

THE PARISH CHURCH.

FOR many years there stood on the east side of the Churchyard a rude structure called a Chapel of Ease, the sacred meeting-place of worshippers who dwelt at too great a distance from the Parish Church of Kirkmichael to be able to attend it regularly. Only at the season of Communion in the summer-time did they take the long journey through the hills to join in the celebration, when services were held each day from Thursday to Monday. For the rest of the year the minister held a monthly service in the Chapel at the Spital. Of the plainest possible description, it did little more than shelter the worshippers from the weather. A century ago it gave place to the present Church, but its appearance has been preserved to us by the pen of one of the greatest of Scottish poets and song writers.

The Ettrick Shepherd visited the Spital in the beginning of last century, and in 1829 he contributed to the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* a series of *Anecdotes of Highlanders*, in which he described the Church as he had seen it. "About thirty years ago," he writes, "I visited the Spital of Glenshee, and at that time I never had seen a greater curiosity than the place of worship there. It is a Chapel of Ease belonging to a parish called Kirkmichael, is built with stone and lime, and the roof is flagged with slate. The door was locked, but both the windows were wide open, without either glass or frame, so that one stepped as easily in at the windows as at the door. There were no seats, but here and there a big stone placed, and, as things of great luxury, there were two or three sticks laid from one of these to another." His description of the earthen floor is distasteful and will not bear repetition. When we remember that there was no proper supervision exercised over an outlying chapel, it is not to be wondered at that, at that date, it could be said regarding some of these, as Jacob said at Bethel—"How dreadful is this place!" But the article continues—

"When the service was ended the minister gathered the collection for the poor on the green, in the crown of his hat, and neither men nor women thought of dispersing, but stood in clubs about the chapel, conversing, some of them for upwards of an hour. I have seen many people who appeared to pay more attention to the service, but I never saw any who appeared to enjoy the crack after sermon so much."

But the Ettrick Shepherd was evidently not aware when he wrote the article that since he had visited the Spital a new Church had been erected, and the old and unseemly edifice had been pulled down. There is a minute preserved of a meeting of the contributors and subscribers to the fund for the erection of a new Church, held on the 14th September, 1822, Major Robertson of Cray being in the chair, to the effect that it was agreed to take over the structure from the contractors as "well finished and complete." The meeting afterwards proceeded to allocate the sittings among the various proprietors and others. Major Robertson was at that time building a new mansion-house at Cray, and was residing during the operations at Runnavey, a mile and a half from the Spital. A proposal had been made to erect the new Church there, as being a more central situation, and this had met so much favour from the residents at the south end of the glen that a start had been made with the building. But the fairies, who interested themselves then in local affairs more than they do now, did not approve of the proposed change, and when the masons started building they came by night and pulled down what had been built up; and this was continued night after night, until the committee realised the futility of opposing the wishes of the "little folks," and the new building was accordingly erected in the neighbourhood of the old one. Glenshee was erected into a parish, *Quoad Sacra*, in 1858. The names of the trustees in the constitution are as follows:—

William Macdonald Macdonald of Rossie and St. Martins.
James Farquharson of Invercauld.
William Smith of Finnegand.
George Clark of Dalnaglar.
William Shaw, Finnegand.

James Robertson, Slochnacraig.
William Grant, Spital of Glenshee.
Thomas Howison, Spital of Glenshee.
John Robertson, Reinalaidh.
John Campbell, Dalnaglar.

The names of those who granted an endowment to the parish from their lands are:—James Farquharson of Invercauld, William Macdonald Macdonald of St. Martins, and George Clark of Dalnaglar. Colonel Macdonald also granted a bond for a sum of money to maintain the Church buildings in a proper state of repair. There is abundant evidence of the need of such a fund, for the winter storms put a severe strain upon all the buildings. One hears every few years of roofs being blown off some of the cottages, and others being partially damaged by the force of the tempest. One of the ministers, in asking the heritors to erect a porch at the front-door of the Manse, supported his application by the statement that "frequently the winds sweeping from Glentaitneach and Glenbeg, met at his door and howled like very devils." It is gratifying to record that his application was willingly granted.

The Church is no longer an unsightly building, as James Hogg described it a century ago, but as it should be, "a holy and beautiful House."

By the kind thought of Sir Archibald Birkmyre, Bart., it was re-decorated a year or two ago on the occasion of the unveiling of a handsome bronze tablet to the memory of the men of Glenshee and the Blackwater who gave their lives for King and Country in the Great War.

The service was held on 19th September, 1921, when the Rev. John Thomas, M.A., minister of the parish, presided. Lieut.-Colonel McKenzie Smith of Finnegand delivered the eulogium, Lady Birkmyre gracefully unveiled the memorial, and the Rev. T. D. Millar, M.A., a former minister of the parish, preached and dedicated it.

Colonel McKenzie Smith, in his address, said it was an evidence of the widespread nature of the war that no place was too remote not to have its memorial to those brave men who

had been willing to lay down their lives for their King and Country. The list of names on the local memorial fell into two classes of soldiers—those of the original British Army, and those, the larger number, of the New Armies. Of the exploits and traditions of the old British Army it was not necessary to say much. The Expeditionary Force was probably as well equipped and as efficient and devoted as any force ever raised in the United Kingdom. Though comparatively few in number, they had what appeared an almost impossible task at the commencement of the war, in facing the enormous hordes of the German Army. They accomplished their task, and stopped the rush, and saved the situation in the first nine or twelve months of the war, but in doing so they perished in the act. For all practical purposes they were wiped out. It is probable that of those who died few would have wished a better fate. The Expeditionary Force was succeeded by soldiers of an entirely different class, civilians for the most part, and their sacrifice was very great. Those connected with the Territorial Army knew from private knowledge of the immense sacrifices made by those men, and of the civilian careers that were ruined. They entered a profession with which they had never thought they would have anything to do, and faced discomfort, disease, wounds and death. It was rather difficult to trust to this generation to estimate the amount of sacrifice made by the British Nation, but it may be that later on others looking at these memorials would form some idea of what was done, and take steps to secure that a recurrence of such a war was impossible. It was difficult to say anything in presence of those who had lost relatives, but one would like to express sincere sympathy with them, and hope that their sorrow would be tempered by the thought of the proud achievement of those who had so nobly done their duty. In asking Lady Birkmyre to unveil the memorial, he would like to refer to the very great interest she and her husband had taken in the erection of the memorial and the re-decoration of the Church.

The inscription and names recorded on the tablet are as follows:—

1914-1919. To the Glory of God, and in Honour of all from the Parishes of Persie and Glenshee who served in the Great War, and in memory of the following who fell :—

Lieut. E. W. Chapman, 3rd Dragoon Guards.
 Lieut. A. MacKenzie, R.F.C.
 Lieut. P. J. C. Wilson, Q.O. Cameron Highlanders.
 2nd Lieut. Alister Duff, 1/7 Scottish Rifles, Cameronians.
 Sergt.-Major D. Cameron, Cameron Highlanders.
 Sgt. R. Lamond, Canadians.
 Cpl. F. McIntosh, Black Watch.
 Lce.-Cpl. P. Cameron, Royal Scots Fusiliers.
 Pte. J. Duff, Black Watch.
 Pte. G. Reid, Cameron Highlanders.
 Pte. M. K. McLennan, K.O.Y.L.I.
 Pte. D. G. Cuthbert, Scottish Rifles.
 Pte. M. Nicholson, H.L.I.
 Pte. C. Robertson, Seaforth.
 Pte. A. D. Robertson, Royal Scots Fusiliers.
 Pte. R. Mitchell, Royal Scots.
 Pte. A. Stewart, Black Watch.
 Pte. J. Cameron, Cameron Highlanders.
 Pte. A. G. Anderson, Motor Transport, R.A.S.C.
 Pte. N. Black, R.A.M.C.
 Pte. J. McDonald, British Columbia Horse.
 Pte. J. H. Murray, Canadian Overseas Force.
 Pte. A. R. Reid, Royal Warwickshire.
 Pte. A. Smith, Black Watch, M.G.C.
 Pte. R. Thomson, Black Watch.
 Pte. A. Straiton, Black Watch.
 Tpr. M. G. Gillespie, Scottish Horse.

It has been deemed seemly and right that we should give all the honour we can confer—

"To those who died
 In the full splendour of heroic pride,
 That we might live."

Lady Ashmore, the name of one of whose sons, a gallant Cameron Highlander, fills a place on the Roll of Honour, in her volume, *Songs of Glenshee and Other Poems*, in the poem entitled "A Highland Memorial," gives a brief description of the service in Persie Church, and epitomises the address delivered on the occasion in the lines :—

"Eternal honour to the brave—the brave
 Who heard the call and answered with their lives;
 We will remember them and all they gave
 While memory survives."

Another interesting service, worthy of being recorded, was held in the Parish Church a few years ago. Ever since the year 1843, when the controversy regarding the election of ministers to vacant parishes, which had been carried on for a century or more, reached a climax in the formation of the Free Church, the harmony and peace of rural places, not less than the large centres of population, had been disturbed by opposing ecclesiastical opinions. The effect of this even reached to the family circle, so that, in some cases, the members could not see their way to walk "to the House of God in company." But after the passing of the Act for the abolition of Patronage in 1874, the reason for the two Churches remaining apart was not so patent to the public mind as it had previously been, and in the latter years a strong desire for union and co-operation has manifested itself, and a joint-committee, consisting of the leading clerical and lay members of both Churches, has been in existence for a number of years, endeavouring to arrange the terms of union, so that the causes of separation and dispeace may be removed. A year or two ago the Moderator of the United Free Church, the Rev. Dr. Inch, conducted the service in the Parish Church, and the Church was filled with members of all the Presbyterian Churches, as well as of other denominations. It was reported in the *British Weekly* that "the Glen turned out en masse." Such a congregation had not been seen in the little Church for four-score years. Dr. Inch referred on the occasion to the strong feeling that existed at the present time for a union between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church. "He took every opportunity," he said, "of testifying to the

cordial and kindly feelings existing between the two Churches. He was not a controversialist, and was not to enter into any controversial matters—he never believed controversy ever accomplished anything, and they were getting tired of it—but here was a task that was facing them in Scotland, the evangelisation of this dear land, and of the lands beyond the sea. It was high time they stopped critically examining one another, and closed their ranks, and stood solid in front of the task to which they were called. He could not for the life of him see what was to hinder them. Good would come to their beloved land through the closer drawing together of the Churches."

Dr. Inch came as the harbinger of a brighter and happier day, bearing testimony to the increasing desire among the people for a closer spiritual fellowship. The Union of the Churches will not have the effect of closing any place of worship in the Glen, for the U.F. Church of Cray is five miles distant from the Parish Church, and will still be required in providing ordinances for a wide district. Formerly people went long distances, eight and ten miles, to the Church, but the taste for such Sabbath-day's journeys is dying out, and for children and elderly persons such distances on foot are not in reason. But the main thing, so far as the Glen is concerned, is that union will remove a standing reproach and a cause of division, and the parish will then be able to lay stronger claim to its alternative title, the "Vale of Peace," for the inhabitants will be banded together in the fellowship of devotion, keeping "the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

LIST OF THE MINISTERS OF GLENSHEE FROM *Pastor Ecclesiae Scotticae.*

JAMES MITCHELL, licensed by the Presbytery of Stirling, 1827; ordained April, 1846.
 GEORGE MENZIES, ordained 1851; admitted the first minister of the Parish, 1858; died 1870.
 DAVID COOPER, B.A., ordained assistant and successor, 1869; translated to Tyrone, Dumfriesshire, 1871; died at Selkirk, 1913.
 GEORGE ROSS, licensed by the Presbytery of St. Andrews; ordained, 1871; translated as assistant and successor to the South Parish, Aberdeen, 1876; translated to Hoddan, Dumfriesshire, 1878; died 1899.

THOMAS DUNCAN MILLER, M.A., licensed by the Presbytery of Perth, 1876; Royal Bounty Missionary, Little Dunkeld, 1876; ordained, 1877; translated to Kirkcud, Peebleshire, 1881; retired, 1919.
 THOMAS CRAWFORD, M.A., B.D., licensed by the Presbytery of Perth, 1870; ordained, 1881; died, 1902.
 GEORGE VEITCH, M.A., ordained, 1902; translated to Collace, Perthshire, 1908.
 JOHN THOMSON, M.A., licensed by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, 1897; assistant Dundee Parish Church; ordained, 1908.

The following interesting particulars regarding the formation of the Free Church at Cray in 1843 were kindly supplied by the late Rev. J. F. Ross, M.A., formerly minister of the U.F. Church, Dalmeir, Presbytery of Dumbarton, who was translated to Cray in 1924 :—

"About a month previous to the Disruption, committees were formed both in Glenshee and Blackwater, and in this way was the district prepared in some measure for that memorable and important crisis. The first sermon after this event was preached by the Rev. Robert McDonald of Blairgowrie, in 1843, from II. Kings, viii, 13, first clause. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed in the open air, on Sabbath the sixth day of August, 1843. The Rev. Andrew Bonar of Collace presided, and was assisted by Revs. Messrs. Gillies of Rattray and McDonald of Blairgowrie. The dispensation of this ordinance, and the granting of a site for a Church, by Major Robertson of Cray, were the principal means of forming the adherents into a distinct congregation. No regular ministerial services, however, were obtained until October, when Mr. William Brown, preacher of the gospel, was appointed by the Presbytery to officiate for a month, and at the request of the congregation this appointment was renewed from month to month, when a unanimous call was given him by the congregation. The call having been accepted by him and sustained by the Presbytery, after the usual examinations, he was ordained pastor of the congregation. The ordination took place on Thursday the 8th day of May, 1844. The Rev. Arch. Fergusson, Alyth, preached, and the Rev. John Duncan, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages, delivered the charges. A Session was formed, etc."

The minutes were signed by Rev. Wm. Brown until 1853, when there occurs a gap of eight years. The death of Rev. Wm. Brown, first minister, is minuted as occurring 20th April, 1853. On 16th June, 1853, the election of Mr. James Robertson is recorded. The minute of 15th July, 1894, is signed by Rev. James Robertson, that of 2nd August, 1894, by Rev. Charles Swanson. On 6th June, 1894, it was intimated that the request of the Church for a colleague and successor had been granted. Mr. Swanson was then called.

Mr. Swanson's death was intimated on 22nd February, 1924, in a Session meeting held at Leyhilllock. Rev. James Fleming Ross, M.A., was welcomed as minister for a period of two and a half years, minimum, at a large and enthusiastic social meeting held in the Church, 31st October, 1924.

Mr. Ross's health failed the following year and the burning of the Manse, which occurred in December, 1925, with the loss of all his books, sermons, and other MSS. proved more than his weakened system could stand, and he never did duty again. He and his wife heard a noise above them in the early hours of the morning and thought it was their maid moving about. Shortly afterwards Mr. Ross looked out of the window and saw the glow of the fire, which had a strong hold of the upper part of the house. They then realised that the noise above was bits of the roof falling on to the floor above their heads. The maid was sent to Dalnaglar Farm (Mr. Robb) to give the alarm, and Mrs. Ross helped her husband to get dressed (owing to his crippled condition he required assistance) and they hurried out by the back door. As they left, the flames were already breaking through to the lower floor. By the time Mr. Robb from the farm, and later Major Don, his gardener, Mr. Straiton, from Cray, arrived they found the building was a roaring furnace. Nothing but a few things from the half-burnt kitchen could be saved. They saved nothing but the clothes they wore and only had time to put on a bare minimum of these. They were given shelter and breakfast at Dalnaglar Farm by Mr. and Mrs. Robb. Major and Mrs. Don, having more room to accommodate them, moved them to Cray after breakfast, and it was proposed that they should go to Alyth to relations next day. A snowstorm

came on and they had to stay a week! It was only by strenuous digging on the part of the roadmen and others that they got away then, on a sleigh supplied by Mr. J. Fleming, Coldrach (son of Leyhilllock), Mr. Ross being unable to walk. They removed to Alyth in this way on Christmas morning, 25th December. Mr. Ross died about a month later—having never recovered from the shock.

The burning papers, etc., flew far over Cray House, down to the river south of Cray Haugh. But for the snow on the trees and ground, the Cray woods would probably have caught fire.

The successor of Mr. Ross in Cray is the Rev. J. Richmond, M.A., who was translated from the U.F. Church of Wormit, near Dundee.