

## PARISH OF EWES.

PRESBYTERY OF LANGHOLM, SYNOD OF DUMFRIES.

THE REV. ROBERT SHAW, MINISTER.\*

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THIS parish was anciently called Ewesdale, which has now been contracted into Ewes, the name of the river, from the Celtic *Uisge*, signifying water.

*Extent, Boundaries.*—This pastoral and mountainous parish is situated in the north-east corner of the county, and is bounded on the south by Langholm. It extends 8 miles in length, and about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in breadth, and contains 24469 Scotch acres, or  $34\frac{1}{2}$  square miles.

*Soil, &c.*—The appearance of the country on both sides of the Ewes is hilly; and the hills are nearly green, with the exception of some small pieces covered with heath, which afford both protection and food for the various species of game.

In the low land along the banks of the river, the soil is light and gravelly; and on the high grounds, it has a tendency to a deep loam. In favourable seasons, good crops of oats, barley, potatoes, and turnips are raised on the low grounds.

The climate upon the whole is salubrious, and no epidemic was ever known to prevail in the parish. The common diseases are, rheumatism, consumption, and catarrhs, arising from the dampness of the climate, or the sudden changes from heat to cold.

*Rivers.*—The water of Ewes runs through the parish for eight miles, has its source near Moss Paul, in the northern extremity of the country, and falls into the Esk at Langholm, two miles below its southern boundary, dividing it nearly into two parts. In the east part of the parish, the water of Tarras takes its rise, and, running almost south-west, falls also into the Esk, about three miles below the town of Langholm.

*Mineralogy.*—The prevailing rocks in this parish belong to the transition class, and of these the most abundant are greywacke and greywacke slate. Greenstone also occurs, and on the summits of some

\* Drawn up by a Probationer of the Church of Scotland.

of the transition mountains, secondary or floetz trap rocks occur. It is supposed coal may be found in the parish, but hitherto no trial has been made.

*Zoology.*—Salmon in the spawning season are found in the rivers. The sea trout, the herling, and particularly the burn trout, are caught in great numbers. Black-cock, grouse, partridge, pheasant, hare, and rabbits are most abundant. The woodcock, curlew, plover, lapwing, and snipe are also plentiful. The fox, the polecat, weasel, and hedgehog are common.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—Session records were begun to be kept in this parish so early as 1646. In the same year, the registration of baptisms and marriages commenced; and that of deaths in 1717. From 1646 to 1680 the records of baptisms and marriages have been correctly kept. In 1694, they were resumed by the prelates, and since that time to the present they have been kept with much accuracy, and preserved with great care. They are voluminous, and contain much curious and interesting information regarding the early discipline of the church.

*Land-owners.*—The chief land-owners are, His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, Mr Elliot of Arkleton, Mr Beattie of Muckledale, and Mr Lamb of Cooms and Middlemass.

There are no resident heritors in the parish, neither are there any modern buildings, mansion-houses, or manufactories.

*Antiquities.*—The only antiquity to be found in the parish is the remains of a small station, which evidently appears from its formation to be either Saxon or Pictish. No medals, coins, arms, or other antiquities have been discovered.

## III.—POPULATION.

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| The population in 1755 amounted to                     | 392  |
| 1791   | 320  |
| 1801   | 358  |
| 1811   | 367  |
| 1821   | 314  |
| 1831   | 335, of whom 171 are males, and 164 females. |
| Number of families in the parish,                      | 57   |
| chiefly engaged in agriculture,                        | 32   |
| in trade,  | 4  |
| all other families not comprehended above,             | 21   |
| inhabited houses,                                      | 53   |
| uninhabited houses,                                    | 2  |
| The yearly average of births for the last seven years, | 5  |
| marriages,   | 2  |
| deaths,  | 5  |

*Character of the People.*—The people appear happy and contented with their lot, and enjoy in a reasonable degree both the comforts and necessaries of life. The tenants are all industrious,

exemplary, and regular in their attendance on public worship. An air of satisfaction and contentment pervades their dwellings, and the heart of every philanthropist must rejoice to know that they enjoy a competent share of the blessings of life. No poaching of game prevails in this parish.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

##### *Agriculture.*—

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| The number of acres arable,                  | 1100  |
| not in tillage, but affording sound pasture, | 23169 |
| under wood and plantations,                  | 200   |

*Rent of Land.*—As the low and high lands are let together, the rent per acre cannot be accurately known. The grazing of an ox or cow may be estimated at from L. 3 to L. 3, 10s., and a full-grown sheep at 5s.

*Live Stock.*—In all this district, the Galloway breed of cattle is preferred. They are hardy, thrive well on the pastures, find a ready market, and bring good prices. The number of sheep pastured may be about 18,000. They are all of the Cheviot breed, and every attention is paid to their improvement. All modern improvements in husbandry have been introduced, and draining and building dikes on the high grounds have been carried on to a great extent.

The state of farm-buildings in point of accommodation and convenience cannot be surpassed. The Noble Duke and the other proprietors withhold nothing from their tenantry that can promote their comfort and happiness. The whole grain raised in the parish is consumed in the maintenance of the families of the growers.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There is no market-town in this parish, and the nearest is Langholm, which is distant five miles. Langholm is also the post-town. There is no village.

*Means of Communication.*—The means of communication in all directions are good. The great road from Edinburgh by Hawick, Langholm, and Carlisle to London, runs along the banks of the Ewes, for the space of eight miles within the parish. The Carlisle mail, besides several other coaches to London, run on this road. This line of road was planned by Mr Pulteney of Westerhall, who obtained an act of Parliament for carrying it into execution in 1763. There are two other public roads, the one leading to the east, which affords a ready communication to Liddesdale, and the other to Dumfries and Moffat. Both of these roads were made, by an

act of Parliament laying an yearly assessment upon the lands of the different heritors according to their valued rent, and which the tenants pay in lieu of the ordinary statute labour.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—Before the Reformation, there were two churches and two chapels in this parish. The principal church of Ewesdale was dedicated to St Cuthbert, and stood on the west side of the Ewes, near a hamlet called Kirktown of Nether Ewes. Robert, the son of Radulph, the parson of St Cuthbert of Ewisdale, having sworn fealty to Edward I., obtained from him a precept to the sheriff of Dumfries for restoring him to his rights. The other church was situated at Ewesduris, in the upper part of the vale, where a pass leads into Teviotdale. From this pass the termination of the name was derived; *drws* in the British and *duras* in the Irish signifying a pass. One of these chapels in Ewisdale stood at Unthank, and the other at Moss Paul, on the south side of the valley where their ruins may still be seen.

The advowson of the Overkirk of Ewes belonged in the reign of James IV. to John Lindsay of Wauchope, who held the ten pound lands of old extent in Ewesdale. By his forfeiture in the year 1505, the lands and patronage fell to the Crown, and were granted to Alexander Lord Home; after whose forfeiture, in 1516, they were granted to Robert Lord Maxwell, in the same year and month.

The Overkirk of Ewes was deserted after the Reformation, and the kirk of Nether Ewes served the whole valley. The advowson of the parish of Nether Ewes, with the tithes and church lands, belonged to the Earls of Nithsdale, during the reigns of Charles II. and of William. The patronage afterwards passed to the family of Buccleuch, and the Duke is now patron. The church was repaired in 1831; it may contain 200 sitters, and is very central. The number of communicants is 87. The manse and office-houses were put into excellent order, the same year. The glebe contains 30 acres arable, and is well enclosed. The stipend is 15 chalders, half meal half barley, payable at the highest fair prices of the county, with L. 6, 8s. 8d. for communion elements. No Dissenting meeting-house is in this parish, and the number of Dissenters is only 14.

*Education.*—There is only one parochial school, and the teacher has the maximum salary with the legal accommodation. The branches of instruction taught are, English, writing, arithmetic, geography, Latin and Greek, French and mathematics. The

average number of scholars may be about 30. The school is central, and there is no need of an additional one. The amount of fees may average L. 11, exclusive of L. 3 given for collecting the poor's rates, and L. 2 for acting as precentor and session-clerk. There is not a single individual in this parish betwixt six and fifteen years of age who cannot read or write, nor is there one upwards of fifteen. Indeed there is not a single father of a family who is not alive to the benefits of education, or who would think that he had performed a father's duty, if he did not give his family, at least the common branches of education.

*Poor-houses.*—These houses were founded in 1761, by the Rev. Mr Malcolm, minister of the parish, and grandfather of the late Sir John Malcolm, for the support of four families supposed to be the most needful in the parish. The Duke of Buccleuch gives to each a quarter of an acre of ground for a garden. The minister and elders have the appointment.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—Poor-rates were instituted in this parish in 1773. The assessment for last year amounted to L. 41, 10s. upon the valued rental. The number on the poor's roll is only 6, but occasional relief is given to a few others, and to poor and distressed travellers. The weekly collections average 1s. 11½d. or nearly L. 5 per annum. The poor receive quarterly L. 1, 10s., and their comforts are in every respect carefully looked after. No legacies or other funds have been left to the poor of this parish. There is no disposition among the poor to seek relief unless compelled by absolute necessity.

*Inns.*—One.

*Fuel.*—Peat is the principal fuel, which costs per cart load 2s. 6d. The nearest coal pits are at Canobie, where the cart load can be purchased for 2s. 6d. The distance is only eleven miles, and the road is good.

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