

PARISH OF LIVINGSTONE.

PRESBYTERY OF LINLITHGOW, SYNOD OF LOTHIAN & TWEEDDALE,

THE REV. JAMES M. ROBERTSON, MINISTER.

THE REV. JOHN LAING, *Assistant and Successor,*

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Extent, &c.—THE length of the parish is between 4 and 5 miles from west to east, and it is nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile in breadth at each end, but contracts in the middle to about half a mile. It contains 4463 Scotch acres. It is bounded on the north-west by Bathgate and Ecclesmachan; on the east, by Uphall and Mid-Calder; on the south-east, by Mid-Calder; south, by West Calder, from which two parishes it is separated by the Ammon and the Brieck waters; and, on the west, by Whitburn.

Topographical Appearances.—The surface of the parish, though much varied, does not rise into any very distinct eminence, except one in the north-east corner, in the lands of Knightsridge, called Dechmont Law, or Knightsridge Hill. Though only 686 feet above the level of the sea, it commands a very extensive prospect. The climate, though rather moist, is favourable to health.

The Ammon (which rises in the upper parts of Lanarkshire,

and after a circuitous and somewhat rapid course in a north-easterly direction, falls into the Frith of Forth at the village of Cramond,) is, in this parish, except for the purposes of mills, a very insignificant stream in general, but when flooded, rises so as to be almost magnificent, and increases in breadth to the great injury of its banks.

Geology and Mineralogy.—The Brieck water has in its course gradually made several deep sections of the circumjacent strata. These are of the coal formation, such as clays, slate-clays, &c. In the bed of the river quantities of boulders appear. The most striking natural feature of the parish is the eminence commonly called Dechmont Law, which, with the surrounding ridges, of which it is the apex, are of the trap-rock formation. The greenstone of the summit is succeeded by compact basalt lower down, and at the foot of the eastern side, fine blue shale appears. Coal and limestone abound at its eastern side, and thus, from its close connection with strata of the coal formation, it bears a striking analogy to the larger trap formation of Arthur's Seat, &c.

A lake-stone rock, in the western part of the parish, is supposed to be fifty feet thick, dips one in every three feet to the north-west, and rises to the south-east. The lime, coal, and sandstone near it dip with equal rapidity, and in the same direction as the lake-stone. Sandstone is to be found in various directions, and from twelve to twenty feet thick.

Lime, coal, and whinstone abound over almost all the parish, but hitherto they have not been very successfully worked.

Botany.—Dechmont Law is in summer beautifully adorned with the yellow mountain-violet (*Viola lutea*), and white saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*.) In a wood west from Livingstone village, the elegant lesser winter-green (*Pyrola minor*) occurs. On the banks of a small stream half a mile above it, the great leopard's bane (*Doronicum Pardalianches*) is met with; and in the woods to the north, *Habenaria bifolia*, *Listera ovata*, and *Hypericum hirsutum* are frequently seen.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Eminent Men.—Patrick Murray, Baron of Livingstone, well deserves to have his memory recorded. Living about the middle of the seventeenth century, this young nobleman, in possession of an ample fortune, turned his attention to the study of natural history, and, not contented with forming at his own country-seat a botanic garden consisting of one thousand species of plants, a great col-

lection in those infant days of the science, he traversed foreign countries with a view to increase it. Having gone over the whole of France, he was, on his way to Italy, cut off by a fever, much to the prejudice of natural history in Scotland, and deeply regretted by those friends who could estimate the worth of character displayed by a youth, who, in the uncontrolled possession of an abundant fortune, could steadily devote himself to a praiseworthy pursuit.

Patrick Murray had been the friend and pupil of Sir Andrew Balfour, who, after his death, had his plants transported to Edinburgh, where, joining them to his own, Sir Andrew laid the foundation of the first botanic garden in that city.

Land-owners.—These are, the Earl of Rosebery; John Pitcairn, Esq., Nether Dechmont; William Wilson, Esq., Dechmont; Alexander Gray, Esq., Knightsridge; Misses Burd, Seafield; William Erskine, Esq., Blackburn House; Robert Forsyth, Esq., Redhouse; Thomas Balfour, Esq., Murrayfield; Heirs of William Baird, Westwood; Heirs of the Rev. Mr Kennedy, Brieck.

Parochial Registers.—Parochial registers were begun in 1696, and have been regularly kept since, but, owing to the smallness of the parish, are not voluminous.

Antiquities.—The house, or, as it was anciently called, the peel of Livingstone, was a fortified castle surrounded by a wet ditch about thirty feet wide, having a rampart of earth within; more than three-fourths of this ditch and rampart remained entire till nearly the middle of last century. The more modern house of Livingstone was pulled down by the present proprietor, the Earl of Rosebery, soon after his purchasing the principal part of the barony. About half a mile north-east of its site is the farm-house of New-Year Field: here, within these sixty years, stood the remains of a square tower, said to have been a hunting-seat of the Kings of Scotland, and frequented by them while Linlithgow was their stated residence, not only for amusement, but for the benevolent exercise of their prerogative of touching for the scrofula, for which disease the water of a spring-well adjoining was considered a specific, when applied by a royal hand upon the morning of New-Year's Day before sunrise. As no cures are recorded, may not we conjecture that the real benefit was inducing both monarch and subjects to practise early rising and morning ablutions, though as-

surely the substituting midsummer for the New-Year would seem to be an improvement on the plan.

A field, called Maukes Hill, which, being intersected by the Ammon, is partly in that and partly in Mid-Calder parish, is considered as a battle-field of long past years, but, as the tumuli containing stone-coffins, skeletons, and all that gives verisimilitude to the conjecture, have mostly been found in the part belonging to Mid-Calder, the elucidation of this somewhat obscure matter belongs more properly to the account of that parish.

III.—POPULATION.

The former Statistical Account gives the population in 1755 to be 598. The state of the population afterwards is as follows :

1801,	-	551
1811,	-	879
1831,	-	1035
1841,	-	1004

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—The whole of the parish is cultivated or in pasture, except about 500 acres. There are not 200 acres of moss which may yet be drained and planted. From 250 to 300 acres are under wood, viz. spruce, larch, and Scotch fir, with a few hardwood trees intermixed. Great attention is paid to the management of the plantations, particularly upon Lord Rosebery's estates, where likewise they are most extensive, and where the yearly thinnings are found very profitable.

Rent.—The rent of land is believed to be about L.1, 4s. per acre.

The Ayrshire and Teeswater milch cows are commonly kept, often crossed with other breeds. The general character of the husbandry is a regular rotation of white and green crops, and then the land is laid down for pasture. Nineteen years is the duration of the common lease.

Quarries and Mines.—There are lime, whinstone, and sandstone quarries. The lake-stone quarry, on the property of James Scales, Esq. in the vicinity of Blackburn village, which has been wrought for many years, is much famed for supplying excellent floors for ovens. It has hitherto given employment to six men in hewing and quarrying, and is sent to all parts of the country for nearly thirty miles round. Quarry now given up for encroaching on the public road. The limestone on the same property is six feet thick, and lies upon a bed of slaty sandstone, called by the workmen "blaes," four feet thick above the coal, which is like-

wise four feet in thickness; but the working of the coal and limestone have been given up for a number of years, the dip being so great as to make it unproductive.

Manufactures.—There is a cotton spinning-mill at Blackburn, which employs about 120 men, women, and children above ten years of age.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There is no market-town in the parish. The nearest is Mid-Calder, at the distance of two miles. There are two villages, Livingstone in the east, and Blackburn in the west of the parish.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church is situated on the border of Mid-Calder, about half a-mile from the eastern extremity of Livingstone parish. It is very inconveniently situate for at least three-fourths of the population. The church was rebuilt in 1732, and is in very tolerable repair. It affords accommodation for about 300 people. The only free sittings are at the communion-table, which remains standing along the length of the church.

The manse was built in 1803, at the accession of the present incumbent, and, being substantially built, has since received only trifling repairs. The glebe consists of six acres of land, valued at L.3 per acre. The amount of stipend, as allocated by the Teind Court, is 10 bolls bear, and 23 bolls meal, and L. 188, 5s. 1½d.; but, owing to some part of the teind being claimed by Whitburn, formerly a part of this parish, the stipend is not fully paid.

There is a Dissenting chapel in the village of Blackburn, belonging to the Independent persuasion. The minister is paid from the seat-rents and collections at the door. It is but thinly attended, and is believed to have only 11 joined members.

Three hundred and fourteen males, and 322 females, are considered as belonging to the Established Church. The number regularly attending is too fluctuating to be exactly ascertained.

One hundred and eighty-nine males, and 180 females, belong to the United Secession; 4 males, and 5 females, to the Church of England; 9 males, and 12 females, to the Church of Rome. 160 is the average number of communicants in the parish church.

Education.—Number of schools, 2; 1 parochial and 1 unendowed. The parochial teacher has the maximum salary, with the legal accommodations of dwelling-house, school-house, and garden.

A Sabbath school and parish library was set on foot in the village of Livingstone four years ago. It consists of nearly 300 well selected volumes, and is supported by subscription, and much prized by the population.

Friendly Society.—A Friendly Society was established in Blackburn in the year 1799, which has been of much benefit to its members, whose numbers are 30 at present, and their stock amounts to L. 125 Sterling.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—There are 27 persons on the roll of poor. The average weekly allowance is 1s. 6d.

Inns.—There are five public-houses in the parish, and three small shops in which spirits are retailed.

Fuel.—The fuel in general use is from Benhar coal-work, about four miles from the western extremity of the parish. The coal is of first-rate quality, and costs 5s. 6d. per ton on the hill.

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