

CERES PARISH

PAROCHIAL REGISTERS:.-The records of the kirk-session are in preservation, from the year 1620 ; and from that date to the present, they have been kept regularly. Under date 1638, we find an account of the Confession of Faith, which was agreed to in 1560, and immediately after it, a solemn declaration or covenant, in which the nobility and gentry bind themselves to stand by the confession, and to withstand the many attempts which were then made against their religion. This declaration is signed at the kirk of Ceres, "the last day of Apryll 1638," by "Lindesay," " Hy. Ja. Hope," and " Jo. Scott," the minister, elders, and heads of families. In 1667, William Rowe, minister of Ceres, had been deposed, because he would not conform to Episcopacy; and we find, in the records of that date, an edict by "Lord St Andrews," appointing Alexander Leslie to be minister in the room of Mr.Rowe.

REMARKABLE EVENTS:.-On Wednesday, the 5th day of October 1785, Sig. Vincentius Lunardi, a Florentine, having ascended at Edinburgh, in an air balloon, at three o'clock afternoon, descended a mile to the eastward of Ceres, at twenty minutes past four P.M. This was the first aerial voyage made in Scotland, and the daring adventurer, in performing it, passed over about twenty miles of sea, and about twelve of land. The house is still standing in which he was received on his descent.

POPULATION.

In 1755, the population was	2540
1793	2320
1811	2407
1821	2840
1831	2762
Number of families in the parish,	606
chiefly employed in agriculture	183
trade, manufactures, or handicraft	281

Since 1831, there has been a great increase in the number of the people ; and, from the accounts of their establishments, which were lately given in by the several manufacturers in the parish, we are authorized to say, that the population must now be about 3000 at least. In 1793, 138 looms are said to have been employed in the parish. From 700 to 900 of the inhabitants are now employed in weaving and winding. From 170 to 200 are employed regularly in the mills; and, with the exception of about 30, who are employed in the lime-works, the greater part which remains of the working population is agricultural. The town of Cupar is so near to Ceres, that there are few shopkeepers or venders of any commodities in the latter place.

CHARACTER and HABITS of the PEOPLE:-The people are universally industrious, and in general they cultivate the sister virtues of temperance and frugality. Considerable attention to neatness and cleanliness also may be discovered among them. Dr Arnot, author of the former account, mentions, that among the women, the cloak and bonnet had become substitutes for the plaid; and among the men, that the bonnet was supplanted by the hat. It is singular enough, that the plaid and bonnet should now be both regaining their former estimation. There exists also among the people a considerable deal of information, and a general desire for knowledge. A subscription and circulating library was commenced by them in 1828. It consists now of 500 volumes, in which there is varied as well as much useful reading. There are 100 subscribers to this library.

During the last three years, there were 3 illegitimate births in the parish.

MANUFACTURES:-Since the date of the last Statistical Account three spinning mills have been built in the parish, and a bleachfield establishment has been erected at Duraden. In 1827, two mills were built on the grounds of Easter Pitscottie. The machinery is propelled partly by water, and partly by steam. The steam, in general, is only required in summer, occasionally when the water is light. The mills belong to Messrs William and James Yool, manufacturers, Ceres.

There is accommodation for the families of the workers in the buildings at these mills ; and they contain altogether upwards of 150 individuals. There is a teacher and a small library attached to the mills. The other spinning-mill, which belongs to Mr David Yool, was erected at Tarvit in 1799. The machinery at this mill goes partly by water, and partly by steam; and the power is applied also to the turning of a saw-mill. The three spinning-mills are occupied in preparing and spinning flax, tow, and yarns. The raw material is obtained from Dundee and the yarns are sent partly to the Dundee market, and partly to manufacturers in Fife. 150 men, women, and young people are employed. The bleachfield establishment was erected in 1825 by some manufacturers in Ceres. It has received the name of St Ann's Bleaching Company, from a well of that name in the vicinity. The number of hands employed varies from 35 to 40. The supply of brown raw material for it, is chiefly obtained from the mills already mentioned. Previous to the erection of this bleachfield, little was manufactured by the weavers in Ceres except " Brown Silesias;" now the yarns are all cleaned and bleached, and the people are employed in weaving dowlas and sheeting. From 700 to 900 are engaged in this employment ; and from L. 50,000 to L. 60,000 Sterling worth of dowlas and sheeting are annually manufactured in the parish. To any one who reads this statement of the manufacture, it will be evident that the various works are most profitably arranged. The mills supply the bleachfield, and the bleachfield supplies the weavers : and while there is a saving in this manner, as to the carriage of the various articles, there is also an encouragement to the manufacture of the place. There is every likelihood that the manufacture of this flourishing place will, in a few years, become more extended ; and there are, at present, some proposals of erecting another mill on a very extensive plan..

PAROCHIAL ECONOMY

MARKETS;- There is a weekly market in Cupar, the county town, distant only two miles and a half. But this widely extended parish has an easy access to markets in several places . and some of the farmers find it convenient to send their produce to Largo, some to St Andrews, and a very few to Dundee. There are two annual markets or fairs held in the village of Ceres, one on the 24th June, and the other on the 20th day of October; and both of them are most numerously resorted to, as excellent wool, and corn, and horse, and cattle-markets.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION;-A turnpike road runs from east to west through the whole length of the parish. There is also a road which runs from north to south, through the breadth of the parish. In summer, a daily-coach runs through Ceres, and joins the steamboat which leaves Largo for Edinburgh. A messenger, paid by the inhabitants of Ceres, carries letters or papers daily to Cupar, the post-town. There are regular carriers from Ceres to all the neighbouring towns.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATE;- Ceres parish is a rectory, which, before the Reformation, belonged to the Provostry of Kirkhheugh, a religious house at St Andrews. A considerable part of the east end of the parish formerly belonged to the parish of St Andrews, and about the year 1620, was annexed to Ceres, quoad sacra tantum, (as it was long thought;) but the present incumbent discovered that there was no such reservation, and it is now annexed, quoad sacra et civilia. Ceres originally belonged to St Andrews presbytery. In the old church of Ceres, there was an aisle on the south, which belonged to the family of Craighall, and which, before the Reformation, was a chapel dedicated to St Ninian. The schoolmaster of Ceres uniformly receives a presentation to the Chaplainry. There used to be a salary of L. 3 Scots paid to him; but the houses in Cupar from which this salary was paid cannot now be discovered. The present church was built in 1806. It stands on a height, where formerly stood the old church and chapel : it was situated on the outskirts of the old town, but since the new town or Bridge-end was built, it may be said to be in the centre of the village. It is seated for 1100, but actually holds 1300, and the seats are very advantageously disposed both for bearers and speaker. These seats all belong to the heritors of the parish, and there is no rent charged for the use of them. Seats are appropriated for the proprietors and farmers, and the remainder are free and open to the people, and, except on very bad days, they are well filled. There are two meetings in the church, winter and summer. The average number of communicants is 1000. The right of patronage, by a grant from the Crown, was vested in the Crawford family.

There are also two meeting-houses in the village of Ceres, one for the Associate Congregation of Antiburgher Seceders, which was built in 1744, the other for the Presbytery of Relief. To each of these are attached a settled clergyman and regular congregation. A brotherly feeling and Christian spirit pervades the greater number of the members of these three congregations and you will occasionally find them in each others place of worship.

There are about 86 families in this parish attached to the Relief Church, and about the same number to the Secession.

EDUCATION:- There are one parochial, one Secession school, and three contribution schools, besides the schools at Pitscottie and Tarvitmills. There are also two female schools, besides one or two small private schools. By a contract entered into, anno 1631, between Sir Thomas Hope, advocate to Charles I., on the one part, and Lord Lindsay, patron of the parish, the heritors thereof, the minister, and kirk-session on the other part; Sir Thomas Hope, in consequence of mortifying 100 merks Scotch yearly, for the benefit of the schoolmaster, was to have the right of presenting the schoolmaster.

The right of trial and admission was to be vested in the minister and session. In this state the matter still continues. The schoolmaster receives the value of this mortification in addition to his salary, which is the maximum. The average number of scholars who attend at this parish school is 150. The fees may amount to L. 65 per annum.

In October 1836. the scholars entered the new school-house, which had been built by the heritors for their additional accommodation, and which would easily contain 200 scholars and upwards. It is a very handsome building, and far surpasses the common structure of school-houses. The exterior is elegantly finished, and the interior is in harmony with the outward appearance. This attention to the comfort and health of the young is an act of true mercy, for which the parents cannot be too thankful. The heritors propose to build a dwelling-house for the teacher.

One of the other schools is held in the village of Craighrothie. A school and school-house were built by subscription in 1806; and ground was given by the proprietor of Craighrothie, who still contributes to the support of the teacher. Excepting this contribution, the fees are the only support of this teacher. From 60 to 70 scholars attend him. There is a Sunday evening school, which is attached to this school, as well as to the parochial one. and each of them have got libraries for the use of those who attend. There is also another Sunday school in Ceres. which possesses a library for the use of the young. About 50 or 60 girls attend one of the female schools, which is kept in the village of Ceres.

POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS:-Besides the usual funds for the poor which arise from collections at the church, and from dues on marriages, etc. there is the rent of three acres which were left to the session, and also the interest of L. 460, which was left by the late Miss Halkerston of Carskardo. Originally, this sum was L. 500, but the necessary expenses on legacies have reduced it to L. 460. It is lent out at 4 per cent. There is no regular assessment. But the heritors, every year, make a voluntary assessment, so as to meet all deficiencies in the other sources. The church collection may amount to L. 60 per annum. There is a great deal of money expended for the good of the poor in a private way, by benevolent individuals who reside in the parish. This private charity falls, of course, very heavily on the few heritors who reside in the parish, and to whom frequent applications are made. A certain quantity of coals and meal is

annually distributed among the poor, at the private expense of some of the heritors. The average number of poor on the roll is 50, and the yearly expenditure is about L. 120.

INNS:-The number of inns may be about 25. Their corrupting influence has not hitherto been very general.

November 1837 (Rev Joseph Crichton)