

# AUCHTERDERRAN PARISH

POPULATION.- From the time of Dr Webster's Report, till that of the former Statistical Account, the population was almost stationary, varying only betwixt 1194 and 1200. The population in 1821 was 1488; in 1831, 1590.

By my last report, the village of Lochgelly contained 342; it now contains 612, so that, although our general population has increased 100, yet the country part of the population has diminished. Lochgelly is our only village. By the census of 1831, the males are 786, the females 804.

Mr Malthus, the political economist, when reading in my former report, the hardships represented in the situation of our married labourers, wishes to change the following sentence. viz. " That people continue to enter voluntarily upon such a hard situation, shews how much the union of the sexes and the love of independence are principles of human nature." Upon this Mr. Malthus remarks, " The gentleman should have said, instead of the love of independence, the love of progeny." But I feel inclined still to adhere to my own version. In that class, the love of progeny does not appear to be either intense or even very general, but the desire of procuring that independence which consists in having their own house, their own fireside, their own little domestic society, &c. seems to influence them generally, and in a great degree.

Poaching and snaring are far from being unknown here. A little Highland whisky I believe, is occasionally smuggled, although we have far too much of our own production.

The chief village is Lochgelly. We have now useful metalled roads in various directions. The lines have not been well chosen; but we are thankful for the roads as they are. In the present depressed state of agriculture, nothing but the improvement of roads could have kept us up.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATE.-The parish church is central. It was built in 1789 ; the manse in 1784. There are no free sittings. The heritors divide the area, according to their valued rent, among their dependents. The glebe is 14 1/2 Scotch acres in extent, and, including the glebe, the living is about L. 300 -a-year. The payment of the grain of stipends by the county fiars is an excellent arrangement. At present, the average number of communicants at the Established Church is 300. All our dissenters are Presbyterians : and there is a meeting-house at Lochgelly. About one half of the population is dissenting or seceding.

EDUCATION.-There are three schools within the parish, and a border school; one is the parish school, the other two village schools. The parish schoolmaster has the maximum salary, and the required accommodations. The border school, supplied with more than one-half of its scholars from this parish, has upwards of 50 scholars. The other two have about 70 each : and the masters have no salaries. The parish school has at present upwards of 90 scholars; the wages 2s., 2s. 6d., and 3s. per quarter. Classical learning is little in request, even in the parish school. The branches

commonly taught are, English, grammatically, the English Bible, English collections, writing, accounts, a religious catechism, geometry, mensuration, geography, navigation, book-keeping, church music. Considering their moderate means, the parents are remarkably anxious to procure education for their children, and none of these grow up without being put to school. Our parochial schools have been much improved by the augmenting of the salaries, a measure equally wise and benevolent.

**POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS.**-Our poor are supplied from our collections at the church, and from the interest derived from a sum of money (about L. 700) in the management of the kirk-session. But though our collections have increased, yet, for the last two years, the interest of our money has decreased in a greater proportion. Yet we are averse to frequent assessments; for although our heritors are well inclined to our poor, we think it would not prove ultimately for the public benefit to apply often to this resource. During my long incumbency we have had only three assessments on the heritors for the poor, and these were for very moderate sums. Our number of poor upon the monthly list runs from 15 to 22 families. To each of these families the kirk-session distributes monthly 3s. at an average. But our greatest disbursements the session reserves for occasional charities, for sickness, for severe accidents, for house rents, for school wages to poor children, for defraying the expenses of patients going and coming to or from an infirmary, &c. Every individual case is inquired into, and carefully judged of by the session.

**MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS:**- Drunkenness, formerly rare, is now lamentably frequent.-Forty years ago, emigration was thought of with much reluctance; now the predilection for, the native spot has diminished, and emigration is more readily embraced.- Forty years ago, we were accustomed to regard increase of population as increase of national prosperity; now such increase seems regarded as an obstruction.-Forty years ago we had no medical gentlemen in the parish; at present two are resident.-Formerly coal-hewers were inferior to other classes in morals and respectability, here they are now nearly on a level. Forty nay twenty, years ago, we had not one metalled road, now we have several. Forty years ago, the ministers of the Established Church generally delivered all their discourses from the pulpit without reading; now they are generalIv read.-Forty years ago land was sold in Fife at thirty-five years purchase of the existing rental, now it sells at twenty-six years purchase of the present rental.

The valued rent of this parish is upwards of L. 7000 Scotch. The present real rent is about L. 7000 Sterling.-Forty years ago, rents were all paid here in money, now they begin to be paid in grain, at the rate of the county fiars.-Forty years ago, resurrectionists, as they are called, were unheard of; now, even the poor 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.

May 1836 ( Rev. Andrew Murray D.D. )