

# LARGO PARISH

ANTIQUITIES:-A circular tower of the old house, inhabited by Sir Andrew Wood, and said to have been, previously to his time, a jointure house of the Scottish queens, still remains. General Durham has lately put on it a monumental stone, with an inscription from Sir Andrew's charter.\* On the banks of the Kiel, a small stream, are the ruins of the Castle of Balcruvie, once possessed by the noble family of Crawford. In the centre of Lundin House, which is a modern erection, rises a square tower of great antiquity. The property of Lundin, which once embraced nearly the whole parish, was held by individuals of the name of Lundin, so early as the reign of David 1. One of King William the Lion's sons, Robert, married the heiress, and in 1670, John Drummond, second son of the Earl of Perth, married the then heiress Sophia, after which the property remained in the united families of Perth and Lundin, now represented by Lady Willoughby D'Eresby, for a number of years subsequent to the attainder of the Earl of Perth in 1745, when it was disposed of; and it is now in possession of Captain Erskine Wemyss of Wemyss Castle, in right of his mother, daughter of the late Sir William Erskine, Bart. \*\*

To the south and east of Lundin House are erected three unwrought stones of a triangular form, measuring six yards above, and, as it is thought, as much below ground, the solid contents of each being 270 feet. They bear no traces of any figure or inscription. By some, they are conjectured to be of Roman origin; by others, to be the gravestones of Danish chiefs, who fought here and were conquered by Banquo and Macbeth ; and by others, perhaps, with most probability, to be Druidical remains. Ancient sepulchres are found near them. They are of red sandstone. Two pieces of the same species of stone, evidently belonging to each other, were found some years ago, a mile apart, on the south of Largo estate. They are now joined, and present the appearance of a carved cross, of which the transverse pieces are equal, surrounded by a carved circle, touching the extremities of each. Such stones are said to be extremely rare, one only being known in Britain, and a few in Denmark. On a rising ground to the north, called Norrie's Law, several antiquities in silver were discovered, together with a number of small silver Roman coins, bearing the stamp of the earlier emperors. They are now in the possession of General Durham. On the property of Balhousie, about forty years ago, were found, deposited eighteen inches beneath the surface, three earthen vases containing ashes, and near them some rude stone coffins, and the bones of a child.

\* He has also erected this summer, on a handsome stage, an iron 32 pounder, belonging to the Royal George, which was wrecked in 1782. This gun, which was recovered in 1836, and presented to the General by the Board of Ordinance, is peculiarly interesting, as Admiral Sir Philip Durham, his brother, a native of the parish, and a distinguished officer, Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, now, and at the time when the gun was recovered, was a lieutenant, and on board of the Royal George, at the time of the wreck, and one of 70 who, out of 1200 persons, were rescued from that fatal calamity.

\*\* The only descendants of the family of Lundin, bearing the name, are the Lundins of Auchtermairnie, in the parish of Kennoway.

POPULATION.

<b>The population amounted in 1755</b>	<b>1396</b>
<b>1801</b>	<b>1867</b>
<b>1811</b>	<b>1973</b>
<b>1821</b>	<b>2301</b>
<b>1831</b>	<b>2567</b>
<b>Males</b>	<b>1210</b>
<b>Females</b>	<b>1357</b>
<b>Males above twenty years of age</b>	<b>606</b>

The population formerly employed in sea pursuits, salt-works, and collieries, in the south, has no doubt been diminished; but the deficiency is far more than counterbalanced by the greater number of hands employed in the cultivation of the land, in manufactures, and in collieries in the north.

Of the whole, there may be considered as residing in villages, 1761

in the country, 806

It is to be regretted, that, from the registration of births not being compulsory, no accurate account of them can be furnished.

<b>Average of deaths for the last seven years</b>	<b>46 5/7</b>
<b>of Marriages</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Number of Families</b>	<b>590</b>
<b>Children in a family</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>inhabited houses</b>	<b>479</b>
<b>uninhabited</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>families employed in agriculture</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>manufactures of all kinds</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>all others</b>	<b>97</b>

Number of insane persons kept in an asylum, 4 ; of fatuous, 4; of blind, 3, and 2 children nearly so ; of deaf and dumb, 3, one of whom is educating at the Edinburgh institution.

There is nothing peculiar in the Language or manners of the inhabitants. It argues well for their prudence and management, that with wages, as frequently happens, not exceeding 6s. or 7s. a week, they are able to clothe, educate, and feed their families, pay their house rent, and defray other necessary expenses. Their general character, with exceptions which are found almost solely in the villages, may be considered as moral and becoming. Their kindness to each other in distress, it is always gratifying to witness, and their attendance at religious meetings, besides the ordinary Sabbath services, is a favourable evidence of their religious character.

**MANUFACTURES:-** There are two manufactures in the parish ; one water-mill for cleaning, and the other water and steam-mill for spinning flax ; the first employing 4, the second employing 85 hands. They work six days in the week, twelve hours per diem, and nine on Saturday. They afford a fair remuneration, and are not considered as particularly prejudicial either to health or morals.

**SHIPPING:-**Three small vessels only belong to the port of the parish. The trade carried on in old times, in coal, salt, iron, sandstone, etc. with Campvere and Rotterdam, and more recently in wood, with Norway, being altogether at an end.

## PAROCHIAL ECONOMY

**MARKET TOWNS etc:-**Leven and Colinsburgh, each three miles distant, from the Kirkton of Largo, may be considered as the market-towns of the parish, for although it has several bakers and brewers, it has never regularly supplied itself with butcher meat. The several villages contain a population as follows, Kirkton, 413; Lower Largo, including Temple and Drummochy, 567; Lundin Mill, 453; Backmuir of Gilston and Woodside, 316.

**MEANS OF COMMUNICATION;-**Numerous means of communication are enjoyed by the parish. A daily post arrives and departs. The turnpike road passing through it exceeds eight miles. There is a daily coach from Cupar to Largo, except in the depth of winter; and at all seasons, one by Largo from Anstruther to Edinburgh, three times a week; and one also as frequently from St Andrews to Largo. A steam-boat plies twice a day in summer and once in winter between Largo and Newhaven. The harbour, formed by the influx of the Kiel into the

Frith of Forth, is not in good order. Were it repaired, which might be done without much outlay, it would be one of the best on this side of the Forth, and were a low water or chain pier to be constructed, and a more level road made between this port and Cupar, not only would the neighbourhood be benefited, and the county town obtain a shipping port within ten miles, but the nearest and most direct communication would be opened between the capital and the north-east of Scotland, and a place of shelter afforded to vessels in storms, by which much property and life might be saved.

**ECCLESIASTICAL STATE;**.-The parish church is situated most conveniently for the majority of the population, but at a distance of four or five miles from one-fifth of it. It was built in 1817; and in 1826, there was taken into the new building, an aisle belonging to the old, by which the spire is supported, bearing date 1623. It affords accommodation for upwards of 800, and there are no free sittings except 50, eight for the hospitalers, and the remainder for official persons.

There are considerable benefactions in the management of the session. The interest of L. 100, left by Mrs Wood, for the benefit of orphans; the interest of L. 600, left by the late Mr Kettle, writer in Edinburgh, one-half for the education of four poor children, to the parochial teacher, and one-half to as many persons as it will reach, none receiving less than L. 2, who have fallen from their former means, but are not on the poor's roll ; and the interest of L. 500, to respectable widows, named Jameson, who have and only as long as they have, children under sixteen years of age. This fund, from the want of applicants corresponding to the description, now exceeds L. 1100. No individual can receive more than L. 5 per annum.

The manse was built in 1770. A large addition, with a complete set of new offices, was made to it in 1823, and another addition this summer, so that now there is none better in the county

There are two dissenting chapels, one belonging to the Relief, and the other to the Baptist persuasion, both situated at Lower Largo. Their ministers are paid by voluntary contribution. The number of families connected with the Establishment is 350 with Dissenters of all classes, 200 ; and there are not a few individuals unconnected with any religious persuasion. Divine service at the Establishment is generally well attended, and, there is reason to think, would be much better attended, were it not that more seats are given to tenants, or let out to others, than they or their families can occupy, and thus such as would, fill vacant seats cannot obtain them, an evil which here, and in many other places, calls loudly for redress. The number of communicants on the roll is 760. The number present in summer is about 600; and in winter, 500.

There were Societies for religious and charitable purposes, but it is found more expedient to have regular collections, several times a year. The average amount collected for the last three years has been L. 30 per annum.

**EDUCATION:**.-There is one parochial school, the teacher of which has the maximum salary, L. 34, 2s. 4d., more than the legal accommodations, and fees amounting to L. 20. Of three other

schools, two have gratuitous salaries of L. 5 each from the heritors; and the fees of each will amount to nearly L. 40 per annum. The branches generally taught are, reading, writing, arithmetic, mensuration, and occasionally Latin, book-keeping, and navigation. The expense, of course, varies, according to the branches taught ; the lowest being 4d., the medium 1s., and the highest 7s. a month. The people are alive to the benefits of education ; and there are few children of six years who have not been sent to school ; and few above fifteen who cannot read. And though the distances from school are two and even three mile, this does not prevent attendance. Additional schools are not required except for this distance, which makes one in the north west district very desirable ; but a more liberal remuneration would be a great boon to the unendowed teachers, who often suffer from non-payment of fees.

**WOOD'S HOSPITAL:-**There is only one charitable institution, -Wood's Hospital. John Wood, a cadet of Sir Andrew's family, by deed of mortification, dated 7th July 1659, bequeathed L. 68,418 Scotch, to build and endow an hospital within the parish, for the maintenance of thirteen indigent and enfeebled persons of the name of Wood, besides a gardener, a porter, and a chaplain, with L. 17 a year. He appointed the Earl of Wemyss, the lairds of Largo, Lundin, and Balfour, together with the minister, and remanent members of the kirk-session, as patrons. The hospital was built in 1667, at an expense, Lamont says, of 9000 merks. This hospital was found in a state of great decay in 1830, and the patrons erected a new one, which is not only a commodious, but a very handsome and ornamental building, after a design by Mr James Leslie, civil-engineer. It cost in all L. 2000. It is fitted up for sixteen inmates, each having a sitting and a sleeping apartment. In the centre is a large hall, where they are convened to prayers, morning and evening; above which, is a room for the meetings of the patrons. The annual allowance to each hospitaler is L. 15 paid monthly, and vegetables. The funds arise from the interest of L. 2000, and a farm, the rent of which averages L. 280.

**POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS:-**The average number of persons receiving parochial aid, and regularly on the poor list, is 40, and their average allowance 1s. a week. The annual amount of collections at the church door for five years has been L. 37, L. 46, L.35, L. 36, and L. 31, and of mortcloths L. 3 per annum. The latter fund has been falling off, in consequence of a subscription mortcloth being most frequently employed. It used to be L. 8. Voluntary contributions are the only other source of income for the poor, and these, from the unwonted number of insane and fatuous persons of late, have been very high, amounting for three years, in 1835 to L. 100; in 1836, to L. 250; in 1837, to L. 100. Nevertheless, the heritors most wisely refrain from resorting to parochial assessment. It is desirable that this forbearance were met by a more general disposition, on the part of the people, to contribute to the funds of the poor, and also by a greater reluctance to resort to the aid of these funds. There are many in need, by whom relief will not be sought as a favour ; by the majority, it is considered and claimed as a right

INNS and ALEHOUSES:- There are 4 inns and 16 licensed ale-houses in the parish. The latter are much more numerous than necessary, and unquestionably have a pernicious influence on the morals of many of the people. At the same time, it may be doubted if their being compelled to observe the regulations imposed on them by law more strictly, would prove beneficial, unless it were possible to prevent a most detrimental practice beginning here, and prevalent elsewhere, viz. their selling spirits, which are used not on the premises, but in private houses.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS:- There can be no doubt that the general condition of the parish has been improved since the date of the last Statistical Account. Much has been done for it in every department of agriculture, and the common comforts of life are more extensively diffused. The gatherings at tent-preachings, which used to amount to 3000 and 4000 at every Sacrament, are now entirely unknown. Beggars, with whom the parish was wont to be infested, are now, by the exertions of a new system of police, scarcely ever seen. Religious animosities, which were carried to a disgraceful height, have greatly subsided. And withal, whilst it must be wished that family worship were more cultivated, the "honouring of all men" more practised, and their mental resources more employed by the body of the population, still they may be viewed as distinguished by shrewdness, and industry, and intelligence, and will no doubt participate in the progressive changes and improvements of the age.

November 1837 ( Rev Robert Brown )