such a suddan change, thronged in so to kirk, that thair wes scarce anie place left to raise up some height for a place to the pastoure. And while the pastoure was in a most moveing and elegant straine for the kindness and mercie of God to that people that hadd lived so long in darkness, it pleased the Lord out of his free and immense love to bring such a suddain rushe of joye upone my hart, that I had almost fainted, but in end remembering myseiffe, I was comforted to think that the Lord had shewed a pledge of his goodnesse towards me, and accepted of my weake and unworthie obedience, to make me instrumentall for the worke of his majestie. I shall not insist to speike anie thing at all of my actings and doings, or sufferings, to be instrumentall in the worke of the Lord, but one thing I must declare, that Sathane hath beene, is, and will be bussie against all those that will be instrumental for the service of God, so became he my enemy in stirring up some to scourge me with the tongue, and put grievous aspersions upone my name and reputacione; in stirring up some to slander mee, as iff I had interverted something that was given by some few friendes for that proud use. But I declare in the presence of God, to all after ages, that such reports are but false calumnies and lyes; thair wes never suche a thing as one penny interverted or withheld by me from the work of the Lord. And becaus my conscience beares mee witnesse of the honestie of my carriage therein, it is also borne in upon mee to pronounce from God, that he who devysed to scourge me with the tongue shall be punished without repentance. And more, to shew my integrity, where ane promise that ever I had in the worke of the Lord, was from a most religious Christiane, William Breggs of Athernie, and becaus I did alwayes rest confident of the certaintie of the helpe of such a religious man; I suspendit it last of all, and would not goe to visite this worthie man without the presence of ane elder, whom I chose to be John Hodge, who accompanied mee to Athernie, and when wee came to Bennochie, it was reported to us, that he was depairted this life, which wes so; and so wee were frustrat altogether of our greatest hopes.

(Signed) Jo. HUNTER.

The number of families is 180, containing each, of individuals, on an average, somewhat more than 5; a fact, perhaps, rather uncommon; and to be accounted for by early marriages, chiefly among the colliers, who earn higher wages than any other class of labourers. There are 4 houses at present in progress of building; all the rest, amounting to 161, are inhabited. The increase of population is owing to the additional number of hands employed at the collieries, and to a system of feuing lately introduced.

The annual average of births for the last seven years, appearing from the parish records, was 15; of marriages, 5; and of deaths, 13. But, as the deaths of all who are interred in the churchyard are recorded, although some of them are from other parishes, and as some parents neglect to have the births of their children registered, the exact number of births and deaths cannot be ascertained.

In general the people enjoy the advantages and comforts suited to their stations in life. In dress and the decoration of their persons, they keep pace with the times. They are, upon the whole, moral and religious. There have been, as there still are, several instances of longevity among them.

During the last three years there have been 4 illegitimate births in the parish.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—In this parish, there is not much land that is not capable of being rendered arable; and by far the greater part has been at one period under the plough. Of late years a good deal has been done in the way of reclaiming waste land, and improving such as had been neglected by bad husbandry; and the result has been a fair remuneration.

Number of acres, standard imperial measure, in the parish, which are either cultivated or occasionally in tillage,	5270 *
Number of acres which never have been cultivated, and which remain constantly waste, or in pasture,	516
Number of acres that might, with a profitable application of capital, be added to the cultivated land of the parish, whether that land were afterwards to be kept in occasional tillage or in permanent pasture,	394 †
Number of acres under wood, whether natural or planted,	530

*Produce.*—The average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish, as nearly as that can be ascertained, is as follows:

Produce of all kinds,	L. 5479 0 0
Potatoes, turnips, cabbages, &c.	2040 0 0

\* Although all this has been at one period in tillage, a considerable portion of it has been long in pasture, and, as such, is now of inferior quality.

† If the spirit for improvement at present manifested by the tenantry does not relax, all the improvable land will, in a few years, have been under crop.

Hay,	L. 1055	0	0
Flax,	32	0	0
Land in pasture, rating it at L. 2, 10s. per cow or full-grown ox, grazed, or that may be grazed for the season,	2216	0	0
Gardens and orchards,	55	0	0
Annual thinning and periodical felling of woods, plantations, (most of which are young,) and copse,	150	0	0
Mines.—Amount of sales at the Keltie colliery from January 1834 to January 1835. The other two collieries have been at a stand for a year or two,	2920	13	0
Total yearly value of raw produce raised,	L. 13947	13	0

*Rent of Land.*—The average price of land may be stated at about L. 1 per Scotch acre. The value of different parts of the same farm differs very widely. Several farms have been for many years under pasture for black cattle, and pay fully as well as in tillage. The state of farming is, upon the whole, rapidly improving, owing partly to the encouragement afforded by the landlords, and partly to a more judicious mode of husbandry, and greater industry on the part of the tenants. Paring and burning, draining, liming, and earlier sowing, are the more striking and beneficial improvements.

The farm-buildings are, in several instances, pretty good, and suited to the value of the farms and to the district. Those on the property of the Earl of Moray have been lately erected. That nobleman has also improved the appearance and value of his lands by judicious plantations. And it were much to be wished, that some of the other proprietors, whose lands afford abundant capability, would, in this respect, follow his Lordship's example, and that of the Lord Chief-Commissioner, by which means their own advantage would be promoted, and the parish be no longer proverbial for bleakness. The duration of leases is, in most cases, for nineteen years, which is considered to be favourable to the occupier. The productions of the parish are, oats, barley, wheat partially, peas, beans, potatoes, turnips, a little flax, and cultivated and meadow hay.\* A day-labourer earns from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a-day. Male farm-servants are hired at from L. 10 to L. 12 per annum; and female servants receive from L. 5 to L. 6 per annum.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Means of Communication.*—There are no market-towns in this parish. The nearest are Dunfermline and Kinross, each distant about

\* From the results of experiments made, for several years past, by the writer of this account, he has reason to believe that carrots sown in our kitchen gardens, about the middle of May, are much less liable to the depredations of the worm, than those sown at an earlier period. It will be an additional advantage to sow them in the beds in which leeks were reared the preceding year.



six miles from the centre of the parish. Blair-Adam Inn, in the parish of Cleish, is the post-office, nearly three miles from the manse. The great north road from Queensferry to Perth, one of the best in the kingdom, passes through the parish, a length of four miles. There are three public daily coaches, including the mail, travelling on it. The bridges are in good repair, and the parish is all enclosed and subdivided, chiefly with good stone fences, called Gallo-way dikes.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is the only place of public worship. Its situation is convenient for the population, but not so its size, affording accommodation to only 250 sitters. It is an old, cold, damp, fabric. In 1808, it underwent a repair, and stands greatly in need of another. If the heritors consulted their own interest, and the accommodation and comfort of the people, they would cause its foundation to be dug up.\*

In good weather the church is remarkably well attended. The average number of communicants is above 200, and the number is annually increasing. Of the population nearly 200, old and young, are Burgher Seceders, the only description of Dissenters in the parish. Their number has greatly diminished within the last twenty years.

The manse was built in 1801, and a small addition was made to it four years ago. The glebe consists of 8 acres, and may be worth from L. 16 to L. 20 yearly. The teinds are exhausted, and the stipend is the minimum.

*Education.*—The parochial school is the only one in the parish. Its situation is central. The usual branches of education are taught in it. For the last fourteen years, owing greatly to the superior merits of the teachers, Mr William Beaton, lately called to the parish of Kennoway, and his brother, who has succeeded him, it has been attended by an average of 100 scholars. The fees are, per quarter, for English reading, 2s. 6d.; reading and writing, 3s.; do. do. and arithmetic, 4s.; Latin and Greek, 5s. The school-master's house and school-room were lately erected, and are good and commodious. The salary is the maximum: the fees may amount to L. 30 per annum. There are very few persons in the parish above six years of age who cannot read. In general, the people are alive to the benefits of education. There are, however, some exceptions, chiefly among the colliers.

\* Since the above account was given in, a handsome and excellent church has been erected, calculated to afford ample accommodation to the parishioners, and which reflects great credit upon the liberality of the heritors.

Some years ago, Francis Berry, a native of the parish, and who spent the greater part of his life in it, in the capacity of a small farmer, (in consequence of the death of his only child, a student in divinity,) bequeathed a feu in land and houses, the fruit of honest industry, for educating poor children, natives of the parish. The property is subject to the liferent of his widow, an elderly woman. It is let in lease for L. 28, 10s. per annum. The kirk-session are appointed sole trustees.

*Poor.*—The maintenance of the poor has long been a light burden. At present there are only 5 on the roll, three of whom receive each 1s. a-week, and the other two, in more indigent circumstances, 1s. 9d. each. Their wants are supplied out of the ordinary collections, which amount to about L. 11 annually; the interest of L. 100 due by promissory-note to the session, and the dues upon marriages and burials. The poor evince no unnecessary disposition to solicit parochial aid.

*Inns.*—There are one inn and four public-houses in the parish, and their effects are notoriously injurious to the morals of the people.

*Fuel.*—The fuel used is coal, of which there is great abundance at a reasonable price.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The more striking variations between the present state of the parish and that which existed at the time of the last Statistical Account, consist in an improved mode of farming, better farm-buildings, plantations, collieries, roads, population, school, and number of resident heritors, which is smaller. The standard weights and measures are in use.

There is still much room for improvement in the way of draining, reclaiming waste land, and planting. What might be profitably done in this last respect, is sufficiently evinced in the extensive and thriving plantations on the estate of the Lord Chief-Commissioner, a gentleman to whose taste, liberality, and public spirit, this district, generally, is highly indebted.

*Given in April 1833, Revised April 1836.*