

ART. XXVIII.—*The Earlier Registers of Waberthwaite and Millom.* By the REV. CANON KNOWLES.

Read at Whitehaven, December 11th, 1877.

I AM but trying a prentice hand at such a paper as this. But whether I succeed in pleasing you or not, believe me, that when the preliminary difficulty of reading old hand-writing is fairly mastered, few books are so delightful as an old parish register, and many are far less instructive.

Now and then, as at Kenilworth, you get an episode of the civil war of Charles the First ; or, as at Waberthwaite, a set of certified copies of certificates of burials in woollen, or, as has before been noticed by others, traces of pestilence widespread, but unrecorded in history. Or odd entries excite your curiosity and lead you to fresh learning, and items, strange enough now, make you acquainted with the minor customs of our forefathers, while others tell you the date when the great changes took place, which, as an antiquarian, you have long deplored, in the fabric of the old parish church, and others again shew the gradual rise in value of labour and materials.

Neither the Millom Register nor that of Waberthwaite is of the highest antiquity,—the former begins 1590, is defective, from May 15, 1595, in the burials, to June 1597. Then these entries run on till October, 1638, with half-a-dozen of 1660, 1661, on fol. 52. The baptismal entries run till October, 1637, and the matrimonial till July 22, 1645. But many pages of Churchwardens' accounts are bound with the book and add to its interest. It is now well bound and well cared for.

The register at Waberthwaite begins only in 1657, and ends in 1724. It is of parchment, unbound, and a good deal

deal injured by damp. In a small quarto are bound up later entries of ceremonies solemnized, and many accounts of churchwardens from 1679.

I will begin with the fabric and furniture of the church. At Millom we find the roodloft standing in 1633, for John Newby received 8d. for mending it.* At Waberthwaite, the new steeple (such is the dignified name for the poor little bell-gable) cost £4 10s. in 1796, and in 1707 the canopy, no doubt over the pulpit, cost 5s. 6d. Here, as elsewhere, we find 'bent' bought (*e.g.* 12d. 1755), and at Millom charges for dressing the church.

But, if I be not wrong, one entry at Waberthwaite, 1717, to Christopher Walls for "Tableing," the church 6d., shews that in this little corner the practice, which was once, if not now, strictly legal, was long retained of removing the holy table from the east wall at the time of communion.

A quaint entry puzzled me for some time; it occurs regularly till 1774:

"From the Parishe for receiveing 14s. 3d."

This is explained by the entry, that takes its place and is equally quaint:

"From the Cuminicats (or Cumnicats)—*i.e.*, Communicants—15s. 10d.

The rustic mind seems almost to have conceived that the offertory was a payment for the sacrament.

The surplice, you all know, drops letters or adopts them with charming facility. It becomes, under the pen of the accountant, "syrpcloth," with y, i, u, or e, and even, though I think not in these books, "sirplate."

Of books for the "chirche," Millom has a good entry in 1617.

"A Byble, ii Comunio Bookes, Paraphrase of Erasmus, Marlorett upon Saint Mattheue, harding and I uell, a booke of Homelies, the Booke of Canons, Articles."

* The small quire (or priest's) door is called the 'heck.'

In 1634, "the booke of libertie," I presume "the book of Sports," cost 8d.

I feel very grateful to a certain family named Benson who, in the end of the 16th century and first quarter of the 17th, took the trouble to illustrate the church discipline of the time.

On the 27th of March, 1595, Jenet Benson was "to be," and I hope she was, "sorye for her sines" by order of "Mr. Commissorye at Botle."

Myles Benson about the same time, another untoward fellow, paid xiid for "sleepinge and not goinge orderly to church."* Three poore persons got a groat each.

And again, in 1608, probably after many warnings,

"Barnard Benson did his penance in the parishe Chirche of Millom, the 19th of March, and payed to the poore of the Chirche xs. which was openly delivered in the pulpit vs. viijd. at Millom and iij. ivd. at Ulfall."

In this 17th century, wine for the holy communion cost 8d. a quart—9d. in 1694.

The church law was not disregarded at Millom, (fol. 17).

"According to the canons laity sett down, 4 sydmen (Synodsmen) are to be appointed every year, one of whose duties is to keeke the dogges out of the chirche." 1605.

The church officers have an allowance of 2d. a day for superintending work done at the church, and for going when required by church business to Bootle, they get 4d.; to Muncaster 6d.; Gosforth or Egremont 1s.; Cocker-mouth 2s. 6d.; Dalton-in-Furness 4d.; Carlisle 5s. 6d.

In 1635, one of them, Edward Reckel, (?) Junr., a church Juryman, has this note against his name "Absolution" (? full payment) "published in Mill. C. Oct. 18, 6s."

Now, if you please, to the registers of ceremonies solemnized, and first of burials.

* The Churchwardens had power to levy a fine of 12d. on any person that did not duly attend divine service.

Waberthwaite is rich in certificates of burials in woollen, under statute of 30 Charles II., St. 1 c. 3 § 3.

"Burials since 1 day of May 1695 which was the time That the Late act of birthes burialls marriages and Batchelers was put in execution."

"November 5th 1685 Jack my Lady foote Boy Buried."

"November 15th 1698 Richard Brockbank, born in Ulpha, an olde Servant at Muncaster Hall, who left a Hundred and Sixtie pounds to the free School."

"1709, Jany 8. John Parker a Yeoman-man."

"William Pearson Carpinter, Buired in Meryland in Virginy, August first 1721.

At Millom, the number of burials varies in ordinary years from eighteen to twenty-seven, but 1597, (the entries for which are imperfect,) 1623, and 1624, were here marked by unusual mortality. In 1614, the deaths fall to 12, but in 1631 rise to 41. In 1636 to 47, in 1618 to 42, but in 1623 to 93, and in 1624 they are 55.

Be it remembered that even in these times of pestilence nearly one-seventh of the whole number were buried inside the church*

"July 9 1633 John Murthat of Wringes buried 'I have (heard) him say that he was 5 score 11 years of age.'"

One suicide :

"May 10 1597. Hugh Bowness who wilfullye hanged him selfe."

Three cases of drowning on Duddon Sand.

A few quaint entries occur :

"Sept. 15, 1593. Ould park wife."

"Nov. 10, 1608. Ellen Parker alias ould Nell."

"June 11, 1609. John Greene sonne of Robt pyper" (who is elsewhere given as Greene) but this is by the by a baptism and so out of place.

"July 28, 1609. Richard Wilson, Shepheard at the beck."

"April 9, 1616. Richard Troughton alias Sandigappe, drowned upon Duddon Sands."

* Out of 26 entries of burials in one page, 1608-9, ten are marked (C) for burial within the church, shewing the prevalence of a most objectionable fashion. So most of the Lancashire and Cheshire Wills, published by the Cheetham Society, express a wish for interment within particular chapels or parish churches."

Some

Some 50 years later "Will Murwheat (Morethwaite) Sumner," who got I suppose 6d. for serving citations.

I am sorry to say that in twenty years I count up sixteen burials of children dying unbaptized, if I may reckon "a wenche of Richard Taylor's."

I shall close this list with one from Waberthwaite of local interest.

"July 4, 1678. William Walls of Newbigginge 66 died and was buried betwixt the Cross and the Quire."

Now for the baptisms at Millom.

It speaks well for the parish morals that out of 529 entries only twelve illegitimate children are noted, and it is rather singular that 288 are boys and 241 girls.

Among boys' names in this same list :

John	occurs 57 times
William	40
Thomas	36
George	20
Anthony	16
Richard	15

We find also, not only Matthew, James, Christopher, Gawen, Lancelot, Rowland, but Ferdinand and Barrantine, both these genteelly introduced by the Lords Seigneurs of that place, the last probably through some alliance, and Ferdinand through Katherine of Arragon from the five Kings of the Spanish Peninsula.

Among the girls, Elizabeth of course in a loyal manor takes the lead with 45 votes, An, Anes, Ane or Anne has 42, Margaret 36, Ellin or Ellen 25, Isabell, Janet, Briget, Frances or Francis from 16 to 11. And probably from Protestant reaction the best of all names, Mary, only six.

One folio, July 1605 to March 1607 is, I think, missing.

On one loose page at Waberthwaite is a wonderful list of baptisms in the one family of Henry Walls, of Newbigging, and Elizabeth his wife; the first child,
Elizabeth,

Elizabeth, born and baptized in 1636; the second, Henry, 1656, the ninth, a second Henry, 1679,—forty-three years after Elizabeth. Did the Henry of 1656 marry another Elizabeth?

One entry only of the marriages. October 29, 1598, at Millom.

“Stenne Troughton }
Anne Myres } bothe of this pishe.

Secuerties for the marige.

Tomas Taylor
and Antony Troughton”

And to come now to less spiritual matters. The provision by a rate or cess of some sort was called at Millom a “cast,” at Waberthwaite, in 18th century, a “purvey,” till 1805. Thus we find:

“Dec 29th, 1625. Caste 3*li* 3*s* in 5 parts Above Millom, Beneath Millom, Chapel Sucken, Thwayte, and Ulpha.”

And in 1760,

“Two purvays 15*s*. 1*d*.”

The Culyet of Millom was, I presume, a collection of free-will offerings made from house to house. The word was, and perhaps is still, used at Christ Church, Oxford, as equivalent to “collecta,” a collection.

Church money was lent out on security at seven-and-a-half per cent.

Who were the Millom Proctors, who used to receive 2*d*. for each baptising, 1*d*. for burying, 8*d*. for a marriage? Were they officers of the lay-rector? We find a good many entries, *e.g.*, 1610, of the discharge of their claims which, as to Baptism, were simoniacal.

The earliest notice of overseers of the poor is, I think, dated 1656.

A quaint Millom entry may find a place here: “George Wigglesworth in Whitechapel parish in East Smithfield

RR

near

near the Swan with two neckes, a Bishoprike-Man,"—what does this last term mean*? — in the year 1635.

Again on the same page (fol. 69, b.)

"3 Bro. Tho. Hunter, Edward Hunter, and John Hunter Taylor in Bishopgate Street died about xi years since."

At Waberthwaite I find no entries of foxheads, ravens, marts, and badgers. A badger or a foxhead was worth a shilling reward at Millom. And here a "pelle" and a "seefe" were bought for fourpence, doubtless for liming the church; and a gallain to beare water in for tenpence. A new stee in 1725 cost five shillings. (W.)

At Waberthwaite in 1679 we have

"Item for Keeping the Glasser and his hors 6d."

"1681. Item for arear and for being overcear 6d."

"Item for dealing morse (? moss) 6d."

But what is this in 1747?

"To the Gaianser 6d."

* Probably, as I am told, "From Durham."