

SCOONIE PARISH

POPULATION.

The population of Scoonie since the commencement of the century, has been progressively and rapidly increasing, owing chiefly to the erection of several manufacturing establishments in the parish and neighbourhood.

The population in 1755 amounted to 1528

1791 -1675

1801 1681

1811 1726

1821 2042

1831 2556

According to this census there were 1224 males, and 1342 females.

Number of persons under 15 years of age 1066

between 15 and 30 545

30 and 50 660

50 and 70 215

above 70 70

The present population is 2640, of whom 2163 reside in Leven and its suburbs, and 473 in the country part of the parish. It is difficult to ascertain with accuracy the average number of births, as few of the dissenters have the names of their children registered ; and many belonging to the establishment are equally negligent.

The average of marriages for the last 3 years is 27

deaths, 60

The number of insane, 2; blind, 2; deaf and dumb, 1 and imbecile, 2.

Number of families in the parish 555

chiefly employed in agriculture, 85

trade, manufactures, and handicraft, 317

There are three landed proprietors of independent fortune residing in the parish ; and three non-resident heritors possessed of land exceeding the yearly value of L. 50.

RATE of WAGES etc.:-A day-labourer receives Is. 6d. in summer, and Is. 4d. in winter; a mason, carpenter, or other mechanic, receives from 2s. 2d. to 2s. 6d. in summer, and from 1s. 10d. to 2s. in winter; an unmarried farm-servant receives from L. 10 to L. 11 per annum, with board in the farmer's kitchen; and when he lives in the bothie, he has the same wages, with 6 1/2 bolls of oatmeal, and a pint of sweet-milk per day; a married man, who has a cow, receives from L. 6 to L. 7, with a house, 6 1/2 bolls of oatmeal, and 6 bolls of potatoes, or ground to plant potatoes ; those who have no cows receive L. 2 or L. 3 additional, with a pint of sweet-milk per day; a woman farm-servant receives from L. 5 to L. 6 with board; and women employed in outdoor labour have 8d. per day of nine hours. The rate of mason, carpenter, and other mechanical work is as follows :-rubble building per rood of 36 square yards, from 28s. to 32s. ; stone and lime dikes per do. 16s. to 20s. ; dry-stone dikes per do. 7s. to 10s.; slating per do, 10s. to 14s. ; tiling per do. 5s. to 6s. 6d. ; plastering two coats per yard, 2d. The price of different articles, for the purposes of rural economy, which are in use and manufactured in the parish, is, a farm-cart with iron axle, from L. 10, 10s. to L. 11 ; an iron two-horse plough, L. 3, 5s.; iron swingle-trees, 15s. ; a pair of iron harrows, from L. 2, 5s. to L. 2, 8s.; a two-horse self-cleaning iron harrow, L. 5, 5s.; an iron trenching skeleton plough, from L. 5, 10s. to L. 6 ; an iron strip plough L. 2, 2s. ; a drill harrow L. 2, 2s.

MANUFACTURES;-The following table gives a view of the several branches of manufacture which are at present in operation in this parish, with the number of individuals employed.

	Males.	Females.
Five mills for spinning flax and tow,	98	156
One foundery for cast iron,	45	-
One saw mill and wood-yard,	30	-
One mill for bruising bones,	12	-
One brick and tile work,	12	-
One Ochre mill,	3	-
Hand-loom weaving,	148	22

In the spinning-mills, both adults and children are employed six days in the week, and work the legal number of hours, as fixed by the factory bill, namely, twelve hours for five days, and nine hours on Saturday, making sixty-nine hours per week. Males receive from 14s. to L. 1, 2s. per week; females from 5s. to 7 s. ; and children from 2s. 6d. to 5s.

These mills are fitted up upon the most improved construction; and their machinery is adapted for spinning all kinds and sizes of flax and tow yarns.

The hand-loom weavers work by the piece, and at their own homes; consequently, their earnings depend entirely upon their own skill and industry; but may average 12s. per week for males, and from 8s. to 10s. for females. In the foundery, wages run from, 12s to 24s. per week, and, in the other works, are nearly the same as those of agricultural labourers. They generally work ten hours a day. Wages for all kinds of manufacture afford at present a fair remuneration and support to those who are engaged in them; and all who are of sober and industrious habits are well able to live comfortably, and to bring up and educate their families in a decent and respectable manner. It has, however, been generally remarked, that those who receive the highest wages are commonly the most idle and dissipated, often neglecting both the maintenance and the education of their families.

PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

MARKET TOWNS.-The only town in the parish is Leven, with a Population of above 2000. It lies on the sea shore, at the mouth of the river of the same name, and consists of two principal streets running parallel to each other, with a variety of bye-lanes. Weaving of linen is the staple trade of the place, and affords steady employment to the inhabitants. A board of police, according to the Act of Parliament, has been established here for some years, and its labours are chiefly directed to the cleaning and lighting of the streets, and supplying the town with water. The inarket.towns" of Cupar and Kirkaldv are each nearly ten miles distant from Leven.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.-The post-office is at Leven, where there are two arrivals every day. The turnpike road, which is well kept, crosses the parish about a quarter of a mile above the town: and a stage-coach passes from the east of Fife to Edinburgh three times a week. There is also a communication with Edinburgh by a steam-boat, twice a-day in summer, and once in winter. The want of a carriage bridge over the river at the town of Leven has been much felt, there being none nearer than Cameron Bridge, about three miles up the river. This much desired improvement, however, is at present in contemplation, and it is hoped will soon be carried into execution. Near the mouth of the river, which was formerly crossed by a ferry-boat, there has been erected a handsome suspension-bridge, for foot-passengers, by means of which the village of Dubbyside is now, in a manner connected with the town of Leven. This improvement cost nearly L. 500, which was raised in shares of 10s. 6d. each. A halfpenny is charged for each passenger ; and the pontage is at present let at L. 85 per annum.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATE.-The old church of Scoonie stood in the centre of the burying ground, about a quarter of a mile from the town of Leven ; and what remains of it forms the family vault of the proprietor of Durie. When the present edifice was built, about sixty years ago, the site was removed to the vicinity of Leven, where the great bulk of the population reside ; and is about four miles distant from the most remote part of the parish. It was seated for about 700 hearers ; but, owing to the rapid increase of the population, the want of church accommodation began to be seriously felt, when, in 1822, the heritors in the most liberal manner, proceeded to its enlargement. It now contains 1000 sittings, of which 100 are set apart for the poor. The interior of the building was completely renewed, and there are few country churches so comfortable, either for preacher or bearers.

The manse was enlarged and repaired in 1820, and is now a commodious and comfortable dwelling.

There is one Independent and one Relief chapel in the parish, the ministers of which are paid by the seat rents and the Sabbath collections. Divine service in the Established Church is regularly and fully attended ; but the writer has no means of knowing the state of the dissenting chapels. Number of families belonging to the Established Church, 384, or 1751 individuals; communicants, 738: number of families of dissenters of all denominations, 156, or individuals, 827 ; communicants, 410. There are 2 Episcopalians, and 62 who attend no stated place of worship.

A society for general religious purposes, under the direction of the ladies of the parish, has been in existence for several years, and the average annual amount of its contributions for the last three years is L. 20. There is also a ladies' charitable society, whose expenditure for the last three years has averaged L. 24 per annum. The church collections for religious and charitable objects, independent of the regular collections, have, for the last three years, averaged L. 8, 7s. 2d. per annum.

EDUCATION:- Besides the parish school, there are three unendowed schools, where, in addition to the usual branches, are taught Greek, Latin, French, and mathematics. There is also a Female school, where the more ornamental branches of education may be acquired. The emoluments of the parochial schoolmaster are salary L. 34, with L. 2 for deficiency of garden ground; school fees about L. 70; and from other sources, as session and heritors' clerk, L. 20. He has also a very superior dwelling-house. The other teachers are supported entirely by their school fees. The average number of scholars attending the different schools is about 380, which shows that the inhabitants are sufficiently alive to the benefits of education ; but, though these benefits are within the reach of all, yet no adequate change for the better has been produced on the conduct and morals of the people.

There have been three illegitimate births in the parish during the last three years.

I am not aware of any individual above six years of age being altogether unable to read, except two, and they are imbeciles.

PRISONS;-Though much wanted, there is no prison in this parish, nor even a lock-up-house.

INNS etc;-There are 28 licensed houses for retailing spirits in the town of Leven,-a number far beyond the wants of the place, and which has no doubt tended much to demoralize the people.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

With respect to the more striking variations betwixt the present state of the parish, and that which existed at the time of the last Statistical Account, I may generally refer to what has been already stated under the different heads of inquiry ; and would advert merely to the improved state of agriculture, by which the rental of the parish has been more than trebled ; the excellent state of the turnpike and statute-labour roads; and the great increase in trade and manufactures. It may be proper, however, to mention also an improvement in the mode of conducting funerals, which has tended much to the comfort and convenience of the working classes. When the present incumbent came to the parish, it was customary to have at least three services, but often more,- one of spirits with bread and cheese, and two of wine with cake and biscuit. This not only occasioned much delay, but entailed a heavy expense upon poor families, which, at such a season especially, they were little able to bear. Now the services are altogether discontinued; the procession commences precisely at the hour appointed; and it may be recorded to the credit of the community, that, generally, they entered most readily into the new arrangement.

December 1836 (Rev George Brewster)