

KIRKCALDY PARISH

CIVIL HISTORY

No historical account of this town has ever been published. Nor do the burgh records throw any light on its earlier history, It seems, however, to have been a place of considerable importance at a very remote period. The obscurity of antiquity conceals what accident or causes led the Culdees to plant an establishment here; and the date of these Christians coming to occupy this as one of their stations is unknown. Of the existence of one of their houses here, no reasonable doubt can be entertained. Its suppression, or at least it being brought into subjection to the religious establishment at Dunfermline, under which it subsequently continued for a long time, very probably took place in the earlier part of the twelfth century. David I., before the middle of that century, introduced thirteen English monks from Canterbury, belonging to the order of St Benedict, into the Culdee establishment at Dunfermline: and thus brought it under the dominion of the Pope. Such an innovation awakened the alarm of the Culdees, by threatening their independence with overthrow. To reconcile them to the change, and to divert their attention from the danger of their contemplated overthrow, the king elevated the priory of Dunfermline to the rank of an abbey; and to flatter them still farther, it is said he, at the same time, suppressed the Culdees of Kirkcaldy, or made them subordinate to, and dependent on, the newly erected abbey.

The first authentic notice of the town, except what is vague and general, from which the commencement of its history must be dated, is its erection into a burgh of regality in the year 1334. David II. at this date mortified Kirkcaldy to the abbot of Dunfermline, and his successors. For more than a century, it was held by this monastery, and used in all probability as the principal sea-port of Dunfermline. In 1450, the commendator and convent of Dunfermline, " gave, granted, and disposed to the bailies and community of the burgh of Kirkcaldy, then present, and their successors, for ever, the burgh, the harbour of the same, and all burgage farms of the said burgh, with the small customs, lie tolls, stallages, with courts and their issues; also common pasture within the muir of Kirkcaldy, and pertinents thereof, as freely in all and by every respect as the burgesses of the burgh of Dunfermline have enjoyed and possessed." Not long after this disposition was granted, the holding of the burgh was changed. From being one of the burghs of the lordship of Dunfermline, it was erected into a free royal burgh, with all the privileges of other royal burghs. The original charter having been lost, the date of the royal burgh's erection is unknown. Charles I. granted a charter of confirmation to Kirkcaldy in 1644, ratifying all its former rights and immunities; and erecting it de novo, into a " new free burgh royal," with enlarged powers and privileges. Prior to the granting of this charter, the magistracy consisted of two bailies and a treasurer, but the charter of Charles gave power to choose " a provost, bailies, a dean of guild, and a treasurer, for administration of justice, and government of the burgh." The provost has also the title of admiral.

HISTORICAL NOTICES.- This town suffered severely during the civil war that followed the contest between the English Parliament and Charles I. ; and also in the struggle maintained by the Covenanters in Scotland. It appears from a statement in the burgh records, that no less than

94 vessels belonging to this port, of the value of L.53,000 Sterling, were lost at sea, or taken by the enemy, between the beginning of the war and the restoration. The public authorities and inhabitants of Kirkcaldy espoused the cause of the Parliament, and opposed the Royalists.

The cause of the Covenanters also was well supported here. The presbytery records show, that the cause was popular in the district, and that the covenant was very generally subscribed. This parish added a large force to the Covenanters, as may be inferred from the circumstance, that the battle of Kilsyth alone, in 1645 is said to have left 200 widows in the town. The general feeling may be gathered from the session records, in which we find "runaways from their cullors warnit," and "declaired contumacious." Sums were allowed from the poor's funds "for horses to cary woundit men," and to be given to "woundit men." On the margins of both the presbytery and session records, special notice is taken of the "batell of Kilsyth." :

PAROCHIAL REGISTERS; Five classes of registers are preserved, viz. minutes of session, registers of proclamations and marriages, of births and baptisms, of deaths and burials, and accounts of the collections and disbursements for the poor. The first and the last of these are nearly entire, and in a good state of preservation; the other three are much mutilated. The oldest volume of the session records commences with January 1614, and the same volume contains, besides the minutes of session, a register of baptisms and marriages, commencing with the same date. The minutes of session from 1645 to 1663 are wanting. In consequence of leaves being torn away at the beginning of a volume, the minutes for the year 1632 are lost. With these exceptions, the minutes from 1614 are complete and well kept. There are duplicates for considerable periods, the scroll copy of the minutes having been preserved.

POPULATION; No traces remain of any census of this parish having been taken prior to 1755 ; but the parochial registers furnish data upon which we may approximate at least to the amount of the population at a much earlier date. The births, annually registered, on an average during the ten years commencing with 1614 were 115. This number is much larger than the register has annually received for many years past. The practice of registration was more general then, we apprehend, than it is at present; for the injury done to the interests of children by the inattention of parents to this duty is matter for regret. If we suppose the population to have been as 35 to 1 of the births, it must have been at this period 4025. Its rapid increase after this date may be inferred from the facts, that the church required to be enlarged in 1643, and in 1650 Abbotshall was disjoined from Kirkcaldy, and a new church was erected. From 1640 to 1650, the average of births was 174, making the population 6090; This, it will be observed, included the present parish of Abbotshall, the population of which, together with that of Kirkcaldy, is at present about 10,000. This gives an idea of the comparative size and importance of this parish, at dates two centuries distant. The trade of the town was nearly annihilated, and the number of its inhabitants was greatly reduced during the forty years that intervened between the death of Charles I. and the Revolution. The population has been gradually increasing for a century past.

Population in 1755	2296
1795	2673

1801	3248
1811	3747
1821	4452
1831	5034

At the time of taking the census there was no apparent cause for any unusual influx or decrease in the population of this parish. Very few have emigrated of late years from this place.

Number of families in the parish, 1057

Houses, or parts of houses usually occupied by one family that are empty, 87

Houses building. 5

No register of deaths is kept; but the average number of burials annually in the church-yard during the last ten years, 82 1/10

This must be rather under than above the number of deaths in the parish.

No noble family has a residence within the parish, and very few others, except annuitants, that live upon their fortunes independently of business. There are only two landed proprietors whose yearly incomes from their land within the parish exceed L.100, viz. James Townsend Oswald, Esq. of Dunnikier, and John Fergus, Esq. of Strathore. The property of Mr. Fergus, however, lies chiefly in adjoining parishes.

A spirit of enterprise, directed and regulated by that prudent caution which naturally accompanies the possession and employment of real capital in business, pervades this manufacturing and commercial community, and prevents the town from being visited. with those sudden and ruinous convulsions, which the rashness of mere speculators, whom injurious facilities of obtaining credit raise up and sustain for a time, too frequently brings upon other trading districts. The habits and conduct of the merchants and manufacturers, who are commonly capitalists to a greater extent than is general throughout the country, in the management of their business, and the nature of the trade itself, give a steadiness to the various branches of industry, and exercise a very salutary influence on the community generally.

The demoralizing practice of smuggling, chiefly from Holland, prevailed here at one time to a great extent. It has now almost entirely disappeared of late years, the officers have never detected smuggling, except, and this very seldom, in the case of small craft from France, which sometimes bring along with their cargoes of fruit, larger quantities of brandy than the crew may be thought to require as sea-store.

MANUFACTURES.- The capital of the burgesses seems at one time to have been chiefly employed in shipping. This interest received a shock, during the civil war in the reign of Charles I., which effected the prosperity of the town for a century and a half. After the shipping interests declined, and were destroyed, manufactures were introduced. With the increase and prosperity of manufactures, the shipping of the port has been revived, and the town, from the union of the shipping and manufacturing interests, now numbers among its inhabitants not a few, who are entitled to the honourable appellation of British merchants, and occupy no mean place among them, whether we regard the capital they employ, the spirit of enterprise they manifest, or the extent of their business.

The principal trade of the town is the manufacture of various descriptions of linen, with the collateral branches of flax-spinning, bleaching, and machine-making. This trade was probably introduced from Holland and Flanders about the time of the Revolution, or early in the last century. It was long very limited. It made little progress till after the middle of the last century, as the following facts demonstrate. In 1733, no more than 177,740 yards of linen were manufactured in this district, including Ahbotshall, Dysart, Leslie, &c. It had increased in 1743 to 316,550 yards, the value of which was L.11,000. The infancy of the trade, the want of facilities for extending it, and the advancement it made during these ten years, may be seen in the anxiety and care manifested by the authorities to afford it all possible encouragement. In 1739, " the town-council, considering the great benefit the town may receive by an annual market for linen-cloth and their goods, they appoint the same to be held on the first Wednesday of July, and to be custom-free for three years." In the same year, " the council, considering how much it will be for the benefit of the town and country that a heckler of lint be established they therefore unanimously resolve to make application to the trustees that a heckler be settled here with such a salary and under such regulations as the trustees judge proper." About the same time advantages were held out to bleachers and encouragement was given them to settle in the neighbourhood. The goods manufactured at this time consisted chiefly of linen checks of inferior quality which were commonly sold to Glasgow merchants for exportation; and linen handkerchiefs checks and a coarse description of ticks not now manufactured; all for the home trade. The goods were conveyed by the manufacturers on horse back to the various towns in Scotland and were mostly sold at fairs.

Towards the end of the last century a great stimulus was given , to the linen trade of Kirkcaldy by the judgment and energy of Mr James Fergus, a name justly associated with the extension and prosperity of the trade of the town. He set himself to produce ticking for the home-trade in England. After he had discovered the tweel, and had provided materials for making this fabric of the first quality, he was unable to find weavers who could give the cloth the requisite stiffness and smoothness. The difficulty was at last overcome by a weaver discovering the effect of what is still denominated " the open stroke." The effect of this stroke in the weaving upon the cloth is, in the language of a workman, to make it as smooth as a " buik leaf." This opened up a new trade, and ticking is still the staple article in the manufactures of Kirkcaldy. Mixed cotton and linen-checks were made for the same market ; they were produced in large quantities, and continued to be sold with profit till they were superseded by the cheaper and more showy article of cotton. Besides ticks, there are now manufactured in the town, drills, dowlas, sheetings, ducks, and sail-cloth.

It was difficult at one time for manufacturers to extend their business, in consequence of being obliged to provide houses for their weavers. Their trade was proportionate to the number of weavers they could accommodate. This practice is not yet altogether done away, but weavers now generally find houses for themselves, and seek after manufacturers who are willing to employ them. Females began to weave here between forty and fifty years ago: and they now form a considerable proportion of the number employed.

The trade is carried on chiefly by eight manufacturing houses or establishments. Besides these, there are a few individuals who occasionally make webs. The manufacturers employ 1100 weavers. Of this number 113 work in two factories, erected for the manufacture of canvas. This branch of trade was introduced in 1811; and the manufacturers of sailcloth here generally obtain a share of government contracts for the navy. Only 119 weavers, exclusive of the factory workmen, are accommodated with looms within the parish. Accordingly, many weavers in the adjoining parishes and surrounding villages, are employed by the manufacturers of Kirkcaldy. The average earning of weavers is 6s. 6d. per week ; and the price of weaving is from one-fifth to two-ninths of the value of the goods when they are ready for the market. The gross value of the linens annually manufactured within the burgh may be estimated at L.80,000. Of the whole manufactures in the town, in the extended sense already explained, including the Links and Pathhead, two fifths are said to be produced within the burgh; so that the value of the various descriptions of linen goods annually manufactured in the town may be reckoned at not less than L.200,000. Besides the home trade in England and Scotland, these linens find markets in Canada, the United States, South America, the West Indies, and Australia.

The manufactures have created an extensive trade in bleaching and dyeing. Some manufacturers dye their own yarns, others employ public dyers. There are only two bleach fields in the parish, one of them is doing very little business; but there are other five in different parts of the county, belonging to merchants and manufacturers in the burgh. The yearly receipts for bleaching yarns at these seven bleachfields amount to fully L.30,000.

Previous to the introduction of mill-spun yarn, manufacturers got their flax dressed in the town, and sent it to agents throughout the country, to be given out to women to be spun. Inferior yarns were imported in large quantities from Germany and Prussia. Hand-spun yarns were also brought from Ireland, and parcels were occasionally procured from the north of Scotland. The difficulty of obtaining supplies of yarn was so great, that orders for goods had often to be refused. Yarns continued to be imported till within the last ten years.

Cotton spinning was carried on here till about 1805. It was on a very limited scale however, as may be inferred from the fact, that neither steam nor water power was ever applied to it.

Flax-spinning, by machinery, was introduced into this neighbourhood from Darlington about 1793. At first the frames were small, and were driven by the hand. In 1807, a steam-engine of six horse-power was applied to flax-spinning. The price of mill spinning after its introduction was from 1s. to 2s. per spyndle ; at present it is not more than 3d. to 5d., and the price of a spyndle of yarn used in the common manufacture of the district, is from 1s. 6d. to 2s.. At present a girl will attend fifty spindles, and will produce 25 spyndles of yarn per day. About forty years ago a girl attended 24 spindles, and produced: seven spyndles per day. Mills are now erected in Kirkcaldy

or the neighbourhood, belonging to merchants and manufacturers within the burgh, which contain 13000 spindles, the cost of erecting which must have been L.90,000, and they will produce 6000 spindles of yarn per day. Besides supplying the manufacturers in the district, the spinners now export large quantities of linen yarns to France. Notwithstanding the difficulties interposed by the additional import duties on linen yarns lately imposed by the French government, the trade with France is still carried on. The yarns annually exported for the previous two years, from Kirkcaldy, may be estimated at about 700 tons, the value of which will be upwards of L.60,000.

The progress and prosperity of flax-spinning called for engineers and machine-makers, consequently a large and important branch of this trade has recently sprung up. There are in the parish three works, engaged chiefly in making steam-engines, and flax-spinning machines, in executing mill-wright work, and in founding iron and brass. In these three works 200 men, at an average wage of 15s. per week, are employed. The mills in the district have not furnished sufficient employment for these establishments, especially during the depression of late years; but extensive orders have been executed in them for Ireland, the continent of Europe, and the British colonies. The capital invested in these works will amount to L.21,000 ; and steam-engines, equal to twenty horses power, are constantly employed in them.

PAROCHIAL ECONOMY. : Markets. -Kirkcaldy is the market-town, not of the parish only, but of an extensive district. Retail dealers in the surrounding towns and villages are supplied with goods by Kirkcaldy merchants. This creates business for carriers, who frequent the town chiefly on Tuesdays and Fridays, and cause considerable bustle on the streets. A corn-market is held on Saturday. It was at one time only a sample market, and most of the buyers came from Leith. After the sales, the grain was shipped at the ports along the coast most convenient for sellers. The town-council erected a stock-market, and opened it for business in 1827. Not only is the grain grown in the neighbourhood mostly sold in this market, but large quantities are brought to it from within a circuit of fourteen or sixteen miles. The attendance of merchants belonging to the burgh, and buyers from other places, is numerous; and prices are generally a shade higher here than in any other market in Fife. The market was unpopular at first, and not a third part of the grain raised in the district was brought to it for some years after it was opened. When the fact came to be known that better prices were obtained when grain was sold in stock than when sold by sample, the prejudices of the sellers were removed, grain was brought from more distant places, and the quantity offered weekly for sale increased, so that this has now become the leading corn market in the county. About 25,000 quarters of grain are annually sold in the Kirkcaldy stock market; and 10,000 quarters more are annually sold in the market by sample. The success of this market has operated favourably on other branches of business, by augmenting the number of weekly visitors, and adding not a little to the circulation of money in the town. In this as in other stock markets, all sales are for ready money, and the effect of this upon the retail trade in the town is beneficial. The market-dues are 1 1/2d. per quarter, and no shore dues are charged on market grain, if it be shipped within fourteen days after it is sold.

Few places in Scotland have a better flesh-market. Besides furnishing the town and neighbourhood with a regular supply of superior butcher meat, the fleshers have been in the

practice for some years of sending large quantities of meat, of all descriptions, to the London and Glasgow markets. No regular fishers are resident here. The town is supplied with fish from Buckhaven and other villages on the south coast of Fife. The fish is commonly carried by land, though boats occasionally expose fish for sale on the beach; but the vicinity of Edinburgh has a tendency to keep up the price of this article of food in Kirkcaldy.

There are a number of large and handsome shops in the town, in some of which there is carried on an extensive wholesale and retail trade. In this respect a great change has taken place within the last fifty years. It was not uncommon in the end of last century for grocers, drapers, and other merchants from Edinburgh and Leith to make regular calls on families here for orders, and many families were supplied with goods in this way. About the same time oatmeal was regularly imported into the parish for consumption from Mid-Lothian, whereas now great quantities of grain are constantly exported for the Edinburgh market.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.- The town has a post-office, and the letters are delivered twice a day. Daily coaches either start from the town, or pass through it, to Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, St Andrews, and Glasgow. A steam-boat constantly plies the ferry between Newhaven and Kirkcaldy. During the summer, it makes eight passages, affording four opportunities of crossing from each side; during the winter months, there are only six passages. A railway is, at present, projected from Lochgelly colliery to the town and harbour of Kirkcaldy, a distance of eight miles; and notices have been served of application being to be made to the first session of Parliament for a bill giving power to the shareholders to carry this railway through.

The collector of excise for Fife and Kinross has his office in Kirkcaldy. The revenue realized from the excise-duties within the bounds of this collection amounted last year to L. 167,420. In 1819, it was L.95,700. This increase is chiefly owing to the duty on spirits sent to England being now paid in Scotland, whereas, prior to 1826, this duty was paid in England. The increase would have been L.40,000 more, had not the duties on beer, candles, tiles, leather, and salt been repealed since 1819.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATE.-The parish church stands upon the rising ground to the north of the High Street, near the middle of the town, a convenient situation for the population. It was erected in 1807. It is large and handsome, and Gothic in its style. It is oblong, with the pulpit at the end of it, and contains 1500 sittings. The fitting up and finish of its interior are chaste, without any superfluity of ornament; and it has an air or elegance superior to what is commonly met with in churches in Scotland. The building, from its style and elevated situation, would be an ornament to the town, were its architectural effect not destroyed by part of an old tower being attached to the west end of it, which is not only in itself devoid of beauty, but is destitute of historical interest, and even of the common attraction of a ruin, which, in the estimation of antiquarians, might have justified its preservation, to deface an elegant building, and offend the eye of strangers. It must indicate to strangers either a scarcity of money, or a want of taste in the inhabitants. Its removal, and the erection of a tower or spire, which would form a prominent and

commanding object from Leith to the mouth of the Frith of Forth, have long been projected and talked of, but have hitherto been prevented, chiefly from the difficulty in raising the requisite funds.

The age of the old church was unknown. It was repaired and enlarged in 1643. It required repairs in 1806 that would have cost L.700. Instead of expending such a sum in repairs, the heritors resolved to erect a new church, if money for this purpose could be raised. The novel method adopted by the heritors to free themselves from the expense of erecting it, has done much to restrict accommodation for the parishioners in the present church. Instead of providing funds by an assessment, as law directs, they resolved to procure plans, and to ascertain, before proceeding to build, what sum could be realized by the sale of pews. After the plan of the proposed church had been exhibited for the inspection of the inhabitants, a committee of the heritors, appointed for the purpose, proceeded to sell the pews by public roup. In the articles and conditions of sale, the following clause was inserted: " in case a sum sufficient for finishing the church shall not be received from the sale of seats, it will be in the power of the heritors to adopt such other method in building the church as they shall be advised, and in that case the sale to be made in virtue of these articles to be null and void." The sale of seats realized L.3428, and the estimate for executing the plan was L.2740. It would appear, however, that by extra work, changes on the plan, law-expenses in settling disputes with the contractor, and additional work to make the church sufficient, the whole of the money was expended; for a gallery was afterwards sold to the kirk-session for L.205, 11s. and a small assessment additional was required to settle the accounts. No detailed account of these money transactions can now be found and it is commonly said, that no such account was ever rendered by those who took charge of the business.

Hitherto there have been no free sittings in the church. The kirk-session have charge of the communion or table seats containing 160 sittings, and a gallery, which they purchased with poor's money, containing 200 sittings. These sittings have hitherto been let, and the rents applied in maintaining the poor. As this exaction in parish churches has been found to be illegal, it will, in future, be discontinued, and the sittings will be free. All the rest of the church is private property, and is occupied or let by the proprietors. Great inconvenience is experienced by the letting of sittings being in the hands of a great number of proprietors. It is difficult for those who want accommodation to find out where sittings may be got and families coming to the parish often find it exceedingly difficult to get themselves accommodated, not so much because there is no room, for the church is not filled, (the average attendance will be from 1200 to 1300), but because they cannot find proprietors willing to let their seats. Pews of eight sittings have of late been selling for from L.40 to L..50. This is a virtual exclusion of the poor from the area of the church, in which these pews are situated, for they cannot acquire such pews; and those, whose worldly circumstances allow them to advance such a sum for church accommodation to their families, are often unwilling, by receiving a rent, to admit to sit beside them their less opulent neighbours.

The manse was built in 1808, and is in good repair; but the offices are in a ruinous state.

The ecclesiastical state of this parish has undergone several important changes. From an early date, and for a long period, the ministerial charge of the parish was collegiate. The Crown is patron of the first charge, and the town council were patrons of the second. Prior to 1650, one-half of the second minister's stipend was paid by the town, the other half by the heritors. This is stated in the beginning of the oldest volume of the kirk-session records: "Steipend payed to the second minister of Kirkcaldie, viz. 800 merks, equalie divyded by the toune and parosch." In 1612, the town agreed to be assessed for their proportion of the second minister's stipend. The same day, October 14, 1612, "David Huchone, baillie, declarit to the haill nybouris of the comunitie thair present, that Mr Ihone Gillespie, minister, was propollit to the towne to be ane secund minister to thame; and thairfore demandid of thame giff they wald be contentit to be taxit or thair awn gudwill for payment of the said Mr Ihone his stipend for the townis part, or uther wayis giff they wald lose the benefit of the said Mr Ihone his doctreine in default of moyen for intertenuing of him to teach and instruct thame in the word of God. Qurunto they maist willinglie agreit, approving and allowing the agrement wt the said Mr Ihone to be ane gud and ane godlie wark, and that they willinglie agreit to be stentit to that effect." After 1650, the date of the parish of Abbotshall being disjoined from Kirkcaldy, the town paid the whole of the second minister's stipend. No hesitation in appointing, and no doubts of the town's liability to support the second minister, seem to have arisen till about 1740. The difficulty of continuing to maintain this living was occasioned by a considerable portion of an augmentation, obtained by the first minister in 1737, having fallen on the town for the lands they had feued, in the feuing of which the town reserved for itself all public burdens, as if for the purpose of publishing annually, that the town had once been possessed of considerable property in land. The town's desire to reduce the ecclesiastical establishment by discontinuing the second minister, in order to relieve the funds from the burden of his stipend, was first manifested in 1741. A vacancy was prolonged at this time for upwards of two years. On various grounds, the town craved delay from the presbytery, always professing that there was "no intention to sink the said charge." The council applied to the Lord Advocate of the day for an opinion as to their liability to appoint and maintain a second minister. After reasoning on the memorial, his Lordship concludes thus: "After what has been said I must be of opinion, that the presbytery has a power, after the lapse of the patron's time, to settle a minister, and that he will be entitled to 1000 merks stipend, that has uniformly been paid to the second minister for so long a time." On receiving this opinion, the town council appointed a minister. When the next vacancy occurred in 1759, the town offered to pay the first minister a certain portion of the second minister's stipend if he would undertake to discharge the whole duties. This offer was accepted by the minister, and connived at by the presbytery, and thus the council accomplished, by an unworthy compromise, what they had previously found they could not accomplish by law. This agreement was not disturbed till the death of the incumbent in 1767. From this date, the town has retained the whole of the second minister's stipend, and the charge has remained vacant. Among the evils entailed by the sale of the town's lands, with a reservation of all the public burdens, this suppression of a ministerial charge, though by no means the smallest, is seldom heard of. The purchasers have gained by the bargain, the town council have gained, the church and the religious interests of the community have chiefly suffered.

Application was made to the presbytery in 1649, by the heritors of this parish, requesting inquiry to be made as to the necessity for erecting another church in the parish; the heritors expressing, at the same time, their willingness to provide a church and stipend for an additional minister,

should the Presbytery think this necessary. Heritors and presbyteries appear to have understood in these days the principles of church extension. The Presbytery recommended to the Commissioners of the Parliament for surrenders and tithes, " that, besydes the church wthin the burgh of Kirkcaldie, for ye present usuallie attendit be two ministers, a church should be erectit in ye landward for a distinct congregation." The proposed disjunction took place in the following year, and, the present parish of Abbotshall, which contains almost the whole of the landward part of the original parish of Kirkcaldy, was erected.

The Rev. Robert McIndoe, a member of the original Burgher Associate Synod, who had a congregation in this parish, lately returned with many of his brethren to the communion of the Church of Scotland. A new church, containing 840 sittings, has been erected for this congregation, which cost L.2000. It was opened last year. It is situated near the east end of the town, is called the East Port Church, and has the eastern part of the burgh, containing a population of 1977, assigned to it as a parish quoad sacra. The stipend is derived from seat rents and collections, and varies according to the number of members. The minister has no bond for his stipend. Besides the two churches in connection with the Establishment, there are four places of worship in the parish belonging to different religious denominations, viz. United Secession, Episcopalians, Independents, and Scottish Baptists. A few Bereans and old Independents regularly meet for worship, but neither of them has a church.

EDUCATION- There are 15 schools in the parish, attended by 773 scholars. eight of these, with 206 scholars, are taught by females; three for young ladies, who are instructed in French, music, &c; and five for girls, who are taught needlework, as well as the elementary branches of English reading, writing, and arithmetic; one of them called the Ladies' School, because it is supported and superintended by a committee of ladies, is partially maintained by subscriptions; and another is supported chiefly by the benevolence of one family. There is an infant school included in the eight, which is also Supported by subscriptions.

The heritors have never been burdened with the maintenance of a parochial school in this parish. The town's funds bear the whole expense of the burgh school. For a long period this school had two teachers, who received small salaries, and were quite independent of each other; and in order to prevent interference or opposition, they were restricted by the council to teach particular branches. The burgh school is now under the charge of Mr John Lockhart, as rector, with one assistant, He is allowed L.50 of salary, without a house, and L.40 for his assistant. There are upwards of 170 pupils attending the school. The present schoolhouse is insufficient for the accommodation of such a number ; but measures are at present in progress for erecting new and more commodious school rooms in a more open and airy situation than that of the present schoolhouse. The elementary branches are taught in all the schools, and in three of them, Greek, Latin, French, and mathematics are taught. In the burgh school, the fees vary from 3s. to 10s. per quarter, according to the branches taught. In some of the other schools the fees are higher, and in some a shade lower than the rates fixed by the council for the burgh teacher. " Scale of fees in the burgh school, fixed by the magistrates; English alone, 3s. per quarter; English with writing, 4s. 6d.; English grammar, arithmetic, and writing, 5s. 6d. ; arithmetic, rudiments of Latin,

geography, and writing, 6s. 6d.; writing alone, for one hour, 2s. 6d. The above fees include pens, and no charge is to be made for coals or janitor."

" Any branches taught besides the above, to be by special agreement with the teacher; but in no case can more than 3s. 6d. per quarter be charged, in addition to the highest rate of 6s. 6d. as above, making in all 10s. per quarter."

Robert Philp, Esq. a native of this parish, long an extensive manufacturer in the town, and an elder in the Established Church, who died in 1828, left the munificent bequest of L.74,000, the interest of which is to be expended in educating and clothing 400 children, who are " most needy," in this district. Schools have been erected and teachers appointed under this trust in Kirkcaldy, Pathhead, and Abbotshall. In Pathhead, 150 children are taught and clothed; in Kirkcaldy, 100; in Abbotshall, 100; and 50 children are sent to the parish school of Kinghorn and clothed by the trust. Children are not admissible under six years of age, and they are not allowed to remain after they are fifteen. Well-behaved scholars, on leaving school, are allowed a sum " to enable them to begin the world." At present, the funds allow them from L.7 to L.10, according to their merits. The management of the fund is committed to eighteen trustees, consisting of the two oldest justices of the peace within the burgh, the minister of Kirkcaldy, three ministers of the presbytery of Kirkcaldy to be elected, four elders from the kirk-session of Kirkcaldy, also to be elected, and eight of the burgh trustees. Some of the details of managing the schools without the burgh are devolved on a board of managers provided for in the trust deed. The Kirkcaldy school is entirely under the management of the eighteen trustees. The teacher's salary in Kirkcaldy is L.100, and a schoolmistress is engaged to " teach the girls to sew, at a yearly salary of L.15. The branches taught are, English reading, writing, arithmetic, and music. The testator provides for a Sabbath school being taught in all the four districts, and allows an annual sum of L.10 to each district for this purpose. The sum of L.780 was mortified by Mr John Thomson, merchant in Kirkcaldy, who died in 1810, the half of the interest of which is to be expended " in paying school wages, and providing school books for poor children of the parish of Kirkcaldy." About 20 children of the class described receive education from this fund. Few places in Scotland enjoy such educational advantages as Kirkcaldy. There are few, if any in the parish, above twelve years of age, who cannot read; there are very few who cannot write a little. Nor need there be any. With such facilities for obtaining a gratuitous education, the neglect of it in the poorest would be inexcusable. It may be inferred, from the number and urgency of applicants for the benefit of the trust funds of Philp and Thomson, that the advantages of education are generally appreciated.

LITERATURE- There are five public libraries in the parish, viz. Kirkcaldy Subscription Library, with 4000 volumes; Kirkcaldy Mechanics' Library, 1500; United Secession Congregational Library, 340 ; two circulating libraries, 2600.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.-About thirty years ago, a few friendly societies were formed in the parish, but being based on erroneous principles, they soon began to decline, and they have all been long extinct.

A charitable institution, denominated the " Prime Gilt Box," " which provides for old and disabled mariners belonging to the port, and for their widows and orphans, and for the relief of shipwrecked seamen, has existed in this parish from a period prior to 1591. Officers and men, in vessels belonging to the port, long paid a percentage of their wages into this society. These contributions are no longer paid. A proposal was made a few years ago to dissolve the society, and divide the funds among the existing members. This was prevented by interdict, and the Court of session ultimately found, that the society cannot be dissolved, and that the whole property of the society is held in trust for the society called the " Prime Gilt Box of Kirkcaldy." The value of the property belonging to this society, the income of which will in future be applied in relieving poor seamen, their widows, and orphans, is from L.2000 to L.3000.

The half of the interest of L.750, mortified by Mr. John Thomson, (the other half being for educational purposes), is applied " towards the support of respectable inhabitants of Kirkcaldy who have seen better days."

POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS.-No legal assessment has yet been imposed in this parish. The poor are maintained from the collections at the church door and subscriptions among the inhabitants. The amount of annual church collections is about L.200; L.33 have hitherto been got from seat rents; and the additional sum required has been furnished by subscription. A sum upwards of L.400 is annually required to maintain the poor. The average number of paupers on the roll for a few years past is 110.

Besides the provision made for paupers by the kirk-session, much is done in the town for the relief of the destitute, by a Ladies' Benevolent Society, a Clothing Society, and a fund annually raised to supply the poor with coals. In very few parishes are the poor more liberally provided for, and are the wants of the destitute more promptly attended to and relieved ?

PRISON.- The Kirkcaldy jail is the best in the county of Fife. Under the New Prison Act, its management has been much improved. The prisoners are constantly employed, and great care is taken that proper attention be paid to their health, their diet, their education, and religious instruction. It is now a place more for the reformation than the punishment of prisoners.

INNS AND ALEHOUSES.-In the parish 54 houses are licensed to sell ardent spirits. Vigorous and successful efforts have been made of late to detect the irregularity of some of the houses, and to bring their possessors to punishment; and it is to be hoped that this system of vigilant superintendence will be kept up, and that it will succeed in checking and preventing that noise and rioting, especially on Saturday nights and Sabbath mornings, of which there has been good reason to complain.

February 1843 (Rev. John Alexander)