

PARISH OF WILTON.

PRESBYTERY OF JEDBURGH, SYNOD OF MERSE AND TIVIODALE.

THE REV. DAVID STEVENSON, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE modern orthography of the parish is Wilton,—obviously an abbreviation of Wiltown, in which form it appears in almost all the old records. In several ancient documents it is referred to under the designation of Walltown and Willis-town; but the precise origin of the name cannot now be ascertained.

Boundaries, &c.—The parish of Wilton is bounded by Ashkirk and Robertson on the west; by Hawick on the south; by Cavers on the east; and by Minto and Lilliesleaf on the north. Its extent along the banks of the Tiviot is about 5 miles; average breadth $3\frac{1}{2}$; and contents $17\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. Its figure is nearly that of a parallelogram,

The principal river in this district, which may be called the Upper Ward of Roxburghshire, is the Tiviot. It takes its rise at a place called Tiviot-stone, about 16 miles south-west of this parish, and runs in a north-easterly direction, until it joins the Tweed at Kelso,—a distance of 36 miles. The Borthwick, a considerable tributary stream, falls into the Tiviot near the southern extremity of the parish, and the Slitridge or Slitrig joins it at Hawick.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

From the proximity of Wilton to Hawick, considerable notice has been taken of this parish in the History of Hawick, by Mr Robert Wilson, shoemaker in Hawick, published a few years ago. This is not only an amusing work, but contains much valuable local information, and is very creditable to the talents of its author.

Eminent Men.—No eminent literary characters appear to have been connected with this parish by birth. It may be noticed, however, that Mr Crawford, minister of Wilton, who flourished about the year 1713, was a gentleman of considerable literary attainments; and in his "Dying Thoughts" left a monument of his piety

behind him. Dr Charters, minister of the parish, was also a clergyman of no common pulpit eminence, and the author of Sermons, which, in simplicity of language, elevation of sentiment, and excellent practical morality, have few to excel them among the modern publications of this kind.

Land-owners.—His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry is patron, and principal heritor in the parish. He is also Titular of the teinds, and his property is rated in the cess-books of the county at nearly one-half of the valued rent. Besides his Grace, there are ten or eleven landed proprietors, whose interest in the parish is, individually, from L. 100 to L. 1000 Scots; also a considerable number of minor heritors.

Parochial Registers—The Session records commence in 1694. They are voluminous and well-kept. The minute-book of the heritors, also a well-kept record, extends from 1723 to the present time, and contains an account of transactions relating to the poor, and the economics of the parish. The only remaining register is that of births; but, as in many other parishes in Scotland, it exhibits nothing like a punctual or regular registration,—parents often disregarding every admonition to record the nativity of their children.*

There is in this parish no register of deaths, and nothing in the shape of a record of marriages, excepting only a record of the names of those who have had proclamation of banns in the church.

III.—POPULATION.

According to the former Account, the population in 1755 amounted to 936. The average number of marriages for the three years immediately preceding the date of that Account was 13; of baptisms, 20, and of deaths 8. “But these numbers,” adds the writer, “cannot be accounted precisely accurate, as all are not recorded.”

In 1801, by census,	-	-	-	1907
In 1811,	-	-	-	1527
In 1821,	-	-	-	1673
In 1826, the date of the present minister's connection with the parish,	-	-	-	1712
In 1831,	-	-	-	1870

Of marriages, or rather proclamations, the average number for the last seven years amounts to 114.

* The expense of registration is so trifling, and the benefit which results from it is often so great, that it is surprising to find such universal negligence in this matter. No doubt there are statutes in force to compel this observance, but it is an invidious task, and not worth the session-clerk's while to enforce them; and, unless the power of registration be lodged elsewhere, it is much to be feared that the present irregular practice will not soon be corrected.

There are at present in the parish 2 persons insane ; 1 fatuous ; and 1 blind.

Language.—The language generally spoken by the lower orders, throughout this district, contains many provincialisms, but these are becoming gradually obsolete. Two diphthongal sounds, however, seem still to maintain their ground, namely, those resembling the Greek *et*, and the *ow*, as in the English words, cow, sow, how, now,—*e. g.* the common people generally pronounce, tree, *tret* ; tea, *tel* ; knee, *kneɪ* ; me, *meɪ* ; and, instead of the diphthongal sound of *oo* in the pronoun you, the pronunciation is almost invariably *yow*, as in now.

Poaching in game is carried to a very considerable extent in this district ; and, so long as the present game laws continue, there is very little prospect of any material diminution. Unqualified persons are to be met with, in bands, in open day, equipped in all the habiliments of the licensed sportsman. This is an employment prejudicial in a high degree to the morals and industry of the community ; and it would render an essential service to many poor families, were the law efficient enough to suppress poaching altogether, or make it an employment not worth the prosecuting. *

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture and Rural Economy.—About two-thirds of the parish are in tillage. But there is very little land that has not at some period been cultivated, as appears by the high ridges that may be observed in all old pastures. A great part of the out-field land in the parish, however, has not been ploughed within the memory of the oldest inhabitants. There is no land which could with profit be added to the cultivated land in the parish ; but, on the contrary, perhaps a-part of what is at present cultivated might be more profitable if left in permanent pasture. The number of acres under wood is about 100.

The kinds of trees commonly planted are, oak, ash, elm, and beech, with larch, Scotch, spruce, and silver firs to nurse. The proportions are, about one-fourth of hard-wood and three-fourths of fir. Considerable attention is paid to the management of wood, by yearly thinning, pruning, &c.

Rent of Land.—It is difficult to ascertain the exact rent of arable land, but, at a rough guess, it may be stated on an average at about L. 1, 1s. per acre. The average rent of grazing may be at the

* In consequence of the establishment of an active constable in the town of Hawick, poaching, within these last two years, has very much decreased.

rate of L. 5 for an ox or cow, kept for a year, and 6s. for a ewe or full-grown sheep, upon unimproved land. The real rent of the parish in 1827 was somewhat more than L. 6000.

Rate of Wages.—Married farm-servants are hired for the year, and their wages, which are paid chiefly in kind, may be valued at from L. 25 to L. 28. Single servants are hired by the half year, and receive from L. 6 to L. 7 in summer, and from L. 4 to L. 5 in winter, besides board. Day-labourers receive 2s. per day in summer, and 1s. 6d. in winter; women, 10d. in summer, and 8d. in winter for out-door labour.

Masons and carpenters, by the day, are paid a little more than common labourers. Mason-work, per contract, may be done for 36s. to 40s. per rood, for workmanship only; or from L. 5 to L. 7, according to circumstances, materials being furnished. Roofing with house timber is about 1s. per square yard for workmanship. Joisting and flooring, 1s. 6d. per square yard. A farm cart costs about L. 9, with all furnishings; a wooden plough, (now seldom used) about L. 3. Country smiths are generally paid in stated sums (about L. 3) a-year for each pair of horses kept upon a farm. This includes shoeing and repairing plough irons and harrows.

Husbandry.—The system of husbandry generally pursued is the four or five-shift rotation; but it is thought the land is gradually deteriorated by this mode of cropping, and would require to rest longer in grass. Turnips are generally sown for a fallow crop, except on wet lands, when clean fallow, succeeded by a crop of wheat, is preferred. Some attempts have lately been made to raise spring wheat in the lower part of the parish, but the success has not been such as to encourage that practice, except in the most sheltered situations.

The greatest part of the wet land in the parish has been drained, but in such a superficial manner, that in many cases the drains require to be renewed. A better system, however, has now been introduced, and is generally practised. A good deal of expense has been incurred in embanking the river Tiviot, but much still requires to be done.

The duration of leases is generally fifteen or nineteen years,—except upon the Duke of Buccleuch's estate, where it is only nine, but the leases are usually renewed at the end of that period.

The farm-buildings in the parish are mostly old, and, in many cases, insufficient for the accommodation of the farm. The land is all inclosed, and the arable land subdivided chiefly by thorn hedges, which are well kept, and thriving.

It has been found impracticable to ascertain the average gross amount and value of raw produce yearly raised in the parish.

Manufactures.—There are engaged in manufactures about 240 male adults resident in this parish, of whom five are masters. There are five mills employed in spinning wool in the parish. Of the five Firms to which they belong, three have their counting-rooms, warehouses, and considerable branches of their business, such as are not immediately connected with mill-machinery, in the neighbouring town of Hawick. Exclusive of these, there are about 500 men, women, and children, employed in manufactories in the parish.

Wool Manufactures.—The manufactories of the parish are of various descriptions of goods made from wool,—such as lambs' wool yarn and hosiery, blankets, plaidings, flannels, tartan shawls, and other goods of a similar nature. The whole mills contain fifty teasing, scribbling, and carding engines, (most of the two latter being what are called double engines,) which prepare as much wool as keeps in motion 9578 spindles in slaubing, spinning, and doubling yarn. The quantity of wool consumed weekly, as nearly as can be estimated, is, upon an average, about 11,500 lb, and gives employment to about 230 slaubers, spinners, &c.—men and lads, who have the care of machinery,—and women, who supply wool to the carding and scribbling engines,—and children, who are employed by the former as piecers,—240 stocking-makers, 75 weavers, and about 40 people in milling, scouring, dyeing, and finishing goods.

Those employed in the mills generally work from six o'clock in the morning till seven o'clock in the evening,—two hours being allowed for meals. Stocking-makers, weavers, &c. begin the day at six in the morning, and cease working at eight o'clock in the evening; but the work-hours of the latter are not regular.

It may be noticed, that some of the manufacturers have of late worked part of their machinery night and day, *i. e.* from one o'clock Monday morning till eleven o'clock Saturday night. Where this is done, two sets of work-people are employed, and each set takes the night-work every alternate week.

Very few children are employed before nine years of age. The work they are put to is of a very light description; and, from the quantity of vegetable oil used in preparing the wool, and the factories being well-aired, they are generally very healthy and thriving. They have all been taught to read previously to their entering a factory, and most of them attend one or other of the Sunday

schools of Hawick. Their situation is fully as comfortable as that of their class in general, though, it must be granted, that manufactories are commonly not the best schools of morality for youth. In many instances, however, fathers who are slaubers or spinners employ their own children as piccers; and the good conduct of many children under the restraining influence of a parent's eye, has, without doubt, a beneficial effect on others who have not the same advantages.

Since the introduction of the woollen manufactories into this part of the country, the quantity of wool consumed has been gradually and regularly increasing. In the year ending December 31, 1828, there were manufactured in Hawick and Wilton parishes, 1,038,641 slips of yarn, and 432,201 pairs of hose; in the year ending December 31, 1829, 1,010,641 slips of yarn, and 465,823 pairs of hose; and in the year ending December 31, 1830, 1,102,865 slips of yarn, and 488,487 pairs of hose; and there is annually, besides, a large quantity of yarn manufactured into blankets, plaidings, and flannels.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Town, &c.—There is no market-town in the parish. Wilton may be called the suburbs of Hawick, and is scarcely disjoined from it; nay, a small section of the parish actually forms a part of the town of Hawick. The grammar-school lately erected there, an excellent building, but very incommoiously situated, is in the parish of Wilton.

Villages, &c.—There are three villages, or rather hamlets, in the parish,—viz. Appletree Hall, towards the north; Langlands Dean, in the south; and what may be called the village of Wilton.

Means of Communication.—The nearest post-office is at Hawick, and an excellent communication has lately been formed with that town from the north by a new bridge of four arches across the Tiviot. This new approach runs through a small part of the glebe between the church and the manse, and joins the present Edinburgh road, at what is called Dovemount Well.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church is almost equidistant from either extremity of the parish. None of the church-going population reside at more than two miles and a-half from the church; and the Dissenters consider it as no inconvenience to travel half a-mile farther to their respective places of worship at Hawick. The present parish church was built in 1762, and very lately underwent a considerable internal repair, and was handsomely painted.

It affords accommodation for about 600 persons, and all the sittings are free. A considerable number of years ago, an additional gallery was built in front of the pulpit, at the joint expense of the Duke of Buccleuch, the late venerable Dr Charters, and William Oliver, Esq. aided by a few small subscriptions. This section of the church is open to sitters of almost every description, and differs from the rest of the accommodation, which was originally allocated to the heritors, according to their respective valuations. The lower part of the aisle or gallery referred to, was reserved for a cemetery to the family of Dr Charters; and there the ashes of that eminent servant of God repose, with a plain inscription upon a neat marble tablet, from the pen of his intimate friend, the late excellent and venerable Dr Thomas Somerville of Jedburgh.

The manse was built about fifty years ago, is a substantial edifice, and kept in good repair by the heritors. It is upon a scale much smaller than modern houses of the same description, and quite inadequate to the comfortable accommodation of a large family.

The stipend is six chalders of victual, half meal and half barley, with L. 36 and odds in money. "The glebe," says Dr Charters, "is large and valuable;" and it is much to be regretted that former incumbents, who lived nearer the source of information, did not think it proper, for the benefit of their successors, to give a more ample account of it. The glebe, properly so called, is altogether an anomaly in the Church of Scotland. What may be denominated *in-field*, and lying around the manse, consists of about eighty English acres of excellent land, all arable, and has been in possession of the minister from time immemorial. There is no document or record in existence to show how this land came into the hands of the church, and every search to discover its history has been altogether in vain. All that can be said in this respect is, that the land is in the possession of the minister, and no person can say with certainty how it came. There is no proof that this extra quantity of land was ever designed as a glebe, or actually given out of the lands of the heritors, by any special appropriation. In an account of his stipend and emoluments, given by the Rev. Mr Simpson, one of the former incumbents, in 1765, he says, "that there is a glebe, and certain lands called the Mains of Wilton, belonging to the minister of Wilton, which lie contiguous, and the respective bounds of which are not known, but in conjunction, they are bounded as follows," &c. But there is a tradition in the

parish and neighbourhood, respecting the acquisition of this land to the benefice, which, though not supported by any existing document, must have had its origin in fact.

It appears from the records of the presbytery of Jedburgh, that a Mr John Langlands was minister of Wilton in 1641, and that the presentation to the parish at that time belonged to the Buccleuch family, and to the Langlands of Langlands, *per vices*. The Mains of Wilton, which lie contiguous to the church and manse, and formed a boundary to the estate of Langlands, are said by this traditionary account to have been given by the Laird of Langlands to his relative, then minister of the parish; and, if any deed of conveyance accompanied the grant, it has long since been lost. The tradition, however, from the remotest periods, has universally been, that the benefice obtained the lands in the manner now mentioned from the Langlands family.

Yet, notwithstanding the uncertainty as to the origin of the glebe, and although it could not be shown that the Mains of Wilton had ever been designed by the heritors in lieu of any portion of the stipend, the Court of Teinds in 1827 held the lands to be the old glebe lands of the Popish incumbents, forming part of the original endowments of the benefice. Previous to 1649, the stipend was 12 bolls of meal and bear, Tiviotdale measure, and 540 merks Scots. An augmentation was then obtained, although the decree of locality is now lost, which made the stipend amount to 3 chalders, Linlithgow measure, and L. 560 Scots, exclusive of the glebe, and this continued to be the value of the living for the period of 178 years. During this long interval no process of augmentation, so far as it is known, was brought forward; and, while other churches were gradually rising in the scale of emolument, the heritors of Wilton, through the apathy or timidity of its incumbents, were suffered to retain in their pockets the augmented stipend which might have been obtained.

Besides the lands which lie contiguous to the manse, there are also belonging to this church about sixteen English acres, which were acquired in the division of Wilton common in 1765. This *out-field* is two miles west from the church, and, although nearly all arable, yet, being in a high and exposed situation, it is much inferior in value to that part of the glebe formerly mentioned.

There are no chapels of ease, nor dissenting congregations of any description in this parish. The Seceders, as at the period when Dr Charters gave in his report, are numerous, although they have

not increased in proportion to the increase of population. Divine service at the Established church is well attended, and the average number of communicants is about 400.

The average yearly amount of church collections for the last seven years is L. 16. As in many other parishes, there are here two funds for the support or assistance of the poor, namely, the heritors' fund, and the collections, with other monies belonging to the kirk-session. The session funds are appropriated chiefly to the relief of incidental distress, and operate powerfully in keeping paupers from the heritors' fund.* The school-fees for a considerable number of poor children are also paid from this fund; and books are occasionally furnished from it for those whose parents are not able to supply them.

Education.—Besides the parish school, there are two unendowed schools, well taught. Although the parish is not large, it is much to be regretted that the heritors, when the schoolmasters' salaries were recently augmented, did not, as in many parishes, allow an additional chaldar for the benefit of these unendowed schools. They have been long in existence, and are of great benefit to the inhabitants of those sections of the parish where they are situated. Men who devote their time and talents to the instruction of youth ought certainly to have a decent remuneration, which, however, in many cases, cannot be obtained, even where the attendance is numerous, in consequence of the low rate of fees.

The parochial schoolmaster has the maximum salary. Neither the school-house nor dwelling-house are commodious, and he has not the legal quantity of ground for a garden, but receives a compensation for the deficiency. The teaching apartment is not good, and is by far too small to accommodate comfortably the very considerable number of scholars who attend the school. All the branches of education commonly taught in parish schools are taught here successfully, by an able, experienced, and indefatigable teacher. His fees may probably amount to L. 50 per annum.

* A few years ago, several of the minor heritors, into whose hands the business of the parish had fallen, in consequence of the non-attendance of many whose interest in the parish is greater, endeavoured to avail themselves of that clause in the poors' act which authorizes them to take from the kirk-session the half of all collections and other monies. This was not the resolution of any thing like a majority of the heritors; and the consequence was, that the collections in a short time dwindled down to nothing,—insomuch, that collecting for several Sabbaths ceased altogether. The people would not contribute when they knew that the half of the collections was to be diverted from their original object, and applied to assist the heritors in the maintenance of the ordinary poor. A return to the old system soon followed, by the resolution of a great majority of the heritors, and the collections are now nearly as ample as before.

No instance is known of any person, who has arrived at the age of fifteen years, being unable to read or write. The people are alive to the benefits of education, and send their children early to school.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid for the last seven years, including a few who receive an occasional supply, is 55; and the average sum allowed to each individual is 2s. 2d. per week. The annual average amount of contributions levied by assessment upon the heritors and tenants for the same period is L. 308. As the church collections derive no benefit from the principal and several other heritors who are non-resident, this fund would go but a very short way in relieving the necessities of the poor. The present mode of assessment is certainly the best, because all are compelled to contribute in proportion to their interest in the parish; whereas were the principle of voluntary contribution adopted, many, it is to be feared, from a parsimonious spirit, would give with a sparing hand. No doubt, the maintenance of the poor is a burden, but it is one of those burdens which must be borne; and there is no other way of doing it, but by a legal provision or individual benevolence. In large towns, where many are wealthy and disposed to charity, the poor may find in some degree a precarious subsistence; but it is altogether impracticable in country parishes, where many of their neighbours are nearly as necessitous as themselves, and of consequence have little to spare. Nothing can be more preposterous, than the idea of maintaining 50 or 60 paupers by spontaneous benevolence, where not only the means are wanting, but where even the benevolent themselves have frequently little time to devote to the business of finding out and relieving the wants of the poor. Much has also been said about the rapid increase of pauperism, but it will be found in this, as in many other parishes, that the number of poor has not increased with the increase of the population. There were between 30 and 40 paupers when the population was 900, and the average number for the last seven years is only 55, though the population in that time has been more than doubled. The expense of maintenance has also been loudly complained of; but it seldom occurs to those who make this complaint, that not only the value of produce has been much enhanced, but also that neither the number of the poor, nor their weekly aliment, has borne any thing like a proportion to the increase of rents within these last fifty years; and it ought, moreover, to be considered, that even the poor themselves contri-

bute materially to heighten the value of produce, and thus a reciprocity or interchange of advantage actually occurs to those by whom the poor are maintained.

Fuel.—The expense of fuel is great in this district. The nearest coal is brought from Red Water, Northumberland, a distance of 28 or 30 miles, and is generally sold by the cart load of five bags, containing about ten cwt. at from 13s. to 14s. Coal is also brought from Berwickshire *via* Kelso, and sold by the cwt. The average price during the year is about 14d., although after harvest, and occasionally at other times, it can be bought at 11d. and 1s. per cwt. Of late years, in consequence of more competition, coal is brought to Hawick much cheaper than formerly. During a long-continued storm, it has been sold so high as 2s. 2d. and 2s. 4d. per cwt.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

In closing this report, I have only farther to remark, that the inland situation of this district, which is nearly equidistant from the Solway, the Forth at Leith and the sea at Berwick, is certainly not favourable to the extension of manufactures, as the land carriage of articles for exportation adds so considerably to the prime cost; and the want of facilities for internal communication by canals and railroads, is a desideratum that will not easily be supplied, on account of the altitude and uneven surface of the country. Yet, notwithstanding these local disadvantages, commerce, trade, and agriculture are in a flourishing condition; and the whole of the manufactories which have been described above, have sprung up in this parish since the date of the last report. Were coal more easily procured, it would undoubtedly add materially both to the comfort of the inhabitants, and to the extension of trade. And were such of the labouring classes as spend their earnings injudiciously,—and not a few of these are to be found everywhere—to abjure the immoderate use of whisky, they would be better clad and better fed, and promote at least the temporal comfort of themselves and families.

November 1834.