

ST. LEONARDS PARISH

PAROCHIAL REGISTERS:-The earliest entry in the parochial registers of the parish, is of date June 28, 1696. The register of births and marriages is extant from that period ; but with regard to the former, the same remark is applicable which has been made in reference to the register of births for the parish of St Andrews, namely, that it is highly defective, many of the parents neglecting to apply to the session-clerk to have the names of their children enrolled.

When the union took place between the Colleges of St Salvator and St Leonards, the grounds and buildings connected with one of them were no longer requisite for the accommodation of the members of the United College. Those belonging to St Leonards College were in consequence sold ; and the apartments in which the masters and students originally resided are now divided between two proprietors, who, with former occupants, have made very considerable alterations and additions to the buildings, so as to form commodious dwelling-houses.

POPULATION.

The population residing in the city	266
suburbs	161
country	62

The yearly average of births for the last seven years that are entered into the register	3 2/7
marriages	2 6/7
No register is kept of the deaths	.
The average number of persons under 15 years of age	203
betwixt 15 and 30	100
30 and 50	125
50 and 70	49
upwards of 70	12
The number of families of independent fortune residing in the parish	4
proprietors of land residing within the parish of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards, but whose-lands are not in the parish	4
Number of unmarried men, bachelors and widowers, upwards of 50 years of age	8
Number of unmarried women upwards of 45	10

The number of Dissenters of all denominations in the parish is 53. A few more usually sit in the dissenting chapels, but have not joined them as communicants. They urge that no accommodation has been provided for them in St Salvator's Chapel, where the St Leonards' congregation assemble for public worship.

There are no blind nor deaf and dumb persons in the parish., but there are two persons in a fatuous state.

PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATE:- The original church of the parish of St Leonards was situated in the immediate vicinity of the college of the same name, and for more than two centuries it was occupied by the parishioners. About seventy years ago it required extensive repairs, the expense of which would have fallen chiefly on the funds of the United College. A few years prior to this period, however, the Colleges of St Salvator and St Leonards had been incorporated by Act of Parliament; and to St Salvator's there had been attached by the founder a large chapel, which was still in a good state of repair, and was now the property of the United College; and it became a subject of discussion among the masters, Whether it would be more eligible to repair the old parish church, or to fit up the Chapel of St Salvator's for the use of the parishioners ? The latter was situated, indeed, beyond the limits of the parish, and within the town parish ; but the distance between the two was so small, that it was a matter of but little importance to the parishioners whether they were accommodated in the one or in the other. The majority of the masters favoured the idea of the proposed transference, as the other buildings of St Salvator's College were already appropriated for the use of the United College; and the sanction of the presbytery of St Andrews to the measure having been obtained, the chapel was fitted up so as to accommodate the parishioners of St Leonards, and the students attending the United College ; and for their use it continues to be appropriated. The walls of the old parish church still remain in a tolerable state of preservation; but the tower and spire connected with it were pulled down soon after the transference. The area of the church formed a parallelogram of about 70 feet long by 18 wide within the walls ; and the style of its architecture was neat and appropriate. The interior still contains several monuments, inserted into the wall, to the memory of individuals connected with St. Leonard's College, in the earlier periods of its existence ; but the most elegant of them has been constructed of a species of stone but ill fitted for encountering the vicissitudes of the weather, and is fast hastening to a state of utter decay.

The greater part of the population of St Leonards being resident in the immediate vicinity of the city, the present substitute for the parish church cannot be regarded as inconveniently situated. But as a distance of between four and five miles intervenes between this portion of the parish and the distant district, it is evident that this latter division of the parishioners must feel, that they reside at a very inconvenient distance from the Church. This, however, is an evil to which a remedy cannot well be applied, so long as they are connected with the parish of St Leonards, as no site for a parish church could be devised that would be suited to them, in common with the other parishioners.

The chapel of St Salvator's, in which the parishioners of St Leonards now assemble for public worship, was erected by Bishop Kennedy about the middle of the fifteenth century. The style of its architecture is the Gothic, and it must have originally been a very elegant edifice. It appears to have been stripped of many of its ornaments of a superstitious aspect, at the period of the Reformation, and to have suffered still more, so far as its architectural beauty and character are concerned, about seventy years ago, when it received extensive alterations and repairs. In its original state, it was an edifice of 107 feet in length by 29 in breadth within the walls. But as this formed an area, of larger dimensions than the congregation of St Leonards required, a partition wall was erected, by which a considerable space at the western extremity was cut off; so that the length of the Chapel, as it is now employed for public worship, is reduced to 78 feet. It is at present in a good state of repair. The area affords accommodation for 360 persons, and a gallery, which was erected for the use of the professors and students, accommodates 120 more. The seating of the area, after furnishing the requisite accommodation for the professors' families, is appropriated to the use of the parishioners, with the exception of a few pews, which are rented.

The ministers of St Leonards had no manse nor glebe, nor any allowance for either, until within these few years, when a glebe, and ground for the site of a manse, offices, and garden, were designed for them by the presbytery of St Andrews, from church lands in the vicinity of the city, and belonging to the United College. But the present incumbent, at whose request the designation took place, instead of taking possession of the ground, which was under lease, has agreed during his incumbency to accept of a compensation.

EDUCATION:- No parochial school has at any period existed in this parish. The young persons residing in those districts which are in the vicinity of the city receive their education at the city schools; and those residing in the distant district, at the school of Boarhills, from which they are distant about one mile only.

POOR and POOR FUNDS:-The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 15, and the weekly allowance made to them is L.1, 2s., being at an average nearly 1s. 6d. each. In addition to this regular payment, amounting to L. 57, 4s. annually, occasional demands, to the amount of about L. 20 annually, have been supplied, so that the average amount of expenditure during the last five years is L 78. To meet this the receipts have been ; average annual collection at church door, L. 47, 15s. 8d. ; average annual rent of three acres of land, L. 8, 7s. ; interest of a sum in the Bank of Scotland, 17s. 5d.; part of said sum drawn from bank annually, L. 21 ; total L. 78, 0s. 1d.

In 1831, the money in the bank amounted to L. 105, but it is now totally expended; and unless means can be devised, either for diminishing the rate of expenditure, or for increasing the annual amount of the funds, it will be necessary to have recourse to an assessment, either voluntary or legal, to enable the kirk-session to meet the demands against them.

December 1837, Revised February 1838

(Rev J. Hunter)