

PARISH OF SCOONIE.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKALDY, SYNOD OF FIFE.

THE REV. GEORGE BREWSTER, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—IN the old parochial Records, the name of this parish is written *Scuny*; and must be of considerable antiquity, as we learn from Chalmers's Caledonia, that the church of Scuny was granted by Malduin, Bishop of St Andrew's, to the Culdees of Loch Leven, about the end of the eleventh century.

Extent, &c.—This parish extends about 4 miles in length from N. to S., and nearly 2 in breadth, and forms the figure of a cone, with its base upon the Frith of Forth. The river Leven washes its western boundary, and separates it from the parish of Wemyss, and a detached part of the parish of Markinch. Kennoway, Kettle, and Cults bound it on the north, and Largo on the east; and "at the north-east extremity, the three parishes of Scoonie, Largo, and Ceres, and the three presbyteries of Kirkaldy, St Andrews, and Cupar meet in one point." The ground rises from S. to N., with a gentle slope, and, at the highest point is about 700 feet above the level of the sea. There are no hills, but several swells or risings of the ground, which command a very extensive and beautiful prospect of the Forth and its southern shore. The coast, above one mile in length, is flat and sandy, without a rock in its whole extent, and forms part of Largo bay.

The climate is in general mild and temperate, especially on the coast, except when the sea breeze sets in during the spring months, and then the atmosphere is loaded with moisture, and the wind cold and penetrating.

Hydrography.—There are few springs of good water in the parish, and only one deserving of notice. It rises in a sandy flat, not far from the sea beach, and has received the name of "the boiling well," from its bubbling appearance as it issues through the sand. The discharge from this spring is copious, and the water of the purest quality, but its distance from the town renders

it of little use. The river Leven, the only one in the county, noticed by Buchanan, issues from the loch of the same name, and, after flowing through a fertile vale and receiving many tributaries, discharges itself into Largo bay, at the town of Leven. It abounds with various kinds of trout, pike, and eels, and at its estuary there was formerly a valuable salmon-fishing; but, owing to the formation of some of the dam-dikes, which prevent the salmon from ascending the river, and also to the deleterious substances from the bleachfields, which are mixed with its waters, this fishing has been discontinued for several years.

Geology and Mineralogy.—Beds of coal, varying in thickness, and at different depths under the surface, pervade the whole of the parish; but none of the seams are at present worked. The coal upon the estate of Durie, which was wrought for upwards of a century, and was drained by a water engine, consisted of three seams, the two upper, each four feet thick, and the lower eight feet. There is understood to be a fourth seam below these, called the *craw coal*, the cropping of which comes out about 120 yards south-east of the mansion-house. The third seam, called the *main coal*, was considered the best in the county. Considerable quantities of it used to be exported to Holland, where it met with a ready sale; and it is said, even at this day, that the best Scotch coals in that market go under the name of Durie coals. The direction of the strata is from the N. W. to the S. E.; with one hitch or dike below the farm house of Banbeath, and another about a mile farther east. The following old table shows a section of Durie coal and metals, cut by a plane perpendicular to the streak, from the crop to the depth of forty fathoms.

| | <i>Fathoms</i> | <i>Feet.</i> | | <i>Fathoms</i> | <i>Feet.</i> |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Earth metals, | 7 | 0 | Brought over, | 24 | 2 |
| Till, | 0 | 3 | Coal, | 0 | 4 |
| Greystone, | 2 | 0 | Dogger and hardstone, | 1 | 0 |
| Whitestone, | 2 | 1 | Broats and hardstone, | 1 | 0 |
| Till, | 3 | 3 | Broats, | 1 | 3 |
| Hardstone, | 1 | 1 | Till, | 3 | 0 |
| Till, | 1 | 5 | Dogger and stone, | 2 | 0 |
| Coal, | 0 | 4 | Grey broats, | 1 | 0 |
| Ratchel, | 1 | 0 | Whitestone, | 1 | 3 |
| Reddish-stone, | 1 | 1 | Broats and till, | 1 | 3 |
| Hard band, | 1 | 0 | Hardstone, | 0 | 3 |
| Irregular metals, | 1 | 0 | Till irregular, | 1 | 1 |
| Soft till, | 1 | 2 | Main coal, | 1 | 2 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 24 | 2 | | 40 | 0 |

About the year 1802, a bore was put down near Scoonie bridge, which reached the bottom of the *main coal*, at the depth of 53

fathoms. This bore, besides the upper seams of coal, passed through a stratum of ochre upwards of 4 feet thick, and three seams of fire clay, two of which are of the finest quality. These operations were preparatory to working the main coal; but the proprietor died soon after, and his heirs are under entail.

A bed of ochre four feet thick, lying on the estates of Durie and Aithernie, has been wrought for several years, of which a considerable quantity is exported.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The town of Leven is a burgh of barony holding under the family of Durie; but, having no local government till very lately, it possesses no records, and there is nothing worthy of remark in its history. There is a very accurate plan of the estate of Durie, which comprehends about three-fifths of the parish; but there has been no general survey of the parish.

Eminent Men.—Of the family of Gibson, the former proprietors of Durie, was Sir Alexander Gibson, Lord Durie, a Lord of Session, and collector of the reports, well known in the Scottish law, under the title of *Durie's Decisions*. Of this judge, a remarkable circumstance is recorded, which indicates a very unsettled state of society, and shews with what a feeble hand the authority of the Government was administered, when such an outrage could be committed with impunity, and even without inquiry. In the early part of the seventeenth century, the then Earl of Traquair had a law-suit depending before the Court of Session, which was of great importance to his family; and, having reason to believe that the opinion of Lord Durie was unfavourable to his interest, he employed Willie Armstrong, a noted freebooter of these times, to convey his Lordship out of the way, until the cause should be decided. Accordingly, when the Judge was taking his usual airing on horseback upon Leith sands, he was forcibly dragged from his horse by Armstrong near the Figgate Whins, and carried blindfold to an old castle in Annandale, called the tower of Graham. Here he remained closely immured for three months, debarred from all intercourse with human kind, and receiving his food through an aperture in the wall. His friends had concluded him dead, and had gone into mourning, supposing that he had been thrown from his horse into the sea; but, upon the law-suit terminating in favour of Lord Traquair, he was brought back in the same mysterious manner, and set down upon the very spot where he had been taken up. Another Lord Durie, in 1652, was one of the commission-

ers sent from Scotland to treat with the English Parliament about the union of the kingdoms: and a laird of Durie of the same family sat in the first Scottish Parliament of Charles II. in 1660.

Mr Jerome Stone, a man remarkable for talent and erudition, was born in this parish, and of humble parents, about the year 1727. He commenced his career in life as a travelling chapman, and afterwards became an itinerant bookseller. Possessing a peculiar talent for acquiring languages, he became, by his own unaided exertions, one of the most eminent linguists of his time; but died in early life at the age of thirty, while schoolmaster of the parish of Dunkeld. At his death he was preparing for the press an "Inquiry into the original of the nation and language of the ancient Scots, with conjectures about the primitive state of the Celtic and other European Nations;" and he left in manuscript the well known allegory, entitled, "The Immortality of Authors," which has been often reprinted, and is a lasting monument of his lively fancy, sound judgment, and correct taste.

Land-owners.—The principal land-owners are, Charles Maitland Christie, Esq. proprietor of Durie and Scoonie, valued rent L. 2961, 7s. 5d.; Captain James Erskine Wemyss, R. N. proprietor of Aithernie, L. 448, 4s. 10d.; Major Anderson, proprietor of Monthrive, L. 470, 15s. 8d.; James Blythe Fernie, Esq. proprietor of Kilmux and Ovenstone, L. 413, 13s. 4d.; George Simpson, Esq. proprietor of Letham, L. 408, 10s.; David Fleming, Esq. proprietor of Myreside, L. 118, 11s. 4d.; and Mr Wallace, proprietor of Park-hill, L. 25, 6s. The present landed rental is about L. 6500, and the house rental about L. 1600.

Parochial Registers.—The oldest volume of records, which has been well kept, contains *the general acts* of the kirk-session from 1626 to 1642, and *the particular acts* from 1640 to 1655. The records commence again in 1667, and are brought down to the present time, with the exception of two blanks, one between the years 1746 and 1764, and the other between 1781 and 1798. This last blank has been accounted for by the sudden death of the session-clerk, who had neglected to transcribe the minutes of session from the note-book into the regular record; and that note-book is now lost.

Antiquities.—There are but few vestiges of antiquity in the parish, though there is little doubt of its having been, in early times, the scene of mortal strife, as is testified by the near neighbourhood of the standing stones of Lundin. It is said in the former Statis-

tical Account, that "some stone-coffins were found to the eastward of the river, with human bones, supposed to have been deposited there in the ninth century, when a battle was fought upon these grounds between the Scots and Danes." But a more interesting relic of antiquity was opened up about fifteen years ago, in the corner of a field upon the estate of Aithernie, when digging out moulding-sand for a foundery in the neighbourhood. This was an ancient cairn or tumulus, containing about twenty stone-coffins, and formed upon the apex of a conical hill. The base of this tumulus was about forty yards square, and laid with a coating of clay; and the *cista* or coffins were constructed of rude slabs, placed on edge with a covering stone, and cemented with clay puddle. Above the coffins was a cairn of small stones, about three feet in depth, and over this was spread a composition of clay and sand, so hard that it required the aid of a pick-axe to penetrate it. In two of the coffins, near the end, was placed a small urn made of clay, and rudely ornamented, and about six inches in diameter and the same in depth. These urns contained a blackish substance, which was covered with oak-bark; but the bark immediately mouldered down, upon being exposed to the atmosphere. Five of the coffins contained each a larger urn of similar materials, about 14 inches in diameter, and 24 in depth. These were placed with their mouths inverted upon a square stone, and were filled with calcined bones. In one coffin, smaller than the rest, were found a quantity of beads made of charred wood, and about half an inch in length. All the coffins, except the five which held the larger urns, contained human bones; but a much greater quantity of these relics of mortality were scattered around the cemetery, and were protected only by the dry stones which formed the cairn. The great number of uncoffined bones might warrant the conjecture, that a battle-field was not far distant; but the absence of all instruments or emblems of war, and the presence of a female corpse, which the beads, the usual ornaments of the British women, indicate, would more naturally lead to the belief, that this tumulus formed a peaceable dormitory of our pagan forefathers.*

Modern Buildings.—The modern buildings are, the mansion-house of Durie, built in 1762; that of Kilmux in 1832; and that of Monthrive in 1836; and five spinning-mills, and one flour-mill, all of modern erection. The materials used for building, especial-

* Some of the urns and beads are still in the possession of Mr Balfour, the tenant upon the farm.

ly in the lower part of the parish, are generally brought by sea, from the quarries of Inverkeithing and Blair.

III.—POPULATION.

The population of Scoonie since the commencement of the century, has been progressively and rapidly increasing, owing chiefly to the erection of several manufacturing establishments in the parish and neighbourhood.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| The population in 1755 amounted to | 1528 |
| 1791 | 1675 |
| 1801 | 1681 |
| 1811 | 1726 |
| 1821 | 2042 |
| 1831 | 2556 |

According to this census there were 1224 males, and 1342 females.

| | |
|---|------|
| Number of persons under 15 years of age | 1066 |
| between 15 and 30 | 545 |
| 30 and 50 | 660 |
| 50 and 70 | 215 |
| above 70 | 70 |

The present population is 2640, of whom 2163 reside in Leven and its suburbs, and 473 in the country part of the parish. It is difficult to ascertain with accuracy the average number of births, as few of the dissenters have the names of their children registered; and many belonging to the establishment are equally negligent.

The average of marriages for the last 3 years is 27
deaths, 60

The number of insane, 2; blind, 2; deaf and dumb, 1; and imbecile, 2.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of families in the parish | 535 |
| chiefly employed in agriculture, | 85 |
| trade, manufactures, and handicraft, | 317 |

There are three landed proprietors of independent fortune residing in the parish; and three non-resident heritors possessed of land exceeding the yearly value of L. 50.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—

| | |
|--|------|
| The number of acres occasionally in tillage, about | 3250 |
| of uncultivated links, | 105 |
| in pasture, but in the progress of being | |
| cultivated, | 250 |
| under wood, planted, | 250 |

Number of acres in the parish about 3855

Produce.—The average gross amount and value of raw produce, raised yearly in the parish, so far as can be ascertained, is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Grain of all kinds, | L. 8500 |
| Hay and pasture, | 3350 |
| Potatoes and turnips, | 2200 |

Total yearly value of raw produce, L. 14,050

Rent of land.—The rent of arable land varies from 16s. to L. 4

per imperial acre, and averages about L. 1, 17s. The grazing of a cow averages about L. 4; of an ox L. 3; and of a ewe or full grown sheep, pastured for the year, 12s.

Rate of Wages, &c.—A day-labourer receives 1s. 6d. in summer, and 1s. 4d. in winter; a mason, carpenter, or other mechanic, receives from 2s. 2d. to 2s. 6d. in summer, and from 1s. 10d. to 2s. in winter; an unmarried farm-servant receives from L. 10 to L. 11 per annum, with board in the farmer's kitchen; and when he lives in the *bothie*, he has the same wages, with 6½ bolls of oatmeal, and a pint of sweet-milk per day; a married man, who has a cow, receives from L. 6 to L. 7, with a house, 6½ bolls of oatmeal, and 6 bolls of potatoes, or ground to plant potatoes; those who have no cows receive L. 2 or L. 3 additional, with a pint of sweet-milk per day; a woman farm-servant receives from L. 5 to L. 6 with board; and women employed in out-door labour have 8d. per day of nine hours. The rate of mason, carpenter, and other mechanical work is as follows:—rubble building per rood of 36 square yards, from 28s. to 32s.; stone and lime dikes per do. 16s. to 20s.; dry-stone dikes per do. 7s. to 10s.; slating per do. 10s. to 14s.; tiling per do. 5s. to 6s. 6d.; plastering two coats per yard, 2d. The price of different articles, for the purposes of rural economy, which are in use and manufactured in the parish, is, a farm-cart with iron axle, from L. 10, 10s. to L. 11; an iron two-horse plough, L. 3, 5s.; iron swingle-trees, 15s.; a pair of iron harrows, from L. 2, 5s. to L. 2, 8s.; a two-horse self-cleaning iron harrow, L. 5, 5s.; an iron trenching skeleton plough, from L. 5, 10s. to L. 6; an iron strip plough L. 2, 2s.; a drill harrow L. 2, 2s.

Breed of Cattle and Sheep.—There are few sheep in the parish, and these are generally bought in the south country markets, about the month of August, either to be fed off on turnips during the winter, or to be kept as a breeding stock, when the lambs are sold in the spring, and the ewes are fattened and disposed of during the summer. The general breed of cattle is the native horned black breed of the county. About twenty years ago, this breed was in great request by the English dealers, to drive to the southern markets, where they met a ready demand, on account of their kindly feeding qualities, and the great weight to which they were raised on the English pastures. At that period, nearly one-half of the cattle bred in the county were taken to England in a lean state. But now, from the general improvement in husbandry, and the introduction of artificial manures, the system is completely

changed. Most of the cattle reared in the county are fattened at home; and are either consumed by our own population, or sent to the Edinburgh or Glasgow markets; and some of late have been sent by the Dundee steam-vessels to London. Where the native breed has been well selected and kept pure, it has been found best adapted for the soil and climate of this county. Unfortunately, however, many crosses with other breeds have been introduced; and almost every one of these crosses has tended rather to deteriorate than to improve the original stock. This appears now to be generally acknowledged, and a desire has arisen among our agriculturists to give up crossing entirely, and to confine their attention to the native breed of the county, as being the most profitable. The celebrated ox of the Fife breed, "Charlie," was bred in this parish, by Mr Wallace, tenant at Balgrummo. He was exhibited by Mr Bruce of Kennet, at the Highland Society exhibition at Stirling in 1833, and gained the premium given by that Society for the best ox of any breed, competing against the Teeswater and other breeds. In this parish, also, were reared by James B. Fernie, Esq. of Kilmux, and exhibited by him at Stirling the same year, the two oxen which gained the premium given by the Highland Society for the best pair of cattle of the Fife breed.

Husbandry.—The system of husbandry generally pursued in this parish, is the rotation of alternate white and green crops; and the soil adapted for grass is allowed to remain two or more years in pasture. Since the last Statistical report was published, the annual land rental has increased from L. 2000 to nearly L. 6500; and many an acre, since that period, has been brought from a state of unprofitable barrenness to bear luxuriant crops of all kinds of grain. Notwithstanding the depression under which the agricultural interest has been labouring for several years, improvements upon the soil are still carrying on with considerable spirit; and some of the occupiers of wet land are rendering the soil comparatively dry, by adopting the new mode of draining, called "the frequent drain system," and by using the skeleton trenching plough, invented by Mr Smith of Deanston, and improved by Mr Henry Thallan, blacksmith at Smiddy-green, in this parish. Major Anderson of Monthrive, and Mr Fernie of Kilmux may be named as improvers on this system.

Leases.—The duration of leases is generally for a term of nineteen years; and there seems no reason to suppose that any change

in this respect would be favourable to the occupier, except in improving leases, where the capital is all expended by the tenant.

Farm Buildings.—Owing to a great portion of the property in this parish being entailed, the farm-steadings are not generally so commodious as they would require to be, in order to keep pace with the modern system of husbandry; but still, they are in a gradual state of improvement. The best steading in the parish was built in 1833 by Mr Fernie on his property of Kilmux, and cost nearly L. 2000. Attached to it is a steam-engine, which propels a thrashing machine, and also two pairs of stones for grinding oats.

The chief obstacle to farther improvement arises from the difficulty of procuring stones for the purposes of building and draining, there being no quarries of any consequence, except in the northern part of the parish, and these chiefly of whinstone.

Manufactures.—The following table gives a view of the several branches of manufacture, which are at present in operation in this parish, with the number of individuals employed, and the requisite capital.

| | <i>Males.</i> | <i>Females.</i> | <i>Capital.</i> |
|---|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Five mills for spinning flax and tow, - | 96 | 156 | L. 15,000 |
| One foundery for cast iron, - | 45 | - | 4,000 |
| One saw mill and wood-yard, - | 30 | - | 3,000 |
| One mill for bruising bones, - | 12 | - | 1,500 |
| One brick and tile work, - | 12 | - | 500 |
| One ochre mill, - | 3 | - | 500 |
| Hand-loom weaving, - | 148 | 22 | |
| | <hr/> 398 | <hr/> 178 | <hr/> L. 24,500 |

In the spinning-mills, both adults and children are employed six days in the week, and work the legal number of hours, as fixed by the factory bill, namely, twelve hours for five days, and nine hours on Saturday, making sixty-nine hours per week. Males receive from 14s. to L. 1, 2s. per week; females from 5s. to 7s.; and children from 2s. 6d. to 5s.

These mills are fitted up upon the most improved construction; and their machinery is adapted for spinning all kinds and sizes of flax and tow yarns.

The hand-loom weavers work by the piece, and at their own homes; consequently, their earnings depend entirely upon their own skill and industry; but may average 12s. per week for males, and from 8s. to 10s. for females. In the foundery, wages run from 12s. to 24s. per week, and, in the other works, are nearly the same as those of agricultural labourers. They generally work ten hours a day. Wages for all kinds of manufacture afford at present a fair

streets, and supplying the town with water. The market-towns of Cupar and Kirkaldy are each nearly ten miles distant from Leven.

Means of Communication.—The post-office is at Leven, where there are two arrivals every day. The turnpike road, which is well kept, crosses the parish about a quarter of a mile above the town: and a stage-coach passes from the east of Fife to Edinburgh three times a-week. There is also a communication with Edinburgh by a steam-boat, twice a-day in summer, and once in winter. The want of a carriage bridge over the river at the town of Leven has been much felt, there being none nearer than Cameron Bridge, about three miles up the river. This much desired improvement, however, is at present in contemplation, and it is hoped will soon be carried into execution. Near the mouth of the river, which was formerly crossed by a ferry-boat, there has been erected a handsome suspension-bridge, for foot-passengers, by means of which the village of Dubbyside is now, in a manner connected with the town of Leven. This improvement cost nearly L. 500, which was raised in shares of 10s. 6d. each. A half-penny is charged for each passenger; and the pontage is at present let at L. 85 per annum.

Ecclesiastical State.—The old church of Scoonie stood in the centre of the burying ground, about a quarter of a mile from the town of Leven; and what remains of it forms the family vault of the proprietor of Durie. When the present edifice was built, about sixty years ago, the site was removed to the vicinity of Leven, where the great bulk of the population reside; and is about four miles distant from the most remote part of the parish. It was seated for about 700 hearers; but, owing to the rapid increase of the population, the want of church accommodation began to be seriously felt, when, in 1822, the heritors in the most liberal manner, proceeded to its enlargement. It now contains 1000 sittings, of which 100 are set apart for the poor. The interior of the building was completely renewed, and there are few country churches so comfortable, either for preacher or hearers.

The manse was enlarged and repaired in 1820, and is now a commodious and comfortable dwelling. The glebe, arable and grass together, is about 12 acres, and is let at L. 50 per annum. The stipend was augmented in 1830, and is 17 chalders of victual, half meal and half barley, the average price of which for the

last three years is L. 226, 9s. 8d. with L. 10 for communion elements.*

There is one Independent and one Relief chapel in the parish, the ministers of which are paid by the seat rents and the Sabbath collections. Divine service in the Established Church is regularly and fully attended; but the writer has no means of knowing the state of the dissenting chapels. Number of families belonging to the Established Church, 384, or 1751 individuals; communicants, 738: number of families of dissenters of all denominations, 156, or individuals, 827; communicants, 410. There are 2 Episcopalians, and 62 who attend no stated place of worship.

A society for general religious purposes, under the direction of the ladies of the parish, has been in existence for several years, and the average annual amount of its contributions for the last three years is L. 20. There is also a ladies' charitable society, whose expenditure for the last three years has averaged L. 24 per annum. The church collections for religious and charitable objects, independent of the regular collections, have, for the last three years, averaged L. 8, 7s. 2d. per annum.

Education.— Besides the parish school, there are three unendowed schools, where, in addition to the usual branches, are taught Greek, Latin, French, and mathematics. There is also a Female school, where the more ornamental branches of education may be acquired. The emoluments of the parochial schoolmaster are: salary L. 34, with L. 2 for deficiency of garden ground; school fees about L. 70; and from other sources, as session and heritors' clerk, L. 20. He has also a very superior dwelling-house. The other teachers are supported entirely by their school fees. The average number of scholars attending the different schools is about 380, which shows that the inhabitants are sufficiently alive to the benefits of education; but, though these benefits are within the reach of all, yet no adequate change for the better has been produced on the conduct and morals of the people.

There have been three illegitimate births in the parish during the last three years.

I am not aware of any individual above six years of age being altogether unable to read, except two, and they are imbeciles.

Literature.— A subscription library, consisting at present of about 650 volumes, has been in operation in this parish for many years;

* It may be worthy to remark, that the present incumbent is only the third Presbyterian minister since the Revolution, the Episcopalian clergyman having been allowed to retain the benefice till his death, which happened about 1717.

and a juvenile collection, chiefly of religious publications, is connected with the Sabbath school. There is also a mechanics' institution, with a respectable library belonging to it.

Friendly Societies.—There have been several Friendly Societies in this parish; but these institutions, though excellent as a means of promoting a spirit of independence, frugality, and forethought among the people, have been subject to great insecurity and instability from various causes, but chiefly from errors in calculation on their first establishment, so that few of the old ones now remain. A Weaver's Society flourished here for nearly fifty years, and was long in a prosperous state; but, owing to a greater number of widows, than they had calculated upon, coming upon their roll, their funds were latterly reduced to L. 120, which, about two years ago, was divided among its members, and the society was broken up. There are at present in Leven, the Gardeners' Society, with 130 members; the Apron Society, with 160; and the Society of Odd Fellows, with 50; and as all these have taken advantage of the Friendly Society Act, passed in 1829, it is to be hoped that, by judicious management, they will be more permanent, and productive of the important benefits which they contemplate. A savings' bank was instituted here in 1816; but it received so little encouragement from those for whose benefit it was intended, that it was soon after discontinued. A Government Annuity Society has been for some time in contemplation. The preliminaries are now finally arranged, and it is hoped that it will be in operation in a few weeks.

Poor's Funds.—The average number of paupers upon the regular roll for the last three years is 15; but none are placed there unless those who, from age and infirmity, appear altogether incapacitated from ever earning a maintenance for themselves. A much greater number of poor receive occasional assistance during a temporary illness, or in winter, when there is no out-door work. This is given at the discretion of the minister, or elder of the district, which has the effect of stimulating their own exertions, and tends in some measure to keep alive a spirit of independence which, I fear, is fast fading from our population.

The average annual disbursements made by the kirk-session for the last three years amounted to L. 219, 14s. 1d.; to regular and occasional paupers, L. 161, 15s. 5d.; to pauper lunatics, L. 42, 19s. 4d.; and to sessional expenses, L. 14, 19s. 4d. Of this sum the church door collections amounted to L. 62, 17s. 7d., and sum-

dries to L. 8, 4s. 6d. The remainder was contributed by the heritors according to their valued rents.

Prisons.—Though much wanted, there is no prison in this parish, nor even a lock-up-house.

Fairs.—In former times, there were one fair in spring for lintseed, and one every month, from May to October, for white linen. Merchants attended from distant parts of the country, and linen cloth to a very considerable amount was annually brought here for sale. These fairs, however, have now dwindled into petty markets for toys and sweetmeats; and, as they are often made an occasion, by many of the working-classes, for dissipation and disturbance, they may well be dispensed with.

Inns, &c.—There are 28 licensed houses for retailing spirits in the town of Leven,—a number far beyond the wants of the place, and which has no doubt tended much to demoralize the people.

Fuel.—The common fuel is coal, from the pits of Wemyss and Kilmux. A considerable quantity of English coals is annually imported, and is generally used by the wealthier classes.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

With respect to the more striking variations betwixt the present state of the parish, and that which existed at the time of the last Statistical Account, I may generally refer to what has been already stated under the different heads of inquiry; and would advert merely to the improved state of agriculture, by which the rental of the parish has been more than trebled; the excellent state of the turnpike and statute-labour roads; and the great increase in trade and manufactures. It may be proper, however, to mention also an improvement in the mode of conducting funerals, which has tended much to the comfort and convenience of the working classes. When the present incumbent came to the parish, it was customary to have at least three *services*, but often more,—one of spirits with bread and cheese, and two of wine with cake and biscuit. This not only occasioned much delay, but entailed a heavy expense upon poor families, which, at such a season especially, they were little able to bear. Now the *services* are altogether discontinued; the procession commences precisely at the hour appointed; and it may be recorded to the credit of the community, that, generally, they entered most readily into the new arrangement.

December 1836.