

ABERDOUR PARISH

CIVIL HISTORY.

Inchcolm.-The parish of Aberdour belonged to the monastery of Inchcolm. This monastery was founded about the beginning of the twelfth century by Alexander 1. in consequence of a vow. Sibbald says, that the western part of Aberdour was given by one of the Mortimers to this monastery, for the privilege of burying in the church. There is a tradition, that the corpse of one of the family was thrown overboard in a storm, which gives the name of Mortimer's Deep to the channel between the island and the shore. This western part of Aberdour, together with the lands and barony of Beath, are said to have been acquired from an Abbot of Inchcolm, by James, afterwards Sir James Stuart, second son of Andrew Lord Evandale, grandfather by his daughter to the admirable Crichton, and by his second son, Lord Doune, to Sir James Stuart, who married the daughter of the Regent Murray. Lord Doune was Commendator of the monastery of Inchcolm at the Reformation. The whole of the abovementioned property, together with the island itself, is still in the family of Moray, with the title of St Colme. The Earl of Moray attempted to cover the island with trees, which would have increased its picturesque appearance, but the attempt did not succeed.-(Old Stat. Account.)

Antiquities .-Not far from the village of Aberdour, on a flat on the top of a hill, there is one of those cairns or tumuli so frequently met with in Scotland. A coffin and several earthen vessels, containing human bones, were found in it. A small plain tombstone erected on the south wall of the old church to the memory of the Rev. Robert Blair, minister of St Andrews, in Fife, and Chaplain to Charles 1, who was ejected from his charge by Archbishop Sharp in 1661, and died at Couston, in this parish, 1666. The inscription is in Latin, but nearly defaced.

Parochial Registers.-These consist of minutes of kirk-session, commencing in 1649 ; baptisms in 1663 ; distributions to poor, 1658; collections at the kirk, 1659; marriages, 1669; deaths, 1658 to 1669, when a register ceased to be kept, but was renewed by the present session-clerk in 1817.

Mansion-Houses. - These are, Aberdour House, Hillside House, Whitehill Cottage, Cuttlehill House, and Templehall.

POPULATION.

Amount in 1811,	1302
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1821	1489
1831	1751
Total, in 1841.	1891
of which in Aberdour village,	908
In the country,	983

Number of illegitimate births in the parish within the last three years, about 7 or 8.

Manufactures. - Not more than eight or nine hand-loom weavers are employed in the weaving of ticking. There are two saw-mills for cutting wood ; also, an iron-mill for manufacturing spades, &c. driven by water

Fishings.-Oyster-fishing is carried on to a very limited extent.

Navigation. -Two pinnaces ply betwixt this and the port of Leith for passengers and goods.

PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Ecclesiastical State.-The number of families in the parish belonging to the Established Church is about 357 ; of Dissenting or Seceding families, about 70, a great proportion of which occasionally attend the parish church ; of Episcopalian families, 1 ; of Roman Catholic families, 1. The manse was built in 1802, and is in very superior condition.

Education.-There are 4 schools in the parish, exclusive of Sabbath schools, viz. the parochial, a female, Donibristle colliery, and Templehall schools. The yearly amount of the parochial schoolmaster's salary is the maximum. The probable yearly amount of fees actually paid to the parochial schoolmaster is, on an average, L.30 Sterling per annum. The probable amount of the other emoluments of parochial schoolmaster is about L.10 Sterling, arising from session-clerk's salary and emoluments of office.

An Association on the plan of a savings bank was recently formed in the parish.

Poor.-The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 26 weekly and 12 monthly pensioners, also a lunatic female pauper; total, 39. Average sum allotted to each of such persons, 1s. 6d. per week; L.9, 2s. per annum to the lunatic pauper, besides occasional relief to others. The average annual amount of contributions for relief of the poor is about L.80 from voluntary contributions of the heritors; about L.30 from church collections ; L. 18, 8s. 7d. from alms or legacies.

Rev. Hugh Ralph (February 1843.)