

# KINGLASSIE PARISH

**POPULATION.** The official report of Dr Webster, eighty years ago, states that the total number of inhabitants then amounted to 998. The Parliamentary census of 1821 represents the population at 1027; that at 1831 at 958, of whom there are 488 males, and 470 females. According to this last return, there are 224 families resident under 198 roofs. Of those families, 66 are employed in agriculture; 153 in manufactures, trade, and handicraft; and 5 in other avocations. It may not be irrelevant to mention, that during a course of pastoral visitation, which was made in the months of February and March of the present year, when a minute numerical survey was taken, the total population was ascertained to be 1050 souls. Of that number, 755 are above twelve years of age, and 295 have not yet reached that period.

**CHARACTER AND HABITS OF THE PEOPLE.**-Sobriety, industry, and respect for religion are qualities, which, with few exceptions, mark the great mass of the population. Considerable attention is paid to neatness of dress and cleanliness of personal appearance. And in such estimation is neatness of apparel held, that the want of raiment equal in quality to that of a next door neighbour is, in some instances, viewed as a valid apology for absence from church, not only when there exists no decided disinclination, but, on the contrary, a seeming anxiety to attend. While a commendable regard to personal and domestic spruceness is often observable, yet some of those families and individuals occasionally discover a neglect of various essential branches of comfort and convenience. Now and then the stagnant puddle and the nauseous dunghill form a striking contrast to the interior aspect of the contiguous dwelling.- On old handsel Monday, there is a general cessation of professional labour; neighbourly visits are interchanged, and raffles are practised. During the three years preceding the 1st June last, the number of illegitimate births in the parish was 9.

**VILLAGE AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.**- The only village in the parish is that of Kinglassie, whose present population is 375. Its inhabitants consist principally of weavers, and other handicraft tradesmen. About twenty-four looms are now in use, several of which are plied by females. The comparatively small income arising from that occupation induced, of late years, a considerable proportion of men to exchange it for agricultural employments. There are 3 public-houses, and the same number of small grocery shops. Brewing of small-beer, ale, and porter is regularly carried on. Bread and butcher-meat are constantly supplied by professional tradesmen. Two fairs occur in the course of the year; one on the third Wednesday of May, old style; the other on the Thursday immediately preceding Michaelmas, old style. An agricultural association, formed upwards of twenty years ago, holds its annual meeting here in the month of August. It consists of about forty practical farmers; and its objects are countenanced by the membership of several landed proprietors. Last season there were exhibited 110 head of cattle and 43 horses.

The village lies about six miles to the northward of Kirkcaldy, which is the post-town. Communication with that burgh is enjoyed by means of several individuals, whose business as carriers repeatedly leads them thither in the course of the week. Easy access to metal has, in connection with other circumstances, produced a very material improvement on the state of the principal roads. But although much has been done in this respect, it must be confessed, that not a

little remains unaccomplished. There are no tollbars within the parochial precincts. The east end of the parish is intersected by the road leading from Kirkaldy to Cupar, on which coaches betwixt Edinburgh and Dundee run daily. It has lately been also traversed regularly by a coach betwixt the metropolis and Perth. There are about twelve small stone bridges.

**ECCLESIASTICAL STATE**-The only place of public worship is the parish church. Situated within a mile of the south-west boundary, and distant several miles from a considerable proportion of the population, its locality subjects not a few to great inconvenience. But although some parishioners are so remote as nearly five miles; yet as the village, where the church is placed, contains a third of the Population, and as its immediate vicinity is interspersed with several agricultural hamlets, the ecclesiastical edifice may, upon the whole, be viewed as standing in the most eligible spot. The exterior of the fabric has a heavy appearance, being nearly 90 feet long, and of very subordinate and disproportionate dimensions in height and breadth. The east gable, and part of the contiguous side walls are supposed to have stood for at least two centuries. The remainder was rebuilt in 1773, when the whole received a new roof. For many subsequent years, however, the church continued with unplastered walls, and without any ceiling. About fifteen years ago, the inside underwent such repairs as have rendered it a very comfortable place of worship. There are sittings for nearly 350. Fully four-fifths of the people professedly belong to the Established Church. Of these about 350 are communicants. The dissenting or seceding portion of the population are generally connected either with the United Secession church, or with the religious denomination adhering to the Associate Synod of Original Seceders. A very limited number are of the Relief and Baptist persuasions. The manse, which is hard by the church, was built in 1774, and was repaired in 1818.

The parochial register of 1682 acknowledges the receipt of four silver communion cups as the donation of Mr Melvill, formerly minister of this parish. Those cups are still used in the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Each bears the following inscription:- " Haec quatuor pocula ejusdem ponderis et mensurae ecclesiae de Kinglassie sacrauit Mr Thomas Melvill non ita, pridem pastor ibidem."

**EDUCATION**.-The parochial school is situated in the village. Besides the maximum salary, amounting to L. 34, 4s. 41/2d., along with a dwelling-house and garden, the schoolmaster annually receives six bolls of oats, the bequest of an ancient proprietor. This seminary is at present attended by about 100 scholars. The ordinary branches of education, including English grammar and the elementary principles of general knowledge, are taught with diligence and ability. Means of instruction in mathematics and classical learning are also furnished. The principles of revealed religion are sedulously instilled. Forty are employed in arithmetic, 20 more are learning to write. The teacher may receive about L.34 a-year of fees. The village has also a small female school, in which knitting and sewing are taught for a very moderate sum.

On the southern boundary, there is a school, which is pretty well attended. Its erection proceeded from the kindness of Mr Ferguson of Raith, who has allotted to its teacher a free dwelling house and garden, with a yearly pecuniary allowance.

So commendably desirous are parents of furnishing their children with the means of education, that there is hardly an instance in which an individual beyond six years of age is unable to read

more or less accurately. To the same praiseworthy feeling, is to be ascribed the comparatively small number among the youthful portion of the population, altogether unskilled in the arts of writing and arithmetic. Children are usually sent to school about five years of age ; although in several instances, distance of locality and badness of roads forbid that early initiation. But in these, and other cases, some elementary training is for the most part practised at home.

A Sabbath school in the village is numerously attended, and judiciously conducted.

June 1836 ( Rev J M Cunnyngame )