

CREICH PARISH

PAROCHIAL REGISTERS.- The date of the earliest entry is 1668. Marriages and baptisms appear, with a few exceptions, to have been recorded with regularity from 1668 to the present time, and births have frequently but not always, been inserted. For many years past, births have been always entered along with the baptisms. There is a register of burials, along with baptisms and marriages, from 1st October 1783, to 1st October 1794, after which time the registering of burials was discontinued, seemingly in consequence of the Government tax on births, marriages, and burials, ceasing at that time by act of Parliament to be uplifted. A register of those who die in the parish has been regularly kept since 1817. The registers of births, marriages, and deaths, have, for the last twenty years, been kept according to a plan recommended by the presbytery to the different parishes within their bounds. They are annually inspected by the committee of presbytery appointed for the examination of the schools, and have uniformly been commended for their distinctness and accuracy.

CREICH CASTLE, the ancient residence of the Bethunes, is now a ruin. It is 47 feet in length, by 39 in breadth, and three stories high, with a court-yard on the west. Within this court-yard the present farm-house is situate. The castle has been a place of very considerable strength. It was defended on the south-east by a morass, which has lately been drained, and on the other sides by strong outworks, part of which has been taken down. It bears no date to mark its age. The proprietor, a few years ago, very judiciously upheld its ruined walls by a repair, clothed them with ivy, and near to them planted some trees for shelter and ornament. It is said that, at a short distance from the castle and a little to the north of the church, formerly stood a brewery, to which was attached a ploughgate of land, denominated Pitfigies.

THE OLD PARISH CHURCH, where divine service was performed so late as the 9th December 1832, is surrounded by the burying-ground and in the immediate vicinity of the castle. In the interior of one of the walls are two niches, on the top of one of which is a coat of arms, which appears to be that of the Barclays of Collairnie, who were, at a very early period, proprietors of Kinsleith, in this parish, and who sold that portion called Easter Kinsleith, in 1727, to James Miller, Esq. the great grandfather of the present proprietor.

ANCIENT HOUSE OF PARBROATH- Of this house or castle, which belonged to the family of Seton, nothing now remains to mark the site save part of an arch surrounded by a few old trees, which has been carefully preserved by desire of the late Earl of Hopetoun. It stands near to the place where the road between the Forth and Tay ferries crosses the road from Cupar to Newburgh. The house is said to have been surrounded by a moat, over which there was a draw-bridge, and the park in which they were situated is still called the Castlefield. There is a tradition that one of the late farm-buildings at Parbroath, which was long used as a barn, had at one time

been a chapel, and that at it, and at the church of Creich, divine service was performed on alternate Sabbaths. In confirmation of a chapel having been here, it may be stated, that, a few years ago, when the foundation of a wall was dug up close by the site of the old barn, some graves were discovered, which probably formed part of the burying-ground connected with the chapel.

It is not unlikely that this chapel may have been the capella belonging to the parish of Creich, mentioned by Sibbald in his history of Fife.

POPULATION

population in 1755 was	375
1791	306, of these were 134 males, 172 females.
1811	394
1821	403
1831	419, of these were 193 males, 226 females.
1838	425

It is stated in the last Statistical Account, that the diminution of one-fifth of the population which had taken place in the thirty five years preceding 1790, was probably owing to one village being allowed to go to decay, to: the union of farms, and the use of two horse ploughs. Since that time, several additional houses have been built in the other villages, and some are occupied by numerous families, which may account for the increase.

There is often a very considerable difference between the population of one year and that of another, arising from the changes of farm-servants and others, some of whom have numerous families.

The number of the population residing in villages is	236
the country	187
The average annual of births for the last ten years is	13 2/5
deaths	6 3/5
marriage proclamations	6 3/10

This last is the average of all who are proclaimed in the parish, whether at the time of a proclamation both parties are resident or only one.

The total number of illegitimate births for the last ten years is 3.

There are eight proprietors of land in the parish of the yearly value of more than L 50. Of these, four are resident, and farm their own properties.

	In 1838	In 1831
Number of families	94	85
Inhabited houses	79	74
Uninhabited houses	3	2
Number of families chiefly employed in agriculture	45	38
in trade, manufactures, &c.**	43	43
all others	6	6

**There are in the parish, including masters, journeymen, and apprentices, 7 wrights, 2 sawyers, 3 masons, 1 blacksmith, 1 saddler, 11 Shoemakers, 5 tailors, 2 bakers, 2 brewers, 2 grocers.

There is no insane person in the parish, but there is one who may be considered fatuous.

PREVAILING AMUSEMENTS.-The favourite amusement in this parish is curling. Many of the landed proprietors, almost the whole tenantry in the neighbourhood, and others of different professions, resort to the ice on Balyarrow, and enjoy this innocent, healthful, and invigorating exercise. The Balyarrow Curling Club is said to be the oldest in the north of Fife.

CHARACTER AND HABITS OF THE PEOPLE.-They are industrious, peaceable, and orderly in their habits. They enjoy in a reasonable degree the advantages of society, and are civil and obliging. They live comfortably without extravagance, and are contented with their situation. In their food and in their manner of dress, there is no peculiarity. On the Sabbath, they appear in church in their best attire, which is neat, respectable, and becoming. They show a regard for religious institutions and instruction ; and may, in general, be considered an intelligent, moral, and religious people.

MANUFACTURES.-The chief branch of manufacture is hand-loom weaving. Osnaburghs, brown and plain white sheetings, and dowlas of almost all qualities, are worked here. Two resident manufacturers, and some resident agents of manufacturers in Cupar and Newburgh, give employment to all the weavers in the parish, and to many in the neighbourhood. The average quantity of cloth woven by them annually, as I am informed by one of the manufacturers after a

careful examination, is 177,200 yards, the value of which is L. 5293, 6s. 8d. Of this quantity, 84,000 yards are woven by the weavers employed by the resident manufacturers, the value of which is L. 2916, 13s. 4d., and the sum given for weaving, which, is about L. 612, 10s. The price of all the weaving, at 1 3/4d. per yard is L. 1292, 1s. 8d. The number of weavers of all ages in the parish is 39, of whom 27 are males and 12 are female, and there are 19 winders all females. The average income of each of the weavers is about 7s. per week throughout the year; good hands from 9s. to 10s. They work about fourteen hours per day. A winder receives 6d. per day when employed, but the employment is not constant. Since the introduction of machinery the spinning-wheel has been almost entirely laid aside, as no adequate remuneration for labour can be procured by it. There is but one in operation in the parish, and that one only occasionally.

PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

MARKET-TOWN-There is no market-town in the parish. The nearest is Cupar, which is distant from the centre of the parish about five miles.

VILLAGES-There are two villages, Luthrie and Brunton, which are pleasantly situated, and at the distance of a mile from each other. The former contains a population of 145, and the latter of 91. The inhabitants are chiefly weavers and other handicraft tradesmen. In the village of Luthrie are a brewery, a bakehouse, a small public-house, a meal-mill, and a barley-mill.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.-There is a regular communication with Cupar, which is the nearest post-town, on Thursdays and Saturdays, and with Dundee, on Fridays, by carriers of small parcels. A turnpike road, between the ferries of Pettycur and Newport, passes through the parish on the south, and along by its southern boundary about a mile and a half, and the turnpike from Cupar to Perth intersects it on the south-west. A statute labour road leads on from the ferry turnpike through the parish eastward to Balmerino, and another leads off from it at Luthrie westwards, and on through the barony of Balenbreich to Newburgh. The length of the former in the parish is 2 miles 450 yards, and of the latter 1 mile 160 yards.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATE.-The parish church, which is a new and handsome edifice, was first opened for public worship on the 16th December 1832. It is situated on a small eminence above the village of Luthrie, near to the greater part of the population, and not above two miles from the most distant. It was built to contain 252 sittings. These were divided among the heritors according to their valued rents, and the division was, sanctioned by the sheriff. The heritors, after having accommodated themselves with seats, gave those which remained free to their tenants, servants, and others. It would have been desirable, however, had a considerable portion of the sittings been set apart for the public ; for although there would be a sufficiency of

accommodation were every seat well filled, yet some individuals are unable to procure sittings, and there is a natural dislike to intrude to the seats which have previously been obtained by others.

LEGACY.-The late Mr George Davidson, schoolmaster of the parish, who died in 1745, bequeathed the sum of 450 merks Scots to the Session for the purpose of purchasing communion cups; and two handsome plain silver cups, which were bought with that sum, are now used at the communion service.

A stable has been erected near the church for the horses of those who choose to ride, or to come to church in their conveyances, and a gig-house has been built for the accommodation of the minister.

The manse and offices were built in 1816, and are suitable and commodious. They are pleasantly situated, but at an extremity of the parish, and at the distance of a mile from the church.

There is no Dissenting chapel in the parish. The number of families belonging to the Established Church is 84, and the number of individuals of all ages belonging to the Established Church is 380. The number of families of Dissenters is 10. The number of individuals of all ages of Dissenters is 45. Divine service at the Established Church is generally well attended. The number of communicants at the Established Church, taking the average of the last seven years, is 198.

This parish has contributed liberally for religious and charitable purposes.

EDUCATION.-The parochial school is the only one in the parish. The usual branches of education are taught in it and in a manner which reflects credit upon Mr Miller, the present schoolmaster, as being an able, diligent, and successful teacher. The school is generally attended in the winter months by about 65, and in the summer by about 50. The fees per quarter for English reading are 2s., and for writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, and mathematics, 6d. each additional, and for Latin 5s. The children usually enter school at from four to six years of age, and leave it at from ten to thirteen. The people in general are alive to the benefits of education, and parents, in particular, are very desirous to procure a good education for their families. When, from poverty, any are unable to do so, the session is always ready to assist them, and there is none in the parish above eight years of age who cannot read. The schoolmaster has the legal accommodations of a dwelling-house, school-room, and garden. He has the maximum salary, school fees amounting to about L. 18 per annum, and the yearly interest of L. 2000 merks Scots.

POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS.-The average number of persons receiving regular parochial aid is 5. They receive according to their circumstances, each usually from 1s. to 1s.6d. per week,

and each family a cart-load of coals at the beginning of winter. Occasional aid is always afforded to a few, and to some there is given merely a cart-load of coals during the year. The tenants and resident proprietors give the driving of all the coals gratis.

ALEHOUSES- There is only one in the parish, which is evidently necessary and quite sufficient for the accommodation of the public

Rev. Alexander Lawson (November 1838)