

the names of the two rivers Liddal and Hermitage. Hermitage Street is nearly half a mile in length. Castletown has three hiring days, the first held in April, the second in May, and the third in November.

October 1839.

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## PARISH OF MOREBATTLE AND MOW.

PRESBYTERY OF KELSO, SYNOD OF MERSE AND TEVIOTDALE.

THE REV. WALTER MORISON, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE origin of the name, Morebattle, is not certainly known. In the most ancient records it is written *Merbotle* and *Merebotle*, and the most probable supposition is, that it is a compound of the Saxon words, *Mer* or *Mere*, a marsh or loch, and *Boll*, a hamlet or village, thus signifying the village on the *loch* or *marsh*. This derivation is not supported by present appearances, but there is reason to believe that it was sufficiently appropriate at an earlier period. The vale of the Kale, (on an eminence on the south side of which the village of Morebattle stands,) for an extent of upwards of two miles in length, and nearly one in breadth, exhibits obvious indications of having been at one time under water, and of having formed a loch or marsh which has been drained by the waters of the Kale, (which flowed through it,) gradually deepening their outlet through the barrier of rising grounds at its lower end. Another conjecture concerning the origin of the name is that it signifies the village on the *moor*. It is found sometimes written *Muirbatle* and *Moorbattle*. But this spelling never occurs in any of the earlier writings. Nor is such a derivation peculiarly applicable either to the present or former locality, at least not more so than to the majority perhaps of the villages of Scotland. Besides, it is liable to the objection of making the name partly Scottish and partly Saxon. Of the name of the other parish, *Mow*, (which lies on the upper part of Beaumont water, and is the highest portion of the united parish,) anciently written, *Mol* and *Moll*, the only derivation which has been proposed, is from the British *Moel*, which signifies bare, bold, also

a naked hill, a conical hill, &c. a derivation not inconsistent with the character of the district.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The greatest length is in the direction of nearly north and south, and is about  $9\frac{1}{2}$  miles. The greatest breadth is from east to west, and is about 6 miles. The mean breadth may be about 4 miles. It is bounded on the north, by the parishes of Yetholm and Linton; on the east, by part of the parish of Yetholm, and by Northumberland; on the west, by Hownam, Eckford, and Linton; and on the south, by Northumberland and Hownam.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The parish extends to the summit of the Cheviot range, and, with the exception of a small portion of the north and west sides, consists almost entirely of hills and the intervening vallies. It presents not, however, that bleak and barren aspect which generally characterizes a mountainous district. The hills are verdant and beautiful, the low grounds are under culture, as also the sides of several of the hills to a considerable height, and some of them to their very summits. The principal vales are those of the Kale and Beaumont, neither of them of very great breadth, but extending in length, the former about four, and the latter about six miles. The principal hills are the Cheviot, (part of which is in this parish); the Curr is next to it in locality and also in height;—the Schell, Whitelaw, Percy hill, Woodside hill, and Clifton hill, a beautiful hill rising from the east side of the Beaumont in the form of a dome. Between the Beaumont and the Kale, Swindon hill, Belford hill, and the Grubit hills; and on the west of the Kale, Gateshaw hill and Morebattle hill. They vary in height from 500 feet to upwards of 2000. From the Cheviot hills the view is grand and extensive, and in the summer season attracts frequent parties of visitors from both sides of the border. The surrounding counties of Northumberland, Berwick, and Roxburgh, lie extended below as on a map. On the east, the view is lost in the German Ocean, and on the south and west it is confined by the midland mountainous tract, which stretches from Westmoreland to the sources of the Clyde and the Tweed. The prospect from the Grubit hills, though more limited, is uncommonly fine;—looking down on the beautiful vales of the Kale and the Beaumont lying at their base, and containing within their limits the pleasant villages of Yetholm and Morebattle, the Primside and Linton lochs, the romantic church of Linton, the wooded villas of Marfield and Clifton Park, the ruins of Cessford

Castle, famed in Border story, the Tower of Corbet House, also connected with the border feuds, and many cheerful farm-houses, with their adjacent cottages; it embraces in the further distance on the one side, the loftier range of the Cheviot, and on the other, the fertile districts of Merse and Teviotdale, studded with gentlemen's seats, the rich vale of the Teviot, the wooded course of the Tweed, the picturesque Eildons, with their triple summit, Hume Castle, Smailholm's rocky tower, the Waterloo monument on Pinnelheugh, with numerous other attractive and interesting objects; and in the back ground is terminated by the distant hills of Lammermuir and Selkirkshire. There is a great scarcity of wood in the parish, which would very much improve the scenery and also the climate. A sufficient extent of ground might be laid out in plantations without materially encroaching on land otherwise valuable, and what might be taken up for this purpose would be more than compensated by the increased value of the remainder. Many patches are everywhere to be found, at present, nearly waste, which might thus be rendered both ornamental and profitable. Some of the proprietors have, within the last thirty years, turned their attention to improvements of this kind, but not generally, nor to any thing like the extent that is required.

*Climate, Diseases, and Soil.*—The climate is dry and healthy. In the lower part of the parish it is mild and temperate, but in the higher districts the winters are severe and stormy. The spring is liable to be interrupted by cold chilly winds, from the neighbouring Cheviots proving injurious to the fruit blossoms and the more delicate vegetation. Fruit is here, therefore, an uncertain crop, and not much cultivated. In spring and autumn, fogs and hoar frosts from Linton loch on the east, and a marshy ground on the north-west, often sit down on the valley or basin of the Kale, and frequently injure the crops, especially of potatoes and wheat, in the valley, and also to a certain height sometimes very distinctly marked, on the adjacent rising grounds. Harvest commonly commences towards the middle of August. The inhabitants, in general, enjoy good health. There is no disease to which they are particularly liable. Agues have entirely disappeared. Epidemics are uncommon. Typhus fever seldom appears, and when it has occasionally been imported has never spread to any great extent. Only five or six cases of small-pox have occurred within these last twenty years. Scarlet fever is perhaps the most fatal disease which now visits the district. Cholera never entered the parish. When

prevalent in the country, every precautionary measure was adopted for keeping it out. The soil is in general light, and such as is well adapted to the turnip husbandry.

*Hydrography.*—The only lochs are, Primside or Yetholm Loch, partly in this parish, and partly in Yetholm; and Linton Loch, partly in this parish and partly in Linton.\* The principal rivulets are the two beautiful streams of the Kale and the Beaumont. Both of them rise in the Cheviot range. The Kale runs from south to north, until it nearly reaches the village of Morebattle, where it suddenly turns to the west, and after a further course of several miles, joins the Teviot about five miles above its junction with the Tweed at Kelso. The Beaumont, continuing its northerly direction, enters Northumberland, where it falls into the Till, another tributary of the Tweed. Their pure crystal waters flowing over fine pebbled beds, in continually recurring currents and pools, and between fine grassy banks, abound in excellent trout, and are well adapted for angling. In the end of autumn the salmon from the Teviot and Tweed ascend the Kale for the purpose of spawning, when they are killed in great numbers during the evenings and nights by torch light. Frequent attempts have been made to put a stop to this illegal practice, but hitherto with little success. No salmon enter the Beaumont, being prevented by a dam near to its mouth. A similar dam has lately been erected across the Kale, near to the Teviot, for the purposes of machinery, which will probably have the effect of also preventing, or at least, of greatly obstructing the passage of the fish, and of diminishing their numbers.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The number of heritors is 11, and in the order of the value of their properties they are, the Duke of Roxburgh, patron of the parish, and proprietor of the greater part of the lands on Beaumont water; the Marquis of Tweeddale, to whom the barony of Morebattle belongs; Sir George Warrender of Whitton; Mr Pringle of Clifton; Mr Ker of Gateshaw, the only resident heritor, and in the superior attention to ornamental improvement on whose estate the advantages of residence are to be seen; Sir John Scott Douglas of Belford; the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; Mr Oliver of Lochside; Mr Wilson of Otterburn; Mr Turnbull of Heavyside; and Mr Darling of Temple Hall.

\* For which see the Statistical Accounts of Yetholm and Linton.

*Antiquities.*—Amongst the hills are to be seen some of these circular rows of stones, called *Trysting Stones*, the origin and design of which are uncertain. On some of the heights there are traces of ancient encampments, most probably British, the most distinct of which are on the two adjacent summits of Morebattle Hill. Following apparently the figure of the heights, the larger is of an oval, and the smaller of a circular form. Of various towers or forts, often mentioned in the ancient border records, only two now remain, those of Whitton and Corbet House. The former is on the estate of Sir George Warrender, and is nearly in ruins. It was battered down by the Earl of Surrey in an inroad into Scotland in the reign of Henry VIII. Corbet House tower belongs to Mr Ker of Gateshaw. Between twenty and thirty years ago, it was repaired and renewed by the late Sir Charles Ker. In 1522, it was burnt by the English, who then ravaged the banks of the Kale and Beaumont in retaliation of a plundering expedition of the Scots into Northumberland, of which Launcelot Ker of Gateshaw had been one of the leaders.

*Eminent Men.*—No names of peculiar eminence occur. But under this head we may mention that Grubit, formerly the estate of Sir William Bennet, and from which he took his title, is situated in this parish, and adjoining to it is Wideopen, the occasional residence of his friend, the author of the Seasons, and at that time the property of the poet's maternal uncle. Of Thomson's residence here, several traditionary anecdotes are still preserved in the neighbourhood. (See the Statistical Account of the adjoining parish of Eckford.)

*Parochial Registers.*—The session records commence in 1726. There is a gap from 1738 to 1771, and again from 1777 to 1803, from which date they have been regularly kept. The register of births and baptisms commences also in 1726. In it, too, a blank occurs, from 1739 to 1760. After this, it continues, without farther interruption, to the present time. No registers are kept of marriages, and deaths, or funerals. A small sum is paid to the session funds by parties giving in their names for the publication of bans. The entries of these sums in the session accounts is a sort of register of proclamations, the entries of the mortcloth dues form a similar register of funerals.

### III.—POPULATION.

In 1755, the population was 789. In the last Statistical Account, it is stated as nearly the same. By the last census of

1831, it was 1050. After the commencement of the modern improvements in agriculture, it rapidly advanced. For the last twenty years it has been nearly stationary. The population is entirely employed in agriculture, or in trades dependent upon it.

Number of families in the parish in 1831,	-	-	-	210
chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	-	112
in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	-	-	31

*Character, Habits, &c. of the People.*—They are in general sober and industrious, of simple manners, and of moral and religious habits. Many of them have a taste for reading, and are well informed and intelligent. There are three public-houses in the parish, all in the village of Morebattle, and ale and spirits are also sold at a toll-house in the neighbourhood. This is perhaps a greater number than the public accommodation requires. Smuggling by carrying spirits across the border into England at one time prevailed to a great extent, but it has now, for several years past, happily been entirely suppressed. There is neither lawyer nor medical practitioner in the parish. The heritors are subscribers to the Kelso Dispensary, where the poor receive advice and medicines gratis, and in cases where they cannot be taken to Kelso, a surgeon from the institution, when requested, visits them at their own houses. The farm-houses are, very different from what they formerly were, large, commodious, and elegant. But there is still great room for improvement in the houses of the hinds and cottagers.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—The higher part of the parish is mostly in pasture. The lower is under tillage, and the soil being that which is suited to the turnip husbandry, the system of farming is the mixed, partly corn, and partly stock. The grains chiefly raised are barley and oats; wheat, too, but not to a great extent; beans or pease seldom. The prevailing rotation is what is called the five-shift, in which case the land lies two years in grass, and sometimes the four-shift, when it lies only one. The chief manures employed are the dung produced on the farm,—lime, which is brought from a distance of seventeen miles, at the rate of about 10s. the one horse cart,—and of late years, with much success, bone dust. The great proportion of the turnips are eaten on the ground with sheep, and when the crop is good, this is a sufficient manuring for the remaining years of the rotation. Without this in a district where there is no command of dung, tillage could not be carried to near-

ly the extent that it is. In the higher district, the sheep are of the Cheviot breed; in the lower the Leicester, and in some places a cross between the two. The cattle are almost all of the short-horned or Teesdale breed.

*Rents.*—The rents, of course, are very various. The average of the arable lands may be from L. 1 to L. 1, 5s. per acre, and of the pasture lands from 8s. to 10s. The valued rent of the parish is L. 16,081, 14s. 8d. Scotch. The real rent between L. 11,000 and L. 12,000 Sterling.

*Rate of Wages.*—Day labourers, men, 1s. 6d. and 2s.; women, 10d. and 1s.; carpenters, 2s. 6d.; and masons, 3s.; tailors, 1s. 6d. with meat; shearers, men, 13s.; women, 12s. a week and their meat. The yearly wages of hinds, or, as they are called, *the conditions* of hinds, are the following, 10 bolls or 100 stones of oatmeal; 15 bushels barley; 6 bushels pease; 1200 yards of potatoes planted; a peck of lint sown, in lieu of which L. 1 is now generally allowed; L. 3 under the name of sheep siller; a cow's grass, or in lieu of it, L. 5, 10s. or L. 6; the privilege of keeping hens, or, instead of them, 10s. or 12s.; and the carriage of four two-horse carts of coals. It is customary to give them their meat during one month in harvest. They commonly keep a pig, which they feed at their own expense. Their wives shear for their houses and yards. The hinds are bound to keep a servant woman called a *bondager*, at least during the summer half-year, for working on the farm at day's wages, commonly 10d. They generally complain of this as a hardship, alleging that what they receive for their servant's work will not do more than pay their half-year's wages, and that they have to give them victuals for nothing.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Villages and Markets.*—There were formerly several considerable villages, of which scarcely any vestiges remain. Morebattle is now the only village in the parish, containing about 300 inhabitants. The ground on which it is built is held of the Marquis of Tweeddale, the superior, on leases of nineteen times nineteen years. In the former Statistical Account, the houses are stated to have been then "mostly of one storey, and covered with thatch." A great proportion of them are now of two stories, and covered with slates. The appearance of the village is greatly injured by the slovenly custom of laying down ashes, fire-wood, and rubbish of different kinds, in front of the houses, along the sides of the street.

Were this nuisance done away, as has been frequently proposed, the striking improvement in comfort and cleanliness would soon reconcile the villagers to any restrictions to which it might subject them. There was a small common near the village, on which the rentallers, by the terms of their leases, had the right of casting turfs. About forty years ago, this was divided amongst them, with the consent of the Marquis of Tweeddale, in shares, proportioned to the amount of their rentals. It has since been all inclosed, gradually improved by manuring, trenching, forcing, &c. and now bears very good crops of potatoes, turnips, grass, and also of corn, and thus, from being a waste and useless moor, is now a considerable benefit to the village.

*Means of Communication.*—No stage-coach runs through the parish. There are carriers to Kelso (the market-town) three days a-week. A turnpike road passes through the village, communicating with the Kelso and Jedburgh road on the west, and leading into Northumberland on the east. The parish roads are kept in good repair. Some years ago it was proposed to establish a side post in Morebattle, but the villagers on being consulted refused it as disadvantageous. They stated that their correspondence being chiefly with Kelso, their letters are either carried free of expense by people going down, or at least for 1d. by the carriers, whereas by post they would cost 3d. or 4d. There are no fairs or markets held in the parish.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church is situated at the north-west extremity of the parish, being within half a-mile of the boundary on that side, and between nine and ten from that on the other. There is no other part of the parish, however, in which it could be placed more commodiously for the bulk of the population. It stands at the north side of the village of Morebattle, on a height overlooking the Kale. It affords accommodation for about 460 sitters, and if well filled, would contain 500. It was built in 1757, and is at present undergoing repairs, which, when completed, will render it comfortable and handsome. No seats are let. St Lawrence was the patron saint. A well below the churchyard, which supplies the village with water, still bears his name, corrupted into Lawrie's Well. At one period there had been a chapel at Clifton, then a village, and another at Whitton. The collections at the church doors are very trifling. The number of heads of families communicants on the veto roll, made up at the last communion, is 50. The manse was built in 1830. The accommodation is large, but

the work being very ill executed, it has already required considerable repairs. The stipend, as modified at the last augmentation, in 1820, is 16 chalders, half barley, half oatmeal, with L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. The glebe consists of about 11 acres of very good land. The minister had also a right to a number of carriages of coals from the tenants, the greater part of which have fallen into disuse. He had also the right of casting turfs on the farm of Morebattle Braes. But the ground being brought under tillage, he agreed to take in lieu of this privilege the carriage of 14 bolls of coals yearly, which, however, for a long time past, he has never received. There is one Dissenting-meeting house in the parish, which belongs to the United Secession. It stood originally at Gateshaw, which was the first settlement of the Secession in the south of Scotland. Their first minister, Mr Hunter, was ordained in 1739. It was some years before a place of worship was built, during which time the congregation assembled summer and winter on Gateshaw Brae, and the minister preached to them from a tent. About sixty years ago, the meeting-house and manse were removed to Morebattle, where they still continue. The minister has a good house and garden, a yearly stipend, I believe, of L. 110, and an allowance for sacramental expenses.

*Education.*—There are two parochial schools—the first in Morebattle, attended on an average by 100 scholars. The schoolmaster has the maximum salary, L. 8 as heritors' clerk, and a trifle as session-clerk. The amount of his fees may be about L. 30. A new school-house has lately been built, without exception, the finest in the county. The schoolmaster's house is of two storeys, containing four rooms, kitchen, and back kitchen, besides garret apartments. The second-school is at Mowhaugh, on Beaumont Water. It was established about fifteen years ago. The teacher has a house and garden, and L. 17 of salary, with the school fees. The branches taught at both schools are, English grammar, writing, arithmetic, geography, mathematics, Latin. There is also in the village of Morebattle a private school, attended by about 30 scholars. There are no persons above fifteen years of age who cannot read, and few, if any, who cannot write.

*Literature.*—A library was established in the parish about forty years ago, which now contains between 600 and 700 volumes. The price of a share is L. 1, 1s. and the yearly contribution is

3s. 6d. The books, which are chiefly in general literature, are chosen by the members at a general annual meeting.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The number of paupers at present on the roll is 45. The sum annually expended for their support is about L. 280. It is derived from assessments on the heritors, and the interest of L. 1500 bequeathed to the parish by a Mr More, a native of the place, who went out to India, where he died. The terms of the destination are, “for the support, maintenance, and education of real poor and destitute orphans.” The heritors throw it into the general poor’s fund. They ‘aliment, of course, the poor orphans, and also pay their school fees.

*Fuel.*—One of the greatest disadvantages under which the district labours is the distance from coals, (about seventeen and eighteen miles,) which are almost the only fuel used, or which can be procured.

October 1839.

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## UNITED PARISHES OF STITCHELL AND HUME.

PRESBYTERY OF KELSO, SYNOD OF MERSE AND TIVIODALE.

THE REV. PETER BUCHANAN, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Extent, &c.*—THE parish of Stitshell lies in the county of Roxburgh,—that of Hume in Berwickshire. The united parishes are betwixt 5 and 6 miles in length from north to south, and betwixt 3 and 4 in breadth from east to west. The boundaries on the north are the parishes of Gordon and Greenlaw; on the south, the parishes of Kelso, Nenthorn, and Ednam; on the east, Eccles; on the west, Nenthorn and Earlston.

### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—These have been kept for both parishes since the year 1640.

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owners are, Sir John Prin-