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PARISH OF CRANSHAWS.

(PRESEBYTERY OF DUNSE, SYNOD OF MERSE AND
TIVIODALE, COUNTY OF BERWICK.)

By the Rev. MR. GEORGE DRUMMOND.

Name, and Situation.

THERE is no certain account, nor even any conjecture which has the least appearance of probability, with regard to the origin of the name of this parish. — Part of the parish of Longformacus intersects it in the middle; so that one half, and indeed the largest half of this district, lies at the distance of 4 or 5 miles from the church. An inconvenience which attends many parishes in this part of the country.

Population.—There are only 164 inhabitants in the parish, of whom 84 are males and 80 females. The population of this, and many of the neighbouring parishes, has of late considerably diminished. The only reason that can be assigned for this diminution is the monopoly of farms. About 50 or 60 years ago there were above 16 farmers in the parish; the whole is now in the possession of 3 only. The return to Dr. Webster in 1754 was 214 souls.

Climate,

Climate, Rivers, &c.—The elevated situation of the parish, being in the middle of Lammermuir hills, renders the air sharp and cold; it is however pure and healthy; and during the summer months the climate is tolerably mild and temperate. Though in all the different seasons there are frequent fogs, yet as they are generally confined to the tops of the hills, the health of the inhabitants is seldom injured by them*.

The Whiteadder or Whitewater runs along the N. and E. sides of the parish.—The river Dye also runs through part of this district. They are inconsiderable streams, but abound with trout of an excellent quality. The banks of both were formerly covered with natural wood, which rendered the appearance of the country in summer most delightfully romantic; but now there is not a tree or even a thrub to be found on them.

There are no manufacturers of any kind in the parish. Its inland situation and great distance from proper fuel, are unfavourable to their establishment. The generality of the inhabitants are therefore employed in agriculture. There are 2 masons, 4 joiners, 2 weavers, 1 blacksmith, and 1 taylor, chiefly employed in working to the people of the parish and neighbourhood, seldom manufacturing any articles for sale. The inhabitants in general are frugal, sober and industrious, free from dissipation, and not addicted to drinking, or any other species of intemperance. As a proof of their industry and sobriety, it deserves to be mentioned that for more than 20
years

* There are few epidemical distempers in this part of the country. The most prevalent disorder is the rheumatism, probably owing to the changeableness of the weather, and the coldness and dampness of the houses. Fevers are not frequent. And the ague, which prevails so much among the common people in the lower parts of Berwickshire, is almost unknown here. The people in general live to a considerable age. Among the small number of inhabitants this parish contains, there are at present 6 persons above 70 years of age, two of whom are above 80.

years preceding 1788, there was only one person upon the poor's roll, and since that time there have been only two on that list.

Agriculture.—As the greatest part of the parish consists of high hills, covered with heath or bent, the lands in general are more adapted to the breeding of cattle and sheep than the raising of grain. There are, however, on all the different farms, a considerable quantity of arable ground, which is very serviceable to the tenants, as it supplies their families with corn, and provides fodder for their cattle in winter. The soil, being light and dry, is suitable for raising of turnips and sown grafs. Of late the farmers have availed themselves of the advantages arising from this kind of soil, and have already carried this species of improvement to a considerable height. Their principal dependance being on cattle and sheep, renders the culture of turnips and sown grafs an object of great importance; not only as being the best food for these animals, but sometimes the only food that can be got for the sheep, for in severe winters the snow is commonly so deep as to prevent their getting any nourishment either from the grafs or heath. Before the introduction of the turnip husbandry, and the raising of clover and rye-grafs, the farmers were frequently obliged in the winter season to drive their sheep into the low country, and purchase hay for them. This was not only attended with great inconvenience and expence, but sometimes also with the loss of a considerable part of their flocks, owing to the difficulty of driving them through the deep snow, and the weak and reduced condition in which the animals generally were before their owners had recourse to this expedient.

The introduction of the use of lime as a manure has been of great benefit to the arable grounds in the neighbourhood. Very considerable crops of oats, barley and pease have by means thereof

thereof been raised from land which in its natural state was of little or no value. And it has not only the effect of occasioning a more luxuriant and plentiful, but also a much earlier crop; a circumstance of great importance in a hilly country like this, where the harvest is commonly late, and the grain in danger of being injured by the frost before it comes to maturity. Another advantage resulting from it is, that it is peculiarly favourable to the growth of clover. Nay, in this cold climate, it is absolutely essential to its vegetation. For it has been found by various trials, that even on the best and most fertile spots in this part of the country, it is impossible to raise this useful plant without the aid of lime; whereas, by employing this manure, the worst of the arable land may be made to produce it. And it is a circumstance worthy of observation, that so great is the efficacy of lime for promoting its vegetation, that, by laying a quantity of it on the surface of the most uncultivated ground, it causes white clover to spring spontaneously. This circumstance is the more remarkable, as there have been many accidental instances of this effect of lime in the midst of the wildest moors, by the breaking down or overturning of the carts employed in carrying it. And that too, at so great distance from any other lands where this plant usually grows, as renders it difficult to account how the seed could have been conveyed; and yet repeated experience has shewn that lime laid on such land, whether by design or accident, has uniformly had the effect of destroying the heath or bent, and occasioning the vegetation of white clover, in great abundance.

It is proper, however, to observe, that notwithstanding the tendency which lime has to meliorate the soil, yet a considerable part of the arable ground in this and the neighbouring parishes has been much injured by the improper use of it, or rather

ther by the injudicious management of the land after laying that useful manure upon it. For although, of all the calcareous manures, lime is unquestionably the best, yet as it acts rather as a stimulus than a substantial manure, and causes the land to make its greatest exertions in the way of vegetation, it has a tendency to exhaust the soil, if not cropped with caution. When it was first employed in the cultivation of the lands of this parish, little attention was paid to this circumstance. The difficulty of driving lime at the distance of 16 or 17 miles through very bad roads, induced the farmers to take as many crops as the land would yield, to refund them for their expence and trouble. And by these means after taking eight or nine crops of oats successively, it was commonly left in a state of total sterility, incapable of producing either grass or corn. This pernicious practice is now in a great measure laid aside; and the generality of the farmers discover equal skill and caution both in the mode of managing and cropping the lands which they improve with lime, and also in the means which they use for recovering what had formerly been impoverished by over-cropping.

Horses, Cattle, and Sheep.—There are about 30 horses, 200 black cattle, and 3500 sheep in the parish. The horses are all kept for the purposes of husbandry. There are few bred in the parish, and none at all for sale. The cattle are but of a tall kind; are bred for sale, and bring from L. 4:10 to L. 5:5 a head when three years old. The sheep, which are of the small black faced kind, are sold lean after they are three years old. The average price for some years past is from 9 to 10 guineas the score. The farmers seem to think that this kind of sheep is most suitable to the pasture, and have on that account made no attempts to improve the breed. They carry a coarse
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kind of wool; it is all laid with tar, and has for some years past sold from 9s. to 10s. 6d. per stone *.

Miscellaneous Observations.—The value of the living, including the glebe, is scarcely L. 50 a year. The stipend is only L. 36 : 19 : 5. The glebe consists of about fifteen English acres, most of it tolerably good land. It has of late been much injured by the inundations of the Whitewater, which has considerably diminished its value. The church was built in 1739. The manse some years earlier. They have both been lately repaired. The patron is Charles Watson Esqr. of Saughton †.

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* The wages of male servants, who get their board in the house, are from L. 6 to L. 7 a year, and female servants from L. 3 to L. 4. Servants who have families, and keep houses of their own, receive a certain quantity of meal or grain, have so many sheep grazed, are allowed to keep a cow, have their fuel brought home, and several other perquisites; the value of which may amount to about L. 13 or L. 14. The wages of a labourer by the day is 1s. in summer, and 10d. in winter, except in hay time and harvest, when they receive considerably more. The wages of women, for weeding turnips, potatoes, &c. is 5d. per day.

† In different parts of the parish are traces of several antient encampments, though none of them appear to have been of any considerable extent. They are so much effaced, as to render it difficult to distinguish of what kind they have been—Cranshaws castle, the property of Mr. Watson of Saughton, is an oblong square of 40 feet by 24. The walls are 45 feet high, and it has a battlement on the top. It is a very antient building, and before the union of the two kingdoms, had been used as a place of defence, to which the inhabitants of this part of the country were accustomed to retreat, upon sudden incursions of the English borderers. There are in many of the neighbouring parishes the remains and ruins of similar edifices, but this is the only one in this part of the country that is still entire. It has been lately repaired by its present proprietor, and is occupied by him as a dwelling house, when he visits this part of his estate.

On a hill, on the west side of the parish, are two heaps of stones of an immense size, each containing, as is supposed, many thousand carts-load. A tradition

As the planting and raising of wood is of the greatest importance to the country in general, so it would in this and the neighbouring parishes be particularly beneficial to landholders and tenants, not only as being the best mode of employing waste land, but likewise from the shelter it could afford, if judiciously laid out, in surrounding the valuable fields that are already, or may yet be, improved for raising corn and hay. But the greatest advantage arising from it would be the shelter it would afford to the flocks of sheep in winter. Many farmers in this part of the country have in one night lost a third, and sometimes near the half, of their sheep by a heavy fall of snow. The efficacy of planting for preventing losses of this kind is well known to all these farmers. The shortness, however, of leases in general gives little encouragement to the tenant to raise wood for this purpose at his own expense, because before he could derive much benefit from it, his lease would expire. It may therefore be suggested as an object worthy the attention of proprietors in this part of the country, as they must ultimately be the gainers by an improvement of this kind, not only on account of its greatly enhancing the value of their farms, from the security which it would afford to the tenant for the safety of his sheep in winter, but likewise from the value of the wood itself; the soil, as appears from experiments that have already been made, being very favourable to the raising of different kinds of timber.

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tradition has long prevailed, that they had been collected together to commemorate the death of two tax-brothers, who fell in battle, when they were commanding opposite armies, and from thence the hill on which these piles are erected, obtained the name of Tax-law. Upon a tradition of this kind, unsupported by accounts from history itself, dependence can be put, especially as it is entirely silent with regard to the quality of the persons, and the time when the transaction happened. It is probable, however, that something memorable had happened at that place; as it was customary for the ancients to adopt this mode of transaction, to posterity the remembrance of events they considered important or remarkable.