

ART. VI.—*Hesket-in-the-forest*. By T. H. B. GRAHAM,
M.A.

Read at Carlisle, April 6th, 1922.

THE parish of Hesket comprises five townships:—
(1) *Hesket Upper and Nether*, including the village of High Hesket, where the parish church stands; Low Hesket and Armathwaite; (2) *Calhwaite*, including High and Low Wooloaks; (3) *Itonfield*, including the large tract formerly known as “Broadfield Common,” Hay Close, Colt Close and Sceugh; (4) *Petterel Crooks*, including Barrock, Ellerton and Southwaite; and (5) *Plumpton Street*, including Brackenbrough (where an old tower remains standing) and some scattered farmsteads.

The parish boundary of Hesket begins at Drybeck, on the bank of the Eden near Armathwaite, and skirting Wetheral parish includes farm houses called Priory,* Lowthiangill and Wragmirehead. It then traverses level ground, formerly known as “Wragmire Moss,” and meets the great highway to Penrith. There a venerable oak, reputed to be the last tree of Inglewood forest, formed the landmark, until its fall in 1823.

The boundary continues in a north-westerly direction to the Petterel, and ascends that stream to a point one furlong south of the bridge at Wreay Hall, where it strikes off in a westerly direction, up the steep rise, and just crosses another highway to Penrith, which follows the western side of the Petterel valley. Then it turns southward, encloses Monk Castle, and meets a little syke, which leads it down to the river Ive, and sweeps in nearly

* It is difficult to account for this name, except by supposing that the Priory of Armathwaite had common of pasture here, in respect of its cultivated land in the Nunclose.

the whole village of Ivegill. It ascends the Ive to Low Braithwaite, and a tributary of the same to Morton, barely excluding those hamlets. Then it wanders for four miles and a half in a south-easterly direction, past Field Head, to Woodhead, at the confines of Penrith parish, where it turns abruptly north-east, and rejoins the Petterel. It then harks back down stream for five miles, after which it cuts across country, in a north-easterly direction, so as to include Inglewood House, Old Town, Heskett Old Vicarage and Armathwaite Mill, from which it descends the course of the Eden to Drybeck.

This perambulation of thirty miles demonstrates that most of the *inhabited sites*, which continue to bear the names of *assarts* referred to in the Royal Letters Patent presently quoted, Armathwaite, Nunclose, Barrock, Ellerton, Southwaite, Itonfield, and Wooloaks, are situate within the ambit of Heskett parish boundary. The remainder of such inhabited sites abut immediately upon it. Part of Plumpton lies in the township of Plumpton Wall and pertains to Lazonby parish. Morton is in Hutton parish, Braithwaite-with-Middlesceugh is still reckoned part of the parish of St. Mary's, Carlisle, while Blaberthwaite (Burthwaite near Wreay) forms part of the parish of St. Cuthbert's, Carlisle, which belonged to Carlisle Priory.

From early times the priory of Carlisle claimed rights and liberties within the *extra-parochial* forest of Inglewood, including the right to take tithe from assarts, or improved clearings, within its area. At the Pleas of the forest in 1285, the priory was unable to adduce any evidence of its title to such rights, except ancient custom and its possession of an ivory horn, presented by its founder, Henry I. (these *Transactions*, N.S., x., p. 12). Its right to tithe was confirmed, on December 5th, 1293, when the king granted to the prior and canons of St.

Mary's, Carlisle, all manner of tithes, arising from assarts in the forest of Inglewood, and other small portions of waste land, both tithes of land lying outside the limits of any parish, the title (*advocatio*) to which the king recovered, before the justices last in eyre, against John, bishop of Carlisle, the prior of St. Mary's and Alan, parson of Thursby, and tithes to arise thereafter from other lawns, or extra-parochial places assarted in the said forest (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 22 Ed. I., p. 55).

Consequently, a large group of tithe-producing assarts in Inglewood were deemed to lie within the parish of St. Mary, Carlisle, which was at the same time a priory church, a cathedral church and a parochial church. Any little chapel erected upon one of such assarts was a chapel-of-ease to the mother church, and was served by the canons or their chaplains. The existing churches at High Hesketh and Armathwaite are alleged to occupy the sites of such forest chapels. The ecclesiastical valuations down to the reign of Henry VIII. do not make mention of the church or parish of Hesketh, but Bishop Nicolson, writing in 1703, states:—"This is properly a *parochial chapel* under St. Mary's,* but it is built in the figure of a parish church, and has long been reputed and taken as such" (*Miscellany Accounts*, p. 93); and the following tradition, related by Dr. Todd, is consistent with that statement. During an epidemic in 1530, a funeral party from Hesketh came to Carlisle, and claimed the customary right of burying their dead within the city. But the mayor shut the gate, and advised them to take the corpse home and bury it at a place called "Wallingstone," where a chapel and burial ground were shortly afterwards consecrated by the bishop (Nicolson and Burn, ii., 338). Wallingstone may have been the quasi-sacred

* Ecton describes Hesketh, St. Mary, and Armathwaite, Christ and St. Mary, as "chapels to St. Cuthbert's in Carlisle" (*Thesaurus*, 1763, p. 565), but Bishop Nicolson's statement is preferable.

precinct of a ruined forest chapel, and is almost certainly identical with the site of the existing parish church. In 1541, the dean and chapter agreed to pay the stipend of £4 to the chaplain of the "chapel of St. Mary of Hascott" (Dugdale, *Mon.*, vi., part i., p. 142), and the record seems to indicate the period of its new foundation.

Even when Bishop Nicolson wrote, there was neither glebe nor house. The curate resided at Sceugh, two miles distant from the church, and kept his register there. So it is evident that Hesketh did not develop into a separate parish until very recent times. It is called "Hesketh-in-the-forest," to distinguish it from Hesketh Newmarket, near Greystoke, and is styled, in 1317, "Eskeheved-by-Hoton" (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, II Ed. II., p. 347). The churchyard overlooks the dry bed of Tarn Wadling, and an old inhabitant of the village remembers the white building upon its margin being used as the boathouse, and also an island that lay in the middle of the tarn. Between the village and Old Town, there survives a short section of the old road to Penrith, and it offers a striking contrast to the broad thoroughfare which has been superimposed upon it elsewhere. It should be observed that Ogilby's map, 1675, places Hesketh church on the *western* side of the main thoroughfare. It is on the eastern side.

The spirit of the forest still pervades the lofty wooded banks of the Eden at Armathwaite. Here was a manor, once "the king's purpresture called Hermanthwaite," first granted as an *inheritance*, in 1461, to John Skelton. Armathwaite Castle was the manorial mansion and the home of the Skeltons. Here too was the purpresture called "Nunclose," the nucleus of which was the little manor held in mortmain by the nuns of Armathwaite. Perhaps the local *thwaite* once comprised low-lying ground on *both* banks of the Eden, irrespective of parochial

boundaries, because forest parishes, in early times, were certainly not included in co-terminous ring fences, as they are to-day. If that were the case, there would be less difficulty in understanding why the Nunnery is so persistently referred to as "Armathwaite Priory."

Armathwaite Chapel-of-ease was erected by the Richard Skelton of Armathwaite Castle, who was living at the Herald's Visitation of 1665, and whose arms were then described as *azure*, on a fesse between three fleurs de lis or a Cornish chough proper, beaked and legged *gules*. A poetical effusion, written by Christopher Rickerby, curate of the said chapel, and entitled "An elegy on the death of Richard Skelton," mentions that the founder used to relate how he visited the spot, one summer's day, and found cattle, sheltering among ruins of what had once been the house of God, and how he was prompted to rebuild it. That may be taken as evidence of a tradition, that the existing chapel at Armathwaite occupies the site of an older one. There certainly was an older one, because there is mention, in 3 Hen. IV., 1402, of a purpresture containing one rood, on the king's land at Armathwaite, where a chapel had been built anew (these *Transactions*, N.S., ix., p. 37). Richard Skelton, grandson of the aforesaid Richard, sold his manor of Armathwaite in 1712.

Letters Patent, frequently granted and frequently surrendered, during the period of a century and a half, give a continuous history of what is now Hesketh parish. On January 21st, 1330, there was confirmation of a lease for 10 years by John de Crombwell, keeper of the forests beyond Trent, to William Lengleis, chief forester in Inglewood,* of the lawn of Hesketh with as many stubs (*aridos zucheos*), therein, as should be sufficient for enclosing the same, at the yearly rent of £2; and extension

* See these *Transactions*, N.S. xx, p. 85.

of the term for a further period of three years (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 3 Ed. III., p. 470); and on June 20th, 1346, there was a grant for life to John de Ratheby of the king's close of Hescath, which William le Engleis formerly held for his life, at the rent of 6 marks (*Ibid.*, 20 Ed. III., p. 129). On October 12th, 1363, John Botycombe and Beatrice, his wife, were pardoned for having lately acquired from John de Kirkeby, knight, an estate in fee in 12 messuages and 100 acres in Peterelwra (Wreay) and Elmetthwayt (Armathwaite), held in chief (*Ibid.*, 37 Ed. III., p. 405).

On April 7th, 1380, Roger de Coghull, "king's esquire" and keeper of Inglewood forest, was appointed for life to the custody of the lawn of Morton and Mortonscogh, rent £22; the close called "les Wollaykes," rent £1 10s. od.; the closes called "Ivetonfeld" and "Barrokkfeld-with-le-Broungill" (Brumegill), rent £13 6s. 8d.; the closes of Hesketh and Nunclose, rent £18 13s. 4d.; and the close of Thoughtuayth (Southwaite), rent £5; being a total yearly farm of £60 10s. od. (*Ibid.*, 3 Rich. II., p. 457); and by letters patent dated April 12th following, he was granted £20 a year remission of his farm rent (*Ibid.*, p. 461), but he surrendered the last-mentioned letters patent on May 13th, 1390, in consideration of a like annuity from another source (*Ibid.*, 13 Rich. II., p. 249).

On January 23rd, 1394, Ralph, Lord Nevill, had acquired a lease for 9 years, at the yearly rent of £15, of the following five *claustræ*:—(1) Mortonclose, (2) Haskethes, (3) le Nonneclos, (4) le Wulakes, and (5) Blakeritweyt (now Burthwaite); and the king granted the reversion of the same (expectant on the determination of Ralph's lease) to Edward, earl of Rutland, for life, at the same rent of £15 (*Ibid.*, 17 Rich. II., p. 376). On July 4th, 1396, William Robinson, one of the foresters, obtained licence to hold to him and his assigns, for 60 years,

three purprestures of the king's forest ground at Armathwaite, containing two roods of land, at the yearly rent of one shilling, to build houses for his habitation (*Ibid.*, 20 Rich. II., p. 5).

The life interest in the reversion of the five *clausturæ* was confirmed on February 26th, 1397, to the said Edward, because Blakeritweyt was a misdescription of the close known as Blaberthwayt (*Ibid.*, 20 Rich. II., p. 88), and again on October 15th, 1397, to the said Edward, then duke of Albemarle, because it had been found by inquisition that Mortonclose was of the annual value of £24, and that a certain Robert Kendal enjoyed, by patent, a life interest therein, to the yearly value of £8. Robert Kendal surrendered his patent, in consideration of £8, of the said yearly rent of £15, being paid to himself for life (*Ibid.*, 21 Rich. II., p. 336). On January 15th, 1399, the said Edward, duke of Albemarle, surrendered his life interest in the reversion of the five *clausturæ* (expectant on the determination of the lease to Ralph, Lord Nevill, then earl of Westmorland), and the same was granted to John Skelton, esquire, for life, at the apportioned rent of £7 to the king and £8 to Robert Kendal (*Ibid.*, 22 Rich. II., p. 562).

On May 1st, 1404, Ralph's original lease had expired, and the king granted the five *clausturæ* to Thomas de Stirkland, king's esquire, for life, at the rent of £15; and it appears incidentally that another close, namely Barrok, lately leased by inadvertence to Thomas de Stirkland, was already in the possession of Mary, widow of William de Stapelton and her son, William, as farmers thereof for their lives (*Ibid.*, 5 Hen. IV., p. 386). That patent was vacated by surrender, and on February 24th, 1407, the five *clausturæ* were granted to John de Skelton, *chivaler*, and Thomas de Stirkland, esquire, jointly for life, at the rent of £15 and 6s. 8d. for increment (*Ibid.*, 8 Hen. IV., p. 294).

On March 8th, 1427, Richard Nevill, knight, obtained, *during pleasure*, custody of the forests beyond Trent, with the same fee as his father, Ralph, late earl of Westmorland, had, namely, 100 marks a year, made up of the following items:—

The £5 which the prior of Carlisle was bound to pay yearly to the king for 55 acres of land in the lawn of Ellerton *; The £5 6s. 8d. which Richard Kirkbride was bound to pay for the lawn of Braithwaite,† with the covert of Midelscogh; The £5 which William de Stapelton was bound to pay for life for the farm of Itonfeld and Barrofeld-with-Brumegill, and out of the said farm after his death; also £22 from the profits of the lawn of Plumpton, by his, the said Richard Nevill's, own hands, and the remainder from other issues of the forest (*Ibid.*, 5 Hen. VI., p. 411).

On May 11th, 1434, proof was made that custody of the fishery of Armathwaite, Tarn Wadling and Glassous ‡ had been committed to Robert Lowther, knight, since deceased, and William Lowther, his son, for twenty years from Easter, 1421, and the same was confirmed to William Lowther, as against Robert Warcop, esquire, who claimed it by letters patent of more recent date (*Ibid.*, 12 Hen. VI., p. 340).

On June 25th, 1437, the five *claustræ* were granted to John Skelton, *chivaler*, and his son, John Skelton, king's esquire, in survivorship, at the old rent of £15 6s. 8d., with licence to take wood for repairs, by survey of the master forester and verderers. Blaberthwaite was then spelt Blaberithwayt (*Ibid.*, 15 Hen. VI., p. 66).

* The 55 acres at Ellerton belonged to the prior at the Pleas of the forest, 1285 (these *Transactions*, N.S., x, p. 15).

† See these *Transactions*, N.S., xv, p. 72.

‡ Probably "Le Glashous," mentioned in connection with "le Nunclos" (these *Transactions*, N.S., ix., p. 35).

On September 20th, 1437, Richard Nevill, knight, then earl of Salisbury, obtained, *for life*, custody of the forests beyond Trent, with the fee of 100 marks made up as before. Itonfeld and Barrokfeld-with-Brumegill were then in the hands of Mary, widow of William de Stapelton (*Ibid.*, 16 Hen. VI., p. 96).

On July 3rd, 1443, the same Richard, earl of Salisbury, *and the heirs male of his body* were appointed justices of the forests beyond Trent and justices itinerant and wardens thereof, with the fee of 100 marks made up of the aforesaid items and also the £15 6s. 8d., paid yearly by John Skelton, esquire, son of John Skelton, *chivaler*, for the five *clausturæ*, which he held for life, and after John's death remainder thereof to the said value in part satisfaction of the fee. Itonfeld and Barrokfeld-with-Brumegill were then held, for life, by Roger, son of Thomas de Bethome, and Mary his wife, widow of William Stapelton, who continued to pay the £5. The said £5, and (after the death of Roger and Mary) remainder of the said three closes to the value of £5 a year, was to go in part satisfaction of the fee; and the earl was empowered to enclose his lawn of Plumpton (*Ibid.*, 21 Hen. VI., p. 191). The last-mentioned letters patent were confirmed on February 14th, 1452, when it is stated that the lawn of Plumpton had then lately been enclosed by the earl at great cost (*Ibid.*, 30 Hen. VI., p. 566).

On December 19th, 1459, Henry (Percy), earl of Northumberland, for good service against Richard, earl of Salisbury, was appointed for life to the said offices lately held by the latter, with the same fee (*Ibid.*, 38 Hen. VI., p. 594).

On December 15th, 1461, there was a grant to John Skelton, son of John Skelton of Cumberland deceased, *in tail male* of a parcel of land containing 100 acres on

Armathwaite Bank; the king's purpresture called "Hermanthwaite" (Armathwaite), with common of pasture in the forest and dead wood called "firewood"; and the close of Touthwaite, with common of pasture as aforesaid; rendering yearly to the king £1 11s. 8d. and 16d. for increment, in the same manner as the above was granted to him, for 40 years, by letters patent of Henry VI., because his father had constructed divers houses and enclosures thereon at great expense (*Ibid.*, 1 Ed. IV., p. 109).

On November 21st, 1466, Richard, earl of Warwick and Salisbury, "the king's kinsman," was appointed to the said offices, lately held by Henry, earl of Northumberland, with the same fee (*Ibid.*, 6 Ed. IV., p. 540).

On December 12th, 1485, there was a grant, for life, to Adam Penington, of the keeping of the closes called War (worse) Morton, Better Hesketh, Warre Hesketh,* Wollukys, Nonneclose, Heyclose, Coltclose and Blaburghwayte, at the rent of £16 and 20d. yearly (*Ibid.*, 1 Hen. VII., p. 54); and on October 21st, 1489, there was a grant, for life, to Thomas Beauchamp, esquire, of an annuity of £20 from the issues of the enclosures called Hayclose, Better Hesketh and War Hesketh (*Ibid.*, 5 Hen. VII., p. 292).

The above-mentioned place-names occur during the second half of the 13th century. At that period, the prior of Wetheral had committed waste "in the demesne wood in le Bankes above Erminthweyt" (these *Transactions*, n.s., x., p. 6), probably on the very edge of Wetheral parish and perhaps identical with "Armathwaite Bank" granted in 1461 to John Skelton. The bishop had a vaccary "in the wood at Byrkskawe (Brisco), by the water of the Peytrel," and his beasts wasted the herbage

* On the map contained in Ogilby's *Book of roads*, published in 1675, Low Hesketh appears as War Hesketh.

of the lawns of Barrok-sleghtes, Ellerton, *Thowethueyt*, *Blakeberithueyt* and Hescayth, while the cattle of Sowerby committed similar waste in the lawn of Braythueyt and the demesne covert of Middelscoch (*Ibid.*, p. 7). Great Barrock fell rises upward of 700 feet above the sea, and it would seem that the suffix of Barrok-feld and Iveton-feld is equivalent to *fell*, not "field" (compare "Whynnefeld" for Whinfell, these *Transactions*, n.s., vii., p. 22). "Little Barrok" is mentioned (*Ibid.*, p. 10). *Blakeberithwaite* of the earlier record becomes Blakeri- and Blaberthwaite in the Letters Patent and Burthwaite to-day.

Braithwaite is nearly always coupled with Middleseugh. The waste called "Braithwaite" was granted to John de Penreth for life in 1317, when it is described as bounded east by the river Ive, west by his own land called "Selywra" and "Lyndebeck" and south by Thomas de Hoton's close called "Hoton Langthwaite" and his own pasture called "Skelton Langthwaite" (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 11 Ed. II., p. 25). "Thomas Close" survives as a place-name.

Coltclose and Hayclose are not so named until 1485. Early mention of *Ellerton* is noticed above. On March 12th, 1541, the messuage called Ellerton, in Inglewood Forest, was demised to John Belson, yeoman of the guard, for 40 years (*L. and P., Hen. VIII.*, vol. 16, p. 326), and, on May 6th, of the same year, the manor of Ellerton was granted in frank almoign to the dean and chapter of Carlisle (*Ibid.*, p. 418).

Hescayth is mentioned early in Edward I.'s reign, in juxtaposition with Theveshed (now Thiefside), a lofty eminence in the parish, crossed by the highway to Penrith (these *Transactions*, n.s., vii., p. 16).

Morton-scoch occurs at the same period (*Ibid.*, p. 19). The suffix represents the old spelling* of "sceugh," which

* The transition seems to be:—o.n. *shógr*; earlier dialect *scogh*, *scoch*; later dialect *sceugh*, pronounced *she-uf*, in two syllables.

is usually regarded as the equivalent of "shaw," *i.e.* wooded ground. Compare Scale-scogh, "the *wood* of the prior of Carlisle" (p. 11), and Hare-scoch (p. 30). The "bogge near Morton" is also mentioned (p. 16).

The Nuns' land in the *Nunclose* was in "the dead hand" and is consequently never referred to.

Peytre-wra (p. 22) is the original form of Wreay.

The *laund*, or lawn, of *Plumpton* (p. 7), occurs side by side with *Plumpton-hay* (p. 16). The late Mr. Francis Parker has suggested that the lawn was the larger area and included the "hay," or park, of which the Huttons were hereditary foresters (these *Transactions*, N.S. xi., p. 12).

Thouthwaite is so spelt on Fryer's map, 1818, and has assumed the form Southwaite very recently.

Wool-oaks was originally Wolf-aykes (these *Transactions*, N.S., vii., p. 11). *Wolfa*, or Wolf-how, near Great Salkeld, may also derive its name from the wild beast, although express allusion to wolves in Inglewood does not occur.

The name Castelewyn, applied to a hill upon which there were formerly traces of habitation, occurs in 1272 (*Ibid.*, p. 14). Ewen, *alias* Sir Hugh Cæsarius* figured in local tradition and legend as a mighty hunter of the forest.

All the assarted land was enclosed and cultivated in such a manner as to interfere as little as possible with the wild life of the forest. Besides deer, there was a herd of forest cattle. The king allowed Andrew de Harcla, earl of Carlisle, in 1322, to take *six wild cattle* and six deer in Inglewood forest (*Cal. Doc. Scot.*, iii., p. 145). Edmund Sandford, about 1675, describes the former surroundings of Naworth Castle, Cumberland:—"pleasant

* Mr. W. G. Collingwood identifies him with Owain, king of greater Cumbria, *circ.* 920-37; explains his epithet *Cæsarius*, and accounts for his presence in Inglewood Forest (these *Transactions*, N.S., xx., p. 63)

woods and gardens ; ground full of fallow deer ; great store of red deer on the mountains ; and white wild cattle with black ears only, on the moors." (Quoted by Storer, *Wild White Cattle*, p. 96.) Lord William Howard, in January, 1629-30, brought some "wild cattle" from Thornthwaite, Westmorland, to Naworth (*Surtees Society's Publications*, vol. 68, p. 264).

Inglewood has been ploughed and ploughed until not a vestige of the primæval forest (so far as regards timber) remains. Its seeds lurk in the upturned soil, and where the plough has ceased to run the wild growth would quickly reassert its sway, were it not effectually exterminated by the close cropping of domestic cattle, especially sheep.