

NEWBURGH PARISH

MANUFACTURES.-Cunningham in the course of his researches respecting Macduff's Cross, says, " And pitie it were, that so old and famous a monument in this our kingdom should be so closlie dormant in a poor country village." Surely the antiquary forgot the compliment he had just paid, in giving to Newburgh the honour of conferring upon the whole county the denomination of the Kingdom of Fife. "No trader," it was remarked in the last Statistical Account, "no trader has as yet appeared in Newburgh, whose extensive transactions in commerce would entitle him to the name and character of a merchant; though perhaps the time is not far distant when many will be found here of that respectable description." That time has arrived; and Newburgh can now boast of a considerable number of spirited individuals who are engaged in extensive commercial speculations, and fully entitled, as others of their countrymen, to the honourable appellation of British merchants.

The principal branch of trade consists in the weaving of linens, termed by the workmen Dowlas sheeting, and for which a ready market is found in London, Leeds, and Manchester; also in the West Indies and South America, to both of which places it is exported directly by our merchants here. A few years ago, individuals employed in the trade, for the most part, wove their own yarn and disposed of their webs to others of their own number who again sold them at Perth, Dundee, Cupar, Auchtermuchty, and Glasgow, to persons who purchased them, either on their own account or upon commission for the English market. The trade is now limited to thirteen individuals, who not only employ all the weavers in Newburgh, but furnish work for considerable numbers in Cupar, Springfield, Pitlessie, Kettle, Markinch, Falkland, Freuchie, Dunshelt, Auchtermuchty, Strathmiglo, Abernethy, Aberagie, Kintillo, &c. The finest of the material wrought here does not exceed what are termed fourteen hundred linens, and from 1 yard to 3 yards wide. Each web of the former sort contains about 140 yards, and averages from L. 5, 10s. to L 6 in price. The latter is sold at 3s. 6d. per yard.

The following are the particulars of the manufacturing trade of Newburgh for 1833:-In the single article of winding bobbins, there are employed, boys, 10; aged men, 3; women above fifty, 80; women below fifty, 249;total, 342. The number of looms employed in town, 564; webs manufactured, 23,600; spindles of yarn contained in do. 826,000; cost of these, including weaving and bleaching, L. 128,325.

Besides the manufacturing of linens, there is likewise a considerable trade in corn, carried on by the merchants of Newburgh. A weekly stock market was established in 1830, which, while it brings advantage to the town, must, from its local conveniences, operate greatly to the benefit of the surrounding country. Dealers from Kirkaldy and other places regularly frequent it; and, from the experience of its past operations, there can be little doubt of its permanent prosperity. Barley is the grain which is principally sought after; but wheat, oats, beans, and potatoes also find a ready sale. To the spirit and intelligence of John Burton, M. D. practitioner in Haddington, but then residing in Newburgh, the public owe a debt of gratitude for the establishment of this market, which has proved so beneficial to Newburgh, and the agricultural interests of an extensive district in the three counties of Fife, Kinross, and Perthshire.

Malting was at one period carried to a very considerable extent at Newburgh, but has for some time past been entirely discontinued.

CHARACTER ETC. OF THE PEOPLE.- The people are in general active and industrious, and, with the usual exceptions which occur almost invariably in manufacturing and sea-port districts, merit the praise of sobriety. The great bulk of them are attentive to the ordinances of religion and the education of their children. The rising generation are supplied from parish libraries with excellent and instructive books. These are read with much interest; and the time is not far distant, when Newburgh, which has hitherto been noted for commercial enterprise, will also be distinguished for a moral, religious, and a well-informed people. "No person belonging to the parish of Newburgh," says Dr Stuart, "has suffered the punishment of death for any crime within the period to which its records extend." To this notice in the former Statistical Account, the writer of the present one has only to add, that, in 1661, two women belonging to the town were hanged at Cupar, accused of the crime of witchcraft, and for causing, under the influence of that "black art, the minister's house, Mr Lawrence Oliphant, to be burnt." As in former times, "Newburgh supplied the navy of Great Britain with steady, well-behaved, and gallant men," the character of its seamen still continues to be held in estimation.

The number of individuals or families engaged in trade are, Manufacturers, 13; corn-merchants, 4; grocers and other retailers, 21 ; bakers, 9; butchers, 4; medical practitioners, 3; stationer, 1.

The number of families, 530; Average number of children in each, 5; Number of inhabited houses, 285 Number of Blind, 0; Number of Deaf and Dumb, 2; During the last three years there have been 9 illegitimate Births in the parish.

April 1836 (The Rev. John Anderson, Minister)