

PARISH OF POLWARTH.

PRESBYTERY OF DUNSE, SYNOD OF MERSE AND TIVIODALE.

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Boundaries, &c.—THE parish of Polwarth lies nearly in the middle of the county of Berwick, forming part of the boundary between its upland and low districts. It is in the form of a triangle, the base of which is bounded by the parish of Langton; the east and west sides are bounded respectively by the two parishes of Fogo and Greenlaw. The parish is about three miles in length; its greatest breadth does not exceed two; and it occupies a space of 4.767 square miles.

Topographical Appearances.—The surface presents nothing very remarkable in character; from Kyles-hill, which rises to a moderate elevation in the western extremity, the ground gradually slopes in gentle undulations to the east. These eminences extend also into the southern angle of the parish, and, being covered with plantations and groups of trees, give the whole a very pleasing and romantic appearance.

Geology.—The southern district is the most fertile; it belongs to the new red sandstone formation. The northern belongs to the old red sandstone formation; and is poor and barren. The rock in the first of these is a dark marly stone, sometimes running into a white variety; in the second, the old red sandstone, which is continued from the adjoining parish of Greenlaw, is generally coarse and often conglomerate. Kyles-hill consists of a hard reddish porphyry; the basis of which is clay containing crystals of felspar interspersed through it. The soil of the district is for the most part clay, but beds of sand and gravel here and there intervene.

Botany.—The Flora of the parish is, from its small extent, very limited. *Campanula latifolia*, *Acer campestre*, and *Spiræa salicifolia*, occur in Marchmont woods. *Agaricus muscarius* and *Alectoria jubata*, on Kyles-hill.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Polwarth forms part of the Marchmont estates, and now belongs to Sir Hugh Purves Hume Campbell, Bart., who is sole proprietor. Marchmont House, built by Hugh the last earl, about eighty years ago, is his residence.

Antiquities.—The church stands on the edge of a beautiful glade in the grounds of Marchmont, half concealed by aged trees. It is a plain substantial building. From an inscription on the walls, it appears to have been first built prior to the year 900, when it was endowed as a rectory; and subsequently repaired in 1378. From the date of this inscription * (1703) the church appears to have been then rebuilt upon its ancient foundation walls, these bearing evident marks of a much greater age than the superstructure. Beneath the church is a vault, the cemetery of the Marchmont family, in which Sir Patrick Hume lay concealed during the times of religious intolerance. To this nobleman, who is known to history as a statesman and patriot, and also as a man of a large and enlightened mind, a brief remembrance is due in a Statistical Account of his native place. The tomb which the necessities of the times had thus converted into the abode of the living, afforded for some time a refuge to its unfortunate inmate. He was here attended by his daughter Lady Grizel Baillie, a person also of historical celebrity from the proofs she has left of a masculine mind and exalted virtue. Chiefly through her means Sir Patrick escaped to Holland; he returned to Scotland at the Revolution, after which he was successively advanced to the honours of Lord Polwarth and Earl of Marchmont.

Parochial Registers.—More light might perhaps have been thrown on the biography and antiquities of this parish, had its parochial registers been in existence; but these were unfortunately destroyed about forty-five years ago; the schoolmaster's house where they were kept having been accidentally burned to the ground. It is proper to add, that the parochial registers have been regularly kept ever since.

* This inscription appearing worthy of preservation is here subjoined.

"Templum hoc Dei cultui in ecclesia de Polwarth, a fundi dominis ejusdem prius designationis, dein cognominis ædificatum et dicatum ante annum salutis 900, rectorisq[ue] beneficio dotatum. Sed temporis cursu laefactum, a Dno Johanne de Sancto Claro de Herdmanston, genero Dni Patricii de Polwarth de eodem, circa annum 1378, reparatum, tandem vero vetustate ad ruinam vergens, sumptibus utriusque prosapiæ hæredis, Dni Patricii Hume, Comitissæ de Marchmont, &c., summi Scotiæ Chancellarii, et Dnæ Grissellæ Kar, Comitissæ, ejus sponsæ, sepulchri sacello arcuate recens constructum, et campanarum obelisco aductum fuit, Anno Domini, 1703."

notice here. In the midst of the village are two thorn trees near to each other; round these every newly married pair were expected to dance with all their friends; from hence arose the old song of "Polwarth on the Green."

Instances of longevity are not uncommon. The present incumbent, who has been sixty-four years minister, is eighty-nine years of age, and is the oldest clergyman in the Church of Scotland. Several of the parish paupers have also attained to a great age.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture and Rural Economy.—The agriculture of this parish is of the most approved kind. The soil is various. But the greatest part of it is clay, some of which is on a tilly bed, and is best adapted for grass; other parts of it are gravelly, and some sandy. On the north-west is a considerable extent of moor.

The whole parish is enclosed except a small farm, and the moor which is allotted by the proprietor to the use of the village for pasture and fuel. A great deal of land is in old grass, which is subdivided into enclosures of from ten to thirty acres, all sufficiently watered. These are let annually, and bring very high rents, for the accommodation of those farmers who breed more stock than they can maintain at home.

The principal crops are oats, barley, turnips, a little wheat, and occasionally a few pease and beans. There is a considerable quantity of old timber of good size, besides extensive young plantations, which are in general very thriving.

We here give a tabular statement of the manner in which the whole land of the parish is occupied.

Acres.
1281.32, Arable.
398.10, Wood.
259.37, Pasture.
1014.30, Moor.
- 39.53, Roads.
28.40, Fences.
17.85, Houses.
13.06, Moss.

3051.95. Total number of acres in Polwarth parish.

Rent of Land.—The valued rent of the parish is L. 1624 Scotch; the real rent is L. 1730 Sterling. Grass land lets at from 10s. to L. 2, 5s. per acre; arable land, from 10s. to L. 2, 2s.

<i>Produce.</i> —Grain of all kinds, whether cultivated for food of man or the domestic animals,	L. 1368 0 0
Potatoes, turnips, &c.	402 0 0
Hay,	490 0 0
Land in pasture,	1097 0 0
Total yearly value of raw produce raised,	L. 3297 0 0

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Means of Communication, &c.—Polwarth has no market; for this it is dependent on Dunse, which is four miles distant, and on Greenlaw, which is three. The parish is intersected by the road from Dunse to Edinburgh, and a stage-coach between these places passes the village daily. There are parish and private roads, which are all kept in good repair.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church is centrally situated, and is regularly attended by all the people, except two or three, who are Dissenters. There is no dissenting place of worship. The average number of communicants is about 120.

The stipend, which received an augmentation in 1814, consists of 64 bolls oats, 80 barley, 80 oatmeal, with L. 5, 11s. 1½d. Sterling in money. The manse is an old house with additions, part of which were made at the expense of the present incumbent. The glebe is about fourteen English acres.

Education.—There is a sufficient school-house, with a residence for the teacher. The salary is L. 28, with about an acre of land. The school is attended, on an average, by forty-five scholars. The probable yearly amount of fees actually paid to the teacher is L. 19.

Poor.—The poor on the roll of the parish amount to 9; and the present annual assessment for their support is L. 50. The reason of the largeness of this sum is, that the parish has to support a lunatic in an asylum, at an expense of L. 23, 10s. per annum. All the poor on the roll that reside in the parish have a free house and garden from the late Sir W. P. H. Campbell of Marchmont. His benevolence extended also to others, particularly to the widows of those connected with the estate. At his demise in the beginning of 1833, he farther, by an heritable bond of annuity executed by him, bequeathed L. 25 Sterling per annum for the use and behoof of the poor of Polwarth.

Besides the enrolled poor, there are others who receive occasional relief. This is afforded partly from a fund of mortified money (L. 111), the interest of which is distributed by the kirk-session, and partly from the collections at the church-doors, which may amount to L. 5 annually.

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