

ART. XII.—*The Registers of the Parish of Dean, Cumberland.* By the REV. W. SHERWEN, M.A., Rector of Dean.
Read at Cockermouth, August 22nd, 1878.

THE institution of parish registers dates, I believe, from 1538, in the reign of Henry VIII. The first date which can be deciphered in the registers of Dean parish is 1542, and this is about three inches from the top of the first page of the book. A few pages are almost entirely illegible. A friend has suggested to me that the early part of this first register is a copy from an older one. This (he thinks) is indicated by the closeness of the lines and the regularity and uniformity of the writing, which seems to shew that a whole page, or a number of pages was written at once. This is (I am told) undoubtedly the case with the registers of this gentleman's own parish, situated in Hampshire. This idea is confirmed perhaps by the fact that at the end of each of the first thirteen leaves there is an entry which my unpractised eye cannot entirely decipher, but which appears to be something like this:—
 "Concord: cū vetere libro (?) Chartar," and is attested by Lancelot Fletcher rector de Deane, and by Jos. Watson and Wm. Walker, after whose names come words which I have not yet made out, apparently indicating the offices held by these persons. The binding or sewing of this first register seems to have been repaired at some time, and this has been done without care to keep the pages in their proper order, a fact which sometimes greatly taxes the patience of him who is studying them. There is an unfortunate break in the continuity of the register. I find no entries for the years 1629-57, and it would seem that the record of those years has been lost at a comparatively recent date, for my predecessor, the Rev. Miles Tarn

Tarn, rector from 1750 to 1795, (to whom I have felt most grateful during my researches for the goodness of the ink he used and the clearly formed characters in which he wrote.) Mr. Tarn, giving on a fly-leaf of a later register, a list of the Fletcher family, who held the living for a considerable period, put down the baptisms and burials of several members of it as coming between 1635 and 1653, and says, that he extracted these entries from an ancient register which was in a bad condition. That register is not now forthcoming, another instance (Mr. Whitwell will say) which proves the necessity of his motion of last session.* There is a tradition handed down to me that the wife of some clergyman, rector, or curate of Dean, being angry with her husband, revenged herself (as she thought) upon him, but in reality on poor posterity, by throwing a register book or books into the fire. Not only, however, have the records of these years been lost, but I am sorry to say that Mr. Tarn, evidently an orderly man who took care of his parish and its concerns, had too much reason to make the following entry on the cover of the oldest register:—“The register book when received of Mrs. Ponsonby (his predecessor’s widow) in the year 1750 had been very ill used by rats or mice, and much damaged by lying in damp places.”

So much for the history and state of the registers themselves. You will gather from what has been said the difficulty of tracing through them the history of any family or place.

Among the names for which the student of Dean parish registers keeps his eye specially open as he runs his finger down each page, stands forth pre-eminently the name of Skelton. Hutchinson tells us that the manor of Branthwaite (which he calls Braithwaite) was held by J. Skelton, of the Crown, by knight’s service, 35th King Henry VIII., as

* Mr. Whitwell, M.P., gave notice of motion in the House of Commons for a Committee into the state and preservation of parochial registers.

of the manor of Dean. This date is within two years of the first legible date in our registers. I am, therefore, greatly disappointed to find no entry of the name of Skelton before 1574, when Thomas Skelton was christened in January. Possibly a more laboured search than I have been able to make might bring to light other entries, but this is the result of my present investigation.

The entries I have found are as follows:—

Christened Ano Dom 1574

Thomas Skelton the 20th (?) day of Januarye

Buried 1574

Robert Skelton the 10th day of Aprill

Christened 1578

Thomas Skelton the 30th of Aprill

Christened 1579

Henry (?) Skelton 27th of March

Buried 1580

Richard (??) Skelton Esquire 27 of July

Christened 1587

Henry Skelton 28th of Januarie

Buried 1587

Henry (Thomas ?) Skelton 23 of December

Henry Skelton 27 of February (1588)†

Frances Skelton daughter of Thomas Skelton, Esquire baptized the xxth day of November 1602

Thomas Skelton sonne of Thomas Skelton of Branthwaite Hall Esquire buried the 5th of March 1611.

* Thomas Skelton sonne of Thomas Skelton of Branthwaite Hall Esquire buried the 5th of March 1611

John Skelton sonne of Thomas Skelton baptizd (sic.) the 14th of Februarie 1612

Dorothy Skelton Daughter of Thomas Skelton of Branthwaite Esquire baptizd (sic.) 19 of March 1614

Henry Skelton sonne of Thomas Skelton of Branthwaite Esquire baptizd (sic.) the first day September 1609

George Skelton sonne of Thomas Skelton of Branthat (sic.) Esquire baptizd the first of June 1617

† A large number of funerals at this time.

* Duplicate entry among the marriages.

Bridgett daughter of Thomas Skelton Esquire of Branthat baptized
17th day of May 1619

Richard sonne of Thomas Skelton of Branthat Esquire bapized the
xxth day of January 1621.

Henry (Mary ?)Skelton of Braithwaite buried xxiiird (?) february
1617.

George Skelton sonne of Thomas Skelton Esquire buried 3 of March
1617

Joane Skelton the relict of James Skelton (two words illegible) of
age the 27th of (Aprill ?) 1619

Thomas the son of Joseph Skelton buried the iii daie of December
1619

Mrs. Julyan Skelton wyfe of Thomas Skelton of Branthwaite
Esquire buried the last of September 1623

Richard Skelton sonne of Thomas Skelton Esquire buried the 8
day of December 1627

Henry Skelton Esqe of Branthwaite was buryed on ye 24th day of
September (1667)

Margaret D : of Thomas Skelton Esqe was (buried ? omitted) Janu-
ary ye 1st 1667.

Henry Skelton of Branthwaite Towne (?) Aug: (1669)

Alice uxor (?) Mr. Skelton buried the 4th September 1675

1679

Mr Thomas Skelton de Branthwt hall sepults 4th of November

Bridget daughtr of Henry Skelton Esqr buried Mar 29—88

Bridget ye wife of Henry Skelton Esq. buried April 10—88

Anno Domini 1688

Bridget daughter of Henry Skelton Esqre May 20.

Thomas son of Mr. Skelton Bapt. Ap. 2 1688 and dyed the same
day

Henry Skelton Esq Buried 9br 3rd—89

(Buried) 94

Alice Skelton Aug (eaten by mice)

Burials 1695 & 96.

Mr John Skelton buryed May 24th

Burials An. Dom. 1703.

ffrancis Skelton Esq Dec 26

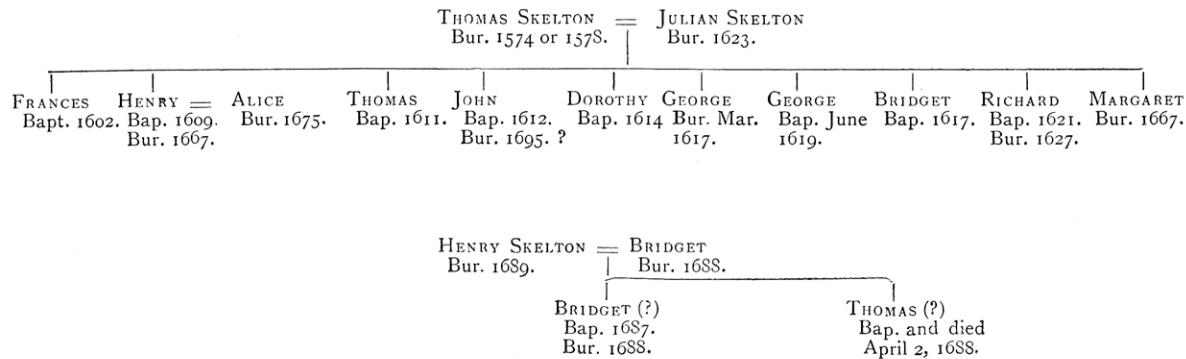
A.D. 1724

gber ye 17th Jonathan Skelton and Mabel Plummer both of the
Parish of Dean married by License granted by Wm. Ponsonby

Such are the materials for a history or genealogy of the
Skelton family, which are found in the registers of Dean
Parish,

parish, and you must please remember that I am to day confined to those registers. To gather together what may be found in these registers is my business, not to write a history of the family gathered from every quarter. I should like to attempt that at some future day. You will see however, that to do anything with my present materials requires both patience and ingenuity. I confess to having failed in a great measure: abler hands may perhaps construct a building out of them. The fact of the earlier entries of baptisms not giving the name of the child's parent leaves one greatly at sea. Therefore I must entirely give up Robert, buried in 1574, and cannot hazard a conjecture as to what place two Henries, baptized respectively in 1579 and 1587, two Henries (possibly the same) buried in 1587 and 1588, and Richard (?) buried in 1580, took in the family. There are two Thomases baptized respectively in 1574 and 1578. Whether or no these are sons of one father, the latter born after the death of the former and receiving his name, we cannot tell from the registers. From one or other of these Thomases it seems a numerous family sprung, as in the pedigree on page 101.

The other entries I cannot marshal into order at all. Possibly Bridget, baptized in 1687, is the daughter of Henry who was buried in 1689 and Bridget buried in 1688, and is the same Bridget that was buried in 1688. Henry, (?) buried in 1617, may possibly have been the brother of Thomas, baptized in 1574, the husband of Julian. Thomas, who was baptized and died on April 2nd, 1688, may have been son of Henry and Bridget before-mentioned, and if so, she must have died at the time of his birth, as she was buried on April 10th in the same year. Henry, buried in 1669, is entered without the customary Esquire or Mr. which generally distinguishes the Skeltons of the Hall and the Crakeplaces, and is described as being of Branthwaite Town. He may have been some younger son or cousin who had a house there,—one of an inferior branch of the family



family. I cannot make out Mr. Thomas of Branthwaite Hall, who died in 1679. If he be the Thomas baptized in 1574 or 1578, he must have been 101 years old at his death, which is unlikely. The place in the family of Joane, relict of James, and Thomas, son of Joseph, buried in 1619, Alice buried in 1694, Francis buried in 1703, and Jonathan married in 1724, cannot be ascertained from the registers, which give no account of their age or parentage. Thomas cannot be the Thomas so often previously mentioned as born in 1574 or 1578, (of whose burial it is curious we have no entry), for his son Richard was baptized in 1621. Whether Jonathan, married to Mabel Plummer in 1724, is a member of this family, is, I cannot help thinking, doubtful.

From the Skeltons I turn to the Crakeplaces. On a stone above the door-way of Crakeplace Hall is this legend with a crest in the centre :—

1612.

Christopher Crakeplace built the Same
When he was servant to Baron Altham.

The entries respecting this family, arranged according to the order of dates, are as follows :—

Margrett Crakeplace the wife of Christopher Crakeplace buried the 31 of Januarie 1607

John Crackplace sonne primogenitus (?) of Mr. Christopher Crackplace of Crackplace Hall baptized the 14th daie of December 1617
Christopher Crackplace of Crackplace Hall gentleman buried the 26 of May 1619

Thomas sone of Christopher Crackplace of Crackplace Hall Baptized the 5th of December 1619

Elizabeth daughter of Christopher Crackplace buried the 7th of February 1621

Elizabeth Crackplace daughter of Christopher Crackplace baptized the 11th of November 1621

Christopher the sone of Christopher Crackplace of Crackplace Hall baptised the xxiiij of february 1624

Thomas Crackplace sonne of Christopher of Highcraplace buried the 15th of Aprill 1627

Married

Married

May 13

Henry Crakeplace & }
Ellenr Hudson } 1670

1672

Henry ye S: of Henry Crakeplace gent baptized Novembr 15th (?)
ye same day his mother was buryed: he also was buryed December
10th follow: anno prædict: (?)

Buryalls

John S: of Henry Crakeplace gent March ye 16th 1673

(——) son of Henry Crakeplace Gent March 15

(——) ye 16 day of the same month (1673 or 1674)

1675

Mary the daughter of Mr. Henry Crakeplace baptized the xth day of
Aprill.

1677

Dalton sonne of Mr. Henry Crakeplace baptised the 2nd day of
October

1679

() daughter of Mr. Henry Crakeplace baptised the 26th of
August

Mary the daughter of Henry Crakeplace Baptized the 20th day of
Apreall 1682

1683 sepult:

Sarah Crakeplace Jan 30th

Dalton Crakeplace March 15th

Thomas ye son of Mr. Henry Crakeplace Bap. Jan 11th 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ (1688)

Abigal ye dr of Mr Henry Crakeplace Bap. Apr 24—89

Chris sonne Mr Henery Crakples baptized July ye 10th 1690

Baptized 1719.

Jan ye 13th Henry son of Mr Tho Crakeplace of Crakep: Hall

Buried 1727

rober ye 29 Mr. Henery Crakeplace of Crakeplace Hall

Buried 1729

July ye 31st Mrs Jane Crakeplace widow of Crakeplace Hall

Buried 1753

March 28th Henry Crakeplace of Crakeplace Hall of ye smallpox

After 1753, I find no more entries of the name of Crake-
place, and the baptismal register indicates that in 1783
the Hall was occupied by a farmer. The archæological
student, as he traces the history of these old families, has
oftentimes

one of the register books, writes opposite to the name of Lancelot Fletcher the first :— “ Register of his time not now legible in many places, but it appears that he or another of the same name was rector in 1546 and till 1635, and was succeeded by his son of the same name.” This latter Lancelot held the living till 1663. It would seem that there must have been three Lancelots, for it is very unlikely that one person should have been rector for 89 years. However this may be, these rectors were descended (so the family genealogy informs me) from Henry Fletcher of Cockermouth Hall, son of William Fletcher of Cockermouth Gent., who died in the time of Henry VIII.

The register book contains some entries made by these Lancelots in strange contrast to the dryness and formality of the entries in our day. Let me transcribe one or two :—

“ George ffletcher the eldest sonne of Lancelot ffletcher parson of Deane: by his first wife Susanna ffen daughter of Mr. George ffen Goldsmith of the citie of Norwich was Borne in Norwich the xvith day of June 1589, and and was baltized (sic) in the church of Snt Andrews by Mr John Moore, was brought into the north beinge of the age of 15 moneths (sic) was brought upp at the School in Deane and St. Beghes: and from thence did goe to Cambridge: and was scholler in Pembroke Hall: where after tow yeares and tow moneths immaturâ morte præreptus he slept in the Lord Jesus and was Buried in the parish church of peter House: the 29th of November 1609

Mortuus est patri vivit at ille deo.”

Another :

“ Robert ffletcher second sonne of Launcelot ffletcher parson of deane by his second wyfe Susanna daughter of Mr Robert Dabrè and Elizabeth his wyfe of the citie of Norwich baltized: 25 of May 1598 departed this lyfe upon Sunday night the six and twenty of March 1626 about nyne of the clock

He was brought upp at Deane Schole: from there he did goe to London: And was student at lawe first in Clifford's Inne: then afterward admitted into the Inner Temple where he continued about seven years, then being sent for by his father he came at Whitsuntide home, to see his father: and by reason of the visitation at London stayed all

O

that

that summer and winter till Lent following : when was he preparing to returne with his father to London to follow his studie, expecting at at the next call to be called to the lawe . but it pleased God otherwise to dispose : and either by an Impostume in his breast or some Hart collick after some ill fitte 3 or 4 days before, to take him to his mercie the time before mentioned and he was buried in the chancell close by his mother next the wall on the south syde upon Monday the seven and twenty of March 1626 he was a young m^a of good parts : of good and great Hopes : his death much lameted.

Corpus terra tegit : spiritus astra petit."

I have not had time to deal with certain families whose names are found running down the stream of time from the first page in the registers. Among these stand out conspicuously the Woodalls (under the various spellings of Woodall, Woodal, Woodhal, Woodhall, Woodle, Wood-dal, Wooddoll) ; the Heads ; the Peels, spelt Payle, Pele, Piele, Peele, Piel ; the ffearons. The last two names, Peel and Fearon, are very legible on the first page. Woodall is on the third, if not on the first and second, of which I am not sure. The Woodals seem to stop about the middle or end of the eighteenth century. The Peels and Fearons come down to a much later period, but are not now represented in the parish, for the family of Fearons now living at Dean is not, I imagine, of the same stock as those mentioned in the early registers. To the family of Peel the late John Peile, Esquire, Lord Lonsdale's colliery agent, belonged. One family however there is still existing among us whose name appears at the very beginning of our registers, and is continued in them down to the present time. The head of that family is my venerable friend and parishioner Mr. Thomas Wood, of Pardshaw Hall. There seems never to have been wanting to that ancient stock an Anthony, a Thomas, or an Agnes, so far as their history may be gathered from our parish records. Other names of families there are which run far back in our registers, Salkeld, Fox, Mirehouse, for example, but they are rather of local than general interest. Among the baptisms in

1782

1782 occurs "Joseph son of Richard Wordsworth of Branthwaite, Attorney-at-law." The family lived, I presume, in the house now called Wordsworth Place, and Richard was, I am told, an ancestor or connection of the poet.

In the marriage register kept by William Ponsonby, who was inducted rector in 1712, and held the benefice for thirty-eight years, I find this singular fact that in a very large number of cases he seems to have married by license granted by himself, persons neither of whom had been resident, or pretended to be resident, in the parish of Dean. A mere glance at the register shews me that two persons belonging to Lamplugh, and a couple belonging, the one to Brigham and the other to Embleton, were married at Dean. Whether Mr. Ponsonby was a member of the old family of Ponsonby of Haile I know not. There is a curious entry in the burials for 1620 :

"William Punsonbie sonne and heire of Mr Henery Punsonbie who dyed in the (space left unfilled) yeare of his age beinge Scholler at Deane under Mr Scott buried the 7th day of November."

Either Dean school had sufficient reputation to attract a scholar from Haile, or Mr. Scott was curate, and young Punsonbie his private pupil, or there was some connection between the Ponsonbys and Dean parish, which brought the lad to sojourn there. In any case it is curious that he should have been buried at Dean with Haile at a comparatively short distance, unless he died of some infectious disease.

In the marriage register for 1749 I find,

"Ober ye 6th Mr Patricious Senhouse to Mrs Frances Fletcher of Moorland Close by licence granted by W. Ponsonby"

Not observing the name Frances in Mr. Fletcher's genealogy, I think it well just to mention this entry.

Tradition says there was once a castle in the Glebe field, now called "Greeny Castle." I find no mention of it in the registers, save in one entry :

"Janett

"Janett Pearson borne at Brackengill died at Greencastle was buried last of May 1619."

A Christian name which I never before encountered occurs in the burial register of 1786 :

"April 30 Blessed Johnson buried at the Expense of the Parish."

And I should be glad if some one would explain the following entry made by the exact and business-like rector, Miles Tarn, in 1767, among the burials.

"May 11, Margaret Atkinson of Row, last woman that wore a straw bonnet here, 78."

There are a few other entries which I cannot as yet satisfactorily decipher.

In closing this paper it may not be uninteresting if I give a comparative view of the number of baptisms, burials, and weddings at various periods :

	A.D. 1550*	Eas to Eas 1559-60	1665	1702	1761	1800	1878
Baptisms	4	23	20	18	20	19	29
Burials	4	6	9	10	7	17	14
Weddings	3	1	4	6	6	9	4

We know how deceptive figures are, but these clearly shew that in the parish of Dean there has been no great advance in the number of the population for three centuries.

Since I read the foregoing paper I have been requested to ascertain the number of burials in 1597 and 1623, the years of the plague. The leaf containing the burials in 1597 appears to be lost. From Easter 1623, to Easter, 1624, there were 53 burials. I may add that there are in the registers lists of collections made upon briefs for various persons and places.

* Probably incomplete.

Cockermouth Castle . Key.

No 'hourd' holes, or battlements - Masons' marks in 'Mark-Kirk' $\frac{1}{2} \times$ in E facade $Y \uparrow \uparrow$; in (?) Oratory A.

- A. Circular tower c. 1230, altered in 14th Century.
- B. Traces of a 2nd circular tower at S.E. corner of original Castle
- C. Later buttresses.
- E. ditch of 2nd period, (?) 1390, wholly filled up in 1649.
- I. masonry of different dates. 8 probably earlier
- M. corner of Kitchen rounded because of staircase.
- N. Roman altar
- O. Site of Hall-treasure & Music Gallery.
- P. double Aubrey near Hall-door, upper shelf 4 feet high.
- Q. Modern arch: the Kitchen door is re-built northwards
- R. (?) Oratory 9^{ft} 7' x 4^{ft} 8'
- S. ^{possibly remains of original Barbican}
- 1. Lady's Chambers. Gorge destroyed. remains of Archers' seats.
- 2. State apartments (late) now called the 'Piazza'.
- 3. Great Hall. c. 1360.
- 5, 6, 7, 8. Cellars, occupying original ditch: State-rooms and (late 14th Century) dwelling house above.
- 8. Great Kitchen, Buttery, Pantry, Gallery; the 'Mark-Kirk' or cellar below. foundations 8 feet below floor, Eastward.
- 9, 11. Rooms; Dungeons 18 feet deep below. Window fitted with iron grille in later times as a prison [11]
- 10. Chief Entrance; the drawbridge seems to have served as a door. Bretesche opening above.
- 12. External wall of original Castle, faced & underpinned when the new range was built c. 1390. thus few traces of the original arrangement remain.
 - a. Staircase to Chambers & above.
 - b. Upper part of Wall later, 15th Century; buttresses much raised.
 - c. Old Wall some 14 ft high; later Wall some 10 ft more above it; domi't workshops' all along.
 - d. much rebuilt recently.
 - e. Old party wall to W range of chambers.
 - ff. fireplaces.
 - gg. garde-robcs.
 - h. gallery above buttery & pantry; communicating with the Hall-gallery covered and possibly glazed.
 - i. rough footing for about 20 feet
 - k, k. lights to dungeons.
 - l. the well; 6 feet deep; [hard water]
 - m. passage into the 'Treasure' or 'Screens' of Hall.
 - n. door from Kitchen to h.
 - o. door from Inner Bailey to 14th Century House; with porter's chamber
 - p. out-work added [15th Century] to Entrance Tower, all open. door on to 'fore-close'.
 - q. ancient stones built in.
 - r. remains of support to external platform & entrance to Hall & s.
 - s. Shields in front of modern house.
 - t. original arrowslit, the form a survival from late Norman.
 - u. Bretesche to great Portal.
 - x. Old ramp across original fosse.
 - y. Original doorway to the Castle [13th Century]
 - z. lower wall near the river.
 - * old fragment @ possibly the head of an early staircase-light.