

Statistical Account For Scotland, 1836

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Parish of Burntisland, Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, Synod of Fife.

The Rev. David Couper, Minister.

I - Topography and Natural History

Name – the name of this parish was anciently Wester Kinghorn. Tradition accounts for its present name by saying, that the small island, which forms part of the west side of the harbour, was originally peopled by a colony of fishermen, whose dwelling was destroyed by fire. But the ancient name of the town was Bartland or Bertiland, which has passed through various forms into Burntisland. The etymology is uncertain, but is probably to be found in the Gaelic. There is no doubt that the parish has derived its present name from the town.

Extent, Boundaries - The parish extends about 2-1/4 miles from east to west, and about 2-1/2 miles from north to south. Its whole extent may be about 5 square miles. It is bounded on the east by Kinghorn; on the west, by Aberdour; on the north, by both these parishes; and on the south, by the Frith of Forth.

Topographical Appearances – The surface is very varied and uneven. The southern part of it presents a series of ridges of different elevations, running from east to west, and parallel to one another. The first is that which rises from the sea; the next, that which is called the Schoolhill, and sometimes Mount Pleasant. Between these two, is situated the greater part of the town. The next is that on which the village of Kirkcaldy is situated. These three ridges are of very inconsiderable height; but the succeeding one rises abruptly, about the middle, to an elevation of 625 feet above the level of the sea. The hill thus formed is called the Bin, and is about half a mile from the shore. It has two tops, which, being on the south side very bare and rugged, present a fine contrast to the cultivated fields below. To the northward of this ridge, the parish presents an interesting variety of hill and dale. The eminences are somewhat irregularly scattered, and vary considerably in appearance and elevation. The highest are, Orrock Hill and Dunearn Hill. The latter is the highest land in the parish, being 695 feet above the level of the sea. The view from it is uncommonly extensive and magnificent, embracing, it is said, portions of fourteen counties. The town stands on a peninsula, which projects a considerable way into the Frith, and is very picturesque in its appearance. There are about three miles of coast, one-third of which is sandy, and two-thirds rocky. At the western boundary there is a small cave, to which at full tide there is no access. The climate is exceedingly salubrious, and epidemics are rare.

Hydrography – There are few streams in the parish. The most interesting is Starly Burn, which flows off the large field of limestone belonging to the Carron Company, and, after a very short course, falls over a high rock into the sea. The cascade thus formed is at all times highly picturesque, and, seen through the luxuriant foliage which environs it in summer, is an object of uncommon beauty. The water is of a petrifying quality. It holds in solution the super-carbonate of lime, which, on coming into contact with the atmosphere, gives off its excess of carbonic acid, and is precipitated as the carbonate of lime. Many interesting specimens of petrified moss and wood have been here procured. The water with which the town is supplied, is conveyed by leaden pipes from the high ground to the eastward. As it flows off lime, it is in some degree impregnated with that substance, and leaves a slight deposit on being boiled. It is hard, but clear and wholesome; and there is, in general, an abundant supply.

Tides, &c:- Under this head it may be stated, that two hours before high water the ebb-tide commences to run down in-shore; and that, vice versa, two hours before low-water, the flood-tide commences to run up in-shore. Sometimes before low-water, the tide is observed to flow for a short time, and then to ebb to a greater distance than the line at which the irregular flow commenced. The reverse of this phenomenon is observed to take place – the tide sometimes beginning to ebb before high-water, and after receding a short space, to return to high-water mark. These irregularities are denominated leakies, and are always connected with stormy weather. A minute account of them, as they occur in the Frith, between Queensferry and Alloa, may be found in Sibbald's History of Fife, in a communication from the Rev. Mr Wright, formerly Minister at Alloa.

Quarries:- Besides the quarries already noticed, there is one of excellent sandstone or freestone at Grange. At Newbigging, the limestone rock has been extensively excavated. The wester quarry extends from the front of the rock backwards above a hundred yards. The roof is sandstone – to support which, masses of limestone four feet square are left standing. The rooms between these supports are 36 feet square. In July 1831, a great part of this quarry was flooded, and eight rooms are still underwater. A large proportion of the limestone is now got from a quarry to the eastward, which communicates with the surface by a tunnel, 500 yards in length, 3 in width, and 2-1/3 in height. In cutting this tunnel, great obstructions were met with, the ground being much troubled with dikes and off-cuts. Masses of greenstone, limestone, freestone, clay and blaes (black and grey) were found intermingled in a state of great confusion. The whole bed of limestone is much intersected with dikes.

Zoology:- In addition to hares, rabbits, and other common animals, deer, badgers, and otters are occasionally seen. About eighty species of birds, including land and sea-birds, are natives or visitors of the parish, but none is peculiar to it, nor are there any very rare. The golden-crested wren, the bullfinch, the goldfinch, the jay, the fieldfare, the pheasant, with most of the common small birds, are found in the district. It has been remarked, that, since the great snow-storm of 1822, goldfinches have been much less numerous than they previously were. In June 1834, a brown-coloured crow was seen in the parish, and attempts were made, but without success, to obtain possession of it.

The more common species of fish are found off the coast. For several seasons, the herring, which formerly was very abundant, has almost totally deserted the Frith. Oysters and lobsters are found, with abundance of cockles, spout-fish, and sand-eels, which form part of the food of the poorer classes during summer. Great numbers, especially of the young, may then be seen digging at low-water for these kinds of fish, in the extensive sand-beds to the east of Burntisland.

II – Civil History

The Town Council records are the chief source of information regarding the history and antiquities of the parish. The Session Records are also of some use in this respect. Some of the following details are derived from the Report on the Municipal Corporations of Scotland.

Historical Notices:- It has been conjectured that Agricola's army encamped on Dunearn Hill, on the summit of which is a flat piece of ground, surrounded with an immense number of loose stones, called, according to the former account, Agricola's Camp or garrison. It is certain that that general explored the north coast of the Frith of Forth, directing his attention particularly to the harbours. "Portus classe exploravit trans Bodotriam," says Tacitus, in the 22d chapter of his Life of Agricola. He could scarcely fail to be struck with the natural superiority of the harbour at this point, and may be reasonably conjectured to have landed here.

Prior to 1541, the town of Burntisland belonged to the Abbey of Dunfermline. It was then exchanged by James V for some lands in the neighbourhood, and was proclaimed a Royal Burgh in 1568. Before the Union, it seems to have been a place of considerable importance. About 1656, Kinghorn, Kirkcaldy, Dysart, Wemyss, Leven, Ely, St Monance, Pittenweem, Anstruther, Crail, St Andrews, and South Queensferry were all counted as members of the head port of Burntisland; and the tonnage of the whole was estimated at 1291 tons, divided over 46 vessels. About that period, and previously, there seems to have been considerable intercourse between this port and Holland.

In May 1601, the General Assembly met at Burntisland. On this occasion, James VI renewed his vows as a Covenanter. Having confessed the errors which had hitherto characterised his government, he vowed, with uplifted hand, that he would adhere to the religion presently professed in the realm of Scotland, that he would oppose the efforts of its adversaries, and be more faithful than he had hitherto been, in performing all the duties of a good and Christian King. The members of Assembly also vowed, at his request, that they would be more faithful in the discharge of their respective duties; and, that the people might be aware of the good understanding between him and the church, the mutual vow was ordered to be intimated from the pulpits on the following Sabbath. At this Assembly, the King also suggested the propriety of revising the common translation of the Scriptures, and the metrical version of the Psalms. According to Spottswood, the speech which he made on the occasion "bred not little admiration in the whole assembly." "But ravished as they were" says Dr M'Crie, "and proud as they might be of having for a King so great a divine and linguist and poet, the Assembly did not think fit to gratify his Majesty by naming him on the committee; but recommended the translation of the

Bible to such of their own number as were best acquainted with the original languages, and the correction of the psalmody to Pont.”

The inhabitants of Burntisland were zealous Covenanters. In 1638, many of them signified their adherence to the National Covenant, as the kirk-session records testify, “with tears of great joy.” The minister, “Mr Johne Mitchelstone”, being of a different mind, was left for a time to preach to empty walls – “13 May – 20 May - 27 May – 3 Junii – 10 Junii – no actionis, because the people goes from the kirke and will not heir the minister, seeing he will (not) covenant with the people of God.” In February 1639, he was deposed for contumacy with regard to the Covenant, and for disowning the proceedings of the celebrated Assembly that was held at Glasgow.

It is said that the town capitulated to Cromwell on condition of his repairing the streets and the harbour. The quays, as they at present stand, were accordingly built by him; and up to the date of last Account, no repairs had been added to those which he effected on the streets. Some years ago, the old pavement was broken up, and the main street macadamised. In 1715, the town was occupied by the Earl of Mar’s troops, who found the harbour very advantageous for the reception of foreign stores.

Land-owners:- The chief land-owners are, Mrs Aytoun of Inchdairnie; the Carron Company; the Heirs of the late Alexander Greenhill, Esq.; J.G.Drinkwater Bethune, Esq. of Orrock; The Earl of Morton; Messrs Young; the Heirs of Captain Beatson; and Mrs Pillans of Rossend.

Eminent Characters:- Mrs Somerville, whose works have raised her to a very high place among modern writers in Natural Philosophy, spent part of her youth in this parish. Craigholm, toward the east end of the links, is the summer residence of the Rev. Dr Chalmers.

Parochial Registers:- The session records commence at March 1602. They consist of eight volumes, and have for the most part been regularly kept. Blanks occur from 1670 to 1672; from 1686 to 1693; from 1711 to 1719; and from 1748 to 1769. From 1786 there is a series of fragments on to 1821; after which period, the record has been regularly kept. The register of births, baptisms, and marriages commences at 1672, and is continued more or less perfectly to the present time. As in the session records, there are some considerable blanks. At various periods, a record of deaths has been kept, but it is very scanty.

Antiquities:- The town was at one time fortified. On the southeast side of the harbour, part of the walls of a fort is still standing; and till within a few years back, traces of the ancient fortification were discernible on the small eminence in the north side of the town. At Lamberlaws, on a knoll projecting into the sea, are the traces of an encampment ascribed to Cromwell; in consequence of which, the name of Oliver’s knoll has sometimes been given to the locality. In the same situation, there appears to have stood at one time a gallows for the execution of criminals under the feudal system. In allusion to this circumstance, the locality is sometime called Gallows Knoll.

On an eminence overhanging the harbour stands Rossend Castle, erected, it would seem, at some period in the fifteenth century, by Dury of that Ilk. Sibbald, in his History of Fife, states, that “ in the chartulary of Dunfermling (to which abbacy this town, castle, and harbour belonged,) there is a grant by George Durie, commendater of Dunfermling and Archdeacon of St Andrews to Robert Durie of that Ilk, of our lands of Nether Grange of Kinghorn Wester, called Le Mains; together with the keeping of the place or fort of the same: ’ and for the preserving and custody thereof, we dispone heritably our lands of Gremland an Cuningerland, now called Brunt-island, within our shire of Kinghorn, regality of Dunfermling, and sherifffdom of Fife; ’ dated anno 1538” After the Reformation, according to the same authority, the castle was given first to Kirkcaldy of Grange, then to Sir Robert Melville of Carnie. Since that period, it is understood to have passed through the hands of many different proprietors. It served as head quarters to the detachment of the Covenanters’ troops that was raised in this part of the country. In modern times, considerable additions have been made to it. It is surrounded by plantations and garden ground ; and forms a fine object in the foreground of the rich and extensive view commanded by the environs of the town.

At the village of Kirkcoun, are the ruins of the original parish church, surrounded by a small burying-ground. The date of its erection is unknown; but it bears the marks of great antiquity. On a small eminence at Stenhouse, in the northwest part of the parish, stand the ruins of a small fort or castle, called Knockdavie. It belonged anciently to an individual of the name of Douglas, of whom some

notice is taken in "The Judgments of God on Persecutors," appended to some of the old editions of the Scots Worthies. At Balbee, a mile and a half eastward, there existed a structure somewhat similar. It was taken down about sixty or seventy years ago, and portions of the fine hewn freestone of which it was built may still be seen in some of the walls in the neighbourhood. Near the same place, a barrow or tumulus was opened fifty years ago, when some square stones were found, arranged in the form of a coffin, but containing no particular relics. There appears to have been a number of tumuli in the same neighbourhood.

III - Population.

Population in 1811, (seamen included,) 2000

1821, 2180

1831, 2399

The following abstract of the population was drawn up by Mr Davidson, the burgh schoolmaster, in 1831:-

Exclusive of seamen not constantly resident, the whole population was found to be ... 2366

Of which number there resided in the town ... 1842

In the village of Kirkton ... 189

And in the landward part of the parish ... 335

The number of families was ... 537

The number of males above 20 ... 574

The number of males under 20 ... 553

The number of houses ... 295

Of which 2 were building, and 24 uninhabited.

Illegitimate births in the course of the last three years, 6

From temporary causes, the population seems to have been somewhat greater when the census was taken, than it would otherwise have been. There has since been a considerable decrease. According to a census taken four years after by the writer, the number of families was found to be 500, giving a population of about 2100. This decrease must chiefly be attributed to the great failure in the herring fishery during the last five years. Employment having thus become scarcer, many have been compelled to seek for it elsewhere. It has also happened, that several families, not dependent on trade, have removed from the parish since the Government census was taken, while others in similar circumstances have not come in to occupy their place.

The average number of births for the last seven years may be stated at 65.

The average number of proclamations for the last seven years may be stated at 18

The average number of deaths for the last seven years may be stated at 34

Twelve of the heritors are proprietors of land of the yearly value of L.50 and upwards. Of these only three are resident, viz. the Messrs Young, who occupy the elegant residences of Colinswell, Grange, and Newbigging.

There are four fatuous persons in the parish, one insane, and one or two blind.

The chief game is golf, the links, though not very extensive, being well adapted for it. A golf club has been in existence upwards of forty years.

IV - Industry

There are about 2900 imperial acres in the parish, of which from 400 to 500 are in pasture, and nearly 90 are covered with wood. From the extent of rocky surface, there is a considerable proportion of waste land, but none that could profitably be added to what is already in cultivation. Some of it, however, could be advantageously planted. There is no land in the parish in undivided common.

Rent of Land:- the value of arable land varies from L.1,10s. up to L.7 per acre; the average rent may be nearly L.3. The rent of grazing is estimated at L.3 for an ox or cow, and 15s. for a sheep.

Rate of Wages:- Farm-servants receive from 9s. to 12s. per week; and the different kinds of country artisans from 15s. to L.1.

Husbandry:- The following is the rotation of crops adopted in the southern and more fertile part of the parish:- green crop, succeeded by wheat, barley or oats; and then green crop of a different kind from what has been two years before. The rotation in the more northern parts is as follows:- green crop, barley or oats, and sometimes wheat; sown grass, one, two or three years; then oats. The system of husbandry may be regarded as carried in some parts of the parish to great perfection. Within a few

years, some waste land has been reclaimed, and great improvements have been effected by liming and draining. The farm-steadings are, for the most part, in excellent order; but there is, in some quarters, a great want of fences, and on this account there is little or no pasture in the most fertile district of the parish. The usual period of a lease is nineteen years. The cattle are generally of the Fife breed, and the sheep of the Cheviot breed.

Produce:- It is difficult to ascertain the gross produce of the parish; but the real rental being about L.4800, should give an average of about L.14,000.

Corn-Mills:- Of these there are two, both in the neighbourhood of the town. One of them is driven by the sea, and can work on an average about fourteen hours per day.

Distillery:- There is an extensive distillery at Grange, about half a-mile to the northward of the town; 11,000 quarters of malt, the quantity which it annually consumes, yield 185,000 gallons of proof spirits, the duty on which amounts of itself to about L.36,000; or nearly L.100 per day. About 700 head of cattle are annually fed in connection with this distillery, which at L. 15, 10s. per head, will produce L.10,850. The proprietors of this work employ regularly about 100 men and 50 horses. Notwithstanding the nature of their employment, the men, in general, are sober and steady.

Herring fishery and curing:- The herring fishery commenced about 1793, and from that period till about 1805, was carried on only in the Frith during the winter season. The curers then began to send boats during summer to the northern fishing stations, and for many years the trade was very prosperous. At its most flourishing period, as many as 500 vessels might be seen at once in the harbour, all either connected directly with the fishery, or employed in the exportation of herrings. The trade has now greatly declined, there having been no winter fishing for the last five years. At present, there are eight curing establishments which send out to the northern fishery between 70 and 80 boats, most of which belong to other ports in the Frith. The greater part of them go to Wick, the rest to Fraserburgh and Roseheart. The middle of July is the time at which they usually set out, and they return in about two months. Each boat carries five men, so that during two months in the year, Burntisland employs in this way about 400 men. A number more are employed in the sloops which, to the number of 8 or 10, ply during the same period between this port and the fishing stations, carrying out barrels and salt, and bringing home the herrings that have been taken. From 200 to 250 cranes (a crane being equal to a barrel) are considered to be the complement of each boat. For some years, there have been annually cured from 16,000 to 18,000 barrels, which, at L.1, the average price per barrel, will give the same number of pounds. About 36 hands, including apprentices, are constantly employed as coopers; and about 60 females are occasionally employed in the curing of the herrings. The occupation is cold and disagreeable; but even this cannot warrant a pernicious practice that has long prevailed, of giving daily to those employed in it, and some of these are young females, a considerable quantity of undiluted spirits.

Whale fishing company:- This company commenced operations in 1830, and from that period have annually sent out two vessels, one of 377 tons, and the other of 311, - each of which carries 50 men. Last season, both returned clean; but from 1830 to 1835, their cargoes produced 1112 tons of oil, and 56 tons of bones. During that period, the wages and oil money paid to the crews of both vessels amounted to upwards of L.14,400 Sterling; and upwards of L.1300 was paid for labourage, landing cargoes, preparing the oil, and cleaning the bone. Twelve oilmen and coopers are employed in the work, and from twelve to fifteen women in cleaning the bone. The late Sir John Leslie, in a report on the subject, gives the following account of the method devised and carried into effect by Mr Farnie, for destroying the fetid vapours emitted during the manufacture of the oil. "The boiler is very large, and completely covered by a circle of thick plank, except a small opening on the more accessible side, to receive the contents of the casks, and a narrow vent in another part, which allows a current of air to mingle with the vapour, and sweep over the surface of the heated oil. All the steaming products are made to enter into a reverberatory furnace, and pass upwards through two successive branders, charged with coke or coal, that burn with an intense white heat. On the same level with the branders, are three small air holes, having each a separate flue for inciting occasionally the ardour of inflammation, and while the ebullition advances, the blubber lying at the bottom of the pan is constantly turned around by an agitator, like the stirrer of a large still, only driven by the action of a crank fixed near the side of the boiler. After the boiling is finished, and the oil has been moderately cooled, it is drawn by means of a syphon into a tank, and the refuse thrown into a covered vault; every operation being performed under the same close roof." Sir John states that he regards the operations introduced by this company "as an

invaluable practical invention,” and expresses his belief that it will “be speedily adopted in the maritime parts of the empire, and thus become a real national blessing.”

Ship-building:- In the building and repairing of vessels, 30 men are at present employed; at former periods, there have been as many as 100. The largest vessel ever built here was one of 443 tons.

V - Parochial Economy

Market Town:-The nearest market-town is Kirkcaldy, six miles distant. The only village in the parish is Kirkcaldy.

Burgh:- The town-council consists of 21, while only 31 burghers are qualified to be elected; but this is one of the burghs the number of whose councillors it is proposed to reduce. It unites with Kirkcaldy, Dysart, and Kinghorn in returning a Member to Parliament. The number of voters is 48. Within the parliamentary boundaries, there are 66 persons whose rents in property or tenantry amount to L.10 per annum and upwards, and of these 35 are burgesses. Within the same boundaries, there are 53 persons whose rents amount to L.5, and are under L.10; and of these 9 are burgesses. Besides the guildry, amounting to 82, inclusive of 7 non-resident, there are 6 incorporated trades, viz. hammermen, tailors, weavers, fleshers, shoemakers, bakers. All these corporations, together with a rather wealthy institution called the Prime-Guild Society, which consists of ship-owners and others connected with the sea-faring line, are possessed of seats in the parish church; and it must be added, that some of these bodies wring out as high seat rents as possible from the pockets of the parishioners. A number of seats are also possessed by the town.

Means of Communication:- There is a regular post-office, the revenue of which amounted, some years ago to about L. 300; but, from the decay of trade, is now understood to fall short of that sum. The communication with Edinburgh, by means of the post, is twice-a-day. There are about five miles of turnpike road, but no public carriages travel regularly through any part of the parish. The Dundee and Perth coaches come occasionally this way, when the weather is too severe to admit of the passengers embarking at Pettycur. This being one of the stations of the Fife and MidLothian ferries, there is regular communication by steam with Newhaven; but great complaints are made of the extravagance of the fares, which are 2s. in the cabin, and 1s. 6d. steerage, very high rates, it must be allowed, for a distance short of six miles, In addition to the steam-vessels, there are large sailing-boats which ply at tide time every lawful day, and are principally employed in carrying goods, etc.

Harbour, & c. – The opinion anciently entertained of the excellence of the harbour may be learned from the name “Portus Gratiae” or “Portus Salutis”, by which it is designated in some of the charters of the burgh. It is still reckoned the best in the frith, being easily entered, as well as very capacious and secure; and at full tide of great depth. Its latitude is 56 deg 3 min 20 sec, its longitude 3 deg 15 min. The distance between the lighthouse on the pier and that on the pier at Newhaven is five miles and a third nearly, as found by accurate observations. In 1833, the vessels belonging to this port were eight, and their tonnage 900. The extension of the piers would be a vast improvement, and could be effected at a moderate expense, as the necessary materials are abundant in the neighbourhood, and the other natural facilities are great. Were this effected, the harbour could easily be entered at any state of the tide. With reference to the improvement of the ferry, Sir Thomas Telford has suggested the construction of a landing-pier a little to the eastward. In his report on the subject, he gives a decided preference to Burntisland as a landing-place on the north shore of the frith, - stating, that “whether the expense of construction, or the distance, facility, and regularity of passage, is considered, it appears quite clear that Burntisland should be adopted.” - “It is, indeed,” he says, “most fortunate that a place so well calculated should afford the shortest passage, and be otherwise so favourably situated.”

Dock:- Connected with the harbour is a dry dock belonging to Mr Farnie. It is 200 feet in length, the width of the gates is 44 feet, and the depth of water at high spring tides 16-1/2 feet. The gates are of a peculiar construction, being circular in the bottom. A Russian frigate of 1000 tons, and the steam-ship, the United Kingdom, are the largest vessels that have ever been in this dock.

Roadstead:- The roadstead of Burntisland possesses great advantages, and is accordingly much resorted to in stormy weather. The anchorage is good; there is great depth of water very near the shore; and ample shelter is afforded by the high ground to the north, and by the sand-bank to the east, which projects a considerable way into the sea. At Starly-burn there is a small harbour where the limestone belonging to the Carron Company is shipped, and where vessels occasionally take in water, of which

there is a copious supply. For this latter purpose, it was frequently resorted to by the King's ships during the last war. About half a mile to the eastward of the town, there is also a pier for the shipping of lime.

Ecclesiastical State:- The parish church stands on the ridge which rises from the sea. It was built in 1592, on the model, it is understood, of the North Church of Amsterdam, and is thus an indication of the ancient intercourse which subsisted between this port and Holland. It was erected, not by the heritors, but by the inhabitants of the town, who began to find it inconvenient to go over to the old church at Kirkcoun. They asked nothing of the heritors but their consent; and, as an inducement, offered them their due proportion of seats, taking the whole burden, not only of building, but also of repairing on themselves. They reared, accordingly, a substantial square edifice, surmounted by a tower, the height of which is not proportioned to its thickness; but want of funds is understood to have prevented it from lifting its head so high as was contemplated. Though situated on the boundary of the parish, and distant about three miles from its northern extremities, the church is perfectly convenient for the great mass of the population. It is at present in a good state of repair, and affords accommodation for 900 or upwards, but might easily be made to accommodate a hundred or two more, as the area is very uneconomically seated. In the former Account, it is stated as a fact well known in this place, that it once held within its walls between 3000 and 4000 Hessians, who were lying encamped near the town in 1746.

The manse was built in 1824, and is considered one of the best in Scotland. The glebe consists of 5 Scots acres, and is let at a yearly rent of L.35. There is no grass glebe, but the sum of L.15 Sterling is allowed in lieu of it. The stipend is mostly payable in money, and amounts to about L.190.

There is a chapel in the parish in connection with the United Secession Synod. The minister is paid out of the seat rents, and his stipend is understood to be L.100. An assistant and successor is about to be appointed, when it is proposed that the former shall receive L.60, and the latter L.80. A house belonging to the congregation forms part of the living of the minister.

Taking 500 as the number of families, about 330 of these belong to the Established Church, and the rest, with very few exceptions, to the United Secession. A very small number are connected with no religious denomination, and there are three or four Roman Catholics. Divine service is respectably attended both at the parish church, and at the dissenting meeting-house; at both it might be better. The average number of communicants at the Established Church is about 400. In connection with the congregation of the parish church, there is a society in support of the missions, &c. of the Church of Scotland. As it is but of recent origin, it would be premature to conjecture the amount of its annual contributions. The collections at the parish church for religious and charitable purposes may be stated as averaging for some years between L.20 and L.30 per annum. This is exclusive of the ordinary collections for the poor, which amount in the year to between L.60 and L.70. The sum realised during the last two years and a-half for religious purposes, including collections, a subscription for church extension, and the contributions already obtained by the society in connection with the parish church, falls very little short of L.130.

Education:- There are in all seven schools in the parish; but five of these are small, and four of them are taught by females. There is no parochial school. The burgh school has always been under the direction of the magistrates and council, and the teacher is appointed by them. His salary is L. 37 a-year, and is paid out of the burgh revenue. The regulated fees are, for English reading, 2s. per quarter ; do. with writing, 2s. 6d. ; with arithmetic, 4s. 6d.; Latin, with Greek, French, arithmetic, mathematics, English grammar, geography, 6s. per quarter; navigation and bookkeeping, L. 1, 1s. per course. These fees have been the same for the last twenty years. All regulations for the school are made under the sanction and control of the magistrates. There are certain lands in the parish mortgaged by a Mr Watson, and a house and garden in the burgh, for behoof of the schoolmaster and three poor widows. Each of the widows has an allotment in the house, and each a third of the garden. The land is let to a tenant at the money rent of L. 18, 10s., and 34 bolls of barley and 6 bolls of oatmeal yearly, the growth of the lands; and if he has no barley on the lands, he is bound to pay the highest Mid-Lothian fiar prices for the barley and oatmeal. Ten bolls of the barley, and one fourth of the money rent are paid to the schoolmaster, for which he is obliged to teach as many poor children belonging to the town and parish as the magistrates recommend, at the rate of 1s. 6d. per quarter, the number of scholars not to exceed, at this rate, the sum he may draw yearly. The rest of the barley, oatmeal, and money rent, is divided equally among the three widows.

The average number attending all the school-- is not much short of 300, which, taking the population at 2100, gives about one seventh attending school. - The people in general seem alive to the benefits of education. Very few above six or seven are unable to read, and most can both read and write. There are two Sunday schools, besides a class connected with the congregation of the parish church.

Literature:- There is a subscription library of between 500 and 600 volumes. Along with the proportion of trash which is usually found in such libraries, it contains a good deal of the standard literature of the country. It has not of late, been in a very flourishing condition. There is also a parish library, chiefly for the benefit of the poorer classes and of the young. It consists of about 300 volumes, chiefly of a religious nature. The books are given out gratis, and the number of readers, both old and young, is very considerable.

Charitable Institutions:- Watson's Mortification, already mentioned, is the only thing in the shape of an endowment for the poor. In January 1829. a society was formed called "The Burntisland Funeral Insurance Society." It is divided into three classes the first, including those who insure a sum of money to be paid at their death; the second, those who insure a sum to be paid at the death of their wives or husbands; and the third, those who insure a sum to be paid at the death of any of their children under eighteen years of age. Any person qualified may enter any one or more of these classes. By the original regulations, it is provided that persons under forty years of age shall pay 2s. and those above that age 4s. on their admission as members ; and that at each quarterly meeting, each member of one class shall pay 3d.; each member of two classes, 6d.; and each member of three classes, 9d. On the death of a member of the first or second class, L. 5 may be drawn from the funds of the society by the party having a right and on the death of a child of a member of class third, if under three months, L. 1, 10s. may be drawn ; if above that age and under three years, L. 2; if between three and eighteen years. L. 3. On these regulations some slight changes have been made, the sums payable on the death of members being now somewhat smaller. This Society has proved of considerable benefit to the working classes, and now numbers upwards of 300 members. There is no savings bank in the parish. An attempt was made to establish one, some years ago, but it unfortunately failed.

Poor and Parochial Funds:- The number at present on the poor's roll is 35. Individuals receive 6d. 1s. or 1s.6d. per week, according to their circumstances, - some, who have children to support, receive larger sums. The highest allowance at present is 3s. The funds arise from the collections at the church door, which may be stated at L.65; from proclamations which, at 2s.6d. each, yield from L.2 to L.2, 5s. per annum; and from a voluntary assessment on the part of the landward heritors to the extent of L.50, the whole of which, however, has not for some time been realised. For a year or two, these funds have proved insufficient to meet the demands made upon them, and the kirk-session have been under the necessity of calling upon the heritors to renew their contribution before the expiry of the annual term. On account of the decay of trade, and the consequent lack of employment, pauperism has been, for some time, decidedly on the increase. Among many of the poor, there is very little reluctance to apply for parochial aid. There are some honourable exceptions; but the old Scottish spirit of independence is gradually disappearing. Instances also occur of extreme unwillingness to contribute towards the maintenance of infirm or aged relatives. As yet, the spirit of beneficence is far from being dormant in the breasts of the wealthier classes. The amount of private charity is considerable; and subscriptions are occasionally made to meet cases of peculiar destitution. Coals, procured in this way, are generally distributed in the winter season; and to the liberality of James Strange, Esq. and his household, by whom Rossend Castle has for some years been occupied during the summer months, have the poor been indebted for a seasonable supply of this necessary article, in the course of the present and two preceding winters.

Jail:- The jail of Burntisland is neither large nor commodious; but there are seldom any prisoners. The following statement of the number of civil and criminal causes tried by the magistrates from 1820 to 1833 inclusive, is taken from the Report on Municipal Corporations in Scotland.

1820 Civil Causes – 6	Criminal Causes - 2
1821 Civil Causes – 6	Criminal Causes - 2
1822 Civil Causes – 13	Criminal Causes - 1
1823 Civil Causes – 5	Criminal Causes - 1
1824 Civil Causes – 14	Criminal Causes - 1
1825 Civil Causes – 6	Criminal Causes - 1

1826 Civil Causes – 15 Criminal Causes - 4
1827 Civil Causes – 25 Criminal Causes - 4
1828 Civil Causes – 10 Criminal Causes - 0
1829 Civil Causes – 18 Criminal Causes - 0
1830 Civil Causes – 15 Criminal Causes - 0
1831 Civil Causes – 4 Criminal Causes - 3
1832 Civil Causes – 16 Criminal Causes - 10
1833 Civil Causes – 20 Criminal Causes - 2

Inns Etc.:- There are 2 respectable inns, and 15 or 16 ale-houses, which, as in most other places, have an injurious effect on the morals of the people.

Fair:- A fair is annually held in the town on the 10th day of July.

Fuel:- The chief fuel is coal, which is brought principally from Lochgelly and the neighbourhood, about six or eight miles distant. The price is from 9s. to 10s.6d. per ton, including tolls and carriage.

Miscellaneous Observations.

Since the date of last Account, both the town and the landward district have undergone great improvements. For a number of years, the town has been a favourite watering-place. The pure air, the good bathing-ground, the agreeable and extensive walks, the rich and varied scenery, together with the facility of communication with Edinburgh, attract annually a great number of visitors; so that, between June and October, the town assumes a much more animated appearance than during the remainder of the year. There is good accommodation for visitors, at rates varying from a small sum up to fifteen or twenty guineas per month. The vitriol work., which was in operation when the last Statistical Account was written, has been long suspended, and the premises have been converted into cottages for the summer visitors.

The country part of the parish is in a much higher state of cultivation than it was forty years ago. The farms are large, and the country population is consequently smaller. In this, as in many parishes, a want of hands is sometimes experienced in harvest, many who formerly inhabited rural districts having been attracted to towns by the thriving state of manufactures. Would it not be for the advantage of all parties, if proprietors were to erect cottages, or give greater facilities for feuing or otherwise encourage labourers and their families to settle in the country? This would be preferable in many ways to the system of bothies; and we should look for a much healthier state of the community, both in a moral and an economical point of view, were the proportion of the rural to the town population much higher than it is.

December 1836.