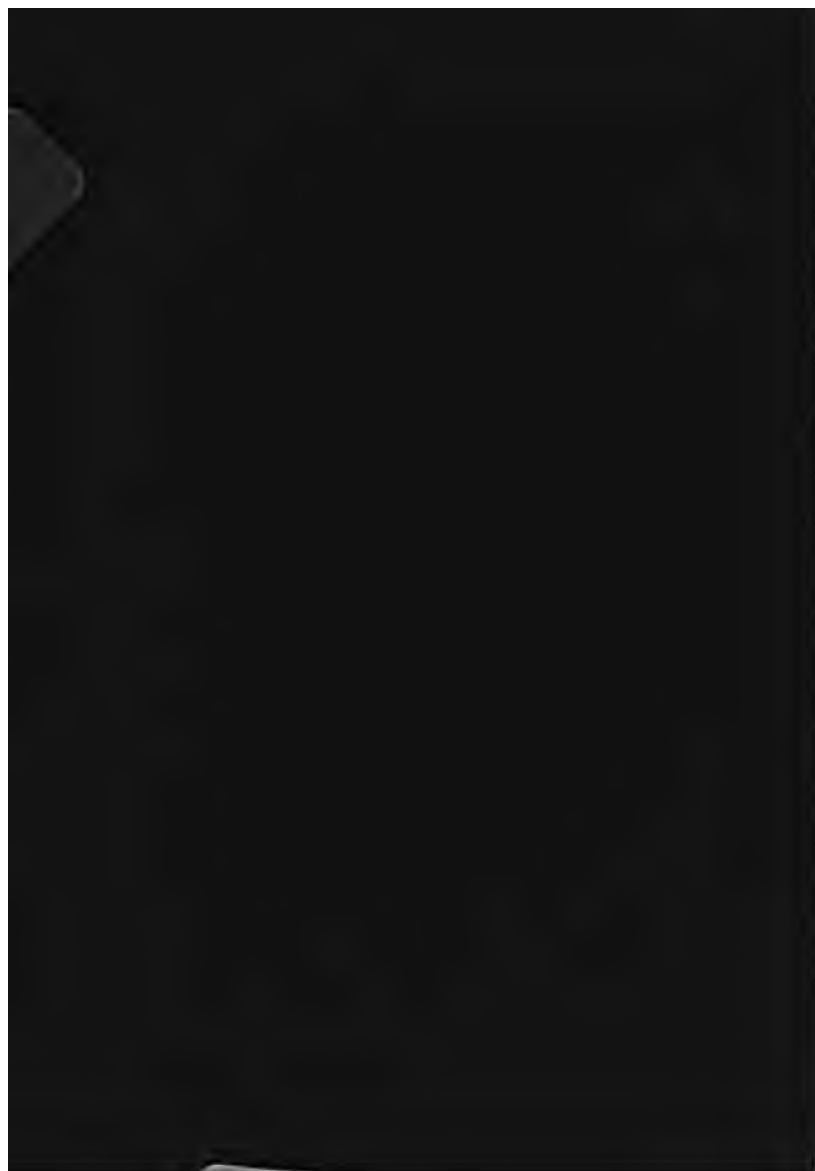


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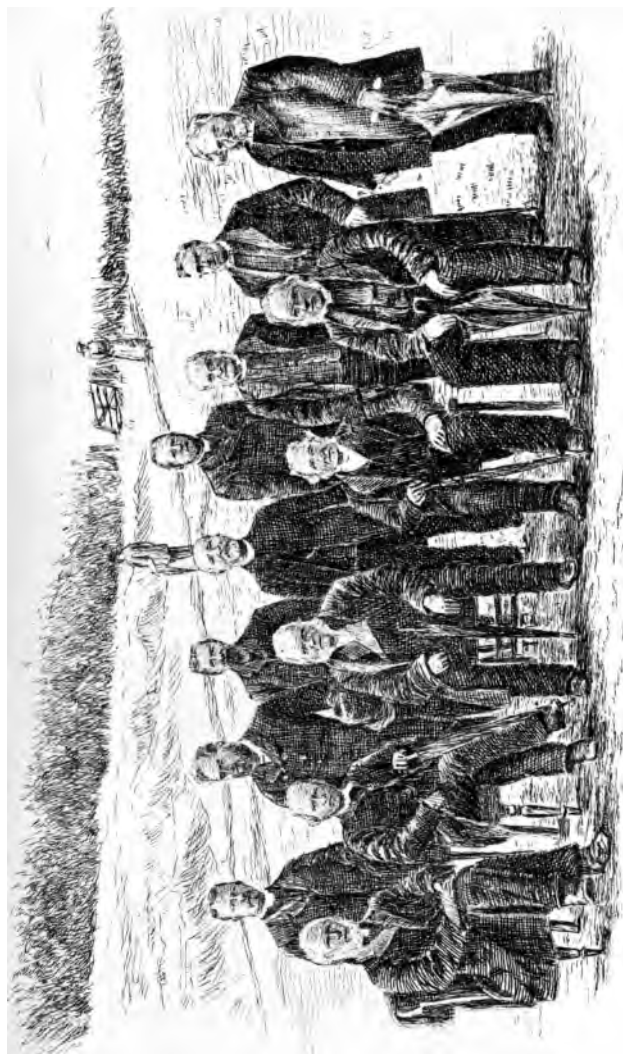


Presbyterian Church, Gt. Br.: Scotland.

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**GROUP OF MINISTERS AT GATESHAW BRAE.**

2nd July 1889.

*Frontispiece.*



1877

1878

1879

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1886

1887

1888



**TWO CENTURIES**  
**OF**  
**BORDER CHURCH LIFE:**

**WITH**

**BIOGRAPHIES OF LEADING MEN AND SKETCHES OF  
THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE  
ON THE EASTERN BORDER.**

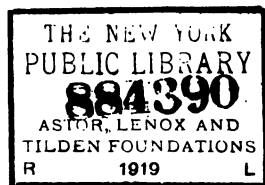
**By JAMES TAIT,**  
**FORMERLY EDITOR OF THE "KELSO CHRONICLE."**

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## PREFACE.

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THE present volume is designed to illustrate Church Life, chiefly as manifested in the origin and history of several congregations in the Kelso Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church. In connection with the third jubilee of three congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery statements were made which arrested public interest, and seemed to stimulate a desire for a more ample record of traditions, oral and written, bearing on the Church Life of the district in the early days of these and other congregations. In his effort to satisfy that desire, the Author has endeavoured to present a plain statement of facts, and to deduce from them only fair inferences, avoiding, on the one hand, extravagant eulogy, while equally guarding against any hasty censure of men who were very earnest, and not less thoughtful than their successors of the present day.

While prosecuting his work, the Author has been greatly encouraged by the general interest manifested in its progress, by the ready response, in nearly all cases, to inquiries for information, including free access to the ecclesiastical records of different de-

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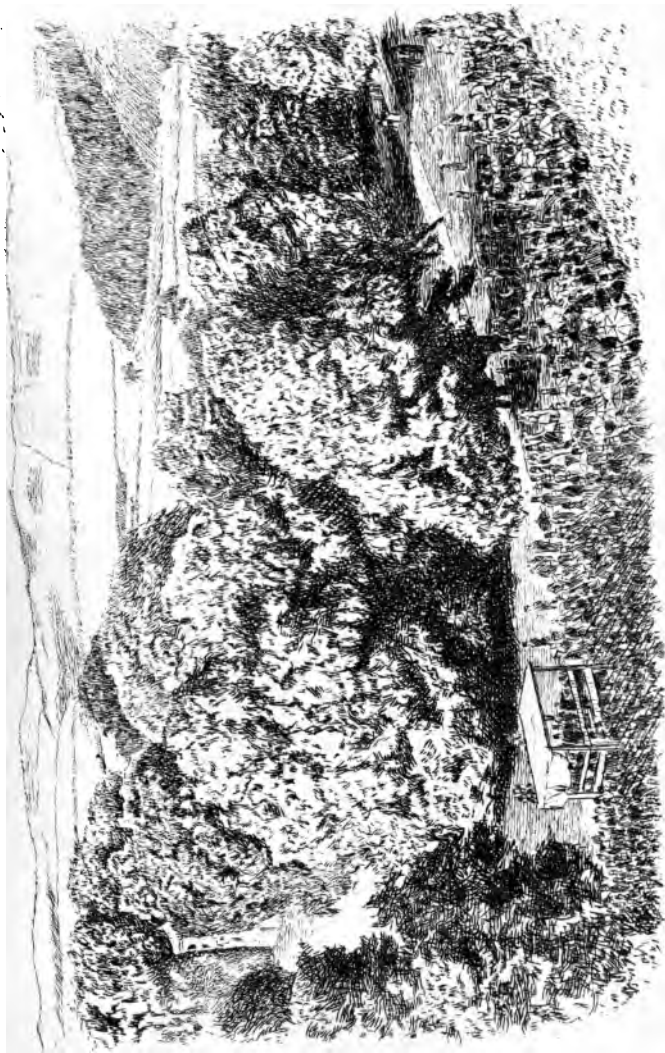
nominations; and, not least, by a goodly list of subscribers, of whom not a few are prominent in the literary world. Very hearty thanks are accorded for these marks of confidence; especially to custodiers of ecclesiastical records, to friends who have been helpful in revising proof sheets, and to others who have generously assisted in promoting the circulation of the volume.

Regret has been expressed in some quarters that a larger number of congregations has not been included; but, apart from other considerations, that would have unduly increased the bulk of the volume. It is admitted, however, that the history of other congregations near the Border might be written with great advantage, and possibly this may be done at no distant date.

On the second of July, 1889, after the first portion of this work was in type, a meeting was held at Gateshaw Brae to commemorate the third jubilee of the Rev. John Hunter's ordination. The precise date of the ordination was the 17th October, 1739; but the memorial service, arranged by the Presbytery of Kelso, was held in July, as that month was considered more suitable than October for a service in the open air. It turned out a remarkably favourable day; and was, in all respects, a memorable occasion. A tent was erected in the precise spot, so far as could be ascertained, which had been consecrated by the first ordination under the auspices of the Associate Pres-

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*From a Photo by Mackintosh, Kelso*

**GATESHAW BRAE.**  
*2nd July 1880.*

*Page v*

bytery. The braes were decked in the rich verdure of midsummer, only slightly browned by the drought of an unusually fine season. Through a screen of light, fleecy clouds the sun shone out at intervals, imparting a sense of comfort, without any approach to that overpowering heat which might have been caused either by a sultry atmosphere or a day of unclouded splendour. Seated on the green sward was a crowd estimated at over two thousand, packed closely in front of the tent, and more thinly scattered in little groups at greater distances, as indicated by one of the illustrations in this volume. There were ministers present from all the Border Presbyteries, from the Free Church, from the Presbyterian Church of England, as well as from many distant parts of Scotland. In the general audience might be observed many who had travelled long distances to be present. About sixty had come in conveyances from Jedburgh, twenty from St. Boswells and neighbourhood, many from Stichel, Kelso, Yetholm, Coldstream, and other places in the same directions. Some were present who had attended the similar gathering fifty years before; and, though a few may have been attracted by curiosity, the great majority of those present were deeply interested in the cause which had occasioned such an assembly.

After devotional exercises, conducted by the Rev. Peter Mearns, Coldstream, and the Rev. William Ritchie, D.D., Duns, Principal Cairns preached a

sermon based on 1 Kings viii. 57, 58, in which he set forth the thankfulness, the diligence, the hope, and the prayerfulness to which the Church should be stimulated by God's presence with their fathers. In illustrating the first point, he referred to the work of the Secession Fathers in preaching a pure and scriptural doctrine at a period of general defection, to the stand which they had made on behalf of Christian discipline, and to the service which they had rendered in vindicating the scriptural rights of the Christian people. Addresses were delivered by the Rev. David Cairns, Stichel (who presided in the absence of the Rev. Mungo Giffen, Morebattle, laid aside by illness); the Rev. A. S. Mactavish, Free Church, Morebattle; the Rev. T. C. Kirkwood, Kelso; and the Rev. Alexander Oliver, D.D., Glasgow, who had been brought up in connection with the congregation of Morebattle, and had been present at the commemoration service fifty years before. Others who took part in the proceedings were the Rev. Messrs. John Polson and J. W. Pringle, M.A., Jedburgh; James Christie, B.A., Carlisle; John Cairns, M.A., Dumfries; John Clark, M.A., Kirkcaldy, nephew of the late Rev. R. Cranston, Morebattle. The psalmody was conducted by Mr. Kiddy, Edinburgh, a grandson of the Rev. Mr. Cranston.



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## TWO CENTURIES OF BORDER CHURCH LIFE.

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### CHAPTER I.

KELSO AND THE REV. JAMES RAMSAY, M.A.

1707 TO 1749.

A NOTABLE figure in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland during the first half of the eighteenth century was the Rev. James Ramsay, M.A., minister at Eyemouth, and afterwards at Kelso. With a strong physical frame, superior intellectual powers which had been carefully cultivated, a large measure of shrewd common sense, and a genuine appreciation of humour, Mr. Ramsay acquired a predominating influence among his contemporaries, and became a leader in the ecclesiastical courts. He was moderator of the General Assembly in 1738, and again in 1741, on which occasion his closing address was contained in the single sentence, "It is with pleasure I can observe that the affairs of this Assembly have, by the good hand of God upon us, been managed with great decency and remarkable unanimity."

By the "Moderate" party in the Church, Mr. Ramsay was regarded as "a very rational, solid divine, of moderate, healing principles, and very

useful in Church judicatories." The opinion of the opposite party is quaintly expressed in Witherspoon's satirical treatise, "*Ecclesiastical Characteristics*," published two years after Ramsay's decease, and dedicated to "his departed ghost or surviving spirit." John Witherspoon, now little known in this country, but very highly esteemed in America, was born in 1722 at Yester, in the county of Haddington, of which parish his father was minister. He was educated at the public school of Haddington, whence, in his 13th year, he went to the University of Edinburgh, and was licensed as a preacher in his 21st year. Though invited to become assistant and successor to his father, young Witherspoon preferred a call to Beith, and was soon afterwards transferred to Paisley, then a rising manufacturing town. His gifts were so generally appreciated that he obtained calls from Dublin, Dundee, Rotterdam, and New-Jersey College, in America, of which he was offered the presidency, previously occupied by Jonathan Edwards. For a time he resisted all such invitations, and stuck to his post as a leader of the Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland. Besides other works, he published in 1751 his "*Ecclesiastical Characteristics*," a brief polemical treatise, which, for keen wit and delicate satire applied to the highest purposes, has been considered almost equal to Pascal's "*Provincial Letters*." The author professes "to open up the mystery of Moderatism," or to indicate "a plain and easy way of attaining to the character of a moderate man as at present in repute in the Church of Scotland." It was one characteristic that he "must be very unacceptable to the common people;" and it

was a maxim that, "in Church settlements, which are the principal causes that come before ministers for judgment, the only thing to be regarded is who the patron and the great and noble heritors are; the inclinations of the common people are to be utterly despised." How far these characteristics were exemplified in the career of James Ramsay will appear in the subsequent narrative.

Ramsay was born in the year 1669, a strange period in the history of Scotland. James Sharpe was then Archbishop of St. Andrews and Primate of the Kingdom. Lauderdale had obtained the management of civil affairs, while the dragoons of Dalziell and Claverhouse were riding rough-shod over the dejected peasantry. In 1678, when Ramsay was nine years old, the country was ringing with news regarding the trial, torture, and execution of James Mitchell, who, eight years before, had attempted to murder Archbishop Sharpe. At the same time there were eighty prisoners in the tolbooth of Edinburgh under sentence of transportation to slavery in Barbadoes on account of their religious convictions; and money left to build a new church for the city was diverted to the purpose of building a new prison, which was thought to be more necessary. Toward the close of the same year broke out a mania for the prosecution of witches; and society seemed to be so utterly demoralised that even the peasantry suffering the agonies of persecution were ready to inflict torture on helpless and unoffending old women. A year later young Ramsay would become cognisant of remarkable events. The Archbishop was killed, and a comet appeared in the sky, which was believed to

presage "great judgments on these lands and nations." The Duke of York had taken up his abode at Holyrood, and made arrangements for the celebration of the mass, while the question of his exclusion from the succession to the throne was under debate in the English Parliament. A procession of students marched down the High Street, and burned an effigy of the Pope in the neighbourhood of the palace, while mysterious voices were heard in the streets proclaiming that the day of judgment was at hand. Early in 1681 six women were hanged at Edinburgh on account of their religion; and four others suffered similarly for murdering their children born out of wedlock. Another comet appeared in 1682, at which time it was observed that the Duke of Lauderdale died.

James Ramsay entered the Arts Classes in the University of St Andrews in 1683-4, and on the 27th March, 1684, was incorporated in St. Leonard's College. On the 23d July, 1687, he graduated as Master of Arts. No additional information regarding his career is furnished by the University records. Names of students in theology were either not recorded or the books have been lost. Probably he was just beginning his theological course when, on the 3d November, 1688, two days before William of Orange landed at Torbay, the whole prelates of Scotland, with two exceptions, joined in a letter to King James, signed in their name by the Archbishop of St. Andrews, professing their fixed and unshaken loyalty, promising the utmost efforts to promote steadfast allegiance among his subjects, and praying that Heaven would give him the hearts of his sub-

jects and the necks of his enemies. In the University itself the same spirit was dominant, for when rumours reached the city that William had landed the professors and heads of colleges drew up an address to King James testifying their steady adherence to the principles of loyalty and obedience, and giving promise of "perpetual prayers" for his happiness and that of his kingdom.

Entering the University at such a time, and in the circumstances thus briefly described, James Ramsay may have looked forward to the day when he would be Archbishop of St. Andrews and Primate of Scotland. By the change of Government in 1688 any such prospect was ruined, and he was destined to become a Presbyterian minister. On the 1st November, 1692, he was licensed as a preacher by the Presbytery of Duns and Chirnside; and on the 9th May, 1693, was ordained minister of Eyemouth, in the same Presbytery. Henry Erskine was then a member, and continued to be so till his decease three years afterwards; but in the district generally the Moderate party prevailed. Not a few of the ministers had been Episcopalian incumbents, and the lives of some were very loose, if not actually immoral. Mr. Kilpatrick of Ladykirk was a noted punster, and, in the last years of his life, became so corpulent that he could not walk across the road from the manse to the kirk. In some parishes the majority of the people favoured the Jacobite and Episcopalian cause. So it was at Coldingham, a parish to which Mr John Dysart, formerly of Langton, was inducted on the 24th July, 1694, under the protection of a military force. For a time after his induction the minister

was accustomed, every Sabbath, to carry pistols, which he laid down openly, one on either side of him, in the pulpit. He was a bold and determined man, a thorough Presbyterian, and zealous in the interests of the Kirk as established by the Revolution Settlement. Henry Erskine of Chirnside died in 1696, and in the same year died Luke Ogle in the borough of Berwick-on-Tweed, described by Boston as "a man of great learning," whom "God had signally supported, owned, and blessed." Only Mr. Dysart and Mr. Colden of Duns were left to maintain the Presbyterian cause till 1699, when Thomas Boston was ordained minister of Simprin; but the following year Mr. Colden was translated to Oxnam, in the Presbytery of Jedburgh. From the first Mr. Ramsay belonged to the Moderate party, but could recognise merit in those who held other opinions, and the religious world is indebted to him for having encouraged Thomas Boston to prosecute his studies, and for showing him in after life many acts of kindness.

On the 5th of September, 1706, Mr. Ramsay was called to Kelso; but not till the 24th of September the following year was the translation completed. The settlement was not unanimous, but, according to accounts handed down by tradition, Mr. Ramsay was not slow in adopting means to conciliate his opponents. Among the malcontents was an influential office-bearer, on whom Mr. Ramsay called, professedly to ask his advice about the investment of some spare cash. Having settled the matter by getting him to take the money for his own business, the minister expressed deep regret at having noticed his absence from the elders' seat, and hoped that one whose



influence was so great in the town would be in his place next Lord's Day. Yielding to such persuasive accents, the worthy man returned to the accustomed seat and the discharge of his official duties.

Regarding Mr. Ramsay's style of preaching materials do not exist to guide us in forming a judgment, any remains of his pulpit oratory that have kept alive his fame being chiefly of a humorous kind, the grotesque features of which have been probably exaggerated. With respect to his pastoral supervision of the parish there is no such difficulty. In a folio volume of 430 pages are contained the records of the session during the whole period of his ministry. It is well named "the book of discipline," for its pages are crowded with cases of scandal, including many offences that would now be considered trivial, and not a few that would be taken before a civil magistrate. The record is valuable because of the light which it reflects on the social system as it existed during the early part of the eighteenth century.

The first meeting of session after Mr. Ramsay's induction was on the 28th September, 1707, and meetings follow one another so rapidly that nearly forty were held within the year. Cases of the class which are said still to occupy much attention in kirk-sessions were exceedingly numerous, and delinquents were punished with unrelenting rigour. Many of the parties were compelled to appear more than once before the congregation, besides private meetings with the session, and, before absolution, were compelled to give caution for the payment of the penalty. According to an Act passed in the

first Parliament of James VI., cap. 13, a fine of £40 Scots applicable to pious uses was payable for a first offence, and in the first Parliament of Charles II. the amount was fixed at £10 for every inferior person, but much more for those in higher rank, and it was to be "levied of the woman as well as the man." These Acts continued in force, and, by an additional Act passed in the reign of King William, application could be made to the justices to enforce the law. Mr. Ramsay was not reluctant to invoke the help of the magistrate. At an early meeting of session "the clerk reports that he spoke to James Curl, according to appointment, and that he finds he is not free to give in bond and caution as usual. The session appoints Thomas Kennedy and James Craig to acquaint him that if he shall not do it presently he will be referred to the magistrate."

The dealings with delinquents were unsparing, and sometimes peremptory. At one meeting "James Thomson reports that he conversed with James Hay in order to bring him to a further sense of his sin, and his opinion is that he should be yet further dealt with, therefore he is appointed to wait on the minister betwixt and the next session day." On the 3d November, 1707, "Margaret Ross being called, appeared and confessed fornication with Sergeant Ross at Leith about eight months ago, when she was serving one Mr. Selkirk, precentor at South Leith. She was rebuked, and appointed to go to Leith, whence she came, and to trouble the town no more."

Some deluded women were dealt with for going off with dragoons, of whom there was always a troop in the town, and others in the neighbourhood. The

morals of the community were not improved by their presence, and not only were women of the town often seduced, but others of a loose character were imported from Edinburgh. Many were rebuked and admonished for "light carriage" with dragoons, and were "appointed to remove out of the town." On the 26th August, 1708, "Elizabeth Johnston, compearing, acknowledged she spake with one James Kennedy, a dragoon, but alleged it was only that he might carry a letter to some of her friends. She was rebuked and admonished, with certification that if she shall be found conversing with dragoons afterwards she shall be put out of the town."

Another class who occasioned scandals in the town consisted of the country lairds. On the 21st June, 1710, "the session being informed that the laird of Chatto was two or three days in the end of last week with a base woman entertained in John Storie's house in Maxwellheugh, therefore the said Storie and his wife are to be warned to the next session." Having compeared, they were sharply rebuked, with certification that if they did the like again they would be publicly rebuked before the congregation." John Don of Attonburn, having similarly transgressed, was cited to appear before the session; but, at a subsequent meeting, "the minister reported that John Don of Attonburn had signified to him his inclination to see him at his own house on Saturday last, and the minister having several things with respect to his conduct to converse with him on beside the particular for which he was ordered to be cited, and fearing lest the citing of him might have deprived the minister of an opportunity of discours-

ing with him on these things, and lest it should have prevented Attonburn's coming to see him as he had promised, the citing of him was delayed, but he is now ordered to be cited again to the next session." At a subsequent meeting the case of Attonburn was still delayed, "the minister having had no seasonable opportunity of speaking with him, and now the sacrament approaches." After the sacrament, the case was delayed again "till the minister have an opportunity to meet with him," but there is no record to indicate farther dealing, from which it may be inferred that lairds were not treated in the same way as common people.

The giving up of names with a view to marriage was called "consignation," apparently because a sum of money was lodged with the session as a pledge that the proceedings at the marriage would be decent and orderly. Penny weddings were common; and in June, 1710, it was enacted by the session that no elders shall be present at or countenance such proceedings. Sometimes the money consigned with the session was forfeited, and went to the poor. On the 3d September, 1710, "the session being informed that Robert Hope had a very numerous wedding, with great drinking and dancing publicly in the street, they appointed his dollar to be forfeit for the use of the poor." On the 26th November two men were allowed to have their money, but "Walter Weir, desiring his crown, which was consigned at his marriage, the session allow him forty pence, and the rest to be kept for the use of the poor, in regard he had a great company at his wedding." In another case James Hardie, "desiring up his dollar, which was

consigned at his marriage, the session finds he had great abuse and public promiscuous dancing at his marriage, whereby the dollar is forfeit; but in regard he is poor, they allow twenty pence of it to be given to the treasurer for the use of the poor, and the rest to be given back to him." In another instance the penalty has been to some extent forfeited, but "in regard he is very poor, they allow him a crown." Alexander Chatto, merchant, "desiring up his dollars," the session allow them to be given, but "refer it to his discretion what he will give to the poor."

The session had much trouble with irregular marriages, for which facilities were afforded by the proximity of the English border. Some were celebrated by Mr. Blair, designated "curate at Cornwall," who, in several instances, had agreed with the parties to ante-date the marriage with a view to cover their evil conduct. In cases of this kind a sharp rebuke was inflicted by the session. In this "curate of Cornwall" may be recognised the Rev. Thomas Blair, incumbent of Lennel or Coldstream, who was ejected by the Privy Council on the 26th September, 1689, because he refused to pray for their Majesties William and Mary, or read the proclamation of the Estates, or observe the national thanksgiving. He lived at Preston, in Northumberland, from 1728 till the 23d August, 1736, when he died, aged about 85, in the 53d year of his ministry. On him the following epitaph was composed:—

" Here lies the Reverend Thomas Blair,  
A man of worth and merit,  
Who preached for fifty years and mair,  
According to the spirit.

“He preached off book to shun offence,  
And what was still more rare,  
He never spoke one word of sense—  
So preached Tammy Blair.”

One subject that greatly occupied the session was that of Sabbath breaking. On the 5th January, 1708, “It being observed that barbers or their servants carry wiggs thorow the town on the Lord’s Day morning: To prevent this disorder the session appoints Thomas Kennedy and John Mein to speak to all the barbers in the town that they neither carry nor give out wiggs from their shops nor do anything belonging to their employment on the Lord’s Day, as they would not incur public censure for profaning the Sabbath.” At a subsequent meeting Thomas Kennedy reported that he had spoken to the barbers according to appointment, and “they promise that no such things should be done again.” On the 1st August, 1708, “It being reported that the gadgers do search the brewers’ houses on the Sabbath, the session recommends it to John Trotter, James Thomson, and James Craig to make search into the truth thereof, and to report.” At a subsequent meeting Thomas Kennedy intimated that he had spoken to Andrew Simson “anent his gadging on the Sabbath, and that he answered that he had printed instructions for what he had done, and that the people brewing so late on the Saturday night obliged him to it.” The session recommended to the elders in their several districts “to deal with the brewers not to brew on the Saturdayes night, or to do any such work after nine o’clock at night. The session likewais recommended to the minister to write to Edinburgh to understand what

methods may be there observed for preventing this abuse, and in the mean time the gadgers are to be further dealt with."

At that time there was no bridge across the Tweed at Kelso, and the session found occasion for offence in connection with the ferry. On the 2d January, 1709, "the minister reported that he spoke to William Knox, the boatman, who alleged it was not his fault that people were transported in time of sermon, in regard that several in Maxwellheugh and others came over after the third bell." The session, therefore, made a rule "discharging any one concerned in the boat to transport any persons over the river upon the Sabbath day after the third bell except in cases of necessity, which if they do they shall be censured for it; and appoints this Act to be intimate to them." A peculiar circumstance led to a similar interference with the hours of work at Kelso mill. On the 24th September, 1710, Alexander Graemslaw in Maxwellheugh, "being dilated for bringing in cabbage to his house the last Lord's Day between sermons, is to be cited to the next session." Compearing on the 2d October, he was rebuked, and on promise not to offend in the same way again was dismissed. Being then asked why he was not in church, he answered that being late at work in the mill on Saturday night, he was obliged to go to his house and get clean clothes. Thereupon two elders were appointed to speak to the masters of the mill, and enjoin them that they suffer not any corn to be ground in the mill on a Saturday night after ten o'clock.

Walking or "vaguing" on the Sabbath was strictly prohibited. On the 21st February, 1708, the session

renewed a previous Act that the elders go through the town and take notice of such as profane the Sabbath by walking to and fro in time of divine worship, and to report. In August following, Alexander Handiside and his son and Jean Ker were cited for "walking to and fro on the Sabbath." At first they "compeared not," but in obedience to a second citation Handiside "compearing, acknowledged that he did walk one Sabbath day to Andrew Robson's to cure a child of his that had broken bones. He was exhorted to be a better observer of the Sabbath, and to attend on the ordinances, which he promising to do was dismiss." Jean Ker admitted that she had accompanied Handiside, and was likewise rebuked. John Handiside having evaded several citations, the minister was instructed to "apply to the bailie anent his contumacy," as a result of which he, having "desired to be called, was allowed to compear, and was gravely and seriously rebuked." On the 16th November two young boys, John Ker and John Lindsay, "compearing, were sharply rebuked for playing on the Sabbath day in time of sermon, and, upon their promise not to do the like in time coming, they were dismiss." James Wallace, having been found by the elders lying in the fields in time of sermon, was cited, and on compearing alleged that he had drawn blood for "rheumatick pains," and had gone out to take the air. He was exhorted to walk circumspectly and wait upon ordinances.

In July, 1710, one of the elders appointed to visit the town reported that he had seen John Handiside in the house of Margaret Melrose in time of the forenoon sermon, and likewise that he had found



William Knox (the boatman) at home, and all his men drinking in time of sermon. At next meeting William Knox and all his men "compearing, were rebuked for staying at home and drinking in time of sermon, and also for bringing persons over the water after the third bell, both of which they promised to guard against in time coming." Next month "those who searched the town giving account that they had seen Katharine Thomson, spouse to Alexander Paterson, sitting idly at her door in time of sermon, and that when she was reproved she abused the reprover, therefore she is warned to the next session." After three several citations, she compeared, and was "rebuked for profaning the Sabbath, and indiscreet carriage to the elder that reproved her, and upon her promise not to be guilty of the like in time coming was dismissed. Thomas Kerss had been seen "going through the street in time of sermon," and refusing to stand still and answer when called, was cited to the next meeting. Compearing, he "pretended he was going to the place where he was to shear upon the Monday," but the excuse was not sustained: he was rebuked for slighting the Sabbath and indiscretion to the elders, and promised not similarly to offend again. In view of the broad fact that "many people in this place are guiltie of profaning the Sabbath by walking abroad in the fields after sermons," the minister was recommended by the session to "give them a general reproof out of the pulpit the next Lord's Day, and to dehort them from so doing in time coming, with certification that the session will take strict notice of any one guiltie of it." Intimation of this matter was made accordingly.

This strict enforcement of the Act against Sabbath profanation was not confined to Kelso. On the 16th January, 1709, Mr. Ramsay intimated receipt of a letter from the session of Maxton signifying that Robert Hall and William Falconer, two company officers in Kelso, had profaned the Lord's Day by travelling to Maxton upon the 28th of November last in time of divine worship. Being cited, they appeared, and confessed that they had travelled to Maxton on the day specified, but not in time of divine service, and affirmed that they had heard sermon both before and after noon "in the meeting-house."\* It was agreed that they be rebuked "as being guilty of a schism out of no principle of conscience, as they acknowledged," and they were appointed by the session to go to Maxton "on the Monday following either to clear themselves or be rebuked for their fault by that session."

It was expected that every elder should have an eye to strangers coming into his district, and allow no one to come who could not produce a "Testificate." In making the periodical search the visitors were enjoined specially to notice "what single women keep houses by themselves, what strangers have come to the town, where and how they live, and who have or have not 'Testificates.'" For this vigilance there seems to have been some necessity, as, on the 20th March, 1709, the minutes state that "the session,

\* This was the Episcopal Chapel at Kelso, the only dissenting place of worship in the district at that time. In Kelso and its neighbourhood there was so much of an Episcopal and Jacobite element that the rebels in 1715 and 1745 made that town the centre of operations in the southern counties.

understanding that this place is sadly abused by a great many vagrant strangers that have come into it, and are guilty of great extravagancies, especially at the town-head, they recommend it to James Thomson and James Craig to go to-morrow and take a list of them, and acquaint the minister therewith, who will go with them to the bailie to desire they may be put out of the town."

Eight years after Mr. Ramsay's induction, and in the autumn of 1715, a company of Highland rebels occupied the town for several days. Whatever opinions the future minister of Kelso may have held during his student days at St. Andrews, he was now firmly attached to the existing Government. At a meeting in the church on the 8th August, the inhabitants subscribed a resolution pledging themselves "to assist and stand by one another in defence of our lawful sovereign, King George, the succession of the Crown happily established by law, and the Protestant religion, in opposition to a Popish Pretender and all his abettors." Along with Bailie Chatto and the principal inhabitants, Mr. Ramsay was active in organizing measures for the defence of the town. About 120 of the inhabitants were supplied with arms, placed under officers, and reviewed by Sir William Bennet of Grubbet and Sir John Pringle of Stichel. The main body of the rebels marched from Seaton House, near Musselburgh, on the 19th October, halted at Duns, and on the 22d left that town for Kelso. Meanwhile Sir William Bennet, who had charge of the defence, finding his forces inadequate, evacuated the town, and a company of rebel horsemen from Northumberland took possession. A body of

cavalry from Nithsdale, arriving about the same time, marched straight to Ednam, met the Highlanders, and conducted them to Kelso, where the whole rebel force had now assembled. Led by old Mackintosh, the Highlanders entered the place with pipes playing and colours flying, but making only a poor figure after all, being draggled with rain and fatigued with long marches.

It would seem that Mr. Ramsay had temporarily retired, for, on the next day, being Sunday, the rebels attended "the great kirk," where service was conducted forenoon and afternoon by a preacher nominated by Lord Kenmure, the rebel chief.\* On Monday morning the Highlanders were assembled in the churchyard, whence they marched with colours flying and drums beating to the Market Cross, and there formed in a circle, with the lairds and other gentry in the centre. Here King James the Eighth was solemnly proclaimed, and the Earl of Mar's proclamation read, containing complaints of "oppressions and grievances, arising particularly from the union of the two kingdoms, the heavy taxes levied, and the large debts incurred for the maintenance of foreign troops." To a certain extent the common people sympathised with this statement of grievances, and the populace shouted with loud acclamations, "No Union! No Malt Tax! No Salt Tax!"

The Highlanders remained till the 27th October, and picked up a few muskets, some pieces of cannon which had previously belonged to Hume Castle, some

\* The officiating Episcopal parson was Paton, the informer, of whom Hill Burton (*"History of Scotland,"* ed. 1874, vol. viii, p. 296) gives a very disparaging account.

broad swords, and a small quantity of gunpowder which lay concealed in the church. Tired of the enterprise, some of them deserted and settled in the neighbourhood. It was probably one of these deserters who had got a post in the Excise that was publicly rebuked from the pulpit in Mr. Ramsay's peculiar style. Excisemen, as a rule, were not liked, but a Highland exciseman in a Border county would be particularly obnoxious. Certain people may be punished to any moderate degree with the certainty that their calamities will evoke no sympathy. Typical of this class was the boy who was suffering chastisement, when the other boys shouted to "hit him hard, his faither's an Anti-Burgher." It was a popular action for the minister to rebuke a Highland exciseman. The culprit was seated in the front gallery of the church, which had some years before been set apart for the dragoons, and toward which the minister's eye would be often directed. Producing a pencil, the gauger was either taking notes of the sermon or making some calculation connected with his business, but either way it was not pleasing to Mr. Ramsay. Looking up to the gallery where the scribe was seated, he exclaimed, "My brethren, except ye be born again, it is as impossible for you to enter the kingdom of heaven as it is for a Highlander not to be a thief! Man wi' the keel-o'-vine, do you hear that?" The "keel-o'-vine" disappeared, and never again offended the eyes of the minister.

In 1745 Kelso was again visited by the Highland rebels. The host was moving toward England in three divisions. The right wing, including about 2000 men, went by Peebles and Moffat, the middle

column taking the route by Lauder, Selkirk, and Hawick, while the left and largest company, about 4000 in number, under Prince Charles Edward himself, reached Kelso on the 4th November, and, two days afterwards, departed in the direction of Hawick. Advanced in years and rich in experience, Mr. Ramsay had provided against this invasion in a manner different from the plan adopted thirty years before. In common with other ministers, he had received a communication from the Government requiring him to consult with the best informed among the inhabitants, and report who were favourable to the Jacobite cause. Knowing his parishioners well, the minister had a complete list of those who wished success to the Pretender. Dissembling such knowledge, he convened in the manse the chief representatives of the disaffected party, and produced the official document. They looked at one another with some anxiety, and Mr. Ramsay, taking advantage of their apparent confusion, suddenly asked, "What reply shall I give to this question of the Government? Do you know any disaffected persons among us?" Taken thus unawares, without time for thought or consideration, each of them assured the minister that all his acquaintances were quite loyal. "Well, well," said Mr. Ramsay, "I am exceedingly glad to hear this. Had there been any disloyal persons in the place I am sure you must have known them, and I shall now acquaint the Privy Council that I have consulted with the most intelligent of my parishioners, who assure me that the people here are all well affected toward his Majesty's Government." Doubtless Mr. Ramsay knew the men, and was satisfied that their disloyal sentiments would

evaporate in mere talk, as they actually did. Prince Charles Edward had little satisfaction with his Kelso allies. When told that they never met on an evening without drinking success to his cause, the Prince answered, "I believe you, gentlemen; I have drinking friends, but no fighting friends in Kelso." In connection with the rebellion, the 18th of December, 1745, was observed in Kelso as a fast, in accordance with a Royal Proclamation read from the pulpit on the previous Sabbath; and on the 22d there was read "a seasonable warning from the commission of the Church anent the present troubles." After the danger had passed there was read from the pulpit on the 22d June, 1716, "An Act of the last Assembly of the Church ordaining a solemn thanksgiving through all Scotland for our merciful deliverance from the late unnatural rebellion;" and Thursday the 26th June was accordingly kept as a thanksgiving "for the victory over the rebels at Culloden."

Mr. Ramsay's strength was specially exercised in the Church courts. His influence in the Kelso Presbytery will be noticed in its proper place. In connection with the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale some incidents in which he took part may be specified. To his credit be it said that he was a life-long friend of Thomas Boston, whose opinions and character differed widely from his own. Through his influence Boston was appointed clerk to the Synod, and when the new clerk objected on conscientious grounds to take the oath, a promise of fidelity was, on Ramsay's suggestion, accepted in place of the oath. Again, when the inexperienced young clerk blundered through "natural diffidence and timorous-

ness," he says with gratitude, "Mr. Ramsay did seasonably express his confidence in me notwithstanding." While thus living on terms of mutual esteem, the two men differed widely on public questions; and when Boston's friend, Gabriel Wilson, Maxton, was tried before the Synod for sentiments uttered in a sermon preached before that venerable court in October, 1721, Mr. Ramsay was one of his chief opponents. To countenance their friend Gabriel, Messrs. Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine were present at the meeting of Synod when the trial took place. Ministers of the gospel, like other public men, have their bickerings occasionally, but these do not always interfere with private friendship. The public work was over, and members of Synod were having some relaxation, when Mr. Ramsay, observing that one of the brethren present was known to be a poet, asked for a specimen of his gifts. In response Mr. Ralph, alluding to the trial and its conclusion, uttered the couplet that has been often quoted—

" We be two angels who did ride and run,  
To see the angel Gabriel fight and win."

Mr. Ramsay was a great pedestrian, and was accustomed to walk from Kelso to Edinburgh for the purpose of attending ecclesiastical gatherings. An excursion on horseback to attend a meeting of Synod was so ludicrous in its accompaniments that there was little inducement to repeat the experiment. The horse was a spirited and rather wilful beast, lent for the occasion by an officer of dragoons whose troop was then located in the town. Having reached the place of meeting, Mr. Ramsay found the animal so restive that he could not dismount. Taking some of



his brethren to witness that if he had failed in discharging his duty the failure had not been voluntary, he set out on the homeward journey, and reached Kelso just when the dragoons were going out on parade. Through the force of habit the well-disciplined steed joined the company, and, to the great amusement of the spectators, took its ordinary place in the ranks with the minister still in the saddle.

With disputed settlements Mr. Ramsay had much to do in the Presbytery, and one conspicuous instance occurred in connection with the Synod. In 1740 the Duke of Roxburghe presented a Mr. Hume to the parish of Bowden, in the Presbytery of Selkirk. The congregation objected to the settlement, and the Presbytery refused to induct. The commission of the General Assembly enjoined the Presbytery to proceed, but still they refused, and in 1741 the case came before the Assembly itself. That was the year in which Mr. Ramsay was elected moderator for the second time, an event of no good omen for the parishioners of Bowden. It was found by the Assembly that the Presbytery of Selkirk had failed to do its duty, and an order was issued that Mr. Hume should, if found qualified, be inducted before the 1st of September, with certification that otherwise the Presbytery would be liable to censure for contumacy. To provide against any risk of failure, it was decreed that if the Presbytery were to continue obstinate the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale should see the settlement completed.

The Presbytery maintained its position, and the task of inducting Mr. Hume devolved on the Synod,

of which Mr. Ramsay was a member. Protected by an armed force, some representatives of that venerable court were approaching the village of Bowden, but found the way to the church barred by a company of parishioners provided with a variety of formidable weapons. The minister of Kelso, who had been hustled in a previous skirmish on a similar occasion, desired his companions to halt, while he rode forward alone to confront the enemy. "What is all this, my masters?" he cried. "What is all this? Do you expect always to have the upper hand? You beat us last time, and my wig being lost, I was compelled to return home with a bare pow. But to-day I am better provided, as I have got a spare wig in my pocket." This unexpected style of address, and a wig at the same time drawn from his pocket and dangled before the spectators, had a softening influence. The people laughed, gave way to a milder mood, and yielded so far that the induction was accomplished, a fact which was duly notified to the next General Assembly.

As already indicated, Mr. Ramsay was a regular and conspicuous member of the supreme ecclesiastical court. This fact was playfully recognised by Witherspoon, who, having dedicated a book to his "departed ghost or surviving spirit," was led to consider where the venerable shade could be found, so that a copy of the work might be presented; but solved the difficulty with the assumption that it would undoubtedly be found about its old haunts in the precincts of the General Assembly. There, as elsewhere, the peculiarities of the Kelso minister were well understood; and he was occasionally the

victim of a practical joke. A recent writer\* describes him as "a man of strong mother-wit, but little learning, no innovator or metaphysician," and apparently without even a rudimental knowledge of theology. These features in his character are illustrated by an incident that occurred in the Assembly of 1721, when "The Marrow of Modern Divinity" was under discussion. Knowing that he would be called on for a speech, Mr. Ramsay consulted some young ministers, and with their help composed an address, which, in due course, he delivered. No sooner had he closed than a cry of "Heresy! heresy!" resounded from all parts of the house. Either jocularly or intentionally, the rogues had primed him with sentiments such as were not approved by the majority of the Assembly; but Mr. Ramsay, who was not ambitious of the crown of martyrdom, said very coolly, "If that be heresy, I renounce it!"

Mr. Ramsay died on the 3d July, 1749, after having been fifty-six years a minister. From the 3d October, 1748, till the 2d January, 1749, no meeting of session was held for discipline, "the R<sup>d</sup> min<sup>tr</sup>. being much indisposed and sickly." The last meeting for business was on Monday the 5th June, 1749; and besides other business, "a Testificate for Isabella Common, a Seceder from Jedburgh, May 22d, /49, was received." A month later, on the 3d July, was held a meeting for prayer, as had been usual for a long time on the first Monday of each month, "but this day in a special sympathie with our worthy minister, Mr.

\* Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century. From the MSS. of John Ramsay, Esq. of Ochertyre. Edited by Alexander Allardyce. Vol. i., p. 274.

Ramsay, now drawing near to death." It is immediately added, "and on this day, Monday, July 3d, 1749, died betwixt three and four in the afternoon, the Reverend, Worthy, and Pious Mr. James Ramsay, Minister of the Gospel in Kelso, in the eighty-third year of his age, and in the forty-third of his ministry in this place, to the Great Grief and Loss of this Congregation and Presbyterie, nay, and to the Loss of the whole Church of Scotland, where he has been twice moderator of the General Assembly with great applause, and he is now justly and heavily lamented by all that truly knew him. He was buried in the place where others of his predecessors had been laid, on the fifth of July thereafter."

## CHAPTER II.

### ORIGIN OF THE SECESSION ON THE BORDERS.

**M**OREBATTLE, formerly Merebottle, signifies in the Anglo-Saxon language the dwelling-place at the lake. The village of that name occupies a prominent situation near the Cayle, a rippling stream that rises among grassy hills on the border of Northumberland, flows through the parishes of Hownam, Morebattle, Linton, Roxburgh, and Eckford, and joins the Teviot four miles south-west from Kelso, near the road leading to the county town of Jedburgh. Till it approaches Morebattle the Cayle flows rapidly, with various little cataracts, among round-topped hills; but near the village its course is changed from north-east to north, and it glides more slowly through an expanse of rich alluvial land, which has, at one time, been the bottom of an extensive lake. The village cannot claim very great antiquity; but the territory, under the name of Mereboda, is historically mentioned in the year 1116, when there was in it a church and a carrucate of land pertaining to the diocese of Glasgow.

When the parish was constituted after 1560 it included, as it still does, the district of Molle or Mow, in the upper part of the Bowmont valley, where it touches the English border at the summit of the highest hills in the Cheviot

range. Twelve miles from Kelso, the market town; five miles from Yetholm, the nearest village; not intersected by any thoroughfare passable by a wheeled conveyance; with no roads save the tracks which led to some cottage or farm-house, the people in that secluded part of the parish lived much alone, and had little intercourse with the outer world. Even with the better roads and greater facilities for travel enjoyed at the present day, it is a locality which seems to rest in the quietness of a perpetual Sabbath. In winter the glens are sometimes swept by heavy snowstorms, locally designated Cheviot blasts, and in summer the gloomy thunder-cloud gathers round the lofty hills, and breaks in drenching showers on the grassy slope; but there are many peaceful days, when the sky is serene, and the face of nature is suffused with brightest radiance.

Near the centre of the district, in a conspicuous situation, close to the water of Bowmont, but on a plateau considerably elevated above the bed of the river, is the old churchyard of Mow, on the tombstones of which inscriptions dated so far back as 1690 are distinctly legible. Standing on that sacred spot on a quiet autumn day one is able to realize something approaching the exultant thankfulness attributed to the Vaudois mountaineers in the hymn—

“For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,  
Our God, our father’s God.”

A silent spot is now this remnant of an ancient village God’s-acre, where, each in his narrow cell, beneath the yielding turf, rest the remains of those once recognised as patriarchs in the glen. On a grassy mound, in a central position, stood the little

church, whence, in a dark age, rays of light were diffused far across those rolling hills, which much resemble an ocean, the stormy surface of which had been suddenly stilled by the powerful voice of Him whom winds and waves obey. Curved furrows distinctly visible on many a hill-side tell how, in early times, this fertile, but sequestered, land was cultivated with laborious toil, yielding corn crops seven or eight hundred feet above the level of the sea, where now there is little else than pasture. Gone is the ancient "town," which, as records say, contained "many fair houses." Vanished are the protecting towers, of which two existed here, and one farther up at Cocklaw, to bar English raiders from entering the valley. The mill, the malt-kiln, and the brew-houses of the monks, all have passed away, despite the powerful protection of St. Mary. Of human handiwork in those distant ages only faint outlines remain, but the solemn mountains still stand exposed to summer's heat and winter's storm; the little rills are still heard purling in the glens, the Bowmont continues to roll its limpid waters by a circuitous route toward the Tweed; and, on a quiet evening, white-wooled sheep, bigger and better fed than the monks of St. Mary's ever saw, may be observed pasturing on the hills, and wending their way slowly upward to rest for the night, on the highest peak under the star-spangled canopy of heaven.

Contiguous with Morebattle, on the south-west, is the parish of Hownam, large tracts of which are not less remote than the locality of Mow. In some quiet corner of that parish the Rev. John Owens, vicar of Stamfordham, ejected in 1662, found a

refuge from his English persecutors.\* Probably he taught the children of shepherds and other hillmen, or held little conventicles in quiet nooks never disturbed by the dragoons of Claverhouse and Dalziel. How Christian teachers subsisted in those times will never be accurately known; probably their viands were often coarse and meagre, but good living was not the object of their desire, and with plain food and home-spun raiment they were quite content. In Hownam parish Mr. Owens lived till he was old and blind, when he returned to the north of England; but, doubtless, the impression made by his life and work in that sequestered region had its share in educating the people for the coming Secession, of which the centre was at Gateshaw Brae.

At the time when James Ramsay became minister at Kelso the Rev. John Simson, M.A., had been eight years minister of Morebattle. In that pastoral parish the course of ecclesiastical events had been anything but smooth. Adam Peacock, M.A., had been "instituted" on the 11th January, 1683, having been translated from Ednam, in the same Presbytery; but on the 1st January, 1695, he was deposed by the Commission of the General Assembly for "supine negligence, neglect of family worship, and other sins." The services of that Episcopal incumbent had not been relished by the people, and a chapel had been opened at Whitton Hall, two miles from the village, where the services of William Veitch, the well-known persecuted Covenanter, were secured. The removal of both ministers left a vacancy, which was supplied

\* "Account of Ejected Ministers," by E. Calamy, D.D., p. 505, and continuation, p. 657.



on the 24th November, 1697, by the induction of Mr. Simson. A native of Roxburghshire, he had studied in the University of Edinburgh, where he graduated on the 11th July, 1687, having probably been one of the students who burned the Pope in effigy near Holyrood Palace. After the usual course of theological instruction, he had been licensed on the 3d July, 1694, by the Presbytery of Kelso; and on the 27th September, less than three months after obtaining licence to preach, was ordained minister at Yetholm. Three years afterwards he was translated to Morebattle. He was a special friend of Thomas Boston, by whom he was described as "a serious, good man; a most pathetic, zealous, and popular preacher, and, withal, substantial in his sermons, having a most ready gift; always concerned to gain souls to Jesus Christ; blessed with a great measure of his Master's countenance, and most acceptable to the people." With this devout pastor the elders and congregation seem to have been like-minded, as Boston found Morebattle a congenial place to visit and take part in communion services. Writing of another friend, he says, "Many a good day we had together, especially at Morebattle." Toward the close of his life, Mr. Simson suffered from a long and gradually increasing infirmity, during which he was once, at least, visited by Boston, with his two friends, Gabriel Wilson of Maxton and Henry Davidson of Galashiels. They found him weak in body, but otherwise "still lovely and pleasant as before." He died on the 2d April, 1723, after which, by appointment of the Presbytery, the Rev. Robert Colville preached at Morebattle, and declared the church

vacant. That was an epoch of great significance in the ecclesiastical annals of the neighbourhood.

After the decease of Mr. Simson, Mr. Andrew Tait, who had been recently licensed by the Presbytery of Kelso, was appointed to supply the pulpit in the vacant parish, and this appointment was renewed at successive meetings of Presbytery. Regarding Mr. Tait not much information is obtainable, but there was a little colony of that name in and near Yetholm, and to that locality Mr. Andrew probably belonged. To the people of Morebattle his services were so acceptable that, having made trial of his gifts, they desired to secure his settlement as pastor of the parish. It had been otherwise decided by those who claimed to exercise authority in spiritual matters.

Regarding the settlement of a pastor agreeable to the wishes of the people there was good reason for serious anxiety. The religious world of Scotland had been agitated for some years by the Marrow controversy, and in the vicinity of Morebattle the subject had acquired great prominence through the trial of Mr. Gabriel Wilson, with whom their late minister, and doubtless many of themselves, thoroughly sympathised. There was likewise the great fact that eleven years before the law of Patronage had been restored, and congregations had no longer a legal right to choose their ministers. With the working of that law these intelligent people were already familiar. In the Presbytery of Jedburgh the Duke of Douglas had exercised his legal right, but, finding the presentee unacceptable, had yielded to the wishes of the congregation, and allowed the man of their choice to be settled. It was different in their own

Presbytery of Kelso. While the Rev. John Simson of Morebattle was on his death-bed, and near his end, the little parish of Ednam had become vacant by the translation of its minister to the better living of Sprouston, on the opposite side of the Tweed; and on the 5th February, 1723, there had been laid on the table of the Kelso Presbytery a presentation by the Crown in favour of Mr. Thomas Pollock, together with a letter from the presentee submitting his case to the decision of the Presbytery. The Sheriff Clerk of Berwick, acting for James Edmonston, the laird of Ednam, and Sir Alexander Don of Newton, influential heritors in the parish, appeared in opposition to the settlement; but the Rev. James Ramsay of Kelso was appointed to preach at Ednam, and, before another meeting of Presbytery, had apparently managed to obtain the concurrence of the people, and arranged that the dissatisfied heritors should not persist in their opposition. Of these proceedings the people of Morebattle were, no doubt, fully cognisant; and the bearing of such events on the interests of the congregation was discussed in fellowship meetings both at Morebattle and in the most remote territory of Mow.

The patron of Morebattle was John, first Duke of Roxburghe, the chief proprietor in both divisions of the parish. His father, Earl Robert, had been a Privy Councillor to King Charles II.; and, in company with the Duke of York, was on the way from London to Scotland in the frigate Gloucester, when that vessel was wrecked, and the Earl, with more than a hundred others, lost their lives. John, fifth

Earl, was a great promoter of the Union with England. He was created a Duke in 1707, and held various offices, including those of Lord Privy Seal and Secretary of State for Scotland. While resident in London, the Duke was accustomed to receive £100 monthly by the waggon from Scotland for the maintenance of the family in the metropolis. The Presbytery had lately considered it dutiful to approach with an address the local magnate, then resident at Floors. On the 1st May, 1722, the brethren appointed to wait on his Grace reported to the Presbytery that they had done so, that they had been very graciously received, and that they had been charged by the Duke to inform the Presbytery that "he would reckon it his honour to do all the service that lay in his power for the Church of Scotland." How this promise was kept will subsequently appear.

It was no secret to the Duke that the evangelical party in the Church was opposed to the Union with England. On the 7th November, 1706, the Commission of the General Assembly had, by a majority of 59 to 17, objected to the proposed union, on the ground that it was contrary to the spirit of their Covenanting ancestors to have 26 prelates sitting in the United Parliament. In preaching, as well as in Church Courts, evangelical ministers were accustomed to disparage the Union long after it had been consummated. In a little volume of manuscript notes we find Gabriel Wilson referring incidentally to its corrupting influence. Lecturing on Luke xiii., from verse 11, concerning the woman who had been bowed down with infirmity eighteen years, he said, "One

would think this woman had as heavy a case for temptation to self-murder as many; a sin that is now become very frequent. This sin is almost as frequent in England as it was among the old Pagans: they did it as a piece of stoutness and magnanimity; but this proceeded from their ignorance, for it is an evident sign, on the contrary, of a silly and a pusillanimous spirit, and it is become very frequent among ourselves. I'll tell you two things about it—1st, We are smitten with it as a judgment; having rubbed skins with England by the sinful Union, we are smitten by them; 2d, I look upon it as a prognosticating sign of more fearful and awful judgments coming on the land." As an advocate of the Union, a member of the Government, and, generally, a supporter of "law and order," which often means an opponent of popular rights, the Duke could have little patience with the claim of any congregation to choose their own pastor.

If little sympathy could be expected from the Rev. James Ramsay or the Duke of Roxburghe, not much reliance could be placed on other members of the Presbytery. The minister of Linton, just across the Cayle from Morebattle, was Mr. Walter Douglas, brother to the laird of Bonjedward, who would naturally fall in with the supporters of "law and order." Sprouston parish was occupied by William Baxter, A.M., who had been presented by the Duke of Roxburghe, and inducted in accordance with the law of Patronage. Ednam parish, rendered vacant by his translation, had been filled up, as previously stated, by the presentation of Mr. Thomas Pollock, a graduate of Glasgow University, who had

been presented by the King, and settled through the efforts of Mr. Ramsay, contrary to the wishes of the principal inhabitants. In Roxburgh parish was Mr. John Pollock, who had likewise been presented by the Duke, and had been settled under the law of Patronage in circumstances that might now be characterised as something like sharp practice. His predecessor was the Rev. Robert Browne, M.A., who had been inducted in 1702, but was deposed on the 14th August, 1716, for alleged disaffection to the Government. The charge of disloyalty was based on a statement that he had drunk the Pretender's health at Kelso, in company with a portion of the rebel army then in the town. He admitted having done so, but alleged that it was from no ill feeling to the Government, only to please the commander, and to recover a horse that had been stolen from him by the soldiers. This plea was not accepted, and he was deposed; but the Countess of Roxburghe provided for him a cottage at Cessford, where his time was occupied in tending a cow and cultivating a small garden. It is not difficult to believe that the hand of Mr. James Ramsay was helpful in procuring the removal of an amiable minister who was lacking in worldly wisdom, and appointing in his place one more agreeable to the ruling powers. Regarding other members of Presbytery not much is known, but they had all apparently homologated the law of Patronage by inducting the nominees of the patron. One of them was the Rev. John Glen, Stichel, who, in 1732, was translated to New Greyfriars, Edinburgh, furnishing an occasion for a disputed settlement, ending in a secession to be afterwards noticed. In

the adjoining parish of Nenthorn was the Rev. James Ker, A.M., ordained on the 30th April, 1696, who lived till 1754, and died in the 83d year of his age and the 58th of his ministry. The Rev. Robert Colvill, A.M., was minister of Yetholm, but died in 1731, in the 60th year of his age.

The parishioners of Morebattle did not know in 1723 all that they subsequently learned regarding Mr. James Ramsay, but they knew enough to raise in their minds anxious forebodings regarding the settlement of a minister. Doubtless, they watched with strained interest the progress of the Ednam case, and interpreted its probable bearing on their own prospects. So passed the long sunny days of June and the sultry weeks of July, when the patron was probably absent in London, and had not leisure to think much of Morebattle. Lammas time, "when muirmen win their hay," had passed, and the little patches of grain in remote straths and up the hill-sides were ready for the harvest, when tidings were circulated which at once set the bent on fire. The news, which sped from cottage to hamlet with startling results, may be concisely stated with the help of the Presbytery records.

At a meeting of the Kelso Presbytery, held on the 3d September, compeared Robert Mason, factor to the Duke of Roxburghe, and by virtue of a special order from him, gave in a presentation signed by his Grace to Mr. James Christie, minister of the gospel at Simprin, to be minister at Morebattle, with an expression of the ducal wish that the Presbytery proceed at once with the regular steps toward his settlement. The presentation was read, and sus-

patron of the church and parish of Morebattle," had given a presentation to Mr. James Christie, minister of the gospel at Simprin, to be minister at Morebattle, that the said presentation was given in to the Presbytery in due time, and that the Presbytery had no exceptions against Mr. Christie, but, on the contrary, had a very great esteem for him. Therefore the Presbytery proceeded to inquire at the persons concerned in the parish, who were then present, whether they concurred with the presentation above-mentioned, and were satisfied that the foresaid Mr. Christie should be minister of Morebattle. The factors and lairds above-mentioned were unanimous in expressing concurrence; and there was produced and read a letter from Lady Riddell, in the absence of her husband, Sir Walter Riddell, bearing that Sir Walter did concur with the presentation foresaid. The committee next inquired if there were any other heritors of the parish present, or any commission from them; but none compearing, they proceeded to ask the elders if they also concurred. They declared unanimously in favour of Mr. Andrew Tait, preacher of the gospel, and against Mr. Christie, not that they had anything to object, but they were "not acquainted with him." The masters of families having been asked if they concurred with the presentation, "there arose such a tumult and confusion that the committee thought fit to proceed no farther, and so concluded with prayer." The Presbytery having heard the report, and deliberated thereon, "not being willing to determine rashly in a business of such consequence, where there are such difficulties, do delay the farther consideration of the affair till afterwards."



The patron, the Presbytery, the presentee, and the heritors, male and female, had done their part in the interests of "law and order;" but they were now face to face with the democracy, determined apparently to defend their rights as a Christian congregation. Regarding the wishes and purpose of the great parish magnate there could be no doubt; the minor lairds and ladies were unanimous in supporting the Duke; and the Presbytery was on the same side with the nobility and landowners. On the other hand, the elders, except one, who was absent from the meeting, were no less united in opposition to those who claimed to have authority; and the heads of families had testified their concurrence with the elders, in terms so like a rising "tumult" that the Moderator was constrained to hastily "conclude with prayer." Which of the parties would give way? That was the problem now anxiously pondered by the ministers. Efforts at conciliation should be attempted in the first instance. Messrs. John Glen of Stichel and James Ramsay of Kelso, two of the most skilful ministers in the Presbytery, were appointed successively to occupy the pulpit; and, doubtless, these cunning diplomatists would do their utmost to quell the mutineers. The winter of 1723 passed slowly away, and at each meeting of Presbytery supply was provided for Morebattle; but no word seems to have been spoken officially about a settlement of the parish. There may have been anxious consultations in private, but there was no public action. In the summer of 1724 the fruits of the earth were in danger through excessive drought; and at the July meeting of the Presbytery a fast

was ordered to be held within their bounds. A seasonable rain ensued, and there was an abundant harvest, a change of circumstances which the Presbytery agreed to recognise in a day of thanksgiving. Great anxiety was expressed to have Morebattle well supplied on the day of special service; and the minister selected for that purpose was Mr. Colden of Whitsome, a near neighbour of Mr. Christie, and, doubtless, well qualified to speak a quiet word in his favour.

Twelve months had elapsed since the meeting which had been abruptly closed with prayer on account of the "tumult" raised by the masters of families at Morebattle, and no steps had been publicly taken to effect a settlement. What efforts had been made in those twelve months to break up the compact phalanx of elders and masters of families cannot now be definitely ascertained. Perhaps some farmers and heads of families had experienced the difficulty of contending against landlords and factors, as not a few farmers in different parts of the country have done in more recent times. It would be strange if the opposition was still unbroken, and if some had not been constrained to accept the situation, and let matters take their course. At all events, in September, 1724, the proprietary party stirred the matter afresh. Probably the Duke had arrived from London to spend part of the autumn recess on his estates, and had been asking why so much delay had occurred in the settlement of his presentee. At all events, the business was now taken up in hot haste. On the 1st of October a *pro re nata* meeting of the Kelso Presbytery was held, and the reason for calling

it was stated by the moderator, the Rev. R. Colvill of Yetholm. It appeared that, on a desire expressed by several heritors and others in the parish of Morebattle, he had called them together to ascertain what they had to propose to the Presbytery in regard to a settlement. On being called, "compeared Sir William Bennet of Grubbit,\* and presented a petition signed by one of the elders of the session at Morebattle and many of the principal tenants and heads of families in the parish, beseeching the Presbytery, as soon as may be, to place and settle Mr. James Christie to be their pastor and minister in the parish of Morebattle." The reasons for calling the meeting were sustained by the Presbytery, who appointed Mr. Colvill and Mr. Walter Douglas to meet with the people on the 8th of the same month. A meeting was held accordingly, but again there arose "such noise and confusion" that the deputies were constrained to dismiss the meeting, and close with

\* Sir William Bennet has been described as "a man of excellent taste and great literary attainments, and a distinguished patron of talent and learning." He patronised Allan Ramsay, and is believed to have at least suggested amendments on Ramsay's great work, "The Gentle Shepherd." James Thomson, author of "The Seasons," spent many holidays in early life at Marlfield, the residence of Sir William on the banks of the Cyle. Unfortunately, the laird of Grubbit was not exempt from some weaknesses that beset humanity. The editor of the Ochtertyre Manuscripts describes him as "too lazy and too fond of his bottle to submit to the toil of composition;" and, on the authority of Lord Kames, says that Sir William having been invited to sup with the first Duke of Gordon, the Duke said quietly to his butler after supper, "give Sir William Bennet his first glass of wine;" after a proper interval, "give him his second glass;" and, at length, "give Sir William his third and last glass of wine." The Baronet, to whom a bottle would have been a moderate dose, said to the man, "God bless you, sir, let it be a bumper."

prayer as before. The proprietary party had now, however, taken measures for prosecuting the matter to a termination without delay. At a meeting of Presbytery on the 3d November the report of the visiting committee was received; but, moreover, there was handed in and sustained a commission said to have been signed by "many heads of families in the parish," empowering Robert Davidson, Walter Gray, James Walker, or any one of them, to compare before the Presbytery at this and all subsequent meetings to promote the settlement of Mr. Christie as their minister. That looks like an arrangement made by men accustomed to deal in legal forms; and it showed beyond dispute a determination to induct the presentee at all hazards. On the other side there was no appearance of submission, but rather an equal determination to have a minister chosen by the congregation. There was presented by John Veitch, one of the elders, a petition, signed by himself and other members of session, giving a lamentable account of their spiritual destitution through the want of a minister, and expressing a desire that the Presbytery would let the people have a fair choice of several, out of which one might be selected to be settled as their minister. Consideration of the case was once more delayed.

On the 1st of December the Presbytery met again, when it was decided to proceed with the settlement. The reasons for this decision were elaborately stated in a long minute; and the momentous character of the crisis was farther recognised by the postponement of the induction for three months. The 4th of March, 1725, was a memorable day in the annals of

Morebattle parish. For anything that appears to the contrary, it was a fine spring morning; but the lambing season and the sowing of oats had not yet begun, and the minds of the people were occupied with matters very different from secular work. The "masters of families" had generally knelt with the members of their households around the domestic altar; and, doubtless, the expected proceedings of the day were particularly mentioned in the morning devotions. In good time the people were on their way toward the village, the lark, meanwhile, soaring heavenward, singing its morning hymn, while the sheep and black cattle were quietly feeding in the grassy glens. The traditions of that day have been embodied in verse by a village poet, born at a later date, but old enough to have conversed with some who were eye-witnesses of the scene which he describes. Unusual crowds were observed crossing over the hills in the direction of Morebattle, and, with a discontented air, congregating in "the kirk-yard green." They are described as having been all people of the working classes—

"The ploughman from the lowland dales,  
The shepherd from the distant fells,"

the cottar from his hillside shieling, and the various artizans, of whom many were then in the parish. From the valley of the Bowmont, partly, no doubt, from the remote locality of Mow, but possibly in part from the parish of Yetholm, came a band of determined men, headed by one called "Nub of Bowmont," because he had a club foot. He has been described as of a stalwart frame, and bearing in his hand "a mighty cudgel," the weight of which had been

proved in many a Border fray. This hero had a little passed middle age, his features were stern, his visage hardened by exposure to the Cheviot blasts, his hair and beard tinged with grey, but the fire of youth still sparkling in his eye; and he was animated by great zeal for the Kirk, conjoined with a quenchless love of popular freedom. To some extent "Nub of Bowmont" was following in the steps of men like Balfour of Burley in a previous generation.

To the reflective and elderly portion of that assembly thoughts of stirring times would naturally be suggested. Less than forty years had elapsed since the period of persecution had terminated at the Revolution, so that the terrors of the killing time could be distinctly remembered by "Nub of Bowmont" and others of similar age. They could easily recollect the time when, in 1684, James Muir at Cessford boat, two miles north, and John Kerr of Hownam, four miles south-west from the village, had been indicted before the Justiciary at Edinburgh for treason, because they would not recognise the King's authority as then established, nor admit that the killing of Archbishop Sharpe was murder, or the rising at Bothwell Brig rebellion; and had been condemned to be hanged at the Grass Market of Edinburgh. If they could not remember, they knew full well from tradition that Henry Hall of Haughhead and other Covenanters had been imprisoned by the Earl of Roxburghe, father of that Duke who was now patron of the parish, in Cessford Castle, two miles from the spot where they were now assembled. They had doubtless seen the great

banner carried before the same Henry Hall at the skirmish of Drumclog and the battle of Bothwell Bridge, at both of which he was a leader of the Covenanting army; and could remember the three lines on the broad expanse of blue silk:—

“JEHOVAH NISSI.—Exod. xvii. 15.”

“FOR CHRIST AND HIS TRUTHS.”

“NO QUARTER TO YE ACTIVE ENEMIES OF YE COVENANT.”

Some of them could remember the great convulsion on the wooded banks of the Cayle at Haughhead, the licensing of Richard Cameron, the subsequent slaughter of Henry Hall when defending Donald Cargill, and the inhuman cruelty of the Privy Council who indicted him of high treason after his decease. Not a few of them had listened to the preaching of John Welch and William Veitch, and in later days of Henry Erskine, and Thomas Boston, and Gabriel Wilson, and their own lately-deceased minister, John Simson. Nor could they forget that the Earls of Roxburghe had been closely identified with the cause of the Stuart dynasty, so that any feeling of allegiance to the Border Chief that may have lingered in their minds was overborne by the higher claims of that sacred cause for which Henry Hall and others known to them had fought and died. The days of martyrdom had not long ceased; it was even possible that trials of a similar kind might return; but it was the same great cause, and what their fathers had endured they were prepared also to suffer if the occasion should arise.

If the parishioners of Morebattle now contemplated an appeal to physical force they had precedents for such a course, furnished not very long before by

people in a higher social position. On the 28th May, 1691, the Presbytery of Duns had met for the ordination of Mr. John Lauder at Eccles, in the Merse of Berwickshire. While Mr. Robert Wilson, one of the ministers, was proceeding with the service, "appeared the lairds of Kames, Belchester, Newland, Newtown, and others, with Ninian Mercer, notary-public, and, in the time of ordination, made public interruption by taking instruments in the hands of the foresaid notary, uttering reproachful expressions, and threatening to resist in case of procedure, which occasioned some clamour and noise amongst the people in time of divine worship; upon which my Lord Mersington, Sir Alexander Swinton, took instruments, notwithstanding of all which the ministers present proceeded to ordination, after the people settled and composed; and thereafter appointed collation and institution to be given as usual." It was a time when legal forms were not so well settled as they now are; and, as lairds had been accustomed personally to assert their claims, it is not wonderful that people in a different station had adopted a similar course. Popular resistance to the intrusion of a minister had been common in the neighbourhood during the prelatie period, and was sometimes followed by condign punishment. In 1665 James Scott was translated from Tongland to Ancrum. At his settlement, on the 5th November that year, "a tumult arose," for alleged participation in which, two brothers, both fathers of families, were, by a sentence of the High Commission, sent to Virginia; their sister, a married woman, was whipped through the town of Jedburgh; and four boys were whipped



through Edinburgh, burned in the face, and sold to Barbadoes.

From a grassy mound, "Nub of Bowmont" addressed the multitude who crowded round him in the churchyard. Pointing to the spot where they were assembled, with the dead of their ancestors beneath the grassy turf, he referred to their successive struggles against the Romans, the Danes, the English, and, more recently, against the persecuting Stuart Kings; and expressed a hope that the spirit of their sires existed unchanged in the breasts of those whom he now addressed. The blessing of freedom, purchased with the blood of their heroic ancestors, had come as a precious heritage, which must be defended and maintained by one generation after another. The high duty and privilege of defending such a glorious inheritance now devolved on those standing round him; and any lack of firmness at this crisis might result in a loss not easily repaired. To them, as parishioners of Morebattle, pertained the right of choosing their own pastor; but that right had been denied them, and their remonstrances had been disregarded. They were asked to accept any pastor who might be sent by the patron, and to be mutely submissive, like sheep on their Border hills. For this encroachment on their liberties he blamed the ministers. The eminent predecessors of these men had not been tempted with filthy lucre, nor scared by the frowns of those in high social position. Ministers in former days had identified themselves with the people, and asserted the rights of church members. But now things had changed, and no minister would stand beside the

peasants; therefore they must defend their own rights. He exhorted them to be men that day, and rally round him, while he ventured to strike a blow for the cause of Christian freedom. An affirmative response was given unanimously; and preparations for action were at once begun. Access to the kirk was obtained by melting the lead which secured the iron stanchions of the windows, and these were appropriated as weapons for the fray. The kirk was speedily filled with a crowd of old and young men, who all declared with loud acclamations that they would defend their rights to the last extremity.

Meanwhile, the clerical party were approaching. At their back were the country lairds, with a motley band of retainers, many of whom had no liking for the work in which they were unwillingly engaged. Approaching the kirk, the ministers had abundant evidence that resistance would be offered. The door was found to be guarded by men, some of them attended by collie dogs. In mild accents the ministers endeavoured to conciliate the crowd, begging them not to disobey the law nor desecrate the peaceful graveyard with unseemly strife. They might as well have attempted to still the waves of a tempest-tossed ocean. Finding it impossible to enter the kirk, the Presbytery formed a little circle in the kirkyard, and the Rev. John Pollock began the service. Having sung several verses of a psalm, he produced a document, from which he was proceeding to read, when a sturdy Amazon snatched the paper from his hand. A local laird, who had come in the body-guard of the ministers, made a rush to seize this bold representative of Jenny Geddes; but the

lads of Bowmont were quick to notice the movement, and accepted it as the signal for a general assault. The din of clashing cudgels, mingled with the shouts of opposing combatants, not without the yelling of colliers, made a strangely discordant clamour in that graveyard among the silent hills. Stoutly was the fight maintained; ground was gained and lost; some, in trying to save their heads, stumbled over grassy hillocks, and fell prostrate on the verdant turf. While the result was still doubtful an incident occurred which was afterwards, in the legendary tales of the district, compared with the appearance of camp followers at the Battle of Bannockburn. It resembled that event in deciding the fortunes of the day. A company of "maids, wives, and widows" appeared, and attacked the lairds with stones and bits of turf torn from the kirkyard dyke. While a close hand-to-hand fight was going on in front, the cudgel of "Nub of Bowmont" waving in the thickest of the fray, the lairds found themselves assailed by this feminine artillery in the rear. One follower of the ministers, who saw the danger, called loudly on others to follow him, and check this galling archery, otherwise the battle would be lost. With brandished club he advanced against the women, when a stone, hurled by a stout carline, laid him prostrate on the grass. The wound was not deadly, and he soon rose, but kept himself now at a safe distance from such a formidable array.

The ministers, looking sadly on the strife, were huddled in a confused knot, uncertain how to act, and compelled occasionally to "jouk" so as to avoid some random shot as stones went whistling past. Observ-

ing signs of confusion in the ranks of his opponents, "Nub of Bowmont" was mustering his forces for a final charge, when it appeared that the victory was already secured. The ministers made a signal for their defenders to quit the field; and the people, who still cherished a feeling of respect for the sacred office, made no effort at pursuit. Retiring to the kirk of Linton, a mile distant, on the other side of the Cayle, they constituted the Presbytery. A minute was adopted, setting forth that they had attempted to meet at Morebattle for the induction of Mr. Christie, but to their "great surprise and sorrow a rabble of profane and furious people from several corners of the country violently kept the Presbytery and congregation from meeting in the church; and even when divine service was begun in the churchyard they fell upon the ministers, and particularly upon the minister who was to preach the admission sermon, after he had sung several verses of a psalm, and obliged him and all the rest to retire, not without blows and opprobrious language." In consequence of these circumstances the Presbytery had been compelled to meet at Linton, and "duly to consider what was to be done in such a singular case." It was resolved to complete the induction, and, the steps which had been taken in the matter having been enumerated, the Presbytery proceeded to constitute and appoint Mr. James Christie minister of the gospel at Morebattle, and to admit and receive him as a member of the Presbytery of Kelso. Several persons, in name of the heritors and others of the parish, took him by the hand as their minister, which, it was alleged, many others would have done had

they been apprized that the Presbytery was to meet at Linton.

The members of Presbytery, as appears from the official record, did not blame the good people of Morebattle for the riot; they laid it on "a rabble of profane and furious people from several corners of the country." Doubtless there were some in the crowd who had been attracted by the prospect of a skirmish, and among them would be active men who had previously taken part in disturbances which were not uncommon when the country had not yet settled down to a complete acquiescence in legal forms as the right mode of redressing grievances. It is probably true that the battle was fought chiefly by such men, as the Christian people of the district were naturally reluctant to adopt forcible measures, even in the maintenance of a good cause. Still, the fact remains that the congregation, as represented by the elders and masters of families, were in opposition to the Presbytery, and it is no discredit to them if it be admitted that they were consenting parties to a blow struck in a disorderly way, perhaps, on behalf of the principle maintained by Boston, the Erskines, Gabriel Wilson, and others, that a Christian congregation had a right to choose their own pastor. The cause of "law and order" prevailed in the end; the presentee was inducted; and some of the combatants were punished with imprisonment. On the other side, there is some reason to believe that the Rev. James Ramsay lost his wig in the scuffle, and was compelled to return home with "a bare pow."

On the 6th of July, 1725, four months after the Morebattle induction had been effected under such

remarkable circumstances, it was reported to the Presbytery that, with one exception, the elders were not attending to their duties or waiting on public ordinances in their parish church. A mandate was issued charging them to "account for this strange piece of conduct." A fortnight later the Presbytery wrote Mr. Noble, minister at Eckford, in the Presbytery of Jedburgh, desiring him "not to admit any of the elders of Morebattle to communion, nor any of the parishioners, without a certificate from Mr. Christie." The elders, having been cited, compeared before the Presbytery on the 3d of August, and, in answer to the question why they did not officiate nor worship in the parish church, said that "Mr. Christie was not their minister." Meanwhile, a commission was appointed to supply their lack of service in cases of discipline at Morebattle. On the 7th December, having been again cited and dealt with, the elders adhered to their decision not to wait on Mr. Christie's ministry. The Presbytery, on the 26th January, 1726, appointed certain members to confer with the refractory elders; but with no good result. Two of their number, William Oliver and William Marshall, appeared before the Presbytery on the 5th April, and "craved liberty to seek Church privileges from others than Mr. Christie." A month later, on the 3d May, all the elders appeared in answer to a citation, and, after a long process, were deposed for deserting their office, and withdrawing from their own parish church. Against this decision they all protested, and appealed to the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale; and on the 19th April, 1727, the Presbytery, in conformity with a recommendation by the

Synod, removed the sentence of deposition, on the elders "judicially demitting their office in relation to the parish of Morebattle in present circumstances;" and likewise declared judicially "that no neighbouring minister shall be called to account for administering the Lord's Supper to them;" and, lastly, appointed one of their number to dispense baptism to their children when application was made to that effect.

The people were not reconciled to the ministry of Mr. Christie by these concessions; they were only the more confirmed in opposition to an arbitrary exercise of power by which he had been imposed on a reclaiming congregation. The minister of Eckford, on the Teviot, three miles from the village, was James Noble, a supporter of those popular rights which were maintained in the same Synod of Merse and Teviotdale by Boston of Ettrick, Gabriel Wilson of Maxton, Henry Davidson of Galashiels, William Hunter of Lilliesleaf, and others. He had preceded Mr John Simson as minister of Yetholm, from which, on the 4th of April, 1694, he had been translated to the parish of Eckford. His opinions regarding the induction of Mr. Christie, as well as his preaching, were satisfactory to the people of Morebattle, many of whom regularly waited on his ministry. Their position was strengthened in 1732, when the General Assembly passed an Act restricting the right of choosing ministers to heritors, elders, magistrates, and town councillors in burghs, and to heritors and elders in country parishes, thus leaving no real voice in the matter to heads of families. Mr. Noble was one of forty-two members of Assembly who pro-

was presented an extract from the Presbytery records, intimating the procedure of that rev. court in having visited and examined the poor's box, and in the election of elders. Mr. James Tully having been elected schoolmaster of the parish, was appointed session-clerk. The church officer must have gone with the Seceders, for Matthew Tully was appointed "beddal" and officer to the session; and James Walker was elected treasurer. It was intimated by the moderator that he and William Riddell had, out of the collections, supplied some of the poor with necessities, and that still there remained £20 Scots in the hands of Mr. Riddell, which was ordered to be "added to the stock in the box."

At a meeting on the 22d May, 1726, began a filiation case, in which Thomas Moir, younger of Otterburn, was charged with the paternity of a child, an allegation which he denied. In modern times such a case would have come before the Sheriff, with an application for aliment; but at that period the charge was patiently investigated by the session and Presbytery. Thomas Moir was ultimately convicted, and appointed "to appear in the place of public repentance, and be rebuked before the congregation." Considering that this was not his first offence, and that he had persisted in a denial of his guilt, the Presbytery required and expected the session to see evidences of repentance before they could admit him to make satisfaction in order to absolution for the scandal, and he was not restored without some faithful dealing.

During the ministry of Mr. Christie the session minutes were kept with scrupulous exactness; and



in various ways the record illustrates the general condition of the parish. The schoolmaster was in a pitiable condition. In November, 1726, it was intimated to the session that James Tully, who had been appointed in the previous April, had tendered his resignation, because he had no convenient house either for school or dwelling. The school and schoolmaster's house were in disrepair, and unfit to be inhabited, so that for some time the schoolmaster had been compelled to lodge two miles from the village where the school was situated, and even that house was in a ruinous condition. The schoolmaster's salary is entered as £3 a quarter from the session, but he got £3 additional as a gratuity; and the fees for poor children were paid, amounting sometimes to £3 a quarter for one family.\*

There was a great want of roads and bridges in the parish. On the 8th December, 1728, it was intimated that there had been no meeting of session last Lord's Day, "the elders being detained through the greatness of the waters." Two years before, on the 4th September, 1726, it had been represented to the session that some inhabitants of the parish who lived on the other side of Cayle Water complained that they were put to great inconvenience in coming to the church on the Lord's Day by reason of the Cayle Water being frequently impassable. The session, taking this matter into its consideration, judged that it would be a great convenience for the inhabitants of these places if a bridge were laid over Cayle Water betwixt the Tofts and Morebattle, and

\* As a general rule the sums consisted of Scots money, £1 of which was equal to 1s 8d sterling.

therefore ordered "two trees and some dales" to be purchased for that end, for which the treasurer was authorised to make the necessary payment. On the 10th August following there was paid "for two trees from Berwick for a bridge, £3 12s." Again, in December, 1726, the minister reported to the session that he had lately preached on a week day at Clifton, when some inhabitants of that place informed him that they suffered great inconvenience from want of a bridge over the Bowmont Water, whereby they were prevented from attending church on the Lord's Day, and earnestly desiring the session to "purchase a tree to be laid over the water for convenient passage, as they had been in use to do formerly." Accordingly, the session agreed that a tree should be purchased for the purpose specified as soon as the season would admit of its being brought from Berwick, and the treasurer was authorised to disburse the necessary expense. There must have been some delay, for not till the 6th January, 1731, was there paid "for the hire of a wain from Berwick with four trees for a bridge at Clifton and Attonburn, £3; and £4 .16s "to Mr. Edmiston, in Berwick, for the above trees."

In a carefully-written list of miscellaneous disbursements may be found the following:—On April 12, 1730, "for leathern bags to hold the treasure 12s;," on September 12, "for eight fathoms of rope to the bell, 12s;," on June 31, 1731, "to the glazier for mending the kirk windows, £2;," on 16th January, 1732, "to Robert Dove for carrying the bell and mortcloth to Belford, the beddal being indisposed, 4s;," on 8th February, 1733, "for a chest to hold the

mortcloth, £3 12s;" on March 4, the same year, £2, "to Andrew Young, glazier, for mending the kirk windows from March, 1732, to March, 1733;" on the 25th March, 12s, "for a new rope to the bell;" and on the 8th April, 6s, "for a new key to the kirk door."

Careful provision was made for the poor; and donations to them are duly recorded. A list of paupers was kept, and at certain times a general distribution was made; but special gifts were regulated by circumstances. In 1729 a dearth occurred, and "in consideration of the present hard and rigorous season, and the high price of the victual," the session, on the 12th February, ordered a more liberal supply than usual to relieve the necessities of the poor. A class of chartered vagrants called "Blue-gowns" perambulated the country, often going in couples, on whom a gift of 2s or 4s was generally bestowed. There were such gifts as 1s "to a poor old man;" 6s to a widow woman with small children, who had her husband and some of her children burnt;" 9s on the 26th February "to Adam Gray for a pair of shoes;" 10s on April 9 "to Barbara Thomson for a pair of shoes;" 12s on April 20 "to John Ewart, an old sufferer;" £6 on June 18 "to Francis Allan, in Morebattle, who had his house burnt;" £6 "to William Bennet for two coffins;" and £1 17s on the 10th June, 1728, "to the stranger poor at the Sacrament." Instances of casual relief are numerous, but generally the person or the cause was "well recommended." Among such cases were 4s to "two men that had been prisoned by the Turks;" 6s to one "who had lost all by fire;" 6s on 29th January, 1729, "to a mother that had nine children at three births;"

6s on August 30 "to Mr. Gordon's children, who had suffered by piracy," and a like sum "to five persons distressed by the Turks." Occasionally the gifts were very considerable, as, on 15th November, 1731, "to George Young, in Templehall, to carry him to Edinburgh, and maintaining him till he was taken into the Infirmary, £5 8s." In addition there was £2 for the hire of a horse for him to Edinburgh, and on the 16th April, £2 10s for a horse to bring him home.

Much sympathy seems to have been manifested toward the distressed and helpless. In 1732 one William Idington was apparently left with a motherless child; and there was paid 12s by the session "to Barbara Robson for taking care of William Idington's child, and nursing it some days, upon the death of its mother." Again, on the 26th June there was paid £7 16s to Matthew Tully for nursing the same child; and £12 again on the 24th December, besides £1 4s to him for shoes and £5 4s for two firlots of meal. There was a payment of £3 on the 22d August, 1735, "to Mr. George Hall, by the appointment of the Presbytery, for assisting him to provide necessaries for his son James, when he was to be sent away to an apprenticeship, for which Mr. Hall gives his receipt."

In the same year there are some remarkable entries connected with a pauper's funeral. There was paid 16s on the 21st November, 1731, for a load of coals for Jean Hall; but in February following Jean Hall seems to have died, and there are certain specific payments relating to her obsequies. On the 13th February there was paid to Thomas Cranston, com-

missary clerk, as licence for rousing the effects belonging to the deceased Jean Hall, in Corbithouse, £1 10s; for charges by the treasurer on the same account, 12s; and £1 10s "for sackcloth, and making it into a gown." On the 16th there was paid £3 14s 3d "to James Robson, in Kirk-Yetholm, for cheese, tobacco, and pipes for Jean Hall's funeral;" £3 to "James Whyte, in Morebattle, for brandy and more tobacco upon the foresaid occasion;" on the 26th March, £7 4s "to William Bennet for a coffin to Dandy Rae, and another to Jean Hall;" on the 9th April, 12s for bread, and on the 16th of the same month £1 1s for oatmeal, at Jean Hall's funeral; and on the 9th, £1 10s to Matthew Tully for digging her grave and crying the roup at disposing of her effects. On the 3d November, 1733, there was a payment of 16s to "Matthew Tully for a grave and the bell to Bessie Turnbull, in Primside." The bell thus referred to was connected with a custom now extinct, in which every death was made known to the inhabitants by "the passing bell," or "the dead bell." This was usually done by the beadle or kirk officer, who walked through the streets of the town or village at a slow pace tinkling a small bell, and, with head uncovered, intimated that a brother or a sister, whose name was given, had departed this life. This intimation was understood to imply a general invitation to the funeral, which was often attended by large crowds. Some female relatives of the deceased were in the habit of walking in the rear of the funeral procession to the gates of the churchyard, where they stopped or dispersed. During the night, and sometimes for several nights between the

death and the funeral, there was a "lykewake," or watching of the body, at which there was often a good deal of eating and drinking.

Some entries are characteristic of a time that has passed away. More than once there was a payment of 12s "for precenting in the kirkyard at the Sacrament;" and, in the same connection, there was paid £5 "to William Bennet for setting up the tent and other work," and £1 17s "to the stranger poor at the Sacrament." On the 22d September, 1734, there was paid £8 5s "for eleven yards of linen to be a communion table cloth at 15s Scots per yard."

In the autumn of 1732 a traveller came to the parish, showing testimonials from other kirk-sessions, and offering to purchase, at the rate of 9s Scots for the pound-weight, any base money that might be found in the session box. The offer was accepted, and, on investigation, there was found to be £41 of "uncurrent money in the box, consisting of doits, Irish halfpennies, and sanded bodles." These were sold, and the result recorded as follows:—"Gevin out as the balance betwixt the uncurrent money found in the box, being doits, sanded halfpennies, and Irish halfpennies, sold at the rate of nine shillings Scots per pound-weight, and the current money received for it, £30 4s."

In all respects the kirk-session carefully supervised the condition of the parish. At one meeting it was intimated that Janet Rutherford, servant to James Walker, in Tofts, having lost 6s out of her pocket, had gone from her master's house, contrary to his express advice, to consult about it with a young woman living at Spylaw, in the parish of Coldstream,

and to get intelligence from her who had the money. In answer to a citation, the said Janet compeared before the session, and admitted the fact; but pleaded that she did not think it wrong to consult a young woman capable of telling her such things. The session, "considering that the consulting with such persons anent lost things was a very unchristian practice, ordered her to be rebuked and admonished for the same."

On the 8th December, 1728, the session having heard that John Sword, in Deanbrae, had lately brought a strange woman into the parish, with whom he was living as his wife, gave orders for the said John Sword and the said woman to be cited before the next meeting. John Sword compeared accordingly, and admitted that he had been married to Rebeckah Yellowly, whom he had brought into the parish from Northumberland. They had been regularly married, but he had neglected to bring the certificate, which, however, he would procure previous to the next meeting of session. He was then and there cited to compear before the next meeting, and to bring the woman, together with their certificate of marriage. They did compear accordingly, the certificate was produced, the marriage found to be quite regular, and the couple were dismissed.

In March, 1732, it was mentioned to the session that several strangers had come into the parish from time to time who had not brought testimonials from the parishes where they had lived previously. These strangers had been taken into families as servants, and some had become householders in the parish, of whom a proportion had fallen into poverty, and

become burdensome to the session, while others had caused disquiet in the parish by their disorderly practices. The session therefore required that all strangers who had come at the last or any preceding term, and had not produced their testimonials, should, without delay, hand them to the minister, or the elder for the district. At the same time, it was earnestly recommended to all masters of families not to receive into their service any who could not produce certificates; and those having houses to let were specially enjoined to be careful not to accept as a tenant any one who could not produce a satisfactory testimonial from the parish where he had formerly lived, as they would not have a hand in bringing such inconveniences on the parish as becomes any regular Christian and good neighbour to avoid. It was farther agreed that these resolutions be publicly read from the pulpit.

To meet the different outlays incurred by the session money was obtained from various sources. One perennial spring consisted of the weekly collections at the kirk, which amounted usually to over a pound Scots. Sermons in remote parts of the parish on week days were frequent, and on all such occasions a collection was taken. Baptism was dispensed in different localities, and on such occasions, also, there was a collection. Marriages were celebrated in the church, and a collection was obtained; but when the minister was subjected to "the needless inconvenience of marrying persons out of the church," thereby sacrificing the collection and depriving the officer of his dues, it was agreed that, in case of marriages out of the church, the parties should pay



18s, of which 12s should go to the poor and 6s to the officer. For every "consignation"—that is, the giving up of names in order to marriage—the charge was 12s. In 1732 a "mortification" of 300 merks Scots came to the session for the poor of the parish; and, as the best way of utilising it, the session agreed to purchase a new mortcloth. In due time the minister reported that he "had purchased a fine velvet mortcloth, the emoluments of which might accrue to the use and behoof of the poor of this parish; that he had caused the same to be made and thoroughly furnished, and brought thither; and that the charges for purchasing and furnishing the said mortcloth were instructed by the discharged account of Andrew Gardener, merchant in Edinburgh, which was produced and read." The total cost was £11 12s 5d, and 1s for carriage from Edinburgh; the balance of the mortification, amounting to £4 19s 11d, was delivered by the minister to the treasurer, "to be added to the stock in the box." It was agreed that the charge for the use of the mortcloth should be in some cases £3 Scots for the poor and 6s to the officer; in other cases, £4 for the poor and 8s to the officer; but these rates were found to be more than people were able or willing to pay, and were afterwards reduced.

One fruitful source of income consisted of penalties levied on parties subjected to discipline by the session. In flagrant cases, and where the parties were understood to have the means, the full penalty of £10 was exacted; but in the case of working people payments were modified to £3, £4, or £5 each.

The session had likewise some invested money, of which, however, the interest seems to have been irregularly paid. In April, 1736, there was received £83 2s 8d Scots, as interest for four years on a sum of £415 13s 4d Scots, lent on heritable security; but out of that sum the session allowed payment to be made for printed Acts of the General Assembly recently received; also for communion table cloths and six table napkins, purchased for the use of the session; the remainder "to be added to the stock in the box."

It does not appear that Mr. Christie was intentionally harassed by the parishioners, though he was regarded as an intruder. On the 19th January, 1727, the minister intimated to the Presbytery that, on the 8th of that month, a fire had broken out in his stable, whereby that and his dwelling-house and barn had been all "burned down to ashes." At the same time, several records, minutes, and other papers belonging to the session were destroyed, and among the rest a bond formerly granted by the lairds of Bowland, elder and younger, for the sum of £415 13s 4d Scots. The communion cups and tokens were also destroyed; and the records of the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, of which Mr. Christie was clerk, were consumed. It appears the fire was purely accidental. A renewal of the bond was obtained; twelve hundred new tokens were got; and two silver cups were procured, the metal of the old cups, reduced to a shapeless mass by the fire, going a certain way to cover the expense.

Traces of insubordination in regard to decrees of session begin to appear. On the 16th March, 1727,

a fast was ordered on account of "the extreme severity of the season, whereby the seed-time and labouring have been long obstructed, and the victual at present is at so great a dearth that the poor are in a great measure deprived of bread, and whereby an universal scarcity is threatened; and, also, that through the excessive rigour of the weather the flocks are perishing, and like to be cut off from the fold;" but it turned out that John Robson, tenant in Heavyside, instead of joining in the congregational exercises, was "carrying on his ordinary work by sowing his seed, and by ploughing and harrowing his ground, to the great offence of many, both of this parish and the neighbourhood, who saw or were acquainted with these disorders."

The session, feeling bound to take notice of this matter, their officer was ordered to summon John Robson to compear on the next Lord's Day. When the session met, Matthew Tully, officer, gave in an execution of summons against John Robson, whom he had cited to compear by delivering a signed copy of the summons into his hand, which execution was read and sustained. The said John Robson, being publicly called, compeared not, nor did he pay any more regard to a second and a third citation. Finding the said John "contumacious to them," the session referred the whole matter to the Presbytery of Kelso. The decision was unfavourable to Mr. Robson, who then appealed to the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale; but that rev. court, finding him "continuing obstinate, and instead of acknowledging the offence he had given by his contempt and profanation of the fast-day, pretending to justify his

practice in that matter, did pass the sentence of the lesser excommunication against the said John Robson," which sentence was, by order of the Synod, intimated from the pulpit, in the parish of Morebattle, on the 28th October, 1730, by the Rev. George Hall, minister at Linton. Under this ecclesiastical cloud George Robson disappears from the cognizance of the session, but two of his sons, after some dealings by that court, admitted the offence, and were subjected to discipline.

In 1737 representatives of the Associate Presbytery appear in the parish; and an incidental reference in the minutes of the kirk-session is highly favourable to their character as faithful guardians of the public morals. On the 9th October that year Andrew Burn, Kelsocleuch, ruling elder, represented to the session that James Walker, one of his servants, had applied to him in order to have his child admitted to baptism, and the reason of his application was that "the said James Walker had brought his child to Mr. Moncrieff, minister at Abernethy, and Mr. Fisher, minister at Kinclaven, when they had a hill meeting, on the 3d day of October, at Place Gateshaw, in this parish, and had applied to them for baptism to his child, but they had refused, upon a pretence of their being informed that the said child of James Walker was brought forth several months before the time."

The session judged it necessary to make inquiry regarding the precise time and circumstances of the child's birth, "in regard that by James Walker's application to those stranger ministers, and they refusing to admit his child to baptism, the scandal

has become public," whereupon they appointed the foresaid Andrew Burn and George Scott, in Sourhope, as a committee of their number, to meet at Kelsocleuch any day they shall find convenient, and to call before them the women who were present at the birth of the foresaid James Walker's child, to inquire at them concerning the precise time of the said birth, and if there were any circumstances preceding the birth which might hasten the woman's delivery that they knew of, and to make report of the whole to the session at the next meeting; and further, the session appoints the said Mr Burn to acquaint James Walker that he must produce a certificate under the hand of the minister that married him to his wife, bearing the precise day of the marriage, to the session or minister of this parish, and this before this session can give any directions anent the admission of his child to baptism." It turned out that the child had been born a month too early, and James Walker, having been asked if he had been guilty of ante-nuptial fornication, gave an evasive answer, and the matter remained undecided. Baptism was afterwards granted, with an intimation that it might have been done earlier had he not applied to the stranger ministers.

About the year 1737 new arrangements were made for the supervision of the poor. On the 7th of August that year it was minuted that the heritors, minister, and elders of the parish had held several meetings, conform to an Act of the Sheriff and Justices of the shire, and that it had been remitted to the session to meet and direct the poor on the roll to be summoned before them, and say if they were

willing to assign their effects at death for the use of the surviving poor. Most of them did so; those who did not were struck off the list of paupers. The closing minute of Mr. Christie's time, dated the 4th December, 1737, has reference to the investment of money. It was intimated that James Rutherford of Bowland had paid up his bond, principal and interest, and members of session were asked to consider to whom the money could be lent. The Moderator reported that Robert Davidson, merchant in Kelso, was willing to borrow £40 sterling from the session at the term of Candlemas next, and give them heritable security for the money; and "the session remitted to Mr. Andrew Rae to inquire if there were any prior heritable securities on Robert Davidson's land in the Register of Sasines." Obviously, the members of that session had been cautious and clear-headed men, to whose management the parochial business could be safely committed.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ANOTHER SECESSION.

**I**N 1732, seven years after the battle in the kirk-yard at Morebattle, and about the time when Ebenezer Erskine uttered the first of those trumpet blasts which ultimately attracted to his standard a large proportion of the evangelical party in Scotland, a vacancy occurred in the united parish of Stichel and Hume. The parish of Stichel is situated in the north-east corner of Roxburghshire; and Hume, conjoined with it, is in the county of Berwick. The name Stichel is said to signify a declivity; and, if this be correct, it is a fair description of the situation. The village is 600 feet above the level of the Tweed at Kelso, from which it is four miles distant; and there is a magnificent prospect of Border scenery, from the eastern extremity of the Cheviot range of hills to the west end of the Carter Fell, the high hills on the borders of Liddesdale, and, boldly prominent on the west, not very far distant, the three red peaks of the Eildons.

The Berwickshire portion of the parish includes the ancient castle of Hume, once inhabited by the lords of that name, a notable fortress in the days of Border raids. The situation, still graced with the gray ruins, is exceedingly strong; and the defenders of the castle in ancient times considered it to be

impregnable. Such was the opinion of the valiant captain who, when summoned by Oliver Cromwell's men to surrender, defiantly answered—

“I, Willie Wastle,  
Stand firm in my castle,  
And a' the dogs in your toun  
Will not ding Willie Wastle down.”

Cromwell was not so easily daunted; he did take the castle, though not without difficulty, and caused it to be in a great measure demolished. The ruins, in the shape of a square turret on the summit of a comparatively isolated hill, form a conspicuous landmark; and from the top of the battlements the country may be scanned to a great distance in all directions.

When the pastorate of the parish became vacant in 1732, Sir Robert Pringle was almost sole heritor and proprietor of the Roxburghshire portion, and an elder of the church. On the 5th of December, 1732, Sir Robert, in name of the elders, applied to the Kelso Presbytery, asking them to invite Mr. Francis Craig, Mr. John Scott, and Mr. Alexander Dick, preachers at Edinburgh, within the bounds, so that each of them might preach several days at Stichel. The Presbytery declined to invite these young men till the church had been declared vacant, but meanwhile appointed Mr. Joseph Leck, minister at Yetholm, to preach at Stichel, and make the necessary intimations. The clerk was instructed to write Sir Robert Pringle to this effect.

At next meeting, on the 2d January, 1733, compared two of the elders, and craved that the name of Mr. Alexander Home, preacher, Chirnside, be



added to the list already furnished; and, farther, desired that, now since the church had been declared vacant, one or two of these preachers might be heard previous to the next meeting. It was agreed that Mr. Francis Craig and Mr. Alexander Home be invited to be present at next meeting, each of whom was to bring his licence to preach. When the Presbytery met again there was an excuse from Mr. Francis Craig, but Mr. Home was present, and his testimonials were declared to be "abundantly satisfying." Mr. John Scott was invited to be present at the next meeting of Presbytery.

Next meeting was on the 1st of May, and the scene had entirely changed. Till that date some deference had been paid to the wishes of the congregation, and it appeared as if they might have a word to say about the appointment of their minister, but now that hope was extinguished. Everything was done in conformity with "law and order," but it was trying for the people to be treated simply as "dumb, driven cattle." At that meeting "John Brown, notar in Kelso, gave in a presentation from his Majesty King George to Mr. Alexander Home, preacher of the gospel, to be minister of the united parishes of Stichel and Hume, and gave in also a letter from Mr John Forbes, Advocate-Depute, empowering him to lay the same before the Presbytery of Kelso, and to follow out the same till it be made effectual." Also, "the said John Brown gave in a presentation from the Earl of Home" to a similar effect. A letter from the presentee was read leaving the matter in the hands of the Presbytery. He was appointed to preach at Stichel on the first Sabbath:

of June; and Mr. Ramsay was appointed to preach on the third Sabbath of May, at the same time making intimation that the Presbytery would meet in the church at Stichel on the first Tuesday of June "to try the inclinations of the people, in order to facilitate the planting of the vacant congregation."

On the 5th June the Presbytery met at Stichel, and, after preliminary proceedings, the officer was instructed to call the heritors and elders; the "masters of families" were not called, as had been done at Morebattle, the voice of the people having been meanwhile silenced by an Act of the General Assembly. In answer to the call, compeared Sir Robert Pringle, heritor and elder, and John Edgar of Wedderlie for the Earl of Home. By a letter, dated at Paris, Mr. Edgar was instructed "to vote and subscribe a call to Mr. Alexander Home, preacher of the gospel, to be the minister of the united parishes of Stichel and Hume, and to do every other deed in the favours of the said Mr. Alexander Home for his being minister of Stichel." A letter from the Dowager Countess of Home, a life-renter in the parish, was also read, and was in similar terms. Mr. Edgar appeared also for Mrs. Stark, widow of the late minister of Stenton, a life-renter in the parish, and for Mr. Robert Stark, minister at Kinross, who was similarly qualified. There was likewise read a letter, signed "John Hair, Newtondon," who claimed to be a heritor, who had heard Mr. Alexander Home preach at Stichel, and was "very well pleased with his doctrine." Mr. Hair could not be present at the meeting, but Mr. Edgar was empowered to vote and sign a call in his name. It was objected that Mr.

Hair had paid no cess, but the reply was that he had a heritage worth £4 Scots, or £3 sterling, in the parish. Compeared, also, William Henderson of Todrig, a heritor, for himself and his mother, Agnes Haliburton, who produced a mandate, also, from William Bell of Blackhouse, another heritor. As elders there appeared Edward Fairbairn, John Richardson, William Watson, John Smith, John Lawrie, Robert Wilson, John Thomson, and William White.

Sir Robert Pringle protested against heritors who were non-resident having a vote in the appointment of a minister to a parish in which they do not reside. He claimed, farther, that heritors who were not present should not be precluded from giving their votes afterwards, "because neither heritors, elders, nor people were either summoned or desired to be present here at this meeting." To this Mr Ramsay replied that he "preached in Stichel Sabbath was a fortnight, and after sermon did intimate to the congregation that the Presbytery of Kelso had appointed the meeting to be held in the church at Stichel the first Tuesday of June, to concert and determine upon the most proper means for the most peaceable and speedy settlement of the vacant charge."

The list of heritors and elders having been adjusted, Sir Robert Pringle submitted a list of objections against Mr. Home being included in the list of candidates. He objected to Mr. Home (1) because he had accepted a presentation before knowing whether or not he would be acceptable to the people; (2) because the manner of his acceptance was contrary to the Book of Discipline, where

patronages are said to "flow allenarly from the Pope, and to be contrary to the Word of God, and inconsistent with the privileges reserved to us at the Union with England;" and (3) because he wants the good report mentioned—1 Timothy iii. 7—as to his ministerial qualifications. He farther protested that the fact of his voting as a heritor and elder was not to be understood as precluding the rest of the parishioners from having a vote in the choice of their minister, seeing that their interest in the matter was not less than his own. These protests were disallowed, and Mr John Edgar of Wedderlie then produced a call to Mr. Alexander Home, craving that it might be signed. Sir Robert Pringle submitted a call to Mr. John Scott, with a like request; and of electors declared to be legally qualified, there voted ten for Mr. Home and seven for Mr. Scott. At the same meeting there was submitted by William Dick, Oxmuir, a paper said to be signed by "a great number of persons," expressing satisfaction with the qualifications of Mr. Home, and craving the Presbytery to proceed to his settlement without delay. Two elders testified "that all the people whose names were annexed to the petition signed willingly either with their own hand or by touching the pen, setting down their mark, and allowing their names to be written." Against the reception of this document Sir Robert Pringle protested, saying it had been improperly got up, and was illegal, and not entitled to any weight in connection with the settlement. Judgment in the case was again deferred.

At another meeting, on the 7th of August, Sir Robert Pringle, with six other elders, submitted a

petition in favour of Mr. Scott, alleging that one cannot be minister of a parish without having received the call of the people, as well as that of the heritors and elders, whereas no steps had been taken by the Presbytery to ascertain the mind of the people in this case. The seven elders, at the same time, stated again the reasons why they could not accept Mr. Home as their minister; and their statements were backed by a paper signed by many members of the congregation. These documents were received, but the decision of the Presbytery was again deferred till the 4th of September, when, at the request of Mr. Edgar, the heritors and elders who had agreed to vote for Mr. Home were allowed to sign his call. Against this decision Sir Robert Pringle protested for the reasons previously stated, and because the sentence was oppressive to the people, taking away the liberty which they ought to have in choosing a pastor for themselves, and because there is a great majority in favour of Mr. Scott and against the presentee. At the same time, he did not think it worth while to carry this matter by appeal to the higher judicatories of the Church, having observed that they had recently paid little or no attention to the wishes of the people. He likewise protested that this apparent acquiescence should not be construed as an acknowledgment of the presentee as his minister; indeed, he could never submit to the ministry of one who intruded himself, or was intruded by a presentation, on a people without their consent. The Presbytery, holding that a majority of those entitled to vote were in favour of Mr. Home, agreed to proceed with the ordination,

which was fixed for the 1st of January, 1734; and when the edict was read Sir Robert Pringle again protested against the proceedings. Finally, on the 2d April, 1734, Sir Robert and six other elders laid on the table of the Presbytery a protest against Mr. Home's settlement, on the grounds previously stated, and for the additional reason that the Presbytery excluded all women in the parish from showing their mind in respect to the settlement of a minister, though their interest in the matter was, at least, equal to that of the men. They likewise protested that it shall be "leisome to us to seek to have the gospel preached and sealing ordinances administered to us by a minister with whom we can join with a safe conscience, without being reckoned factious or divisive."

Thus, in the Presbytery of Kelso, two congregations, about twelve miles apart, had been thrust out of the Church by patrons and ministers enforcing the law of patronage. Looking across the valley of the Tweed, the parishioners of Stichel could see the grassy hills among which dwelt the brave men who had struck the first blow for popular freedom in the district. For eight years already had the people of Morebattle continued in a state of separation from the Parish Church; three years longer these two little companies were destined to occupy the same position before any efficient steps could be taken to obtain a pastor chosen by themselves, and a still longer period must elapse before their aspirations could be realized. But "the word of the Lord was precious in those days," and though they lived on "borrowed meals" the spiritual life was well sustained, and their attach-

ment to principles continued unabated. Maxton was at no great distance, but it was across the Tweed, and there were then no bridges, so that the people were largely dependent on praying societies, which were numerous all over the country. These societies consisted of a few individuals who met in private houses on some week-day evening, but where the minister was very unacceptable they met on Sabbath during the hours of public worship. They usually met in small numbers and with great privacy. When the minister and people were of one mind they waited on ordinances in the church, but enjoyed their fellowship meetings during the week, the minister frequently attending and taking part in the exercises. The best mode of conducting these meetings engaged the attention of Ebenezer Erskine, James Hog of Carnock, and other popular leaders, who compiled and printed rules to guide the societies. The number of members was sometimes three, at other times ten or twelve, and in no case more than twenty. Of these societies one or more existed in every parish; in some parishes there were five or six. Each society met once a-week; a number of them, called "The Association," met conjointly once a-month; and delegates from the Associations, called "The Correspondence," held a meeting once a-year. Thus a complete net-work of praying societies covered the country, and, though newspapers had scarcely an existence, the Christian people were kept well informed concerning all matters affecting the common interest.

## CHAPTER V.

### SISTER CONGREGATIONS.

ON the 5th December, 1733, Messrs. Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff, and James Fisher met at Gairney Bridge, in the county of Kinross, and constituted the Associate Presbytery, from which has grown up one branch of the United Presbyterian Church. Two years afterwards, in December, 1735, the first applications for supply of sermon came in from the praying societies of Muckart and Kinross; and, in February following, similar applications came from Portmoak and Edinburgh. Meanwhile secessions continued to increase in number, praying societies were greatly multiplied, and in the two years 1737-38 upwards of seventy applications for supply of sermon were received. Among the applicants in 1737 were the praying societies of Morebattle and Stichel. A "Judicial Act and Testimony" issued by the Presbytery had found its way even to the green hills of Morebattle, and was accepted by the people as expressing the desires they had long and ardently cherished. A formal adherence to it was prepared, and at Dunfermline on the 12th July was presented to the Presbytery, along with a petition "begging relief in their lamentable circumstances, and that the Presbytery would appoint a day of fasting to be observed in the bounds."



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*Ralph Erskine* *John Wilson*  
*Thos. Mair* *James Mair*  
*William Wilson* *John Erskine*

FIRST MEETING OF ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY.

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The Presbytery agreed to take the people under their inspection, but delayed consideration of the petition till afterwards. Not much help was available. There were no preachers in connection with the infant society; the circumstances were so novel and unexpected that the Presbytery had not thought, for some time, of making provision for supply of sermon, and the constantly increasing demand for services could be supplied only by the four ministers, and four others who soon afterwards joined them, labouring in different parts of the country as far as time and strength and circumstances would permit. It was, however, agreed that Messrs. Moncrieff and Fisher should conduct a service at Morebattle, where there would be a day of humiliation, and that they should meet with the people and constitute a session.

The Presbytery met again at Orwell on the 31st August, when a petition was presented from Stichel, characterised by the practical directness which had been conspicuous in all the proceedings of that district. It intimated the accession of the people to the Presbytery on the ground of the Testimony, and craved that the Presbytery would send some to preach among them "that they may have trial of their gifts, &c., in order to their calling some one of them to be their minister." It was agreed to take that people also under the inspection of the Presbytery; and the moderator, in name of the court, intimated to the commissioners their readiness to send preachers "so soon as the Lord, in His providence, should open a door for it." Farther, it was agreed that if the elders of Stichel applied by a written representation to the brethren to be at Morebattle, declaring their adoption

of the Testimony, and desiring a day of humiliation on the ground thereof, the said brethren were appointed to observe Thursday the 29th September as a day of humiliation among them, and thereafter to hold a session with the elders there.

According to appointment the Rev. Messrs. Moncrieff and Fisher preached at Morebattle on the last Wednesday of September, 1737, and constituted a session with the elders who had left the Parish Church. The occasion was one of supreme interest in the locality. Doubtless, the momentous event had been discussed with much animation ever since the time was definitely fixed by the Presbytery on the 31st August. It was the harvest month, but in corn field as well as homestead and cottage, and especially in meetings of the praying societies, this epoch in their local history would be the chief subject of conversation. Nor was this fervour confined to a single parish. Secessions had now occurred in the parishes of Jedburgh and Ancrum, and the praying societies there had united with those of Eckford, Linton, and Morebattle. From Northumberland, on the other side of the Border, came adhesions to the Testimony. Thus, over a wide expanse of the Border counties there was a buzz of unusual excitement, and many earnest men and women were invoking the Divine blessing on this return to something like the old days of the Covenant.

Who made the arrangements and fixed on Gateshaw Brae as the place of meeting cannot now be ascertained. Probably it was the elders who had seceded from the Kirk. They have made that quiet glen not merely a classic but a sacred spot, for it was a place of comfort and refreshment to multitudes.



COTTAGE AT GARNET BRIDGE IN WHICH THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATE  
PRESBYTERY WAS HELD.

*(From a Photograph by Mr. Annan, Edinburgh.)*

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Why that particular spot was selected is not known. It is quite a mile from the kirk at Morebattle, and is separated from it by a little spur of the Cheviot hills. Perhaps no place of meeting could be obtained nearer the village, as the owners of the soil were probably not less hostile than they had been twelve years before. Certainly no more suitable site could have been found in that or in any locality for a sanctuary under the canopy of heaven. It is a singularly romantic dell, through which a brooklet trickles with a gentle murmur to join the water of Cayle, and is more compact than the scene of the great conventicle at Haughhead, farther down the valley, where Richard Cameron was licensed to preach. That grassy glen, where for many years the gospel was regularly preached, is now finely sheltered with trees which a hundred and fifty years since might not be large, but the conformation of the ground is such as to afford shelter from cold and boisterous winds. It opens out to the southward, but near the entrance are some older trees which, even in the early years of the Secession, would suffice to screen the worshippers from sun or wind. Within the sanctuary itself are some spreading elm and lime trees, under the shadow of which the feebler portion of the flock may have found a kindly refuge; but, according to traditional accounts, the congregation was accustomed to sit among the snows of winter, and nobody was ever conscious of being injured thereby.\* From the bottom of the dell to the brae-top is fully a hundred paces; and the conformation is such as to form a

\* Unfriendly critics did not credit this statement, and characterised the people as "the Gateshaw leears."

complete natural amphitheatre, with admirable acoustic qualities. A speaker standing on the plateau at the bottom can be heard without difficulty at the highest point, and in this natural sanctuary some thousands of people could be accommodated without difficulty. At that period the surrounding country was cultivated only in patches, and was unfenced, thus permitting worshippers from all directions to converge on the hallowed spot without hindrance. The neighbourhood has now been to a great extent brought under cultivation, but the Brae itself remains intact, and pilgrims to the sacred shrine can see it in much the same condition as it was in the days of Moncrieff, Fisher, and the Erskines.

On the 12th October the Associate Presbytery met at Perth, when Messrs Moncrieff and Fisher reported that they had fulfilled the appointment at Morebattle, that a number of persons residing on the English side of the border had intimated their adhesion to the Presbytery, and that the whole had been united into one congregation, under the designation of the United Societies of Teviotdale and Northumberland. They reported, likewise, that they had preached at Stichel, and had constituted a session with five elders, of whom one was the honourable Sir Robert Pringle, who had judicially signified his concurrence with the design of the petition presented by the people, and his adhesion to the Testimony emitted by the Presbytery. It was farther stated that the session at Stichel unanimously insisted on their petition for a gospel minister. Again, on the 1st November, the Presbytery met at Abbotshall, when there was produced and read a



letter from Sir Robert Pringle, intimating his accession to the Presbytery, and a petition from the people of Stichel, craving the Presbytery to license young men as preachers. The Presbytery intimated that they were not for delay in the matter, but were taking the necessary steps to supply the demand, and were determined to go forward "as the Lord might give them light." A similar petition from Morebattle came before the Presbytery at Kinross on the 31st December, and was answered in like terms. The persistent and importunate sister congregations were forward again on the 14th February, 1738, when it was agreed that a letter should be written to them by Mr. Moncrieff. They were probably the more urgent as they knew that Mr. John Hunter, a native of the district, was soon to be licensed, and they were anxious to secure the first minister that might be available. At Abernethy, on the 12th April, there was another petition from Stichel, and on the 13th a very urgent representation from Morebattle, in answer to which Messrs. Moncrieff (Abernethy) and Mair (Orwell) were appointed to visit the people and preach, the one at Morebattle and the other at Stichel, on the first Sabbath of May.

At Orwell, on the 8th June, 1738, Mr. John Hunter was licensed to preach, and became the first probationer in connection with the Associate Presbytery. He was a native of Roxburghshire, had been for some time assistant teacher at Linton, where Mr. Christie was inducted as minister of Morebattle in 1725, and was, of course, well known to the people of Morebattle. He had studied theology in connec-

tion with the Church of Scotland, but, having heartily adopted the Marrow doctrines, was rejected by the Presbytery to which he had applied for license. With a recommendation from Mr. Gabriel Wilson, he had applied to the Associate Presbytery, by whom he was cordially welcomed. Steps had at length been taken to procure a supply of preachers, and the Rev. William Wilson, Perth, having been appointed professor in the end of 1737, opened a theological class soon afterwards. In the first list of students appears the name of John Hunter, and that season closed his course as a theological student. Having been licensed to preach, Mr. Hunter appeared in the locality, where he was already known, and favourable expectations were more than realized. No effort must be spared to secure his services; and accordingly, on the 18th July, when the Presbytery met at Abernethy, a petition was presented from Morebattle and Stichel for one to moderate in a call to Mr. Hunter. A letter was read from Sir Robert Pringle concurring in the petition. It was agreed that a letter be written by the moderator, intimating that before their request could be granted the friends in that part of the country must submit to the Presbytery a particular statement indicating those over whom Mr. Hunter was to have the pastoral supervision, who were to be the callers, what were to be the places of worship, and how a suitable maintenance was to be secured. These and other matters were not arranged without difficulty and disputation. Possibly members of the societies were disposed to chide the Presbytery for delay and extreme punctiliousness. Certainly, there were some

heart-burnings, for on the 5th October, at Burnt-island, nothing was done by the Presbytery to expedite matters; all they did was to converse with the commissioners and "recommend harmony to them." It was some consolation that Mr. Hunter, though not ordained, was officiating in the district; but the field was wide, and, to meet all demands, he is said to have sometimes preached or addressed meetings twice daily every day of the week.

At length the consummation of their hopes seemed to be within reach. The usual petition was again before the Presbytery, at Stirling, on the 13th December; and on the following day, having heard commissioners from these and other places, "the Presbytery, after much reasoning, agreed to grant the petition of the united congregation of Morebattle and Stichel;" in consequence whereof they appointed Messrs. Mair and Fisher to moderate in a call at Gateshaw on the first Wednesday of March, 1739, and to preach at Stichel on the Sabbath immediately preceding. They farther appointed this decision to be intimated at Morebattle on the third and at Stichel on the fourth Sabbaths of January by Mr. John Hunter, the officiating preacher. It was, doubtless, necessary to fix a date so distant as the first week of March, because travelling over a high ridge of hills from Edinburgh to the south of Scotland was difficult and uncertain in the depth of winter; but, on the other hand, the beginning of March was named so that there might be no unnecessary delay.

What incidents occurred to the two brethren on their journey southward, or what pleasant words of

welcome were received when they reached the banks of the Cayle, we have no means of knowing; but they were present to do their work at the time appointed, and they did it like men conscious that they were making an epoch in Scottish ecclesiastical history. On the 16th of March their report was submitted to the Presbytery. They had met as a committee at Stichel on the 5th March, when Mr. Mair was appointed moderator, and Mr George Murray, doubtless an elder, was chosen clerk. The correspondents of Morebattle and Stichel were present. The committee proceeded to fix the boundaries of the congregation. It was arranged that worship should be conducted regularly at Gateshaw on two Sabbaths and at Stichel on the third Sabbath, and that for the present the bounds of the congregation on the south side of the Tweed should be eight miles south, east, and west from Gateshaw and to the river Tweed on the north, and that the callers within these bounds shall attend for examination where the minister that is to be called shall appoint. On the north side of the river the bounds were to be seven miles north, east, and west from Stichel, and to the river Tweed on the south; but on the express understanding that members within these bounds shall attend for examination and other church privileges at Stichel. It was farther agreed, at the desire of the correspondence of Morebattle and Stichel, that, "till the Lord shall send forth more labourers into His vineyard," the monthly meeting in Ashkirk parish shall be allowed to be callers of the minister, but with the express provision that they attend for examination and other Church

privileges within any part of the foresaid bounds on the south of the Tweed that the minister may appoint; also, that the societies at Chirnside, Preston, and Norham be allowed to be callers, on condition that they attend for examination and other Church privileges at Stichel. The correspondence from Morebattle moved that none be allowed to vote in the election of a minister except such as are in total secession, and hear none of the ministers of the Establishment; but, the committee having stated that the terms of Christian communion had not yet been fixed by the Presbytery, and that it was not in the power of the committee to do so, the friends from Morebattle agreed not to insist on their motion or do anything to delay the moderation.

The bounds thus fixed included a very wide extent of country. Ashkirk, at the western extremity, is five miles beyond Hawick, and more than twenty miles from Gateshaw, even by the most direct route. Early in the century the people had enjoyed the ministry of Charles Gordon, M.A., whom Boston described as "a learned and holy man, of uncommon integrity." In 1711 he was succeeded by Robert Lythgow, who had been chaplain to Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, and has been described as "a worthy brother, a faithful, serious, and moving preacher; having a great insight into the doctrines of the gospel; a judicious, pious man, endowed with an uncommon measure of ingenuity." This worthy man died on the 15th November, 1729; and eleven months thereafter his place was filled by the induction of Walter, son of Bailie Stewart, Newton Mearns, who was presented by Sir Gilbert Elliot, acting on

the advice of Mr. William Hamilton, Professor of Divinity. Mr. Stewart had studied at Edinburgh and Leyden, and was doubtless a man of cultured mind, but so unacceptable to the people that some of them preferred to join the Associate congregation at Gateshaw.

The distance from Stichel to the eastern boundary of the congregation would vary from twelve to twenty miles. Chirnside was the village where Henry Erskine, father of Ebenezer and Ralph, had finished his course as a gospel minister about forty years before; and Preston, north-east from Duns, may have come under the influence of his preaching at an earlier period. The life and labours of that venerable man, who was born, and afterwards lived in retirement, at Dryburgh, had left an impression so deep and lasting that when his sons began to visit the neighbourhood in connection with the Secession they had a cordial welcome from many for their father's sake. Some who joined the congregation at Stichel were in the habit of leaving Chirnside on the Saturday, so as to be at Stichel in time for the service next day.

Preparations had now been completed, and the first Wednesday of March, 1739, to which the people had for two months looked anxiously forward, had arrived. Work was suspended, as well it might, for that day marked an epoch in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland. To the first four Seceding ministers had now been added Messrs. Ralph Erskine, Dunfermline; Thomas Mair, Orwell; Thomas Nairn, Abbotshall; and James Thomson, Burntisland, so that the Associate Presbytery included eight ordained

ministers, but none of them were located farther south than Burntisland. The General Assembly had tried various methods to crush the movement. In 1738, when Mr. James Ramsay was moderator, they had been disposed to adopt "gentle means," but with a scarcely concealed threat to "sist them at the bar of next Assembly" should other efforts be unsuccessful. This ulterior process was now in preparation. In November a committee had been named by the Commission to prepare a libel; and one count in it was the action of the Presbytery in having licensed Mr. John Hunter to preach the gospel, and directed him to a particular parish wherein to exercise his ministry; and now, in this very month of March, the libel was to be submitted for the approval of the Commission. It was the crisis of a great controversy, and the people of Morebattle and Stichel were in the centre of the conflict. They had taken the lead in opposition to the enforcement of patronage, from their bounds had come the first probationer, whose existence as such was now denounced by the Commission of the General Assembly; and now, with continued persistence, they had managed to have the first moderation in a call, and the prospect of the first ordination under the auspices of the Associate Presbytery. To aid them in this constitutional struggle there were now present the Rev. Thomas Mair, moderator of the Associate Presbytery, and Mr. Fisher, son-in-law of Ebenezer Erskine.

The proceedings began at an early hour. At nine o'clock the committee met at Nether Whitton, in the vicinity of Gateshaw Brae, when the leaders of the congregation were recommended to have the draft

time and satisfy the demands of justice. In accordance with this policy of calm deliberation, the date of the ordination was fixed for the 17th October, exactly seven months after the moderation. The proceedings were conducted with strict decorum. On the 15th the committee met at Stichel, when some accessions were received and subscriptions to the call permitted; and on the 16th a meeting was held at Gateshaw for similar purposes. The Presbytery met at Gateshaw on the 17th—Mr. Ralph Erskine moderator, with whom were present, at first, Mr. Thomson and Mr. Fisher; Henry Erskine was chosen as temporary clerk. The conduct of the committee was approved; the questions to be put to ministers at their ordination were also read and adopted. The edict was called for and returned, and no objections offered. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Mair arrived before the public services began.

The Presbytery adjourned to "the place of public worship," where the service of "fasting and prayer" was begun by Mr. Thomson, after which Mr. Ralph Erskine preached from Luke xiv. 23—"Compel them to come in, that My house may be filled." The questions of the formula were addressed to Mr. Hunter, and satisfactorily answered; the people testified their willingness to accept him as their pastor by holding up their hands; and Mr. Hunter was solemnly set apart to his sacred office with prayer and the imposition of hands. It had been arranged that Mr. Wilson should preach, but "this day of solemn fasting being far spent, it was not thought convenient" that he should do so. The Presbytery having "returned to the place of meet-



ing," Mr. Hunter's name was added to the roll, and he received the right hand of fellowship as a co-presbyter.

The joy of the united congregation was speedily blighted, for their young minister died on the 7th January, 1740, before having completed the twelfth week of his ministry. It has not been ascertained what caused his premature decease; probably the fatal illness was brought on by superabundant labours, coupled with exposure to the elements when travelling in the discharge of pastoral duties. It is known from contemporary records that the summer and autumn of 1739 were cold and rainy, and about the 1st of January, 1740, began one of the most severe and prolonged frosts ever known in this country. Accustomed though he was to the blasts of the Cheviot Hills, the constitution of the young minister may have been weakened by hard study and much exposure, so that he might readily succumb to the fall of temperature in the first week of the year. One can imagine how reluctantly he would accept the summons to quit the great field of labour so plainly spread out before him; but, doubtless, he submitted implicitly when the call to "come up hither" was plainly recognised. In a similar spirit of resignation was the bereavement endured by the congregation and the Presbytery. On a short and cold winter day, when the solemn hills that overlook the village grave-yard were clothed in white, the congregation would assemble with sorrowful hearts, and, wondering what could be the meaning of this strange dispensation, commit to the silent grave the precious dust of him on whom so

many hopes had centred. No brother minister could possibly be present, but there is no reason to doubt that the elders were equal to the occasion, and that all things would be done decently and in order. The sermon preached at his ordination by Ralph Erskine was published, with a postscript, in which a tribute was paid to the memory of the deceased pastor. He was described as "a burning and a shining light that burned so fast and shone so bright that it is less to be wondered that he did not burn and shine long." Estimating his powers, Mr. Erskine said "his preaching and praying gifts came the nearest of any to those of the great and eminent Mr. Samuel Rutherford, being so full of homely similes and metaphors, tending to convey the truth with such pleasure and evidence into the hearts of the hearers that few or none who heard him once but were fond to hear him again." Alluding to his preaching stations at a wide distance apart, the same postscript contains the lines often quoted :—

" This mighty Hunter, well employed  
Between the distant poles,  
His mortal body soon destroyed  
To save immortal souls."

Even by critics not disposed to be favourable, Mr. Hunter is admitted to have been a powerful and attractive preacher. Principal Robertson, then a young man, having been visiting a family in the district, incidentally heard of a fast-day at which Mr. Hunter was to preach, and took the opportunity to mingle among the audience. He described the sermon as "rough, but overpowering," and said many years afterwards, "Even yet, when I retire to

my studies, the recollection of what I then heard thrills through my mind." Some idea of his style can be formed from a perusal of four published discourses, stray copies of which may still be found in the district. The style is not rough in the sense of being turgid or harsh, but the sermons are not polished according to artistic rules, which, indeed, they could scarcely be, seeing that he had to preach so often.

By unfriendly onlookers the death of Mr. Hunter was interpreted as an indication that Providence was frowning on the infant cause; but the reply may be regarded as sagacious, if not prophetic, "No, it is not a frown. You know that God, under the Jewish dispensation, claimed the first-fruits, and that was the earnest of an abundant harvest. He has now claimed the first-fruits, and I expect there will be produced, in connection with the Associate Presbytery, an abundant harvest of good gospel ministers."

## CHAPTER VI.

GATESHAW AND MOREBATTLE, 1742—1871.

FOR two years and four months after Mr. Hunter's decease the congregation of Gateshaw continued without a minister. No records exist regarding the congregational life at that period, and even the minutes of the kirk-session, previously kept with admirable neatness, have come to an end. One of the latest entries was on the 25th April, 1736, when the session gave "£3 to Andrew Ker, beddal, to help him in his livelihood." Heritors were now conjoined with the session in caring for the poor; and from the minutes of heritors' meetings, to be afterwards noticed, some light is obtained regarding the condition of the parish. For the intervening period there is a blank in the parish annals.

James Scott, who became second minister of Gateshaw, was born in November, 1717, at Ashieburn, in the parish of Ancrum. His father, William Scott, was proprietor of Africa and Ashieburn, and his grandfather was Walter Scott of Clarilaw, by whom Ashieburn was purchased toward the close of the seventeenth century. In a valuation roll of the period the rental is entered as £106 a-year, a very comfortable income for those days. James Scott was, therefore, the son of a respectable landowner in the county, and himself inherited the estate at

an early age. His whole character and demeanour, so far as can be ascertained, corresponded with the circumstances of his birth. He was well educated, dignified in his bearing, a diligent worker, chaste and elegant in his style of preaching, of unbending integrity, and most methodical in all his arrangements.

Served heir to his father on the 20th August, 1733, James Scott seems not to have interrupted his studies, and was, early in 1737, attending the ministry of Gabriel Wilson, in the adjoining parish of Maxton. Among numerous manuscripts that have been preserved is a little volume in paper covers containing neatly-written notes of Mr. Wilson's discourses in successive weeks; and the services on each day consisted of "a preface, a lecture, and a sermon." The habit of taking notes was then common among religious people, and seems to have been countenanced by ministers and instructors of youth. Among students of theology it was fostered by a custom in the University of Edinburgh. All the students attended divine service together, and afterwards met in several classes to repeat notes of what they had heard, with passages of scripture which had been prescribed for them to learn. In this way students would naturally acquire the style of ministers under whose ministry they sat; and the future minister of Gateshaw would retain some lineaments of Gabriel Wilson.\*

\* Boston (Memoir, pp. 252-3) describes Wilson as "a man of great piety, tenderness, and learning, with a vast compass of reading; a painful minister; a plain preacher, but deep in his thought, especially of later years, and growing remarkably unto this day in insight into the holy scriptures; zealous and faithful to a pitch; having more of the

James Scott was one of six students who entered the Theological Hall under Professor Wilson in 1740, and in the course of the same year he was licensed as a preacher. He was appointed to officiate on the second Sabbath of August at Jedburgh, the congregation with which his friends were probably connected, and on the 13th May, 1742, he was ordained minister at Gateshaw. Before the close of that year there were twenty ministers connected with the Associate Presbytery, of whom twelve had been ordained within two years, and one had acceded from the Established Church, but Mr. Wilson had died at the close of the preceding year.

Toward the close of 1745 Mr. Scott married Alice, youngest daughter of Ebenezer Erskine, by his first wife, Alison Turpie. The Associate Presbytery had now expanded into a Synod, containing the three Presbyteries of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dunfermline; and, at the initiatory meeting, held at Stirling on the first Tuesday of March, 1745, Mr. Scott would have opportunities to arrange about his prospective marriage. The young lady was about 27 years of

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spirit of the old Presbyterians than any other minister that I know, for the which cause he has been in the eyes of many like a speckled bird; but, withal, a most affectionate, faithful, and useful friend; a seasonable and wise adviser in a pinch; . . . often employed of God signally and seasonably to comfort and bear me up when I needed it extremely. . . . Whatever odds there was in some respects betwixt him and me there was still a certain cast of temper by which I found him to be my other self. He was extremely modest, but once touched with the weight of a matter, very forward and keen, fearing the face of no man; on the other hand, I was slow and timorous. In the which mixture, whereby he served as a spur to me, and I as a bridle to him, I have often admired the wise conduct of Providence that matched us together."

age. In 1723, while yet a child, she had been ill with a fever; and, in secret devotional exercises, her father had been able to say, in humble submission, "Welcome, Lord, to come and pluck a flower in my family, if Thou hast use for her in the upper paradise." That flower, whom he describes as "my pleasant child Alice," was spared, brought to maturity, and continued to beautify the earth for the long period of ninety-four years.

The matrimonial relationship of James Scott and his young wife was chequered by one peculiar circumstance. On the 9th April, 1747, occurred the "breach" in the Synod in connection with the religious clause in the burgess oath then applicable to certain towns, and the result was a hitch in the career of the young couple at Gateshaw. A crisis had been impending in the Synod, and when the breach took place in 1747 Mr. Scott went with the Anti-Burghers, while Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, the father and uncle of his wife, took part with the Burghers. The Anti-Burghers, led by Adam Gib of Edinburgh, excommunicated the other party. When Mr. Scott left for Edinburgh, his wife necessarily remained in her quiet home at Gateshaw, where no tidings of the debates could be obtained, and she could only wait and hope for news. At length the familiar figure of the minister appeared on the banks of the Cayle. It was the scene of his daily walks, but on this occasion he was probably riding, and it may be imagined that his countenance was unusually grave. Tradition says that his loving spouse was at the door, but the husband was in no haste to speak. In a mildly interrogative tone she uttered the monosyllable,

"Well?" The grave and self-contained minister simply echoed the little word, "Well!" Unable longer to restrain her feelings, Mrs. Scott then bluntly asked what had happened. "Oh!" said Mr. Scott, "we have excommunicated them." "Do you, James Scott," asked the now indignant wife, "mean to say that you have excommunicated my father and my uncle?" He could not deny the charge. "Then," said Mrs. Scott, "I can no longer wait on your ministry." Little more was said on the subject. The session might have taken action on the two-fold ground of schism and insubordination to her lord; but there is nothing to indicate that any such step was taken. Mrs. Scott joined the Burgher congregation at Jedburgh, over which Mr. Smith had been ordained minister a year before. This difference of opinion is said to have produced no alienation between the minister and his wife; on the contrary, he was in the habit of seeing her off on horseback to Jedburgh on the Sabbath morning, and waiting to give her a hearty welcome home. An elder in the congregation, who came from the westward, was accustomed to meet the minister's wife on her way to Jedburgh, on which occasion he never "goamed" her; but in the afternoon, when he met her on the homeward journey, he respectfully saluted the returning wanderer.\*

\* It is traditionally said that Mrs. Scott was in the habit of spinning on the fast days appointed by the Gateshaw session to shew her disregard for them. In other ways she freely expressed ideas regarding the minister and congregation at Gateshaw, but sometimes met with a good retort. One day she was narrating a dream. She dreamed she had been to heaven, where she saw her father and her uncle Ralph, but did not see her husband. "Ah, but," said a listener, "Mr. Scott wad be farther ben."



For seven years Mr. Scott preached in the open air, summer and winter. Probably the reason of this delay was connected with some difficulty about a site. The circumstances in which the congregation originated had not been forgotten; and the lairds may have resolved that no such pestilent sect should find a local habitation in the neighbourhood. At length a site was obtained and a sanctuary built near the water of Cayle, in close proximity to the brae, and there Mr. Scott officiated during the remainder of his life. At a little distance behind the church was a house for the minister.

Few particulars can be obtained regarding the ministry of Mr. Scott. No minute of session nor any roll of births or baptisms has been discovered. That such documents existed there can be little doubt, as Mr. Scott was in the highest degree methodical, writing with exactness all he intended to deliver from the pulpit, including even his directions at communion seasons. Among many volumes of manuscript sermons only one fragment can be found which may be called a minute, and that is an "Act of the Associate Session of Gateshaw for a Congregational Fast," obviously designed to be intimated from the pulpit. It is dated the 26th November, 1759, and is very full and precise. Besides reasons of a more public nature for having a fast, there are mentioned "many grounds of controversy with such as profess to be witnesses for Him, particularly in this congregation, that as some of them have been guilty of gross acts of immorality, particularly uncleanness, not only fornication, but adultery itself, and some of them are giving offence by promiscuous dancing." That his

ministry was not without trials may be inferred from the fact that, while lecturing through the gospel of John, he interjects a discourse on Ephesians v. 7 and following verses, concerning keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, in which he deals with what appear to have been prevailing errors. Some are mentioned who neglect ordinances because "they profess to know as much as the minister can teach them, and others who maintain that they can read as good doctrine at home on the Sabbath as they could hear preached." But he says "they might need fresh excitement, and though ministers might not be able to be instructors, yet surely they might be their remembrancers, and excite them to that duty which they know already perhaps better than they practise it."

Some idea regarding the sacramental services may be learned from an intimation made on the preceding Lord's day:—"There are a few things I have to advertise you of with respect to the work we have in view on the ensuing Sabbath. It is proposed that public worship should begin about half-an-hour after nine o'clock; and let none come too soon to the place of worship. Such as have their ministers here will be served with tokens by them; such as have elders will be served by them; and such as have neither minister nor elders here will be served upon sufficient attestation. It is expected that you will, on this occasion, extend your charity: this is the more necessary in regard we have no other fund for defraying the expense of the occasion. It is hoped that the members of the congregation will be kind and hospitable to strangers. And, on the other hand,

strangers are desired to behave themselves soberly and Christianly in their quarters ; and it is expected that such as are in ability will not grudge to travel two miles or some more for quarters, that those who are near may not be burdened. You are exhorted to beware of treading upon the standing corn in coming to or going from the place of worship. Take care that your good be not evil spoken of. Communicants are to enter to the tables at the west end, and remove from them at the east ; and none are to sit down at the tables till they be fenced."

The tables were fenced with great solemnity. "We are now," he said, "to proceed unto the solemn work of commemorating and showing forth the death of our Lord Jesus in the Sacrament of the Supper. And, in regard the Lord's Supper is a sacrament and feast of the covenant of grace—a feast for the friends of Christ and not for His enemies—it is proper and necessary doctrinally to set a rail about this holy table of the Lord. The distribution of tokens doth not make the doctrinal debarring unnecessary ; for the distribution of tokens excludes only the ignorant and scandalous, whom the Church cannot admit, but all that have not a right to the Lord's Supper in *foro Dei*, or before God ; all unbelievers, all unregenerate persons, all the enemies of Christ ; yea, the principal design of the doctrinal debarring is to show who they are that have a right to the Lord's Supper before God, that so persons may be excited to a due care in examining themselves before they come. We intend not first to debar all and then to invite all ; but first to debar and exclude the enemies of Christ, and then to invite His friends.

Wherefore, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, who is both the Author and the Master of this feast, I, as one of His ambassadors, tho' most unworthy, do, in general, debar and exclude from this holy table of the Lord all profane and ungodly persons, all formalists and hypocrites." Then he proceeds to "debar and exclude all who do not study a willing and cheerful, steady and constant, universal and impartial obedience to the commandments of God; all who do not serve and obey God willingly and cheerfully out of love, and with a single eye to His glory; all who do not serve God with reverence and godly fear, with the dutiful and ingenuous fear of a child, but without the servile and offending fear of a slave."

Mr. Scott died on the 6th February, 1773, in the 31st year of his ministry, and was buried in the churchyard of Ancrum, his native parish, in which he had become a landed proprietor. During the course of his ministry he had never been laid aside from public work by indisposition, except on the three Sabbaths preceding his death. He had always been conspicuously attentive to the duty of preparation for preaching, and was no less diligent in visiting the families of his flock, in catechising, and in regular attendance on the courts of the Church. Personally, he was conspicuous for ingenuous simplicity of character, and for such unfailing regularity that it was said the people could have set their watches by observing the time when he went out for his daily walk. In 1774 a volume containing nine of his discourses was published by John Gray, Edinburgh. Some of these were prepared for publication by

himself; others, as appears from a brief preface, were "faithfully transcribed from his notes for the pulpit by another hand;" but no difference is observable, and no important correction was required in order to publication.

One student in theology connected with the congregation entered the Hall in 1740 along with Mr. Scott; and two became students in the course of his ministry. The first was George Murray, who, on the 2d May, 1744, was ordained minister at Lockerbie, but died in the 14th year of his ministry. Another was Alexander Oliver, who entered the Hall in 1756, and was ordained on 3d May, 1763, at Craig-Mailen, near Linlithgow. In 1807 he removed, with a portion of his people, to Linlithgow, where he died on the 1st January, 1812, in the 82d year of his age and the 49th of his ministry. The third was Alexander Pringle, who began his theological studies in 1772, the year before Mr. Scott's decease; and on the 14th August, 1777, was ordained minister of the North Church, Perth, where he had a long and distinguished career.

It might have been interesting to know some additional particulars regarding the domestic life of a couple so peculiarly situated as Mr. and Mrs. Scott, but not much can be ascertained. Writing to his daughter on the 22d May, 1750, Ebenezer Erskine said, "I would be glad to see you here at our sacrament the second Sabbath and 11th day of June; and I am sorry I cannot invite your husband to come along with you. . . . I have many an anxious thought about your difficult situation, but rejoice to hear of your decent and Christian be-

haviour therein. The Lord knows how and when to deliver you." Mrs. Scott's father died in 1754, and a brother-in-law, Mr. James Jaffray, bookseller in Stirling, in 1756, after which an elder sister Anne, thus left a widow, came to live in Kelso, chiefly to be near her beloved younger sister. After Mr. Scott's death his widow removed to Edinburgh, where she joined the congregation of Bristo Street, then under the ministry of Mr. John Patison. To the close of life her old force of character was unchanged. A conspicuous feature was her attention to personal appearance, including elegance and even finery in dress. This was not uncommon with Edinburgh gentlewomen of a past generation; but the reason assigned by her when the fact was noticed by her minister was peculiar. Her body, according to scripture, was a temple of the Holy Ghost; and as such it should be suitably adorned. For her father's memory and for the office of the Christian ministry she had much veneration. Having heard a company of gentlemen discussing the worldly circumstances of ministers in terms such as she could not approve, the strong-minded matron said, with a dignified and decided air, "Well, you may say what you please concerning the situation of ministers, but let me tell you that a minister of the gospel holds a more honourable position than a minister of State." Her life was passed in great serenity, and during the last forty years of it no shade of doubt regarding her spiritual condition ever crossed her mind.\*

\* Referring to her prolonged life after her dearest friends had gone, Mrs. Scott is reported to have said, in a humorous mood, that her father and her uncle Ralph would be saying to each other in the celestial abodes, "Ailie's unco lang i' comin': I hope she hasna missed the road."



*Allie Scott*

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Equally satisfied was she concerning the providential supervision of sublunary affairs. When a French invasion was expected early in the century the subject was discussed in a gloomy spirit by a company of ladies, when she cheerfully said, "Come, ladies, lay aside your unbelieving fears; remember that the Lord reigneth." On the 13th January, 1814, at the age of ninety-four years and a half, Mrs. Scott died in Edinburgh, in the house of her daughter-in-law, Mrs. William Scott. The passage of scripture in the 5th chapter of 2d Corinthians, concerning the "house not made with hands," having been read, she expressed her absolute certainty of an immediate entrance, and, with a final adieu to earth and earthly scenes, she peacefully fell asleep.

Three sons were born to Mr. and Mrs. Scott. Ebenezer, the eldest, died in August, 1756, at an early age. William, who succeeded his father as laird of Ashieburn, died in 1807, in Edinburgh. Ebenezer, the third son, was for many years a respected medical practitioner in Dalkeith, and died there on the 27th April, 1828, leaving a married daughter and four sons, the eldest of whom was Mr. James Scott, accountant in Edinburgh, who died on the 5th March, 1830; but was followed in the same line by the late Mr. Ralph Erskine Scott, and now by his son, who bears the honoured name of Ebenezer Erskine Scott.

David Morrison, from the second congregation, Milnathort, entered the Theological Hall in 1767, and, on the 16th March, 1779, was ordained as the third minister of Gateshaw. Prior to the date of his ordination changes had come over the district, and

he lived through a period memorable in the history of our country. In and around the village of Morebattle there had been changes for the better. A new lord of the manor had granted leases of nineteen times nineteen years, and with this security of tenure the feuars had built more substantial and comfortable houses. Additional privileges were granted in the shape of small holdings. About 380 acres of land contiguous to the village had been occupied as two farms, at a total rent of £64 a-year; but, as the leases expired, this land was divided into portions suitable for occupation by working men. These pendicles, locally called "pilmuir," were twenty-six in number, the largest of them rented at £22 10s, and the whole of them at £230 a-year.

The inhabitants then numbered about 200, and they were active, industrious people. There were four weavers, who were employed in making into cloth the woollen and linen yarn spun by women in the winter evenings. Six were wrights or joiners, who were, doubtless, occupied in doing the woodwork of new houses, making such articles of furniture as were then required, including rocks, reels, and weaving looms, besides occasionally constructing a wooden bridge, and making rude agricultural implements. Some descendants of these village carpenters continue to maintain themselves comfortably in the same line, with the help of a little holding of land, besides the house, which is their own property. The same holds true of masons, of whom there were three then in the village. There were five tailors, who made long journeys among the hills, and worked in the houses of their customers,

getting eightpence a-day, with victuals; but there was only one shoemaker, most of the working men being able, with a little help, to keep themselves and their families in shoes. At that time none of the ploughmen, and few of the women servants, purchased their shoes in a complete condition. The shoes of the men, called *brogues*, were made of leather tanned from horse hides, and having only a single sole. It was customary for the purchasers to double and sometimes treble this with their own hands, for which purpose every working man was provided with a box of tools. The shoes were very clumsy, but cost little money.

Some of the villagers were day labourers, and facilities for building additional houses were welcomed at that particular time, as many small farmers and working people were ejected from the houses of their fathers by the tendency toward large farms that had now begun. The leisure hours of tradesmen and others were occupied in cultivating their little crofts; others rented land sufficient to maintain one or two horses, and were useful for doing any necessary work in the village, besides carting coals or lime for farmers in the neighbourhood. Many of them had cows, and women had part of their time usefully filled up with making butter and skimmed milk cheese. Much time was occupied in spinning, partly with a two-handed wheel that Mrs. Morrison introduced to the district. She was Miss Christy Inglis, from the parish of Kinglassie, in Fife, and was married on the 19th November, 1779, to Mr. Morrison, by Mr. William Inglis, minister of the Associate congregation at Dumfries.

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In the rural economics of Morebattle and its neighbourhood great progress had been made. Turnip husbandry and the feeding of cattle had reached a high degree of excellence under the auspices of William Dawson at Frogden, in the adjoining parish of Linton. Lime had been applied to the virgin soil with amazing results, cultivated land on the farm was kept in good heart with abundance of manure, crops were kept scrupulously clear of weeds, and the farm-house, offices, and feeding-sheds were skilfully constructed and admirably arranged. The Clifton estate, then owned by Mr. Pringle, an Edinburgh lawyer, was very carefully and methodically managed. A rotation of crops, extending over five years on some of the farms, had been introduced, and the pasturing of grass land was all under strict regulation. In the remote district of Mow Mr. James Robson, from England, had leased Belford, a farm conspicuous for "high, rough, and exposed ground," where he was proceeding to improve the Cheviot breed of sheep. Of his place a farmer from East Lothian wrote in 1777—"The house and offices are remarkably good; and great was my surprise to find so clean and neat a habitation in the midst of mountains. I never saw more appearance of rural felicity," which was, in great measure, attributed to excellent household arrangement. The tenant paid more than £1000 of yearly rent; and, by great industry and skill, gradually improved his flock with respect to shape and wool, but chiefly in hardiness and capability to thrive on coarse herbage and on the most exposed hills. In the adjoining parish of Hownam there were about

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12,000 sheep, and efforts to improve the breed were in progress with fair success, but a notable feature in that parish was the diminution of small holdings, with consequent removal of inhabitants. About 1750 the number of people was estimated at 632; it had dwindled down to 365 in little more than forty years. In one instance five small holdings were merged in one farm, and, generally, the farms were reduced to about one-fourth of their previous number. In the same parish had lived some "small but proud lairds," all of whom had disappeared before the close of the century. Their lives had been loose, and a course of dissipation led to their ruin.

With regard to arable farming in the district the visitor above-mentioned said—"About Morebattle there are several farmers eminent for corn and store farming. It is surprising to see in every quarter of this country with what spirit and industry improvements go on. There is not a single farmer that is not ashamed to lag behind." The farm of Mosstower, in Eckford parish, had been let to a young man named Church, brought from England by the Duke of Buccleuch, and afterwards notable for an improved species of oat that was named after him. The farm of Crailing is in the district of Jedburgh, but not many miles from Morebattle. It was occupied by Mr. George Cranston, who paid £160 for 260 acres, and was described as "a judicious and accurate farmer." The soil was good, and after an application of lime, produced great crops of turnips. His crop of grass was sometimes 200 stones per acre, and oats produced seven times the seed sown. The cows were shorthorns, and the yield of milk averaged ten to

twelve pints per day for each cow. Labour was carried on with two horses and two oxen in a plough.

At the time when Mr. Morrison was ordained, or soon afterwards, the stipend of the parish minister was £160, including the manse and glebe. The schoolmaster had a hundred merks Scots, with a free house and kail-yard, besides fees, which were 1s 6d. for English, 2s for writing, and 2s 6d for arithmetic and Latin; but only about 25 scholars were in regular attendance. This little income was supplemented by a trifle for acting as session clerk, besides 4d for every baptism enrolled in the parish records, 2s 6d for each proclamation of a marriage, and a trifle for writing testimonials or certificates of character. He had £3 or £4 a-year for collecting poor rates and taking charge of money derived from John Moir's legacy, a fund left originally for the benefit of orphans, but afterwards applied equally to the relief of "infirm old people." Collections at the kirk, which were generally very small, were distributed among occasional poor.

In connection with the parochial economy some account may be given of the legacy above mentioned. At a meeting of heritors on the 20th October, 1756, which had been called by intimation from the pulpit—present, Robert Pringle of Clifton, Esq.; Mr. John Scott, factor for Mr. Nisbet of Dirlton; Colonel Scott of Horsliehill; and Andrew Moir of Otterburn—it was intimated a letter had been received from Fort George, East Indies, bearing that John Moir,\* carpenter to

\* John Moir was a son of Thomas Moir of Otterburn, in the parish of Morebattle, representative of the ancient family of Mow, which was the original form of the name. In the Register of Sasines is a special

the East India Company, had bequeathed his whole estate to the heritors of Morebattle for certain specific purposes. First, his father, Thomas Moir of Otterburn, was to have the interest during his life; and, next, the same was appointed for the support, maintenance, and education of real poor and indigent orphans belonging to the same parish, "and none else, for ever." The will was duly registered at Jedburgh, and on the 14th September, 1758, a meeting of heritors was held, at which were present John Scott, factor for Robert Scott of Horsliehill, Thomas Moir of Otterburn, Andrew Frain of Dean-

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service of "John Mow, now of that ilk, to the late John Mow of that ilk" his father, in the £20 lands of Mow, with tower, fortalice, &c., the lands having been in non-entry, and occupied by the persons following since the death of the said John Mow, elder, in the year 163—,—namely, those parts of Mow called Colroust, Mowtoun, and Mill of Mow, in the hands of Adam Bell of Colroust, in virtue of disposition by said deceased John Mow; and the rest of the lands called Newtoun and Mowmaynes, in the hands of the King. Expede at Jedburgh before Sir William Douglas of Cavers, Knight, Sheriff Principal of Roxburgh, on 21st December, 1636." In a valuation roll, dated 1643, Mr. William Moir appears as possessing the two-merk land of Clifton, rated at £42 a-year, besides lands in Morebattle and Otterburn worth £210, teinds in Whitton £200, and teind of Nether Tofts £33 6s 8d—a total of £485 6s 8d, of which £12 yearly was contributed to the minister's stipend. As witness to a special service in 1650, John Mow is described as "brother-german to Mr. William Mow of Otterburn." On 25th April, 1671, there was a general service of Thomas Moir (the name now appearing in its altered form) to his father, Mr. William Moir of Otterbourne; and, in 1678, his valuation was £406 13s 4d, including £113 for the teinds of Whitton, £69 for the Templehall, and £224 13s 4d paid by Gilbert Elliot, Esq., for Otterburn. Before 1709 the last link between the family and the lands of Mow had been severed, for in that year there was a special service of Francis Scott of Horsliehill to his father, Robert Scott, of same place, in various lands, including Belford, formerly called Mowtown, with the mill of Mow, &c.

brae, and William Ker of Gateshaw. The Rev. Mr. Chatto reported a communication regarding the legacy, which would amount to £1317 19s 11d. A letter was read from Mr. Pringle of Clifton suggesting that the money be lodged in the Bank of Scotland at Edinburgh, and it was agreed to do so "till proper hands be sought for lending out the money on proper security, in terms of Mr. Moir's settlement." It was afterwards ascertained that the Bank would allow no interest unless the money were lodged for twelve months, but as Mr. Scott of Belford, factor for Mr. Pringle of Clifton, offered to take the cash on heritable security at four per cent. interest, payable at Whitsunday and Martinmas yearly, the offer was accepted.

On the 9th May, 1759, the heritors met to consider the state of the poor, and the sum required was found to be 13s 2d sterling per week. An assessment was imposed for the months of May, June, and July, one half payable by the tenants. At another meeting on the 1st August "the heritors, finding that there is now a half-year's interest due on the money in Clifton's hands," are of opinion that proper relief should be given out of the fund to the orphans, the amount required being 12s weekly. At the same time Mr. Chatto was appointed factor to the trust. Very soon the money was diverted from the purpose to which it was destined, for on the 3d April, 1760, a meeting of the "heritors and kirk session" was held to consider the state of the poor, at which Mr. Chatto submitted a financial statement. It appeared that he had paid to the overseers enough to satisfy the wants of the orphans till Lammas next, and still had a



balance on hand. Other four were added to the list, getting\*9d to 1s each per week. At the same time a list of "the poor of the parish standing in need of supply" was made up, and "the heritors observing that there is a balance in the factor's hands arising from his account of the management of the orphans' fund after supplying the orphans on the roll, which will be sufficient for answering the provisions in the following list, authorise the factor to pay in to the overseers wherewith to answer the said pensions, which are to be continued till August next." Thus began the practice of diverting the funds from the object specified by the testator, a process that was continued in many subsequent years.

In 1762 an additional sum of £243 sterling was received from John Moir's executors, and was lodged with the capital sum in Clifton's hands. Next year Mr. Chatto was instructed to pay the overseers at the rate of 18s 7d weekly from Lammas till Candlemas for the orphans, and 15s 2d for "the aged poor," all out of John Moir's legacy. The interest on the money was raised to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in 1772, and at the same time the claims of the orphans were more strictly scrutinized, so that a larger sum was year by year available for the ordinary poor. In 1780 the total amount required for the half-year was £34 10s 10d, of which only £7 3s was for orphans. The interest on invested money was £34 5s  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d, which nearly covered the amount required for both classes. The sum allowed to orphans in May, 1782, was only £5 4s, and for ordinary poor £12 19s 11d in the half-year.

Connected with this legacy and its administration,

some particulars indicated in the minutes illustrate the vicissitudes of families. John Moir, who left the money for the orphans, was a son of Thomas Moir of Otterburn, in the parish of Morebattle. In 1643 Mr. William Moir was a proprietor, with a total income of £485 6s 8d a-year. The proprietor in 1678 was Thomas Moir, whose valuation was £406 13s 4d, including £113 for the teinds of Whitton, £89 for the Templehall, and £224 13s 4d paid by Gilbert Elliot, Esq., for Otterburn.

Had Thomas Moir survived his successful son John he would have been entitled to a life-rent of the money made in the East Indies, but he did not get any such benefit. He was succeeded by Andrew, and then followed Thomas Moir, the scapegrace who, as "younger of Otterburn," had given trouble to Mr. Christie and his session. In 1767 the name of Thomas Moir has disappeared from the list of heritors, but no mention is made of the family till ten years afterwards, when, out of the orphan fund, there was granted £5 to "the children of a certain family," described next year as "the family of a deceased heritor," and afterwards as "Mrs. Moir and family." A "foundling" named John Moir was, by arrangement with the heritors and kirk-session of Morebattle, taken into the house of John Waldie of Hendersyde, near Kelso, as a servant; and, on the 9th November, 1786, a donation of ten shillings was allowed to "Christian Moir, who calls herself daughter of the late Thomas Moir of Otterburn, to bear her expenses to Edinburgh, as she cannot be admitted on the roll of this parish." So the "wild oats" sown by "Thomas Moir, younger of Otterburn," yielded in

various directions a full crop of unhappiness. Other illustrations of mutable fortune appear about the same time. Henry Leck, tenant in Whitton, sat with the heritors in 1778, representing his landlord, Sir John Riddell of Riddell, Bart.; but in 1781 and following years grants of £2 and £2 10s in the half-year were allowed to "Henry Leck and family;" also £4 to the widow and family of Mr Davidson in Hownam.

While the heritors were thus dealing with the legacy a marked deterioration is observable in the condition of the Parish Church. Minutes of session meetings are few and brief, the minister's time seeming to be occupied chiefly with the duties of his factorship and meetings of the heritors. About 1810 the church collections averaged 1s 3½d per week, though it should be mentioned that it was now sterling money. On rare occasions they mounted up to 3s 6d; and on the 25th December, 1811, a collection for making a bridge across the Cayle, opposite Tofts, mounted up to £1 6s 2½d. In 1832 there was only one elder, and the minister of Yetholm was appointed by the Presbytery to aid in constituting a session for necessary business. Those were times when the ministers did not care though all the people went to the meeting-house, provided none of the stipend went with them.

At length the light which had been gradually penetrating many dark places found an entrance into the chamber of heritors in the parish of Morebattle. On the 12th May, 1847, "the attention of the meeting was called to the will of the late John Moir, Esq., in virtue of which there is just now

annually collected the sum of £60 of interest; and it having been stated that doubts have arisen as to the proper mode of administering the said interest, Mr. Wilson is instructed, with the assistance of the Rev. Joseph Thomson, to prepare a memorial detailing the circumstances connected with the grant and the application of the interest, and to lay the same before George Graham Bell, Esq., advocate, for his advice and instruction." The opinion was submitted on the 1st November, but consideration was delayed till the 10th January, 1848, when it was agreed—

(1.) "That the interest arising from Mr. Moir's legacy shall in future be kept separate and distinct from the other parochial funds, and that all accounts relating to the said interest shall be kept under the head of Moir's Orphan Fund.

(2.) "That the said interest shall, in terms of the bequest, be applied solely to the support, maintenance, and education of the poor and indigent orphans belonging to the said parish of Morebattle, and accordingly that the said interest shall, in the first place, be applied to the support and maintenance, and, secondly, to the education of the said orphans, such education embracing all the branches ordinarily taught in the parochial school of Morebattle, and also Latin and Mathematics, as the funds will permit.

(3.) "That if the said interest shall in any year be more than sufficient to answer the above purposes, the residue shall be deposited in a bank for the benefit of orphans in after years.

(4.) "That Mr. John Swanston, schoolmaster, be appointed treasurer, with power to uplift and discharge the interest arising from the said bequest."

At the time when better houses were built in the village a site was obtained there for a meeting-house, together with a manse, stables for the horses of members coming from a distance, and likewise a good garden and green; and in the summer of 1780 a removal was effected from Gateshaw to Morebattle. On the 21st May that year the communion was dis-

pensed at Gateshaw for the last time, and, after service on Monday, the work of demolition was begun. Before the end of summer the removal was finished, and the meeting-house at Morebattle was opened in the autumn by the Rev. Alexander Pringle of Perth. It was simply a change of site, for the roof and internal wood-work were all utilised. The roof was very substantial, and remained with no change, except very slight repairs, for ninety years afterwards. Till 1866 the congregation sat in the stiff, square seats which had been often packed with the sturdy Seceders at Gateshaw Brae, and the old meeting-house remained substantially in its original condition.

The session records during the ministry of Mr. Morrison are so full as to reflect fairly the character of the congregation and the district. On the 20th March, 1779, the first meeting was held, when there were present John Bennet, John Gray, William Davidson, Robert Blackhall, Andrew Craig, and James Hope. All the time was occupied with devotional exercises, except that Robert Blackhall was appointed session-clerk. The first business meeting was held on the evening of Sabbath the 23d April, when "John Scott, in the parish of Hownam, compeared for being married by one of the Burgher ministers." Being "free in his acknowledgments of having deviated from his profession in that step, and the session finding some alleviating circumstances in his case, they unanimously agreed to dismiss the affair with an admonition, and he was admonished by the moderator accordingly." A similar case came before the session on the evening of Sabbath the 25th

June, and was treated in like manner. On the evening of Monday the 24th April a meeting was held for "prayer and conference," and after "the ordinary time" thus spent, James Hope, ruling elder, was appointed to attend the meeting of Synod on the 2d May following. The session met again on the evening of Sabbath the 30th April, when "Alexander Hunter compeared to give in his accession to the Judicial Testimony." Having satisfied the session as to his knowledge concerning the Testimony, and declared his adherence to a covenanted work of Reformation, and his readiness to be taken under the inspection of that Associate Session, in subjection to the Associate Synod, he was admitted a member of the congregation.

Another meeting was held on the evening of Sabbath the 21st May, when "Andrew Telford compeared for his irregular conduct in leaving the Testimony by attending Mr. Robert Young, who preached at his own hand, in opposition to the Associate Synod's suspension." Having freely acknowledged his sin and instability, and promised through grace to adhere to the Testimony in future, he was admonished by the moderator, and exhorted to greater stability. On the evening of Sabbath the 25th June, Alison Cramond was admonished for having heard Mr. Young preach at Kelso; and on Saturday the 1st July Agnes Wilson, Janet Wilson, Janet Gray, and John Bell were admonished for hearing "the Anti-Government ministers preach at Eckford Moss."

The session in those days did not meet always in one place; and on the 28th July there was a meeting

at Eckford Mill, when Thomas Balmer, senior, John Brown, senior, Stephen Balmer, Thomas Balmer, junior, John Oliver, William Stobbs, Robert Wilson, and Isobel Davidson were admonished for "hearing the Anti-Government ministers at Eckford Moss;" and at Jedburgh on the 12th August other two members were admonished for the same offence.

The sin of hearing the Burgher ministers was regarded as specially heinous. On the 21st April, 1776, "compeared Adam Redpath for hearing the Burgher minister on the Lord's day at Coldstream." The session finding that he had been before them some years previously for the same offence, dealt closely with him. He declared that it had been matter of great sorrow and grief to him, freely acknowledged his sin and scandal therein, and declared his resolution through grace to be more steadfast to the principles of a covenanted Reformation in time to come. The session, considering that this was his second offence of the same kind, and that he had a good measure of knowledge regarding his principles, unanimously agreed that he should be rebuked for such sin and scandal, which was done accordingly. A month afterwards, on the 20th May, "compeared Mary Elliot, who had been formerly in communion with the Secession body of Anti-Burghers, but by means of her husband, who is a Burgher, had been led away from her former profession, and joined the Burghers." She declared before the session that her apostacy in that step had been very heavy to her for some time past, and that she had entirely given over hearing and adhering to the Burghers by returning some time ago to her former profession. Being asked

if she had joined in the bond for the renovation of our covenants before her apostacy, she declared that she had, and that the breach of her solemn engagements therein had been very heavy to her. The session, after other questions had been asked and answered, being so far satisfied concerning the genuineness of her profession of repentance, agreed to dismiss the affair with a rebuke, which was administered accordingly by the Moderator.

On the 25th February, 1776, eleven months after the ordination of Mr. Morrison, the first instance of immorality came before the session. Thomas Hall, in the parish of Hownam, admitted his guilt, and confessed that he had joined in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper afterwards at Kelso, which he considered to be an aggravation of the sin. It was agreed that he appear before the congregation on the first Sabbath of March, and be publicly rebuked; and at a subsequent meeting on the 17th of that month the session were so far satisfied with the evidences of his penitence, that they appointed him to appear and be publicly absolved.

Two months afterwards "compeared Robert Thomson for being overtaken once with drunkenness;" but the session "finding that snares had been laid for him, and that he had no habit of it, dismissed the affair with an admonition."

On the 1st of June the same year, being the Saturday before the communion, "compeared Isobel Hog for hearing in the Established Church." Finding that she had been ensnared into it, the session dismissed her with an admonition. On the same day "compeared Jean Potts," charged with having



countenanced the dispensation of baptism by a minister of the Established Church, and also with having engaged in promiscuous dancing. Having professed sorrow for her transgressions, and promised to abstain from similar practices in future, she was dismissed with an admonition. A second offence in the matter of "promiscuous dancing" usually brought a rebuke by the moderator.

Writing in 1799, the Rev. James Rutherford, minister of Hownam, mentions Gateshaw, "where there has been, from the beginning of the Secession, a meeting-house of the wildest kind of Seceders, the Anti-Burghers, who are zealous in disseminating their principles, not supposed very favourable to morals and true piety." What gave rise to such a supposition it is not necessary to inquire; no such notion is countenanced by a case which came before the session in 1775, and is worthy of notice here. The Moderator submitted a demand for a certificate by John Oliver, who had left the congregation four years before in circumstances at least doubtful in character. After reasoning, it was agreed to give him a certificate as follows:—"These certify that John Oliver, presently vintner in Kelso, removed out of this congregation upwards of four years ago, under the scandal of defrauding several of his creditors, without ever to this day giving any satisfaction to them or to this congregation, where this offence was committed."

The congregation did not contain any of the rich and the noble; indeed, the minister of Hownam tells with satisfaction, toward the close of the century, that they had only one small farmer from his parish; but there were many excellent people whose descend-

ants became farmers, or went out to fill even more important offices in the world. Several, in Mr. Morrison's time, became ministers of the gospel. Robert Culbertson entered the Theological Hall under Professor Archibald Bruce of Whitburn in 1787; and, on the 1st September, 1791, was ordained minister of the Leith congregation now located in St. Andrew's Place. Some of his sermons, preached on public occasions, such as the deaths of the Princess Charlotte and King George III., were published; and a course of Lectures on the Book of Revelation, in two volumes, had a good run of popularity. Contemporary with him was Robert Wilson, who, on the 28th May, 1792, was ordained minister at Ayton, in Berwickshire. John Robson became a student in 1789, and, on the 14th December, 1796, was ordained at Cupar as minister of the congregation now called Bonnygate Church. His father was a shepherd, one of that admirable class for which the Cheviot hills have always been conspicuous, and who formed a marked element in the Morebattle congregation. Of him it was said in a biographical notice of his son that "by unfeigned piety, modest, inoffensive manners, and strict fidelity in discharging the duties of his station, he secured the respect of his employers, as well as the affectionate regards of his relatives and neighbours." A son of Mr. Robson became the Rev. John Robson, D.D., minister at Lasswade, and for many years afterwards the greatly-respected pastor of Wellington Street congregation, Glasgow. Two grandsons are now in the ministry, and a third is one of the legal advisers of the United Presbyterian Church.

George Stevenson, from Morebattle congregation, began his theological course in 1791, and in 1797 was ordained as a minister at Ayr. He was a man of ability, but so conservative in ecclesiastical affairs that he protested against the union with the Burghers in 1820; and his congregation afterwards joined the Synod of Original Seceders. Mr. Stevenson was one of the first seceding ministers who was made a Doctor of Divinity. Thomas Young, from the same congregation, was in 1812 ordained as colleague and successor to Mr. Morrison at Norham.

James Pringle was born in a higher social position than some others connected with the congregation who studied for the ministry. His father was tenant of Holefield, in the parish of Sprouston, a farm owned by the Duke of Buccleuch, rented afterwards at £400 to £600 a-year. It is close to the English border, and would be at least ten miles from Morebattle, with only very rough roads, hardly passable at certain seasons, but these were not then regarded as insurmountable obstacles. James Pringle was born in 1781; and his baptism is thus entered in the roll kept by Mr. Morrison:—"Holefield, April 26th.—Baptised James, son to William Pringle and Margaret Davidson; the parish of Sprouston." James Pringle became a theological student in 1798; and on the 10th October, 1804, was ordained minister of the congregation long known as Clavering Place, now Westmorland Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne. He died on the 8th March, 1866, in the 85th year of his age and the 62d of his ministry.

Another branch of the same family occupied the farm of Blakelaw or Easterstead, in the parish of

Linton, and there was born at an earlier period Alexander Pringle, who, in 1777, was ordained minister at Perth, where he had a congregation of 3000 members.\* At the same place was born, in 1788, Thomas Pringle, "son to Robert Pringle and Katherine Heatlie," and baptized on the 3d February. In infancy his hip-joint was dislocated by some accident, a fact which was culpably concealed by his nurse till it was past remedy, so that all his life Thomas Pringle was a cripple compelled to use crutches. Baptisms at Easterstead followed each other in rapid succession. There had been a daughter, Mary, baptized on the 8th December, 1785, and a son, William, on the 12th April, 1786, and, at the usual interval after the birth of Thomas, came a son, John, and a daughter, Isobel, together. All of them worked on the farm except Thomas, who, doubtless with the concurrence of the minister, was sent three years to the Grammar School at Kelso, and afterwards to the University of Edinburgh. He took to literature, and worked for a while as a clerk in the Register Office. He was described by Mr P. Gillies, in his "Memoirs of a Literary Veteran," as "a young man of excellent literary tact, and of most amiable disposition—mild, prepossessing, persevering, patient, and industrious;" but he was very unsuccessful. No doubt, the principles imbibed in the family at Easterstead and in the

\* Besides being a highly successful minister, Alexander Pringle was a voluminous author, and a book entitled "Scripture Gleanings" was planned and composed after the author was in his 84th year. In 1819 the degree of D.D. was conferred on him by Marischal College, Aberdeen. He was moderator of the Synod in 1821, after the union with the Burghers. He died on the 12th May, 1839, in the 87th year of his age and 62d of his ministry.

Anti-Burgher meeting-house at Morebattle hindered his success as a literary adventurer, for he could not help putting his heart into his work, and for his honest sentiments the world was not yet prepared. He became editor of *The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*, now known as *Blackwood's*, but differed with the publisher because he declined to become a Tory. In 1820 Pringle, with his wife and family, his father, two brothers, and several friends—in all, twelve men, six women, and six children—emigrated to the Cape of Good Hope; and, says Sir Walter Scott, “he might have done well there could he have scoured his brains of politics, but he must needs publish a Whig journal at the Cape of Good Hope!!” He could not “scour his brains of politics:” he could not cease to act and write in accordance with his convictions, whatever might be the result. On the 7th July, 1826, Pringle, with his wife and sister-in-law, arrived in London, without means, and with a heavy burden of debt. Through the influence of Messrs Z. Macaulay and Baxter, he was appointed secretary to the Anti-Slavery Society, and continued to hold that office till, on the 27th June, 1834, the slaves were emancipated. It was congenial work, in co-operation with friends whose convictions he fully shared, and with the consummation of their efforts his life not inappropriately, though somewhat prematurely, closed. On the day after the deed of emancipation had been published a crumb of bread had passed down his windpipe, which caused such a fit of coughing as to rupture a small blood vessel. This led to consumption, ending in his decease on the 5th December, 1834, in the 46th year of his age.

Robert Cranston, from the congregation of Howgate, entered the Theological Hall in 1807, under Professor Paxton. In due time he was licensed as a preacher, and called to Selkirk, also to Morebattle, where, on the 25th January, 1815, he was ordained as colleague and successor to Mr. Morrison. This venerable minister survived till the 9th May, 1818, when he died in the 81st year of his age and the 40th of his ministry. His son, Walter, born on the 6th April, 1778, had been for some time minister of the parish, while his father officiated as pastor of the Anti-Burghers just across the road. Once, at least, Miss Morrison went to hear her brother preach in the Parish Kirk; but, for so doing, submitted to an admonition from her father's session.

The early life of Robert Cranston was typical of many others who had become ministers in the same denomination. His parentage was humble, but highly respectable; his education was begun at the parental fireside. Along with other members of the household, he was expected, on the Sabbath evening, to give some account of the services at which they had been present during the day. The minister at Howgate was then Mr. William M'Ewen, whose son became minister of Claremont Church, Glasgow, and whose grandson is worthily following in the footsteps of his distinguished ancestors. The wife of Mr. M'Ewen was a staunch Anti-Burgher. Her husband was dead, and she was seriously ill when her son came from Glasgow on a visit. The venerable lady was in a comatose condition, and could not, or would not, answer the kindly inquiries regarding her state. It happened that the Duke

of Wellington had just died, a fact which was mentioned, but called forth no response. Somewhat vexed, but with a sense of humour not quite repressed even by the solemn circumstances, the son asked whether the Duke was a Burgher or an Anti-Burgher. The ruling passion asserted itself at this touch of the old chord. The dim eye showed a gleam of intelligence, and the reply was ready, "He was a Burgher, for they were aye loose in their admissions."

Robert Cranston's efforts at recollecting the sermon were more successful than those of "the minister's maiden," of whom a story is told. Her master was unmarried, and had no inmate of the house to catechise except the one domestic. He was long-winded in the pulpit, and had a custom of saying "but I must have done," while still adding something more. One evening the servant answered so badly that the minister asked, with a little irritation, "Is there nothing of what I said to-day that you can remember?" "Yes, sir," she readily answered, "ye said, But I must have done." From an early age Robert Cranston could recollect the text. Then he began to appreciate the difference between "heads" and "particulars," and soon could repeat them all. Having accomplished so much, he went on to remember part of the illustration, and could, after a while, repeat a third or a fourth part of the sermon. As a result of this continuous training there grew up a desire to write, commit to memory, and deliver sermons. The boy was allowed to follow the bent of his inclination, and became minister of Morebattle, where he lived and laboured more than fifty years.

Of a retiring disposition, Mr. Cranston took little part in public matters, but was eminently conscientious in the discharge of pastoral duties. Two days in every week were occupied in visiting among his people, and it was calculated that, apart from railway travelling, but including conveyance by gig, he had gone over space sufficient to have taken him twice round the globe. Four days weekly were occupied with preparation for the pulpit; and, with the work begun so early and conducted day by day, he was seldom in a bustle at the close of the week. He wrote and delivered from the pulpit more than five thousand lectures and sermons, besides more than three hundred delivered on special occasions; and he baptized nearly nine hundred children. His discourses were exceedingly methodical, neatly written, carefully committed to memory, and delivered with little action, but with quiet dignity and a plaintive earnestness that was very impressive.

Under Mr. Cranston's ministry the congregation continued to prosper. It included several farmers in comfortable circumstances, and many shepherds who were, in many respects, equal to farmers. Seven preachers connected with the congregation were licensed during his time. These were the Rev. William Stobbs, for many years minister at Stromness, Orkney; Rev. John Clark, formerly of Abernethy; Rev. Alex. Oliver, D.D., Regent Place Church, Glasgow; Rev. James Scott, Bath Street Church, Glasgow; Rev. John M. King, D.D., Winnipeg, Canada; Rev. Stephen Balmer, who went to the United States; and Mr. Hogarth, preacher. Connected with the congregation for a time was Robert





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Davidson, a day-labourer, who published some genuine poems, including one on the ordination of Mr. Christie.

Among particular events in connection with the congregation during the ministry of Mr. Cranston was the centenary commemoration of Mr. Hunter's ordination. The 17th of October, 1839, has been described by Robert Davidson, who was present, as "one of the loveliest that ever shone." The beautiful green hills that run with wavy outline out from the Cayle toward Primsidie were tinted with the withering fern that told of the waning year. The sun came forth in his strength, and, from a cloudless blue, made everything to glow with the mellow lustre of autumn. Three thousand people had assembled at Gateshaw Brae for the commemoration service, not then so common as similar meetings have since become. A sermon was preached by the Rev. James Pringle, and addresses bearing on the subject of the day were delivered by the Rev. Messrs. Cranston, Morebattle; Renton, Kelso; and Thomson, Coldstream. The sacred traditions of the place, the smiling countenance of external nature, the hearty unanimity of the great crowd of worshippers as they joined in the devotions, and the inspiring addresses by men venerated in their time, combined to make it a day to be remembered for a life-time; and, as the mild rays of the western sun glistened on the slopes of Hownam Law, straggling groups of worshippers took their homeward journey over hill side and mountain path, filled with much of the heroic spirit that had sustained the Covenanters and the Seceders of earlier times.

On the 18th of October, 1864, Mr. Cranston's jubilee as a minister was celebrated with appropriate services. The Rev. John Cairns, D.D., preached from Romans i. 16, and made suitable reference to the occasion of the meeting. There was a public dinner at three o'clock, when the Rev. Alexander Oliver, B.A., occupied the chair, and Mr. John Scott, farmer, Lempitlaw, father of the Rev. James Scott, officiated as croupier. In the evening, at 6.30, there was a tea soiree in the church, at which the Rev. Mungo Giffen, who, on the 19th January preceding, had been ordained as colleague to Mr. Cranston, occupied the chair. An address to Mr. Cranston, together with a purse containing £130 10s, was presented, in name of the congregation, by Mr. Richard Moscrip. A silver cake basket to Mrs. Cranston was presented at the same time.

Another event of some consequence in the congregational history was the opening of a new church. The old building was occupied by the congregation for the last time on the 7th July, 1866, when both pastors took part in the services; and on the 10th the new church was formally opened, in presence of a crowded congregation, by the Rev. Principal Cairns. In the afternoon there was a public dinner, at which the Rev. Mungo Giffen presided, and the Rev. James Jarvie, Presbytery clerk, was croupier. The proceedings of a memorable day were closed with a service in the evening. Tea was served in the old church, after which the crowds adjourned to the new edifice close at hand. The chair was occupied by Mr. Giffen, and addresses were delivered by the Rev. James Scott, the Rev. Alexander Oliver,

and others. Shortly after ten o'clock the meeting was closed with praise and the benediction, after which, in the soft twilight of a midsummer night, the great assemblage slowly dispersed, each little company threading its homeward way over the silent hills, hundreds of Christian hearts filled with thoughts the full solemnity of which can be realized only in those solitudes of nature, far from the crowded city, and where the atmosphere is not disturbed even by the distant hum of a passing railway train.

The long career of Mr. Cranston was closed with his decease on the 17th August, 1871, in the 87th year of his age and the 57th of his ministry. His wife, who was a faithful and worthy helper, was a daughter of Mr. Clark, farmer at Grange, near Gateshaw Brae, and a sister of the Rev. John Clark, Abernethy. They had a family of nine daughters. Mr. Cranston's successor was the Rev. Mungo Giffen, from Wishaw, who was ordained at Morebattle on the 19th January, 1864, and proved a great source of comfort to his senior colleague and to the congregation, but was compelled to resign his charge in 1889 owing to failing health.

## CHAPTER VII.

### STITCHEL CONGREGATION, 1741-1855.

FROM the date of Mr. Hunter's decease in 1740 till 1751 the congregation of Stitchel had no settled minister. They called Adam Gib, who afterwards became the great Anti-Burgher hero. He was called also to Edinburgh, and there, on the 2d April, 1741, he was ordained minister of Bristo, the only Seceding congregation then in the city. Adam Gib was a remarkable man, competent for work of a high class, but his strength was exhausted in a controversy of no permanent importance. While a student of literature, residing at Muckart, he had left the Establishment "because of the disgust he felt at the arbitrary conduct of the General Assembly toward the seceding brethren." When Professor William Wilson opened his theological class in 1737 Adam Gib was one of six students, of whom John Hunter was another, and William Kidston, afterwards of Stow, was a third. He was a most ardent promoter of the Secession in Muckart; and, after being settled as a minister in Edinburgh, he gathered in three years a congregation of 1279 members. In 1747 Mr. Gib was the great leader of the Anti-Burghers, but as a minority of his congregation, including the trustees of the property, took the other side, there was a litigation which lasted six years,

and came twice before the Lord Ordinary, three times before the court, and twice before the Sheriff, before it was settled. The controversy ended in Mr. Gib's ejection from Bristo Street, and the expenses must have been heavy; but, without much delay, the congregation had a new church erected in Nicolson Street, and there this theological giant laboured till 1788, when he died in the 75th year of his age and the 48th of his ministry.

The congregation at Stichel next called Mr. Walter Loch, who was also called to Haddington, but died before being settled in either place. Next they turned to Mr. John Swanston, one of themselves. While yet a student, John Swanston, a native of the Stichel district, had left the Established Church, and acceded to the Associate Presbytery. Having completed his course at the University of Edinburgh, and studied Theology under Professor Alexander Moncrieff, he was licensed as a preacher. Calls were addressed to him from Stichel, Urr, Dundee, and Montrose. He was appointed by the Synod to Urr, but refused to go, for which he was publicly rebuked. Called to Belfast and three other places in Ireland, he was appointed by the Synod to Ballerenny, but again declined to obey, and was ultimately settled in Kinross. In 1765 he was called to the church of Ebenezer Erskine at Stirling, but declined the call; and on the 18th May, 1764, his list of honours was crowned by an appointment as Professor of Theology to the Associate (Burgher) Synod. While assisting in the dispensation of the Lord's Supper at Perth he died suddenly, on the 12th June, 1767, in the 46th year of his age and the

19th of his ministry. A volume of sermons from his pen was published in 1773, under the editorial supervision of John Smith, then at Dunfermline, but previously at Jedburgh, and, like Mr. Swanston, a native of the Stitchel district.

Another object of attention was John Potts, and this effort, after some delay, proved more successful. A native of Kelso, Mr. Potts had acceded to the Associate Presbytery, and, in 1742, attended the theological class of Alexander Moncrieff. Having been licensed to preach, he was called to Dalkeith and Stitchel, but "the breach" took place while the result was still undecided. A majority of both congregations adhered to the Burgher Synod; but the calls were in the hands of Adam Gib, who refused to give them up, even though "demanded from him under the form of instruments." Meanwhile, Mr. Potts was appointed to supply the Synod's station in London, where he remained three years. His conduct was not quite satisfactory to the Synod, and he was repeatedly enjoined to return; but, like Mr. Swanston, he had something of the rebellious Border spirit, and did not at first obey the summons. Meanwhile, the people of Dalkeith had dropped their call, while a large body of Seceders in Kelso had been joined to Stitchel; and in 1751 Mr. Potts was ordained minister of this united congregation. In 1753 they were disjoined—Mr. Potts became minister of Kelso alone, and Stitchel was once more vacant.

On the 18th June, 1755, Mr. George Coventry, from the congregation of Mr. Swanston at Kinross, was ordained as the first minister of Stitchel in its capacity of a distinct congregation. More than



twenty years had elapsed since the first members had left the Establishment, but during that time they had enjoyed little more than two years of a settled ministry. Other congregations had been supplied by them with excellent pastors; but the people of Stichel were left to shift for themselves, with no congregation where they could conscientiously worship nearer than Jedburgh, more than twelve miles distant. On all hands they were beset with Anti-Burghers, who, possibly owing to the superior energy and masterful power of Adam Gib, seemed to be more fortunate in obtaining pastors. Thus a congregation at Earlstoun, called "the people in the west end of the Stichel community," had, in 1751, secured the services of Mr. John Dalziel, from Nicolson Street, Edinburgh; the congregation at Midlem had, as early as 1742, obtained Mr. Patrick Matthew as their pastor; and on the third Sabbath of every month there was service at Hume, conducted by the Anti-Burgher minister from Earlstoun. There was a congregation at Kelso and one at Norham, so that the field had become narrowed in various directions since the formation of the church at Stichel. Still, it was sufficiently wide for any ordinary pastor.

At the date of Mr. Coventry's ordination the tendency towards agricultural improvement had begun in Berwickshire, whence many of his members were drawn. Cockburn of Ormiston, in East Lothian, was the leading agricultural improver in Scotland; but Mr. Swinton of Swinton, father of the lord of that name, a gentleman of great ability and public spirit, had visited Ormiston, and adopted what he

approved of the new system. The whole of his estate was fenced, drained, marled, and brought to an advanced condition of fertility. Similar advancement was made on other estates, including Eccles, Lammerton, Blackater, Ninewells, Mains, Ayton, and Blanearne. About the year 1746 Lord Kames had turnip fields dressed and cattle fed with the produce on his Berwickshire estate. William Dawson and other farmers followed the example; and as the century advanced the face of the county was greatly altered.

The smaller tenants and the peasantry, among whom the adherents of the Secession were chiefly found, retained many of the old Scottish habits. Tenants of this class were regarded as feudatories of the old families, and were accustomed to succeed one another, from father to son, with unfailing regularity. They were generally representative of the Covenanters, most of whose habits they held with little change. Especially they continued to be of frugal habits, simple manners, and evangelical sentiments. Few farms in Berwickshire then exceeded five hundred acres in extent, and each farm constituted a little community, living in peace and comparative independence.\* The farm-house, with little

\* Tenants of this class did not at first fall in with the new-fangled modes of farming. In one instance a Scotch laird, full of theory but deficient in practice, was bragging to one of his principal tenants about his superior scientific knowledge, laying down with emphasis some chimerical notions about analysis of soils and manures, and closing up his long-winded harangue with the question, "Well, Sandy, what do you think of this?" "Why, really, sir, and please your honour," said Sandy, quietly, "I am as ignorant as the child unborn of all that you have said. My only scheme has been to make my farm dry, to make and keep it clean, to muck it well with good and clean dung, sow it at

windows in the upper storey projecting through the thatched roof, formed one side of a quadrangle, in which cattle were kept during winter, the other sides being occupied with the barn, stables, and other farm offices. Near at hand was a vegetable garden stocked with the pot herbs then in common use, together with some bushes of black currants, and possibly a few fruit trees. In the farm-house six or seven unmarried servants, male and female, were accommodated, and these, with members of the family, would make a household of fifteen to twenty persons, old and young.

The chief shepherd and one or two of the hinds occupied cottages, each with its little cabbage garden, and a stack of peats or turf for fuel. Generally, there were some cot-houses, the inhabitants of which were a sort of farm retainers, bound only to give their services in harvest and any other busy season, in lieu of house rent. The number of people thus subsisting on a farm of four or five hundred acres would be from thirty to fifty, who were all maintained on the produce of the land, but lived with great frugality, and were always industriously occupied, but not oppressed with labour. Farmers of this class, who were generally sober, virtuous, and

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the right time with principal and well liquored seed, keep the vermin off my corn, and take it off the ground when perfectly ripe. Indeed, sir, I have little more to say. Your honour has enclosed all my land; I will never allow a gap in my fence, or a filthy weed to be seen on my land. I like a can of good strong ale or cappy, but I hate whisky, and never loiter in public-houses. I am sure your honour will not be angry at anything I have said, as I am never a week behind with your factor at term time."

religious in their habits, took a parental supervision of their domestics, by whom this kindly interest was cordially reciprocated. Master and servant, mistress and maiden, had their meals together, worked together, and, after the labours of the day were done, assembled in the kitchen for amusement or conversation. At ordinary meals the goodman, as the master was usually called, took his place at the head of a large table, the mistress sitting on his right hand, the children on his left, the men-servants next, according to age or length of service, and the maid-servants at the bottom, one of them doing what was needful in the way of waiting on the assembled household. At breakfast and supper the one dish was "halesome" oatmeal porridge; the dinner consisted of broth, meat, milk, cheese, and butter, with oatcake or bannock made of pease and barley meal. Neither tea nor potatoes had come into use. There were two stated festivals in the year, the "kirn" at the close of harvest and a feast of oatcakes and cheese, with a moderate allowance of drink, at the new year. At these times abundance of the ordinary viands crowned the board; the hinds and cottars were all invited, and a portion was sent to any who could not be present.

Specially characteristic of these farmers in the olden time was the system of attention to religious observances. In the morning before breakfast the whole family assembled in the kitchen for prayers, and in hay time or harvest the hour for this exercise was between five and six o'clock. Again, there was a similar gathering before supper in the evening, when every member of the household was expected

to be present. The service, consisting of praise (usually two double verses of a psalm, and each line read out before being sung), reading the scriptures, and prayer, was conducted by the goodman, but in case of unavoidable absence, the duty was undertaken by the eldest man servant, and sometimes by the matron herself.

On Sabbath every one went to church, however distant, except such as were absolutely required to wait on the younger children or to tend the cattle. In the congregations of the Secession the public service began at eleven o'clock, and consisted of a preface on the psalm, a lecture, and a sermon, with singing and prayers, but no reading of chapters, and the whole was not concluded before two o'clock. A family who had to travel six miles on foot, as many did, was compelled to leave home at nine, and could not get back till four in the afternoon. Everything was done without hurry or bustle. The services in the meeting-house were long, but they were regarded as savoury and satisfying.\* On the road people walked in companies, discussing theological questions;

\* Any tendency to drowsiness was counteracted by frequent applications to the snuff box by the men and to the "bob" of mint and southernwood by women and young people. Ventilation was then little known, and in the close atmosphere of a full church with a low roof it was not always easy to continue wide awake. It was not unusual to stand up during the sermon when ordinary efforts were unavailing. Members exercised a supervision over each other. One is reported to have whispered to his drowsy neighbour, "Oh, man, how can ye sleep? There's a savour comin' frae that poopit aneuch to keep ony body frae sleepin'." Failing other appliances, a rebuke from the pulpit had a powerful influence. At an earlier period a class of officials, armed with long poles, waked up offenders with a more or less gentle crack on the head. From the nature of their occupation they were called the "nappees."

the services of the day furnishing material for discourse on the homeward journey. . It was not unusual to kneel together on the purple heather while one or other of them led the rest in prayer.

Having reached home and partaken of a late dinner, the household gathered round the master, who catechised the children and then the servants. Every one was expected to tell what could be remembered of the services at "the meeting." Then they were asked the questions of the Shorter Catechism, the whole of which were usually gone over in two successive evenings. The remainder of the time was spent in reading a sermon or in conversation regarding religious matters; and the evening was closed with family prayers.

These grave pursuits were varied by others of a lighter kind. Farmers were not oppressed with heavy rents, and had no ill-feeling with their servants. There was a time for everything, including innocent enjoyments. Spring and autumn were the busy seasons; but toils were encountered with alacrity, and at other periods the work was comparatively light. The making of peats and hay, the milking of ewes, sheep-shearing, dairy work, and the tending of flocks and herds occupied the joyous days of summer, but these were carried on with mirthful jocularities and much singing of pastoral and patriotic ballads. In winter a game at football was common; and the long winter evenings were spent in harmless mirth, combined with singing, story telling, and sometimes more serious conversation. Thus, with scarcely any books of amusement, with no games of chance, without the use of intoxicating drink, without ever

seeing a newspaper, these healthful peasants passed their time cheerfully and perhaps not less happily, on the whole, than their descendants do with many appliances then unknown. One well acquainted with the part of Berwickshire within the Stichel circuit at that time has said:—"The patriarchal simplicity of manners which, about the middle of last century, so especially characterised Scottish husbandmen, was calculated in a high degree to foster deep affections, and a sober, but manly, earnestness both of principle and deportment; and it may be fairly stated as one of the happy privileges of the Secession Church that so large a number of its ministers have sprung from this virtuous and valuable order of men."\*

Thomas Waugh occupied a farm of this class at East Gordon, in Berwickshire, about the middle of the century. The minister, Mr. Bell, invited him to become an elder in the Parish Church, but this he declined, partly "from a settled disapprobation of the violent measures in the planting of ministers in vacant parishes by lay patronage, which were at that time employed by the ruling party in the General Assembly." When the Secession occurred at Stichel he joined the congregation, and took part in the call to Mr. Hunter, and in the subsequent call to Mr. Coventry. His wife was Elizabeth, a daughter of Alexander Johnstone, a farmer in the neighbourhood, "a godly, modest, inoffensive woman," yet so self-possessed as to be able to conduct the family devotions when her husband was occasionally absent. Animated with the most tender regard for the welfare of her children, she studied by prayer, by exhortation,

\* "Memoir of the Rev. Alexander Waugh, D.D.," pp. 2-3.

by example, and even with tears to impress on the hearts of her children those principles which were the solace of her own heart and the guiding motives of her life. Thomas, the elder son, followed in the footsteps of his father, held for many years the farm of Caldron-brae, near Stichel, and succeeded so well as to be able to purchase the comfortable little estate of Laretburn, near St. Boswells.

Alexander, the second son, was born on the 16th August, 1754, ten months before the ordination of Mr. Coventry. From childhood he was dedicated by his parents to the Christian ministry. It was customary with many of these honest farmers to educate one son at least for a learned profession, and to this laudable habit the country was indebted for many professors in the Universities, some of the most eminent physicians, and particularly for ministers both in the Established and Dissenting Churches. The education of Alexander Waugh, not neglected at home, was carried on in the parish school of Gordon till, in his twelfth year, he was sent to Earlston, the schoolmaster of which, Mr. John Mill, had obtained a high celebrity as a teacher of Latin and Greek.

Alexander Waugh was regarded as "the most active, lively boy at the school, and the leader of all frolics." He was fond of adventure, and a great lover of nature. Often in the summer mornings he would be up early, and on appearing at breakfast would say, "I have been seeing foxey, and hearing the linnets." But underneath this love of nature and of youthful sport the principles of fervent piety were rooted in his heart. He read the scriptures frequently and devoutly, delighted in secret prayer, and joined with



some of his young companions in holding a prayer-meeting under the shade of an elder tree. At fifteen years of age he joined a fellowship meeting at East Gordon, held in the house of James Spence, an elder in the Secession Church, and the mode in which he was then able to express his thoughts furnished a good indication of his future eminence.

In 1770, when sixteen years of age, Alexander Waugh joined the congregation at Stichel, of which he continued to be a member till he was licensed as a preacher. Of Mr. Coventry he was accustomed to speak in terms of grateful and affectionate veneration. His conversation, his sermons, his prayers all manifested a large measure of Christian excellence. It seemed to afford him peculiar pleasure to communicate instruction to the young. He was given to hospitality, and, being in easy circumstances, was able comfortably to entertain ministers and young men preparing for the sacred office. In students he took a special interest, lending them books, directing their studies, aiding them with his counsel, and not hesitating to administer pecuniary help when that was needful. The quiet village where he lived acquired importance and interest as the scene of his pious labours and his works of benevolence.

Waugh, who began life in connection with Mr. Coventry's congregation at Stichel, was preparing for a distinguished career. On the 30th August, 1780, he was ordained as the first minister at Newtown; was afterwards called to Bristo Street, Edinburgh; and three times to Wells Street, London, where, in 1782, he was ultimately settled, and became one of the most active members of the London

Missionary Society. Even while engrossed with arduous labours in the metropolis he never ceased to remember Mr. Coventry, and, to the close of life, his enthusiasm was stirred by recollections of a Stitchel communion, with its preachings in the open air. In any moment of flagging energy his spirit was at once roused by any reference to Stitchel Brae; he longed to preach again from that tent at its base, and to see the hundreds of people sitting on the face of the hill above and around him drinking in with joy the glad tidings of salvation, or to hear good old Mr. Coventry "give as much sound divinity in one sermon as is now given in many volumes." If the preaching was grand, so was the music; and one of the psalms sung to the tune of "Martyrs" in such circumstances Dr. Waugh regarded as more thrilling than "a' the chanting, and a' the music, and a' the organs in a' the cathedrals o' Europe."

Peculiar incidents sometimes occurred at these field meetings. After the time of Mr. Coventry, the Rev. James Henderson, Hawick, was engaging in prayer, when a heavy shower came on, accompanied with lightning and thunder. Taking advantage of the circumstance, he pleaded that the influences of the Spirit might descend into the hearts of the hearers as the large rain drops fell on the thirsty soil. Then as the storm quickly passed over, and the sun shone with meridian splendour, he was equally ready to express gratitude and confidence.

James Hay was another of these respectable farmers, "a pious, sober, upright-hearted man;" his wife was Elizabeth, a sister of Alexander Waugh, "a woman of singular piety, prudent and industrious in

all her domestic arrangements," and ardently attached to her family. On the 8th June, 1770, James Hay was tenant of Ednam-Spittal, and had a son, named after himself, baptized by the Rev. Mr. Nicol, minister of the Associate congregation at Kelso. At Whitsunday, 1772, the family removed to Runningburn, of which a lease had been obtained for five years; and in 1777 the farm of Corsick, in the parish of Smailholm, on the south side of the Eden water, was obtained on a lease of fifteen years. This place was five miles north of Kelso, and three miles west of Stichel, where the family waited on the ministry of Mr. Coventry. Corsick was on the Mellerstain estate, and was partly arable, partly in sheep pasture. Times were bad, and prices of both grain and cattle were low on account of the American war. The tenant of Corsick, having applied in vain for a reduction of rent, dispensed with all the servants that could be spared, made every member of his family work, and economised to the utmost with a view to avert impending ruin. James, his second son, was put to herd the cattle; and, during four years, he was only one winter at school. Most of his spare time was occupied in reading, and, when agricultural prospects improved, he was sent to the Grammar School at Kelso, then under Mr. Lancelot Whale. By invitation the studious boy made a visit to his uncle, Alexander Waugh, who had been ordained minister at Newtown, but having no manse, was living at Caldron-brae, near Stichel, and, in accordance with his advice, it was finally resolved that James Hay should be educated for the ministry. In October, 1785, his father took him to Edinburgh, got him entered in the Latin and

Greek classes, found for him a lodging in Buccleuch Street, and so left him to begin the battle of life. Having afterwards studied theology under Professor Lawson at Selkirk, James Hay was licensed to preach; and afterwards became the Rev. James Hay, D.D., minister at Kinross.

The Christian life of the Stitchel congregation in the days of Mr. Coventry may be illustrated by some reference to a manuscript in possession of the Rev. Walter Macleod, Edinburgh, the use of which has been kindly permitted. Thomas Stobo, born at Stitchel in 1758, became farmer of Claydub, on the Marchmont estate, in the parish of Greenlaw, and died there in 1849, leaving some notes bearing on his life and religious experience. When about twenty years of age he went with his brother William to travel in England. On the Sabbath before leaving home he went with his father and his brother John to hear Mr. Coventry as usual. He preached from the words in Isaiah, "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." "That sermon," he says, "made some small impression on me, but as yet there was nothing savingly done." Travelling in Yorkshire, where he incurred some risk of being "pressed" for the war with America, he could not forget that sermon, and, returning to Greenlaw, he again waited on the ministry of Mr. Coventry. In very earnest language he describes the experience of his first communion, when Mr. Coventry preached from Psalm lxxxix. 2, "For I have said mercy shall be built up for ever."

In 1781 he got married, and was afterwards in the habit of going to communions at Kelso, Duns, Coldstream, and Stow. On one of these occasions at Kelso Mr. Nicol, who was then the minister, preached from 2 Samuel xxiii. 4, "And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth," &c., on which the good man remarks, "O! how I was made to rejoice in Him who is like the dew unto Israel, and as showers that water the earth."

Toward the close of the century "new light" began to dawn, but Thomas Stobo was one who preferred the old paths. About 1795 he says—"Our minister at Stitchel, Mr. Coventry, was by old age and infirmities unable to preach; and for this reason we had often young men sent from the Presbytery to supply our want, but many of them grieved me very much, for they testified their dislike of our Reformation principles both by their doctrine and their practice. . . . Mr. Coventry was much of my mind, for when I went to him to get a child baptized, a little before he went away from Stitchel (for he left us a short time before his death), we were speaking of the times and the evil of them, and he said he thought this was the time of the slaying of the witnesses. My brother John, who was one of his elders, went to see him before he went away, when he said to him that he dreaded our Professor was not sound, for the most of our young ministers were erroneous in their doctrine. . . . It was not long until that which we feared came upon us; for no sooner was Mr. Brown of Haddington dead and Mr. Coventry gone to his rest than they made it appear to the world what spirit they were of.

They soon began to complain of their consciences being burdened with compulsory measures in our covenants, in our catechisms, and in our formula for ordaining ministers and elders. They gave in a petition to the Synod to have their consciences unburdened, and soon got the majority on their side. They denied that the magistrate has anything to do with religion more than any other private person, and that our covenants are binding on posterity. These are new light principles. The congregation of Stitchel, of which I was a member, being vacant, we had the first ordination of this new way in Scotland. My brother John, myself, and other two opposed it in the Presbytery, but to no purpose, for they were mad upon their own inventions. This was a sorrowful day to me and some others."

After this they withdrew from public ordinances for about a year, when he writes—"Mr. Shirra, minister of Yetholm, heard what we had done at Stitchel on the day of the ordination, so he came to Greenlaw to speak with us about the great matters in hand; and we communicated our mind to each other, and were much of one mind concerning the backsliding courses of the day. We were also of one mind not to go away in any respect from the Reformation principles; so we said that if he did abide by the truth we would abide by him." They went to Yetholm on the 21st May, 1797, a distance of eighteen miles from Greenlaw. Mr. Shirra "stood alone for about the space of three years, till some of his brethren saw a necessity to bear testimony to the truth also. Mr. Willis in Stirling, Mr. Watson in Glasgow, Mr. Hislop in Shotts, and Mr. Taylor in

Perth formed themselves into a Synod; and thus we continued for a time, but our best days for the present were but sorrowful days, for the glory of the second temple was not like the glory of the first."

About 1807 some ill feeling arose in connection with the ordination of the Rev. David Inglis at Greenlaw, with which congregation the brothers had connected themselves. They alleged that the settlement was effected mainly at the desire of Mr. Nisbet of Rumbleton for a specific reason; but when the ordination was over they submitted to the majority, though not signing the call. In a fellowship meeting soon afterwards one member affirmed that Christ as mediator is not the object of divine worship, a doctrine which was controverted by Mr. Stobo. This was reported to Mr. Inglis, who, on the next Lord's day, said in his sermon that "they have ignorant heads and erroneous hearts who say that Christ as mediator is the object of divine worship. If I speak meanly of Christ it is as He is man and mediator." The session met after the service, when a discussion of the doctrine took place, and all, except Mr. Stobo, concurred with the minister. Two of the brothers shortly afterwards called on Mr. Inglis to discuss the matter, but obtained no satisfaction, and a second visit ended in a similar result, as "he would not allow that Christ should be called Lord or Jehovah in His mediatorial character;" and yet next Lord's day he called Him "Jehovah-Jesus." The brothers went to Mr. Shirra at Yetholm, but, finding he had invited Mr. Inglis to assist at the communion, they refused to participate. Mr. Shirra reproved them for meddling with such mysteries as the person,

offices, and relations of the mediator. As a result of the controversy, Mr. Stobo and his brother John were deposed from the eldership and debarred from communion in the congregation at Greenlaw. They carried the matter to the Synod in 1809, but Mr. Inglis denied having used the expressions attributed to him, and was exculpated by the Synod.

Two hundred yards eastward from the brae, and about the centre of the village, stood for generations the Secession Church, a plain, unadorned, low-roofed, rather uncomfortable building. It was erected before the meeting-house at Gateshaw Brae, Sir Robert Pringle having at once granted a site, so that Stichel had the first Secession meeting-house in the Border counties. In this humble sanctuary the ministry of Mr. Coventry was continued till the 30th June, 1795, when he died in Edinburgh, "his wonted heavenly and placid temper still beaming on his countenance." He had been twice called to the church of Ebenezer Erskine at Stirling, but remained to finish his life-work amid the romantic beauties of the Border-land.

The congregation next called Mr. Campbell, who was appointed by the Synod to Old Cambus, now Stockbridge, in Berwickshire. On the 14th July, 1796, Mr. Robert Greig, from Kinross, whence they had previously received Mr. Coventry, was ordained as their fourth minister; but he died in 1802, in the 29th year of his age and the 6th of his ministry. His successor was William M'Lay, from Kilpatrick Craigs, who was ordained in 1804, and died on the 3d July, 1844, in the 71st year of his age. Mr. M'Lay had a venerable appearance, a mellifluous voice, solid theological attainments, a good judgment, and a kindly



heart, which greatly endeared him to the congregation. Hugh Darling, from Dalkeith, was ordained on the 3d June, 1845, but resigned his charge in 1854, and proceeded to Australia. Next year Mr. David Cairns, a brother of Principal Cairns, from Stockbridge congregation, was ordained as his successor.

Of recent events connected with the congregational history the most notable has been the building of a comfortable new church. It cost £2000, was opened nearly free of debt, is very commodious, and has most of the accessories now generally considered necessary to the carrying on of congregational work. The new church was opened on the 8th May, 1878, when the services were conducted by Principal Cairns.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SECESSION AND RELIEF CHURCHES IN KELSO.

**T**HILL after the death of James Ramsay in 1749 there was no congregation in Kelso connected with the Associate Synod. Supply of sermon was granted for a time by the Anti-Burgher Synod, but the experiment did not succeed, and in February, 1749, the station was suppressed. Individual members, however, had joined the congregation at Stitchel, among whom was Alexander Mein, one of the elders who had left the church in October, 1739, because of Mr. Ramsay's violent speech in the General Assembly. Of Mr. Mein's departure there is no mention in the session minutes. James Ramsay had now been more than thirty years minister of Kelso, and continued to maintain unchanged his complete supervision of the parish. The communion was fixed for the 14th October, 1739, and on the 23d September the people were "earnestly exhorted to suitable preparation for that solemn ordinance." It was intimated on the same day that the elders would meet on several days during the week "to visit the rolls, as usual, for admitting people to the Lord's table." On the first Monday of October the session had "a diet of prayer before the sacrament" at four in the afternoon, when all the members were desired to attend. At that communion the collections amounted to £106 13s 4d,

being £17 18s 6d on the fast day, £15 17s 2d on the Saturday, £53 1s on Sunday, and £19 16s 8d on Monday. From that statement it would appear that the attendance was good on all "the preaching days." For special service on the occasion there was given £4 to Alexander Bell, church officer, 12s to Christian Ker, and 6s to John Handiside. These amounts were in Scots money.

On the 26th November thereafter a strong measure was adopted with regard to uncertificated strangers. The minister and session found that "notwithstanding all their care and diligence that none be allowed to be in the town or parish without certificates sufficient," and that "families or persons that are strangers unable to maintain themselves" should not have houses let to them or be hired to serve in families in this place, and also that "no single women should keep rooms or houses by themselves, thereby giving offence, and exposing themselves to temptation and scandal," the session had still "too much ground to be offended by practices of this nature." To hinder them more effectually the minister submitted to the session the draft of an Act, with which they were "well pleased," and earnestly desired that he would obtain for it the sanction of the civil magistrate. By this statute it was enacted that no feuar or house proprietor should set houses to poor families coming from a distance with no visible means of subsistence, nor suffer any such "indigent strangers" to remain in their houses after the term of Whitsunday next, under the penalty of twenty shillings Scots money; that any servant admitted to a family or to any service should produce a sufficient certificate within a month after admission,

or pay a fine of twenty shillings to the poor, and any person who employed such servant should incur a similar penalty; and that no woman, in particular no young woman, shall be allowed to live by herself alone in time coming, under pain of twenty shillings Scots to the magistrate. This Act was ordered to be read from the pulpit after divine worship in the forenoon; and, with a view to its enforcement, a special visitation of the town by the elders was appointed.

About 1743 it was found that elders were remiss in looking after the collections, and members of session were enjoined to attend more regularly at the church doors, both on the Sabbath and other days when there was service in the church, so that the poor might not suffer through their neglect. It was farther resolved that any elder who failed to be at the church-door in his turn should explain the cause of his absence at next meeting of session; and it was seriously recommended that if any elder were absent some other elder should take his place. Farther, it was agreed that such as collect on Sabbath days should visit the town in time of divine service, and go to suspected houses where idle and vicious persons are entertained that they may be brought and rebuked or otherwise punished according to their deserts. It was agreed that the elders who collected at the easter door should sit in Broxlaw loft to prevent abuse there by idle boys in time of public service.

The period of absolute rule by the kirk-session was now drawing to a close; for, on the 21st August, 1748, "The committee of the heritors and their doers

having enjoined the session of Kelso to exhibit to them, at their next meeting on the 29th August current, a full and complete list of all the debts, heritages, and effects belonging to the poor of Kelso parish under their management, with inventories of all the writings relating thereto, therefore the session presently nominated the following persons—viz., Bailie George Pringle, John Jerdan, Thomas White, James Brewiss, James Hood, William Thomson, Thomas Mein, and William Cunninghame, with the present treasurer, James Ormiston, and the session-clerk—as a committee of their number to inspect the whole papers that are documents of money or debts due to this session, for the use of the poor in the parish of Kelso.” After more than one meeting, at each of which Mr. Ramsay was present, a complete list of the documents was prepared, showing all the money due to the kirk-session of Kelso for the use of the poor as at the 29th August, 1748; and a certified copy was ordered to be left with William Ker, the town-clerk. The committee likewise ordered a good many bills for penalties, and some for debts otherwise due, which, after reading them and conversing about them, they found perfectly irrecoverable, many of the debtors being dead and others absolutely insolvent, to be burned immediately, which was done accordingly.

James Ramsay died on the 3d July, 1749, and on the same day the Presbytery held a special meeting, “that the elders of the parish of Kelso might have an opportunity of asking supply of sermon.” Two of the elders appeared and desired the Presbytery to take the case of their vacant congregation under their care, and grant such supply as they might think

proper. For the next Sabbath Mr. Thomas Pollock was appointed, to be followed by Mr. Walker, Mr. Leck, and Mr. Hog. Supply was afterwards appointed for August and September; but on the 5th of the latter month a meeting of Presbytery was held, at which Mr. Charles Binning, advocate, "waited on the Presbytery, and represented to them that my Lord Duke of Roxburghe, patron of the parish of Kelso, intending to present Mr. Cornelius Lundie, preacher of the gospel within the bounds of the Presbytery of Haddington, to be minister of said parish and Parish Kirk of Kelso, desired that the Presbytery would invite Mr. Lundie to preach before the congregation of Kelso." The Presbytery agreed to meet again in a fortnight, and to invite Mr. Lundie then to preach before them. He did so, and, at the same time, produced his licence and testimonials. He was then appointed to preach at Kelso on the last Sabbath of September and the first of October.

On the 10th October Mr. William Broadfute, factor to his Grace the Duke of Roxburghe, compeared, and gave in to the Presbytery a presentation signed by his Grace in favour of Mr. Cornelius Lundie, also a letter from Mr. Lundie signifying his acceptance of the presentation. There was likewise given in by Mr. Walter Ker, town-clerk of Kelso, a petition signed by "a number of heritors, elders, and heads of families in the town and parish of Kelso, craving that the Presbytery would proceed to the settlement of Mr. Lundie according to the rules of the Church." The Presbytery admitted that the Duke was generally understood to be patron, but represented that it did not appear from their records that any of his ancestors

had been accustomed to present ministers to Kelso ; it was desirable, therefore, that documents should be produced showing his title to make the presentation. A charter, dated 30th November, 1741, and given under the seal agreed to at the Treaty of Union, was exhibited ; the Presbytery was satisfied ; and the moderation was fixed for Thursday the 26th of the same month, Mr. Chatto to preach next Sabbath and make the necessary intimation.

On the 26th October the Presbytery again met, when the report of the committee appointed to moderate in a call was received. The committee had met ; the heritors, elders, and heads of families had been called and compeared ; and a call to Mr. Lundie had been read and laid on the table for signature. At the same time a petition had been given in to the committee by James Hood, one of the elders, entitled "The humble petition of the heritors, elders, feuars, and heads of families in the parish of Kelso to the Very Reverend the Presbytery of Kelso, or what committee of their number shall meet upon the 26th current, upon which the said James Hood took instruments." John Jerdan, another of the elders, requested that the committee should read and consider this petition previous to the signing of the call, "in regard there were some legal objections against the presentee." The committee, considering that they had no power to sustain or repel any legal objections against the presentee, did not read the paper, but agreed to transmit it to the Presbytery, and meanwhile proceeded with the moderation. Mr. William Ramsay appeared as mandatory for the Countess of Roxburghe, and the Rev. Mr. Park of

Foulden, proprietor of Easter Wooden ; Mr. W. Ker, town-clerk of Kelso, appeared for John Carre of Cavers, Esq., Andrew Bell, tenant of Spylaw, and others ; Charles Swinton appeared for Mr. Purves, a heritor ; and George Swinton, saddler, appeared for his father as head of a family. John Jerdan objected to any signatures being received before the call had been before some superior court of the Church ; but the objection was overruled, and the call was signed by those mentioned above, "as well as by other heritors, elders, and heads of families in the parish of Kelso for themselves."

Having heard this report, the Presbytery proceeded to read the petition which had been transmitted by the committee. The petitioners profess great concern at being compelled to take such a step, but they were animated by care for immortal souls, and "not a spirit of opposition, as is alleged by some." They admitted that a presentation had been given to "the reverend, but young, Mr. Lundie," and they did not dispute the legal right of the Duke to act as he had done, though they might have done so had they been influenced by a contentious spirit. They took the ground that Kelso was by far the most considerable parish in the bounds of the Presbytery, if not in the whole south of Scotland, and a congregation so numerous requires "not only a man of learning, but a man of experience, a man of weight, and known prudence." The petitioners proceed to say "our late pastor, of pious memory, was in use to comfort himself that "there was less division in his parish than in any other in the bounds," and they did not doubt that the Presbytery desired a continuance of this state of



unity ; but the settlement of Mr. Lundie would inevitably produce great discord and confusion, "to the great grief of many of the pious and godly in the parish." Not that they disputed the abilities of Mr. Lundie "as a young minister," or alleged anything against his moral character, for they knew little about him, but they had not confidence in his prudence. It was pleaded that the parish of Kelso had never been settled with a young, inexperienced minister ; and now, with many Episcopalians among them, and Seceders all round, nothing would prevent many from "falling in with errors and delusions except the settlement of an experienced minister." It was urged as a legal objection against Mr. Lundie that he had not qualified to the King in legal form when he was licensed to preach, and if he had done so recently it could only be attributed to interested motives. Any tinge of disloyalty would be a serious objection, considering the number of Episcopalians in the town. As to those who had signed the call, the considerable heritors were all non-resident, the elders who had signed were doers, or tenants, or otherwise dependent on the Duke of Roxburghe, while the subscriptions of "such as pretend to be heads of families were illegally procured" in the office of the Duke of Roxburghe's clerk, by his servants, and the town officials. The arguments employed were such as these, "Come, sign this paper: what need you care who is minister ? The Duke must have his will. This man must be minister whether you will or not, and why need you oppose ? Your opposition may hurt you, but can do you no service ; therefore come and sign." John Jerdan gave in to the Presbytery a long memorial

analysing the claims of those who had subscribed the call.

At this stage William Thomson, one of the deacons in the kirk, rose and *viva voce* charged Mr. Lundie with unsoundness of doctrine. This was admitted by the Presbytery to be a serious charge against a young minister, and it must be withdrawn, otherwise William Thomson must prepare a libel. Meanwhile, a committee was appointed to confer with the opposition, and it was farther agreed that a libel be produced. Not much came of the conference; but, after some delay, William Thomson compeared to substantiate the charge of preaching unsound doctrine. In the first count of the libel Mr. Lundie was charged with having said that "our abilities and natural inclinations lead us to God as our portion." This charge alone was found relevant; but, an explanation having been made by Mr. Lundie, the Presbytery expressed satisfaction.

On the 9th January, 1750, the Presbytery proceeded to a final issue of the matter. John Jerdan, skinner, still conducted the opposition, raising objections against many of the callers, and several of his objections were sustained. One of those who took part in the call was thus described:—"With regard to Joseph Ormiston, the Presbytery are well informed that though he is both deaf and dumb there is ground to believe that he has a sense of religion, and had once partaken of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, having been admitted thereto by the late Mr. Ramsay, minister of Kelso, and therefore the Presbytery know not how they can exclude him from concurring in the call of a minister as head of a family." Having

adjusted the roll, excluding such as had no right to sign, and arranging others in their proper class, the Presbytery sustained the call, and resolved to take Mr. Lundie on trials for ordination. On the 5th July he was ordained, the Rev. Mr. Ridpath, Stichel, preaching on the occasion. A protestation against the proceeding was given in, signed by seven elders and 214 members. It does not appear that Mr. John Jerdan, who led the opposition to Mr. Lundie, continued in connection with the congregation now in course of formation. He was charged by Mr. Jamieson, surgeon, with having several times heard a non-jurant Episcopal minister; and, though no appearance was made in support of the complaint, there is reason to believe that Mr. Jerdan drifted away to that communion.

The dissatisfied party, or the majority of them, applied for guidance to the Rev. W. Hutton of Dalkeith, moderator of the Burgher Presbytery of Edinburgh. A special meeting of the Presbytery was held at Edinburgh on the 3d October, 1756, when commissioners appeared, and presented a paper signed by 112 persons, craving to be accepted as seceders from the Established Church. They were readily received, but the supply of preachers being inadequate to the demand, were joined with the congregation of Stichel, over which Mr. John Potts was ordained as minister. As a place of worship the Riding School was purchased and fitted up by the congregation.

On the 6th February, 1753, the congregation of Kelso was disjoined from that of Stichel, when Mr. Potts, being allowed his choice, preferred to be

minister of Kelso. Three months later, on the 1st May, 1753, Mr. Potts was suspended by the Presbytery from the exercise of his office. While in London he had fraternised with Congregationalists, adopting their views regarding free communion, taking part in a fast day appointed by the State, and omitting to hold one appointed by the Synod, of all which he was summoned to give an account to the Synod at Stirling. Explanations resulted in "a patched-up peace," which did not long continue, and there was obviously a want of mutual confidence. In June, 1752, matters came to a crisis, and the occasion was a communion at Jedburgh. The elders had been distributing tokens of admission; and some members from Kelso were present, who reported that on the previous Sabbath their minister had said he was in favour of a mixed admission to the table, as was used by the Dissenters in England. A letter, signed by John Brown, minister at Haddington, John Smith, minister at Jedburgh, and five Jedburgh elders, in name of the session, was sent by express, asking to know the truth of this matter. Next day was sent a reply couched in somewhat lofty terms, and claiming Ralph Erskine as one who held the same opinions; but this was not considered satisfactory, and he was not only excluded from the communion at Jedburgh, but summoned before the Presbytery. Ultimately, Mr. Potts was suspended; and, in a pamphlet of thirty-three pages, besides a dedication and introduction, he then delivered his "protest against the Seceding Presbytery of Edinburgh" and his "appeal to the Protestant Reformed Churches." The dedication was to Sir Robert Pringle of Stichel,

to whose "impartial censure" Mr. Potts offered "these sheets," in which will be found "an antidote against Seceding regimen," and a miniature of those men with whom Sir Robert "once stood in connection." Obviously, Mr. Potts considered it to be quite unworthy of him and Sir Robert to associate with such "poor, silly, or subtile men." He had incautiously united himself with them "at an age so immature that he could not be esteemed a judge either of men or things;" but had got from them only "Jeddart justice and Coupar law," with threats of "suspension, deposition, excommunication;" and, finally, "to be delivered over, not to the physician of souls, but to the tempter thereof." In particular, he protested against the Presbytery of Edinburgh, because they had tolerated in him for a course of years a line of conduct which they now condemned "as contrary to the covenants, your act and testimony, and such like." He maintained that they knew five years before, when he was sent as a missionary to London, that he was in the habit of joining in worship with other Churches than that of the Secession, and yet when he came down to Scotland after the breach they had not, either publicly or privately, condemned his practice in that particular. No member of the Presbytery or Synod had ever taxed him with his conduct in this matter, excepting Adam Gib,\* "unto whose character and

\* Dr. Walker, in his "Cunningham Lecture" on "The Theology and Theologians of Scotland," says of Adam Gib:—"He is altogether a unique figure in that eighteenth century. He ruled his Anti-Burghers with a firm, strong hand; and I do not know but that an Anti-Burgher Synod was as difficult to rule as many a great empire: they tried rebellion once, but it utterly failed. A clear-headed man, with no

conduct in this particular I will do so much honour as to own he did severely censure me for it, both by word and writ; and if I had joined his Synod I knew I was to undergo censure for the same, as the brethren on that side of the question made no bones of declaring such conduct censurable, similar to their exorbitant principles upon other things." He had joined the Burghers, thinking they would be more tolerant; but now had discovered his mistake, and believed their forbearance at first had been only with a view to make proselytes. The matter ended in his suspension, after which he returned to London, and became minister of a Congregational Church, but died early.

The next minister at Kelso was Robert Nicol, also a native of the town. He entered the Theological Hall under Professor James Fisher in 1757, five years after Mr. Coventry, who was settled in Stitchel, and in the same session with Alexander Shanks, who became minister at Jedburgh. Mr. Nicol was ordained on the 30th September, 1761, having previously declined a call to London. He was an attractive preacher, and the congregation increased so rapidly in numbers and wealth that in 1779 they were able to build a church, described in the "Kelso Records,"

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imagination, plodding away in the old theologies—I should suppose a dull preacher save to persons of his own type—given to formulas, he had in him the elements of the enthusiast or the fanatic. He wrote, we are told, his first covenant with God in the blood of his own veins. Not without mellowness of soul withal: his elder brother was disinherited for bad behaviour, but the Anti-Burgher chief burned their father's will on his promise to amend; and his plan was successful. *Ultimus ecclesiasticorum!* I have sometimes been disposed to exclaim over him."—2d ed., p. 117.

1789, as "the largest and most elegant of any meeting-house in Scotland, the society being very numerous, and the congregation very wealthy people." On the 7th March, 1783, a newspaper, *The British Chronicle*, was started in Kelso; and in its columns on the 2d April, 1784, appeared the intimation—"This morning died here the Rev. Mr. Robert Nicol, minister of the Burgher congregation."

The third minister of Kelso was Robert Hall, of whom a distinct impression still remains in the district. He was born at Cathcart, near Glasgow, where his father lived on a farm that had been occupied by the family for several generations. Robert was the youngest of a family that included, besides himself, two brothers and three sisters. One brother, James, became minister of Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh, and for fifty years stood conspicuous as one of the most attractive ministers in a city noted at the time for able preachers. With sound erudition and fascinating eloquence he conjoined a remarkable nobility of disposition, a courtly dignity that would have fitted him to shine in any social circle, great wisdom in all the business of life, and a degree of piety and grace which eminently qualified him for the sacred office of the ministry. The same general features were observable in the younger brother, who had undoubtedly great capabilities and did much excellent work, but might have done still more had not some eccentricities of character acquired a gradually overshadowing prominence.

The parents of Robert Hall and his illustrious brother belonged to that excellent middle class who, in the eighteenth century, furnished a large propor-

tion of evangelical ministers. From their father was obtained the feu on which was built the meeting-house of Shuttle Street, now Greyfriars, Glasgow, the earliest Secession Church in the city, and for many years the most prominent. Their mother owned some land contiguous to Kirkintilloch, and presented the Seceders of that place with land on which to erect a church and manse. To his mother Robert Hall was indebted for early education and guidance, his father having died when he was only three years of age. After attending school at Cathcart and Glasgow, he served for three or four years in a cloth shop, with a view to mercantile pursuits, but his taste did not run in that direction, and he was sent to the University. There he studied under Young, Jardine, and Dr. Thomas Reid, whose instructions he greatly appreciated. In 1779 he entered the Theological Hall under Professor John Brown of Haddington, and, after the usual course, was licensed as a preacher. An offer of a living in the Establishment was made to him, as it had been to his elder brother, but was rejected with scorn. He was accustomed to say, "Had the living been a bishopric, sir, I should have thrown the offer back in their face."

The great acceptance of Robert Hall as a preacher appears from the fact that calls were addressed to him from Renton, Fenwick, and Eaglesham, as well as Kelso. Two candidates were proposed at Kelso, the other being John Dick, afterwards of Greyfriars, Glasgow, and Professor of Theology to the United Associate Synod. Even against an opponent so justly distinguished, Mr. Hall had a decided majority, but the settlement was not harmonious, and at least



a portion of the minority left the congregation. Those who continued steadfast found in Mr. Hall a faithful pastor, and so thoroughly evangelical that he was distinctively known as "The Gospel Preacher."

One sermon, published in Mr. Hall's life-time, gives some idea of his preaching power. It is entitled, "The State of the Heathen World Disclosed," and is a great missionary sermon, expounding in masterly style the theme that "of all human beings there are none whose condition is so necessitous and so loudly calls for help as those who are without the gospel." The sentiments are now generally accepted in the Christian world, but were received with hesitation seventy years ago, and in the *Christian Instructor* Mr. Hall's sermon was subjected to some captious criticism. To this the author replied tersely and emphatically in a long note appended to a second edition of the sermon.

About Mr. Hall many anecdotes are still current in the district, many of which are doubtless substantially correct. There is a story that he believed his mother's death was revealed to him in a night vision. The old lady was living at Cathcart while he was at Kelso, and he had not heard that she was in worse health than usual, when he dreamed that he saw a funeral procession at Cathcart, in which he himself was prominent, and his mother was seated on the dicky of the hearse. He slept again, and the dream was repeated a second and then a third time, with no essential variation. Convinced that something was wrong, he set out for Cathcart, and arrived just in time for his mother's funeral, which he could not have done had he waited for any regular communi-

cation, as the death had been sudden and travelling was slow.\*

Another night Mr. Hall could not rest, and felt an irresistible desire to walk out on the road toward Edinburgh as far as a toll-bar, fully a mile from the manse. It was midnight when he reached the place, and at that moment the door was opened by the keeper of the toll, who was a member of his congregation. Startled by the sudden appearance of the minister, the man asked what had brought him there at that hour of the night. "I cannot tell you," said Mr. Hall; "but I could not rest without walking out here at this hour." "Then," said the toll-keeper, "you have been sent to save my life. I had opened

\* Whatever may be the explanation of such phenomena, there are other cases of a similar kind authenticated beyond all reasonable doubt. Thomas Boston, while minister at Simprin, had a child born with the deformity called a hare lip, which was a great grief to Mrs. Boston and himself. When the child was three months old the parents left home to visit Mrs. Boston's relatives at Barhill and Ingevaar, in Fife, when, "in her sister's house on a morning, she lying a-bed after I had risen, dreamed that she saw the child perfect, the natural defect being made up, and extraordinary beautiful. This making impression, as it could hardly miss to do, we returned homeward as soon as conveniently we could. Arriving at Blacksmill, about eight or nine miles from home, in a little our hearts were pierced with an account that our dear child was dead and buried. After which we came home in great heaviness, and found that that very day and hour of the day, as near as could be judged, wherein my wife had the dream aforesaid, the child had died." An instance of an "apparition" in quite a different class of society may be cited from Lawe's "Memorials," edited by C. K. Sharpe. "After the battle of Killiecrankie, where fell the last hope of James in the Viscount of Dundee, the ghost of that hero is said to have appeared about daybreak to his confidential friend, Lord Balcarres, then confined to Edinburgh Castle. The spectre, drawing aside the curtain of the bed, looked very steadfastly on the Earl, after which it moved toward the mantelpiece, remained there some time in a leaning posture, and then walked out of the chamber without uttering one word."

the door to go out and commit suicide; but you have been sent to keep me from committing that great sin."

Mr. Hall remained unmarried till the close of life, not willingly, but because he was unskilful in the business of courtship. He admitted as much in his old days to a young friend who intimated his approaching marriage. Adopting the regal or editorial style, as his custom was, the old man somewhat plaintively said, "Well, sir, it is said there never was a silly Jockie but there was a silly Jenny; but—would you believe it, sir?—we made the attempt three times, and three times were unsuccessful." Doubtless, he was somewhat of a "cauldrie wooer," for on one occasion he employed a brother minister to inform the young lady of his wishes. As a not unnatural result, the fair one signified, not obscurely, that to her the bearer of the message would be more acceptable than the sender; and Mr. Hall was like the lame man at the pool, when another stepped into the happy state before him.

As sometimes happens in the case of bachelors with a tendency to eccentricity, Mr. Hall had a housekeeper with a local reputation in the same line. It is not denied that "Leezie" was devotedly attached to the minister, careful in attending to his wants, and very watchful of his reputation against any who might say a word in his disparagement. But she found his ways occasionally tantalising. She failed to make the minister comprehend the propriety of shortening the morning devotions on a day when she had a washing or other heavy work in prospect. He would rather sing a few additional

double verses of a psalm on such occasions, and Leezie was compelled quietly to submit. But when Mr. Hall went to his knees, Leezie would sometimes quietly withdraw to her work. On one occasion she managed to pay him back in another way. He had expressed displeasure on account of some rappings at the doors and windows late in the evening, and gave a general order that in future no attention should be paid to such noises after a certain specified hour. It happened soon afterwards that the minister sauntered out after evening worship was over, and, soothed by the cool evening air or lost in meditation over some difficult text, did not observe the lapse of time. He returned to the manse after the hour which fixed the limit of nocturnal visits, and found that Leezie, in accordance with her usual attentive carefulness, had barred the doors. The minister knocked, and then shouted, but in vain. This faithful domestic must be oblivious of sublunary matters, and probably the master of the house would not find access till her usual hour of rising in the morning. In reality, she heard the whole affair, and, after a reasonable time, opened the door to admit her master, at the same time expressing a mild surprise at his indulgence in such unseasonable hours.

Early in January, 1830, Mr. Hall obtained as his colleague Mr. Henry Renton; but they worked together only for a brief period. Mr. Hall was seized with paralysis on the 1st of July, 1831, and became gradually worse till the 7th, when, at eight o'clock in the evening, he peacefully expired, in the 73d year of his age and the 46th of his ministry. It was observed as a singular circumstance that, though he

had been opposed all his life to the use of paraphrases in public worship, and had never given out one to be sung, he deviated from this practice on the last day he conducted the service, not much more than a week before his death, when, after sermon, he gave out five verses of the 48th paraphrase, beginning at the words—

“ The Saviour died, but rose again  
Triumphant from the grave,  
And pleads our cause at God's right hand,  
Omnipotent to save.  
Who, then, can e'er divide us more  
From Jesus and His love,  
Or break the sacred tie that binds  
The earth to heaven above ?”

Not only did he give out the paraphrase: he read the verses with emphasis, stopping at some of the most forcible lines, and repeating them over again with a degree of solemnity, the recollection of which was peculiarly impressive.

The congregation continued to flourish under the ministry of Mr. Hall; and the meeting-house was enlarged by removing the stairs which led to the gallery, and placing them outside the building. The congregational property was, and still is, very valuable. It is conveniently situated, quite near the market place, and central for all parts of the town. In front of the manse is a large and good garden; and there was an extensive green, on which the summer sacrament was held in former times, the minister preaching from a tent, the members bringing seats according to their pleasure or convenience.

On the 6th January, 1830, Mr. Henry Renton, M.A.,

was ordained as colleague and successor to Mr. Hall, and for nearly half-a-century filled a large space in the Church life of the Border counties. Like many other ministers of his Church, Mr. Renton belonged to the respectable, and intelligent, and religious middle-class. His father, William Renton, was a native of Channelkirk, in the Lammermuir district of Berwickshire, but went early in life to Edinburgh, where he became a successful and highly respected merchant; his mother was Agnes Duncan, daughter of a merchant in the city, a woman of marvellous activity, energy, and goodness. She had "a light, well-knit, elegant person, of great agility and nerve, and, in conjunction with it, a constitution of remarkable health and vigour, which she sustained by the most regular habits and the strictest temperance." In her household she was active, orderly, and thorough in all departments and details, and how onerous were her household duties may be inferred from the fact that she was the mother of eight sons and four daughters, all of whom, except one son and one daughter, who died in childhood, reached maturity, and filled honourable positions in the world. Not less conspicuous was Mrs. Renton in connection with public affairs. Their home in Buccleuch Place became a centre of political and ecclesiastical activity; and their sons, as they grew up, were in constant intercourse with a galaxy of illustrious Whigs, who were laying the firm, broad, and deep foundations of a grand temple of constitutional Reform. Trained under such auspices, Henry Renton was naturally fitted for his life-work as an ardent, enlightened, and uncompromising advocate

of human interests, in the highest acceptance of the term.

Born on the 5th October, 1804, Henry Renton became a pupil in the High School of Edinburgh in 1815, when Mr. James Pillans was in his prime as an instructor of youth. Three years afterwards he entered the University, where he took the literary and mathematical classes; but in 1820 went to study logic in Glasgow under Professor Jardine. Attracted by the great reputation of Sir Daniel K. Sandford, he took the Greek class also; and there an incident occurred which illustrates at once the courage and the fine moral sense of the youthful student. The Professor, with his wonted energy and enthusiasm, was translating from Aristophanes a passage not very suitable for a class of students, and not toned down, but rather exaggerated, by the translator. Against such a course the boy student modestly, but firmly, protested. Sandford was, at first, inclined to resent such interference, but was more careful ever afterwards. Three sessions were spent in Glasgow, and, altogether, seven sessions were devoted to University studies. He graduated in 1823, but took advantage of his residence in Edinburgh to attend some classes outside the prescribed course. At the same time, he was an active member of various literary associations, where he contracted valuable friendships and acquired great facility as a public speaker.

In 1824 Mr. Renton entered the Theological Hall, then under Professor Dick. One of his fellow-students was David King, afterwards of Greyfriars, Glasgow; and a year before them was John Robson,

who became Mr. Renton's brother-in-law, and minister of Wellington Street Church, in the same city. Meanwhile, Mr. Renton was partly occupied with pursuits not common with theological students. As editor of *The Star*, an Edinburgh newspaper, he advocated advanced opinions on Reform, Catholic Emancipation, the Abolition of Slavery, the Corn Laws, the Disestablishment of the Church, and National Education.

Another circumstance that contributed to form and strengthen Mr. Renton's character was a confidential friendship with Dr. James Hall, minister of Broughton Place Church. In the house of this distinguished minister, Mr. Renton lived as a son with his father; and, in after life, was accustomed to speak of that early and confidential friendship in the most affectionate terms.

In April, 1829, Mr. Renton was licensed as a preacher; the congregation at Kelso took steps at once to obtain a hearing; and the result was a call signed by 730 communicants. After the usual trials his ordination took place in a crowded church, even the passages being densely packed. No previous minister ever had a call to labour in Kelso with so many signatures, and never before had an ordination in the town been so numerously attended. There were forty ministers present at the ordination service, including several belonging to the Established Church, and those of all denominations in the town. The Rev. John Brown, who had succeeded Dr. Hall in Broughton Place, began the service; the Rev. W. Young, Berwick, preached and ordained; the Rev. R. McLaren, Coldingham, gave the charges to the minister and congregation. At a dinner in



the Queen's Head Hotel there were 150 persons present. One of the speakers was Mr. Lundie, of the Parish Church; another was John Brown Patterson, presentee to Falkirk, who spoke as a special friend of the young minister. On the following Sabbath Mr. Renton was introduced to his congregation by the Rev. John Brown. As the senior minister continued to occupy the manse, Mr. Renton lodged at first in the house of Mr. Kell, incumbent of the Episcopal Church, with whom, as well as with Mr. Lundie, he lived on the most friendly terms.

At the time of Mr. Renton's ordination the "new light," political and ecclesiastical, which had been gradually gaining ground in spite of many efforts at repression, was ready to burst forth, and all the conditions of Church life were materially changed. Tories of the old school were hopeful that even yet what they dreaded might be averted. At a general election in 1826 Sir Walter Scott had written regarding Roxburghshire—"Henry Scott carries the county without opposition." On the day of nomination he was at Jedburgh, when he wrote—"There was a numerous meeting; the Whigs, who did not bring ten men to the meeting, of course, took the whole matter under their patronage, which was much of a piece with the Blue Bottle drawing the carriage." The Whigs, thus despised, could look farther into futurity than the Tory novelist, and saw the hands of the clock already pointing at the hour of their triumph. Four years later, and after Mr. Renton had been ordained minister at Kelso, the same Henry Scott of Harden, afterwards Lord Polwarth, was for the third time elected without opposition. It was

the last scene in the old play. Reform was in the air, and Sir Walter Scott's last appearance at a meeting of Roxburghshire freemen was on the 21st March, 1831, when he spoke against the bill. The gloomy chamber was invaded by a crowd of the unenfranchised, by whom Sir Walter's remarks were hissed and hooted. Losing temper, he exclaimed, "I regard your gabble no more than the geese on the green." The time had arrived, however, when the voices of the intelligent middle class would cease to be mere inarticulate gabble.

At Kelso, as well as Jedburgh, the two parties came into collision, and Mr. Renton was in the front with something more effective than hissing and hooting. He was a loyal subject, punctilious in every matter of courtesy, public or private, and had readily joined with Mr. Lundie and others in a quiet ceremonial, in June, 1830, on the accession of a new king; but he was equally ready to stand alone in asserting a distinctive principle. In Kelso, as in Jedburgh, a meeting was summoned to oppose the Reform Bill. It was in the Town Hall, at two o'clock, an hour very unsuitable for men with any stated occupation; but it was expected that the utterance of a few lairds would be accepted as the voice of the district. Consulting with nobody, but acting on his own sense of duty, Mr. Renton was present, and moved an amendment, which he supported with a speech. The amendment was seconded, and, on a division, carried by a majority, on which, as Sir Walter had said, the Whigs "took the whole matter under their patronage," and that so effectively as to prepare a petition in accordance

with the altered circumstances. In December, 1832, Captain George Elliot, a member of the Whig house of Minto, was elected representative of the county by a large majority. It was the first election in which the middle classes had a voice; and every Dissenting minister in the county supported Captain Elliot, but only one minister of the Establishment was on the same side. Political power had been transferred to those who represented the Seceders of Gateshaw Brae: the necessity to exercise that power in opposing aggressive action by the Establishment was speedily to arise. In the front of the battle was Mr. Renton, who, at a dinner to Captain Elliot five months before the election, proposed a toast to "The immortal memory of Charles James Fox."

In ecclesiastical, as well as political, life the radiance of the "new light" had assumed dazzling proportions. Thomas Gillespie, founder of the Relief Church, had, at an early period, spoken against Church Establishments; and in 1792 the Rev. William Graham, a Presbyterian minister in Newcastle, charged "the incorporations of the British National Churches with much of the immorality admitted to prevail in the country," expressing, at the same time, his conviction that in proportion as State Churches have been complete and of longer duration "ignorance and impiety" have prevailed, and have "gradually obtained the sanction of custom," which is stronger than the sanction of any human laws. Similar views were about the same time adopted by many Seceders, and continued quietly to spread among ministers and intelligent members all over the country. Meanwhile, there was no abatement in

the exodus of members from the Kirk, and about 1828 it was believed that in all the chief centres of population the Dissenters numbered one-third more than the members of the Establishment, while they were just about equal taking a broad view of the whole country.

Some steps had been taken to buttress the Establishment, chiefly by the erection of Chapels of Ease and Parliamentary Churches; but, with a view to more systematic action, a Church Extension Committee was appointed by the Assembly in 1828, with Dr. Brunton as convener. This step was accepted as a challenge by the Dissenters to defend their position, and the gauntlet was taken up at a meeting in Greyfriars Church, Glasgow, where the Rev. Andrew Marshall, Kirkintilloch, delivered a discourse, afterwards published with the title of "Ecclesiastical Establishments Considered." Among those present was Dr. Heugh, who, at the close of the discourse, said, regarding the principles therein stated, that "the time had come when those who held them should be prepared to justify their convictions to the world." Some there were who said, "Our strength is to sit still," and who maintained that every Church should do its work quietly, without any direct antagonism to other organizations, but this view did not commend itself to the leading Dissenters. It would have been a culpable suppression of truth which some of them had held for nearly half-a-century, and, at that stage, would have been almost suicidal. The work of organization proceeded rapidly. Voluntary Church Associations were formed in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Fife, and, soon after-

wards, in nearly all towns and populous districts in the lowlands of Scotland.

In 1834 the war which had raged more or less for six years reached a critical stage, for Dr. Chalmers was appointed convener of the Church Extension Committee, and issued an appeal to the Scottish people asking for money to build three hundred additional churches, for which a partial endowment would be asked from the Government. A deputation was despatched to London, and received by Lord Melbourne, then Prime Minister, in a way that seemed to be friendly, but the session was far advanced, and before another year the Tories were in office. Sir William Rae, then Lord Advocate, asked Dr. Chalmers to renew his application for a partial endowment, but, with the circumspection of a statesman, asked, "Supposing the Government willing to propose a grant for providing additional church accommodation, and for the endowment of the ministers, how would that be taken by the Dissenters?" The answer was peculiar. "I do anticipate a great outcry, though I trust a temporary one, on the part of the Dissenters; but I am quite clear that it is the wisdom, as well as the duty, of the Government to brave it." At the opening of the session in 1835 the claims of the Kirk were recognised in the Royal Speech; but the Tories were defeated, and Lord Melbourne came again into office. On the 18th April commissioners from the Kirk proceeded to London, but found, with some dismay, that the "great outcry" had already begun, and was likely to be something more effective than a mere helpless cry: that a counter deputation had, in fact, seen Lord Melbourne, and that instead

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of getting £10,000, the Kirk would get a Royal Commission of Inquiry. That was the first serious rebuff for the leaders of the Kirk.

In February, 1837, a report was submitted by the Commission; and a bill was prepared by the Liberal Government, which proposed—1st, To give the Crown teinds to Highland parishes; 2d, to alter the Act 1707 anent unexhausted teinds, so as to make them accessible to the new parishes where no unexhausted teinds exist; and 3d, to do nothing for the towns unless where they have landward parishes with unexhausted teinds. These proposals were unsparingly denounced by both parties. Speaking for the Church, Dr. Buchanan of Glasgow remarked —“Obviously the design of the first part of it is to meet the claims of the Dissenters about their vested rights; in the Highlands there are no Dissenting Churches, and consequently no money speculations to injure by cheap seat-rents. The second is a torch of discord between the Church and the heritors; and the third leaves the towns to Radicalism, Dissent, and infidelity, and consequently secures them as nurseries of Liberalism. Anything more bare-faced and shameless never was proposed by a Government.” Dr. Buchanan lived to correct this hasty judgment.

By the Dissenters, who claimed at that time to represent nearly the whole Liberalism of Scotland, the proposals were strenuously opposed. An extraordinary meeting of the Scottish Central Board for vindicating the rights of Dissenters was summoned for the 4th January, 1838, and was largely attended by delegates from widely distant parts of the country. Special meetings of the United Secession and Relief

Synods were held; hundreds of petitions to Lord Melbourne were sent up from all parts of Scotland. From English towns, and notably from Birmingham, petitions were likewise despatched.

In February deputies from Edinburgh and Glasgow proceeded to London, but found that a deputation from the Kirk was already on the spot. These had betaken themselves to the Tory leaders, as their natural allies; and the Duke of Wellington is reported to have said—"The real question which now divides this country, and which truly divides the House of Commons, is just this, 'Church or no Church.' People talk of the war in Spain, and the Canada question; but all that is of little moment. The real question is, 'Church or no Church;' and the majority of the House of Commons—a small majority, it is true, but still a majority—is practically against it. It is a melancholy state of things; but such appears to me to be the actual position in which we stand."

The Dissenting deputies were not dismissed with any such cold comfort. At first, indeed, Lord Melbourne's manner was "careless and haughty;" but gradually he became "more impressed;" and at a second interview told the deputies that he "had been unspeakably the better for their interviews." The Bishops and the Duke of Wellington remonstrated with the Premier on his deviation from the practice of former Governments, and urged him to support the Church; when Lord Melbourne bluntly replied—"That is all very well. I have no doubt you are very sincere in the advice; but, translated into plain English, it means this, and nothing else,

‘Try to please your irreconcilable enemies, and try to alienate your best friends and supporters.’” That was a statesman’s view of Scottish politics, and it was correct. It was a second rebuff to the leaders of the Kirk, and with this ended all hope of promoting Church extension in Scotland by Government help. Happily, a more excellent way was discovered.

The aim of Chalmers had been to cover Scotland with “a sufficiently thick Establishment,” the new churches to be built by private beneficence, but each to receive from the Government a small endowment. In Glasgow alone Mr. William Collins proposed to build twenty new places of worship. They were to be Parish Churches, each with a defined territory, and to be on a perfect equality with existing parishes. A sum of £20,000 was raised before the work of building began, and in six or seven years the churches were all finished. In other parts of the country the success was equally conspicuous, and in less than seven years a sum of £300,000 was raised, by means of which 220 churches were added to the parochial places of worship in Scotland. One of the new churches was built in a prominent position within two hundred paces of Mr. Renton’s meeting-house and manse, and these premises were included in the new *quoad sacra* parish. Naturally enough, the minister and congregation regarded this as something like intrusion, and statistics were produced to prove that no new church was necessary. A meeting on behalf of Church Extension was held in the Established Church, at which Mr. Renton rose, in front of the gallery, and offered to propose an amendment. On a point of order this was disallowed; but there



was great excitement, and intimation was made of a subsequent meeting to answer the speeches. It turned out a most effective demonstration, but the joy of it was marred by the sudden death of Mr. Pringle, farmer, Holefield, immediately after he had seconded a motion made by the Rev. Joseph Brown, Dalkeith. He was a brother of the Rev. James Pringle, Newcastle, and a friend for whom Mr. Renton had a special regard.

In the whole of the Ten Years' Conflict Mr. Renton was deeply interested, and his voice was uplifted as occasion offered, which was not seldom. In his own neighbourhood he was the leader with unquestioned supremacy; in the courts of his Church he was always conspicuous; and, by request, he went to confront Dr. Lockhart, the noted "Anglo-Scotus," in a public discussion at Newcastle. To his legal mind the conflict of the Kirk with the civil courts was peculiarly suggestive, and he followed every turn of events with intense earnestness. In his own mind he had no doubt from the beginning that the Court of Session would decide against the leaders of the Church, and when the first decision in the Auchterarder case was announced he did not hesitate to say publicly that the Establishment had received its death-blow. Others, who looked at matters in a constitutional light, took a similar view; and when the Disruption came in 1843 Lord Cockburn wrote in his diary, since published:—"It is the greatest fact that has yet occurred for all the enemies of Ecclesiastical Establishments. It is their case. The mitres of England may tremble for it. If it be true that the Church of England cannot be destroyed without

a revolution, this is the most revolutionary event in modern British history. Protestantism was our first Reformation; Presbytery our second; this erection of Presbytery freed from the State is our third."

For some years previous to the Disruption the numerical progress of Dissent had been lessened by the spread of evangelical preaching within the Establishment, and after that great event the work of providing ordinances outside of the Kirk was largely undertaken by the Free Church. The previous prosperity of Dissent had not extended to all parts of Scotland, but was conspicuous in certain localities, one of which was the county of Roxburgh. At the census of 1851 a return was obtained showing the number of places of worship, sittings, and attendance in the various counties, and though the making of this return was not compulsory, it gave some approximation to the truth. In a county like Aberdeen the attendance in all United Presbyterian Churches was only 3404, whereas 23,631 attended the Free Church and 20,252 were present in the Established Churches. The proportion was still less in Banffshire, where United Presbyterians numbered 702, compared with more than 6000 in each of the other two Churches, and 1905 Roman Catholics. Caithness showed 300 United Presbyterians, 442 members of the Establishment, but an attendance of 6779 at the Free Church congregations, and 509 Independents. In Edinburgh and Glasgow, on the other hand, the attendance in United Presbyterian Churches out-numbered that in the Establishment, but was a little under the number in the Free Churches. In Roxburghshire the figures were con-

spicuously favourable to the United Presbyterian Church, for, in a total attendance of 12,963 at the various churches, 6183 belonged to the United Presbyterians, 2312 to the Establishment, 2730 to the Free Church, and 773 to the Independents.

With the Disruption the direct issue between the Kirk and the Dissenters became quiescent, a circumstance which Mr. Renton never ceased to regret, as he believed that the whole question of an Establishment in Scotland might then have been finally settled. He accepted, however, and took part in promoting such instalments of justice as could be obtained, but was always careful to guard himself against any paltering with great principles. The dominating desire of his life was that every reform in civil or ecclesiastical matters should be thorough; and if he submitted to accept a half measure it must be on such lines that a farther extension was only a question of time. On all public questions he was loyally supported by his Presbytery, his session, the members of the congregation, and generally a preponderating majority of his fellow-townsmen, who had learned by experience the solidity of his arguments and the purity of his motives. He lived to see nearly all the principles for which he had contended in early days placed in a more or less perfect form on the statute book. The cause in which least practical progress had been made was that of the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control, and the failure to obtain this at an earlier date he attributed to the supineness of his own denomination when they had the ball at their feet, and might have sent it home. He did not concur

with those who affirmed that a broad assertion of Voluntary principles was adverse to the progress of the Church; on the contrary, his experience was that intelligent working men joined his congregation on the basis of that teaching.

As a pastor Mr. Renton was eminently faithful and conscientious. His ideal of the Christian character was lofty, and his constant aim was to have his people individually, and as a congregation, approximating to his own high standard. His expositions of truth were admirably clear, his style elegant, his practical exhortations very impressive. In visiting the congregation he was systematic, after the good old fashion of seeing every family during the course of the year. Every elder was expected to accompany the minister in visiting the families of his district. In a little book were noted any changes that had occurred during the year; and all the circumstances of the family were distinctly ascertained. He was always happy in thus visiting a pious and virtuous family; and, after cheerful conversation regarding common matters, gave a brief exhortation adapted to the family circumstances, and concluded with a similarly appropriate prayer. On the other hand, where any trace of backsliding or carelessness was visible his penetrating eye and searching questions elicited the truth, and with sorrowful earnestness, but sometimes with stern rebuke, he exhorted them to a more Christian course. Where faults or failings were plainly unavoidable his kindly sympathy often brought relief, and tended greatly to heal the wound. To give advice and help in difficulty he was always ready, and his sound



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judgment, conjoined with excellent business talent, made him a counsellor of inestimable value.

In connection with the congregational work, Mr. Renton introduced changes that would have staggered Seceders of the olden time, though most of them have long ceased to excite surprise, and many have been generally adopted over the Church. Strictly conservative on all the great essentials of Christianity, his desire was to assimilate the congregational usages, as nearly as possible, to those of the Primitive Church. From the first day of his ministry he introduced the practice of reading the Scriptures statedly as part of the sanctuary services, a habit unknown at that time in the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland. He introduced the use of paraphrases, which had not previously been sung in the congregation. In 1831 he began a minister's class for adults above fourteen years of age, one of the earliest in the district. Previously young communicants had been admitted privately by the session; Mr. Renton introduced the practice of having them publicly recognised in presence of the congregation, as is now generally done. In 1832 he commenced a weekly congregational prayer meeting. A year previous he had instituted a monthly prayer meeting in connection with Missions; and, at the same time, formed a congregational Missionary Society, the first in the town or district, with a staff of collectors, who made monthly calls on the members and adherents. His great desire was to encourage systematic giving for the extension of the gospel, and an ambition long cherished was that his people should do as much for the spread of the gospel as for its support among

themselves. This object was nearly attained in the last year of his life, when the congregational income was £489 12s 3½d, and that for missionary and benevolent purposes, £473 8s 4d. Early in 1834 Mr. Renton instituted a congregational organization for the distribution of tracts, known as "The Monthly Visitor," to all the families in the district, the expense to be defrayed by voluntary contributions, and a collection at an annual evening sermon. He initiated stated monthly meetings of the kirk-session; and was careful that a representative should always be chosen who could give regular attendance on Presbytery and Synod. The secular affairs of the congregation were managed by deacons, chosen and ordained in the same way as elders, and both classes of office-bearers were elected by ballot, after an open nomination. With the appointment of deacons came the right of the minister, or, in his absence, one of the elders, to preside at the annual meeting of the congregation, which was understood to be a regular church meeting. Another change was the simple and more frequent observance of the Lord's Supper, first by simultaneous communion, instead of four "tables," as before, and a quarterly celebration, without any special service on week-days or on the Lord's day, which was begun in 1838, and next in 1860 the monthly observance of the ordinance. These and other changes were introduced as a result of careful consideration, after measures had been adopted so as to promote unanimity in the session and congregation.

On the 6th January, 1864, Mr. Renton obtained as his colleague Mr. Robert Whyte, M.A., in whom he



enjoyed great and unalloyed comfort. A call to College Street, Edinburgh, was declined by Mr. Whyte, but in January, 1868, he was translated to Pollokshaws, and afterwards to Lauriston Church, Edinburgh. In October, the same year, Mr. James Rogers was ordained, and continued till after Mr. Renton's decease, but afterwards resigned his charge on account of failing health, and died in New Zealand. Mr. Renton died on the 4th January, 1877, and was interred in the new cemetery at Kelso, which had been obtained and laid out largely through his instrumentality. A granite obelisk was erected in his memory by the congregation and other friends; and his name is perpetuated, also, by the Henry Renton Bursary, open to students in connection with the United Presbyterian Church who are preparing for the Mission field.

An event in more recent years of peculiar interest to the congregation, and intimately associated with the memory of Mr. Renton, has been the building of a new church, with other accommodation for the carrying on of church work. Prior to the decease of Mr. Renton the venerable building, which had stood since 1787-88, and was linked with many precious memories, had been showing signs of decay; but not till 1884 was the idea of a new church seriously entertained. On the 30th June, 1880, the Rev. T. C. Kirkwood, who had been minister at Stromness, in Orkney, since 1876, was inducted as pastor of the congregation, and under his vigorous guidance the office-bearers and members were ready for a step in advance. It was apparent that if the old building were still to be used it must undergo

extensive repairs, and the result would probably not be satisfactory, so that the alternative of a new church came up for fair consideration. The promise of a handsome subscription by one of Mr. Renton's daughters encouraged the idea of a new building, and, after careful deliberation, it was decided to proceed. Plans prepared by Mr. John Starforth, 37, York Place, Edinburgh, were adopted; and on the 21st July, 1885, the memorial stone of a new church was laid by John T. Renton, Esq., London, a younger brother of the Rev. Henry Renton. It was altogether a most interesting and auspicious occasion. The gorgeous scenery of Kelso was lighted up with bright sunshine, and thus external nature seemed in sympathy with the crowds who assembled to witness the proceedings. A historical sketch of the congregation was given by Mr. Kirkwood, after which a hymn was sung by the choir and audience. The trowel presented to Mr. Renton was a beautiful piece of art manufacture. The handle was ivory; the blade was silver in the shape of a diamond, and on it a finely-engraved view of the new church, together with an emblem in which the olive branch was suitably introduced. Around its three sides, engraved in antique characters, was the inscription, "Presented to John T. Renton, Esq., on his laying the memorial stone. Kelso, 21st July, 1885."

In a cavity beneath the stone was deposited by Mrs. Renton Mein, Roxburgh Barnes, a glass jar securely sealed, and containing a sketch of the congregational history, memoirs and sermons of the Rev. Robert Hall and the Rev. Henry Renton; a series of congregational reports, with lists of office-bearers,

Sabbath School teachers, and missionary collectors; notices of congregational agencies and operations, summary of principles, communion tokens in the time of the Rev. Robert Nicol and in 1809, communion cards, selection of coins, a photograph of the old church, photographs of the Rev. Messrs. Renton, Whyte, Rogers, and Kirkwood, also of Kelso and Floors Castle; a plan of the new church, copies of the local papers with reports of the valedictory services, and copies of the Edinburgh papers for the day. The stone having been duly laid, addresses suitable to the occasion were delivered by Mr. John T. Renton; the Rev. Dr. Logan Aikman, moderator of the Synod; the Hon. Arthur D. Elliot, member of Parliament for the county, and others. An offering laid on the memorial stone in aid of the building fund amounted to £560 7s 4d, including a cheque for £250 from James Hall Renton, Esq., London, a brother of the deceased minister. Prominent in the assemblage were numerous friends connected with other denominations, thus pleasantly illustrating the more expansive spirit of Church life in modern compared with more remote times.

The church, as subsequently finished, is a splendid addition to the ecclesiastical architecture of a pretty town conspicuous for its elegant buildings. In its day the old church was a handsome edifice; but, in more recent years, it was surpassed by the North Parish Church, and still more by the Kelso Free Church. The new church will compare creditably with any recent erection of its kind. It is built with rock-faced rubble; and the outside elevation is effectively broken up with buttresses. With a frontage

of 21 feet 5 inches, there is a tower about 80 feet high, surmounted by a belfry. On either side the tower is flanked with a circular staircase leading to the gallery of the church. Accommodation is provided for about 800 adults; and a commodious gallery is supported on strong cast-iron fluted columns with moulded capitals. The whole interior of the church, including roof and fittings, is of pitch pine. In the rear of the main building, and parallel with it, is a hall, together with a library, a ladies' room, session-room, vestry, and other accessories to comfort or convenience, constituting altogether a most complete and commodious ecclesiastical edifice. The style is of the Early English Gothic or Decorated period. A dead wall which previously bounded the congregational property on two sides has been removed, and its place supplied by a very elegant dwarf wall, surmounted by a railing, giving the whole premises a light and tasteful appearance. The cost of the whole buildings amounted to upwards of £5900, of which all except £1600 was raised by May, 1889. In the previous year the total amount raised by the congregation for ordinary purposes, including the various missionary and benevolent contributions, was £918 3s 6d, showing a liberality equal to the later years of Mr. Renton's ministry, in addition to the heavy payments necessary in connection with the new buildings.

Till 1843 a second congregation, formerly the Anti-Burgher, existed in Kelso. Immediately after the breach in 1747 those who adhered to the Anti-Burghers proceeded to erect a place of worship at the village of Hume, but it did not prove a success.



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**FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, KELSO.**

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Those resident toward the south insisted on having a supply of sermon in Kelso, which they obtained for a time; but in 1749 the station in that town was suppressed. Meanwhile, a station was opened at Earlstoun, where sermon was supplied on alternate Sabbaths with Hume, some people from Kelso travelling ten miles to Earlstoun. The station at Hume never prospered, and in 1765 supply of sermon was again granted to Kelso, to which members were attracted from Hume and some part of the Morebattle district. A church was erected at Kelso in 1777, with materials conveyed from Hume. On the 2d September, 1772, Mr. John Muirhead, from Pathhead, Kirkcaldy, was ordained pastor of the congregation, and for a time the church was well attended. In 1785 Mr. Muirhead resigned the pastorate, and was succeeded in 1786 by Mr. James Hogg from Milnathort. In 1807 Mr. Hogg withdrew, with Mr. M'Crie and others, who formed "The Constitutional Presbytery." He died in 1807, and was succeeded by the Rev. Patrick Mackenzie, but the congregation diminished in numbers, and many of those who remained were attracted to Mr. Hall's church after the union.

The East congregation, Kelso, formerly the Relief, was founded in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Application for sermon was made to the Edinburgh Presbytery on the 6th July, 1791; and on the 17th of the same month the first sermon was preached by the Rev. Thomas Thomson, then of Duns, but afterwards the earliest minister of St. James's Place congregation, Edinburgh. On the 31st July the Rev. James Scott, Jedburgh, preached;

and on the 21st August the Rev. James Struthers, Edinburgh, one of the most eloquent preachers of the time, officiated. These services were all in the open air, and there was no organized congregation; but on the 28th August the Rev. Mr. Thomson of Berwick intimated from the tent that he would give a word of sermon on the following evening, and would wait to receive the adhesion of such as were prepared for a stated supply of preaching. Though multitudes had flocked to hear the eloquent preachers in the open air, only a small number appeared at the time thus appointed, but within a few days a petition to the Edinburgh Relief Presbytery was signed by forty-five persons, and was presented on the 6th September, 1791, by Mr. Andrew Lockie. On the 11th of the same month the communion was dispensed by Mr. Thomson, Duns, and children were baptized for Mr. Andrew Lockie and Mr. Richard Allan. In October, the same year, an agreement was made as follows:—"Kelso, October, 1791. The under subscribers agree to pay a weekly subscription unto Mr. Pirie, treasurer of the Relief Society, as a moiety to assist in paying the preachers, the surplus to run into an accumulating fund, and a state of accounts to be kept by him for the inspection of the committee to be appointed, beginning the first payment on Saturday the 15th current." The sheet contains the names of twelve persons as regular subscribers, of whom Andrew Lockie and James Pirie gave each one shilling weekly, and ten others gave sixpence each. Their names were Robert Wilson, William Gray, William Home, Richard Allan, James Renton, James Downie, Gilbert Hialope,



Andrew Kerr, John More, and Andrew Hilson. The name of John Bell appears with a payment of 3d weekly.

Preachers in connection with the Relief Church were few, and supply was granted only at considerable intervals, but occasional service was obtained from members of the Presbytery. In the winter of 1791 and the spring of 1792 the congregation met in a large room in the Horse Market belonging to Mr. Johnston, and there was usually sermon in the evening as well as during the day.

On the 20th May, 1792, the Rev. Mr. Struthers of Edinburgh again appeared on the scene, and introduced Mr. John Pitcairn, who shortly afterwards preached on two successive Sabbaths, and produced a deep impression. A moderation was appointed for the 28th June, when the Rev. Mr. Scott, Jedburgh, presided; and a call to Mr. Pitcairn, signed by 208 persons, was, on the 2d July, sustained by the Presbytery at Duns. Meanwhile, a site had been obtained, and the building of a church, seated for 550, was in progress. On Thursday the 25th October, 1792, the day fixed for Mr. Pitcairn's ordination, the church, though still unfinished, was fit for occupation. The collection was 44s, which was considered very respectable. At the ordination service Mr. Thomson, Duns, presided, and the proceedings were very impressive. Fifty years afterwards the Rev. James Jarvie, addressing the congregation, quoted largely from a manuscript left by Mr. Andrew Lockie; and on the evening of the ordination day the good man had written:—"O, how kind God is to his people; I hope He has sent us a pastor after

His own heart, and in answer to many prayers, and that He will bless the connection formed for the good of many souls. He has, indeed, regarded our low estate beyond expression. Praised be His name for ever and for ever."

Under the ministry of Mr. Pitcairn the success of the new cause was rapid, and, within seven years, an enlargement of the church was needful. This was effected by removing the west wall, and lengthening the building by about twenty feet, which gave an addition of two hundred sittings. A subscription list quoted by Mr. Jarvie indicates that Mr. Robert Nichol gave £21 toward the expense, while George Elliot, Andrew Lockie, and John Ballantyne gave each ten guineas. In addition there were seven guineas by Alexander Blackie, four guineas by Joseph Hardie, and two guineas each by John Gray, James Pirie, James Renton, Thomas Davidson, and John Bell. George Dickinson gave £1 11s 6d; Robert Turnbull and Alexander Gibson gave each one guinea; and half-a-guinea was given by John More, Thomas Robertson, and Charles Purves.

Of Mr. Pitcairn, the editor of "The Kelso Records" says he, "by his intellectual powers, and the graces of his eloquence, for the period of more than twenty years, stood prominently forward as one of the first of Scotland's pulpit orators." One well qualified to judge says of him:—"He possessed a native suavity and elegance of manners which would give lustre to any walk of life in which he might have been placed, and which rendered him so often the delight of the social circle of his friends. He seemed, too, to breathe the atmosphere of the sanctuary in every

scene. It was this high sense of propriety, this consistency of deportment, that gave such a charm to his society. He was a nervous, striking, and accomplished pulpit orator." "The highest ambition of his active mind was to excel to the edifying of the Church; and for this species of excellence he was singularly qualified. His intimate acquaintance with the doctrines of scripture enabled him rightly to divide the word of truth; while the power which these doctrines exerted on his own heart threw an unction into his style and manner which often held his audience in breathless admiration." The skill to adapt his teaching to special circumstances was possessed by him in large measure, and one of his sermons, suggested by the drowning of three young ladies in the Eden at Newton Don in 1795, was long remembered for its effective oratory. A rapid increase of membership was one natural result of this powerful preaching; and the meeting-house, enlarged after the first seven years, was crowded to the door. The strain occasioned by such preaching, however, brought on premature old age; and on the 13th February, 1829, Mr. Pitcairn died in the 60th year of his age and the 30th of his ministry.

William M'Cheyne, second minister of the congregation, was born at Glencairn, Dumfriesshire, on the 12th June, 1801; grew up under the ministry of the Rev. Edward Dobbie, of the Relief congregation, Penpont; and received his classical education at Wallace Hall, a well-known seminary in the parish of Closeburn. At an early age his desire was toward the Christian ministry; and his parents, who willingly seconded the wish, sent him in his seventeenth year

to the University of Edinburgh. The study of theology was begun in the halls of the Established Church, as the Relief Synod had then no professor; but for two sessions afterwards he attended the prelections of Dr. Thomson of Paisley. On May 5, 1828, he was licensed to preach, and during the summer officiated at Kelso, to which he was soon afterwards called as colleague to Mr. Pitcairn. Meanwhile, Mr. Pitcairn died; and on the 16th March, 1829, Mr. McCheyne was ordained as sole pastor of the congregation. At the date of his ordination the young minister seemed to be in vigorous health; but the congregation was so large and widely scattered that strength gradually failed, and it soon turned out that the vital functions were seriously impaired. For a time he cherished the hope of recovery; but when a fatal termination of the complaint was inevitable he prepared for the last struggle with the fortitude of a Christian, and looked forward with rejoicing to a future state of happiness. He died on the 19th July, 1836, after a protracted, and latterly a painful, illness, which he bore with exemplary fortitude and resignation. Thus was a brief and bright ministry of seven years and four months brought to a close in the 36th year of his age.

In all respects the ministry of Mr. McCheyne had been successful. As a Christian pastor he was faithful and conscientious, entering into the feelings and aspirations of his people, visiting them especially in times of sickness or sorrow, and conducting all the functions of his ministry in such a manner as to win the confidence and affection of his flock. Improvements were made on the property during his ministry;

a Sabbath School was opened and a Congregational Library was founded. So conspicuous had been the success of the two first pastors that, in 1842, after the Rev. James Jarvie had been five and a half years minister, there were still nearly nine hundred members, many of whom were warmly attached to the congregation, and some travelled long distances rather than give up the old connection.

The third minister was the Rev. James Jarvie, previously of Carluke, who was admitted on the 18th April, 1837. At first something of the old enthusiasm remained, and the congregation flourished; but it was a time of change, and, after the Disruption especially, when the number of churches was greatly multiplied, there was a gradual decadence. Recruited by some useful members, and under a new pastorate, the congregation is now better organized than it probably ever was before, and continues to hold a creditable place among the Christian associations of the district.

## CHAPTER IX.

### JEDBURGH: BLACKFRIARS AND CASTLEGATE.

IN the year 1737 the Rev. Mr. Winchester, parochial minister of Jedburgh, offended many members of his congregation by reading "The Porteous Act" from the pulpit on the morning of a communion Sabbath. Several of them rose and left the church, observing as they did so that their minister had "celebrated the death of a murderer before the death of the Saviour." About the same time, and for a similar reason, a secession took place in the neighbouring parish of Ancrum. The minister was Mr. John Cranston, M.A., who, in 1704, had been translated from the contiguous parish of Crailing. His eldest son, Dr. William Cranston, was the confidential friend of James Thomson, author of "The Seasons," who had spent many of his youthful holidays at the manse of Ancrum, surrounded by some of the most romantic scenery of "bonnie Teviotdale." Another son, John, licensed on the 1st July, 1730, was presented by John Scott of Ancrum, Esq., and, in March, 1733, ordained as colleague and successor to his father. Mr. Cranston, senior, lived to be the father of the Church, and died on the 17th October, 1748, in the 84th year of his age and the 57th of his ministry. His son, after a ministry of exactly the same length, died in 1790, in the 85th

year of his age. At first Mr. Cranston, senior, as became a successor of Calderwood in Crailing and Livingstone in Ancrum, went with the popular party in the Church, but gradually altered his course, to the grief and disappointment of his congregation. Dissatisfaction prevailed, but the smouldering embers were fanned into a flame by the reading of the obnoxious Act, and many members joined their friends in Jedburgh, who now made a formal accession to the Associate Presbytery.

Among those who seceded from the church at Jedburgh was James Mather, farmer at Mounthooly, one of the elders, who seems to have taken a lead in the movement, as he appeared before the Presbytery in name of "the correspondence" at Jedburgh. These new accessions were united to the congregation at Gateshaw, then in course of formation. On the 17th October, 1739, when the Presbytery met at Gateshaw for the ordination of Mr. Hunter, the Seceders in and near Jedburgh had increased so largely, or considered their position in the county town so important, that they ventured again to ask for supply of sermon, but with this request the Presbytery was still unable to comply. A third application was more successful; and on the 12th May, 1741, the Associate Presbytery agreed, by a large majority, to "disjoin the said correspondence from that of Morebattle." It was farther agreed that Mr. Beugo, probationer, should preach and hold a fast at Jedburgh on the Thursday after the fourth Sabbath of the same month of May. On the second Sabbath of August the preacher was Mr. James Scott, who was afterwards ordained minister at Gateshaw.

Some member of the correspondence, probably Mr. Mather, kept a list of baptisms, which begins so far back as the 7th May, 1738, and is the earliest record in the district connected with the Secession. Three children seem to have been conveyed over the hills to Gateshaw, and were there baptized by the Rev. Alexander Moncrieff of Abernethy. There is every reason to believe that other children were then baptized by Mr. Moncrieff and his colleague, Mr. Fisher, but these are not recorded. The first entry is:—"Andrew Caverhill, gardener at Bonjedward, had a child baptized by the Rev. Alexander Moncrieff, minister of the gospel at Abernethy, 7th May, 1738, at Gateshaw. Child's name, Thomas; born 4th October, 1737. Witnesses — Alexander Dickson, gardener, Jedburgh; Walter Sharp, miller at Upper Crailing." The child thus baptized survived to be a man, and became the grandfather of the Rev. John Caverhill Jackson, minister at Crail, and great-grandfather of John Caverhill, Esq., factor to the Marquis of Lothian. Previous to 1746, when the first minister was ordained, there were 120 baptisms, an average of fifteen every year, which indicates a congregation of 300 members. The baptisms were by the Rev. Messrs. Hutton, Stow; Gib, Edinburgh; Scott, Gateshaw; Matthew, Midlem; Whyte, Duns; Mair, West Linton; and Murray, Lockerbie.

Before obtaining a pastor, the congregation called the Rev. James Thomson, minister at Burntisland, who was continued by the Synod in his present charge, and Mr. Mair, who was ordained at Muckart. A defect in their organization seems to have come under the notice of the Presbytery, which they proceeded at



once to rectify. "At Mr. Gib's house in Bristow, near Edinburgh, April 22, 1746," the Presbytery, understanding that there was no eldership in the Associate congregation of Jedburgh, agree "that some elders be elected and ordained in that congregation, and out of the properest corners thereof, with all convenient speed." Commissioners from the congregation were present, and were directed to carry intimation thereof to that congregation, with instructions to have the affair ripe for a moderation at next meeting of Presbytery. The friends at Jedburgh made no delay, for at Linton, on the 26th May, they presented a paper craving the Presbytery to appoint one or more of their members to moderate in the election of elders. In the whole matter there is apparent the energy of Adam Gib, for Messrs. James Scott and George Murray were appointed to moderate on the 11th of June next. At Stow, on the 2d July, these members reported that Robert Bunyan, Robert Turnbull, Walter Scott, Andrew Caverhill, Robert Robson, James Dods, John Corbet, and Adam Douglas had been chosen as elders, and that they had satisfied themselves regarding the qualifications of these nominees for the office. The Presbytery then appointed Mr. Whyte to preach at Jedburgh on the third Friday of the same month and serve the edict, after which he and Mr. Scott were to preach and ordain the elders on the second Sabbath of September.

On the 24th September, 1746, Mr. John Smith was ordained as first minister of the congregation. The public work of the day was begun by Mr. Whyte, who preached from Psalm cii. 16, "When the Lord

shall build up Zion He shall appear in His glory." Mr. Matthew preached the ordination sermon from Ezekiel iii. 17, "Son of Man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel." After the ordination Mr. Scott concluded the public service of the day with a sermon from 1 Cor. iii. 5, "Who, then, is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed." It will be observed that each text had a special adaptation to its place in the service; and probably the same tact would be manifested in the treatment of the different subjects. It was, doubtless, a day of rejoicing among the Seceders of the district, but, beyond the bare facts, no particulars have been recorded. In the same year was the first meeting-house erected by the congregation.

John Smith, who belonged to the congregation of Stichel, had studied theology in 1744, under Professor Moncrieff at Abernethy. When the breach took place in 1747 he took part with the Burgher Synod, along with the great majority of his congregation. Only one elder and eighteen members left and joined the congregation at Gateshaw; on the other hand, Mrs. Scott, the minister's wife, left Gateshaw and joined the Burgher Church at Jedburgh. In 1753 Mr. Smith had the high honour of a call to succeed Mr. Ralph Erskine at Dunfermline, but, meanwhile, remained at Jedburgh. A second call in 1756 had a similar result; but a third call ended differently, and in April, 1760, he was transported to Dunfermline.

On the 9th December, 1757, a great ecclesiastical event had occurred in Jedburgh, for the Relief congregation had been formed under the

ministry of Thomas Boston. The Relief cause was equally strong in Dunfermline, where a capacious church had, in 1752, been erected for Thomas Gillespie, previously minister at Carnock. Founded and conducted on principles in some essential respects different, but both having respect to popular freedom, the Secession and Relief Churches continued to exist side by side till 1847, when they joined in constituting the United Presbyterian Church.

The congregation did not long remain vacant after the removal of Mr. Smith, for on the 15th of October, the same year, Mr. Alexander Shanks was ordained as minister. Alexander Shanks was born in 1731, in the pastoral parish of Stobo, and county of Peebles. His father was a day labourer, but an intelligent man, and so conspicuous for pious gravity that his presence in any company "over-awed the most profane, and at the same time attracted their esteem." The benevolence of his character was so notable that he was described as one "who never thought he could do enough for either God or man." He was an elder at West Linton, in the congregation which had been formed in 1737 by the secession of five elders and about 70 members, because of a disputed settlement. Over this congregation the Rev. James Mair, from Aberdeenshire, who, as a licentiate, had acceded to the Presbytery, had been ordained in 1740, when Alexander Shanks was nine years of age. With the fervid energy characteristic of his native county, Mr. Mair took the supervision of his country congregation, insisting that the members should know the truth, and urging them on with the threat that unless they could answer his questions better he

would send them back to the Auld Kirk. There was no need, in general, for such a threat, as many of the people were in the habit of reading the works of Owen, Manton, Baxter, Boston, and other theological giants, as well as edifying and sharpening one another in the weekly fellowship meetings, which were said to be sometimes protracted till the morning dawned. From the same congregation came George Lawson, eighteen years younger than Shanks, afterwards minister at Selkirk and Professor of Theology to the Associate Synod. Trained in such a school, and personally addicted from early boyhood to habits of reading, meditation, and prayer, Alexander Shanks grew up, naturally, into a sound and learned theologian. His preliminary education was completed in the Theological Hall, which he entered in 1757, and which was then conducted by James Fisher, one of the first four Seceders.

For a young minister trained as Alexander Shanks had been the congregation at Jedburgh furnished a most eligible field of labour. Though situated in a town, it was largely a country congregation, and in most of the parishes whence the members were gathered the people had been trained under excellent ministers. In the town itself old people could recollect Gabriel Semple, whom Boston describes as "one of the old sufferers who, in the time of the persecution, was eminently countenanced of God with success in the work of the gospel, especially in the borders of England." With him had been associated as assistant in his later years, previous to 1706, Gabriel Wilson, afterwards of Maxton, who did much in after life to promote the cause of the Secession.

The parishes of Ancrum, Crailing, and Eckford, in the Teviot valley, had for generations been nurseries of pious men and women. In Oxnam the minister, till 1738, when he died, aged 84, in the 55th year of his ministry, had been Alexander Colden, who, in earlier times at Duns, had been the bosom friend of Thomas Boston, and the inscription on whose tomb at Oxnam bears that, "as a divine, a Christian, as a minister of Christ, for his piety, learning, wisdom, diligence, and success in gaining souls, he had few equals." In the parish of Oxnam the bounds of Jedburgh congregation extended to the English border, as they did farther west, in the parish of Southdean, where the father of the poet Thomson was incumbent in the early years of the century. In the contiguous parish of Abbotrule, six miles from Jedburgh, had been some good ministers, including the Rev. George Hall, afterwards translated to Linton, near Morebattle, some of whose admirable practical sermons were published in 1732 by Mr. James M'Ewen, Edinburgh.\* In the adjoining parish of Hobkirk

\* Previous to 1660 a son of Mr. John Kerr of Littledean was minister at Abbotrule, having been presented by King James VI., but was deprived of his charge and confined to the parish, after the establishment of Episcopacy. Having preached in his house on the 14th March, 1680, to a congregation of 500, most of whom were outside, he was libelled before the Privy Council on the 6th May following, for keeping a conventicle, and was imprisoned. On the 1st September he was liberated, on giving caution to appear when called, and to hold no conventicles. When scoffingly abused by Meldrum, who commanded a company of soldiers, the good minister replied, "Sir, I was a minister before you had a being, and will be one when you are gone," a prediction which was literally verified, for he survived the Revolution, was restored to his charge, and lived till 1794, when he died at the age of 93, a rare example of a man who had attained the 70th year of his ministry. His wife was accused of witchcraft, and tried by the Presbytery, but the charge was not proven.

Robert Riccaltoun had been minister for thirty-five years when Mr. Shanks was ordained at Jedburgh, and continued till 1769, and then died in his 79th year. Of Jedburgh parish the minister in 1760 was Mr. Douglas, the presentation to whom had occasioned the formation of a Relief congregation in the town. In 1769 he was succeeded by Dr. Macknight, author of "A Harmony of the Four Gospels," who, in 1772, was removed to the West Kirk, Edinburgh, and his place at Jedburgh supplied by Dr. Thomas Somerville. That gentleman had got married, in consequence of which, he says, "there appeared a necessity for the immediate exertions of my friends to procure a more remunerative appointment" than the parish of Minto, where he had been previously located. The translation to Jedburgh "was considered an instance of singular good fortune. The situation was healthy and pleasant, the stipend the largest in the Presbytery, and, though the parish was extensive and populous, yet, from the number of Dissenters, the duties were not at that time more burdensome than in most of the country parishes in the vicinity." The congregation had increased a little under Dr. Macknight, several families having been reclaimed from the Seceders; but Dr. Somerville, in his autobiography, remarks, "A few of them apostatized again on my admission, so that my ordinary hearers were not numerous." A ministry begun and carried on in the spirit thus indicated was not likely to diminish the attractiveness of Mr. Shanks as a Christian pastor.

In 1768, as well as some years before and after, there was great literary activity in the Border coun-

ties, but not of a kind that Shanks was likely to share. For the county of Roxburgh the centre of attraction was Minto, six miles west from Jedburgh, the house of Sir Gilbert Elliot. Born in 1693, Gilbert Elliot was admitted an advocate in 1715, and had a distinguished career. His father, Lord Minto, who had been associated in early life with the Rev. John Livingstone of Ancrum, and had signalised himself by saving James Veitch from a martyr's death, had taken uncommon pains in the education of his son, who became one of the most accomplished men of his time. So classical was his language, and so well chosen and forcible were his topics, that the court in Edinburgh was crowded whenever it was known that he was to speak. Like other young lawyers of his time, he was a constant member of the General Assembly, where for a series of years there were great debates, in which he made a distinguished figure. In 1755 he appeared in a case of disputed settlement at South Leith in opposition to Mr. Dundas, then Lord Advocate, and conducted his case with such modesty and discretion as to carry a majority against the Government official. He entered Parliament in 1754, and in that capacity was equally successful. Possessed of fine poetic talent, he could have written much, and the fragments that exist only cause regret that he did not do more; but he was equally conspicuous for critical skill, and was surrounded by the foremost literary men of his time. The history of Charles V. was read to him in manuscript by Dr. Robertson, who gladly adopted his suggested amendments in regard to style. Among the visitors at Minto were David Hume, John Home (author of the

tragedy of "Douglas"), Mrs. Montagu (author of an "Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare"), Dr. Gregory, Lord Kames, Principal Robertson, and others. In respect of religion and morals, Sir Gilbert discountenanced the laxity generally prevalent among many of his class, and was no less opposed to the sceptical philosophy expounded by Hume. In public matters he was a Liberal, to which side of politics his descendants consistently adhered, and long afterwards found their chief supporters among the middle classes whose principles had been nurtured by Alexander Shanks and others of the same school.

Fourteen months after the ordination of Mr. Shanks on the 23d December, 1761, it was agreed to have an election of elders. The districts to be represented were Grange, Bonjedward, Nisbet, Upper Crailing, Nether Wells, Newbigging, Linthaughlee, and Jedburgh, and the members in these localities were instructed to "look out from among them men of honest report, and exemplary prudence and humility." On the 21st January, 1762, the session met to receive the lists, and, having adjourned to the church, the Moderator preached from 1 Tim. v. 17, "Elders that rule well." Lists having been called for and the vote taken, it was found that William Turnbull had been elected for Grange, William Black for Netherwells and Upper Crailing, Henry Hall for Linthaughlee, and William Caverhill and John Fairgrieve for Jedburgh. Intimation was made that such as had accepted office would be ordained on the 21st February, and some of the elders were present on that day, but it was agreed to delay the ordination "on account of an hurricane which prevented the assembling of the congregation."



The session was frequently occupied with cases of immorality, and generally the delinquents were directed to appear before the congregation for rebuke; but in one instance of flagrant transgression the man was made to appear "clothed in sackcloth." Potatoes had been lately introduced into the district, and, in 1763, James Veitch, servant to Robert Cranston, Crailing, was charged with having taken potatoes belonging to his master. He admitted having, on more than one occasion, taken some in his pockets and his "maud-nook," for which he was sentenced to be publicly rebuked. On another occasion Mary Robson admitted that, while serving at Swinnie, she had taken some yarn belonging to her master, Andrew Harkness, for which she was now sorry. A sessional rebuke was administered. At another meeting compeared Andrew Black, and acknowledged that some time before Whitsunday last he had taken some of Walter Briggs' wheat to ring the mill for grinding the poor folks' batches, which he now saw to be sinful. He also was sessionally rebuked. Much importance was attached to the publicity of a rebuke or admonition. On the 8th December, 1774, the session received from the weekly society in Lanton a signed complaint to the effect that a sessional rebuke having been administered to one of their members, it had been stumbling to them that no intimation thereof had been made from the pulpit. "Not that we presume or allow ourselves to dictate to the session in things above our station;" but they desired to have their remonstrance inserted in the minutes.

Any deviation from established order was at once

checked by the session. At a meeting on the 30th October, 1764, "it having been suggested formerly at an extra-judicial conference that it was whispered through the congregation that one to whom the session had denied Church privileges for some time because he justified himself to the offence of the congregation in liberty to hear all that he thought preached sound doctrine, and refusing charitably to restrain himself in the use of that liberty for the sake of the weak, . . . had been served with a token at Kelso communion in August last; and Robert Turnbull having signified that he was the elder who gave the token, the session agreed to take the matter into consideration, and now desired Robert Turnbull to give reasons for what he had done, without the knowledge or consent of the session;" whereupon Robert Turnbull declared that "he could not in conscience refuse that man a token, because he looked on him as a singular Christian, and wished there were many similar communicants among them." After prolonged dealing, Robert admitted that in a matter that had been judicially decided by the session it was wrong to act on his own private judgment; on which the session expressed satisfaction, and recommended him to act cautiously and prudently in like cases in all time coming. In order that all the elders might understand Church order, it was agreed, in terms of a Synodical recommendation, to procure and read at meetings of session the General Assembly's form of process, and other books on Christian discipline.

In 1769 one of the elders was brought up for having failed to keep a fast-day appointed on the 8th March "in view of the ensuing seed-time." It was

intimated to the meeting in May that Henry Hall had not observed the fast. He was not present, and proceedings were therefore delayed; but meanwhile it was judged inexpedient that he should officiate at the approaching communion. At next meeting he was present, and was heard in explanation of his conduct. The session were "considerably well satisfied," but required him to forbear officiating at the communion, and meanwhile delayed farther consideration of the matter till next ordinary meeting. Ultimately he was allowed to demit his office as an elder, but continue a member of the congregation.

At a meeting of session on the 17th July, 1775, William Reid appeared and confessed that he had taken the abjuration oath, whereby he had given offence. Having expressed regret and promised not to offend again in a similar way, he was dismissed with a recommendation to "be more diligent in attending upon ordinances and other duties of the Christian life." At another meeting "compeared Thomas Sword, and acknowledged that on the Tuesday after the dispensation of the Lord's Supper in June last, as he was going from Jedburgh, one of his neighbours coming up, they fell a-bargaining about a horse, and his neighbour seeking a certain price, he, without any evil intention, said he knew not if he and his horse were both worth that. This was so warmly resented by his neighbour that he immediately struck at his horse and then at himself till he brought him to the ground, and afterwards fell a-struggling with him till they were parted by another neighbour; but when farther on they fell a-struggling a second time." He now expressed

sorrow for what had happened, and was judicially admonished. A similar admonition was given to Andrew Buckham, who acknowledged that in the latter end of May or beginning of June he had been overtaken with drink, and fell a-fighting with one of his comrades.

After a comparatively brief ministry of scarcely thirty-five years Mr. Shanks placed his resignation in the hands of the Kelso Presbytery, and it was accepted on the 28th of July, 1795, but on a petition from the elders to that effect he was allowed to continue moderator of the session. Every step was taken in accordance with strict order. On the 5th January, 1796, a meeting of the elders was called from the precentor's desk, and an extract from the Presbytery minutes was produced. The minister was then sent for, and came in, when, after a brief conference, he opened the meeting in the usual way.

With a constitution naturally robust and an ardent temperament, Mr. Shanks had, from the first, entered on his work at Jedburgh with great enthusiasm, but an early paralytic seizure was the result of his intense application. During nearly nineteen years of his ministerial life he laboured under great bodily infirmity, the paralysis continuing to increase, but to the last he wrote out his discourses, though he was compelled to employ one hand to steady the other, and was often obliged to lie at full length on his study floor. Taught by experience when too late, he began to take greater care of his health, taking regular exercise in the open air, and relieving his mind when fatigued with long and close thinking by short interviews with some families in the town

and neighbourhood, the duration of his stay in each place seldom exceeding ten minutes, and never more than a quarter of an hour. While a student he had read many of the best theological books, but soon after ordination he lost all relish for works of human composition, and gave himself to the study of the Bible, which ever afterwards maintained an exclusive ascendancy over his mind. To biblical study his days and nights were devoted, and, as might be reasonably expected, he became "mighty in the scriptures." In the Life of Dr. Lawson, it is said that on one occasion Shanks rode over to Selkirk during the night to consult that learned Professor regarding the meaning of a text, but the story as there told is not quite correct. The true version was suggested to the Rev. John Polson by Mr. John Dodds, long a respected elder in the congregation. Shanks had a habit of early rising, while the rule at Selkirk manse was quite different; and it was easy for the Jedburgh minister to ride over on a summer morning in time to find the Professor still asleep. Roused from his slumbers, Lawson explained the text, but expressed surprise that one who had been so long in the ministry could have felt any difficulty on the subject. Lawson got dressed, and expected to find Shanks at the breakfast table, but learned with surprise that he was already far on the road toward Jedburgh. Remarking that he was "a fiery bit body," Mr. Dodds gave it as his opinion that Shanks had intended to remain to breakfast, but had been nettled by the Professor's remark about his failure to understand the text, and had gone off in a huff.

Shanks excelled in the art of lecturing. The subject of lecture was contained in four to six, but sometimes as many as twelve, verses. Adhering strictly to the scope of the passage, he made a judicious division of its parts, and expounded each portion with much perspicuity, introducing concise illustrations, with many natural and practical reflections. The time occupied by the lecture was about forty minutes, and he likewise preached a short sermon in the forenoon, usually from some verse in the passage from which he had lectured. Among his favourite subjects were the perfections and covenant relations of God the Father, the duty and offices of the Son, the person and operations of the Holy Spirit, and other grand distinguishing doctrines of the Christian religion, and his sermons on these subjects were much admired. His characteristic excellence as a preacher, according to Robert Hall of Kelso, consisted in the mastery of scripture sentiment and scripture imagery with which he was able to enrich and enliven his discourses; and the sermons "being delivered with a grave, forcible, dignified, and impressive utterance peculiar to himself, never failed to produce in the minds of his audience the deepest and most solemn effect." Shanks was exceedingly careful in the composition of his discourses, aiming at the model of sublimity as defined by Longinus, whose treatise he read once every year. Regarding his appearance in the pulpit his successor, the Rev. Peter Young, described it as indicating great self-possession. "He stood erect, and with little motion of his body while delivering his discourses; his countenance sedate, and often inclining

to a smile. The gentle motion of his paralytic hand, his fine eye rolling to the different parts of his audience, accompanied by a voice of unequalled solemnity and pathos; in short, his whole appearance, and language corresponding with the grandeur of his subjects, and the noble flights of his imagination, fairly displayed the holy warmth of his heart, and often made an impression on his audience which cannot be described." Yet, through bodily infirmity acting on a sensitive temperament, "he often stood in the pulpit under an horror of great darkness, doubting at times the rationality of his own nature, and fearing at another that he was about to be struck down by the avenging arm of a holy God."

The appeals of Mr. Shanks to his hearers were sometimes uncommonly pointed and impressive. Stories are told of quaintly expressed rebukes to drowsy hearers, and those who came before the congregation for discipline. His reproof of a swearer is described in a brief memoir by Mr. Young, his colleague and successor. Finding a servant one day beating his master's horses, and taking the name of God in vain, he stood still and reproved him sharply. The servant made no reply, but, prompted by curiosity, came next day to hear his reprover preach. "Swear not at all," said the preacher, when concluding his discourse, "is a divine command that binds both master and servant. I knew a man not long ago who surprised one of the swearing tribe of servants in the very act of damning his master's horses. The son of Belial, though challenged, durst not open his mouth for his father's interest, but hung down his head like a coward in the devil's service.

He passed by, and had not the manners to thank his reprover, or grace to promise amendment. Is he here? Do I see him? Shall I name him?" After a pause he added, "No, we will rather pray for him." The culprit, who was sitting in a state of great agitation, came afterwards to the minister, confessed his fault, became a member of the congregation, and was never again known to indulge in profane swearing.


For a discourse on the words, "Curse not the king," preached and published during the early years of the French Revolution, Shanks was offered a pension by the Government; but the offer was declined in these memorable terms:—"I am loyal from conscience, a Seceder from principle; I have done nothing more than my duty; I take no reward." It is known that his neighbour, Dr. Somerville, minister of the Established Church, was in embarrassed circumstances, from which he was labouring to extricate himself by literary effort; and, according to tradition, Mr. Shanks, with generous simplicity, suggested that he might have the proposed pension. Shanks was likewise the author of a sermon entitled "Peace and Order recommended to Society;" a sermon on Joel ii. 17, preached in 1771 before the Synod; and a volume entitled "Salvation through the Grace of our Saviour Displayed, the Doctrine of Grace Illustrated, and Righteousness in all Manner of Conversation Recommended." Two octavo volumes were published at different times after his decease, to one of which a brief memoir by his colleague and successor is prefixed.

In the congregation were many excellent Christian



people, and some of great intelligence on matters of scripture doctrine. Most families had a few good books, which were carefully and thoughtfully studied. At a diet of examination a woman once answered a question in a way that surprised the minister, and when asked, "How did you know that?" her reply was, "Ralph says sae." A young woman, afterwards mother of a family, was engaged in carrying seed to the sowers in spring. She had recently come by a copy of Ralph's "Gospel Sonnets," and occupied every leisure moment in committing the poems to memory. Some of the people were very poor, but wonderfully contented. An old man whose life-work was finished, and who could only sit by the ingle nook, was one day visited by the minister. It was a cold winter day, the wind was whistling through many a crevice, the old man's shoulders were wrapped round with a homespun "maud" to keep out the chilling blast. To the question how he felt, the ready reply was, "Oh, sir, I'm just sittin' under His shadow wi' great delight." Another, who was dying, expressed himself just "a wee thing confused wi' the flittin'." One on his death-bed confessed that he had been a good deal troubled with the adversary, but, in the end, "I just packed him off, an' he never lookit ower his shoulder."

In 1799, a year black with disaster to agriculturists, on the 5th of October, Mr. Shanks died in the 68th year of his age and the 39th after his ordination. The Rev. Peter Young, from Kelso, had a year previously been ordained as his colleague, and the two pastors were united by bonds of tender solicitude and unwearied kindness. The cause of death was



palsy, with which Mr. Shanks was seized on the 15th August, 1799; and with great serenity he witnessed the shadows gathering around him. In answer to a question he said, "My hope is the hope set before me in the gospel, and I rejoice in hope of the glory of God." On the last day of his life he was uncommonly fresh, vigorous, and collected, apparently like one waiting for the coming of his Lord, and saying at times, "When will Christ come in? When will Christ come in?" At four o'clock, on the morning of the 5th October, as Robert Hall of Kelso remarked, "He was taken to be with God, to see and enjoy for himself what he had all his life been preaching and recommending to others." On the following Sabbath his surviving colleague preached from 2d Kings ii. 12, "And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof! and he saw him no more."

Several students of theology were connected with the congregation during the ministry of Mr. Shanks. James Scott was ordained at Bridge Street, Musselburgh, in 1768; and in 1770 Andrew Davidson became minister of the West Church, Duns, where he had a large congregation, over which he presided fifty-four years, and died in the 84th year of his age. Alexander Dickson was ordained in 1772 as the first minister of Golden Square, now Wallace Green, Berwick, but his ministry lasted scarcely nine years. John Smart was ordained in 1789 as minister of the church founded by Ebenezer Erskine at Stirling, where, after a distinguished career, and obtaining from Glasgow University the degree of D.D., he died in November, 1845, in the 82d year of his age

and the 57th of his ministry. John Jardine became minister of the North Church, Langholm, where he organized a good congregation, and continued his labours till 1820, when he died in the 71st year of his age. Benoni Black was ordained at Haddington East Church in 1789; and, in 1792, George Black became minister of Kinghorn. William Smart, a younger brother of John, became minister of Abbey Close, Paisley, in 1802; James Henderson was ordained at East Bank, Hawick, where he was minister for about fifty years; and Robert Balmer was ordained at Berwick on the 23d March, becoming also Professor of Systematic Theology to the United Secession Church, and a D.D. of St. Andrews University. Regarding two of these students a more detailed account will serve to illustrate the Christian life of the congregation at that time.

About Eckford Moss there seems to have been a little colony of excellent people, who had probably owed their training to the good ministers of Eckford parish. Among them was William Smart, a "labouring man," highly esteemed by his neighbours for intelligence, probity, independence, and high Christian principle. In boyhood William Smart desired to be a minister, and the wish occupied his thoughts even to the distraction of his attention from daily work, till, in a dream, he was warned that not he but his son was destined to the sacred office. It turned out that not only the oldest but the youngest son became a successful minister, while a third was a much-respected elder, and two grandsons also became ministers in the Secession Church. William Smart

himself was an elder in the congregation of Mr. Shanks at Jedburgh.

John Smart, his eldest son, was born at Eckford Moss on the 23d February, 1764; and after a preliminary education at Nisbet, Crailing, and Jedburgh went in 1781 to the University of Edinburgh. Letters from his father indicate the manly, honourable feeling, the rich Christian principle, the superior natural sagacity, the fine moral sentiment, and the good nervous style of writing that characterised these admirable Scottish peasantry. One specimen will illustrate the style of parental supervision. Writing on the 8th December, 1783, and obviously referring to the dream of his early years, William Smart says:—"And now, my son, I gave you once some hint how matters stood between God and me, on your account, and think on it. I left the work in His own hand, and He has given me to see more of His wisdom, power, love, and faithfulness than I can mention. O, my son! do you not see Him in the dispensation of this providence toward you? I see He has graciously honoured me, the very chief of the chief of sinners. Take care lest He cast you off for yourself. But I hope better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though I thus speak. In every place take care to glorify Him, and He will honour you. Trust Him for what you need for time and eternity; thank Him for what you have; mind your holiness, and He will not forget your happiness."

In 1784 John Smart became a student of theology under John Brown at Haddington. The Theological Hall was open only two months in each year, and

his time was occupied as a tutor, first at Holefield and afterwards at Eckford Mains, near the place of his birth. At Holefield one of his pupils was James Pringle, afterwards minister at Newcastle. In the family of Mr. Oliphant, at Eckford Mains, he had the happiness of being near his parents and early friends, and joining the congregation of Mr. Shanks, by whom he had been baptized. On the 23d September, 1788, Mr. Smart was licensed by the Presbytery of Kelso, and was soon afterwards called to Hawick and Lanark, besides Erskine Church, Stirling, where he was settled.

Another eminent minister belonging to the same neighbourhood was Robert Balmer, who was born on the 22d November, 1787, at Ormiston Mains, in the parish of Eckford. His father, Thomas Balmer, farm steward at Ormiston, was a member of the congregation at Morebattle, and was doubtless one of those who were admonished for "hearing the Anti-Government ministers at Eckford Moss."\* The wife of Thomas, and mother of the future Professor, was Margaret Biggar, a granddaughter of James Biggar; mentioned in the Autobiography of Thomas Boston as an elder at Ettrick, who, with his family, had been most comfortable to him as a minister, and whose benediction was thus fervently expressed:—"May the blessing of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, rest on them from generation to generation! May the glorious gospel of His Son catch them early, and maintain its ground in them to the end!" Margaret Biggar was a member of the congregation at Jedburgh, and, before marriage, stipulated with Thomas

\* See page 127, *ante*.

Balmer "that they should abide by their respective Churches, without fretting at each other on this account." Thomas was a grave and serious man; Margaret was of a lively and cheerful temperament, much respected by her neighbours as being peculiarly well informed on religious subjects, with no little sagacity and energy of mind. Robert, the first-born of this excellent couple, was a sickly child, but active in mind, and early instructed in Christian truth. One night his mother, when washing the little boy, remarked on his weakness, and said, "Indeed, he looks as if, before Saturday at e'en, he'd be in his grave." The little one looked up quietly, and said, "Aye, then I'll be with Jesus."

When Robert Balmer was three years of age his parents removed to Upper Crailing. There he first went to school, and was instructed by a school-mistress to read and write. In November, 1796, he went to another school at Crailing Mill, where the teacher was Mr. Richard Scott, afterwards an elder in Golden Square congregation at Berwick. About that time one old man, a neighbour, was in the habit of coming frequently at leisure hours to converse with Thomas Balmer and his wife. The good man was harassed with doubts and fears about his interest in the Saviour. One day Robert listened while his mother argued with the poor man, endeavouring to persuade him to dismiss his unbelieving fears and commit himself trustfully to Christ. Her efforts were vain, and he reiterated, "Christ will have nothing to do with me." Robert, perceiving, apparently, that the man was under the influence of some morbid feeling, said, "Then what is the use of your aye talk,

talking about Him to my mother? If He'll have nothing to do with you, can't you let Him alone?" "Let Him alone, hinny," exclaimed the old man, "I would not let Him alone for a thousand worlds." "Oh, then," said the boy, "I'm thinking you'll do well enough."

Thomas Balmer died when his son Robert was about ten years of age. The worthy man looked forward to his change with composure, and departed in the full confidence that he was entering into rest. When the end was near he called the family around him, solemnly blessed them, laid his hand on each in turn, repeating a scripture promise, and then bade them all farewell. On the question of Robert's going on with his education, the dying man said to his wife, "Just be guided by your means, and by your judgment. See that the rest be not injured by what you do for him; but if you can, let him go on."

The funeral was over, and before retiring for the night Robert brought the books for family worship as he had been accustomed to do, but now placed them before his mother. She was, naturally, overcome; but her youthful comforter said that God who had taken away his father would be a Father to them, and, said he, "We must not go to bed without worshipping Him." His mother then took the books, and conducted worship for the family regularly till Robert was old enough to undertake the exercise. Thomas Balmer had left a little money, and his widow opened a small shop at Eckford Moss, from the profits of which she was able to maintain a family of three sons and a daughter, allowing Robert to continue his studies, while not permitting

the others to suffer. Without solicitation Robert, who had formerly attended church at Morebattle, now accompanied his mother to the meeting-house of Mr. Shanks. The first day of his attendance was a communion Sabbath, and during the action sermon Robert sat before his mother on the grass. She had not seen him before at a public service, and was grieved to see that he was restless; but was agreeably surprised to find, on the way home, that he could remember more of the sermon than any one else. After he had several times modestly interposed in the conversation, an elder, who was in the company, asked, "Margaret, d'ye ken wha's laddie that is?" With gratitude and honest maternal pride, she replied, "The laddie is mine."

Robert Balmer attended school at Eckford for a short time, afterwards walked regularly to Morebattle, then under Mr. Richardson, and finished his preliminary studies at Kelso under Mr. Dymock, afterwards Dr. Dymock of the High School, Glasgow. Here he met with Thomas Pringle of Easterstead, and a life-long friendship was the result. Balmer went afterwards to the University of Edinburgh; studied theology under Dr. George Lawson; and, after a most distinguished career, died at Berwick on Monday the 1st July, 1844, at a comparatively early age. The communion had been arranged for the following Sabbath, when the services were conducted by the Rev. Joseph Brown, Dalkeith, afterwards Dr. Brown of Kent Road, Glasgow. The scene at the funeral has been described as "altogether overwhelming. The crowded and sobbing audience at the religious services in the chapel,



where the coffin containing the remains of him who had so long ministered there lay covered with a pall before the pulpit; the long and solemn procession down the street which led to the burying-place; the deep silence that was maintained amid the mournful tolling of the bells—all seemed to testify the universal feeling that a great calamity had befallen—that a common bereavement was mourned.”

On the 15th August, 1798, Mr. Peter Young, from the congregation of Robert Hall in Kelso, was ordained as colleague and successor to Mr. Shanks, and his ministry of twenty-six years was uncommonly prosperous. At the ordination there were present Messrs. David Ure (*moderator p. t.*), John Riddoch, George Lawson, George Bell, William Elder, Richard Hall, Alexander Calderhead, James Henderson, Robert Greig, and Robert Easton, ministers, with Messrs. George Henderson (Wooler); James Young (Berwick), William Marshall (Stitchel), and James Ferguson (Hawick), ruling elders. The public services were begun in a tent by the moderator, who preached from Gal. vi. 14—“God forbid that I should glory,” &c.—conducted the ordination service, and gave the charges to minister and people. The Rev. George Lawson preached from Luke viii. 18—“Take heed how ye hear.”

The session was still a good deal occupied with petty offences. On the 14th November, 1804, appeared Margaret King, who declared that she heard Agnes Hobkirk call Peggie Rutherford “a murdering limmer.” The clerk was instructed to write Agnes Hobkirk, intimating that “until she cultivated a better temper toward her neighbours she cannot be

of our communion." On the 18th December, 1806, John Sibbald acknowledged that he had been intoxicated some time in harvest last, and had, at the same time, been guilty of profane swearing, for all which he expressed sorrow, and submitted to an admonition.

About 1807 appears the first indication of giving up "reading the line" in singing. There was presented to the session a petition signed by George Clark, purporting "that several members of the congregation were not satisfied with reading the line in singing psalms in public worship, and desiring the advice of the session thereanent." Consideration was deferred, but, at next ordinary meeting, "the session, having considered the same, do not judge it expedient to do anything in the matter at present, but order the petition to lie on the table." On the 31st October, 1810, consideration was resumed, when the session agreed that "the mode requested to be adopted in the petition is, in certain circumstances, preferable to that in use, yet from the late ferment in the congregation they judge it not expedient to make any change at present, conceiving that should they do so it would rather promote strife than godly edifying."

On the 6th August, 1816, the subject came up again, together with some additional innovations. A memorial was read from some members of the congregation, in which they request the session to adopt an improvement in the mode of singing in public worship without giving out the line; also, request the pastor to give out paraphrases when he thinks it for edification; and, third, to allow the congregation to choose another precentor. It was

agreed to instruct the precentor to sing without giving out the line; also, to leave it to the discretion of the minister to use the paraphrases when he deems it for edification, but the session were of opinion that the memorialists had no right to interfere with the appointment of a precentor, as that privilege had always been exercised by the session alone.

The psalmody question was not yet settled. On the 25th November, 1816, there were read remonstrances against the mode of singing psalms without giving out the line, and against using the paraphrases in public worship. Having deliberated at some length on the subject, the session "find no argument advanced of sufficient weight to induce them to reverse what they formerly agreed to respecting this subject." Again, on the 3d March, 1818, petitions were presented from a number of members complaining of Francis Hogg, the precentor, and representing him as not acceptable to the congregation. The session, after considering said representations, see it to be their duty to recommend Francis Hogg to demit his office, on the ground that his continuance therein would not be expedient; but in respect he has always conducted himself properly in his office, the session "agree to pay his salary till Martinmas next."

As a pastor Mr. Young was greatly esteemed. According to Robert Hall, the minister of his early days, and whom he assisted every year for twenty-five years at the communion, "benevolence to men was the very element in which his soul lived and moved," and "in him Christianity appeared lovely and inviting, pouring day over the dark mind,

strengthening the weak, consoling the afflicted, gladdening the hearts of the faithful, commanding the respect of the most worthless." His piety shone "not like the moon when labouring under an eclipse, but like the sun when shining beautifully in the heavens." In his discourses there was "an uncommon zest of *savouriness*, for his heart was transfused into the words which proceeded from his lips." He was tall and slender in form, his countenance mild, his manner grave, his utterance distinct, his voice full in its tone. The truth uttered by him was tenderly and strongly impressive; but on the people it fell "not as lightning and thunder and tempest, but as the warm and refreshing rain upon the earth."

During the ministry of Mr. Young the congregation continued rapidly to increase. At his first communion in June, 1799, there were fifty-nine young persons admitted, besides five "accessions." In other years they came up to about the same number. A new church was built in 1801; and in 1818 was erected a handsome, spacious, and substantial edifice, sufficient to accommodate about 1500 hearers. The ground covered by the congregation was very extensive, for it marched with Otterburn in England and with Newcastleton along the Scottish side of the Border. In 1804 there was an election of elders, one of whom was for "the head of Rulewater." At the extremity of that district, ten miles from Jedburgh, James Davidson, best known as "Dandie Dinmont," occupied the pastoral farm of Hindlee, 5000 acres in extent, stretching to the English Border and to the summit of the ridge dividing Teviotdale from Liddesdale. He was a constant attendant on the ministry

of Mr. Young, even when residing at Hindlee, but came afterwards to Bongate, at the townfoot of Jedburgh. In 1819 Dr. Waugh of London, along with Mr. Young, visited Mr. Davidson, and "readily obtained from him a whulp of *Old Mustard*, newly spaened," which the worthy doctor carried off to London. In the house of a relative at Berwick, where Dr. Waugh halted in his southward journey, it is said that "many were the handkerchiefs torn to pieces, and great was the domestic confusion occasionally produced, by his attempts to elicit evidences of its inherited dispositions." He carried it off to London as a great treasure, and was much excited when he introduced to his family there his "auld-farrant-looking young friend." A letter from Mr. Young records the closing scene of Mr. Davidson's life:—"I read to Mr. Davidson the very interesting and suitable truths you addressed to him. He listened to them with great seriousness, and has uniformly displayed a deep concern about his soul's salvation. He died on the first Sabbath of the year 1820; an apoplectic stroke deprived him in an instant of all sensation; but, happily, his brother was at his bed-side, for he had detained him from the meeting-house that day to be near him, although he felt himself not much worse than usual. So you have got the last little Mustard that the hand of Dandie Dinmont bestowed." In Oxnam church-yard is a flat slab, bearing the inscription—"James Davidson, late tenant in Hindlee, who died at Bongate [Jedburgh], 2d January, 1820. Aged 55 years."

The minister himself died on the 18th October, 1824, in the 50th year of his age and the 27th of his

ministry. In the time of sickness he enjoyed great mental serenity. A fortnight before his death he seemed to recover somewhat, and said to a friend, "I have been within sight of the harbour, but I think I am again blown back a little." On the evening before he died, which was a Sabbath evening, he said to friends beside him, "You see me here making rapid progress to eternity, and I am marching under the brightest beams, both from the outward kindness of God and His inward communications to my soul."

The fourth minister of the congregation was William Nicol, from the congregation of Dr. Lawson at Selkirk, in which town his father was a merchant. Naturally bright and of studious habits, Mr Nicol was sent to the University, and in classics, physics, and medicine became one of the best students of his time. In 1815 he entered the Theological Hall, then conducted by Professor Lawson, and one of his contemporaries was William Rutherford, afterwards of Newtown.

During his theological course Mr. Nicol, like many another earnest student, was disturbed with philosophic doubts, and for a season intermitted his studies. Unable to express belief in a particular dogma, and feeling that he could not consistently proceed with preparations for the ministry, but unwilling to grieve and disappoint his father, he expressed a desire to visit America. There he spent some time among the Indians, far removed from any contact with European civilization, and adopted for a time the manner of life and nomadic habits of the native tribes. Treating them with kindness and confidence, he won the

hearts of the simple-minded Indians. While resident in the primeval forest his mind continued to brood over the subject which had for a time banished him from the society of civilized men. Wandering in the forest one day, in a region where he believed no white man had ever been before, he was surprised to find among the grass a piece of printed paper. It turned out to be a portion of a Scottish newspaper, with an obituary list, in which was included the death of an early friend, of whose illness Mr. Nicol had no previous knowledge. This intimation, coming so unexpectedly, and in such peculiar circumstances, induced a train of thought that removed his doubts, and led to the resumption of his theological studies, which were in due time completed, and he was licensed to preach the gospel.

At first Mr. Nicol did not find acceptance as a preacher, and under the influence of "hope deferred," he was looking about for some other avenue of usefulness, when it occurred to him that his discourses were too scientific, and that a different style might be more acceptable. The result fully justified his expectation; and calls were addressed to him from Kirkcaldy, Kilpatrick, Glasgow (Gordon Street), Portobello, Dunfermline (Queen Anne Street), and Jedburgh. His fame as a preacher had preceded him to Jedburgh; and when the young probationer arrived from London, weary and dust-covered, on a Saturday evening, special messengers were dispatched to circulate the news. Next day the spacious church was crowded, and the enthusiasm of the people was unbounded. A moderation was obtained, at which the Rev. James Clark of the Townhead, formerly the

Anti-Burgher, congregation, presided. The call was signed immediately by 502 members; and, at the meeting of Presbytery, there was presented a paper of concurrence signed by 314 others who had been unable to be present. There was also a paper signed by 103 ordinary hearers. Competing calls were then decided by the Synod, and, in accordance with Mr. Nicol's desire, the decision was in favour of Jedburgh. The stipend promised was £160 yearly, with a free house and garden, and £5 at each communion. The ordination was fixed for Wednesday the 17th August, 1825—Mr. Williamson, Melrose, to preach and preside; Mr. Robert Hall, Kelso, to give the charges to minister and people; and Mr Thomson, Coldstream, to conclude with devotional exercises. A concluding sermon had now disappeared from the programme. Mr. Hall, not being able for his part of the work, his place was taken by another.

For years after the settlement of Mr. Nicol in Jedburgh, his popularity was very great. His personal appearance was uncommonly prepossessing. Tall and erect in figure, he had a broad, open, benevolent countenance, expressive also of strong will, searching intellect, and commanding ability. His discourses were elegant, his elocution graceful, his earnestness in pressing home practical truth sometimes overpowering. From all the district within a circuit of ten miles crowds of eager worshippers flocked from hillside and glen; and, though the Relief was then largely attended, and a proportion turned in to the Townhead meeting-house, the majority always found their way to the Townfoot. At the date of Mr. Nicol's ordination there were 1620

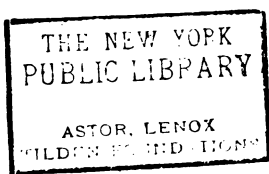




My dear Janet -

Yours affectionately

Wm Lloyd  
W



members on the roll; and the attendance was so large that seat-holders could not be sure of finding accommodation unless they were early in their places. On communion occasions it was necessary to have seats in all the passages. A course of lectures on the Book of Revelation was particularly attractive, and many intelligent hearers were desirous that these should be published, but to this Mr. Nicol could not see his way. Five sermons, delivered on special occasions, were at different times published, besides a letter addressed to the Rev. John Purves, in reply to a document circulated by the kirk-session of Jedburgh. In August, 1853, the degree of D.D. was conferred on him by the University of Glasgow. The physical powers of Dr. Nicol began early to fail, and, after having enjoyed the assistance of a colleague for fully two years, he died on the 28th December, 1858, in the 62d year of his age and the 34th of his ministry. The works published by Dr. Nicol were "A Sermon preached on the occasion of the National Fast in 1832, on account of the Visitation of the Cholera Morbus;" "A Sermon preached at Selkirk on 3d December, 1849, on the occasion of the Death of Rev. George Lawson, Minister there;" "The Magnanimity of God as a God of Mercy" (1850); "A Discourse on the Expiation of Sin by Our Lord Jesus Christ" (1858); "The Comfort of Love: a Sermon preached to the Established Church Congregation worshipping in Blackfriars Church while the Parish Church was being repaired" (1857).

In addition to those ministers previously mentioned who were connected with the congregation in early life there were James Waugh, ordained at Sunder-

land, 1766, died 1786; John Henderson, Dunbar, 1767-1816; George Bell, Wooler, 1778-1800; James Mather, Maybole, 1798-1811; Moses Henry Williamson, North Sunderland, 1810-1817; Thomas Hill, Glenluce, 1818, suspended in 1819; George Wood, Kirkcudbright, 1820-1870; William Rutherford, ordained at Newtown in 1821, died in 1843; James Mein, ordained at Nairn in 1822, died in 1841; Robert Brown, ordained at St. Margaret's, Dunfermline, in 1826, died in 1828; John Hunter, Savoch-of-Deer, 1833-1865; George Robson, ordained at Lauder in 1834; George Dodds, ordained at St. George's, New-castle, in 1852; John Caverhill Jackson, ordained at Colinsburgh in 1850; James Christie, B.A., ordained as colleague to his father at Otterburn in 1862, translated to Carlisle in 1870; Adam S. Matheson, ordained at Alloa in 1862, translated to Claremont Church, Glasgow, afterwards to Dumbarton; George Rae, M.A., Dumfries, afterwards of Gourrock; and Thomas Davidson, widely known as "The Scottish Probationer." Among others directly sprung from the congregation is the Rev. Charles Jerdan, M.A., LL.B., Dennyloanhead, afterwards of Greenock, whose father, Mr. David Jerdan, was formerly a member.

A student connected with the congregation in early life, but who joined another denomination at an early stage of his course, was Dr. William Veitch, the noted Greek scholar. His grandfather, James Veitch, and his father, John Veitch, were successively tenants of Spittal Mill, on the Teviot. In 1791 John Veitch married Jean Elliot, daughter of William Elliot, Lanton Mains, a woman of uncommon intelligence and sterling Christian principle. They had a

family of twelve children, of whom William was the third, but the second son. He was born in July, 1794, and was baptized by Mr. Shanks on the last day of the same month. In April, 1802, Mr. John Veitch was elected to the eldership, but declined to accept office. Having by exemplary diligence in business and a careful style of living acquired a modest competence, Mr. Veitch, with a view to the education of his family, removed to Jedburgh in 1810. It was the desire of the parents that their two eldest sons should become ministers; and James had entered the Theological Hall at Selkirk, but an unfavourable criticism of a discourse by a member of the Presbytery altered his whole career, and led William also to leave the Church of his fathers. Though both brothers left the Secession Church, the other members of the family remained unshaken. John Veitch died in July, 1816; and the family removed to Ancrum, but in 1823 took up their permanent abode in a cottage at Lanton, which ultimately became the property of Dr. Veitch, and his cherished home when in the country during his annual holidays.

On the 12th November, 1856, Rev. John Polson, from Paisley (Thread Street), was ordained as colleague to Dr. Nicol; and till the decease of the senior pastor, the two colleagues enjoyed the most kindly and confidential intercourse. Numerically, the congregation has declined, owing to the multiplication of churches and changes in the habits of the people; but it is more compact, and has, in recent years, made numerous improvements on the manse and the church, besides building a commodious hall

for meetings and for the accommodation of an unusually excellent congregational library, to which a private member of the congregation, the late Robert Hunter of Hindsfield, devoted much attention, and contributed many standard volumes.

At the "breach" of the Associate Synod in 1747 one elder and eighteen members separated themselves from the congregation at Jedburgh, and were united for a time to the Anti-Burghers at Gateshaw. Increasing in numbers, and strengthened by the adhesion of others in the neighbourhood who sympathised with them, the little company applied for a disjunction from Gateshaw, and, in 1752, these members were formed into a congregation at Jedburgh. Till 1765 this select little flock assembled in a hall, but in that year took possession of a meeting-house that had been erected near the "townhead," containing 400 sittings. The congregation called Mr. Alexander Oliver, who was appointed by the Synod to Craigmalen; but a second effort was more successful, and, on the 28th August, 1765, Mr. John Robertson, from Milnathort (Second), was ordained as their first minister.

Till his death in 1806, "Maister Robieson," as he was locally designated, ministered faithfully, and with great appreciation, to a compact little congregation of zealous and intelligent Anti-Burghers. He had never more than £40 of yearly stipend; but in his congregation were some substantial farmers and kindly matrons, whose gifts in the shape of produce contributed to keep the manse larder comfortably filled. In like manner he was hospitably entertained, and lodged for a night, if necessary, when visiting

his people in remote districts. A fowl was usually killed for his use; and in the quiet jocular style which was much appreciated by the people he is said to have occasionally remarked that "the chuckies may keckle when I come to the town."\* With this moderate income, and a trifle belonging to his wife, Mr. Robertson managed to maintain and educate his family, and even to save money.

In 1771, six years after the ordination of Mr. Robertson, James Brewster, a man of sterling worth, and considered to be one of the best classical scholars and teachers of his day, was appointed rector of the Grammar School at Jedburgh, and lived in the Canongate, just beside the house of Mr. Robertson. Ten years later, on the 11th December, 1781, was born David, third child and second son of the rector, who afterwards became the distinguished Professor and Principal Sir David Brewster. Two sons of the Anti-Burgher minister likewise attained very high positions—one as a member of the well-known firm of Spottiswoode & Robertson, Parliamentary solicitors in London; the other as a responsible editor in one department of *The Times* newspaper. Great intimacy

\* Even in higher social circles a fowl, with perhaps a piece of salt beef, constituted a principal part of the dinners of that period. In the published notes by John Ramsay of Ochertyre (vol. ii., p. 68) it is said—"Few of our gentry kept as full or regular a table; and as their guests were, for the most part, upon an easy footing, broth, a couple of fowls, newly killed perhaps, or a joint of meat, was thought no bad dinner." Visitors often came early; and it was necessary to catch, kill, and cook the fowls in time for dinner precisely at one o'clock. An uncle of Baron Clerk, who lived at Penicuik, was accustomed to visit the Tweeddale lairds in the forenoon. "He stayed till he heard the hens intended for his dinner give their last scream, after which, in spite of all they could say, he very ill-naturedly went off."

subsisted between the Brewster and the Robertson families, and the young people had a habit of communicating with each other across the street by a telegraphic system mutually arranged. With David Brewster and three brothers, and the young Robertsons, was associated James Scott, a son of the Relief minister, an object of great interest and amusement owing to his eccentric cleverness, and afterwards a popular preacher in the Cowgate of Edinburgh. In the streets of that city he became a well-recognised figure; and was described as "a little man, of long corpulent body, short legs and large head, with a brown wig and wide hat." One year younger than David Brewster, and a member of the same youthful set, so far as etiquette would permit, was Mary Fairfax, born in the manse of her uncle, Dr. Somerville, and destined, as Mrs. Greig, and afterwards as Mrs. Mary Somerville, to attain great distinction as a scientific writer.

In Jedburgh, at that period, were many remarkable men. The parish minister was Dr. Thomas Somerville, a Moderate in his theological views, but a man of learning, an elegant writer, a friend of many eminent men, by some of whom he was at various times visited at his comfortable manse. Among laymen there was Mr. John Ainslie, land-surveyor, well known for his large map of Scotland; Robert Easton, known as "Lang Rob," a land measurer, fond of astronomical and botanical pursuits; Alexander Scott of Fala, afterwards factor to the Earl of Hopetoun; George Forrest, gunmaker, whose inventions were favourably regarded by eminent authorities; William Hope, ironmonger, in-



ventor of a new printing press; and, besides several others, James Veitch of Inchbonny, described by Sir Walter Scott as "a very remarkable man, a self-taught philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician, . . . and certainly one of the most extraordinary persons I ever knew."

To what extent Mr. Robertson associated with such men, or with French prisoners of war, then living in a kind of honourable captivity within the burgh, it is now impossible to say. Certainly his sons had profited by such facilities for self-improvement as then largely existed, and their youthful aspirations were doubtless tempered and directed by the discretion of parental experience. Two daughters, who continued to live in Jedburgh till the last of them died in 1868, had the bearing and manner of educated gentlewomen, familiar with the manners of good society. It is highly probable that Mr. Robertson was a scholarly man, with a good share of sound sense, and quite able to act his part in any company; but not in the habit of frittering away on historical or philosophical disquisitions the time and talents consecrated to more sacred work. Hence, he is never mentioned by writers like Dr. Somerville or Sir Walter Scott, probably saw little of Robert Burns, and not much of the scientific men who lived in the district or came on occasional visits, but rather used up time and strength in his study, or in visiting the members of his congregation. As a result of patient and faithful work, Mr. Robertson built up a compact little congregation of earnest and devoted Anti-Burghers; and after having thus served his generation, died on the 24th of April,

1806, in the 68th year of his age and the 41st of his ministry.

On the 19th August, 1807, Mr. James Clark, from Clerk's Lane, Kilmarnock, was ordained as the second minister of the Townhead congregation. There was a proportion of members in the town, but others were scattered over a wide area, and consisted of farmers, shepherds, small tradesmen, and cottars, far up the vales of the Oxnam, the Jed, the Rule, and other mountain streams. One farmer's family travelled regularly from Riccaltoun, ten miles distant, and not very far from the Border line. A shepherd's household came from Whitelee, on the English side of the Carter Fell, a distance of not less than twelve miles. Others came from Westshiels and Jedheads, on the farm of "Dandie Dinmont," ten or twelve miles distant, and near the confines of Liddesdale. In the locality of Abbotrule, in Southdean parish, six miles from Jedburgh, was a little colony of staunch Anti-Burghers, chief among whom was Mark King, commonly known as "Maister Clairk's recruiting sergeant." The house of Mark was a humble thatched cottage, consisting of one apartment, and a single window with four small panes of glass. He was a cooper, a species of artizan whose handiwork was in request when porridge "bickers," milk "bowies," and other wooden vessels were in constant use. As summer advanced Mark would travel southward to the Lincolnshire fens, where, with the help of sons, as they grew up, he would pocket some English gold by assisting with the wheat harvest, generally working by the piece. They would return in time for the harvest nearer home; and thus, in a succession of

weeks, money was made sufficient to carry the family well through the winter. Some additional help was derived from the younger members of the family gleanings after the shearers. The hours of rest for breakfast and dinner were occupied with theological discussions; the winter evenings were similarly improved; and Mark had really some success in making proselytes. With a marvellous number of really substantial theological books by English as well as Scottish divines, including Hervey's *Meditations and Contemplations*, and many others of a similar class, and with a naturally good understanding, Mark was usually able to silence his opponents; but his great treasury of arguments was Gib's "*Display of the Secession Testimony*," a treatise against the Burghers, which he accepted as quite unanswerable. An elder in the Townhead Meeting-house, he was highly respected by Mr. Robertson, and, after the decease of that worthy minister, was often a guest of the Misses Robertson from the Saturday to the Monday at a communion season, as the walk of twelve miles on three successive days had become too much for his strength. One source of anxiety on these occasions was the length of Mark's family devotions on the Sabbath morning, when the public services began early, and the ladies were sometimes deprived of the time necessary for their preparations. Mark left a family, of whom one son, at least, inherited in all their integrity his father's opinions. He oscillated between the Townhead of Jedburgh and Hawick West, according to the locality where he lived for the time; and though Burghers and Anti-Burghers had been united forty years before his

death, he was still at heart a genuine Anti-Burgher. To the last day of his attendance at church he obstinately refused to sing a paraphrase. His seat was in the gallery of the old meeting-house, and his figure, bent over the closed book, was conspicuous when a paraphrase was read out to be sung. If it was the last singing for the day he would slowly rise and make his way down the stair, which was inside the church, and out at the door, a proceeding not marked by any effort to make little noise. In this respect, and in opposition to "repeating tunes," "read sermons," the abolition of "preaching days," and other modern innovations, Jamie King was one of the last outstanding specimens of a sturdy race.

In the early years of Mr. Clark's ministry the congregation included many members of the class above indicated. Nothing would induce them to associate in Christian fellowship with those of other denominations. There was danger of contamination even arising from contiguity in place. In one instance the Anti-Burgher congregation was accommodated with the green in front of the Burgher Church; and at the conclusion of the service a worthy matron remarked, with thankfulness, "We've gotten a gude meal oot o' a dirty dish!" An old woman, on her death-bed, was much exercised about her neighbours, often exclaiming, "O thae Burghers! O thae Burghers!" A friend at her bedside endeavoured to promote a more charitable feeling, intimating that if she went to heaven she would meet Burghers there, and if she went elsewhere she would probably find Burghers there also. It was always believed that true Christians were only "a little flock;" but one

decent matron was troubled with fears that heaven might be full before she and others were gathered home. To express assurance of salvation was regarded as savouring of presumption; the utmost to which they might aspire was "a well-grounded hope." In general the members were much given to prayer and reading of the Scriptures, punctual in attending to all religious observances in the family and in connection with the Church, conspicuous for honest integrity in all transactions, and careful to avoid immorality in every form. These were regarded as "fruits of the Spirit," and not, in any sense, the procuring means of salvation.

The young minister settled in 1807 was well adapted for the congregation. With a strong bodily frame he could visit on foot, or on horseback, members of the congregation in remote recesses of the Border hills, and would freely partake of such hospitality as these hillside cottages could furnish. He has been known to dine satisfactorily on oatcake and boiled vegetables, even though more palatable fare might have been available. Equally was he at home when drinking toddy with a company of farmers; but, while able to stand as much as the best of them, he was careful to discourage drinking to excess. In the later years of his ministry drunkenness among working people of the town seemed to increase, and he struggled hard against it, both by preaching and private effort; but the more modern plan of Total Abstinence had not then come into operation. Equally earnest was he against the use of profane words. The manse was a thatched house, on the line of the street, half way from the meeting-

house to the townhead; and he was located among families of the working class. One day the street door had been left open, and a child had thoughtlessly found its way into the lobby. The mother was heard calling, "Come oot, ye little devil," when the minister, with grave face and spectacles on his nose, emerged from the study. "Are you the mother of that child?" he asked, and, having received an affirmative reply, he added, "Well, I never saw the devil's mother before."

A distinguishing feature in Mr. Clark's ministerial work was his care for the young. At an early period he opened a class for young people of twelve years old and upwards, to which those of other congregations were cordially welcomed. The class was on the first Sabbath of each month, immediately after the public service, and the attendance included young people from remote country districts. Connected therewith was a library of books carefully selected, and well adapted for juvenile readers. In his youthful friends Mr. Clark was greatly interested; and one of the most impressive sermons he ever preached was on the death of Miss Simson, daughter of Mr. William Simson, Riccaltoun, one of the young people, who was cut off suddenly in the bloom of youth. In 1826 he published a little volume, entitled "Motives to Early Piety," to which is prefixed a dedication, "To the young belonging to the author's congregation, and, in particular, to those attending his class for religious instruction, he most affectionately dedicates these letters designed for their advantage." It was carefully written, had a good circulation, and is said to have been reprinted

in America. In 1839 he published a terse and well-written volume under the title of "Motives to Prayer." It was dedicated to James Douglas, Esq. of Cavers, a gentleman of eminent ability; and by him the book was highly valued.

In all public movements Mr. Clark was deeply interested. He cordially welcomed the healing of "the breach" in 1820, when the two branches of the Secession became re-united. No less ready was he to welcome the "new light" gradually dawning on Church and State; nor did he hesitate boldly to express his convictions in public or in private. He hailed the abolition of the Test Acts, Catholic Emancipation, and Franchise Reform with intelligent satisfaction; but his bold utterances on these and other subjects offended some members of the congregation who were less advanced in intelligence.

Another feature in Mr. Clark's ministry was a monthly evening sermon. One memorable series of discourses delivered to his people, but re-delivered in the evenings, was on the Book of Daniel. On these occasions the little meeting-house was usually crowded to the door, with an audience gathered from all denominations in the town. On either side of the pulpit were square pews, which were usually occupied by representatives of the better classes; others bestowed themselves according to inclination; and the front seats of the gallery were filled with boys, who came early, and took up their places at once. This had the benefit of keeping them directly under the preacher's eye, and as the heavy wooden front of the gallery came well forward he had these juvenile auditors under good command. He would

begin in a mild mood, expressing satisfaction at seeing so many of his young friends present, and pressing them to behave themselves, and remember they were in the house of God. Any tendency to levity was promptly and sternly repressed. "This is not the place for laughing," he would say; "if you wish to laugh go to the streets; but I don't blame the children, I blame the parents." On one occasion a youth tried to divert the stare of the congregation by looking behind him as if in quest of the delinquent, but the minister emphasised the matter by wrathfully exclaiming, "It's you, sir; you with the red hair." In a little monograph on the Rev. James Clark, the late Mr. John Hilson says:—"The Book of Daniel afforded Mr. Clark a varied field for reflection on the wondrous providences of God; and there was queer, almost grotesque, realism of manner and remark about these discourses which yet create a smile with those who recall them. He was full of graphic, sententious vigour in describing the fate of the three Hebrew children. The fiery furnace he conceived to have been nearest in resemblance 'to a modern lime-kiln.'" The preparatory process was described with stately slowness, winding up the expectation of the audience, till the climax came in the words, "So they rolled them up like a bundle, and tumbled them in." In dealing with the prophetic parts of the Book of Daniel Mr. Clark illustrated his subject with copious historical references, a style of pulpit oratory not appreciated by the bulk of ordinary hearers, and so the lectures on Daniel became gradually less attractive, and in the end somewhat wearisome.

It was another specialty in the ministry of Mr.



Clark that on occasions of convicts under sentence of death he was selected to minister to their spiritual wants, a delicate task which he discharged with much feeling and consideration. One such instance was a man Robertson, from Hawick, who, in 1822, was tried at Jedburgh, before Lord Hermand, for housebreaking and theft, and, being convicted, was sentenced to be hanged. In the prison at Jedburgh Mr. Clark preached from the text Luke xxiii. 39 to 43, and the sermon was afterwards published with the title of "The Thief on the Cross." It must have been, says Mr. Hilson, "a somewhat odd scene to see the prisoners in the varying grades of criminality all brought together in the roomiest apartment of the jail, and grouped around the principal misdoer, who sat bound, leg and arm, listening to the tones of Mr. Clark 'improving' the occasion—the magistrates sitting, too, tapping their snuff-boxes, in self-complacent, yet reverential, dignity as the guardians of the occasion. The discourse is not a dry, self-righteous scalping of the poor criminal. The preacher points out, in very apt illustration, that the Redeemer, when on the cross, made no reproachful reference to the past conduct of the poor thief, 'which numbers would have been ready to do,' but shewed the greatest alacrity to pour the balm of comfort into the bleeding heart, and to whisper peace to the troubled conscience." A prayer offered up on the scaffold by Mr. Clark was so impressive that by many who were present it was never afterwards forgotten.

Similar offices were discharged in the cases of Robert Scott, from Berwickshire, tried at Jedburgh

on the 16th September, 1823, found guilty of murder, and condemned to be executed at Fans, the scene of his crime ; and Thomas Rogers, a Coldstream carter, executed at Jedburgh eight years later. Scott was a man of kindly disposition, a good husband, and a kind father ; but, on the road home from Earlstoun Fair, had fallen foul of two men who had given him some provocation, and felled them dead. Under the kindly instructions of Mr. Clark he manifested a spirit of true penitence. Rogers, a man of stalwart form, with a fine open countenance, and a genial, hearty disposition, having partaken of too much drink, had attacked an Irish reaper, who, he believed, had injured a nephew of his, and felled him with a paling stake at Sharpitlaw Mill, near Kelso. It became known after his execution that there was a brain abscess which subjected him, when excited, to temporary insanity ; but this knowledge came too late, and on the 19th October, 1831, he was executed in front of the prison at Jedburgh. On the scaffold he joined with the assembled thousands in singing the words—

“ The hour of my departure’s come,  
I hear the voice that calls me home :  
At last, O Lord, let trouble cease,  
And let Thy servant die in peace.”

Next Sabbath evening Mr. Clark preached a funeral sermon to an audience that crammed his little church to the doors ; and on this, as on previous occasions of a similar kind, the services were characterised by good taste and kindly feeling, while his auditors were exhorted to be careful regarding their own conduct.

Mr. Clark was the first dissenting minister in the neighbourhood who wore a pulpit gown, and the occasion of its first use was interesting. On the death of King George IV. and the accession of King William there was a public proclamation of the new sovereign at the Cross, in connection with which there was a brief religious service. The parish minister, Dr. Somerville, had recently died, and his successor had not been appointed. Some of the Tory magnates desired that a neighbouring minister should be asked to officiate; but Provost Hilson, uncle of Messrs. William and George Hilson, who both afterwards occupied the same office, insisted that the service be conducted by the oldest minister in the town, irrespective of denominational distinctions. Thus the duty devolved on Mr. Clark. As a matter of etiquette it was considered proper that the officiating minister appear in "official robes," and with all haste an order was given to procure a gown for Mr. Clark. It arrived in good time; the minister of the Anti-Burgher meeting-house arrayed himself in the new vestment; and with stately dignity walked down from the Townhead to the Cross, where he filled the appointed place in the public ceremonial. The gown, which was of good material and richly tasselled, was worn habitually by Mr. Clark during the remainder of his ministry.

Owing to a variety of causes the congregation diminished in numbers, and as infirmities advanced on the minister he became fretful and dissatisfied. Mutual animosity increased till, on the 23d May, 1842, he demitted his charge, and retired to Dunoon, where he had a small property, on which he lived

till the 9th May, 1849, when he died, aged 74 years. His grave, marked by a very humble stone, is in the south-west corner of the churchyard of Dunoon. Besides the publications already mentioned, he was the author of a sermon on "Union to Christ." In 1832 Mr. Clark was moderator of the United Secession Synod.

An effort was made to continue the congregational life; and on the 18th January, 1843, Mr. John Baird, A.M., from Old Kilpatrick, Craigs, was ordained as the third minister. It was a hopeless struggle, conducted in the face of increasing difficulties; and on the 12th April, 1853, Mr. Baird resigned his charge, and emigrated to Canada. Without any hesitation the congregation was dissolved; and with scarcely less unanimity the members joined Blackfriars congregation, then under the ministry of Dr. Nicol. Numerically, the addition to the larger body was not very great; but the compact little band of spirited recruits who had been accustomed to work heartily and unitedly brought an accession of energy quite out of proportion to their numbers. For years the congregation had rested quietly under a debt of £2000; but an effort to clear off this burden, initiated by one of the imported members, was speedily successful. It was time that this should be done, as Dr. Nicol was advancing in years, and the increased responsibility of a collegiate charge was in prospect, while the numerical strength of the congregation had greatly diminished. The two streams united in 1853 at once flowed in a united channel. The old meeting-house was transformed into a wool store; on its site dwelling-houses were afterwards built;

and now it would be just as easy to find the site of Carthage as for a passing visitor to understand that a little colony of earnest Anti-Burghers once had its local habitation near the townhead of Jedburgh.

## CHAPTER X.

JEDBURGH: BOSTON CHURCH. 1755.

ON the 18th September, 1755, the pastorate of Jedburgh parish became vacant through the decease of the Rev. James Winchester, an event that was followed by very remarkable results. Anticipating the course that would probably be adopted by the ruling ecclesiastical powers, the elders of Jedburgh, to the number of seventeen, subscribed a paper pledging themselves "to stand and fall together in the election or choice of a minister for this parish against all solicitations, threats, or bribes whatsoever, or from whomsoever, and against all intrusion that may be attempted on said parish by any minister whatsoever, and that we shall cleave and adhere firmly to the majority of this parish in the choice, as aforesaid." This paper was dated the 25th of October, 1755; and, at the same time, a paper was numerously signed expressing a desire that Thomas Boston, minister at Oxnam, son of the celebrated Thomas Boston of Ettrick, should be appointed minister at Jedburgh. In disregard of any such desire, a presentation by the King in favour of Mr. John Bonar, minister at Cockpen, was issued on the 4th February, 1756, and was accepted by the presentee. Objections were urged before the Pres-

bytery, Synod, and General Assembly; but meanwhile Mr. Bonar received a presentation and call to Perth, which he accepted, and the matter ended so far as he was concerned.\* In continued disregard of the popular wish a presentation was issued in favour of Mr. Douglas, Kenmore, to whose settlement the opposition was still more determined and united. So flagrant and high-handed was the conduct of the authorities that the Presbytery declined to induct the presentee; and pleaded earnestly before the Commission in November, 1757, that the presentation to Mr. Douglas should be withdrawn, for this, among other reasons, that "the whole parish, excepting five, are openly declaring against him." Without a vote the Commission expressed concurrence with the five callers, and authorised them to prosecute the matter in due form. The General Assembly, in May, 1758, affirmed this resolution, and enjoined the Presbytery of Jedburgh "to admit Mr. Douglas as minister of the town and parish of Jedburgh, with the usual solemnities, betwixt and the end of July next, so as to be in condition to report their having done so to the Commission in August." It was further ordained that every member of the Presbytery be present at the said admission; and if any were absent they were enjoined to satisfy the Commission as to the cause of absence, otherwise such censure was to be inflicted as the Commission might decide. No member of the Presbytery was prepared for martyrdom; and on the 28th July, almost the last day

\* Mr. Bonar was grandfather of the three eminent Free Church divines and brothers, the Revs. J. J. Bonar, D.D., Greenock; Horatius Bonar, D.D., Edinburgh; and Andrew A. Bonar, Glasgow.

allowed by the statute, Mr. Douglas was admitted as pastor of five callers, when all the members of Presbytery were present. The Presbytery at that time included the Rev. Robert Riccaltoun of Hobkirk.

It was one peculiarity in this case that, while the Presbytery was contending for popular rights, the congregation had ignored the Church Courts, and, as became the representatives of a free and ancient burgh, had taken the matter into their own hands. On the 26th May, 1757, the General Assembly had taken into consideration "a complaint by the King's advocate and the concurrers with a royal presentation in favour of Mr. John Douglas, minister of Kenmore, to be minister of Jedburgh, against the Presbytery of Jedburgh, for not obeying the sentence of the Commission, appointing Mr. Douglas's transportation and settlement; and a petition of others of the aforesaid parish, opposers of the presentee, complaining of the Commission's sentence, and craving it might be reversed," and had by a large majority sustained the presentation. There was no reason why the burghers of Jedburgh should any longer delay. The case might drag its slow length along through the various Church Courts for another dreary year; but the final issue was palpable, and the stalwart men of the Border burgh had made their decision. They would secure the minister of their choice whatever Church judicatories might say or do.

Four days after the above-mentioned decision by the Assembly; and on the 30th May, 1757, "a meeting of the Magistrates, Town Council, several heritors, and inhabitants of the town and parish of Jedburgh" was held, "in order to concert upon proper measures



for raising and erecting a meeting-house in the town." Like shrewd men of business, they resolved first to ascertain how many would concur in the scheme, and, with this object in view, "order a call in favour of Master Thomas Boston, whom they resolve to call as their minister, to be made out and subscribed by the inhabitants within the town, against Wednesday next, at seven o'clock in the morning." Arrangements were likewise made for obtaining the signatures of members in rural districts; and a general meeting was appointed to be held on the Thursday following. A committee was appointed at the same time "to transact matters in name of the town and parish," said committee to consist of "Bailies Lookup, Winterup, Ainslie, and Haswell; James Winter, Dean of Guild; William Smith, Treasurer; Bailie William Turnbull of Langraw; Richard Hunter; Robert Boswell; George Rutherford; James Chisholm; William Bullerwell; Gabriel Newton; Samuel Riddell; James Madder, in Langtoun; Robert Dick; Bailie Archibald Douglas; William Brown, younger, merchant; and Andrew Davidson, merchant;" any four of them to be a quorum. This committee was entrusted with full powers to procure a suitable site, purchase materials, and employ workmen to build a meeting-house. The Town-Clerk was directed to have a subscription list, and be ready to receive contributions in money.

At a subsequent meeting, held on the 8th June, William Turnbull of Langraw was appointed preses, and arrangements were made for a thorough canvass of the parish. In the minute it is said—"Langraw condescends to go to the lowest part of the parish,

to visit Langtoun, Crailing, and other parts of that country." Deacon Newton undertook to visit Mossburnford, Scraesburgh, and places adjacent. Samieston, Renniaston, and other places in that neighbourhood were appointed to Samuel Riddell and George Rutherford, while George Douglas and Robert Oliver undertook to visit the Edgerston barony. James Oliver, John Borthwick, and Robert Boswell were appointed to Swinnie, Old Jedward, Earlishaugh, and that locality. Robert Jerdan took the Stewartfield barony, Woodend, and Mounthooly. Robert Dick, John Jerdan, and James Black were appointed to "go through the high gate of the town of Jedburgh." Visitors of the country districts were enjoined to begin next day, and the meeting was adjourned for a week, but in the meantime "any one who inclines to concur with the parish" was invited to "come to the town-clerk's chamber and subscribe the call."

On the 15th June William Brown, merchant, was appointed collector and cashier. A distinct statement was made up of the "trees and dales" required for building the house; and John Telford and Robert Balmer, wrights, were deputed to visit Berwick, with a letter of credit from the preses and clerk, and procure from Thomas Rutherford, merchant there, such timber as was immediately required. A week later John Telford reported that he had gone to Berwick, and purchased timber to the value of £46 15s 8d sterling, which report was approved. The collector was empowered "to employ such of the subscribers as have wains or carts to bring up from Berwick the timber" immediately required; and to employ them

or any other persons "who will carry cheapest what farther shall be required."

At the ordinary meeting, on the 29th June, the preses and collector were enjoined to employ wrights when necessary for the work, always giving a preference to subscribers, on condition that they charge no higher than others. The area of subscriptions was, at the same time, greatly extended. Robert Jerdan was appointed to go with a subscription paper to the parish of Minto. Langraw and James Chisholm were named for the barony of Edgerston. William Bullerwell and Robert Boswell were to visit Hawick and Cavers. Andrew Davidson and John Ainslie were appointed to Lilliesleaf, Midlem, and Selkirk; Mr. Chisholm to Lesudden and Maxton; Robert Dick to Ancrum, Langnewton, and Belses; Alexander Ainslie and Thomas Winterup to Eckford and Crailing; and William Smith to Morebattle, Linton, and Yetholm. All of them were enjoined to report within three weeks; and meanwhile a meeting of the committee, summoned by the ringing of the town bell, was to be held in the Council House every Saturday afternoon at three o'clock. At the same meeting John Ainslie, writer, was appointed to act on the committee in place of Bailie Lookup.

At successive meetings arrangements were made regarding stones for various parts of the building, tiles for the roof, and timber for the interior; and on the 3d of August matters were so far advanced that it was agreed to get the call fully subscribed, and presented to Mr. Boston without farther delay. Proposals from Mr. Boston were submitted to a meeting held on the 20th of the same month, when

"the magistrates, with the preses and clerk, were appointed to prepare answers," to be presented to Mr. Boston at Oxnam by Langraw, with Bailies Winterup and Winter and the clerk. Before the 10th of September matters had been all "concluded and arranged between Mr. Boston and the parish with respect to his coming to Jedburgh;" and the completion of the house was urgently pressed forward. The covenant with Mr. Boston was contained in a bond, whereby he was promised £120 of yearly stipend during his natural life; but a back bond was given by him, to the effect that this money should be payable only so long as he was resident in the bounds and useful to the congregation. The bond was subscribed by William Turnbull of Langraw, Bailie Winter, William Scott, Robert Dick, John Wright, William Scott, Robert Chisholm, James Turnbull, John Blyth, William Madder, Thomas Henderson, Thomas Elliot, Thomas Turnbull, James Ovens, Walter Scott, William Brown, John Murray, Thomas Winterup, James Oliver, John Reid, John Colden, Andrew Bennet, and Adam Mitchell.

Matters were gradually matured till, in the winter of 1757, Boston voluntarily closed his connection with the Scottish Establishment. On the 7th December the Presbytery met in the old church at Jedburgh, when the crowd was so dense that many of the seats were broken down. The demission of his charge tendered by the minister of Oxnam was reluctantly accepted, and he was free to enter on a fresh field of labour. At a meeting of committee held on the same day it was announced that the new church was "now completely finished," the whole work

having thus been completed in five months. At the same meeting a small committee was appointed "to put a value on the seats," to prepare a plan of the seats with the valuation thereof, and to lay their report before the next general meeting. It was farther agreed that, "considering there is a minister named Mr. M'Kenzie to come from Edinburgh to preach Mr. Boston's admission sermon," the treasurer be authorized to advance £5 sterling for his expenses.

On Friday the 9th December, 1757, Boston was inducted into the new church. It was a day to be long remembered in the ancient burgh. The bells of the Town Hall were rung to announce the hour of meeting. The magistrates and council, wearing the insignia of office, walked in procession, and took their places in a seat specially set apart for their use. The service was conducted by Mr. Roderick M'Kenzie, who had been minister of a Presbyterian Church in England, and was then under call by a company of Dissenters at Nigg, in Ross-shire. On the Sabbath following Mr. M'Kenzie preached in the forenoon from Isaiah xxvi. 4—"Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength;" and in the afternoon Boston preached from Ephesians vi. 18, 19—"Praying always . . . that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." The audience was so great that many were compelled to remain outside, but the windows were opened, so that all might hear. The church thus built for Mr. Boston was on the south side of the High Street, which is still occupied by the commodious edifice erected about sixty years afterwards.

Unremitting attention was still paid to business arrangements connected with the meeting-house. At a meeting of the committee held on Saturday the 10th December, several schemes of seat-letting were submitted, and one prepared by William Brown was adopted with certain modifications. The price of each sitting in the elders' seat was fixed at 2s 6d; a sitting in the magistrates' seat was to be 5s. It was arranged that Mr. Chisholm, the precentor, should intimate "over the desk" next day that sittings would be let on the following Thursday and Friday, and that each occupant would be expected to pay the half-year's rent in advance. Crowds of people now attended the weekly service, and some who had taken seats were incommoded by the intrusion of strangers. On the other hand, many seats were unlet; and it was afterwards agreed to "barr up" such seats as were not taken, of which intimation was to be made from the desk, with certification that if any one stepped over the barriers he would not escape notice. It was farther arranged that Mr. Chisholm, who had been precentor and session-clerk in the old church, should have two guineas yearly for his services as precentor; that William Brown should be allowed one guinea for acting as collector; and that every one who paid for a seat should contribute one halfpenny for each sitter as an allowance to the "beddal." At a parish meeting the Provost had proposed that half the collections in the new church should be added to those in the old church for the benefit of the poor, and this was carried in spite of opposition by Bailies Winterup and Haswell, but was unanimously rejected by the committee

acting for the new church. The buildings having been completed, a general meeting of the subscribers was held on the 6th January, 1758, "to take William Brown's accounts of his intromissions with the subscriptions, and his disbursements in building the house." It was remitted to a committee, consisting of the four Bailies, the Dean of Guild, the Treasurer, and the Preses, with Deacon Telford and Thomas Winterup, mason, and any others who chose to attend, "to take in the collector's accounts of charge and discharge, of his intromissions and disbursements, and settle the same;" also "to consider upon some proper method for setting the seats which are not yet taken, and to redress such grievances" as are alleged to exist in connection with the sittings.

The summer of 1758 was an eventful period for the new congregation. To the minister and members it mattered little that, on the 29th May, the case came before the General Assembly for the last time. Any proceedings in that quarter were useless, except so far as they might pave the way for the induction of Mr. Douglas to the stipend, with the pastorate of five remaining individuals. The Presbytery of Jedburgh still pleaded for some regard being paid to the wishes of elders and people, but were answered sharply by the King's Advocate that the elders "are now no more: they have formally renounced their office, and departed from the Church." Therefore there was no longer any opposition to the settlement of the presentee. They had emptied the church, and all was now peaceful. The congregation might be grateful if nothing worse than the settlement of Mr. Douglas should be inflicted; for, said counsel for the Crown,

“the conduct of the magistrates is attended with circumstances which only in this age of liberty could have occurred, and which scarcely in this age of liberty can pass unobserved and uncensured.” It was, however, a compact little community: one that had many times broken the force of an English invasion, and had the civil power provoked a conflict in 1758 there would have been no unreadiness to defend their rights. The mild censure of an advocate in the General Assembly carried with it no penalty; and the resolution of that venerable court, prohibiting all intercourse between Boston and any minister of the Church, was a matter of little moment. Much more interesting was the continued prosperity of the new congregation, and the celebration of the sacrament later in the season.

The first dispensation of the communion by Boston to his new congregation was graphically described in an early issue of *Fraser's Magazine* by a writer, afterwards known to be Mrs. Hall, a respected resident in the burgh, and an eye-witness of the memorable scene. In the minutes, carefully kept by the managers, some prosaic, but interesting, preparations for the great event are recorded. At a meeting on the 2d August it was agreed that the services should be on the Ana, a sequestered spot on the left bank of the Jed, near the outskirts of the town. It was farther resolved that four forms and tables shall be furnished and erected by Bailies Lookup and Winter, and that the table belonging to the town be furnished by the magistrates, and be set immediately before the minister. The linen was to be supplied by Thomas White and John Bell, but the cloth to



be laid on the table before the minister was to be got from Samuel Riddell. It was recommended that John Broughouse make and have in readiness a sufficient quantity of tokens; and that the minister write for four hard-milled cups. The bread was to be obtained from John Bell, and the wine from Bailie Haswell, Bailie Douglas, and Robert Boswell.

It was only reasonable to expect that great crowds would assemble to witness and participate in the first communion dispensed by Boston in his altered circumstances. The preacher was widely and favourably known in evangelical circles, both on his father's account and because of his own eminence as a preacher. Apart from personal reasons, the sequence of events was well calculated to arrest popular attention. Disputed settlements had been common for some years; but in this instance a royal burgh, represented and led by the legally-constituted authorities, had despised the General Assembly, and set at naught the public censure of the Lord Advocate, while asserting the popular right to select their own pastor. Proceedings of such a stirring character, protracted over two years, and producing heated debates in the supreme ecclesiastical court, were fitted to arouse curiosity, not to speak of deeper feelings. So it was that on the Saturday before the communion Sabbath crowds of strangers had arrived from neighbouring parishes; from the uplands of Selkirkshire, where the names of Boston and his father were still highly esteemed; from the Merse of Berwickshire; and even from districts beyond the Forth. To all these crowds of earnest worshippers Boston was, unaided by any ministerial friend, to

dispense the bread of life. Roderick M'Kenzie, who had presided at his induction, was settled in the remote district of Nigg; and though Thomas Gillespie had been separate from the Church for five years no communication seems to have passed between him and Boston. Trusting in the promise that "as thy day is so shall thy strength be," the devoted minister of the new church came forth to his great work.

The day was all that could be desired for a service in the open air, and the spot was particularly well adapted for such a meeting. The sky was cloudless, and external nature was reposing in the ripe beauties of autumn. Close to the rippling Jed was a flat expanse, bounded partly by the river, and on the farther side by a steep wooded bank rising like a wall of sandstone, the roseate tints of which glistened through the leafy screen with a peculiar beauty characteristic of that pretty vale. On the green sward near the "brae" were the communion tables, covered with linen that had been bleached white as snow. All heads were uncovered as the minister, attended by his elders and the magistrates of the burgh, walked in solemn procession to the spot whence he was to address so many thousands of Christian people. The physical effort of that day, sustained as it would be for several successive hours, must have been stupendous. An eye-witness of the scene has narrated that Boston when going on with his discourse would stop, and say to the immense multitude, "If any one does not hear well let him hold up his hand, and I will speak louder," though it seemed almost impossible to conceive that he could

do so. His voice was described as "loud, yet pleasant; and being tall, he had, from his elevation above the people, a very commanding appearance."

The next communion was in August, 1759; and has a historic interest as being the first occasion when Boston had the assistance of Gillespie, the founder, along with himself, of the Relief Church. Arrangements were made as formerly by the congregational committee, who agreed that all things necessary for the occasion should be furnished on reasonable terms. The Anna was again selected as the place of meeting. Deacon Telford was instructed to erect the tent, furnishing deals for that and for the seats and communion tables. For all this he was to be paid 12s 6d; but should it appear to be a hard bargain for the congregation he was to "come in their will for the half-crown." Three dozen bottles of wine were to be furnished by Bailies Boswell, Haswell, and Douglas; and Thomas Turnbull was to supply six sixpenny loaves. Thomas Gillespie, who had been deposed by the General Assembly in 1753, and had become minister of a large congregation in Dunfermline, was expected as the minister's assistant. Why he and Boston had not previously met it is now impossible to say; but they had strong links of connection. To Boston's father Gillespie owed his spiritual life: the two men had left the Establishment, and stood alone; they held identical opinions on all essential questions; the wonder is that they had not sooner recognised one another as brethren and fellow-workers. Their first meeting was remarkable. Sabbath morning had dawned, but the expected assistant from Dunfermline had not

arrived. Boston had gone to the place of meeting, the opening psalm had been sung, but in the middle of the prayer a footstep was heard quietly entering the tent behind the minister. At the close of the prayer the stranger was recognised as Mr. Gillespie; and the two friends cordially shook hands in presence of the assembled multitude, among whom the singular event naturally created great excitement. It was an epoch in the life of the two ministers and their congregations, and in the religious life of Scotland. From that time they were united in the bonds of closest brotherhood. A third congregation was soon afterwards formed at Colinsburgh, in Fife; a minister was inducted there on the 22d October, 1761, when Boston preached the induction sermon; and on the evening of the same day the three ministers—Gillespie, Boston, and Collier, with an elder from each of their congregations—formed themselves into the Presbytery of Relief.

Till 1767 Boston continued to labour in Jedburgh with apparently unabated success. The sacrament was dispensed for the third time in the latter part of July, 1760, when the arrangements were the same as before. Again the place of meeting was the Anna; seats and tables were put up by Deacon Telford at the same rate as in the previous year; three dozen bottles of wine were provided by Bailies Haswell, Boswell, and Douglas; and six sixpenny loaves were obtained from Deacon Scott. At a meeting held on the 4th August, Provost Turnbull in the chair, it was found that the money collected at the communion had been £10 14s 3d sterling, out of which the elders had distributed £2 4s to the poor; the balance, after

payment had been made for the elements and other expenses, was delivered to Provost Turnbull, "for which he is to be accountable." At that meeting the minister was present, and proposed that, till the debt contracted for building the church had been extinguished, half-a-crown out of the weekly collections should be distributed among the poor, and the balance applied to the liquidation of the debt. This proposal was adopted. Provost Turnbull, who had charge of the seat-letting, was continued in that office for another half-year.

Once more, in June, 1761, was the communion dispensed in the Anna, under the same circumstances as before. At a meeting of overseers on the 17th of the same month Mr. Boston occupied the chair; and the minute is signed in a good round hand, "T. Boston, Pr." It was agreed that, of the money collected at the communion, £2 8s 9d should go toward the extinction of the debt; £1 to John Aitken; £3 11s 9d to Bailie Haswell, for wine; 3s to Bailie Winterup; 4s to James Henderson, for bread; and 15s to Deacon Telford, for the tent: the remainder to be distributed among the poor, "at the sight of the minister and kirk-session."

In the year 1766 Boston had inducements offered for leaving Jedburgh; but, on the 3d September, represented to a meeting of the overseers his inclination to remain, though his removal to Glasgow would be a great advantage to his family. The only discouragement under which he laboured was that, in the event of becoming tender and unable to discharge the duties of his office, it might be difficult, in his particular circumstances, to get proper relief and

assistance. With cordial unanimity the overseers agreed to do everything in their power to make their minister's mind easy on that score should the necessity arise. The minister was in feeble health, and died four months afterwards, on the 13th February, 1767, in the 54th year of his age and the 31st of his ministry. His son, Michael Boston, became the first Relief minister of Falkirk. A daughter was married to Mr. Simson, minister at Bellshill, afterwards at Duns, and finally at Pittenweem; and another daughter was married to Mr. Campbell, minister at Dysart. Provision for his widow seems to have been scanty, as some money was afterwards raised for her by subscription in Edinburgh.

For nine years Boston had laboured in Jedburgh, and had collected a great congregation, some members of which travelled long distances. The local habitations and the social condition of the people are, to some extent, indicated in a list of baptisms, during his ministry, which is still in existence. The first place is occupied by James, son of James Harvey, wright in Lanton, who was baptized on the 11th December, 1757, when the witnesses were Gabriel Newton, late convener, and Samuel Riddell, late deacon of the Glovers, both in Jedburgh. On the 1st February, 1758, Boston himself had a daughter, Margaret, baptized by the Rev. George Dickson, Bedrule, the General Assembly having not yet interdicted all ministerial intercourse. In the first year of Boston's ministry there were thirty-seven baptisms. One was Gilbert, son of "Alexander Ainslie, late bailie, present dean of guild, and notar-public in Jedburgh, and of Margaret Elliot, his spouse." The

witnesses were "Andrew Frame of Deanbrae, present provost, and James Winter, eldest bailie in Jedburgh." Another was "Gilbert, son of John Ainslie, late bailie, and present town-clerk." The wide extent of the congregation is indicated by the baptism of "John, son of Thomas Dryden, in Tinnis, parish of Yarrow," distant at least twenty miles from Jedburgh; George, son of Ralph Kerr, mason in Town-Yetholm, at least fifteen miles distant; and Anne, daughter of Thomas Hall, in Yetholm Mill. In 1760 there were three baptisms at one time in the parish of Minto, some in the parish of Cavers, and one in the parish of Lilliesleaf. On the 14th September, 1760, John, son of James Hilson, weaver, was baptized in the town of Jedburgh. Among baptisms in 1765 was "John, son of William Leyden, tailor in Denholm," probably a cousin of the poet, John Leyden, who was born ten years afterwards in the same neighbourhood. In 1769 "Margaret, daughter of Andrew Hud, in Woodend, Morebattle parish," was baptized at Hownam by Mr. Bell, who had succeeded Boston as minister at Jedburgh; and on the 18th February, 1770, "James, son of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Bell, minister of the Relief congregation in Jedburgh," was baptized by Mr. Monteith, minister of the Relief congregation at Duns. One instance of an adult baptism is thus recorded:—"Matthew Dawson, son of Margaret Kenmure, indweller in Jedburgh, born September 26, 1753, compared before the Relief congregation here, and having made a solemn and public profession of his faith, and taking the baptismal engagements upon himself, promised, through divine grace, to perform the same, after which he was baptized on a

fast day, being the 14th of January, 1773, by the Rev. Mr. Thomas Bell, minister of said congregation. Witnesses—Thomas Elliot and George Rutherford, church elders.”

After the death of Boston the question came up for consideration whether or not the congregation should continue to exist. A meeting, called by intimation from the desk, was held on the 21st February, and was attended by the Provost, Magistrates, most of the Councillors of the burgh, all the members of the kirk-session, the overseers and heads of families, and a considerable number of the congregation. It was the unanimous opinion of the meeting “that this kirk should be supplied with another minister;” and, as the membership continued to increase, it was of great consequence that a fit successor to Mr. Boston be obtained. As a preliminary step it was agreed that the minority should acquiesce in the opinion of the majority. It was then ascertained to be the almost unanimous opinion of the meeting that the Rev. Michael Boston should “succeed to and supply the place of his late worthy father.” To bring about this result the meeting appointed a committee, with full power, to take proper steps before the Presbytery of Relief—first to obtain occasional supply of sermon, and then to secure the settlement of Mr. Michael Boston as their minister. The committee consisted of Provost Turnbull, Bailie Lookup, Councillor Aitken; the members of the kirk-session; Robert Stewart, in Tofts; James Oliver, in Ashiebank; Robert Davidson, in Cunzierton; Robert Ormiston, in Eckford; George Thomson, Harden Mains; John Shiel, Edgerston; Andrew Murray, in Tower; James



Hobkirk, in Denholm; Thomas Brown and James Madder, in Lanton; William Smail, in Ancrum; John Renwick, in Swinnie; James Oliver, in Moss-side; Samuel Davidson, in Standalane; Robert Douglas, in The Haugh, Jedwater; Adam Young, in Old Hall; John Hall, in Fulton; and Thomas Robertson, in Crailing.

Having ascertained that the Presbytery was to meet in Edinburgh on the 17th March, 1767, it was agreed that Provost Haswell, and George Rutherford, one of the elders, should proceed thither, and present a petition in terms of the previous resolutions. As Mr. Boston did not accede to their request, the congregational efforts were directed with greater success toward Mr. Bell, who, while a student, had acceded to the Presbytery from the Established Church. The stipend promised was £80 a-year, with £10 yearly for a house. On the 19th April, 1768, Mr. Bell was ordained at Jedburgh; and at a meeting held subsequently the committee allowed him five guineas to meet expenses connected with his settlement. In 1769 the communion was again dispensed at the Anna, when tables for permanent use were made at a cost of £6 10s by Deacons Balmer and Telford, and James Henderson; and Deacon Telford was paid five shillings for putting up the tent.

With the close of 1769 came a critical period for the congregation. The parish minister, whose induction had occasioned so much strife, died in November; and was soon afterwards succeeded by Mr. Macknight, who had obtained a high reputation for theological literature. He was a judicious man, who interested himself in the secular as well as the eccle-

siastical affairs of the parish; and, says Dr. Somerville, "reclaimed several families from the Secession, and restored the respectability of the congregation." If Mr. Bell had experienced any disappointment at losing some members of his congregation during the ministry of Mr. Macknight, he would be reassured by the settlement of Dr. Somerville, and not till he had obtained repeated calls to Glasgow did he entertain the idea of translation. At a meeting of the congregational committee, held on the 28th August, 1777, a letter was read, intimating that, having been called "in effect the fourth time," he had decided on removing to Glasgow. He added that the people there "would not stand the shock of a disappointment," whereas the congregation of Jedburgh would survive his departure. Thus the congregation was once more without a pastor, and some time was destined to elapse before the vacancy could be filled.

After various unsuccessful efforts the committee succeeded in obtaining the services of Mr. Andrew Dunn, who was ordained in 1780 as third minister of the congregation. At a committee meeting on the 4th February Bailie James Chisholm was appointed to attend the Presbytery at Edinburgh on the 16th of the month, and do what was possible to expedite Mr. Dunn's settlement. With reference to stipend, he was instructed to say that they would give him yearly £105 sterling, to be paid in equal portions at Whitsunday and Martinmas. This was to include stipend, "riding charges," providing communion elements, entertaining ministers, and "every other expense the congregation used to be at about their minister." Even this moderate promise was hardly

realized, for, on the 25th May, the collector was authorised to pay Mr. Dunn a quarter's stipend, "and take his receipt." Perhaps this scarcity of money arose from the fact that the congregation were roofing the church with blue slates instead of tiles as formerly, and making some internal alterations.

In 1781 the membership of the church was 745, of whom there were 366 in the town, 328 in the country, and 51 young communicants. Of those in the town 135 were in the Townhead district, 105 in the High Street, 110 in the Canongate, and 15 in Bongate. Those in the Townhead included Provost Turnbull, John Murdy and his wife, Robert Smail, and other names that have remained ever since in connection with the High Street congregation. In the High Street were Provost Winterup and James Hilson, the latter of which is a name that has been closely identified with the congregational life. Provost Lookup had his residence in the Canongate, and with him were three ladies, probably sisters. This family occupied a good social position, for the house is mentioned by Dr. Somerville as the only one in Jedburgh, besides the Manse, that had a carpet on the floor; and the three ladies are the only members with the designation "Miss" prefixed to their names.

The career of Mr. Dunn was brief, for he died in March, 1782, in the 25th year of his age and the 2d of his ministry. As his successor the congregation had some hope of obtaining Mr. Thomson of Earls-ton, who was reported to be "unhappily situated with his congregation;" but this effort failed, and in September, 1783, the Rev. James Scott, who had been minister at Branton, in England, since 1774,

was inducted as fourth minister of the congregation. His ability and influence were recognised by the Relief Synod, of which, in 1788, he was chosen moderator. Till 1815 he was sole pastor of the congregation, and in a collegiate relationship he continued till 1823, when he died on the 12th August, in the 85th year of his age and the 49th after his ordination. He bears the character of an exceedingly excellent and godly man, and a faithful and successful gospel minister; and till his decease the two colleagues lived on terms of warm mutual esteem. From recollection Mr. Scott has been described as a tall, rather primitive-looking old gentleman. He had a suit of black clothes that is said to have lasted forty years; but if this be correct, they must have been worn only on sacramental and other special occasions. It was not then considered necessary for ministers to be arrayed in black; and Mr. Wills, who was predecessor of the Rev. David Crawford in Earlston, was in the habit of appearing in the pulpit with a coat of steel grey. For some years subsequent to 1815 Mr. Scott was accustomed to sit in the pulpit while his junior colleague was preaching; but a new church was built, in the pulpit of which there was not room for two ministers. The venerable man, therefore, relinquished his seat, remarking to his colleague, "Ye've got quit o' me noo!"

On the 13th July, 1815, Mr. James Porteous was ordained as colleague and successor to Mr. Scott. James Porteous was born on the 31st January, 1789, at the farm of Springwells, in the parish of Johnstone, and county of Dumfries. His parents occupied a good social position, his father being a farmer under

the Johnstones of Annandale, and his mother, a woman of superior intellect and good education, one of the Grahams of Burnswark. After a preliminary education in the school of his native parish, James Porteous, who early manifested an ardent desire of learning, was sent to the burgh school of Lochmaben, and afterwards to the University of Glasgow. Connected with the Relief Church of Gateside, now Wamphray, he looked forward to the ministry in connection with the Synod of Relief. As the Synod had then and long afterwards no Theological Hall, Mr Porteous studied theology in connection with the Church of Scotland. On the 14th April, 1814, he returned to his native place, at the close of his preliminary studies, and asked to be taken on trials for license by the Relief Presbytery of Dumfries. He was licensed on the 4th October the same year, and was occupied for about three months preaching in his native district. His fame as a preacher was great, calls were proposed to him in almost every vacancy; and a presentation to a living in the Established Church was offered to him, which was at once refused. Coming next within the bounds of the Edinburgh Presbytery, his popularity continued undiminished; and calls were addressed to him from Earliston and Jedburgh. He preferred the latter, where he was in due time ordained, Mr. Smith from Edinburgh presiding. A stipend of £200, payable quarterly, was promised to the two ministers, in the proportion of £120 to the junior pastor and £80 to his senior colleague.

From the outset the young minister was exceedingly popular. He had a fine appearance, a melo-

dious voice, a frank kindly manner, and unfailing courtesy as a member of the community, as well as a Christian pastor. He was faithful in visiting the sick, preaching often in remote rural districts, and unsparingly devoting time and strength to the interests of his congregation. His discourses were highly relished: they were, in the words of the Rev. Daniel Kerr of Duns, "so richly laden with gospel truth, so practical in their bearing, so simple and memorable in their structure, and delivered in a way so animated and attractive."\* Crowds of worshippers filled the meeting-house from week to week; and fears were entertained that the structure would give way under the pressure. It was apparent that the walls were bulged, and the roof seemed so much decayed that extensive repairs were absolutely necessary.

For the safety of all concerned, it was considered essential to have the premises carefully inspected by competent tradesmen; and a minute examination was made by Messrs. William Smail, George Huggan, Thomas Cranston, masons, William Balmer, George Halliburton, and John Selkirk, joiners. On the 13th February, 1818, a report was submitted to a committee of managers, wherein it was stated that the back wall of the church was six inches off the perpendicular; that both side walls were much bulged, and were the more unsafe as having been wholly built with mud; that the joists of the ceiling were in a badly decayed condition; and that the supports at the end galleries were quite insufficient to bear the weight frequently resting on them. Having heard this report, the

\* Memorial of the Rev. James Porteous. Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Co. 1870.

committee called a meeting of managers for the 19th, at which it was agreed that a meeting of the congregation, for "business of great importance," should be called from the precentor's desk, to be held on the 25th of the same month, at eleven o'clock. At that meeting it was the unanimous opinion that the rebuilding of the house was urgently necessary. The congregation had no funds, but neither had it any debt; it was desirable to collect as much money as possible before beginning building operations; and it was agreed that Mr. Porteous be requested to preach a sermon on a week-day in order to convene the people with a view to inaugurate subscriptions. Accordingly, on Thursday the 4th March a sermon was preached, after which a subscription was opened, and collectors were appointed to visit the members, and obtain additional subscribers. Had there been any disposition to delay it would have been obviated by an apparent subsidence of the gallery on a Sabbath during the time of worship. The service was immediately stopped, and the people were dismissed without panic, but never again entered the old meeting-house for public service.

About the year 1818 the congregation was in a highly prosperous condition. It had a young and most popular minister; its financial affairs were very carefully managed; the stipends of the two ministers were paid punctually every quarter, and there was always a balance in the hands of the treasurer. Still, the whole congregational income was considerably under £300 a-year. There were about one thousand members, among whom were many substantial

tradesmen and a proportion of comfortable farmers; but money was not plentiful in the hands even of the better classes, and the great majority of the congregation were working people, whose wages were not large. It was therefore a matter of serious moment to face the building of a new church; and the preliminary subscriptions were not of large amount.

Prominent as an elder and a member of the managing committee was Mr. Andrew Oliver, tenant of Westerhouses, a farm on the Jed Forest estate, in the parish of Southdean. It was a pastoral holding, with a wide expanse of rough heather, plenty of grouse, and abundance of crowberries in the season, but not many sheep, and only a few arable fields of small size. The rent was half-a-crown per acre; and the culture was in the old easy style, with no drainage nor any artificial manures, but with plenty of leisure, an adequate living for all concerned, but no extravagance or waste, and the rent always ready when the time of payment arrived. A thoroughly respectable man, always ready to magnify his office as an elder in the Relief congregation, Mr. Oliver, like others of his class, indulged in the luxury of a covered vehicle called a "noddy" to convey himself and his wife to the meeting-house at Jedburgh, which was fully seven miles distant by the only tolerable road. The "noddy" was a rather cumbrous-looking box set on two wheels, entered by a door in the rear, and with a seat for the driver in front. As any attempt at rapid travelling produced a "nodding" motion decidedly uncomfortable to those inside, the vehicle usually went at a walking pace; and it was



necessary to leave Westerhouses soon after half-past eight in order to be at the meeting-house in time for service at eleven o'clock. Punctuality in all things was a guiding principle with "the elder," as he was locally called; and pedestrians going to the different meeting-houses could regulate their watches by the appearance of "the Westerhouses noddy" at different points on the road. The matron at Westerhouses was a remarkable woman. In body she was unusually corpulent, and her mental vigour was no less conspicuous. She was mighty in the scriptures, and was always ready to quote texts in support of her opinions. In her estimation the Relief Church, if not the only embodiment of pure Christianity, was undoubtedly the nearest approach to perfection then in existence. The sermons of Dr. Blair she characterised as "a dub o' cauld water."

Another active member of the committee was Mr. George White, tenant of Falside, another farm on the same estate, more remote from Jedburgh "as the crow flies," but with a more convenient road down the valley of the Jed. Some of his descendants are still members of the congregation. A third was Mr. William Elliot, Doorpool, occupant of a large farm contiguous to Westerhouses, but still more distant from the town, which would be at least nine miles by road from the farm-house. Besides these large farmers, who held, in the aggregate, a wide expanse of land, many respectable working people from the same neighbourhood attended with perfect punctuality. Betty White, who supported herself and an aged mother by keeping a toll, where, besides taking money for passing quadrupeds, she sold quietly

a glass of whisky or a bottle of ale, was an attached adherent of the Relief meeting-house. Sometimes her toll was three miles, at other times fully six miles, from the town, but distance made no difference in her attendance. On summer days she walked barefooted over the moor, and sat down quietly by the roadside to put on shoes and stockings before entering the town. Middle-aged, quiet, self-possessed, and very capable of managing her own affairs, Betty was well acquainted with the principles of her denomination, and honestly regarded the Relief as the most enlightened Church in the world. Many others could be named, in town and country, who were proud to own connection with the Relief congregation. Long afterwards, at the jubilee of the Rev. William Barr in 1883, Mr. William Hilson, then Provost of the burgh, said, while his brother, Mr. George Hilson, occupied the chair:—"Our family is able to trace back, in direct line of descent, and on both sides of the house, our connection with the Church to the time when, in 1757, so many members, unable longer to remain comfortably in the then National Church, came out, for conscience sake, in such notable numbers, and, under Boston, formed the Relief Church. No wonder that some of us are proud of our high and honourable lineage, and anxious to see the principles of its founders maintained in their integrity." These were fair specimens of a congregation that had its roots deep in the Border soil; and was, under the ministry of Mr. Porteous, in a most flourishing condition. Some families lived in remote localities among the hills, and their homes could be reached only with difficulty, not unaccompanied with danger. About

the year 1819 Mr. Porteous, accompanied by Mr. James Hilson, had gone to baptize a child of Mr. James Trotter, farmer at Quickening Cote, among the Cheviots, but the travellers lost their reckoning, and reached the place of destination only after long delay and with much difficulty.

At the time when the new church was built employment for tradesmen and labourers was scarce, and, as many members of these classes were connected with the congregation, the managers thought it desirable to give their own members a preference in the different departments of work. Instead of proceeding by estimate, therefore, they decided that an experienced builder should be invested with full power to employ, and likewise to discharge, such workmen as he might think proper, but preferring those connected with the Relief congregation. To this office William Smail, Ancrum, was appointed, at a salary of 25s weekly. From several plans exhibited by Mr. Smail, the committee selected one in the style of the Burgher Meeting-house at Coldstream, but larger in dimensions. The old building is still remembered by some aged members of the community. It stood with one gable close to the High Street and another toward the Backgate, and a door in each gable. The galleries were reached by outside stairs, one at each end, beginning a little way in from the street. The new building was made to face the High Street, from which it is a little way back, and the stairs are inside. Stones for the building were to be obtained, with permission of the Marquis of Lothian, from the quarry at Ferniehirst. No time was lost in making a commencement; and on the 18th May the corner-stone

was laid by Mr. Porteous, in presence of a vast concourse of people. With him was the Rev. David Crawford, Earlston, father of Mr. John Knox Crawford, S.S.C., and Mr. William Crawford, printer, Edinburgh, attached and influential members of the United Presbyterian Church.

The congregational committee in charge of building operations consisted of Andrew Oliver, tenant, Westerhouses; George White, tenant, Falside; Thomas Thomson, tenant, Harden; Adam Oliver, tenant, Cleuchside; John Mack, manufacturer, Allars; William Elliot, tenant, Doorpool; John Oliver, innkeeper, Jedburgh; James Douglas, innkeeper; William Renwick, bookseller; John Robison, merchant; Matthew Stewart, weaver; Robert Bell, hosier; George Halliburton, wright; William Oliver, dyer; and James Madder, baker, convener of the committee.

The tradesmen employed in the work were William Young and James Brown, quarrymen; William Elliot, architect, Kelso, planner of the roof; John Selkirk and John Rule, executors of the same; William and Michael Waugh, slaters; George Common, plumber; Thomas Winterup, maker of the window sashes; George Halliburton and James Telfer, glaziers; Gilbert Martin and William Robson, plasterers; William Adams, maker of the pulpit. Selkirk, Halliburton, and Telfer, above mentioned, did the interior wood-work, such as joisting and seating; and William Hope, the ironmonger work, including gates and railings. The work was all paid by measurement at valuation, in conformity with an agreement between the committee and the tradesmen, except the slating and railing, which were done by estimate. William

Elliot, architect, was appointed to measure and value the wood-work.

Unfortunately, the expenditure greatly exceeded expectation, while the subscriptions came far short of the amount required. Unexpected expense was incurred in digging for a sure foundation in consequence of several old tan-pits being in the way; and all the stones of the old building were used up before the walls were up to the surface of the ground. Other materials were selected with a view to stability, and the work in every department was executed in a thoroughly substantial manner. This was probably sound policy; but it resulted in a total expenditure of £2664, exclusive of the old materials, while there had been raised by subscription only £464; and on the 13th October, 1819, the congregation found itself with a well-built and commodious meeting-house, but with a debt of £2200. A mode of dealing with this burden was suggested by Mr. James Madder, treasurer, and adopted. The method was to divide the money into shares of £50, and ask such members as were in a position to do so to lend money to the amount of one or more shares, instead of borrowing from any outside source. So heartily was the proposal received that thirty-two shares of £50 each were taken up before the meeting separated, one-half of the money to be paid immediately, and the remainder at or before Candlemas following. The highest sum promised by any one individual was £300, by Andrew Rutherford, carter, Jedburgh; two others, Mr. Oliver, Westerhouses, and James Douglas, shepherd, Hundalee, taking shares to the amount of £200 each. Three others, including the treasurer,

lent £100 each; and twelve others £50 each. Any one was at liberty to call up his shares by giving notice three months before the annual congregational meeting; and from this cause a good deal of trouble subsequently occurred. As an instance of this, the largest subscriber obtained a farm soon afterwards, and all his money was called up to purchase the necessary stock. At Whitsunday, 1834, the debt stood at £1812, of which £500 was due to one party, £300 to another, £200 to a third and a fourth, and smaller amounts to others.

For twelve months, while the church was in course of erection, Mr. Porteous preached in the Anna, where the communion had been dispensed in the time of Boston: a spot associated in the minds of his hearers with many sacred memories. At length the new meeting-house was opened; and for twenty years longer Mr. Porteous continued to labour with undiminished success. His disposition was always to cultivate friendly feelings with other denominations in the town. The Burgher congregation, under the ministry of Mr. Young, had likewise erected a spacious new church in 1818; and after the two congregations had settled in their new premises Mr. Porteous proposed that he and Mr. Young should alternately occupy each other's pulpits on the Sabbath evening. At first Mr. Young hesitated, but afterwards agreed; and ultimately Mr. Clark, of the Anti-Burgher meeting-house, also yielded to his persuasive influence. Among the members there was at first a certain amount of stiffness in connection with these united meetings. An old member of the Relief congregation had difficulty in finding a seat one evening in the

Burgher Church when Mr. Porteous was to preach, and seeing some seat-holders apparently unwilling to make room, said, testily, "Sit up there; if the cage is yours, the bird is ours." About Mr. Porteous there was a fund of humour, which on one occasion, at least, was manifested in conjunction with a spirit of sturdy independence. In 1832 he had been appointed by the Synod, along with the Rev. David Crawford, to itinerate in the north of England. When approaching South Shields in their conveyance, which was driven by Mr. Porteous, an equipage was observed in front of them, preceded by a rider, crying, "Make way for the Bishop of Durham." Having no faith in the dogma of Apostolical succession, and conscious that he himself was a bishop equally with the functionary of Durham, Mr. Porteous held on his way, shouting, "Make way for Mr. Porteous of Jedburgh."

A serious danger confronted the congregation and its minister in 1837 and two subsequent years. The Rev. James Smith, minister of the Relief Church at Campbeltown, having been cut off by the Synod from connection with that denomination, endeavoured to carry the Church property with him into the Establishment, of which he had been admitted a minister. Litigation was begun; and in its preliminary stages the decisions were not favourable to the Relief congregation. In the Court of Session the case came before Lord Moncrieff as Lord Ordinary on the 15th June, 1838; and his Lordship's note, transmitting the case to the Second Division, was decidedly unfavourable. The resources of the Relief Church, intellectual and pecuniary, were strained

with a view to secure a fair presentation of the case. On the 6th June, 1839, the final decision was given in favour of the congregation and against Mr. Smith, with all expenses. It was known that had the result been different the church at Jedburgh, and at least another, would have gone to the Establishment. While the case was still undecided Mr. Porteous was in Edinburgh with the title-deeds, and learned with dismay that the case was likely to be lost. Happily, it turned out otherwise, and the minds of minister and people were relieved.

For years the ministerial life of Mr. Porteous at Jedburgh was bright and happy. The congregation had no manse; but he had a new and comfortable house erected in the centre of a large garden near the Town-head, and it looked as if his life-work lay in and around the ancient burgh. An unforeseen course of events led to a different result. Debt, under any circumstances, has a baleful influence that ruins many a fair reputation and darkens many a brilliant prospect, and congregational debt has often led to evil consequences. It led ultimately to the removal of Mr. Porteous from Jedburgh. As stated in the *Kelso Chronicle* at the time of his decease, "Christian economics were not well understood in the earlier period of dissent in Scotland. The practice of leaving the cost of the erection of churches to be defrayed by posterity was common, and burdensome debts were in this manner entailed upon the generations following. The Jedburgh High Street edifice had been reared at a heavy cost, the interest on the remaining debt became troublesome, and vexatious circumstances arose out of partially





*I am yours most affectionately  
Anna Dooleas.*

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abortive efforts for its extinction, discouraging to the most devoted minister. By the translation of the Rev. J. S. Taylor of Coldstream to Glasgow, that young congregation having become vacant, Mr. Porteous was induced, at some pecuniary sacrifice, and with not a little laceration of feeling, to quit the scene of his early ministry, and of much domestic and social happiness, for a new and more limited sphere." On the 8th January, 1840, he was inducted as minister of the Relief congregation at Coldstream, to the great delight of that people and of all who desired their prosperity.

In the first year of his ministry at Coldstream, the Relief Synod showed its appreciation of Mr. Porteous by electing him to the Moderator's chair; and it is worthy of notice that in the same year the Synod took its first step toward the general extinction of congregational debt. This matter came up in the shape of an overture from the Kelso Presbytery, of which Mr. Porteous was a member; and was introduced in the interest, not of newly-formed or feeble congregations, but on behalf of churches whose numerical strength and respectability in other respects might seem to afford security against pecuniary embarrassments. Of these it was affirmed that "any contingency which slightly reduces their numbers, shakes their credit, or increases their obligations, is apt to produce a panic, resulting in disastrous effects both to minister and people," while the existence of debt also "hinders the discharge of many obligations divinely imposed upon Christian Churches towards their indigent and sick members, their poor children, their distressed sister churches and aged pastors, and

the unconverted and heathen population of the world." It was suggested in the overture that a Liquidation Fund be established, by which these churches, and others in varied circumstances of difficulty or restraint, might be set free to take part in the momentous transactions of an age called to devise liberal things. The spirit and object of the overture were unanimously approved by the Synod, and an influential committee was appointed to mature a scheme and issue an address to the churches. In May, 1841, Mr. Porteous, as retiring moderator, preached before the Synod from 2 Cor. vi. 1—"We, then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Among other business, the question of debt liquidation again came up, and the sum of £360 was subscribed, in amounts ranging from £1 to fifty guineas, by members of the court, all of them ministers except three. The scheme was afterwards taken up by the Church at large, and Mr. Porteous, who, in his second as well as his first charge, had to labour under the oppressive load, lived to see both congregations freed from that great stumbling-block in the way of all that is good.

On the 13th July, 1864, Mr. Porteous, having entered on the fiftieth year of his ministry, half of which had been exercised in Jedburgh, the other half in Coldstream, the occasion was embraced by admirers in both congregations to attest their attachment to him by a proper celebration of the event. In accordance with previous arrangements, the Presbytery of Berwick, to which he now belonged, met at Coldstream; and at four o'clock there was a public

dinner in the Newcastle Arms Hotel, attended by one hundred and fifty gentlemen. The chair was occupied by Mr. Halliburton, Coldstream; the croupiers were Dr. Calder, Oxenrig, and Mr. Nevins, Marldown; and among those present were many ministers of different denominations, the sons of Mr. Porteous, and most of the principal inhabitants of Coldstream and its neighbourhood. In the evening a soiree was held, when the chair was occupied by the Rev. David Crawford, D.D., a life-long friend, who had accepted the call to Earlstoun on the day when Mr. Porteous was ordained at Jedburgh, had preached in the Anna while the building of the new church was in progress, and had in many ways been closely associated with Mr. Porteous during the whole course of his ministry. Addresses were delivered by the Rev. Dr. Cairns, the Rev. Messrs. Kerr (Duns) and Barr (Jedburgh), and others; and in course of the evening an address, together with a purse containing one hundred and fifty-five sovereigns, was presented to Mr. Porteous by Mr. Halliburton, in name of the subscribers. The whole of the proceedings were of a most interesting character.

The death of Mr. Porteous on the 23d August, 1869, occurred under peculiarly affecting circumstances. On the previous day he had preached at Spittal, near Berwick-on-Tweed, having exchanged for the day with his eldest son, the Rev. William Porteous, minister of the United Presbyterian Church in that place. Though he had entered on his 81st year, one who was present and had heard him in 1815 averred that in these fifty-four years there had been no diminution of his preaching power. Toward the

close of the afternoon service he became conscious of a sharp internal pain, which speedily assumed an aggravated form; and, on reaching the manse, Dr. Hume, of Jedburgh, who was then at Spittal, was called in. Other medical men were summoned from Berwick, and the case was believed to be *iliac*; but Mr. Porteous himself conjectured that there had been some internal rupture. All night the pain continued without abatement; and about noon next day he died, in presence of his wife and his son, Mr. Richard R. Porteous, Kelso. The Rev. William Porteous, who had on the previous day officiated for his father at Coldstream, and the third son, Mr. James Porteous, solicitor, Coldstream, arrived just after the closing scene. His old friend, Dr. David Crawford, who had for some years filled the post of acting treasurer to the United Presbyterian Church, had died only a few weeks before. On Friday the 27th August the funeral took place at Lennel, the cemetery of Coldstream parish, on which occasion an address was delivered by the Rev. John Stark, Horndean. The pulpit was occupied on the following Sabbath by the Rev. Daniel Kerr, Duns, who, at the close of a sermon from Dan. xii. 13, gave a most appreciative sketch of the deceased pastor's career. At the time of his decease only three ministers in the United Presbyterian Church were his seniors, of whom the Rev. Mr. Lamb, Errol, alone was doing all the work without assistance.

On the 15th September, 1867, an incident occurred that curiously illustrates his prolonged ministerial career. He was officiating in Church Street United Presbyterian Church, Berwick, and, at the close of the

service, baptized a child of Mr. John Young, Castle Terrace. It was observed at the time that Mr. Porteous had baptized the mother of the child and its grandmother, the wife of the Rev. Mr. Muirhead, of Wooler. He had assisted at the marriage of the child's parents, had officiated at the marriage of its maternal grandparents; and the first marriage after his ordination in 1815 had been that of its maternal great-grandparents.

The sixth minister of Jedburgh Relief Church was the Rev. William Barr, a native of East Kilbride, where he was born on the 3d September, 1806. He studied in the University of Glasgow, and on the 3d September, 1833, was licensed as a preacher by the Relief Presbytery of that district. In April, 1834, the same Presbytery ordained him as pastor of Brandon Street Relief Church, Hamilton, where he laboured for seven years, and acquired the reputation of being an acceptable and eloquent minister. When the pastoral charge of Jedburgh became vacant Mr. Barr preached as a candidate, and so decided was the impression that he soon afterwards received a practically unanimous call. It was accepted, and on the 28th January, 1841, Mr. Barr was inducted into the vacant charge. A hearty welcome was accorded to the new minister, not only by his own congregation, but by the entire community; and his ministry, auspiciously begun, was continued successfully for a long series of years. Taking advantage of the liquidation scheme, the congregation got rid of its debt; and, though the membership decreased owing to altered circumstances, the spirit of liberality continued to grow, and the congregational

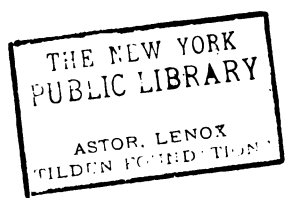
organization kept pace with the tendencies of the age.

Early in 1883 Mr. Barr entered on his fiftieth year as a minister of the gospel; and on the 24th April of that year meetings were held in connection with that event. A meeting of the Kelso Presbytery was held in the hall of the church, when Mr. Barr received the cordial congratulations of the members. There was a dinner in the Spread Eagle Hotel, at which upwards of eighty gentlemen were present, and the chair was occupied by Mr. George Hilson, preses of the congregation. Referring to Mr. Barr's life and work in Jedburgh, Mr. Hilson said that through all these forty-two years he had "proved himself to be the pattern of a Christian pastor and Christian gentleman," having "shown sound knowledge of gospel truth, and been fearless and hearty in expounding its principles," while his practice had corresponded with his profession. As a citizen he had "always taken a great interest in the affairs of Jedburgh, and had never failed at any time to express in a clear and decided and well-informed manner his opinions on any question that came before the public." On the same occasion Mr. William Hilson bore equally decided testimony to the eminent qualities of their minister. Speaking of his distinguished predecessors as having "all left a fragrant memory for conscientious and earnest devotion to their pastoral work, for consistent daily walk and conversation, and, when occasion demanded, for having the courage of their opinions, and being ready at all times and at all hazards to defend the cause of civil and religious liberty of thought and speech," he added that all these remarks were particularly



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applicable to Mr. Barr. He had been "an earnest and devoted pastor;" his conduct had been "marked in the highest degree by truthfulness and uprightness;" and "he was always in the forefront when the cause of right was assailed, and in pulpit or on platform ready to maintain or defend what he thought truth and justice."

At a soiree on the evening of the same day congratulatory addresses were presented from the Presbytery of Kelso, of which Mr. Barr was a member, and from that of Melrose, of which he had formerly been a member. At the same time, there was presented by the Chairman, on behalf of the congregation, an address containing some references to changes during the preceding fifty years. Among ecclesiastical changes had been the union in 1847 of the Relief and Secession Churches into one body, constituting the United Presbyterian Church. Apart from those in a wider sphere, there had been many changes in the direction of progress within the bounds of the congregation. Internally, the structure of the church had been renovated, adding much to the comfort and convenience of the worshippers; and externally the appearance of the building had been greatly changed for the better. A new hall and vestry had furnished facilities for carrying forward congregational work. The various changes had been effected at great pecuniary cost, but the charges had been met by the liberality of the members. The High Street congregation had been one of the first to use the new hymn-book sanctioned by the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church. It had also been foremost in celebrating the com-

munion four times in the year instead of twice as formerly; and it likewise led the way in adopting the system of simultaneous communion. Another innovation which had been wholly successful was the abolition of seat rents as a mode of raising money for the maintenance of ordinances. All these various modifications had been successively submitted to the consideration of the members, and adopted without friction or ill-feeling. It may be added that, in addition to the liquidation of debt to the amount of £2000, the congregation had, during the years of his active ministry, provided a manse for the use of their pastor.

At the time of his jubilee Mr. Barr was in failing health; he survived it only two months, having died on the 7th of June the same year. Till 1875 he had been sole pastor of the congregation, but in that year Mr. J. W. Pringle, M.A., had been ordained as his colleague, and for eight years the two co-operated cordially in promoting the best interests of the people. On the 11th June, 1883, the remains of the senior minister were laid in the Abbey cemetery, Jedburgh, amid many manifestations of respectful sorrow. Mr. Barr was the author of a sermon on "The Evils of Parental Negligence," preached on a special occasion, and published by request. Among the names appended to the memorial asking for its publication were those of the Rev. William Nicol of Blackfriars congregation, the Rev. John Baird of Castle Street, and Mr. George Balfour.

In recent years important alterations have been made on the congregational property. A hall, vestry, and ladies' room were built in 1876 at a cost, includ-

ing the site, of more than £600, all of which was at once cleared off by the members. Early in 1888 the office-bearers began to consider the propriety of some renovations in the internal structure of the church. It was felt that if the building were re-seated and some other changes introduced, including proper provision for heating and ventilation, the comfort of the worshippers would be greatly promoted. A plan was prepared, submitted to the members, and, between the 9th July and the 28th November, carried out under the direction of a committee, consisting of the elders, managers, and auditors. While these alterations were in progress the congregation met, not on the Anna, as they had done seventy years before, but in Blackfriars Church, the two congregations meeting together, and the ministers officiating conjointly. The cost of the new arrangements was estimated at £750, and this was exceeded; but toward the liquidation of the amount a sum of £500 was at once contributed, and a collection of £57 10s 4d was obtained on the Fast-day, when the building was re-opened. In addition to pecuniary contributions some valuable gifts were presented, including an American organ, now used in the congregational worship; a marble tablet, commemorative of the deceased ministers of the church; a baptismal font; communion plates; and various articles of furniture.

As previously indicated, the practice of collecting funds by seat-rents has long been discontinued; and, according to official reports, the system now adopted works satisfactorily. Twice a-year there is a voluntary offering; and, according to the Report for 1888,

“this department of our finance has proved in the past one of the surest pillars of our voluntary system.” The total income in 1888 was £1105 2s 8d, but that included £634 11s 9d paid on account of the renovation fund, and the financial year closed with a balance in hand. In all departments the congregational organization is efficient; and posts of active usefulness are filled by descendants of some who were zealous members at the time when Thomas Boston was their minister.

## CHAPTER XI.

### YETHOLM.

ON the east side of the county of Roxburgh, close to the borders of Northumberland, bounded on the other sides by Morebattle and Linton, four miles long by two in breadth, and of a triangular figure, is the parish of Yetholm. Its area is stated at 5700 acres, of which nearly 3000 acres are arable or in grass parks, the remainder consisting chiefly of luxuriant pasture on the hills, including some of the highest summits of the Cheviot range. With pardonable exaggeration, Professor Herbert Story, in the "Life" of his father, writes concerning the twin villages of Kirk and Town Yetholm that they "lie there among their green hills and beside their gliding river, like grey-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone." Doubtless the past is here much more important, historically, than the present; and the parish is associated with many stirring incidents in Border life.

Of the two townships, situated one on each side of the Bowmont water, that of Kirk Yetholm is the older; and, indeed, its origin is lost in the mists of antiquity. This village, as now existing, is on the south side of the Bowmont, a mile and a half from the English border, the steep green hills "coming to the very door" so literally that some houses and kail-yards are situated on the slope. Most of the

inhabitants are rentallers under the Marquis of Tweeddale; and it may interest advocates of small holdings to know that each feu consists of a house, a garden, and about a quarter of an acre of land in the "loaning," the latter in lieu of certain privileges renounced some years since. Some of the rentallers farm a few acres of land near the village at rents which range from £1 5s to £2 an acre. Of larger farms in the neighbourhood scarcely any pay £1 an acre; in some cases it is several shillings less, so that occupiers of small holdings pay more than double, and in some cases three times, the rent paid for larger farms. It should be observed, however, that land on the larger holdings varies in quality and differs in climate. Many small occupiers are tradesmen or day labourers, who cultivate the land when not otherwise employed; and certainly it is a source of health and comfort to themselves and their families.

Still, it is certain that to a reflective mind "the past is here greater and nearer than the present." In the ages long ago it was the village on the "yet" or "gait," or road leading through mountain passes into England. Strictly speaking, it was a point whence roads diverged in different directions. One led southward, up the valley of the Bowmont, past the ancient township of Mow, and over the pass of Cocklaw, where the Scots had a little fortress very remote and easily defensible. Eastward the English border was very near, and the two kingdoms were separated only by a narrow stream. Remains of old civilization are here abundant; and the foundations of houses are distinctly visible close to the border line on either side, showing plainly that subjects of



different monarchs can live in peaceful neighbourhood if only the exigencies of rulers will permit. Possibly the humble abodes of cottars suffered less in those days of rapine than more aspiring habitations, the possessors of which might have frequent occasion to say with Wat Tinline, who lived on the border farther west—

“ They cross’d the Liddell at curfew hour,  
And burn’d my little lonely tower ;  
The fiend receive their souls therefor ;  
It had not been burned for a year and more.”

Even supposing the turf huts of those hardy Borderers to be destroyed, they could be reconstructed much more easily than a colony of ants can repair the damage inflicted by some incautious human foot. With the waning moon at Michaelmas came a period of comparative peace ; and a Cheviot blast furnished a complete protection against invasion. In spring and early summer there was little that could be carried off except such poor thin cattle as might have subsisted through the winter, which, at that season, were very little worth. In summer the cottage would be practically deserted, the hardy inmates probably thinking, like the gipsies in later times, that they were liable to catch cold living in houses, and therefore preferred the open sky or the light covering of a tent. Yet the people of the two countries must have been distinct in many respects, for even now, nearly three centuries after the union of the crowns, the Northumberland “burr” is observable in the speech of young and old immediately after crossing the stream.

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that

this Border district was in olden days destitute of religious instruction. As the heathen tribes of the Highlands and Hebrides bowed to the Christian teaching of Columba and his successors in distant Iona, the boisterous spirits of the Border-land yielded to the benign influence of Cuthbert and his associates at Lindisfarne. From an early date the monks of Kelso had three acres of land in Yhetan, with right to build houses for themselves, their men and animals, also with right of common pasture in Yetholm, and with free passage for themselves, their men and animals, across the brook which separated the two kingdoms. On the other side, at Shotten, they had land sufficient to keep two ploughs at work, besides pasture for twenty oxen, twenty cows, five hundred ewes, and two hundred other sheep; also common pasture and fuel, and a right to grind at the mill without payment of multure.

For about a century and a half Yetholm has been identified with a colony of Gipsies; and during much of that time has contained a royal residence. But with the change of social habits, and the gradual tightening of police regulations, they have found it difficult to subsist according to the old style; and there are not many left who now follow a nomadic life. Gipsy royalty is also a thing of the past. Its splendour had waned considerably even when Will Faa, the last King but one, wore the crown. Will was a man of great physical strength, and had been a noted smuggler; but a sword-cut in the wrist received in a struggle with gaugers ended his smuggling, and the evening of his life was spent more peacefully. His character was superior to that of the

rest of his tribe, and this, with a certain reserve in his manner, deepened respect. The Marquis of Tweeddale and Wauchope of Niddrie, to mark their consideration for him, gave the old man the right of shooting over their property and fishing in their streams; and he was no mean hand with the rod and the gun. His successor, Charles Blythe, who was elected to the throne because married to a relative of Will Faa's, was a man of a different type. He was tall and powerful, with an imposing presence, keen, piercing eyes, and a prominent nose. Addicted to reading, and possessed of much general knowledge acquired by extensive observation, he was particularly well acquainted with the ballad literature of the Borders; and had often met with Sir Walter Scott, who was in the habit of visiting the royal encampment whenever he could conveniently do so. Charles's latter days were cheered by a weekly allowance granted him by Lady John Scott, who had known him in her girlhood, and who wished to mitigate the hardships which had befallen gipsy royalty. In 1861 he died at the age of 83, and with his demise the sovereignty seemed likely to collapse. It devolved naturally on his son David, who waived his claim to a worthless inheritance in favour of his youngest sister Helen; but Esther, the elder sister, who bore the royal name of Faa, successfully asserted her claim, and was crowned at the cross of Yetholm, with public proclamation of her title as Queen Esther Faa Blythe, "challenge who dare."

With a dignified aspect, a large share of shrewdness, and a plausible manner with visitors to her shrine, which consisted of a neat little cottage on the

outskirts of Kirk-Yetholm, Queen Esther did what she could to maintain a fair position, but the effort was hopeless. The tinsel crown, her emblem of royalty, was somehow lost; and in March, 1867, her income had become so precarious and insufficient that application for assistance was made on her behalf to the Parochial Board of Jedburgh, to which town her husband, then deceased, had belonged. She was offered accommodation in the poorhouse, but that did not meet her ideas of dignity and freedom. So the struggle with poverty was continued till at length the hapless Queen found refuge in "The Castle," a large, unshapely block of buildings in the Horse Market of Kelso, which had become a general rendezvous of the indigent and vagabond classes. There she had an allowance from the Parochial Board of Yetholm. She died in July, 1883; and on the 15th of that month, which was a Sabbath, her mortal remains were conveyed to Kirk-Yetholm, and deposited in the tomb of her ancestors. It was estimated that 1500 persons were present at the church-yard gate, but of these not more than two dozen were gipsies. The coffin was there taken out of the hearse, and carried to the grave on the shoulders of stalwart men. It bore the inscription—"Esther Faa Blythe, Queen of the Gipsies, died July, 1883;" was heavily mounted with gilt tinselling, and was covered with flowers, including a wreath of white roses sent by Lady John Scott. Over it was spread the royal cloak of scarlet cloth worn in her life-time by the deceased sovereign. Altogether, it was an imposing ceremonial, the interest of which was enhanced by the prevailing consciousness that in the grave of that representative

woman was buried the last remnant of gipsy royalty in the Border district.

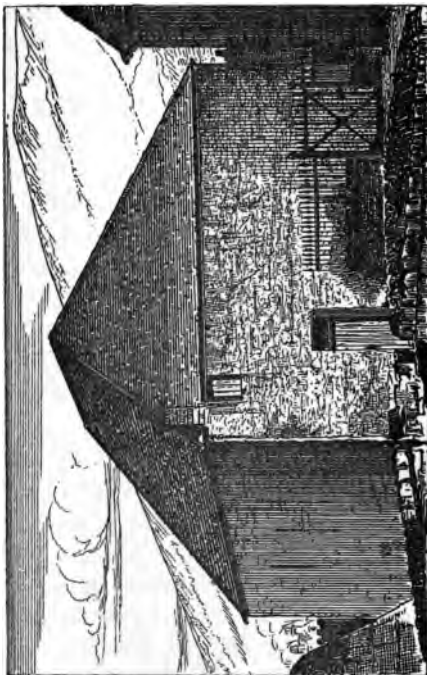
On the north side of the Bowmont is Town Yetholm, likewise a village of great antiquity, and now a centre of commercial interest to a rural population, many of whom are intelligent shepherds among the Cheviot Hills. Here, also, may be observed many attractive features of life in a Scottish village. The merchant or tradesman is able to maintain his family in comfort, with the help of a good garden or even a small holding, which, no doubt, entails constant industry in summer, but yields an ample recompense by the provision laid in against the gloomy days of winter. The district is notable in various respects. All the shepherds on both sides of the Border have cows as part payment for their services; and the produce is manipulated by matrons and maidens in these hillside cottages with careful industry. Another part of the remuneration is a "pack" of sheep; and Yetholm is probably the only place in Scotland where there is an agricultural show for the stock of shepherds alone. A similar show is held in Northumberland; but these two are believed to be quite exceptional.

In the village there are upwards of a dozen cows, which, in summer, graze together under the care of a herd on the north side of the river. For various kinds of garden produce the village has more than a local reputation; and heather honey occupies a conspicuous place at the horticultural exhibition in autumn. Wool gathering is not now encouraged by farmers on the hills; but soiled and broken wool is cleaned and manufactured on the south side of the river. As a health resort, this village, as well as

Morebattle, has a growing reputation, and the desire to breathe the bracing mountain air will doubtless stimulate efforts to furnish additional accommodation.

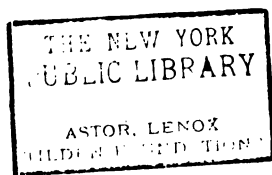
Toward the close of the seventeenth century the Rev. John Simson, M.A., was minister of the parish; and on his removal to Morebattle the vacancy was filled by the Rev. Robert Colville, M.A., from Annan. Early in 1731 Mr. Colville died; and a presentation was issued by the commissioner for Mr. Andrew Wauchope of Niddrie in favour of Mr. Joseph Leck, M.A., who had been licensed by the Presbytery of Duns five years before. From the 23d September, 1731, Mr. Leck was minister of Yetholm till the 1st September, 1785, when he died in the 87th year of his age and the 54th of his ministry. It was a long period of peace to the parish; and even the gipsies were respectful to the minister, though it does not appear that any successful efforts were made to break up their organization, and lead them into the paths of honest industry, till many years afterwards.

At the time of Mr. Leck's decease, in 1786, there was no such thing in the Church of Scotland as popular election; and in due course a presentation was issued in favour of a successor, who proved unacceptable to the parish. The result was an extensive withdrawal of the people, who obtained a supply of ordinances from the Associate (Burgher) Synod; and in the same year a church was built in Town Yetholm, with sittings for 600 people. This building was of the square, low-roofed, old-fashioned sort which characterised the ecclesiastical edifices in Scotland at that period in connection with Seceding congregations. It occupied a good site, close to the road



*Page 314.*

ASSOCIATE (BURGHER) MEETING-HOUSE, YETHOLM.





leading to Kirk Yetholm; and each congregation could look across the valley at the other church, less than a quarter of a mile distant.

The first minister of the Secession Church at Yetholm was the Rev. Robert Shirra, a nephew of the Rev. Robert Shirra, Kirkcaldy. Both uncle and nephew were from the Associate congregation, Stirling, of which Mr. Ebenezer Erskine had been the first minister. Having entered the Theological Hall, under Mr. John Brown, at Haddington, in 1780, Mr. Shirra was, in due time, licensed as a preacher, and was called to Fenwick and Yetholm. At the latter place he was ordained in 1787, when the Rev. Mr. Elder, Newtown, preached and presided; and with him were present the Rev. Messrs. George Coventry, Stitchel; William Kidston, Stow; Alexander Shanks, Jedburgh; George Bell, Wooler; John Blackhall, Berwick; and John Riddoch, Coldstream.

In the parish there were then 1200 inhabitants, most of whom had left the old church; and the meeting-house of Mr. Shirra was usually filled, often crowded. The young minister was well read in geography, also in the history and usages of ancient nations; but he excelled in knowledge of the Scriptures, the doctrines of which he could apply with great power to the human heart and conscience. In accordance with custom at that period, much time was devoted to visitation and catechising, which entailed on Mr. Shirra frequent travelling among the hills. While thus engaged he was in the habit of thinking out his sermons, and was often heard speaking aloud to himself. In common with all faithful ministers at that time, the young pastor was com-

pelled to deal with numerous ecclesiastical offences, prominent among which were irregular marriages. Offenders of all classes were compelled to give satisfaction to the kirk-session, and then to compare before the congregation at an ordinary diet of worship on one or more Sabbaths, according to the more or less heinous character of the offence, when they were publicly rebuked and absolved. Like many ministers of his time, Mr. Shirra was often called to aid in the settlement of disputes; and his session took cognizance of such offences as "monopolising," "contrabanding," "slandering," and "hame-sucken." On rare occasions the parties resorted to "Letters of Lawburrows." Meetings of the kirk-session were wont to be opened with "family worship" by the moderator, or one of the elders. Then a text of scripture was given out, and spoken to by every member before the ordinary business began.\* The members of session were intelligent men, and had all, previous to ordination, been examined regarding their knowledge of scripture and the "doctrine, worship, and discipline of this church."

In a preceding part of this volume† it has been stated that, when the controversy regarding the "new light" began, Mr. Shirra was one of those who preferred the old ways. The questions at issue referred to the magistrate's power in matters of religion, and the obligation of the National Covenant on posterity. An explanatory statement was adopted by the Asso-

\* For information regarding this congregation and its ministers we are indebted partly to the "Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church," by the Rev. David Scott, F.S.A. Sc., minister of the Free Church, Saltcoats. 1886.

† See page 156.

ciate Synod, and, by their direction, prefixed to the formula of questions proposed to preachers and ministers at the time of license and ordination, not requiring their approval of persecuting or intolerant principles in religion; and also, while admitting the obligation of the Covenants on posterity, not expressing any opinion regarding the nature of such obligation. On the adoption of this statement fifteen members renounced the authority of the Synod, and formed themselves into a separate religious association. The separatists assumed the name of "The Associate Synod," but to distinguish them from the larger body they have been ordinarily called "The Original Burgher Synod."

On the 12th November, 1799, Mr. Shirra, with his congregation, acceded to the new denomination. In August, 1802, and in February, 1803, he was called to Dunfermline, and in July, 1806, to Whitburn; but the translation was not in either case allowed by the Synod. The course of ministerial usefulness and congregational prosperity at Yetholm was not unchequered. In connection with cases of discipline the Edinburgh Presbytery held various meetings with the congregation; and once, on the 8th December, 1807, they were hindered from meeting "on account of the storm of snow that covered the earth." On the 29th April, 1810, the Presbytery enjoined the session and managers to pay their minister a half-year's stipend in advance, of which decision information was to be furnished to them by the clerk. The state of friction thus indicated continued to increase; and on the 23d August, 1814, petitions were read to the Presbytery from the minister and several

members of session, which shewed a great want of harmony in the congregation. Some alleged opposition to the principles of the Church as the ground of dispute, while others said it arose merely from ill humour and personal pique. The disputation ended in a schism, when two hundred members left the congregation, and applied to the Burgher Presbytery of Coldstream for supply of sermon.

With his diminished congregation, Mr. Shirra continued to work till, on the 15th July, 1834, application was made for a colleague and successor, when a stipend of £60 a-year was offered, with a free house, and £10 for sacramental expenses. The request was granted, and the Rev. Andrew Mackenzie, Edinburgh, was appointed to moderate in a call on the first Sabbath of August. It turned out in favour of Mr. John Hastie, probationer, and was subscribed by one hundred members and nine adherents. On the 15th October, 1834, Mr. Hastie was ordained, when the Rev. John Hill of Shottsburn began the service by preaching from Phil. ii. 29; and the Rev. Robert Lindsay, Dalkeith, delivered the ordination sermon from 1 Cor. iii. 23, besides giving suitable exhortations to pastor and people. The senior minister died on the 16th November, 1840, in the 82d year of his age and the 53d of his ministry, and "was buried with his forefathers at Stirling." His surviving colleague, who was born at Whitburn in 1800, and began his studies somewhat late in life, was a faithful and useful minister, especially among the young. Of an accessible disposition, and with a frank and kindly manner, he was much beloved beyond the bounds of his congregation. In 1842 he joined the Synod of the

Original Secession Church ; and in 1852 the congregation was merged in the Free Church of Scotland. He died on the 4th July, 1863, in the 29th year of his ministry. For two years prior to his decease he had suffered from infirm health, but the close of life came unexpectedly. While visiting an invalid he was seized with a fit of coughing, which brought on hemorrhage, and, in a few moments, he who had come to comfort another was himself numbered with the dead.

The third minister was the Rev. John Coventry, ordained on the 28th May, 1862, as colleague to Mr. Hastie ; demitted his charge on the 6th April, 1869, having received an appointment to Gibraltar. His successor was the Rev. Alexander M'Millan, ordained 30th September, 1869, translated on the 15th April, 1878, to Baillieston. On the 29th August, 1878, the Rev. Norman M'Pherson was ordained as fifth minister of the congregation. In 1884 the membership was 180 ; the total amount of money raised yearly £140 ; and the stipend, £177, with a manse.

As already indicated, the congregation of the United Presbyterian Church was formed in 1814 by a secession from that of Mr. Shirra, and for a time the congregation met for worship in a building which belonged to Robert Elliot, then a brewer in the village. Calls were addressed to Mr. Andrew Lawson, who was appointed by the Synod to Ecclefechan, and Mr. P. Bradley, who was ordained at Lilliesleaf, in the Presbytery of Selkirk. On the 1st April, 1818, Mr. Walter Hume was ordained as first minister of the new congregation, and in the same year a church was built in a style then regarded as very

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neat and commodious. Mr. Hume was born at Fairnington, in the parish of Roxburgh; and was much indebted in early life to the influence of a pious mother, of whose care, however, he was deprived when only twelve years of age. His father was steward to Mr. Arres, on the large farm of Fairnington, and was a member of the Burgher congregation at Jedburgh, then under the ministry of the Rev. Peter Young. Trade in the west of Scotland was very prosperous, and Walter Hume, at the age of fourteen, was induced to exchange his rural home for a more active life in the city of Glasgow. In a year or two he had made a little money, and began to improve his education, going afterwards to attend the University. Looking forward, now, to the Christian ministry, he taught a school in Glasgow for a time; but afterwards returned to his native place and taught the family of Mr. Arres at Fairnington, where his father still occupied his old position. In M'Kelvie's "Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church," he is stated to have belonged to the First congregation, Stirling; but this is a mistake, as he never, previous to ordination, was connected with any congregation except Shuttle Street, Glasgow, under the ministry of Dr. Dick, and Jedburgh, under Mr. Young. In 1811 he entered on the study of theology under Professor Lawson; and was, after completing his course, licensed by the Presbytery of Selkirk.

The ordination services at Yetholm were conducted in the open air, and the principal part of the work devolved on the Rev. Mr. M'Laurin, Coldingham. On the succeeding Sabbath the young minister was

introduced to his congregation by the Rev. Peter Young. From the first his ministry was acceptable in the neighbourhood; and within two years the membership had increased so much that a gallery was erected in the church for the required accommodation. The young minister was eminently a man of peace. The business of his congregation was conducted quietly, but systematically; and the people were very regular in their attendance, though the distance was in some instances great. From the first day of his ministry Mr. Hume was a most industrious and faithful worker. In the manse he was not a moment idle, but was occupied either in reading and study or in writing out his sermons in shorthand, a practice that was continued during all the years of his active life. Thus his discourses were always the result of thoughtful study, and were carefully prepared. In other departments of pastoral work he was equally conscientious. Every family connected with the congregation was visited once a-year, diets of examination were held in various localities, and to the sick or the bereaved he was particularly attentive. In all his efforts the members of session were kind and helpful. A young relative who went in 1820 to reside in the manse describes these worthy elders as "men who were exemplary in their lives, and highly esteemed by all connected with the congregation." The members of session at that time were William Davidson, Yetholm; Edward Brown, hedger, Yetholm; John Taylor, shepherd, Trowburn; Robert Shiell, farmer, Sourhope; James Davidson, steward, Cherrytrees; Walter Neil, farmer, Hoselawhill; and Thomas Oliver, Thirlstane, whose daughter was afterwards Mrs. Hume. William

Davidson was likewise a manager and treasurer of the congregation. The other managers were George Henderson, Plough Inn ; James Ainslie, baker ; John Cockburn, blacksmith, Primside Mill ; George Simpson, joiner ; and James Dodds, carrier, who was also precentor. All these excellent men have long since gone to their reward ; but of most of them descendants still remain in the locality, and are connected with the congregation.

In every scheme that was calculated to promote the prosperity of the district, Mr. Hume was greatly interested. He was some years in advance of any other in the locality to establish a Sabbath school ; and the attendance included many unconnected with his own congregation. Along with a few others he was active in forming a village library, to which he presented a number of volumes. For some years after his settlement there was no Post Office in Yetholm ; letters and newspapers were all conveyed by old Thomas Lowrie, carrier, who was nearly blind. The lack of postal accommodation was seriously inconvenient to the village and neighbourhood, and Mr. Hume spared no effort to have matters placed on a better footing. He communicated with various members of Parliament, one of whom was Mr. Wallace, then member for Greenock, and officially connected with the Post Office. After long delay, and much correspondence, all conducted by Mr. Hume, the matter was ultimately adjusted.

The friend of Mr. Hume to whom we are indebted for some of these reminiscences describes him as a pattern of "Christian consistency." What he preached from the pulpit the young minister exemplified in his



walk and conversation. At the old minister's funeral a co-presbyter remarked that "he not only preached the gospel; he lived the gospel." Similar testimony is borne by the Rev. Dr. Oliver of Regent Place United Presbyterian Church, Glasgow, who, for a time, attended school at Yetholm, and in his student days was a frequent visitor at the manse. Genial and hospitable in disposition, and lively in conversation, Mr. Hume was always ready with a hearty welcome to visitors, and was likewise received with pleasure in many a social gathering. Though thus generally kind, he was stern and authoritative when called to denounce any wrong-doing. On sacramental occasions he had generally three assistants, one of them for the fast day; and then he was in his happiest mood. Usually these assistants were members of the Presbytery, with all of whom he lived on brotherly terms.

Till his death, on the 21st December, 1861, in the 78th year of his age and the 44th of his ministry, Mr. Hume discharged with unwearied fidelity the duties of his pastoral office; but, owing probably to excess of modesty, did not figure largely in the eyes of the public. "Of unfeigned piety, of sound understanding, of clear intellect, and of solid attainments, which were augmented through life by much and various reading, combined with a singularly modest, obliging, and social disposition, and the capacity of imparting his ideas in a distinct and easily intelligible form, he possessed many of the best qualifications for a good Christian pastor, and from the beginning to the end of his career sustained and adorned that character. Upright and conscientious, there was no

part of his office which he performed perfunctorily. He was laborious in his preparations for the pulpit, ever exhibiting in his discourses the fruit of intelligent and mature consideration, and well digested, well arranged, and perspicuously expressed thought, delivered with humility, solemnity, and earnestness.”\*

He was equally conscientious in the discharge of other pastoral duties. Without thinking of the labour, he was regular in visiting his people, many of whom lived in remote places among the hills; and by the afflicted especially his cordial sympathy and wise counsels were much appreciated. In pecuniary matters he was generous, even beyond his means, and made sacrifices amounting to hundreds of pounds on account of his congregation. Living in a remote rural district, far from the busy haunts of men, he was, nevertheless, an intelligent observer of public events, in which he always took a lively interest. Cheered by the sympathy of an attached congregation, sustained by the confidence of his brethren in the ministry, and greatly respected by all who knew him, Mr. Hume laboured in his country congregation till the latter part of 1860, when failing health made it necessary to secure the help of a colleague. With needful aid obtained from the general funds of the Church, suitable arrangements were made by the Presbytery; and on the 14th August, 1861, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine Whyte, from the congregation of Bridge-of-Teith, was ordained as colleague and successor. Before the year closed the senior minister

\* Obituary notice in *United Presbyterian Magazine*, February, 1862, obviously from the pen of the Rev. Henry Renton, who is known to have highly appreciated his co-presbyter, Mr. Hume.

was removed. From the time when the congregation began to hear preachers Mr. Hume had never been able to be in the church; but the ordination of Mr. Whyte was a solace to his mind, and the affectionate attentions of the young minister were much appreciated. For many weeks the aged pastor was confined to his room, but was always cheerful and resigned, till at length the hour of his departure found him still cherishing the humble, but trustful, confidence in the Saviour that had cheered him through life. The only son of the deceased minister became a medical practitioner in Jedburgh; his elder daughter became the wife of the Rev. Daniel Kerr, Duns; and his only other daughter was married to Mr. John Hilson, manufacturer, Jedburgh, a gentleman of literary tastes, who was often at Yetholm, and had a high appreciation of the genial and intelligent minister. On the Sabbath after his interment special services were conducted in the church at Yetholm by the Rev. Daniel Kerr, his son-in-law, and by the Rev. E. E. Whyte, surviving minister of the congregation.

The ministerial career of the second pastor was very brief. With a bright cheerful manner, and an active physical frame, he was, in many respects, well adapted for a widely-scattered rural congregation, and the ordination in 1861 was a time of joyful anticipation. Having caught a cold in the spring of 1863 his strength rapidly failed; and on the 5th July, the same year, he died in the 33d year of his age and the second of his ministry. His successor was the Rev. Andrew Ritchie, from Shamrock Street, Glasgow, who was ordained on the 6th October,

1864, as third minister of the Yetholm congregation. He was afterwards translated to Erskine Church, Stirling; and was succeeded by the Rev. Archibald Torrance, from the congregation of Morningside, Edinburgh. In 1888 there were 236 members; and the total income of the congregation was £321 1s 1d, being the fourth in the Kelso Presbytery in respect of liberality, and the fifth in regard to membership.

Of students connected with the congregation may be mentioned the Rev. James Douglas, who, after a distinguished career in the University of Edinburgh, in which he took the highest prize in the Natural Philosophy Class, was, on the 1st February, 1843, ordained minister at Hartlepool. In more recent years the congregation has produced Mr. Thomas Kirkup, M.A., who, in 1872, obtained the Edinburgh University Endowment Classical Fellowship of £100, tenable for three years; who entered the Theological Hall in 1868; but afterwards took to literature, and, besides other work, has done valuable service, and shown his capability of doing more, by his "Inquiry into Socialism." At an earlier date, but not connected with the Dissenters, the late Rev. Robert Story of Roseneath, father of Professor Herbert Story, was born at Yetholm, where his father was schoolmaster. Natives of the two villages have attained prosperity abroad, while others occupy honourable positions in business and in society, and many of them return with delight to spend a brief summer holiday in the romantic valley where their childhood's years were spent. Thus pleasantly are associated the years of childhood with those of riper age; and some who are influential in the busy marts of commerce,

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as well as in the political and social movements of the day, come back for refreshment and renewed vigour among the more primitive dwellers in their native district and the healthful breezes of the Cheviot Hills.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

**T**HE Disruption in 1843 was an epoch in Scottish Church life; and introduced extensive modifications in the arrangements of the Border district. In the parish and locality of Jedburgh these changes were conspicuous, and some of the causes were at work for at least twelve years before the Disruption. Previous to 1830 the Rev. Dr. Somerville had been parochial incumbent for the long period of fifty-eight years, and, in his own words, had "never resorted to any mean artifices to court popularity." He had, indeed, submitted to the "drudgery" of repeating his sermons instead of reading them, but his discourses were dry, and not generally acceptable to the common people. Ministers in nearly all the adjoining parishes were of a similar stamp. Not lacking in ability, and often with the bearing of gentlemen, they had no high standard of ministerial activity. Supervision of the poor was managed in conjunction with the heritors; while the religious instruction of the young was left in charge of the parochial teacher. There was no pastoral visitation, and ministers seldom entered any house except those of the lairds, and perhaps one or two principal farmers. The services on Sabbath were short, dry, and so unattractive that few of the parishioners cared to attend. They pre-

ferred to travel six, eight, ten, or even twelve miles to the meeting-house, where they found life, warmth, and edifying spiritual instruction. Thus it happened that the roads leading toward Jedburgh were thronged with worshippers, many of whom walked past the door of the parish kirk, but never, even on a boisterous winter day, would dream of seeking a temporary refuge within the grey old walls. They preferred to read one of Ralph Erskine's sermons at home; and would have a special family exercise about the middle of the day, consisting of singing, reading, and prayer, similar to the morning and evening worship then universally observed. One minister is said to have described his parish as "a nest of Dissenters;" but neither he nor any of his neighbours made any effort to reclaim the wanderers by providing more attractive services nearer home.

The first break in the dreary waste of "moderatism" occurred in 1830, when the Rev. John Purves was inducted as Dr. Somerville's successor. John Purves was born in July, 1800, at Rawburn, in the parish of Longformacus, Berwickshire, and was the son of an extensive Lammermuir farmer. His early education was obtained partly at the parish school of Ayton, but chiefly at Yarrow, where he was boarded with Mr. Scott, then parochial teacher there; and subsequently at Lauder, where Mr. Patterson was a much esteemed and successful teacher for nearly half a century. Among others educated at Lauder along with Mr. Purves were Dr. Wilson, afterwards of Bombay; Dr. Runciman of Glasgow; Principal Fairbairn of the Free Church College, Glasgow; and Dr. Fairbairn of Newhaven.

At the age of fourteen Mr. Purves went to college, and passed creditably through the various classes, obtaining prizes in those of Mathematics and Moral Philosophy. In the early part of 1823 he was licensed as a preacher by the Presbytery of Lauder, and shortly afterwards became assistant to Mr. Clason, minister of Logie parish, near Bridge of Allan, where he lived in the manse on terms of great confidence and cordiality with that excellent Christian pastor. In 1825 he went to be assistant to Dr. Jones, minister of Lady Glenorchy's Church, Edinburgh; and in April, 1826, was ordained there as assistant and successor. It was a very large church, situated under the North Bridge, in the place now occupied by the Waverley Station, and contained about two thousand sittings. For many years the building had been a place of refuge for those connected with the Established Church in Edinburgh who relished evangelical preaching; and, under the ministry of Dr. Jones, with his youthful colleague, the congregation stood high in respect of Christian character and influence.

In October, 1830, Mr. Purves received from the Crown a presentation to the parish of Jedburgh, and on the 8th December following was inducted to the pastorate. To the people of Jedburgh the gospel in all its fulness was no novelty, for preaching in a similar strain had prevailed for generations in the various meeting-houses of the town. But under the arches of the old Abbey such strains had not been heard for many years; and about Mr. Purves there was a fervid eloquence which speedily made its mark, and wafted the fame of the young minister even to



distant places. Efforts were made to bring about his return to Edinburgh to succeed Dr. Gordon in Hope Park Chapel; and he was urged to entertain the idea of accepting a call to Regent Square, London, as successor to the Rev. Edward Irving, but nothing would tempt him to leave Jedburgh. To a minister of cultured mind the situation was in many respects singularly attractive. It was the church of which Gabriel Semple had been minister more than a century before; the parish where the Relief Church had been organized under Thomas Boston; the town where a great Secession organization had been built up by Shanks and Young; and where Nicol and Porteous were still in the zenith of their fame. The congregation met weekly within the walls of the ancient Abbey; while the manse, with its garden and fruitful pear trees planted by the monks, looked out southward on the valley of the Jed. Apart from other associations, it was a noble work to preach the gospel within these historic walls to a congregation educated in a different school.

The preaching of Mr. Purves, as described by a friend at the celebration of his jubilee in June, 1876, was "clear, eloquent, and authoritative—powerful to arrest and arouse the sinner, and lead to peace and holiness;" and in the words of Dr. Chalmers, after reading his volume of sermons, "no one has so well redd the marches on the subject of free grace." He was connected with the Bonar family, having married in 1827 Elizabeth, daughter of the Rev. Archibald Bonar, minister at Cramond, near Edinburgh; and was much associated with Messrs. Horatius Bonar, Kelso; Andrew A. Bonar, Collace, afterwards of

Glasgow; M'Cheyne, Dundee; and Burns, Kilsyth, in evangelistic work. About 1839, '40, and '41 numerous revival meetings were held; and in one of these years they were continued almost every night for many weeks in the School and the Town Hall, which were generally crowded. The personal efforts of Mr. Purves during the early years of his ministry in Jedburgh were unceasing; and it is recorded that he would ride twenty miles over the Carter Fell to preach in a Presbyterian Church among the hills, and ride home after the service was over. A great transformation in the old Monastic Church at Jedburgh was one natural result of such labours, and on sacramental occasions in particular, when he had always good assistants, the building was usually crammed from floor to ceiling. One notable sermon preached from Romans viii. 34—"Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died"—was afterwards published by Messrs. Rutherford, Kelso, in a volume entitled "No Condemnation." Another memorable sermon was preached from the words, "Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Mal. iii. 2); and a discourse on the words, "Flee from the wrath to come," produced a great sensation in the old Abbey congregation.

Except from the Rev. Messrs. Wallace, Hawick, and Milroy, Crailing, Mr. Purves met with little sympathy in the Presbytery of Jedburgh; but as the "Ten Years' Conflict" proceeded the power of these three brethren was increased all over the neighbourhood. It was no light sacrifice for Mr. Purves to give up his ample stipend, his beautiful manse, and his fine position as minister of Jedburgh. But he had no

hesitation about the matter, and, on the afternoon of the memorable day of the Disruption, said to a friend whom he met in Tanfield Hall, "I have just been signing away my earthly all, and I feel a good deal lighter than I did in the morning."

Returning to Jedburgh from the General Assembly, he was no longer entitled to appear in the Abbey Church; but repaired to the Anna, where Boston had dispensed the communion, and where Mr. Porteous had preached during a whole summer twenty-five years before. There was not such a clean sweep of the old building as that which had been witnessed in the days of Boston; but still a great crowd joined in the fresh emancipation, and went out to the new place of meeting with joyous fervour. Members of the dissenting congregations looked on the new movement with respect, quiet country people remarking to each other as they met at the door of the meeting-house, "Man, the Kirk has made a bonny spleet;" and others thoughtfully pondering the future course of this rushing and still tumultuous current. Steps were immediately taken to have a place of meeting erected, and meanwhile the congregation met weekly in the assembly room of a hotel.

The task of arranging for neighbouring parishes devolved largely on Mr. Purves; and there was much to be done, with no help, but much opposition, from the ministers. In most districts, however, laymen were actively helpful, looking out places where a barn, or some other temporary accommodation, could be had for a religious service, and providing for the conveyance, as well as the maintenance, of the preachers. Where nothing better could be done,

there was service in the open air. Gradually matters began to get into shape; and new churches were provided at Crailing, at Ancrum, at the village of Denholm, to accommodate the parishes of Cavers, Minto, and Bedrule, and at Wolflee for the parishes of Hobkirk and Southdean. In all these districts the families connected with dissenting congregations at Jedburgh were numerous; and for a time no great change was apparent, but gradually the younger people were attracted to the Free Church, or perhaps to the Parish Churches, which were, one after another, supplied with younger and much more active ministers.

At first there was a lack of mutual appreciation between the Free Church and the members of the older non-established denominations; but by degrees any sense of jealousy disappeared, till in Jedburgh and the parishes adjoining they came to cordially recognise one another as brethren closely united in principles and aims. A special friendship grew up between Mr. Purves and Mr. Barr, and was largely shared by the two congregations, which at one time worshipped together for many months, when the services were conducted alternately by the two ministers. Regarding Mr. Purves, it may be added that subsequent to the Disruption, as well as before it, he was a leader in the Presbytery and Synod, as well as largely influential in the General Assembly. In addition to the volumes already mentioned, he published in 1832 a sermon preached before the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and in the same year two sermons, entitled "Our Danger and Duty." In 1846 he published the volume of

sermons which called forth the eulogium of Dr. Chalmers. Other publications had reference to the Sustentation Fund and the Education Question; and he also published one or two lectures delivered by him to the Jedburgh Mechanics' Institution. The degree of LL.D. was conferred on him as a just recognition of his meritorious services. On the 13th June, 1876, his jubilee as a minister was celebrated; and on that occasion the venerable pastor, who had done so much valuable work, was presented with a full-length portrait of himself, painted by Mr. Norman Macbeth, A.R.S.A., Edinburgh, along with a purse of sovereigns. He died on the 18th October, 1877.

Connected with Border Church life in more recent times, the name of Horatius Bonar is inseparably associated with the town of Kelso. Like many other eminent men, Dr. Bonar is said to have received his first, and probably most abiding, lessons in the faith from maternal training; but in boyhood and youth he was surrounded by many influences all calculated to sustain and strengthen sentiments thus early implanted. While a student he was in constant, harmonious fellowship with others having similar views and prospects. Among these were his own brothers, besides such promising aspirants to the sacred office as Robert M'Cheyne, William Burns, Robert M'Donald, Moody Stuart, John Purves, John Milne, and A. N. Somerville. Among this devoted band the ties of Christian brotherhood were strengthened by mutual conference and prayer conducted in the lodgings of one or another, according to circumstances. Thus they grew up a little company of earnest and consecrated men of God, destined to

exert a great and happy influence on the community.

Having been licensed to preach the gospel, Horatius Bonar was engaged for some time in mission work at Leith, where he was assisted by his brother Andrew and Dr. Thomas Smith. In November, 1837, he was settled in the North Parish, Kelso, where a new church had been erected in connection with the extension scheme, then under the direction of Dr. Chalmers. This additional accommodation was provided for the parish chiefly through the efforts of Mr. James Nisbet, who was born at Spylaw, near Kelso, on the 3d February, 1785, and rose to be the eminent publisher at 21, Berners Street, London. Largely instrumental in founding the Presbyterian Church in Regent Square, of which he was for many years a ruling elder, and cordially concurring in the church building efforts of the General Assembly in Scotland, Mr. Nisbet was bent on doing something for his native parish. After much consultation, he secured the consent of the Rev. James M'Culloch, minister of the parish, and the co-operation of Messrs. Alexander Leadbetter, John Henderson, and Robert Williamson, members of the kirk-session. A site was purchased at a cost of about £500; and on the 3d May, 1836, the foundation stone was laid in presence of the presbytery, the kirk-session, the trustees, and other friends. On the 26th November, 1837, the church was opened for public worship, the Rev. Dr. Muir, St. Stephens, Edinburgh, officiating in the forenoon, and the Rev. J. A. Wallace, Hawick, in the afternoon. The cost of the building, when completed, was £3000, by far the greater part of which had been either given

or collected by Mr. Nisbet, who likewise subscribed liberally toward the maintenance of ordinances and subsequent repairs on the building.

Many years before the Rev. Robert Hall, minister of the Burgher Church, had been designated "The Gospel Preacher;" and it cannot be said there was subsequent to his day any lack of gospel teaching in Kelso: but Horatius Bonar came as a young man, a representative of the evangelical section of the Church, and a leading member of a school already known in the neighbourhood through the fervid and earnest preaching of the Rev. John Purves at Jedburgh. The great theme of his message was the necessity of the new birth; and years afterwards he wrote that "though some were repelled, many were attracted." At the same time, he said—"I found there plenty of work, plenty of workmen, and plenty of sympathy; zealous elders, zealous teachers, and zealous friends." He had great power over the young, many of whom were led, through his efforts, to become earnest Christians. At an early period of his ministry he was in the habit of issuing invitations for united prayer on specific subjects, thus anticipating the action of the Evangelical Alliance in the same direction. Communion seasons were times of special effort; and by the devout people who waited on Dr. Bonar's ministry were always anticipated and enjoyed as a rich and satisfying spiritual feast. Able and congenial assistance was secured, generally including one or both of Dr. Bonar's brothers, whose style was pointed and impressive like his own. After sermon on the evening of the communion Sabbath there was always a short meeting for prayer, to which

many remained, and regarding which an attached old member, quoted by Mr. Lundie of Liverpool in a sermon preached after Dr. Bonar's funeral, writes :—  
“Our own Dr. Bonar, and the other two Drs. Bonar, sometimes all three together in the pulpit, asked for a special parting blessing, concluding with the verse—

“ ‘O may we stand before the Lamb  
When earth and seas are fled,  
And hear the Judge pronounce our name,  
With blessings on our head!’ ”

I used to wish that we did not need to go down into the world again, but that we might go straight up into heaven, which seemed so near.”

Till after the Disruption Dr. Bonar had no access to adjoining parishes, as the ministers were of a different stamp; and he never made any figure in ecclesiastical courts, the atmosphere of which was not congenial to his tastes, but he had other modes of expressing his views. With the co-operation of some friends, he was instrumental in starting *The Border Watch*, a district newspaper designed to be conducted on lines similar to those occupied by *The Witness* in Edinburgh. It did not succeed, and resulted in a pecuniary loss; but in other respects his pen was doing admirable work. The “Kelso Tracts,” one of which was entitled “Believe and Live,” were issued regularly for a time, and attained a wide circulation far beyond the district of Kelso. Not less popular were volumes chiefly on practical religion, some of which found their way to distant lands, and were even translated into foreign languages. It is stated that his volume entitled “God’s Way of Peace” has circulated to the extent of 285,000 and



his "Night of Weeping" to the number of 59,000 copies.

Still more conspicuously is the name of Horatius Bonar identified with sacred song; and some of the hymns written by him can scarcely be excelled by any similar composition in the English language. In the preface to his "Book of Praise," published in 1863, Mr. Roundell Palmer wrote—"A good hymn should have simplicity, freshness, and reality of feeling: a consistent elevation of tone, and a rhythm easy and harmonious, but not jingling or trivial. Its language may be homely; but should not be slovenly or mean. Affectation or visible artifice is worse than excess of homeliness; a hymn is easily spoiled by a single falsetto note. Nor will the most exemplary soundness of doctrine atone for doggerel, or redeem from failure a prosaic didactic style." Though not placed by that eminent authority on the same level with William Cowper, Philip Doddridge, Bishop Heber, Thomas Kelly, Henry Francis Lyte, James Montgomery, John Newton, A. M. Toplady, Isaac Watts, or Charles Wesley in respect to meritorious hymns, he is, at least, in the second rank, as indicated by the fact that four of his compositions are included in the "Book of Praise." Others may give him even a higher place; and it is known that Bishop Fraser of Manchester considered the hymn beginning "I heard the voice of Jesus say" the finest in the English language.

Regarding the origin of these hymns, Mr. Lundie said in the sermon already mentioned—"Mr. Bonar, when superintendent of his Sunday School at Leith, began with the simple aim of putting into the lips

and depositing in the hearts of the children gospel truth in a clear attractive form. Beginning in Leith, the hymns were multiplied in Kelso." The first published seems to have been the hymn beginning "I was a wandering sheep;" the second, "I lay my sins on Jesus;" and the third, "A few more years shall roll." They were liked by the children in Leith and Kelso, but speedily they were considered worthy of a wider circulation, and this was promoted by Mr. Nisbet, whose interest in Kelso and in Dr. Bonar continued undiminished till the close of his eventful life. The Christian people of England, as well as Scotland, soon recognised the genuine worth of the Kelso hymns. To the colonies and America these sacred songs found their way, and proved very attractive; and now old people as well as children, on the continent of Europe, from Spain even to Russia, find in them, as rendered into their own languages, a suitable utterance of their spiritual longings. A habitually silent man in private life, and always reticent regarding his own feelings, Dr. Bonar had a constantly active mind, the deepest sentiments of which were embodied in these simple melodies which have now been left as a precious heritage to the Christian world. From small beginnings these songs of Zion gradually accumulated, till it was easy to compile a goodly volume, and in this form the "Hymns of Faith and Hope" have circulated to the extent of 140,729 copies. There is reliable evidence of much good effected through these beautiful lyrics; and, in the words of Mr. Lundie, "the history would be voluminous, and of tender interest if it could be written, of the dark

souls enlightened, the troubled souls comforted, the dying souls revived, by repeated or remembered verses of Horatius Bonar's hymns."

Freed from the trammels of State connection in 1843, and no longer bound by law or usage to regard parochial boundaries, Dr. Bonar literally "went everywhere preaching the word." Of this work he wrote long afterwards—"I found open doors and open ears in that populous district among all ranks of the people. Year after year the work grew, and the people flocked to hear." It became necessary to procure assistance; and two missionaries were engaged. "They traversed the three counties of Roxburgh, Berwick, and Northumberland with blessed success, and the fruit of their labours remains till this day all over the Borders. . . . Whole villages were awakened, besides many other stray souls gathered into the Church of God from various quarters. Many rebuffs we got, many angry letters, many threats of ecclesiastical censure; but in spite of all this the work went on." At the same time he wrote:—"Righteousness without works to the sinner, simply on his acceptance of the divine testimony concerning Jesus and His sufficiency—this has been the burden of our good news."

: As minister of a parish *quoad sacra*, Dr. Bonar suffered less in a pecuniary sense than some other ministers, while he obtained freedom to preach in parishes from which he had been previously debarred. Largely through his efforts congregations in connection with the Free Church were formed in districts where the ministers had remained in connection with the Church of Scotland. From Mr. Craig, who

renounced his position as parochial minister of Sprouston, he received valuable aid, and great help was given by influential farmers in the different localities; but it was no easy work to organize congregations where the resident ministers were hostile, and involved an expenditure of strength and skill which it would be difficult to over-estimate. For about twenty years after the Disruption Dr. Bonar retained his position as minister of the North Church, Kelso; but after prolonged litigation the property of that and some other churches was adjudged, in accordance with the title-deeds, to be an appanage of the Established Church; and thus a building erected chiefly with the money of those who joined the Free Church was, in virtue of a legal warrant, appropriated by their opponents. With united heart and earnest purpose the congregation met this adverse decision. Steps were at once taken to build a new church of imposing architectural design. Vigorous and sustained effort was needful; and subscriptions, which flowed in from many quarters, partly for the sake of Dr. Bonar, were supplemented by the work of ladies continued during many months, and resulting in a handsome addition to the building fund. While the work was still unfinished, however, the minister indicated an opinion that his usefulness would be increased by a change of sphere; and after twenty-eight years spent in the Border town he removed to Edinburgh, and built up a new congregation in the Grange district. Not discouraged by any change of pastorate, the members gathered and sustained under his ministry continued to be a centre of Christian activity, and even a training school for

young ministers. Like his eminent predecessor, the Rev. James T. Stuart, M.A., second minister of the Kelso Free Church, removed to Edinburgh, and gathered a new congregation in the locality of Mayfield; while the Rev. W. R. Nicoll, M.A., the third minister, has attained a high and influential place in the literary world, particularly as editor of some valuable serials. After a time of weakness and suffering, Dr. Bonar died in the first week of August, 1889, having been nearly fifty-two years a minister.

Apart from the Disruption and its results many changes have occurred in recent times connected with Church life in the Border district, as well as elsewhere. The Established Church itself has become much more attractive, and almost every parish is furnished with a complete organization for conducting all departments of Christian work. By visitation, by cultivating a more popular style of address, by promoting social meetings, and by a measure of fraternal intercourse with their brethren of other denominations, parish ministers have managed to attract many whose parents and grand-parents were sturdy supporters of the meeting-house. Nor is there any such marked distinction between the services of different denominations as there was in former days. The reading of sermons is not now confined to pulpits of the Established Church. The relish for long doctrinal discourses has largely declined; and the ordinary Sabbath services, as well as preachings on sacramental occasions, have been very greatly shortened. For these and other reasons the sharp distinctions which formerly kept the different denominations completely apart have in great measure dis-

appeared. The "breach" in the Associate Synod which caused so much animosity in the latter half of the eighteenth century has long ago been healed. For upwards of forty years the Church founded by the Erskines has been harmoniously united with the sister denomination originated by Gillespie and Boston. The tendency is still in the direction of farther union. As members of different denominations recognise in greater measure the urgency of the great commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," the desire for united action will continue to grow in strength; for, apart from the wider development of Christian charity that comes with union, there is a growing inclination to economise, in the interests of Home and Foreign Missions, a portion of the resources now largely squandered in denominational rivalries.

## APPENDIX.

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### THE CALL TO THE REV. THOMAS BOSTON.

WHEN the last sheet of this volume was ready to be printed off the call presented to the Rev. Thomas Boston by the parish of Jedburgh was accidentally discovered. On the 30th September, 1889, died Mr. James Stevenson, who, in 1827, had succeeded Mr. Thomas Shortreed as Procurator-Fiscal for the county of Roxburgh, and had held other important public offices. Among the papers of the deceased was found the call presented to Mr. Boston. It is a brief, business-like document; but to it is attached a long list of signatures, constituting a roll extending to about three yards, with the signatures in triple columns. There is, of course, great variety in the writing, some names being inscribed with clerkly skill, others written with laborious effort, and scarcely legible; and not a few consisting of initials, with the name written apparently by a clerk, the Christian name before and the surname after the initials.\* First on the list stand the members of the Town Council, twelve in number, and at the bottom, "Jno. Ainslie, Town Clerk." Next follow the elders, numbering at least fifteen, and possibly more, as it is not quite easy to say where the list of elders ends and that of ordinary members begins.

\* Initials only were written in all cases where, in the printed list, two capital letters come between the Christian name and the surname. The names have been carefully transcribed, and regarding most of them there is no dubiety; but a few are so badly written that the spelling can be made out only with difficulty.

Of the first portion of the call only fragments are legible, but an exact copy of the document as now existing is subjoined:—

. . . . . and almost the whole parish of Jedburgh,  
 . . . . . said Burgh considering that the objections  
 . . . . . a presentation is granted by the . . . . .  
 in favour of Mr. James Bonar, minister at Cockpen, under  
 whose ministry . . . . .  
 to submit ourselves for the reasons mentioned in our objec-  
 tions . . . . and likeways considering the great abilities,  
 faithfulness, and diligence of Mr. Thomas Boston, Minister  
 of the Gospel at Oxnam, . . his faithful ministry, and  
 his singular unblameable life, and . . . .

Intreating the Presbytery in respect of this our call, and  
 requesting the Moderator and Presbytery to admitt and  
 receive him to their ministry, In order to dispense the  
 severall ordinances of the Gospel amongst us, And to whose  
 ministry wee Promise and Engage to submitt ourselves in  
 the Lord. In Testimony whereof, these presents written by  
 James Fair, servitor to John Ainslie, Town Clerk of Jedburgh,  
 are subscribed by us at Jedburgh, the Twenty-first day of  
 April, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six years, two  
 or more of us being witness to each subscription, and all of  
 us having signed before John Ainslie, Nottar Public.

*Councillors.*

Ja. Winter.

Alex. Ainslie, Thes<sup>r</sup>.

And<sup>r</sup>. Lookup.

William Smith.

Andrew Jerdain.

Thomas Henderson.

James Ker.

James Ovens.

Andrew bennet.

Thomas Turnbull.

John Archibald.

Ralph Ker.

James Oliver.

Jno. Ainslie, Town Clerk.

James Scot.



*Elders.*

Adam Rutherford.	Robert Jerden.
James Oliver.	James Laidlaw.
James Chisholm.	Adam Scott.
Samuell Riddell.	John Jerdon.
Robert Chisholm.	Andrew Hall.
Adam Billerwell.	George Rutherford.
Gabriel Maibon.	Mark Tully.
John Brown of [illegible.]	And <sup>w</sup> . Davidson.
James Robson of Bonnyrig.	Thomas White.
William Turnbull, late Baillie.	John Borthwick.
James Maddar of Langton.	Richard Dick.
James Haswell, Saddler.	James Black.
Thos. Winterup, late Treasurer.	Hellen Wood.
Richard Hunter.	William Brown.
	Margaret Maddar.
	Thomas Hall, elder in Lanton.
Andrew Oliver, Fleasher.	Agnes A. H. Henderson.
James Japp.	J. S.
James davison.	Andrew Wood, Smith.
William Balantine.	John Story, Smith.
William Storie.	Agnes A. T. Turnbull.
James Common.	John Telfer.
William Wark.	Adam Robson.
Geo. Shortred.	George Hallyburton.
Adam Henderson.	Adam Wilson.
William Maddar.	David Porteous.
George Purves.	William Henderson.
John Jerdan.	Alexr. Moffat.
Thos. Ingles.	David Mordy.
James Briggs.	James Henderson.
Robt. Rutherford, Sadler.	James King.
Dand Goven.	James Thomson.
David Henderson.	Susan Rutherford.
William Hud.	Adam Brown.
James J. E. Elliot, Mason.	Adam Jerdon.
John Selkirk.	Andrew Turnbull.
Will. Watson.	John Laidlaw.
James Alexander.	James Turnbull.
Andrew A. V. Veitch.	Adam Dryden.
Robert Turnbull.	Thomas Laidlaw.
	Adam Smeall.
	Andrew Robson.
	William Davidson.
	Wm. Hope, late convener.
	Wm. Scott, present deacon.
	John Porteous, Glover.
	Daniel Henderson, thatcher
	Andrew Jorden.
	Robt. Henderson, Fleasher.
	James Brown.
	Henry Telford, Geler.
	Jas. J. G. Gray, Workman.
	John Preston.
	Janet J. S. Smeal.
	James Maddar, in Lanton.
	James Wood, Gardener.
	Charles Watson.
	William Turnbull, Sho'er.
	Adam Horsburgh.
	John Ronnelson.
	William Rutherford.
	George Currey, Dayster.
	John J. B. Bog, Shoemaker.
	John Gray, Distiller.

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Janet Dixon.	Richard Thomson.	Alexander Hymers.
Sarah Mitchell.	John Wright.	George Lookup.
William Shiell. [Jedward.	John Ball.	George Fair, Smith.
Rd. R. L. Leithen, Old	Richard Dick.	John Lidgerwood.
Agnes Johaston.	Richard Portous.	Isobell Wood.
Euphame Douglas.	Mag Jamison.	Wm. W. B. Briggs.
James Fox.	John Loson, Weaver.	Wm. W. D. Dods.
Archibald Elliot.	Robert Wood, dayster.	John Mitchell, deacon.
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Thomas Reid.	Alexr. Waugh, lait ballie.	Adam Oliver.
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I, John Ainslie, Notary Public, Do hereby certify and declare to all concerned that the call above written, subscribed by the Heritors, Magistrates, Councillors, and others of the Burgh and Parish of Jedburgh, Calling and Inviting the Reverend Mr. Thomas Boston, Minister of the Gospel at Oxnam, to come and labour in the work of the Ministry in said Parish, was signed upon the twenty first, twenty second, and twenty third days of Aprile Instant, and that each of them did sign and subscribe in my presence. In witness whereof this certificate is subscribed by me the twenty fourth day of April, One thousand seven hundred and fifty six years, before these witnesses—John Young, tenant in Chapmanside, and James Fair, servitor to me, Nottary Publick.

(Signed) Quæ attestor.  
 JNo. AINSLIE, N.P.

(Sgd.) JA. FAIR, Witness.  
 " JOHN YOUNG, Witness.

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