

## PARISH OF ECCLES.

PRESBYTERY OF DUNSE, SYNOD OF MERSE AND TIVIODALE.

THE REV. JAMES THOMSON, MINISTER. \*

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Boundaries.*—THE name Eccles occurs in each of the three kingdoms. It was a surname and baronial title of great antiquity in Dumfries-shire, and was carried in the beginning of the seventeenth century, from that county to Ireland, by a cadet of the Eccles family. Eccles in Berwickshire seems to have derived its name from the number of churches or chapels at one time situated in the parish; for we have evidence that, besides the parish church, there was formerly a chapel at Leitholm, and another at Birgham.† The term is plainly derived from the Greek word signifying a church.

It appears from the "registrate of the valuation of teinds," made in 1634, that the parish was anciently divided into four quarters. 1. Magealens or southern quarter, comprehending "Lochton, Newtown, Templand, Fairnyrigg and Birgim." 2. St John's or northern quarter, including "Mersingtoun, Overplewland, Litlethank, Herdrig, Burnhouses." 3. Ladies or eastern quarter, containing "Lawrig, Buthrig, Belchester, Newbigging, Antonshill, Peill, Stainerigg, Litem." 4. St Cuthbert's or western quarter, consisting of "Kennetsyhead, Hassingtoun, Nethermains, Whythouse, Hardaikers, Stainfeeld, and Dedriges."

The greatest length of the parish from north-east to south west is  $6\frac{3}{4}$  miles, and the greatest breadth from north-west to south-east  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and it contains 17.413 square miles, according to Mr Blackadder.

The river Tweed bounds the parish on the south. The whole of the parish, with the exception of some slightly elevated parallel

\* This account has been drawn up by Robert D. Thomson, M. D.

† The churchyard at Birgham still exists. The chapel of Leitholm stood at the west end of the present village. The site of it is marked by an old ash tree known by the name of the *chapel tree*, which grows on the summit of the *chapel know*. The adjoining ground was used as a place of burial, and is now cultivated. Bones and coffins have been occasionally dug up.

ridges, called Cotchet ridge, Brae Dunstan, and Bartlehill, consists of a plain beautifully fenced, cultivated, and wooded.

*Meteorology.*—The heat of springs in the parish is  $48^{\circ}$ , which may be considered the mean annual temperature of the atmosphere. The state of the weather from an average of five years is as follows: 120 rainy days, 12 snowy days, 39 frosty days, and 234 fair days, making the proportion of rainy to fair days as 1 to 2 nearly. The mean height of the barometer for two years was 29.390 inches, which gives  $364\frac{1}{2}$  feet for Eccles above the level of the sea.

*Diseases.*—The inference drawn here from observation is, that disease does not increase in proportion to the gross amount of the rain which falls, but according to the length of its duration in the atmosphere, or, in other words, to the diminution of the atmospheric pressure. Hence the year 1830 (in which there were long tracks of wet weather) was accompanied with many acute diseases. Scarlet fever raged with great virulence in the village of Eccles, and in Leitholm scarcely a family escaped the small-pox, though none died\* but one child who had not been vaccinated. Measles also were very frequent.

Before the general introduction of draining, intermittents were very common, but during the last thirty years they were never heard of, until about three years ago, when several well marked cases of ague occurred in the village of Eccles. Inflammations, as must happen wherever persons are exposed to sudden alternations of heat and cold, are frequent, especially during autumn. As far as the writer of this article has been able to learn, a case of calculus has never occurred in the parish.

Notwithstanding these incidental complaints, the inhabitants may be said to be very healthy. Many attain a very great old age, and there are instances of persons reaching nearly the age of a hundred.

*Hydrography.*—The average depth of the wells in the parish is fifteen feet, and the water obtained at this level is extremely clear and palatable, which may in some measure be ascribed to the great quantity of sulphate of lime which it holds in solution, and which is partly separated when the water is evaporated and allowed to cool.

The sp. gr. of the well water at Eccles manse is 1.000792 and

\* The propagation of this disease is in a great measure to be ascribed to the inefficient manner in which vaccination is performed; the principal operators being midwives and other ignorant people, who cannot be supposed capable of distinguishing between a genuine and spurious vesicle.

it contains in the imperial gallon, sulphate of lime, 57.750; common salt, 29.752; = 87.503.

On the borders of the parish, at the Leet, there is a chalybeate well which was furnished with a stone cover in 1780. The supply of water is pretty copious. Its sp. gr. is 1.00237, and in summer the temperature is 48°. The solid contents are sulphate of lime, common salt, and a minute portion of iron held in solution by carbonic acid. At the east of Birgham Haugh there are springs originating in the calcareous sandstone, which are impregnated with bicarbonate of lime, and when they drop upon plants, leave a deposit by which elegant masses are formed.

The river Tweed forms part of the south boundary of the parish, and separates it from Northumberland. Its breadth on the west side of the haugh by measurement is 114 yards, and its average depth from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet in summer.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—The best section of the rocks of the parish is seen at the Tweed, for the banks of that river rise in the form of elevated cliffs, and reach a height of 50 feet in some places above its level. They consist of a dark slaty marly sandstone, which contains 25 per cent. of carbonate of lime and a white compact sandstone dipping at a slight angle to the south-west. At Lochton, thin beds of red massy gypsum with crystals imbedded, (termed *alabuss* by the common people,) containing  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of peroxide of iron and white fibrous gypsum, occur.

Proceeding along the course of the river, the northern bank continues high and precipitous for about a quarter of a-mile, when its height gradually diminishes, and at Birgham Haugh exceeds the level of the water only by a few feet. Here the bed of the Tweed consists of magnesian limestone, containing red hornstone and crystals of calcareous spar. The south bank is formed of alternations of this rock and claystone porphyry, and these extend for some miles up the river. The sandstone of Eccles quarry, which is three miles to the north of the Tweed, reposes on a similar rock. The analysis of tolerably pure specimens from Hadden rig gives nearly: Carbonate of lime, 6.25; carbonate of magnesia, 5.25 = 11.5; or an atom of each, with some impurities; a little silica, alumina, and iron. A few shells have been observed in this rock. At the east end of the haugh, the sandstone is covered by amygdaloid, containing green steatite and calcareous spar. The upper portion resembles greenstone, and the cavities contain

quartz nodules. The inferior part of the rock has a wacke basis approaching to clay, and stilbite occurs sparingly in it.

In the sandstone which is exposed near Kennetside head, the silicious particles predominate to such an extent as to constitute almost a quartz rock. The same marly sandstone which is seen at the Tweed appears on the banks of the small river Leet, and contains thin beds of gypsum.

From these facts it appears that the whole of the parish is situated in the new red sandstone formation. A bluish marl containing 30 per cent. of carbonate of lime occurs at Harlaw and Overmains, which was used as a manure, but it seems now to be nearly exhausted. There is considerable variety of soil in the parish, that on the banks of the Tweed being light, while to the south-east there is some moor land; in the middle and northern parts, clay and loam predominate.

*Zoology.*—The banks of the Tweed and the plantations at Mayfield, harbour a number of foxes, weasels, and rabbits. The otter frequents Ferneyrig bog.

Besides about eighty common birds, the parish is occasionally visited by some rarer species. Of these may be mentioned the *Columba turtur* (turtle dove); *Aquila albicilla* (sea eagle); *Turdus vescovorus* (missel-thrush,) which was very uncommon till within the last three years; *Corythus enucleator* (hawkfinch); *Alcedo isipida* (king's fisher); *Ardea nycticorax* (night heron or bull of the bog); *Mergus merganser* (goosander); *Lanius excubitor*, Linn. (greater butcher bird.)

On the Tweed, the salmon fishery, the property of the Earl of Home, had very much declined, but during the last two years it has in some measure revived. Pike occurs in the Leet, Ferneyrig and Harlaw bogs.

*Botany.*—Notwithstanding the high state of cultivation of the parish, above 360 Phenogamous or flowering plants grow within its bounds. They may all be classed under three soils, but the rarer plants alone deserve notice; 1. marshy; 2. light and moor; and 3. clay soils.

1. Fernyrig marsh furnishes a considerable variety of the first, viz. *Hippuris vulgaris*, *Utricularia vulgaris*, *Potamogeton heterophyllus natans* var. *Samolus valerandi*, *Cœnanthe phellandrium*, *Parnassia palustris*, *Spergula nodosa*, *Ranunculus lingua*, which occur on the borders of the marsh, while the water is overgrown with the *Arundo phragmites*, the stems of which are used for thatching

houses, and by weavers, and the *Scirpus lacustris*, and *Typha latifolia*. In the bog south of Hardacres grow the *Galium boreale*, *Valeriana deltoides*, and *Listera ovata*. *Pyrola minor* in Bankhead wood. *Epilobium angustifolium*, *Eupatorium cannabinum*, Tweedside at Birgham. *Potamogeton perfoliatus*, *pectinatus*, *pusillus* and *lucens*, narrow-leaved var. in the Tweed, *Nuphar lutea*, pond at Kames; *Iris foetidissima*, pond at Anton's Hill.

2. On the banks of the Tweed are the *Dianthus deltoides*, *Cerastium arvense*, the three British *Malvae*; *Euphorbia esula*, Birgham Haugh; *Centunculus minimus*, Mayfield moor.

3. In the glebe and likewise on the banks of the Tweed, and in the fields about Eccles, grows a species of *Tragopogon*, which has been hitherto confounded with the *T. pratensis*. It was first added to the British Flora during the present year (1831) by the writer of these pages, who has been able to identify it as the *T. major*. The *Senecio tenuifolius* grows near Sunnyside and Grizzlerig. *Anchusa sempervirens* at Belville and Hassington. *Solanum dulcamara* near Orangelane; *Rubus cæsius*, Tweedside.

About 40 species of fleshy fungi have been collected in the parish, of which 30 are *Agarici*. Of the latter may be mentioned the *A. muscarius* and *A. Listeri*. The greater proportion occur at Bankhead wood. *Alectoria jubata* on trees at the same place.

There are numerous thriving plantations scattered over the parish, consisting of every variety of tree, but few of a century's standing. The most aged are some elms and ashes at Leitholm Peel, and Eccles-House.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Historical Notices.*—Birgham, a village on the Tweed, formerly called Brigham, (from a bridge which it is supposed united the two kingdoms at this point) is celebrated as having been the place where several important affairs were transacted. In 1188, when the distresses of the Holy Land had induced Henry II. of England and Philip of France to agree to tax their dominions in order to carry on a new crusade, Henry having determined in a great Council in his own kingdom, that a tenth of all the moveables and revenues of the clergy and laity should be exacted for that purpose, sent Hugh, Bishop of Durham, with some other courtiers, to collect a similar tax in Scotland. On the arrival of the Bishop and his attendants, William the Lion of Scotland met with him at Birgham, in an assembly of his bishops, earls, barons, and many inferior vassals. The meeting terminated by William informing

the English Ambassador, that he could not prevail on his clergy and laity to give the *Saladin tenth demanded*.\*

On the 17th March 1290, after a dispensation had been obtained from Pope Nicholas IV. for the marriage of Prince Edward, son of Edward I. with Margaret of Scotland, a numerous meeting of the community of Scotland assembled at Birgham, and expressed their approbation of the intended match, upon condition of Edward's giving them security for certain matters relating to the state of their country. This assembly also wrote a letter to the King of Norway, informing him of their consent, and requesting him to send his daughter as speedily as possible to England. Another meeting, furnished with greater powers, was held at the same place about the middle of July following, at which were present the Bishop of Durham and five others, who solemnly assented, in their master's name, to every important regulation made by the Scots for securing the independence of their kingdom. The death of the young queen soon after in one of the Orkneys, as is well known, defeated the intended marriage. †

Purves-Hall, the seat of John Purves of that ilk, is situated in the parish. This family was founded early in the seventeenth century.

*Eminent Men.*—Eccles was the native parish of Henry Home, Lord Kames. He was born at Kames in 1696, and there spent his youth. It was in this quiet retreat that he entertained Dr Benjamin Franklin and his son in 1759; that he wrote many of his philosophical works; and studied those agricultural processes which he has so ably described in his "Gentleman Farmer."

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owners at present connected with the parish are, the Marquis of Tweeddale; the Earl of Home; Sir W. Purves Hume Campbell; and Sir John Marjoribanks.

*Parochial Registers.*—The earliest date of the parochial registers is 1698. The present incumbent introduced a great improvement in the mode of registration. Every two opposite pages are divided into ten columns, and each column has a distinct title, stating the names of the parents, their residence, and profession, the names of the children, dates of birth and baptism, whether public or private, and the names of the witnesses. Two copies

\* Ben Petrol. p. 514.—Ridpath's Border History, p. 104.

† Rymer, Tom. ii. p. 448.—Ridpath's Border Hist. p. 166.

are preserved, one by the minister, and the other by the session-clerk.

*Antiquities.*—At Crosshall, about a mile to the north of the village of Eccles, there is a cross or monument of white sandstone, without any inscription. It consists of a column, which passing through a base or pedestal, penetrates into the earth. The late Sir John Paterson wished to remove it to near the mansion-house of Eccles, and for that purpose employed workmen, who dug several feet into the earth without being able to reach the foundation of the column. An antiquarian would regret that this monument has never been protected by any enclosure. The column above the base measures 10 feet high, 1 foot 6 inches broad on the west and east sides at the bottom, and 1 foot on the north and south. The pedestal, which is a large solid block of sandstone, is 2 feet 6 inches high, and 3 feet square on its upper surface, and is raised 1 foot 6 inches above the ground, so that the whole elevation of the cross is 14 feet. The north face of the column presents the sculpture of a cross Calvary, with the upper part surrounded by a kind of shield. The west side gradually becomes narrower upwards, and has at the summit a circular expansion 1 foot 6 inches in diameter, with a cross, and below an escutcheon, with a chevron in the dexter and sinister chiefs,\* and precise middle base respectively, and a St John's cross. The south has an escutcheon similar to that on the west side, and beneath an ancient double-handed sword: the east a circular expansion at top, with a cross, and below, the naked figure of a man and a greyhound. Some have supposed that this monument was raised to the memory of one of the Percies of Northumberland. The conjecture of Mr Robertson is more probable, that it was erected after the second crusade, which happened in 1114, (the crosses referring, perhaps, to the Holy War,) in honour of the father of Sir John de Soules, Lieutenant or Viceroy to John Baliol. The local tradition says, that a governor of Hume Castle was killed on the spot in a skirmish. The place where it stands was, till lately, called Deadriggs, and is reported by tradition to have been so named from a battle which was fought there, in which the slaughter was so great, that the small stream of Lip-rick, a little to the north, *ran with blood for twenty-four hours.*

On the hill of Hardacres, about a mile to the north-west of the

\* Trans. Soc. of Antiq. Scotland, 4to, 1792, Vol. i. p. 269, where there are a description and drawings of the monument by Roger Robertson, Esq. of Ladykirk. The present writer's measurements differ slightly from his, and if Mr Robertson's are correct, the monument must have sunk 10 inches.

cross, there are traces of entrenchments, and some cannon balls \* have been found between it and Hume Castle, which stands two miles north-west. The latter are, perhaps, remnants of Colonel Fenwick's attack upon Hume Castle in 1650.†

Eccles was anciently the seat of the Bernardine or Cistercian nuns. At what period the first foundation of this nunnery was laid, no account can be derived from history. According to Hoveden and the Melrose Chronicle, it was founded a second time in 1154, or, according to Cowpar, in 1155, by Cospatrick, Earl of March, father to Earl Waldave, and was consecrated to the Virgin Mary. The abbreviation of the Scoto-Chronicon, annexed to Fordun, says that this nunnery was established by the Countess of March. In 1296, during the interregnum in Scotland, Ada de Frazer, prioress of Eccles, obtained a letter of restitution, in consequence of the fealty sworn to Edward I. by the Scots. In 1333, Edward III., after taking Berwick, received the fealty of the convent of Eccles, and of the other nunneries in the adjacent country. The convent of Eccles was visited 13th November 1523 by the Duke of Albany, when retreating from Wark Castle. He stayed till midnight, and then marched to Lauder.

In 1545 the abbey and town of Eccles, together with the tower of Mersington, were destroyed by the Earl of Hertford, who, having been entrusted with the command of the troops in the north of England, made an inroad into Merse and Tiviotdale, and ravaged and burned the whole country in his way, without receiving any check from the Scots.‡

There is in the public records, Lib. xxi. No. 537, a charter, whereby Marieta Hamilton, prioress of Eccles, disposes to Sir Alexander Hamilton of Innerwick, the village and lands of Eccles in 1569, which charter was confirmed by Queen Mary at Edinburgh the 11th of May, the same year. The place was formed into a temporal lordship in favour of George Hume, afterwards Earl of Dunbar.§

The ancient nunnery, from the investigations of the Rev. Mr Murray, (author of the former Statistical Account,) appears to have occupied a square of six acres. The only remains of it are a wall,

\* One of these in the author's possession weighs 3 lb. 1 oz. Troy, measures 8 inches in circumference, and consists of cast iron.

† Kingsrig, Bartlehill, and Banghousewalls are places in the neighbourhood.

‡ Hollinshed's Scot. Chron. p. 338.—Ridpath Bord. Hist. p. 554.

§ Rymer, Tom. ii. p. 723.—Spottiswood's Appendix to Hope's Minor Practics.—Ridpath's Border Hist. p. 93, 201, 310, 518.

which forms part of the east gable of the mansion-house, and two vaulted cells contiguous to the churchyard.

On the west side of the ruin, there is a large arched gate or door-way 9 feet 8 inches high, and 6 feet 1 inch broad, and within this there is part of a ruined stair, and the door of the south cell, which is 6 feet 4 inches high, and 3 feet 1 inch broad. The cell itself is 22 feet 3 inches by 12 feet 6 inches, and 10 feet 9 inches high. The walls are 3 feet 9 inches in thickness. The north cell is similar, but less. In digging the adjacent burying-ground, the workmen are interrupted by the foundations of walls. Before the front door of Eccles House a stone coffin was dug up many years ago about 6 feet long, and covered above with flag stones, containing the figure of a human body. Nothing remained but some of the earthy matter of the bones, which, when weighed by Sir John Paterson, was found to amount to an ounce and a-half.\*

On the farm of Hassington Mains there is a broad elevation which is raised several feet above the surrounding surface, and can be distinctly observed for some hundred yards. It is called the *Kames* by the people in the neighbourhood, who have a traditional opinion that it extends from sea to sea. A gravelly ridge, of which this seems to be the western termination, can be traced running through the parish by Loanknow and Ploughland. It was opened some years ago, and found to consist of large water-worn stones and sand, compactly thrown together, so as to form a kind of fortification, and at one place a heap of wood ashes was discovered. The adjoining farm on the south is called Kaimflat.

The production of this ridge, of which there is a similar example upon a larger scale in the neighbouring parish of Greenlaw, can be satisfactorily accounted for upon the supposition that an aqueous current had at some period existed, setting in from the north towards the south, as the stones found in it were greywacke, and therefore derived from the Lammermoor hills.

On the property of General Hunter, Sir Martin, of Antonshill, is Leitholm Peel, the remains of a stronghold, to which tradition says the borderers were accustomed to drive their cattle for protection during invasions.

“ The frightened flocks and herds are pent  
Beneath the peel's rude battlement.”

The remnant consists of a wall 31 feet long, about 15 feet high, and 4 feet thick.

\* The revenue of the priory at and previous to 1560 was L. 647, 13s. 8d.—See short account of Scottish money, &c. pamphlet, Edinburgh, 1817.

## III.—POPULATION.

In 1750, according to Dr Webster, the population amounted to	1489 souls.
1793, Rev. Mr Murray,	1780
1801, by Government census,	1682
1811, do. do.	1820
1821, do. do.	1900
1881, do. do. 888 males, 997 females,	1885

During 1830–31, no less than 94 persons emigrated to America, which accounts for the decrease in the last, compared with the preceding census.

The average of the population to the square mile is 108.25.

1. Number of families in the parish,	411
of families chiefly employed in agriculture,	299
chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	90
2. Number of males above 20 years of age,	441
of houses,	423
3. The average number of births for the last 7 years,	37
of burials,*	18½
of marriages,	14½
4. The number of persons in 1821 under 15 years of age,	709
do. upwards of 70,	55

Seven persons of independent fortune reside in the parish. There are 25 heritors, and of these 5 cultivate their own lands.

There are 1 insane and 4 fatuous persons in the parish.

*Language, Customs, &c. of the People.*—The language spoken by the common people corresponds with that of the greater part of the Lowlands. One peculiarity, however, in the pronunciation of the syllable *ch*, pertains to this parish, as well as to the rest of Berwickshire. Thus, cheap is pronounced *sheap*; church, *shurch*.

A curious custom connected with marriage is still kept up by the youths here. Once a-year, or oftener, according to circumstances, all the men who have been married within the last twelve-month are *creeled*. This consists in having a creel or basket suspended to the individual's shoulders, and, while he runs with all his speed from his own house to that of his next new-married neighbour, he is pursued by the unmarried men, who endeavour to fill his basket with stones. The wife, following armed with a knife, strives to relieve her husband of his burden, by cutting the rope which attaches the basket to his person.

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy.*—In no part of the county of Berwick has agriculture made greater progress than in the parish of Eccles; for the whole of it, consisting of 11,000 acres, is ara-

\* The actual average of births is here under-rated, because very few dissenters enter their children's births in the register. The burials also given here are under the true number, because no accurate account is kept of the interments in Birgham churchyard.

ble, and, being all enclosed and studded with thriving plantations, it presents to the view a rich and elegant appearance.

The increase of the rental within the last forty years is a striking proof of the improvement of the land, but is not greater than was anticipated. Mr Murray states the amount of rent in 1793 to be L. 11,000, but adds, "it would not be surprising if in the course of a few years the rental of the parish should exceed L. 18,000 or L. 20,000." Accordingly, in 1822 it amounted to L. 20,000, the valued rent being only L. 15,604, 3s. 4d. Scots.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent per acre is under L. 2. The size of farms varies from 50 and under to 1000 acres. The rents of course vary in proportion, the greatest being L. 1400.

*Husbandry.*—The general duration of leases is 19 and 21 years, but one or two farms are let for 15 years. Most of the larger tenants keep a greater or smaller number of sheep, principally of the Cheviot and Leicestershire breeds. The former, from their greater hardihood, are best suited for clay lands. The four shift husbandry has been long, and for some time successfully practised here. Excellent wheat, oats, and barley are produced. Turnips are raised by every farmer, both for sheep and cattle, and, although the light soil of the southern part of the parish is best adapted for their growth, yet in the clay and loam they attain a very fair size, and are healthy and well-flavoured. In all the stiff lands it has been remarked of late years that the broad-leaved clover (*Trifolium pratense*) sown in spring rarely stands the ensuing winter. Various reasons have been assigned for this, but the fact indicates the propriety of making some change in the present rotation, and the employment of gypsum as a manure. \*

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Markets.*—The parish is very well supplied with respect to markets, for, although there are none within its bounds, yet Kelso and Coldstream are only about 6 miles, and Berwick 18 from the centre of the parish. There are four villages in the parish, and of these Leitholm is the largest, having a population of 343 souls, and a bye-post to Coldstream.

*Means of Communication.*—The London road from Edinburgh

\* For an account of the agriculture of Berwickshire, relating especially to the parish of Eccles, vide "Sketch of the present state of Agriculture in Berwickshire."—*Annals of Philosophy*, Vol. i. 260,—Vol. ii. 185.

About the middle of last century Mr Hume of Eccles and Lord Kames were very active promoters of improvement in agriculture.

by Greenlaw traverses the parish from north to south, (by which the mail passes daily) and that from Edinburgh to London by Kelso, with the road from Kelso to Berwick crosses it from west to east. A London coach passes by the south road, and there are two coaches from Berwick to Kelso. All these turnpikes are kept in excellent order, and, notwithstanding its extent, there is not a toll in the parish.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is situated about a mile from the western side of the parish, and is therefore not so conveniently placed as it might be. It is a large spacious building, furnished with a handsome spire, and was built after the model of the St Cuthbert's Chapel of Ease, Edinburgh. Its length is 78 feet 6 inches, and its breadth 34 feet. It was erected in 1774, and conveniently holds 1000 people. The expense was 48 months' cess, or L. 999, 15s. 7d. All the sittings are private property. The stipend is 16 chalders. The manse and glebe formerly lay to the south of the mansion-house of Eccles, but their situation was changed at the expense of Sir John Paterson. The present manse is placed about a quarter of a mile to the east of the church, and was built in 1813. The glebe, formerly called Birgham Park, lies in front of the manse, amounts to 21 acres, and consists of good land. Since the Revolution there have been five clergymen whose names and dates of ordination or admission are as follows:—John Lauder, 1691; Matthew Sandilands Dysert, 1731; Adam Murray, 1774; James Baird, 1797; James Thomson, 1805.

The average number of communicants for five years preceding 1829 was 549, but in 1831, in consequence of the emigration, the number was only 505. As to the number of Dissenters in the parish, no exact statement can be given, as they vary every year from the annual emigration and immigration of hinds.

*Education.*—There are five schools in the parish, but only one of these is a parish school, the remainder being entirely supported by school fees. The parochial schoolmaster teaches Greek, Latin, English, writing, and mathematics, and has two chalders of salary. Mr Waddel, the present schoolmaster, has the merit of having established, at his own expense, a library for the use of his pupils, and he finds that they are much benefited by private reading. He has the maximum salary.

*Charitable Institutions.*—An association termed the "Eccles Friendly Society," was established on the 31st March 1808, for the purpose of relieving its distressed, infirm, and indigent mem-

bers. The fund amounted in 1826 to L. 267, 8s. 9½d. At present it is L. 329, 10s. 5½d. and the number of members 79.

*Poor.*—The poor are supported by assessment, and those who may want occasional aid are relieved by the money collected in church on Sunday. Assessment produces here, as wherever it has been introduced, a carelessness about providing for old age, but it would be improper not to mention that the highest spirit of independence is exhibited by many as long as nature will permit. The average number upon the poor's roll for the last year is 50½, and the different rates by which the poor are paid quarterly vary from L. 2, 5s. 6d. to 10s. The amount of assessment from Martinmas 1830 to 1831 is L. 270, 9s. 1d., and the number of months' cess 13.

The system of poor rates commenced here in 1763; the number of months' cess then charged was 2½, and the sum L. 44, 12s. 4d. The highest amount of assessment was in 1819, when it was L. 416, and the number of months' cess 20. The greatest average of paupers on the roll was 62 in 1820, and the smallest 16 in 1766.

*Inns.*—There are six inns and alehouses in the parish. Such a proportion for the population is far too high, and hence they are a great evil to the lower orders.

*Fuel.*—Coal and lime are brought from North Durham; and the distance (15 miles) at which the collieries are situated constitutes one of the greatest disadvantages under which the parish labours.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The most striking differences between the present state of the parish and its condition when the last Statistical Account was drawn up, a period of 38 years, are in the following particulars: The rental has nearly doubled. The number of tenants in 1793 was 56, now it is 36. Previous to 1793 the population was advancing at the rate of 727 in a century, or about 7¼ per annum. Now it is at 240 per century, or about 2½ per annum. The poor have increased 13¼; and the poor rates have trebled. The registered births, deaths, and marriages have all diminished by the respective numbers, 49, 3½, 1⅔.

*Revised May 1834.*