

# EDINBURGHSHIRE

## PARISH OF HERIOT.

PRESBYTERY OF DALKEITH, SYNOD OF LOTHIAN AND TWEEDDALE.

THE REV. ROBERT COURT, MINISTER.

[Drawn up by the late Incumbent, the Rev. Edward Hume, and revised by the present Incumbent, the Rev. Robert Court.]

### I. - TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Extent and Boundaries.*- The figure of this parish is an oblong square form, extending geographically  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles by  $3\frac{5}{8}$ . It contains  $23\frac{5}{8}$  square miles, and is bounded on the south, by Stow; on the west, by Inverleithen; on the north, by Temple and Borthwick; and on the east, by Stow and part of Fala. It is strictly pastoral, and may well be denominated a parish of hills; one acre in ten only being arable. The highest hill is that of Blackup Scars, on the north-west point, and is the most lofty in the county, being 2193 feet above the level of the sea, and not less, I should think, than 1000 above the stream at its base. The next to it is that of Dewar, in the south-west corner, which is 1654 feet in height. These hills are called the Moorfoot, and are a branch of the Lammermuir and Soutra, from the east, stretching toward Peebles on the west. The land on the banks of the Heriot is rich and fertile, and, where well farmed, extremely productive. The want of a suitable road to the top of the parish for the conveyance of lime has been long felt; and if ever accomplished, must enhance considerably the value of property, - there being many acres either not at all or indifferently cultivated, for want of proper access; and where lime has reached, there is the most marked difference.

*Climate.* - The climate, though cold, is extremely salubrious, and many of the inhabitants arrive at a good old age. The healthy aspect of the children, especially, has often attracted the notice of strangers.

*Hydrography.* - Heriot Water is the principal stream. It rises in the north-west end of the parish, and after a circuitous course of upwards of five miles, unites with the Gala, exactly at the eastern boundary, about a mile and a half below the church. Gala water, renowned in song, rises in the north-east quarter of the parish, through which it runs about two miles before its junction with the Heriot. The Heriot is subject to frequent floods, which come down with amazing rapidity, overflowing the banks, and sometimes doing considerable damage to property. The highest flood in the memory of the oldest inhabitants took place in August 1837. On that occasion, the Heriot suddenly rose with a rapidity and to a height wholly

unprecedented. Dikes and walls of considerable strength were either levelled or swept away by the torrent; and the low ground presented the appearance of one great sheet of water.

*Soil.* - The soil on the banks of the water is of the finest description, and, were it not for the climate, would produce most abundant crops, which, notwithstanding, occasionally occur in good seasons. There is little or no wheat grown, and barley is now substituted instead of bear.

*Live-Stock.* - This parish has been long famed for its breeding of stock, Most of the farmers feed off cattle of their own rearing. They generally feed to between fifty and sixty stones. The sheep are numerous, and of fine quality. They are almost wholly of the black-faced kind. Their lambs frequently bring the top prices. The number kept in the parish for breeding is 7660 in all.

*Botany.* - The hills afford an inviting field for the botanist. Multitudes of the rarer species of plants are to be found distributed in every corner, and are well worthy a visit from those fond of that delightful study in the summer months. The months of August and September seem the most favourable for botanizing. There is a great want of plantations. The larch and the beech and the plane thrive best. The oldest tree is a plane near the church called the Bell Tree, from the circumstance of the church bell having been suspended upon it. Its exact age cannot be ascertained, but it is supposed to be nearly 250 years.

## II. - CIVIL HISTORY.

In regard to the civil history of the parish there is an ancient account of it in manuscript, in the possession of A. Macdonald, Esq, Register Office, to whose kindness I am indebted for its perusal. It was drawn up in 1627 by William Borthwick, Esq. of Hallheriot, now Borthwickhall, and Mr Scott, elder, Heriot-town; and, after a few observations on the church and living, gives a detailed account of the valuation of each of the properties in the parish at that period. Chalmers, in his Caledonia, is more minute in his description. He gives its history so far as known; whereas the former seems confined to an account at the then present time. It is also alluded to in the taxatio of Mid-Lothian.

We learn from Chalmers's Caledonia, that the church of Heriot was once of "considerable value." In the ancient taxatio it is rated at 30 merks, or mercas, a sum equal to that of many now considered much superior.

The patronage of the church, during the twelfth and part of the thirteenth century, belonged to Roger de Quincy, then Lord of the Manor, and Constable of Scotland, who, it is supposed, had derived it, in all probability, from the Lords of Galloway, who themselves may have received it from the Morvilles. In the division of De Quincy's estates among his three daughters, Heriot fell to Elena, the youngest, who married La Touche, an English Baron. Elena afterwards granted the Monks of Newbotle - now called erroneously Newbattle - the Church of Heryeth, as it was then called. This grant was confirmed by a Bull of Nicholas, and both were confirmed by Fraser, the Bishop of St Andrews, then diocesan. By a chapter in 1309, William Blair, the vicar of Heryeth, resigned his vicarage to Lamberton, Bishop of St Andrews, on which the diocesan immediately conferred the whole vicarage revenues on the Monks of Newbotle, and issued a mandate to the Dean of Haddington, commanding him to put

them in possession of them. These monks seem also to have afterwards acquired the lands of the church, but when or from whom is unknown. "It is, however, certain," says Chalmers, "that both the church and lands of Heryeth belonged to the monks of Newbotle at the Reformation," which is confirmed by Borthwick and Scott's Account of the parish, drawn out in the time of Charles I., in the year 1627, wherein it is said, "that the kirk belongs to the Abbotcy of Newbattle," and that the benefice "consists of a parsonage and vicarage." It adds, "that it is a several kirk and benefice of itself, and consisted of laick patronage before the Reformation;" and that there "are no prebendaries, chaplanries, frierlands, but ane rowme called Kirkland Hill, haldin of the house of Newbattle." Kirkland Hill is now the name of a farm-steading, belonging to the Crookston estate, prettily situated on the side of the water, and about three-quarters of a mile distant from the church. The lands and patronage after the Reformation came into the possession of Mark Kerr, supposed Commendator of Newbattle, to whose heir they descended.

In 1609, Robert, the second Earl of Lothian, was served heir to his father, Mark, in the lands of Heriot and Heriot-moor, which were afterwards sold to Walter Hay, to whose son they descended in 1643.

On the failure of this family, at the death of the late Lord Borthwick, in 1692, the barony of Heriot was acquired by a son of Lord Stair, then one of the Clerks of Session, upon which he was styled Dalrymple of Borthwick, from whom it descended, through the late Dowager Lady Dalrymple, to her eldest son, Sir John H. Dalrymple of Cousland and Fala, Bart., Oxenford Castle, present proprietor.

It is supposed by some that Douglas, author of the celebrated translation of Virgil's *Æneid*, who once held the provostship of St Giles in Edinburgh, and afterwards became Bishop of Dunkeld, was rector at Heriot. Upon investigation, however, we find this to be incorrect, for on examining the manuscript copy of his life prefixed to his work, it is not Heriot, but Hawick that is mentioned.

*Land-owners.* - The land-owners are 7 in all, viz. Sir John Dalrymple, Bart. principal heritor and patron; the Earl of Roseberry; J. Borthwick, Esq. of Crookston; Thomas Adinston, Esq. of Carcant; S. Fraser, Esq. of Garvald; Thomas Cranston, Esq. of Dewar; William Baillie, Esq. of Falahill.

*Parochial Registers.* - The ancient parochial registers are very imperfect, and have been very irregularly kept. There are only three, the fourth being lost. The earliest bears date 1685. They record only baptisms and deaths, and the latter imperfectly.

*Antiquities.* - On the tops of some of the hills are to be found the remains of ancient camps. One or two are quite distinct, and consist of three or more concentric circles with the marks of gateways. But whether encampments of the Romans, Britons, Danes, Picts, or Scots, we have no means of determining. On the south-east boundary of the farm of Dewar, and road side leading to Inverleithen, and quite in the march between the parishes, are to be seen the head and footstones of a grave. It is said to be that of the piper of Peebles, who, undertaking for a wager to play from Peebles to Lauder, became exhausted and fell down, and was buried where he died. On Dewar Hill, not far from the piper's grave, there is a large stone called Lot's Wife, the cause of which title is unknown. At a little distance from it again, is a place called

the Wolf's Cleugh, concerning which a traditionary story is told. It is said that this cleugh was inhabited by a ravenous wolf, which plundered and annoyed the neighbouring country, attacking and destroying many who attempted to pass that way. At last a reward of the lands was offered to him who should slay this destructive creature. One appeared who succeeded in slaying it, and, obtaining the lands, called them Dewar, after his own name. Near Heriot House, there is also a stone called Mary Gibb's, from an unfortunate woman who is said to have been burnt upon it for witchcraft.

There is on Heriot-town hill-head a circle of high stones, 70 or 80 feet diameter; and on Borthwick Hall hill-head, three large rings or ditches, about 50 paces diameter. Chalmers says that these contain the only Druidical remains in Scotland, save those in Kirknewton parish.

### III.- POPULATION.

From Borthwick and Scott's account of the parish in 1627, it would appear that there was nearly double the number of inhabitants then that there is now. It is there mentioned that the number of communicants was eleven score, which, supposing that number the third part of the population, would make it amount to 660, which is more than double that of the present amount.

Population in 1801, -	320
1811, -	300
1821, -	298
1831, -	327
The average number of persons under 15 years of age, is	95
betwixt 15 and 30,	76
30 and 50,	45
50 and 70,	12
upwards of 70,	3
Independent families,	1
Proprietors of land,	7
Unmarried men upwards of 50,	3
Unmarried women upwards of 45,	7
Number of families,	50
Average number of children in each family,	4
Number of families chiefly employed in agriculture,	21
trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	7

Number of illegitimate births during the last three years, 3.

The people are in general intelligent, sober, and industrious. Smuggling, which was once very common in the parish, has ceased to be carried on; but it is to be lamented that poaching in game, especially in salmon, prevails to a great degree.

### IV. - INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.* - The total number of acres English is 15,000, Scotch 12,000; 9633 of which are uncultivated and remain constantly in pasture; 1286 might be profitably cultivated.

*Rent of Land, &c.* - The average rent of land is about L. 1, 5s. per acre. The extent of the farms varies from 50 to 2000 acres.

The general term of leases is for nineteen years.

The farm-steadings throughout are disgraceful. The enclosures are few, and shamefully executed. The hills, though well adapted for planting, are without a tree; the want of which impedes immensely agricultural improvement. Were planting adopted to any extent in so favourable a field, it would not only improve the climate, but incalculably benefit the farmer, and enhance the value of the land.

*Produce.* - Amount of raw produce raised in the parish: -

Value of all kinds of grain, as nearly as possibly can be found,	L. 4265 0 0
of potatoes,	L.104 0 0
of turnips,	L.473 0 0
of hay,	L.615 0 0
of meadow do . . . . .	<u>L.187 0 0</u>
	<u>L. 1379 0 0</u>

Total yearly value of all kinds of grain and raw produce whatever, L. 5644 0 0

#### V. - PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Town.* - The nearest market-town is Dalkeith, twelve miles from the centre of the parish, and nine to the nearest boundary.

There is no village in the parish. The post-office is at Fushie Bridge, distant seven miles. The length of the turnpike in the parish is nearly three miles. [About four miles of the new turnpike to Inverleithen, which intersects the north and north-west district of the parish, may now be added. 1839.]

*Ecclesiastical State.* - The parish church is conveniently situated in nearly the very centre of the parish. It was rebuilt in 1804, since which time it has undergone considerable repair, and were it lathed and made free from damp, might be considered a neat, cleanly place of worship. It is small, and may afford accommodation for about 200. The sittings are all divided among the tenantry. There are no free sittings, except the communion table seats, which are comfortably fitted up. The walls of the former church were much more substantial than those of the present, and should, with little repair, have been in every respect better. The date of its erection cannot be discovered, but in all probability it was as old, or older than the ancient bell, which bore date 1518, with the following inscription: - "Maria Vocor, Ao. Dni. MCCCCXVIII. Jhonn Dawies." The manse was rebuilt in 1793, and in 1829 was extensively repaired, and may now be considered remarkably comfortable. There is an excellent garden, of deep and rich soil, and with the very best exposure. The glebe, adjoining the manse, consisting of 16 Scotch, or 20 English acres or thereby, is of the finest land. It is rented at L. 27. The stipend is, as enlarged by the King's bounty, L. 150, and L. 8 for communion elements.

The number of people attending church about 160; attending meeting, I should think about 40 in all.

Divine service in the Established Church is remarkably well attended. Number of communicants about 100.

The probable amount of church-door collections may be annually about L. 8, 10s.; for religious purposes about L. 6. [The sum of L.12, 4s. was collected in Heriot church last year (1838,) for the General Assembly's Schemes.]

*Education.* - One parochial school in the parish; salary maximum; school fees about L. 25 per annum.

All can read and write; and the people are deeply alive to the importance of education. There is a parochial library, which is little prized.

*Poor.* - Number on poor's roll, 3; two of whom have 12s. per month, and one 6s. per month, raised by assessment. The assessment amounts, on an average, to L. 22, 10s.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the preceding Account was drawn up a considerable improvement in the Parochial Economy has taken place. The reproach of disgraceful farm steadings and shamefully executed enclosures has been in a great measure, though not altogether, wiped away by the erection of plain but commodious houses on several of the farms, and the building of substantial dry stone dikes pretty generally throughout the parish, especially during the last two or three years. The parish church, too, has been greatly improved by the raising of its walls, formerly too low, and by the addition of a small gallery, containing nearly thirty sittings, erected at the joint expense of two of the heritors, Thomas Adinston, Esq., and John Borthwick, Esq. In noticing church accommodation, it may be proper to mention that a great proportion of the inhabitants of the upper district of Stow parish, to the north of the Armilt or Crookston water, in consequence of the distance from their own parish church, find it more convenient to attend at Heriot. Some steps have been taken to disjoin that district entirely, from Stow, and annex it *quoad sacra* to Heriot, and it is hoped that an arrangement so reasonable and desirable will soon be completed.

*October 1839.*