

PARISH OF ABBEY ST BATHANS.

PRESBYTERY OF DUNSE, SYNOD OF MERSE AND TIVIOTDALE.

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name, Boundaries, &c.—THE name of this parish has been variously written; St Boythans, St Bothans, and St Bathans. St Boythans occurs in the more ancient writings. St Bothans was the usual form till the early part of the last century; and St Bathans, which was then introduced, has continued to be the name ever since. The prefix abbey was first made use of at an earlier period, and was probably employed to distinguish this parish where there was formerly a convent, from that of Gifford, or Yester, in East Lothian, anciently called St Bothans, where there was a collegiate church, but no monastic establishment.

The mean length of the parish of Abbey St Bathans from east to west is about $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and its mean breadth from north to south about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles; the whole extent of the surface falls somewhat short of 8 square miles. It is of an irregular figure, and is divided into two portions by a detached part of the parish of Longformacus. It is bounded on the north by Cockburnspath, Oldhamstocks and Innerwick, on the west by Longformacus, on the south by Dunse, and on the east by Coldingham and Buncl. The church and manse, which lie nearly in the centre of the parish, are about fourteen miles southward of Dunbar, and about seven miles northward of Dunse; their latitude being about $55^{\circ} 52'$ N., and their longitude about $2^{\circ} 23'$ W.

Topographical Appearances.—Though the parish is situated among the Lammermoor hills, none of the more remarkable elevations of that range lie within its bounds. The high grounds rise to a height varying from 300 to 400 feet above the intervening vales, and then spread out into extensive flats. On the sides of the streams which drain the hills are flats or haughs of considerable fertility—the slopes are also in many cases fertile; but the greater part of the higher grounds is barren and covered with heath.

Hydrography.—The river Whitadder winds in a sinuous course through the parish, its general direction being from west to east. It is here a beautiful stream, upwards of eighty feet in breadth. Before it enters the parish, it has run about twelve miles from its source, and has received the river Dye, with many smaller streams. In its progress through the parish it receives a number of streamlets from the dells and vales that occur among the hills; but its two principal tributaries are the Monynut and the Ware, flowing in a south-easterly direction.

Mineralogy.—Veins of copper-ore having been discovered on the estate of St Bathans, an English mining company obtained right by lease in the year 1828 to work this mineral; but after driving in a single mine, they abandoned the undertaking.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Historical Notices.—Small as this parish now is, it consisted before the Reformation of two parishes. These were St Bathans and Strafontane. We will trace the history of each separately.

With regard to St Bathans, it appears that soon after the introduction of Christianity into this part of the country, (an event which took place in the early part of the seventh century,) a church was founded here, and dedicated to the saint whose name the parish now bears.* Like that of Coldingham, it was, during the

* Chalmers' Caledonia, Vol. ii. p. 212, 344.—There is reason to believe that this holy person was St Baithen, cousin to the celebrated St Columba, and his successor as Abbot of Iona. St Baithen employed much of his time in propagating the doctrines of Christianity in the country now called Scotland, and in establishing churches there. He died on 9th June 598.

That it may be seen on what grounds the writer of this article conjectures that this parish derived its name from St Baithen, he shall add a short explanation. There are four saints whose names bear a close resemblance to that of this parish. These are the following: 1st, St Bothan. According to Chalmers, St Bothan was the patron of this parish, (Caledonia, Vol. ii. p. 344.) But this saint was a bishop of Dunblane, (Camerarius de pietate Scotorum,) and must therefore have lived after the erection of that bishopric by David I. The church of St Bathans, however, was dedicated to its saint many centuries before. If it be said that St Bothan, who is not mentioned in Keith's Catalogue of the Bishops, may have been a member of the convent of Culdees, which was established at Dunblane before the erection of the bishopric, this circumstance would not increase the probability of his being the patron saint of this parish, because in that case he must have flourished subsequent to the time of St Blaas, from whom Dunblane derived its name; and, as St Blaas lived in the reign of Kenneth III. (Keith's Catalogue,) St Bothan could not have been the person to whom the church of St Bathans was dedicated some ages before. 2d, St Bathan. He is said to have been a bishop or teacher and confessor throughout the whole of Scotland, but chiefly in Orkney and Shetland, (Camerarius.) It is not likely that a church would be dedicated to him in the Saxon kingdom of Northumberland, in which kingdom this parish was then situated. Camerarius confounds this saint with the following: 3d, St Baithan. He was one of the persons to whom a celebrated letter from Pope John was addressed in 640, preserved in Bede. He was Bishop of Clonmaenois in Ireland, (Jameson's History of the Culdees, p. 104,) and it is not therefore probable that he was the saint to whom the church of St Bathans was dedicated.

incursions of the Danes, destroyed more than once by fire; a calamity to which such edifices were in those days peculiarly liable from their having been constructed of wood. In a subsequent age it became a living of considerable value,* but at the Reformation its revenues were reduced to a very small amount.

At the church of St Bathans a convent of Cistercian nuns, with the title of a Priory, was founded between the years 1184 and 1200 by Ada, daughter to King William the Lion, and wife to Patrick Earl of Dunbar. From this lady and her husband, and from subsequent benefactors, the institution received various grants in lands and revenues, and among other benefactions the patronage of the church, a grant which enabled the nuns, by appointing a vicar, to appropriate to themselves the large revenues of the living. The property thus acquired consisted of a considerable estate in the immediate neighbourhood of the convent, various detached subjects lying in the counties of East Lothian and Berwick, and a large revenue in tithes. † About the time of the Reformation the lands were alienated by the prioress and nuns, principally to Lord Home, for payment of annual feu-duties; and, on the final suppression of monasteries, the benefice itself was gifted to Elizabeth Home, a relative of the same nobleman, and wife to Adam Cuming, Comendator of Beaully; and, by a transaction with her, and through the favour of the crown, it was subsequently acquired by David, son to Patrick Lindsay, Bishop of Ross, afterwards Archbishop of Glasgow, who seems to have disposed of it in parcels to various individuals. Elizabeth Home took the title of Prioress, and David Lindsay that of Prior of St Bathans. ‡

Besides the church and priory of St Bathans, a chapel was founded in this parish, but by whom, or at what time, does not appear.

4th, St Baithen. Besides the circumstance that none of his competitors seem to have any claim, there are various reasons for supposing that St Baithen is entitled to be considered as the patron saint of this parish. 1. About the time at which the church was founded, a constant intercourse subsisted between this part of the country and Iona, where St Baithen was abbot. 2. Like his relation, St Columba, St Baithen preached in this part of the country; and, 3. the name of this saint and the most ancient name of this parish (St Boythan) are very similar in sound.

* See *Taxatio* in Chalmers' *Caledonia*, ii. 322.

† The estate in the neighbourhood of the convent consisted of the farms of St Bathans, Frampath, and Hardhissells, with their corn and waulk-mills, Blackerston, and the half of Quixwood. The other properties of the priory were situated in Stenton, Pople, Belhaven, Cockburnspath, Butterdean, Billie, Dunse, Ninewar, Kimmergham, and Edinburgh; and its tithes consisted of those of Waughton and Crauba, of the town and mains of Cockburnspath and their steadings, including Fulfordlees and the two Hoprigs, the two Shiells, Rauchenside and Cloves, and those of the farms belonging to the convent itself.—(Title-deeds of the Benefice.)

‡ See Title-Deeds.

The history of the parish of Strafontane commences in the reign of David II., in which reign an hospital was founded here; but the name of the founder is forgotten. This house seems at one time to have been dependent on the abbey of Alnwick. It was in 1437 transferred by the abbot of that place to the monastery of Dryburgh; * and it came ultimately into the possession of the collegiate church of Dunglass, and gave a title to one of the prebends. Its original destination as an hospital was changed to that of a church; but public worship ceased to be performed in it at the Reformation. Its cure was then united to that of St Bathans. †

Eminent Men.—As a remarkable person connected with this parish, David Hume of Godscroft may be mentioned. This accomplished gentleman, who was the son of Sir David Hume of Wedderburn, held a conspicuous place among the miscellaneous writers of the seventeenth century, and was one of the early and most intimate friends of the celebrated Andrew Melville. He was extensively acquainted with the ancient and modern languages, theology, politics, and history; and among those who at that period were distinguished for their skill in the composition of Latin poetry, which was then enthusiastically cultivated, there were few who showed a mind more deeply imbued with its genuine spirit. ‡

Antiquities.—The church of St Bathans is a very ancient building. The north and east walls still bear marks of antiquity. In

* Chalmers' Caledonia, ii. 348.

† Report to Commission of Teinds preserved in Register House, Edinburgh.

‡ The works of David Hume of Godscroft consist of, (1.) Latin Poems, several of which were printed in a separate form, and were collected and published under the title "Poemata Omnia, &c." at Paris, 1639. 8vo.—(2.) Tractatus de Unione Insulæ Britannicæ. Lond. 1605. 4to. And reprinted at the end of the "Poemata" 1639.—(3.) Camdenæ, sive Vindiciæ Buchanani contra Camdenum. M.S. 4to.—(4.) History of the House of Douglas and Angus. Edinburgh, 1743. 2 vols. 12mo.

N. B.—There was a David Hume, minister of one of the Protestant churches abroad, the author of one or two works in French and Latin, which have been usually attributed to David Hume of Godscroft. Whether he was any relation does not certainly appear.

James Hume, doctor of medicine, son of David Hume of Godscroft, was the author of the following works:—(1.) Pataleonis Vaticinia Satyra ad Dom. Rob. Kerum, &c. Rothemagi, 1633. 18mo.—(2.) Traité de la Trigonometrie, &c. Paris, 1636. small 8vo.—(3.) Algebre de François Viete d'une Methode Nouvelle, par Jacques Hume, Escuyer. Paris, 1636. 8vo.—(4.) Latin Poems, &c. subjoined to the volume "Poemata, &c." of his father, David Hume of Godscroft, printed at Paris 1639. 8vo. James Hume appears to have been editor of the volume.—(5.) Methode Universelle pour faire et descrire toutes sortes des Quadrans et d'Horiloges, avec Nouvelle Demonstratione fort belle et Curieuse. Paris, 1640. 8vo.

Anna Hume, daughter of David Hume of Godscroft. She published in English verse, "The Triumphs of Love—Chastity—Death." Translated out of Petrarch by Mrs Anna Hume." Edinburgh, 1644. Small 8vo.

the former is to be seen an arched door, now built up, which communicated with the residence of the nuns. The ancient Gothic architecture of the east window is still in some measure preserved; and in the wall near the altar was a stone font with a leaden pipe in the bottom. The building was formerly large, measuring 58 feet by 26; but about the end of last century it was greatly contracted by the removal of the west wall to a position nearer the centre.

Adjoining the church, and between it and the Whitadder, the remains of the priory were visible a few years ago, but they have now entirely disappeared,—the stones having been carried away for various purposes. From the vestiges, however, which could then be traced, the buildings seem to have been of considerable extent. The house was supplied with water from a spring in the rising ground to the south by means of leaden pipes, parts of which have at different times been dug up. To the south and east of the church lay the gardens of the priory, thence called the precincts yards, and round the whole was a walk composed of three tiers of stones. On the east side of these gardens was another walk of considerable breadth, bearing the name of the Bishop's Loan.

At some distance east from the church, in a woody nook, issues a spring named St Bathans's well, which, according to the superstition of ancient times, had the power of healing diseases; and which still, as is the belief in the neighbourhood, neither fogs nor freezes, and even prevents a mill-lead into which it flows from being locked up with ice in the winter.

Farther east, and about a quarter of a mile from the church, were to be seen some years ago the foundations of the chapel, and of a wall enclosing a small space around it. This space bore no marks of having been used as a place of interment. These foundations have now been removed on account of the obstruction they presented to the operations of agriculture, but the field that contained them is still called *Chapel-field*.

Like most of the other ancient buildings in the district, the remains of the church of Strafontane, which was situated about a mile west of St Bathans, on the south side of the Monynut, have disappeared before the encroachments of the plough. It is, however, but a few years since the foundations of this church were extant, with the mouldering tombstones around it; and it is said that

within a century, (*i. e.* that is since 1730,) burials have taken place here.

It is a favourite article of belief in this quarter, that a subterranean passage exists leading from the nunnery of St Bathans, below the Whitadder, to the church of Strafontane, by which the nuns went, unseen, to be confessed by the clergy there.

III.—POPULATION.

The parish is thinly inhabited, the whole population by the census of 1831 amounting to no more than 121 souls, of whom 66 are males, and 55 females. As compared with the number of inhabitants in 1821, there is a decrease of 29 souls in the population; but this diminution is accounted for by the circumstance of young unmarried men being preferred to married men as servants, by some of the tenants who now occupy the farms. It appears, however, that the population of this parish, though subject to temporary fluctuation, has gradually decreased in numbers for two centuries past. This seems chiefly to have arisen from the enlargement of farms, two or three being now united into one. Thus the Farm of Abbey St Bathans consists of lands which, till within these last hundred years, were divided into three separate farms, *viz.* St Bathans, Frampath, and Hardhissells; and besides a corn-mill, there was a waulk-mill on the same estate, till within these fifty years.

There is in the parish one resident proprietor of land of the yearly value of about L. 50. The number of unmarried men upwards of fifty years of age is 4, and of unmarried women upwards of forty-five, 3.

The whole number of houses in the parish is 29, of which 23 are inhabited; and the number of families also 23.

The inhabitants are in general sober, frugal, and industrious in their habits, and are contented with their situation and circumstances, which are such as to afford them, in a reasonable degree, the comforts and advantages of society.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

The parish consists of six farms, containing in all about 5000 acres of land. Of this surface about 2600 acres are hill pasture, never cultivated; about 100 acres are covered with wood; and the remainder, about 2300 acres, are arable.

Husbandry.—The lands, like other parts of Lammermoor, are in general more adapted to the breeding of cattle and sheep than to the raising of corn; but on the several farms there is a consider-

able part of the grounds under cultivation, and different kinds of grain, particularly early oats and barley, are produced, little inferior in quality to those raised in the lower parts of Berwickshire. The five break rotation of crops is generally employed, namely, turnips, barley, grass, and oats, the grass being allowed to lie for two years; but a crop of pease is sometimes introduced, in which case the grass is allowed to lie for only one year.

The chief object, however, that the skilful farmer has in view in making use of the plough, is not so much the immediate return from the corn that he raises, as the amelioration of the pasture for his cattle and sheep, by sowing his fields with artificial grass seeds, particularly rye-grass and white clover, which thrive well on all the dry grounds that have been improved with lime, and also the procuring of hay, turnips, and straw, as food and litter for his stock during the winter. This method of husbandry enables the farmer not only to keep a much greater quantity of stock, but also greatly to improve the breed both of his cattle and sheep.

Rent of Land.—The average rent of grazing on out-field pasture is at the rate of from 25s. to 35s. per ox or cow, and at the rate of about 3s. per ewe or full-grown sheep pastured for the year. But the summer pasture of a cow, if she is grazed on sown grass, is at least L. 3.

The expense of furnishing a pair of horses with harness, &c. to fit them for draught in the cart and plough, is about L. 10. The smith work necessary to keep a plough in repair, and a pair of horses properly shod, costs about L. 3.

Price of Labour.—The wages of male servants who get their board in the house are about L. 8 a-year; of female servants about L. 5 for the summer half year, (field labour being then required,) and from L. 1, 10s. to L. 2 for the winter half year. Servants who have families and keep a house are paid in grain, have a cow grazed, and other perquisites, which altogether amount to about L. 25 yearly. The wages of a day-labourer are about 1s. 8d. or 2s. a-day in summer, and about 1s. 6d. in winter. In hay time and harvest they are considerably more.

Breeds of Live-Stock.—The breeds of sheep commonly kept on the farms are the black-faced and the Cheviot, but chiefly the latter; and to improve the stock, the black-faced and Cheviot ewe is often crossed with the Leicester tup.

Improvements.—On one farm in the parish the present tenant has, in the space of six years, improved, out of heath, upwards of

100 acres of land, at the expense of about L. 5 per acre. The advantage derived from the improvement of the pasture is found to afford a sufficient return upon the capital thus employed.

Surface draining is found to be a great improvement on the stock farms in Lammermoor, and has been carried to a considerable extent. By cutting a trench about 24 inches wide and 14 inches deep in a proper direction, the water is allowed to escape from the surface of boggy land; and instead of the rushes, &c. produced in swampy situations, there rises a natural grass mixed with white clover.

Great advantage would result to the tenant from more accommodation in the way of houses for cattle, &c. than is at present found on some of the farms; and generally from more extensive enclosing; strips of plantation judiciously situated for shelter would also be very conducive to his interest.

Produce.—The average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish may be estimated as follows:

Average produce of grain of all kinds, about 1200 quarters, at the average price of 22s. per quarter,	L. 1320 0 0
Potatoes and turnips, about 130 acres, at the average price of L. 4, 10s. per acre,	585 0 0
Pasture, with straw and hay, cut principally to be consumed on the farms,	650 0 0
Total,	L. 2555 0 0

The yearly value of raw produce may be assumed, therefore, as between L. 2000 and L. 3000 Sterling. In point of soil and climate, this parish is perhaps preferable to any other part of Lammermoor, and on this account the returns from corn, turnips, and pasture, may be taken somewhat above the average for the hill district.

The leases of the several farms are for nineteen years, and do not seem to present any obstacle to improvement.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Means of Communication.—The parish roads are kept in tolerably good repair, though their occasional steepness is felt an inconvenience.

There is, properly speaking, no village in the parish; but in a delightful little vale through which the Whitadder glides, lie the farm-house and steading of Abbey St Bathans with its adjoining smithy; a neat cottage, a corn-mill, the decent parish church, the manse which, topping a little eminence, is embosomed among trees, and the school-house; so that there are here to be seen within a small space a cluster of objects connected with the improve-

ment and well-being of man. The interest awakened by these objects is at the same time heightened by the natural scenery amidst which they occur. *

A substantial foot bridge has lately been erected over the Whitadder, which is a great convenience to the neighbourhood, a boat having been formerly the only means of crossing the stream. To the eye of the traveller, whose way lies through this romantic spot, nothing can be more striking than the contrast between it and the barren heaths, which on one side or other he must pass to reach it.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church is situated conveniently for the population, its distance from the remotest part of the parish not exceeding two miles. It is at present in a good state of repair, and affords accommodation for 140 persons. The seats are apportioned to the several heritors according to their valued rents, and are occupied by the tenants and their servants.

The manse was built in 1822. The extent of the glebe is about fourteen acres of arable land, worth about L. 1 per acre yearly rent. The stipend is one of those augmented by Government to L. 150, besides an allowance of L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. The sum received annually from the Exchequer is L. 93, 16s. 4d. As the larger part of the stipend, namely, L. 137, 11s. 5d., is payable in money, the whole amount from year to year is not much affected by the variation in the fiars.

With the exception of four or five families, the inhabitants attend the Established church. But besides the parishioners, a number of individuals from the outskirts of the surrounding parishes find it more convenient to attend public worship at this place than at their several parish churches, on account of the distance. From this cause, not only are the numbers increased of those who attend the ordinary service of the Sabbath, but also the number of communicants exceeds what the parish itself would naturally furnish, the number being usually above eighty. There is no dissenting meeting-house or chapel within the bounds of the parish.

* Along each side of the Whitadder, a fertile haugh stretches for upwards of a quarter of a mile; beyond which the hills that wall in the valley rise on all sides, with considerable steepness. The ground on the north side of the vale rises abruptly from the haugh, and presents a bank finely covered with natural wood. The slope which forms the south side of the vale is cultivated to a considerable height, and portions of it are planted with larch and Scotch fir, intermingled with the elm, the oak, and the ash; but still rising higher as it recedes, it at last presents nothing but its natural covering of heath. At each end of the valley, besides the opening by which it receives and transmits the Whitadder, there opens a beautiful dell from north-westward, with its appropriate brook. These romantic objects, joined with its attractions connected with human life, render this vale, although sequestered, a cheerful and pleasant habitation.

Education.—The parish school, which is the only place of education in the parish, is situated at a convenient distance from the several farm-steadings. The outskirts of the surrounding parishes also furnish some scholars. All the usual branches of instruction are taught at the following rates: Reading, 2s. per quarter; reading and writing, 3s per do.; reading, writing, and arithmetic, 4s 6d. per do.; Latin and Greek languages, 7s. per quarter; mathematics, 7s. 6d. per do. The salary of the schoolmaster (including a mortification) is L. 30 yearly; and the amount of the school fees may be about L. 10 more.

The people in general appear to be sufficiently alive to the benefits of education, but the progress of the children at school is much impeded during the summer and autumn, by their being so frequently called out to work in the fields.

Friendly Society.—The only friendly society that exists in the parish is one instituted in the year 1828, and having for its object the procuring of medical assistance for the members and their families in case of sickness. Each member pays a small sum quarterly into the hands of the treasurer, and thus a fund is formed, out of which, when sickness occurs, the expense of calling in a medical practitioner and of procuring medicines is defrayed. There are at present forty-three members; and the amount of disbursements made by the treasurer during the four years that the society has existed is about L. 15.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—There are at present only two individuals who receive parochial aid; the one a widow advanced in years, the other a woman of middle age. The annual contributions for their relief amount to L. 7, 18s., of which sum about L. 3 arise from church collections; the remainder is raised by legal assessment.

It is to be regretted that the poor in this neighbourhood, so far from regarding it as degrading to receive parochial aid, apply for it without hesitation, and consider it as a legal provision made for them, to which they have as good a title as to the wages of labour.

Fuel.—The fuel commonly used in the parish is turf and peat, but more generally the former. Coals cannot be obtained for less than 20s. per ton, on account of the distance from which they must be brought.

Inns.—There is no alehouse in the parish, but there is one in the immediate neighbourhood. It does not appear, however, that any bad effects on the morals of the inhabitants arise from this cause.

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