

# CAMERON PARISH

PAROCHIAL REGISTERS.-The date of the earliest registers of births and marriages is 1695, with a chasm from 1709 to 1717. They have been regularly kept. A most voluminous record of discipline commences in 1694, and is continued to 1739.

The only mansion-house of any note in the parish is Mount Melville, the residence of John Whyte Melville, Esq.

## POPULATION.

There are only three persons of independent fortune resident in the parish. The population of the parish has been increasing for the last forty years, and during the forty years before that period it seems to have been decreasing. The cause of the decrease during that time appears to have been the inclosing, and letting, in grass from year to year of a number of farms; and during the latter period, the high prices got for agricultural produce caused a number of them to be let for tillage, and consequently a number of more hands were required for the cultivation of the land. There have been likewise a good many houses feued in the parish, at Westfield of Radernie, which is another cause of the increase in the population. The population may be said to be wholly agricultural and resident in the country, as the houses that are collected Denhead, Radernie, and Lathones, can scarcely be termed villages.

the average number of births for the last seven years, is 26

of deaths, 10

of marriages,, 8

number of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards, 22

of unmarried men upwards of 50 years of age, 11

women upwards of 45, 26

of insane persons is, 1

of fatuous, 1

of deaf and dumb, 5

Number of families in the parish, 255

chiefly employed in agriculture, 87

in trade, manufactures, or handicraft, 29

There are no customs, games, or amusements, prevalent in the parish. The people in general are sober, frugal, and industrious in their habits. They are cleanly in their persons and apparel, and their houses are for the most part neat and comfortable. There is nothing peculiar in their manner of dress ; the short-gown and petticoat which, within these few years, were generally worn by the females, are completely exploded, and the printed gown is now universally seen. On Sunday, they dress very showily, and the Merino and Silk gown are quite common. Each family feeds a pig or two, and sometimes three in the year, the flesh of which, with the garden stuffs, forms a very comfortable and wholesome meal for dinner; porridge and milk are the common breakfast of males, and tea and oat-cakes or wheaten bread and butter, of females ; tea is generally used in the evening; and for supper, either porridge and milk, or herrings and potatoes; cheese is often used in the evening, and at dinner and supper. Where industrious habits prevail, the people may be said to enjoy in a reasonable degree the comforts and advantages of society, and are generally contented with their situation and circumstances. Engaged for the most part in agricultural operations, and not brought together in great numbers, they are not exposed to those various temptations with which the manufacturing population in large towns are surrounded, and are characterized by an independence of mind, and decency of behaviour, which generally accompany rural life. They are intellectual, religious, and moral, and show a great regard for all the ordinances of religion. Poaching does not prevail to a great extent, and smuggling is altogether unknown.

During the last three years there were 5 illegitimate births in the parish.

**RATE OF WAGES:**-The yearly wages of an unmarried ploughman are, L 10, 10s. or L. 11, with 6 1/2 bolls of oatmeal, and one Scotch pint of new milk from the cow, and one boll of potatoes of 4 cwt. for supper, with lodging in a bothy, and coals; of a married ploughman, L. 8, with a cow kept for him during the year, or L. 10 without a cow; but with one Scotch pint of sweet milk, as much ground as will plant half a boll of potatoes, and as much as half a peck of linseed will sow, together with a house and garden. The yearly wages of a female servant who lives in the house are, from L.5, 5s. to L.7. Women who work out of doors have 8d. per day without victuals, from eight in the morning to six in the evening. with an hour for dinner ; taking up potatoes, 1s. with dinner; day-labourers are paid 1s. 4d. in winter, and 1s. 6d. in summer, without victuals, from eight in the morning to darkness in winter, and from eight in the morning to six in the evening in summer, having one hour allowed for dinner; wrights and masons have 2s. 6d. per day for the same hours; smiths are generally paid from L 1, 15s., to L.2, 10s. per pair of horses, not furnishing either the mould-board or side-plates of the ploughs.

## PAROCHIAL ECONOMY

The nearest market-town is St Andrews, where there is a postoffice and daily post, distant about 31/2 miles from the manse, which is situated about the centre of the parish. Ample means of communication are enjoyed by the inhabitants with the surrounding country. There is a turnpike road from St Andrews to the south coast, which passes through the centre of the parish, a little to the eastward of the manse, along which a coach from St Andrews to Largo passes three days a-week to meet the steam-boat from Edinburgh. There is another turnpike from Newport ferry, opposite Dundee, to the Forth, which passes through the west part of the parish, and these are joined together by another at Higham Loan. A great improvement has taken place in the district within these few years, by the opening of a new line of road a little to the southeast of the manse, to the east, where it joins the St Andrews road to Anstruther at Wakefield. Formerly great inconvenience was experienced from the want of more direct means of communication to the south and east coast, as the only way at that time for a carriage was to go by the road leading by Balcarres dikes, which is now entirely obviated. There are ten bridges in the parish, and three leading into it, which are all in good repair.

**ECCLESIASTICAL STATE.**-The church is nearly in the centre of the Parish, betwixt two and three miles distant from the extremities on the E. and W., and about two from the N. and S., and is in as central and eligible a situation as could well be fixed upon. It was built in the year 1808, and is a very plain building with blue slate, with a belfry on the west gable, and is at present in a good state of repair. The old church was in a very ruinous state before divine service was given over in it. The present incumbent has got drenched in the pulpit when preaching, stepping stones were placed along the passages, as after rain they became a complete sheet of water. The church is very neat in the inside, and is seated to contain 495 persons. There are none of the seats let ; they are all apportioned to the different heritors, according to their valued rents, and they, with their tenants and servants, occupy them. The manse was built to the present incumbent, immediately after he was presented to the parish, in the year 1799, and cost L.355. It received an addition, and got a repair in 1823, which cost L. 50, and is at present in good repair. The offices are old, and have little convenience. . There is one Burgher meeting-house situated on the border of this parish, adjoining the parishes of Kilconquhar and Carnbee, where there are a considerable population at a great distance from their parish churches. The number of families of Dissenters is computed at 12.

Divine service is always well attended at the parish church. The average number of communicants is 450.

**EDUCATION.**-There is one parochial school, the teacher of which has the maximum salary, which amounts to L. 34, 4s. 41/2 d., a good dwelling-house and school-room, and rather more than the maximum allowance of garden ground. The school fees may amount to L. 10 per

annum. He also receives L. 3, 10s. as clerk to the heritors kirk-treasurer, and L. 2, 10s. as session-clerk. There are likewise two private schools,-one situated at Lawhead, and the other at Denhead, both depending on the school fees, and both having free school-rooms; a free dwelling-house being also attached to the latter. The branches usually taught at the parish school are, English, English grammar, writing and arithmetic. The same branches are taught at the other schools. The school fees at the parish school are, for English grammar, per quarter, 3s. 6d.; reading, 2s. 6d.; writing and reading, 3s. ; reading, writing, and arithmetic, 3s. 6d. At the other schools each branch is 6d. per quarter higher.

There are very few persons in the parish beyond the age of six years who cannot read and write. The people seem all very much alive to the advantages of education, and are anxious to give their children as much learning as possible. Children of paupers, and those whose means are very circumscribed, are educated at the parish school gratuitously. Ample means of education are provided, and none of the children are so distant as to prevent attendance at school.

**POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS:-**There are at present on the poor's roll 12persons. The average sum allotted to each, per week is 9d. There are, besides, a few who receive aid occasionally. They are all supported by the church collections, which amounted in the year ending, 1835, to L. 17, 12s. In general the poor consider it as degrading to come upon the parish, but there are instances to the contrary, where there is no reluctance to apply, and no degradation felt to receive a regular support.

**INNS;-**There are 8 houses in the parish licensed to sell whisky, and two where only beer is sold, which is more than are necessary for the convenience of the inhabitants.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The alteration in the appearance of the parish since the present incumbent first knew it, is very striking. Then, a great quantity of heath was to be seen from the windows of the manse, now it has altogether disappeared and instead of the comparatively barren waste, neat enclosures and fields waving with yellow corn, meet the eye, affording a rich reward for the pains and industry of the cultivator, and producing abundance of food, by the bounty of that Almighty Being who governs the universe, both for man and beast. The quantity of wood now rising on all sides contributes to enrich the prospect, besides tending materially to alter the climate, in connection with the extensive system of drainage which is now pursued.

The condition of the people is much improved. The article of potatoes has contributed materially to bring about this change, not only in affording nourishment to themselves, but in enabling them to acquire a considerable quantity of excellent bacon, which before could only be procured at mills, and at a high price. Tea has also become a new article of comfort and consumption, which

the rise in the price of labour, since its introduction into this country, has enabled them to procure. The superior clothing, too, since the introduction of steam, forms another striking proof of the comfort of the peasantry. Formerly both the woollen and common spinning wheel were in constant use, now the former is never, and the latter is seldom to be seen, the cloth being to be had much more cheap in the shops than it can be manufactured at home.

When this country was visited by that awful scourge, the Asiatic cholera, by which so many millions of the human race were destroyed since 1817, meetings were held for the suppression of vagrancy in the district, as it was thought that vagrants, going from place to place, carried the infection along with them, and a constabulary police force was then appointed for its suppression and is still kept up. The officer makes regular rounds with a book, in which entries are made by all respectable householders, of the number, description and appearance of any vagrant, or strolling mendicant, who may from time to time appear, with their supposed route; who is thereby enabled to apprehend and lodge in jail, or pass to their proper places, all such vagrants and sturdy beggars as may be found in the district. Since this force has been appointed, the happiest results have followed ; the country being made free from those vagrants, who, when at times refused their exorbitant demands, poured forth torrents of abuse and oaths, and were not at all scrupulous in taking what they could lay their hands upon ; and our highways are now free from those exhibitions of squalor, filth, and deformity, with which they formerly abounded.

January 1837 ( Rev Thomas Adamson )