

KENNOWAY PARISH

PAROCHIAL REGISTER:.-The date of the earliest entry in the parochial register, is supposed to be in 1634. The figures after anno at the top of the page have been removed through decay of the paper; but an entry, about half way down the same page, bearing the date 1635, is perfectly distinct. After this, on a subsequent page, comes July 1638 ; and though the book in which these dates are found, is not in a state of very good preservation, yet the details of the transactions of the kirk-session, given with great minuteness, and often showing an extreme degree of vigilance and rigour in the exercise of authority, may be gathered from the last-mentioned date, with few, if any exceptions, continuously down to December 1675. From this time, however, to 1690, a period of about fifteen years, there is an entire blank ; and the same thing occurs between 1755 and 1761. From this last date, up to the present time, the records are entire. What could have occasioned the blanks above referred to, it is impossible to say determinately : but the probability is, that the minutes had been originally kept, and that the books which contained them have been lost : for the volumes preserved are filled with minutes of transactions in regular succession, and the blanks occur in both cases between the conclusion of one volume and the commencement of another.

POPULATION.

In the former Statistical Account of the parish, written in 1793, it is remarked, that the number of the people and houses seems to have been nearly the same for centuries; and in regard to the village of Kennoway, containing about one-half of the whole inhabitants, it is observed, that " very few houses were known to have been built on a new foundation." The population of the parish at that time, seems to have amounted to nearly 1300.

Within the last forty years, however, the village and parish, retaining nearly the same relative proportion in point of numbers, have made a very considerable increase of their population. In the village many new feus on ninety-nine years leases have been obtained and built on, principally along a new section of the line of road leading this way from Kirkcaldy to Cupar :- and in other parts of the parish, the number of dwelling-houses has been gradually enlarged, chiefly in the same way.

The increase of population adverted to has been owing principally, it is presumed, to the gradually improving condition of this part of the country in general; and may, perhaps, be in some measure assigned to the establishment and growing prosperity of several manufactories in the near neighbourhood. A number of individuals find constant work at Cameron Distillery, and the Haugh Spinning-mill, which are both in Markinch parish ; and the extensive manufacture of linens carried on, by wealthy individuals and companies, in most of the surrounding district, supplies the weavers, of whom there are a great many here, with regular employment.

The amount of population at each census, taken at different periods under the direction of Parliament, is as follows

1801	1466
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1811	1517
1821	1649
1831	1721*

*This number of 1721, ought to have been increased, we presume to think, by 234, the amount of population on the lands of Dalguinch, etc., in the west end of the parish, which are an annexation quoad sacra to Markinch. The census of population by order of Government is unquestionably a purely civil matter ; and, therefore, the whole of the inhabitants of the parish quoad civilia, ought to have been stated: -the more especially as the population on the lands of Duniface, in Markinch parish, which are an annexation quoad sacra to Kennoway, was also included in the Markinch lists.

It is worthy of notice that, at the time of this last census, the number of males exceeded that of females by 9 ; there being of the former 865, and of the latter 856.

Of the population residing in villages, there were at the same time in that of Kennoway, 862 ; in that of Star, 232 ; and in that of Baneton, 125; making in all 1219; and in the country there were 502.

The average of baptisms for these last five years may be stated at	45
deaths	29
marriages	14
The number of families in the parish at last census was	409
The average number of individuals in each family was	4 1/5
Number of families chiefly employed in agriculture	110
Number of families chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, or handicraft	158
All others	141
Number of professional or other educated men is	7

The number of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards, is 10, of whom only three are at present resident in the parish.

Of fatuous individuals there are 4 ; of blind, 2 ; and of deaf and dumb, 7. Of the last mentioned class, 5 belong to the same family, viz. two sons and three daughters. The family, in all, consists of three sons and four daughters, all of whom are of adult age.

Illegitimate births in the course of the last three years, 13.

CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE:- The people, in their general habits, are industrious, cleanly, and economical ; and their circumstances are, for the most part, comfortable. In behaviour, the

great bulk of them are worthy of commendation, as being sober, peaceable, decorous, and upright. Some few exceptions have, no doubt, always existed ; and these have of late years, it is to be feared, been very considerably increased. Drunken brawls, and acts of wanton mischief, committed during the night by persons under the excitement of spirituous liquors, have, for a few years past, been frequent and outrageous beyond all former precedent in the history of the place; and at this moment, a general movement is making by the respectable part of the community, to put an end, if possible, to such things, by having the perpetrators of them uniformly prosecuted and punished ;-to take steps towards which, individuals who have been aggrieved have hitherto felt a great reluctance. The grand remedy, if it could be applied, would be to lay a restriction on the improper use of ardent spirits. Drunkenness is certainly the prevailing vice amongst us; and is the originator, or at least inciting cause, to almost every mischief. Imprisonment for violent assault under its influence has of late been in two instances inflicted. " A considerable proportion of the inhabitants of this parish," says a discerning and impartial observer, who has lived long amongst them, the Rev. Dr Fraser, " appear to me to discover their own share of Scottish acuteness and intelligence. I have often seen evidence also of their readiness to assist each other particularly by personal service, in times of affliction."

MANUFACTURES.-Besides two grinding-mills for oats and barley in the parish, there is also a lint-mill for scutching flax, a plashmill for washing yarn, and a spinning-mill for spinning tow. The three last-mentioned are on a very small scale, employing together not more than 18 or 20 hands. All the mills are driven by water.

At the time when the former Statistical Account was written, it is remarked, that there was then, " a considerable quantity of coarse linen made in the parish, which was sold brown ; and some also of a better quality, which was bleached and sold at the summer markets in the neighbourhood." This species of goods was commonly known by the name of Silesias, and there were not a few individuals in this place who, in a small way, were engaged in the manufacture of them. The trade was for a long time brisk and profitable, but it entirely failed on the introduction of millspinning, through the consequent great reduction on the price of manufactured goods.

There are still a great many weavers in the parish, not fewer than 300 male and female, connected with whom, at least 150 hands more, find employment as winders. But the business now is all transacted by agencies, on account of wealthy manufacturing companies or individuals in the surrounding district. There are none in this parish.

The species of goods now manufactured are dowlas sheetings of various widths, from three yards and under, Tweels, and a few diapers and Darlingtons. The quality varies from 700 to 1000 dowlas. The number of spindles woven in a year may be stated at 68,000 ; and the average wage of each weaver at 7s. a week: but a good and diligent worker will, without difficulty, make twice that sum.

There are not fewer than 69 hands employed as shoemakers in the parish. The produce of their joint labour is of course much more than is requisite for meeting the wants of the neighbourhood

; and the surplus is, for the most part, carried to the adjacent market-towns, chiefly to Dundee, to supply the shoe-shops. A small proportion is also disposed of at the principal fairs in the neighbourhood.

REED SOCIETY;.-The operative weavers of Kennoway, or at least the great majority of them, sensible of the advantages that might be derived from having the use of an extensive and proper assortment of reeds ; after having been, for a number of years, members of a society in the neighbourhood, instituted for promoting this object-about three years ago formed themselves into an association for the same purpose, denominated the " Kennoway Reed Society." The sole object of this society is to serve its members with reeds of any given order and breadth. It is open at all times for the admission of workmen properly qualified and recommended, who are of good character, and living within two miles of the village of Kennoway. The entry-money is 3s. 6d. for one share, and a member may hold as many shares as he pleases. A certain rate is paid for the use of each reed, according to the description it is of, and according to the amount of spindles it is employed in the weaving of.

This society is found to be of great benefit to its members. Of these, there are 122, holding in all 199 shares. The number of reeds which the society is possessed of, is 560 ; the average price of each of which, when new, might be 5s.

PAROCHIAL ECONOMY

MARKET-TOWN..-There are no market-towns in the parish, but the access to Kirkcaldy and Cupar is easy, each being about nine miles distant; the former in a south-westerly, and the latter in a northeasterly direction. The means of communication, in every part of the parish, are easy, the roads being in general good. Of these, there are about two miles of turnpike.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATE..-The situation of the parish church in the village of Kennoway, renders it convenient for by far the greater part of the population ; there being in that village, and within the compass of about half a mile around it, upwards of 1100 inhabitants. The distance of the church from the most remote extremities of the parish is between two and three miles. The age of the church must, from its structure, and the height to which the surrounding burying-ground has accumulated above its foundation, be very great; but there are no means of ascertaining the exact period at which it was built. The lintel of a door, which is supposed to be of the same date with an addition that had been made to the original edifice, has 1619 inscribed on it. The present state of repair of the church, however, notwithstanding its great age, is exceedingly good. Perhaps it is to be regretted, considering its size, as compared with the Population, that it is so good ; and that such a sum as nearly L. 200 was expended in putting it into its present comfortable state, so lately as in the summer of 1832. The number of sittings in it is 463; while the number of families belonging to the Establishment in the parish is 238; and that

of individuals of all ages 1027. The number of names on the communion roll at present is 507, from which, if 28 be deducted for the old and infirm, who cannot attend church, there is left still the number 479. This exceeds the number of sittings in the church by 16. There are no free sittings.

An excellent and commodious new manse, with offices and garden wall, was built in 1833, on a new and very eligible site, about five minutes walk from the church.

There are two Seceding congregations in the parish, the places of worship of which are both also in the village of Kennoway. An unpopular settlement about the middle of last century gave occasion to the erection of the elder of these two congregations, which is connected with the United Associate Secession Synod. The present minister of this congregation, who was ordained to his charge, upwards of forty-two years ago, is the learned and pious Rev. Donald Fraser, D. D., well known as the biographer of the Erskines, two of the fathers of the Secession, and as the author of other popular works. In his congregation, by particulars which he kindly furnished for this account, the number of members is 428; besides whom, there are of the young with a few other hearers, about 290. It is to be noticed, however, that about one-third of the whole reside within the bounds of other parishes. The amount of stipend is L. 120, with a comfortable dwelling-house and garden.

The other Seceding congregation in the parish, which is in connexion with the Original Burgher Synod, has been since 1800. The number of its members is under 200, of whom about one-half reside within the parish. This congregation is at present without a minister; but the stipend of the one who lately left them for another situation was L. 75, with a dwelling-house and small garden.

There are, besides those attached to these two congregations of Seceders, a very few individuals within the parish, belonging to the Relief and Independent denominations. The proportion which the whole number of Seceders and Dissenters taken together, bears to the number of those attached to the Established Church, is very nearly as 19 to 23. Among all denominations, the places of worship are in general well attended.

EDUCATION:.-Besides the Parochial School, which is attended on an average, by 120 scholars, and is most efficiently taught, there are two unendowed schools in the parish, one of which is a female one :-and the children in the village of Star, in the West end of the parish, enjoy the benefit of a school which is taught just beyond the boundary. There are thus very few who can be said to be inconveniently situated with respect to the means of education. The parochial teacher has the maximum salary, with the legal accommodations. The amount of his school fees may be between L. 30 and L. 40.

The list of fees for the parochial school is as under : English reading, 2s. 6d. per quarter; reading and writing, 3s. per do.; arithmetic, 4s. ; Latin and other branches, 5s.

POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS;.-The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 22 ; and the sum allotted to each per calendar month varies from 2s. 6d. to 8s. 8d. The average annual amount of contributions, for the last five years, for the relief of the poor, has been L. 77 ; of which, L. 34 have been collected at the church door; L. 5 have come from mortcloth and marriage dues; and the remainder has been obtained by voluntary assessment of the heritors.

For a considerable number of years past, a sum of between L. 30 and L. 40 has been raised in addition to the above, by extraordinary collections at the doors of the church and meetinghouses, and by donations from non-resident heritors. for the purpose of distributing about new-year time, amongst individuals and families of the poorer class, but who are not generally on the Poor's roll, a quantity of coals and meal, and occasionally some other little necessary. By help of this fund also, for several years past, the spinning of flax has been obtained for some of the old People, who can find no other employment. Dressed flax, is at Present kindly supplied, as needed, by a mill-spinner in the neighbourhood, who allows 6d. per spindle for spinning it. To this the fund adds another 6d., so that the spinner receives 1s. for her work, while the fund loses 6d. on each spindle. The sum earned in this way, by even a good spinner, is very small; but whatever it may amount to, it is the fruit of labour, and it is prized as such.

INNS and ALEHOUSES:.-There are no less than 13 houses in the parish licensed to sell spirituous liquors and ales. if so many can make profits by such a traffic, there is great reason to fear, that,by far too much money is spent in them, and that an increase of intemperance must be the result. The unnecessary multiplication of such places of resort is much to be deprecated; for, besides affording facilities to those who are already addicted to drinking, it sets additional and powerful temptation to the worst of all vices, in the way of those who are sober and industrious.

January 1838 (Rev David Bell)