

VII.—EDMUNDBYERS.

By the Rev. WALKER FEATHERSTONHAUGH, rector of Edmundbyers.

[Read on the 30th of May, 1900.]

The parish of Edmundbyers, of which I am about to endeavour to give some account, lies in the north-western division of the county of Durham, thirteen miles from Hexham, nineteen from Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and seven miles from Stanhope in Weardale. It is separated from the county of Northumberland by the river Derwent, an affluent of the Tyne, which forms its boundary on the northern and eastern sides; being of a somewhat triangular shape, the apex of which, pointing to the east, lies at the influx into the Derwent of the Burnhope or Burdonhope burn, which for some distance bounds the parish on the southern side; the ancient road from Stanhope to Corbridge being in great part the boundary on the western side. The southern boundary, that is, the ancient boundary (for a new one was laid down by the Ordnance surveyors about fifty years ago) leaves the Burdonhope burn where it is crossed by the road from Edmundbyers to Stanhope, and is coincident with the ancient road which mounts to the top of Harehope fell, and joins the present turnpike road at the 'Cross,' about four miles from Edmundbyers; which I identify with 'Barnard's Cross,' named in the *Feodarium*¹ of the prior and convent of Durham, and of which the socketted base still remains, lying on the side of the road. The boundary here leaves the road and runs in an arbitrary line north-westward along the summit of the watershed, joining the western boundary on the Stanhope and Corbridge road, near the 'Dead Friar's Curruck.' Authentic notices of a parish like Edmundbyers, remote in situation and consisting very greatly of unreclaimed moorland, are, as regards the early history of the district, necessarily but scanty. Charters and other documents coeval with the formation of the ecclesiastical foundation, which might have given us information as to the original proprietors who made their settlement here, who gathered around them a number of cultivators of the soil, and who built for themselves and their people the still existing church, these have either disappeared or lie unrecognised in neglected hoards of

¹ 58 Surt. Soc. Publ.

ancient deeds. We are therefore thrown back for information, or rather conjecture, on surviving names, local traditions, and a few ascertained facts, which shew that, even in the earliest ages of the history of our country, this locality was visited and traversed, and had become the habitation of men. The parish comprises an area of about 7,000 acres, of which about 2,000 are in cultivation, principally grass, the remainder being unenclosed moorland; and rises gradually from about 600 feet above sea level at the junction of the Derwent and the Burnhope burn, to 1,660 feet on the western side, the rise being prolonged beyond the parish to the summit of Bolt's-law, at 1,774 feet. Geologically, it is of the Millstone-grit formation, between the Carboniferous strata and the Great Limestone, an upper bed of which, the 'Fell Top Limestone,' appears in the bottom of the valley which intersects the parish and carries the Burnhope burn. The surface is mainly devoid of trees, which are confined to small stunted oaks in the valley, tracts of Scotch fir and larch planted in recent years, and small patches of birch, remains of the ancient forests of the district; and affords pasturage to numbers of hardy black-faced sheep, which maintain a spare existence on the heather and moor-grasses, which they crop in summer. The millstone-grit strata furnish quarries of sandstone slates for roofing, of flag stones, and of a fine grained freestone, admirable for building purposes, whilst many parts of the fells are dotted abundantly with boulders of vitrified sandstone, locally called 'bastard whin,' the result, doubtless, of some explosion of volcanic force, of which many traces are to be found in the counties of Northumberland and Durham. The whole subsoil is traversed by veins of lead ore, which have been extensively worked, from time immemorial, by levels and adits driven into the hill sides in all directions. The millstone-grit lies to the day on the top of the hills between Edmundbyers and Stanhope, and dips rapidly towards the east; the carboniferous strata do not appear, having been entirely swept away; whilst the present Burnhope burn is only a feeble representative of a mighty stream that once filled the valley and left a deposit of upwards of sixty feet of clay of the finest texture and quality, the upper surface of which has furnished many nodules of stone foreign to the district, as granite from Criffel in Scotland, Chialstolite slate from Skiddaw, and other trap rocks of volcanic

origin. The sides of the hills retain in many parts, from Bolt's-law downwards, the lines of ancient sea beaches, at various altitudes, at levels parallel to one another and of corresponding height on the opposite sides of the valley; the whole valley of the Derwent above Shotley Bridge having been at one time apparently blocked by ice, causing an accumulation of water, which has found its outlet at Hownes gill near Consett. The parish contains two townships, Edmundbyers and Roughside, the former on the southern, the latter on the northern side; Edmundbyers itself being a village of about forty houses lying on the gentle slope of the Burnhope valley, on its northern side; whilst Roughside (or Ruffside, as it is often spelt) is a hamlet of only about a dozen houses, on the southern side of the valley of the Derwent, two miles from Blanchland in Northumberland. Edmundbyers lies at an elevation of nine hundred feet above sea level, the ground rising gradually to the west; where the valley, not without a certain grandeur, is closed by the prominent elevation of Bolt's-law, a hill forming a striking feature in the landscape, and, as already said, rising to 1,774 feet above the sea. The situation is remote, and, until a comparatively recent date, had been cut off, from any but the scantiest intercourse with the surrounding world, by lofty hills, unbridged streams, and roads of very primitive character. It might have been a matter of doubt whether human dwellings were likely to be set down in a situation so secluded and elevated as this which I have described; were it not that evidence exists of its settlement in British times, either earlier than, or coeval with, the occupation of the district by the Romans. Those great conquerors and colonizers, in their scheme of reduction of a wild and hostile country, inhabited by tribes whose fierce though undisciplined valour they had so often experienced, not unfrequently at heavy cost to themselves, invariably pursued the plan of laying down numerous roads, as pioneers of civilisation, and especially as channels of communication between important towns, and means of passage for troops from point to point. It is now understood that these Roman roads were much more numerous than was at one time supposed; often remaining unrecognised owing to the circumstance that many of them have continued in use from the time of the Romans until now, and have always formed the public highways; for

which they have been found admirably adapted, from the excellence of their engineering and the solidity of their construction. The county of Durham was intersected by many such. Crossing the river Tees at several points, as Pounteys, Piercebridge, and elsewhere, they traversed the county to the sea on the east, and to the mountainous district on the west; whilst the great central road from York, after passing the Tees at Piercebridge, and reaching Binchester, near Bishop Auckland, branched off from there to the great stations and towns of Chester-le-Street, South Shields, Newcastle, and Corbridge; with numerous cross roads, forming a network of communication over the county. One of the main roads continued from Binchester through Lanchester and Ebchester to Corbridge, and is still in great part in use, passing about seven miles to the east of Edmundbyers; whilst another ran at a similar distance on the west from Binchester through Auckland and Stanhope to the head of the river Wear. But two other Roman roads passed nearer to Edmundbyers than these, on the high ground at the east and west ends respectively of the valley in which the village lies; one three miles on the east, running from Auckland by Rowley, Allansford, and Minster-acres to Corbridge; the other crossing the head of the valley four miles to the west, at an elevation of 1,600 feet, from Stanhope by Bale Hill, Bay Bridge, and Slaley, also to Corbridge; where the Roman road crossed the river Tyne by a bridge, of which numerous remains are to be seen when the river is low, a little to the west of the town. Abundant evidence exists of the presence of the Romans in upper Weardale—an entrenched camp near Westgate, altars from Bollihope and Eastgate, coins, and smelted lead in the crannies of the rock where the operations were carried on, and in terraces of cultivation around Stanhope. It is therefore not improbable that they may have extended their researches beyond the valley of the Wear, and that some of the slagheaps of imperfectly reduced lead-ore, which cover in numbers the sides of the Burnhope valley, may owe their origin to Roman industry. But whether this be so or not, proof is not wanting that the valley was more or less inhabited in very early times, coeval with or anterior to the Romans; possibly of the period to which may be referred the cave-dwellers who occupied Heatheryburn cave in the neighbouring valley of the Stanhope burn; where were

found, about forty years ago, a number of articles, partly the refuse of human domestic consumption, as bones of animals of the chase, and partly personal ornaments, as bronze armlets, pins, &c., with worked wood and bone, amber beads, and perforated shells from the sea-shore, all of which have been fully described by the Rev. W. Greenwell.² The men of that date seem to have inhabited the valley of the Burnhope also ; for when a bridge was built, some sixty years ago, to carry the road over the burn, at a point near Edmundbyers, in a mound which was near at hand and was cut down to furnish material for an embankment, was found a square burial cist of the usual British type, formed of flat stones set on edge, and covered with a large slab. Further details are wanting, as unfortunately the circumstance passed almost unnoticed, no one then resident taking an interest in such matters. Again, it was reported to me, now many years ago, that a similar cist had been found at an elevated spot on the fell by a shepherd, who, however, jealously concealed the spot, either from superstitious fear or from a belief that it covered treasure. An extensive mound of large stones, probably a grave barrow, stands on high ground in Muggleswick park, overlooking the Edmundbyers valley ; two curious and mysterious earthworks exist in the parish, not far from the village ; and two large grassy mounds, lying close together and plainly artificial, may be seen by travellers to Blanchland, on the western side of the Acton burn, north of the Derwent. Several flint-flakes have been found by myself and others at and near Edmundbyers ; and a few years ago a 'thumbflint' or 'scraper,' and also a large rough flint core, were found by the tenant of one of the glebe farms, about a mile above the village, on the side of the valley facing the south. From this we may conclude that the Edmundbyers valley was not unknown to settlers in those early times. It is a long leap from A.D. 410, when the Roman occupation ceased, to about A.D. 1100, to which date, or very soon after, the building of the church at Edmundbyers must be referred. We have in the county of Durham not a few parish churches which, admittedly, lay claim to a Saxon origin, as Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, Escomb, and Ebchester ; and as the church of Edmundbyers possesses features entirely in common with the last of these, I do not hesitate to claim for its

² *Archæologia*, vol. liv. pp. 87-114.

original plan a Saxon date. If, as I have endeavoured to show is probable, the locality was settled in British times, it is most likely that the occupation was continuous, the hills being found profitable for lead-mining, and the lower lands for agricultural pursuits. The name of the place points to the same conclusion, denoting that it was the 'byers,' settlement, location, or building, of one Edmund, doubtless the Saxon proprietor, probably a contemporary of the Saxon Mocla, from whom the adjoining parish of Muggleswick takes its name. The name is spelt variously and indifferently, 'Edmundbyers,' 'Edmundbyres,' 'Edmundbires,' 'Edmundbyrez,' 'Edmundbiers,' and in later documents, 'Edmondbyers,' all pointing to the proprietorship of Edmund. Having then established himself at Edmundbyers, a locality which he considered favourable for agriculture, the occupation of the time, Edmund would soon draw around him a number of dependents, whose interests must be attended to, in return for the service rendered to himself. This would include arrangements for the due performance of the rites of religion ; a church was, therefore, a necessity. At first, probably, it would be only a humble, wattled, mud-plastered building, only a degree above the 'bothies' of the husbandmen around ; but afterwards, as the settlement became more established, with a prospect of permanence, better provision would be made and a stone church erected. In casting about for a design, and an architect to carry it out, he would not have far to seek ; he would soon learn that a church was at that time in process of building at the hamlet of Ebchester, seven miles down the Derwent valley, for which a site was found in the abandoned Roman station of *Vindomora* ; where, as in many other instances, the Christian religion had taken the place of the worship of the heathen gods, and a Christian church was being reared on the site of the abandoned heathen temple. In an age when a new style of architecture was in process of formation, as the Gothic was succeeding and displacing the Classical, new ideas would rapidly be adopted and as rapidly disappear ; so that the characteristics of one decade, even of one year, might be obsolete in the next ; whereas the small round-headed windows of Edmundbyers church are precisely the same as those in the chancel of Ebchester, which possesses a still earlier form of window in its nave. The work would doubtless proceed rapidly,

as might well be in the case of a little church to hold only 150 people at the most. Materials in abundance would not be wanting in the locality itself. The geological formation of the Edmundbyers valley is, as I have mentioned above, that known as the millstone grit, a very durable stone, of which blocks of every variety of size are found all over the surface. Of this, and the vitrified sandstone blocks found in great quantity on the fell, the walls of the church are composed; the former, the millstone grit, being used wherever chiselling was required, as for arches, door and window jambs, as well as base and string courses, for which the length of the blocks in which it is found peculiarly fitted it; whilst of the latter, the vitrified sandstone being unworkable by the mason's chisel, the blocks were roughly squared by the hammer and so built into the wall. The mortar available was of excellent quality, being procured from a narrow bed of limestone called the 'Fell-top limestone,' a band that underlies the 'Millstone grit' and is found in the sides of the hills around, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the village. It furnishes a mortar of brown colour, of particularly strong and binding character, contrasting favourably in this respect with the limestone of the lower beds so extensively quarried at Stanhope. This latter can only be used to advantage in the manner adopted by the Romans, grinding up the quicklime and mixing and using it fresh. The 'Fell-top' limestone mortar more resembles that made from the 'Magnesian limestone' of the east coast, in its binding and durable character, and where it has been in contact with in the repairs of Edmundbyers church, was found to be in fact harder than the stone with which it was used. There would be no lack of timber about Edmundbyers in those days. The oaks which now clothe the sides of the valley below Edmundbyers are only feeble and stunted representatives of the noble trees which once existed there, of which one or two decaying specimens still remain, whose trunks are now and then found in the peat mosses, and of which the last examples were cut down to furnish timber for old England's wooden walls, her stately and picturesque ships of war, now passed away. Stone slates for the roof and flag stones for the pavement would be found all around, in the upper strata of the beds overlying the millstone grit, where they have been worked up to the present day. Thus the principal materials for the church,

the stone, the lime, and the timber, were not far to seek, and the carriage would be supplied by the lord's own dependents, using the rude means of traction of the day, rough carts, or may be only sledges drawn by oxen. The plan of the church, when adopted, probably differed in no appreciable degree, if at all, from St. Ebba's church at Ebchester, and from what it itself presents at present ; indeed all the churches on Derwent side would seem to have been arranged on a uniform plan, as far as can be ascertained. The churches of Hunstanworth, Edmundbyers, Muggleswick, Shotley, Whittonstall, Medomsley and Ebchester appear to have possessed the same features in common, a small chancel and nave, with south porch and western bell-gable, and to have had their origin in the same architectural mind. Even the large Premonstratensian abbey church of Blanchland³ presents only the same idea on a larger scale, a chancel and nave without aisles, lighted by plain single Early English lancet windows ; the north transept and tower, with porch opening into it on the eastern side, being additions of slightly later date. For the wants of the district that acknowledged Edmund as lord a small church only was sufficient ; the chancel of Edmundbyers church measures twenty-four feet in length by twenty-two in width, external measurement ; the nave forty-two feet by twenty-four feet six inches. The walls are three feet thick. The chancel communicated with the nave by a single round-headed arch, not so high as Escomb, nor so low as Ebchester. Some stones of this arch remain, built up into the walls, shewing a face eighteen inches wide, with a plain roll moulding at each angle. At the south-west side of the chancel still remains one jamb of a priest's doorway, probably also round-headed, destroyed, at a date of which I shall have to make mention further on, for the insertion of a pseudo-Norman window, doubtless in order to procure additional light. East of this, in the three-feet-thick wall, remain two small windows, round-headed lancets (if such a term may be used) four feet in height, six inches in width, with very deep internal splay, and the glazing almost flush with the external surface of the wall : another exactly similar, in the north wall of the chancel, was removed on the erection of a vestry : whilst another, similar in every respect, remains near the east end of the north wall of the nave. All these

³ See 'Blanchland' by the Rev. A. Johnson.—*Arch. Ael.* xvi. 295, *et seq.*

are very similar to the windows of the chancel of Ebchester church. The south entrance doorway of the nave, with plain semi-circular arch, has never been moved, having been spared when much else was altered or removed. The north wall of the nave is apparently of original work, of rude workmanship, built with stones probably gathered off the site when cleared for building, and roughly squared with the hammer. In the south wall of the chancel, near the east end, remain the ancient aumbry and piscina, the drain of the latter still perfect. The ancient stone slab of the altar was found at the east end, and is now in use; and in the wall of the porch are set up two mutilated cross coffin lids, one, from the chalice carved on it, having doubtless covered the remains of a priest who served the church. Outside, under the wall plate on the south side of the nave lies a corbel table about six inches deep, into which run from the base course five flat pilaster buttresses, about two feet six inches wide by six and a half inches deep. These buttresses are returned at the east and west angles of the nave. The corbels on which rests the water-tabling that terminate the gables of the east and west ends of the nave, are carved into rude representations of the human face, apparently of date coeval with the erection of the church. The chancel walls on the east and south sides are supported by four stunted buttresses, graduated in two steps, of later date than the original church, two on the east and two on the south side. In selecting a patron saint for his new church, Edmund the Saxon would seem to have been influenced by the coincidence of his own name with that of the sainted martyr king of the East Angles; it was therefore dedicated to St. Edmund. Of the clergy to whom was committed the ministration of the offices of religion in St. Edmund's church we have for a considerable period no record at all: they and their people lived, worked, and died; Edmund himself was gathered to his fathers, and would be buried in his own church, where probably his dust at present lies. The first that we hear of as a cleric in charge of the church of Edmundbyers is 'Willelmus diaconus et persona de Edmundesbires,' who appears in the *Feodarium* edited by the Rev. W. Greenwell for the Surtees Society,⁴ as giving evidence in a dispute between the bishop of Durham and the prior and convent, respecting the right of presentation to the living of St. Oswald's in Durham.

⁴ 58 Surt. Soc. Publ., p. 250.

That was in 1228. The next name mentioned is Richard de Kirkeley, in 1275; then Sir John de Cotum, in 1325; from which time the clerics in charge run down in regular order, apparently, and with scarcely a break, until the present time. They are as follow, derived from Surtees, and from other sources:—

c 1228 William.	1508 Robert Sprague, <i>p. res.</i> Fabyane.
1275 Richard de Kirkely.	1557, 17 Dec.—John Forster.
1325 Sir John de Cotum.	1570, 6 Feb.—Thomas Benson.
1333 Lawrence.	1575, 20 March — John Greenwell,
1343 John de Allerton. ⁵	A.B., ⁶ <i>p.m.</i> Benson.
1348 John de Bamburgh.	1609, 22 June—Mark Leonard, A.B.
1357 John de Seham.	<i>p.m.</i> Greenwell.
1392 Thomas de Gathril, <i>p.m.</i> Seham.	1628, 21 July—Michael Walton, A.M.
Thomas Annerley.	<i>p. res.</i> Leonard.
1399 William Hyndeley <i>al. de Lam-</i>	1629, 2 July—John Durie, A.M., <i>p.m.</i>
<i>esley, p.m.</i> Annerley.	Walton.
1401 William de Malteby.	1684, 20 Nov.—Christopher Smith,
1401 John de Hexham, <i>p. resign.</i>	<i>p.m.</i> Durie.
Malteby.	1735, 27 Sept.—Francis Hunter, A.M.
1402 Henry Hinton, <i>p. res.</i> Hexham.	<i>p.m.</i> Smith.
1411 Robert Aukland, <i>p.m.</i> Hinton.	1743 Thomas Coulthard, A.M., <i>p.m.</i>
1419 Robert Baker, <i>p.m.</i> Aukland..	Hunter.
1421 Richard Walworth.	1779 William Stephenson, A.M.
1456 William Denton.	1787 James Deason.
1468 John Wouldhave, ⁶ <i>p. res.</i> Den-	1811 Joseph Dawson, <i>p.m.</i> Deason.
ton.	1837 Joseph Forster, <i>p.m.</i> Dawson.
1504 William Fabyane, ⁷ <i>p. res.</i>	1856 Walker Featherstonhaugh, M.A.
Wouldhave.	<i>p.m.</i> Forster.

With regard to this list of clergy, it may be observed that John Greenwell was remarkable for his learning amongst his contemporary neighbours; that John Durie was dispossessed during the rule of the Puritans and replaced at the Restoration; Christopher Smith lies

⁵ On the 2nd Jan., 1343, John de Allerton, the rector, was granted leave of non-residence for one year, and during his absence to farm the living.—*Reg. Pal. Dum.* iii. 520.

⁶ At the visitation of 12 Nov., 1501, 'dom. John Woodhaie,' the rector, was infirm; Robert Oliver and Edward Blumer, 'parochiani,' were present and said all was well.—*Bp. Barnes, Eccl. Proc.* (22 Surt. Soc. Publ.) xiv.

⁷ This rector was present in 1507, at a Synod in the Galilee of Durham Cathedral church.—*Hist. Dum. Scrip. tres,* ccccv.

⁸ In 1578 'John Grinivell,' the rector, Robert Snowball, the parish clerk, and Christopher Hurde and George Lumley, the churchwardens, were present at a visitation.—*Bp. Barnes, Eccl. Proc.*, 52. The same rector performed the task (Gospel of St. Matthew) at the visitation of 22 July, 1578. He was also present at that of 29 Jan., 1578[-9].—*Ibid.* 72, 96.

under a flat stone in the churchyard at the east end of the church; Mr. Hunter was laid under the black marble stone in the chancel of the church; and that Mr. Deason was also vicar of Pittington as well as rector of Edmundbyres, and was resident at neither place. Mr. Dawson also lies in the churchyard, at the east end of the church.

As to the way in which the vill and advowson of Edmundbyres became the property of the prior and convent of Durham, I cannot do better than quote the remarks of Canon Greenwell in his note to the article 'Edmundbirez.'⁹

"Edmundbyres, at the compilation of Boldon Buke, belonged to Alan Bruncoſte, nor is there any evidence to show how it passed from him or his representatives. The earliest instrument in connexion with the vill, amongst the muniments of the Dean and Chapter of Durham, is the following confirmation, which dates about the middle of the 13th century. 'Gilbertus filius Radulphi de Rugemund . . . Adae de Bradley et heredibus suis totum jus et clamium quod habui vel habere potui in villa de Edmundbyres, et in donacione seu advocacione ecclesiae ejusdem villae, cum homagiis, relevis et excaetis et omnibus aliis pertinenciis suis. Habendum et tenendum sibi et heredibus in perpetuum. Et pro hac concessione . . . dedit michi dictus Adam quamdam summam pecuniae in mea necessitate.' The following charter is no doubt from the son of the grantee in the former one, and he is probably the same person who alienated the manor by the instrument which follows this. 'Joulanus filius Adae de Bradeley dedi, concessi et praesenti carta mea confirmavi Johanni de Schelis, pro homagio et servicio suo, ij tofta in villa de Eadmundbiris, cum xij acris terrae, in territorio ejusdem villae, scilicet, illa ij tofta cum eisdem xij acris terrae quae data fuerunt Petro de Middilham, cum Oriota sorore patris mei, in liberum maritagium. Tenenda et habenda sibi et heredibus suis . . . in perpetuum. . . . Reddendo inde annuatim michi et heredibus meis vel meis assignatis 1d. in villa de Eadmundbiris, scilicet, die apostolorum Petri et Pauli, pro omni servicio.' . . . 'Jolanus de Bradeley. . . . Johanni de Insula manerium

⁹ *Feod. Prior. Dun.* (58 Surt. Soc. publ.) 179. In 1311 the bishop (Kellawe) of Durham confirmed by charter to the church and canons of St. Mary de Giseburn lands including 'totam terram suam in Edmundbyres, quam habent ex dono Petri Brouncost.'—*Reg. Pal. Dun.* ii. 1135. Bishop Beaumont [1317-1343] gave to the prior and convent licence to hold the mediety of the vill.—*Hist. Dun. Scrip. tres*, 119.

meum de Edmundbires, cum advocacione duarum partium ecclesiae ejusdem villae, et omnibus aliis pertinenciis suis, ut in dominicis, dominiis, serviciis libere tenencium, et vilenagiis, cum villanis et eorum sequelis et catallis, sine aliquo retinemento. Habendum et tenendum sibi et heredibus suis vel suis assignatis de Domino Episcopo Dunelmiae et successoribus suis libere.' In 1325 'Walter de Insula miles' granted to Sir John de Cotum, chaplain, all lands, tenements, etc., which he held in the vill and territory of Edmundbyres, together with the advowson of the church. In 1328 the same John de Cotum conveyed to the prior and convent of Durham 'manerium meum de Edmundbyers, cum advocacione ecclesiae dicti manerii, videlicet, quicquid habui in dicto manerio cum advocacione praedicta, una cum serviciis liberorum, bondorum, et aliorum quorumcumque.' Bishop Beaumont in the same year gave license to the said John de Cotum to convey the same manor and advowson to the Convent, the Statute of Mortmain notwithstanding; Cotum's instrument, though more generally worded than Insula's, would only convey his two-thirds of the advowson, and their particular manerium might well be two-thirds only of the vill. The following instrument shows that at the time of Cotum's grant, the Convent was already in possession of the other third part of the will and advowson. 'Johannes Gylett de Eggesclyf venerabilibus viris Dominis Hugoni Priori Dunelm. et ejusdem loci Conventui . . . totam terciam partem villae de Edmunbyris, cum tercia parte advocacionis ecclesiae ejusdem villae, et cum tercia parte molendini de eadem, et cum omnibus villanis meis ibidem habitantibus et eorum sequela, et cum catallis omnibus, et cum homagio et servicio Alani de Slykeburne de toto tenemento cum pertinenciis, quod de me tenet in eadem villa de Edmunbyres, et cum homagio et servicio Roberti praepositi de toto tenemento quod de me tenuit in eadem villa, et cum omnibus aliis pertinenciis suis, tam in dominicis quam in villenagiis et serviciis, sine aliquo retinemento, quae omnia insimul emi pro xl marcis argenti a Johanne filio Alani de Hedlum, et per cartam suam michi inde confectam in curia Dunelm. plenarie investitus fui. Tenendam . . . de me et heredibus meis in perpetuum in feodo et hereditate, libere . . . reddendo inde annuatim michi et heredibus meis 1d. ad natale Domini, et Priori et Conventui de

Gysburne, nomine meo et heredum meorum, 5s. tantum, et faciendo forinsecum servitium quantum pertinet ad terciam partem ejusdem villae, scilicet, terciam partem duodecimae partis feodi unius militis.' . . . The two following charters refer to land which ultimately centered in the Prior and Convent. 'Alanus Bruncoſte . . . Ranulfo Bruncoſte, pro homagio et ſervicio ſuo iij acras terrae et dimidiam, cum tofto et crofto et omnibus aiſiamētis ad villam de Hedmundebires pertinentibus, infra villam et extra, illas, ſcilicet, quas Aldredus molendinarius tenuit, illi et heredibus ſuis tenendas de me . . . libere et quiete et honorifice; reddendo annuatim michi et heredibus meis dimidiam libram cimini ad feſtum Sancti Cudberti in Septembri, pro omni ſervicio . . . ſalvo ſervicio forinſeco'. . . 'Radulfus de Rubeo Monte . . . Deo et Sancto Cuthberto et domui Elemoſinariae Sancti Cuthberti de Dunelmo . . . ij bovatas et j acram terrae arabilis in villa de Edmundebires, in excambium ij boyatarum terrae quas habuit dicta domus Elemoſinaria in villa de Holm, ex dono Bernardi molendinarii, videlicet, illas ij bovatas terrae quas Ricardus de Falderleya tenuit in villa de Edmundebires, cum tofto et crofto dicti Ricardi, et j acram terrae arabilis ex additamento juxta Truteburne.'"¹⁰ The proceſs of acquisition appears to have been as follows: John Gylett of Eggesclyf had, by purchase from John, ſon of Alan of Hedlum, for forty ſilver marks, become poſſeſſed of one-third of the vill, one-third of the advowſon, and one-third of the mill, of Edmundbyers, with all the villains living thereon and all the rights appertaining thereto, which he made over to the prior and convent of Durham; who, ſhortly after, in 1328, received from Sir John de Cotum 'capellanus' alſo the remaining two-thirds of the vill and advowſon, which he had received in 1325 from Walter de Inſula, whoſe relative John had acquired it from Joulanus de Bradley, who in turn, through his father Adam, had received it from Gilbert de Rugemund, to whom Adam had advanced money. Further than this we have no certainty. Alan Bruncoſte under Boldon Buke held Edmundbyers for his ſervice in the foreſt; and before the date of Hatfield's ſurvey the whole eſtate (with a ſmall exception), including the advowſon, had accrued under charter to the prior and convent of Durham, with whom, represented now by the dean and chapter, it

¹⁰ *Feod. Prior. Dun.* 180.

still remains. The exception relates to the manor of Pethumeshake or Pethmoshake (now 'Pedom's Oak') in the western part of the Burnhope valley, which belongs to Sherburn hospital; 'Magister Hospitalis de Shirburn tenet libere totam terram ad Pethuneshake, quam Alanus de Brumptofte [*sic*, in the charters 'Bruncoste'] dedit Magistro Arnaldo de Ankeland, pro homagio et servicio suo et pro xvj marcis argenti, salva communi pastura villae de Edmundbyres, reddendo inde per annum heredibus dicti Alani et postea Priori Dunelm. j bisancium vel 2s., ad festum Sancti Cuthberti in Septembri. 2s.'¹¹

I must now endeavour to put together some account of the social condition of a village like Edmundbyers; and for this I shall be indebted to the labours of Mr. John Booth, deputy registrar of the diocese, who edited for the Surtees Society what remained of the early Halmote Court Rolls of the prior and convent of Durham. These do not, it is true, extend nearly so far back as the period we have been considering, when Edmund the Saxon gathered together the village community and built the church; but those that remain to us (for they are very imperfect) overlap the date when the entire vill and advowson came into the possession of the prior and convent by the gift of Sir John de Cotum in 1328. I may here remark that the manor of Roughside appears also to have been, at this date, under the lordship of the prior and convent, but to have been, at some period not long subsequent, transferred to the lordship of the bishop. The court is always called the court of the prior; he represented the convent; acted independently of it; and alone stood in the relation of lord: in him were embodied the rights and authority of the convent, and their consent, or even knowledge, does not appear to have been necessary in his dealings with the tenants. His present representative, the dean, seems, by statute, to have the same power; 'Licebit etiam Decano . . . terras . . . dimittere . . . secundum consuetudinem maneriorum ecclesiae praedictae, etiam non-requisito consensu capituli.' The vills subject to the jurisdiction of the halmote court in the County Palatine of Durham numbered thirty-five, of which a list is given by Mr. Booth in his edition of the Court Rolls: of these Edmundbyers was one. The

¹¹ See *Feod. Prior. Dun.* p. 72, for charter.

courts appear to have been held three times in each year, numbered first, second, and third 'turnus'; of which the first, on account of the legal year beginning on the 25th March, was counted to be held in the summer; the second in the autumn; and the third in the spring of the next year, as we should reckon it. They were presided over by the officials of the convent—the steward, bursar, and terrar, usually; sometimes only two of these; sometimes the prior himself was present, in which case one of the others was absent; and there were usually, perhaps always, others sitting as assessors, probably some of the principal inhabitants of the vill. The business with which they dealt included—I. Questions relating to demises of land, etc., held by the tenants of the several classes and of the demesne lands; II. Injunctions and bye-laws for the regulation of the community and the due enjoyment of rights; III. Penalties for the breach of the regulations, and for other offences against social well-being. For the determining of these questions, and especially for the fixing of penalties, in each vill jurors were elected by the common voice, chosen at one court to sit at the next, and sworn to perform their duties. They had duties both in and out of court; the latter being, when directed, to report on and assess damages of tenements out of repair, to view and report on encroachments and other infringements of land regulations, to define and adjudge disputed boundaries, and to set up 'merestanes' or boundary stones. The penalties inflicted were usually of a very mild nature, and were not unfrequently remitted altogether. The jurors themselves were sometimes fined for refusal to sit, or for non-performance of their duties. As revealed in these rolls, the government of the prior, the lord, seems to have been of a truly paternal character, and a real home government; for the adjustment of differences and settlement of questions, the inhabitants of the vill were not obliged to go to a distance in order to appear before the court, but the lord came to them, and set up his court amongst themselves, and took the greatest pains that matters should be fairly and amicably settled, and by the voice of the people themselves. These halmote courts, as thus constituted, give us much interesting information respecting the various vills, the conditions on which the land was held and the methods of its cultivation, as well as the condition and manners of the inhabitants. We see their several ranks, and their

relation to the prior as their lord ; we see how they managed the internal affairs of their village by their locally elected officers ; and how, in the halmote court, local questions were discussed and settled, how their trespasses and wrong doings were punished, usually gently, how their strifes and contentions were repressed, and endeavours made to promote peace and quietness in the community. In vills like Edmundbyers, the villagers came under four classes, with varying rights, privileges, and duties. They were I. the free tenants, who had a recognised estate of inheritance, descending from father to son ; who owed and paid homage and fealty to the lord in his court, and were subject, in some cases at least, to rent and fines on entry, with other incidents of manorial tenure. II. The tenants of the demesne lands, who held for terms of years or life, and whose rents were payable to the prior's exchequer. III. The villeins (*husbandi*) and cotmen (*cotarii*) probably the more numerous class, who held for life, and whose tenant right gradually became a customary right of tenure ; the only limitation being the tenant's inability, from poverty or some other cause, to pay rent or perform the usual service. But here much consideration seems to have been shown for the circumstances of the tenants, as payments were often allowed to be postponed or were abated, on proof being given such as satisfied the court. IV. The last, and lowest class, were the neifs (*nativi*) of the lord, who were tied to the land (*glebae adscripti*) and could not leave the vill without the licence of the lord. For the privilege to do so a payment was required. If they held bondage tenements, as they often did, they held them not for life (as other tenants), but at the will of the lord, 'quia natus,' as is often expressed in the form of admission. On the other hand, they do not appear to have been subject to fines on entry. They appear to have been sensitive of their abject condition, which seems to have often been cast up to them by the superior tenants. The last two classes supplied the labour necessary for the cultivation of the demesne lands, being bound to supply a certain amount as the condition of their holding. They appear to have been indulgently treated ; and the customary right which they gradually came to claim has been a bone of contention even up to very recent years, and is not, as far as I am aware, authoritatively settled even yet. In the case of inability to pay, the holding was formally seized into the

lord's hand ; but some concession was usually made, by which the holding was transferred by family arrangement, and was not absolutely lost to the tenant. If this was not done, the tenant was not readmitted, except on payment of a fine. The position which the free tenants held in relation to the halmote court is somewhat indefinite and obscure. Although they had their own free court, they appear to have sometimes attended the halmote court, done homage and service there, and acknowledged orders and injunctions issued there. Possibly it was a matter of choice ; they might not be bound to attend : but if they did attend, they probably thereby placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the halmote court. The class of ' husbandi ' and ' cotarii ' engrossed a great part of the business of the court : in the letting to them of houses and land ; seeing that the houses were properly kept in repair and justice done to the land ; settling disputes that arose ; and, often, assessing penalties for transgression. The condition of the houses was very strictly looked after. The tenant was bound to keep his toft in as good repair as he received it ; not infrequently receiving permission from the lord to cut timber for repairs, but not allowed to take it for that or any other purpose without such permission. The houses of this class would not be very grand affairs : some that have survived to our day in Edmundbyers probably pretty accurately represent the cotmen's houses of the 14th century. One yet standing may suffice for an example. It is a rectangle of twenty-seven feet by twenty-one outside measurement, the frame supporting the roof consisting of a stone gable at each end, of rough stones mortared with clay, and in the interval two ' forcs ' of solid oak. These, set up together at a more or less acute angle, had their feet either resting on the ground or sunk a few inches below the surface, being kept in their places by an oaken ridge-timber, the ends of which rested on the gables. These main timbers thus resembled pairs of gigantic compasses set upright with their points in the earth. Then broad walls were built up, front and back, of rough stone with clay for mortar, so as to enclose the feet of some portion of the timbers, and to form a small rectangular room. A ceiling, if at all, was formed by placing across from front to back rude planks of riven oak ; first ribs and then rafters of the same laid on the principal timbers above formed a support for two or three

feet of heather thatching, and the house was complete. A wide and rough chimney was run up inside, or sometimes outside, against one of the gables ; and a small door and a tiny window back and front were left, to give entrance and light. This, the chief house of the holding, was sometimes called the 'firehouse,' as distinguished from other buildings where no fire was used. The village of Cassop, in 1414, gives us the order, probably, of most of the villages of the county of Durham at that date. On the south side were a firehouse and a byre. At the east end there was a grange in a garth, with a stable at one end, a pigeon house and a pigstye. At the west end of the village was a firehouse and a grange, and on the north side a sheepfold (which very likely also answered for a pound), and a tenement consisting of a firehouse, a byre, and a grange. Besides these there would also be the common bakehouse and the common forge. To each vill would be attached a common pasture ground, and the tillage land would lie around, parcelled out in strips divided by lines of turf called 'baulks,' the portions belonging to the several tenants being indiscriminately and very singularly mixed. It will easily be seen that this system of common and unenclosed fields (if they may so be called) would frequently give rise to disputes and bickerings, often rising to serious breaches of the peace, which were brought before the court by officers appointed by the inhabitants themselves, and sworn to perform their duties. Besides the jurors, who have been already mentioned, each vill had also a bailiff (*praepositus*) elected at the court and sworn ; a harvestman (*messor*), a collector of rents and fines, a punder or keeper of the village pound, ale-tasters, and constables, all of whom also were elected by the jury at the court, and sworn. Sometimes the bailiff received an assistant, who also was sworn. The vill possessed also a common forge, a common oven, and a common pound ; and they co-operated in many works for the common good, such as repair of highways and lanes, setting of landmarks and guideposts, and cleaning out of streams, springs, wells, and water-courses. To these duties they were summoned by the bailiff, on the order of the court. For the more perfect adjustment of local matters, the free tenants seem to have been frequently willing to co-operate with the other tenants, attending the Halmote court, submitting to its orders, joining in the consideration of matters

brought before the court, and meeting outside to discuss questions submitted to them. These matters were then named as determined 'ex communi assensu,' and the work to be done was 'injunctum omnibus tenentibus villae.' Of matters affecting the relations of the tenants to the lord, the more frequent orders concern encroachments on the lord's demesne lands, waste, or timber; the protection of the tenants of the lord's mills, brew-houses, and ferries; the upholding of the jurisdiction of the lord's court, by prohibiting pleas being taken elsewhere; the obligation to supply the lord's wants in priority to those of any one else; the due performance by the tenants of such services as they were bound to render, either in working the demesne lands or in carriage of corn and victuals beyond the vill; the repair of mills and mill-pools and the buildings on the tenants' holdings; regulations for the orderly cultivation of the land, and for ensuring the tenants' leaving the tillage lands in the same state as on entry, in regard to ploughing, manuring, and fallowing. The duties which the village communities owed to their lord and to their own members are well illustrated by the record of penalties and fines inflicted and damages assessed for breaches of condition of tenure, and of those rules and regulations of the community which they themselves took part in framing, and to which they were bound to conform. The first surviving record of the holding of the prior's halmote court is of the date 1296 (that is 1296-97), when the three sessions were held in the eastern part of the county: the first at Hebburn on May 23, the second at Pitlington on October 26, and the third at Hesleden on March 4, 1297: then a gap occurs up to 1300: and for some years the series is irregular, until 1365, when the record becomes regular. The first mention of Edmundbyers occurs in 1364, November 4; when some business from there seems to have been brought specially before the court then sitting at East Merrington. Robert Souter, the bailiff, is fined 6d. for not summoning Margaret, widow of William of Allenschellys (Allanshields in Hunstanworth parish), to do homage for a messuage and twenty acres of land which she held in Roksyd (Roughside or Ruffside). At the same time he is ordered to summon Isabella, sister and heir of William Hunter, tenant of a messuage and eight acres of land; also Agnes, widow of William Sadeler, tenant of a messuage and fifteen

acres ; and Dominus Alanus de Schittlyngton, master of Sherburn Hospital, tenant of 'a certain place called Pethmosak (Pedomsoak)' to do homage respectively. In 1367 we find a court held at Edmundbyers itself 'Curia tenta apud Edmundbyers . . . festum S. Andreae apostoli (Nov. 30) anno etc, lxvij.' 'Compertum est per jur,' that a cottage in the tenure of John Huker, burnt down, was of the value of 30s. and for that sum could be made as good as he received it ; for which purpose the bailiff was ordered to seize all J. H.'s goods and chattels, and have them conveyed to the grange at Muggleswick (manerium de Mugleswyk). This was a country house of the prior and convent, standing in Muggleswick park, of which considerable remains may yet be seen, including a chapel on the upper story, also the fish pond, stew for holding fish convenient to the house, and also, in Hysehope dene, part of the paved road by which the monks made the journey from Durham. In this entry, also, 'Johannes Rogerson cepit . . . del Westyait ad Dominicam prox' futur' capiendō qualibet septimana vij panes spendabels et . . . omnes transgressores infra boscum et camp' domini.' In 1368, apparently before 'dominis Ricardo de Birtley terrario Thomas Surtays seneschallo Johanne de Beryngton bursario et aliis,' the second session was held at Edmundbyers on Oct. 24. John Edeson was fined for swearing at Robert Souter, the bailiff, 'in officio suo pacis' ; and that his servants had rescued a pot which had been seized by the lord. The dispute appears to have arisen about some land and a house held by John Edeson, which belonged to one Adam Barbour, who died 'in the first pestilence.' From these words it would appear that even a small and remote place like Edmundbyers did not escape the invasion of the great plague ('Black Death') which ravaged the land, and gathered its victims from China to the shores of Greenland. Coming to us from France in 1348, it broke out first in the county of Dorset, from which it spread rapidly all over England, in which it is reported by contemporaries that 'only one-tenth part of the inhabitants remained alive.' 'The great mortality,' as it was styled, was in 1348 ; but it occurred also in 1360, and again in 1373 and 1382. In London 100,000 are said to have perished, and in Norwich upwards of 50,000. As a consequence, many tracts of land lost their cultivators, and the ground remained untilled. On the death of Adam Barbour, in the plague, the care of his

two-year-old son Richard, was committed to John Barbour of Hexham, and his land let to John Edeson, who is required by the court to show his authority for holding it. A court was again held at Edmundbyers in 1369, July 2, when the case of John Huker was brought up again from the court of 1367. The bailiff was ordered to seize 6s. belonging to Huker which was due to him for three sheep sold to Richard de Heswell 'capellanus'; the jury finding that he had no other goods to place against his burnt house. The matter of the land of Adam Barbour was again brought before the court; and it was incidentally mentioned that the lord had received no profit from it since the death of Adam; the land having probably lain waste more or less since that time. A court seems to have been held at Edmundbyers, either in the third 'turn' of 1369 or the first of 1370, when a place in Roughside is named as held from the prior; also fines are fixed for shepherds pasturing on the 'park' more stock than allowed by custom. At a court held at Edmundbyers on November 28, 1370, the forester was ordered to seize for the lord two 'dales' of land containing $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres, being some ground which 'Johannes de Edmundbires' had unlawfully enclosed from the lord's waste, as his son, 'Thomas del Schels,' confessed on his death-bed, desiring that it should be restored; and the jurors were ordered to set up boundaries. Hugh Sadler and the jurors were ordered to view some land held by John de Heswell, and some formerly held by Ralph Jolibody. John appeared to be in possession of more than his share; on which account the land could not be let. The matter was now to be settled and the land divided into proper proportions. In the matter, again, of John Huker's burnt house, the forester was ordered to distrain on Richard de Hessewell 'capellanus' (of Muggleswick) for 6s. owing to Huker for sheep sold, to be applied to the re-building of the house. The bailiff was ordered to seize for the lord some land at Roughside formerly belonging to Alicia de Alaynscheles, deceased, leaving an heir under age; the land being let to 'Robert de Hidewyn' for 6s. 8d. an acre; and the rent to be distrained for at the Pentecost and Martinmas terms. The bailiff was ordered to summon all the tenants of the vill, women as well as men, to the next court, to answer for cutting down trees in the 'Allers,' to the lord's great loss. John Edeson was fined for cutting down an oak, and taking honey and wax, for the honey 14d., for the

tree 12d. All the tenants of the prior's vill were ordered to grind their corn at the Muggleswick mill (the prior's). A court was held at Edmundbyers on November 27, 1371, no business recorded. At the court held in 1373, a peculiar entry appears, which I shall transcribe in the original :—'compertum est per jur' quod panis benedictus solebat dari de omnibus tenuris villae et quod ille qui haberet iij tenuras solveret pro aliqua tenura panem benedictum ut turnus suus acciderit, et quod ista consuetudo solebat dari a tempore quo non existat memoria. Et injunctum omnibus tenentibus villae quod faciant de cetero sub poena di. marcae.' This passage appears to refer to a long-established custom that the bread for the Holy Communion should be furnished by the villagers in turn. Then an order is made that steps should be taken for fixing the quantity of stock to be put upon the Edmundbyers common field. This field I have not been able to identify. The next order is very peculiar—that all the tenants, each on his own portion, should extirpate 'herbam vocatam gold,' the herb called 'gold.' I suggest that this refers to a troublesome perennial weed, common ragwort, *Senecio Jacobaea*, with a bunch of bright yellow flowers, which prevails greatly in the pastures at Edmundbyers, and is undoubtedly a great nuisance. Another court was held here in 1374. No record of business. Also in 1377. In 1379, at Edmundbyers, John Edson takes a cottage and six acres of land, lately held by Alan Hird, for life, at the rent of three shillings a year, and the usual service to lord and neighbours. At a court held here in 1380, more business was transacted than usual. Houses and land were let to seven persons, four of them in Roughside ; John Edson was fined for cutting brushwood in the park ; and sixteen were fined for cutting brushwood in the common field, five shillings and sixpence ; three women were fined for incontinence (leyr) ; and three for breach of the assize of ale. The sale of ale was generally in the hands of women, who were obliged periodically to send for the sworn aletasters, from whom, no doubt, they received a certificate. The offences seem to have been, as to be expected, short measure, overcharge, and bad quality ; sometimes refusal to supply people out of the house ; sometimes refusal to supply particular persons at all. Another very usual offence in the vills, besides 'leyr,' or incontinence of women, seems to have been 'merchet,' marrying of a

nief's daughter without the consent of the lord. These are not much noticed in Edmundbyers, though they no doubt existed (in many other vills they are very frequent indeed); some serious offences of violence, such as drawing knives, swords, axes, arrows, and clubs at one another, do not appear at Edmundbyers at all. At a court held in 1382, many of the same appeared as at the last court, charged with unlawfully cutting green brushwood within the prior's bounds without his licence, and were again fined in various sums from 2d. to 2s. The business at the court of Edmundbyers seems never to have been extensive, and we have reason to conclude that the inhabitants were an orderly and quiet-going community, as might be expected from people living much apart from the world, and little affected by its turmoils and commotions. The few notices that have survived of the work at the courts at Edmundbyers may very well be supplemented from the records of other courts; for whilst the business brought before the courts would vary greatly according to locality and peculiar circumstances—villages near the sea, for instance, furnishing a totally different class of cases from those further inland—still, a certain class of business would be common to all. The tenants of Edmundbyers, in common with all others, would be required to attend the court at the summons of the bailiff; to come in time and behave themselves whilst there; to elect from their own body a number to act as assessors and jurors; to give faithful service as jurors when sworn, both in and outside the court; to meet out of court at the summons of the bailiff to discuss matters of public interest; to elect village officers and find their salaries; to view, where required, and assess, damages to buildings, etc.; to provide a common pound, forge, carpenter's shop, brewhouse, bakehouse, and swinehouses, and keep them in repair; to provide and keep in repair stocks, branks, ducking-stool, and whipping post; to set boundary stones and guide posts; to pay cost of villagers' compulsory journeys to Durham; to compensate substitutes for war service; to furnish carriage in time of war; to furnish carriage when required by the prior; to carry victuals and provide beds for officers of the halmote court; to work for lord according to class and at specified times; to mow lord's meadow; to work for lord in autumn; to grind their corn at the lord's mill; to keep buildings in repair; to assemble at the sound of the 'messor's' horn; to repair highways, mill-dams,

&c. ; to clean out mill-races, and to keep clean ponds, springs, and wells ; to provide guard, 'hirsell,' for stock outside the village ; to help constables in keeping peace. Besides these duties enjoined, the tenants were forbidden generally to hold land without leave ; to exchange land without leave ; to leave land untilled, except in due course, as fallow ; to trespass on the lord's land ; to cut down the lord's trees and brushwood ; to carry causes before the court of another lord ; to sell manure out of the vill ; to pay higher wages than neighbours ; to buy ale and other things outside the vill, to be sold in the vill ; to keep more stock than agreed upon by common consent of the vill ; to break pound and seizure ; not to hunt nor keep hunting dogs ; not to entertain vagabonds ; not to pasture horses diseased with scab ; husbandmen not to encroach on cotmen's pasture ; not to use, for washing clothes, cooling irons from the forge, &c., the springs or other waters reserved for brewing or baking ; not to apply to any the term 'nativus' or 'rusticus ;' not to shift boundary stones ; not to make new tracks across other people's ground ; not to allow stock of any kind to trespass on the sown corn ; cotmen to keep their stock to the common pasture ; not to refuse capons, pullets, &c., to the lord, when they had them to sell ; not to let pigs go out without rings ; not to quit service when engaged ; not to dig to the injury of the highways ; brewers not to sell beer at more than 1d. a pot (*lagena*) ; none to sell beer except those licensed ; not to abuse the bailiff or other servant of the lord ; not to use violence to other people's servants ; the workmen of the vill not to leave so long as any of the neighbours have any work to be done ; tenants not to cut down trees standing in their gardens ; 'cotmanni' and 'laborarii' not to refuse to work for the tenant of the 'manerium' at a due wage ; not to leave the village under those circumstances ; villagers not to do, themselves, the work of the common 'fabri' ; tenants not to allow their wives to quarrel with or vilify their neighbours ; corn and herbs gleaned in the field not to be brought furtively behind the gardens, but openly through the middle of the village ; not to play at ball ; lodging-keepers not to refuse lodging to strangers passing on foot, nor on horseback ; tenants carrying corn of the lord to Durham not to bring unsound and torn sacks, and not to carry by night ; not to allow the goods of felons or other 'fugitivi'

to be removed from the vill ; not to place stones on other people's land ; a special order is issued 'by assent of the lord and all the tenants within his lordship' that no one living within the same, draw knife or raise staff for evil purposes under a penalty of 40d. Any one striking another with staff, knife, or sword, to pay to the lord half a marc. Also (perhaps as conducing to the same) that women restrain their tongues, not using bad or irritating language, under penalty of 12d.

Besides this catalogue of things ordered and forbidden, it would be of interest, as illustrating the manners of the district generally at the period with which we are concerned at present, to note a few of the more unusual circumstances recorded in these halmote rolls, as they came before the court, sometimes the prior himself, more usually his seneschal, bursar, and terrar, with the assessors and sworn jury ; but these would not immediately relate to Edmundbyers.

With the year 1384, unfortunately, the records of the prior's halmote court, as published by the Surtees Society, come to an end ; unfortunately, since for very many subsequent years the history of Edmundbyers is a total blank. From what is published, the prior and convent appear to have been good masters, and to have done their duty towards their people ; they seem to have done their best to bring it about that the villagers should have justice, and live a life of comfort, respectability, and peace. They endeavoured to have all their wants properly supplied ; but if one thing stands out more prominently than another, it is their care that the villagers should be properly supplied with ale ; which might seem a small matter, but was really a necessary of life in those days, before tea and coffee had been introduced. As far as they could, they secured that the villagers should be able to get it when they wished, and in quantity convenient to them ; that they should get it of proper measure, the vessels being stamped, and at a just price ; and that they should have it good. Transgressions on these points by the retailers were frequently and rigorously punished. I may finish this only too meagre account of the earlier history of the parish by setting down the surnames which are found on the halmote rolls as belonging to inhabitants of Edmundbyers, and which differ very materially

from those now existing here. The first that occurs, in the year 1364, is the name of Souter, the owner of which was, in that and many subsequent years, the head man of the place, holding the honourable office of 'praepositus' or bailiff; also Hunter and Sadeler. In 1367 occur Huker and Rogerson. In subsequent years, Edeson, Barbour, Browne, Milner, Jolibody, Hird, Layborn, Walleworth, Prentys, Redding, Heswell, Brecauldoun, Smith, Tailliour, Heued, Grys, Skinner, Walker, appear as surnames of tenants and inhabitants, of various classes, and under the jurisdiction of the halmote court. The more modern history of Edmundbyers does not open so early as is the case with many parishes, which possess registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials running back to the end of the 16th century, and often books recording parish transactions almost as far back; for the register books of Edmundbyers do not contain a single entry older than 1700, and even these, up to the middle of the century, are very imperfect and unsatisfactory. The earliest, which are entries of baptisms and burials, have been copied by my predecessor Mr. Forster (as appears from the handwriting) from an earlier and apparently imperfect book, which, however, has unfortunately not been preserved. There exists in the village a tradition that the register books were much injured by fire during the incumbency of the Rev. Francis Hunter, rector from 1735 to 1743. The only break in the silence of the parish down to quite modern times occurs in the will of the Rev. Thomas Benson, who was rector from 1570 to 1575, made in December and proved in January 1575 (old style). The following is the will :

Thomas Benson, clerici testamentum. In the name of God, amen. The sixth day of December, in the yeare of oure Lord God, a thousand fyve hundrethe seaventie and fyve. I, Thomas Bensoune, clarke parsoune of Edmundebyers, beinge of whole myndé and in goode and perfect remembrance, laud and prayse be unto God Allmightie, make and ordayne this my presente testament concerning hearin my last will in manner and forme folowinge, first, I geve and bequeath my soule unto Almightye God my creator and redeemer, trustinge in his grace and mercie to be one of his electe childeringe. Also I will yt John Foster (bayse begotten sonne of Johne Foster, clarke, layt parson of Edmondebyers, who was given unto me and his goods by his father John Foster, clarke, the which goods are conteaned and specified in his father's last will. I geve and bequeathe unto Richard Fetherstoune, of Stanhope, one bushell of rye. I geve to Margerie Collinge one kennynge of rye. I geve to Widow Whitfield of Edmundebyers, one kennynge of rye. I geve and bequeathe to

Widow Blomer (*alias* Ward) of Edmoundebyers, one kennynge of rye. I geve and bequeathe to Robert Blomer (*alias* Warde), the which was the sonne of Thomas Blomer (*alias* Warde), xij yeawes. I geve and bequeathe to Margaret Ellisonne, the daughter of Robert Ellisonne, one lambe. I geve to Thomas Lomelie, the sonne of George Lomelie, one lambe. I geve and bequeathe to Thomas Maithwhen, the sonne of Xtofer Maithwhen, one lambe. The rest of all my goods with the owande unto me, my getts and legacies being paid and my funerall expensis beinge discharged, I geve and bequeath unto Katherin Blomer (*alias* Warde), the layt wyffe of Thomas Blomer (*alias* Warde), and unto William Bensoune my baise begottenne sonne, whome I make to be true and lawfull executors, supervisors of this my last will and testamente, I make Mr. Barnard Gilpinne (clarke), parsonne of Houghtoune in the Springe. Witnesses of this my last will and testamente Robert Ellisonne, Ustn Whitefelde and William Starthop clarke with other moo.

Prob. 21 January 1575.

This will gives a few additional surnames as of that date, Colling, Whitfield, Blomer, Ward, Ellison, Lumley, Mathwin; all of Edmundbyers; also a Featherston, one of the large clan of that name settled in Upper Weardale; and Bernard Gilpin, the saintly rector of Houghton-le-Spring, often called the 'apostle of the north.' It also gives testimony to the loose and irregular way in which even educated people spelt words at that date; and it also introduces the much-vexed question of clerical marriages in those times, and the social status of the children of such unions. Was Mr. Benson, rector of Edmundbyers, a married man? Was his son,—though in a legal document like a will he was obliged to describe him as 'base-born,'—was the son so regarded by his father's parishioners? or was he looked on as the off-spring of an honest, though irregular, union? Mr. Benson's predecessor, Mr. Foster, was in the same position.¹²

¹² Chaucer, in the *Miller's Tale*, seems incidentally to show that the popular view of the children of a cleric was not unfavourable; and other evidence goes to prove the same. There is, I suppose, no doubt that, up to the 11th century, a great number of the clergy were—and considered themselves to be legally—married men; and that in many cases the tenancy of their incumbencies descended in hereditary succession to their sons. It was only then that, in great measure from political motives, and in order to detach them from secular ties, it was proposed to deny marriage to the clergy; removing them more from the influences of the world, and making them more distinctly a religious order. To this idea the great body of the secular clergy, in England as well as other countries, opposed for many years a determined resistance, on the grounds of both history and expediency; that for ten centuries bishops and priests of the church had been able to marry if they chose; and that, as married men, they were more in sympathy, and had interests more in common

Mr. Durie's incumbency of Edmundbyers fell upon evil days, when king and archbishop were sent to the scaffold, and when the clergy who refused to acknowledge the abnormal state of things were deprived of their means of living, and turned out of their incumbencies, to seek maintenance as they could in the cold world outside. Mr. Durie was one of these, and his place was filled by an intruder, until the happier times of the Restoration arrived, when he was replaced in charge of his church. But not to find things as he had left them. On my promotion to the living in 1856, I was able to gain some idea, in the process of restoration of the fabric and belongings of the church, of the extent to which dilapidation had proceeded during this melancholy interval of Puritan ascendancy, making it evident that the church had gone through a period of passive neglect and intentional dismantlement. The north and east walls of the chancel were bulging outwards and dangerous. They had at one time been down almost altogether, and rebuilt from the stones on the ground, set with mud instead of mortar of lime. It was a matter of wonder to me why this should be, until I came to the conclusion that the rector, Mr. Durie, on his return, and wishful to rebuild his church, had found himself with scant funds to do it ; for a great part of the tithe, from which the income of the living was derived, had been made away with by granting moduses. The church had at one time been roofed with lead, of which I found many fragments in the *débris* of ruined masonry, heaped up to a height of three feet outside the northern wall ; and the archstones of a small

with those amongst whom they laboured. The rule of celibacy was, nevertheless, gradually forced upon the church, but was unwillingly obeyed, and evaded in every possible way. However, it had the effect of making the sons of priests legally illegitimate, and preventing the descent of clerical offices from father to son ; though at the same time it is certain that, for centuries after the promulgation of the order for celibacy, priests were married, and their children were not viewed by the people in the light in which confessedly illegitimate children would have been regarded, though in the eye of the law they were 'base-born.' It is probable that Mr. Benson's son may have been in this position, that he was the son of a real though unrecognised wife ; for his father does not seem ashamed to acknowledge the relationship, though obliged to allow its irregularity : which he would probably have hesitated to do had he been only the son of a concubine. That celibacy did not prevent scandal is evident from the not very infrequent entry in the Halmote court rolls, of a woman fined for " *leyr cum capellano.*"

window on the north side were recovered from the wall when taken down, having been built into the interior, and the head of the window supplied by a wooden lintel. I believe that the principal roof timbers were intact, being of a more ancient date than that repair. The wood of which they consist is a matter of uncertainty. At a meeting of the Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland, held at Edmundbyers not very long after I came, these timbers were examined. Naturally supposed to be of oak, they were found not to be so. Chestnut was suggested; but it was finally decided that they are of larch, grown at a high elevation, and therefore slowly, and consequently of close grain and hard substance. There are trees now in the woods on the banks of the Derwent in Muggleswick parish which might supply such beams. The south wall of the chancel had not suffered from dilapidation like the north, the masonry being very hard and sound, and the two narrow round-headed windows, with very deep splay, being perfect. Whatever Mr. Durie did, in the way of repair, being his bounden duty as rector, I do not suppose that the nave was then touched; for at a subsequent and comparatively recent period, extensive repairs were done to the nave at the expense, I believe, of the dean and chapter of Durham, the patrons. In the repairs of that date, the west, and parts of the north and south walls were taken down and rebuilt; the east wall of the nave entirely so; and a new chancel arch was built, with a centre and two side arches in Norman style. A contemporary example of this exists in the diocese, in the small Norman church of Elton, near Stockton-on-Tees, probably known to the architect who conducted the repairs at Edmundbyers. The wall was not continued of full thickness up to the roof, but as the ends of the ribs of the roof, being decayed, required support, rude pillars were run up, unsightly but not visible, as being above the ceiling; a fortunate arrangement, as, the centre arch being badly built, if the wall had been continued of the same thickness the whole would have come down. In the south wall, the windows—two on the east, and one on the west of the entrance doorway—whatever they may have then been, were taken out and re-placed in Norman style; and a similar window was inserted towards the west of the south chancel wall, destroying what was probably an early priest's door, the eastern jamb still remaining. The north wall of the nave, of rude

massive work, was mainly left untouched; the entrance archway on the south side was spared; but a new porch was erected, smaller than the original, of which the foundations remain under the surface, shewing an internal area of seven feet square. The walls of the whole building were then covered with a thick coating of plaster, hiding all defects, and they were many. When I was presented to the living in 1856, I found that considerable repairs were necessary in the chancel; not only the walls were decayed and dangerous, but the roof required immediate attention, the ribs being rotten at the ends and threatening to fall; the flooring of both chancel and nave was in holes; and the ceilings, with which both were covered, were falling to pieces. When the outside pointing of the chancel was removed, the mud mortar ran out from the inside of the walls like sand; but when, in process of removal, the south-east corner of the church was reached, the original wall was found standing as sound as when built, the mortar, of Fell-top limestone, as hard as the millstone-grit stones of which the wall is composed. Corbels were built into the west wall to support the shortened ends of the ribs of the roof, which itself, both chancel and nave, was removed, repaired, and re-placed. The plaster was taken off the whole church; the ceilings were removed and the flagging re-laid. A gallery at the west end was taken away, by permission of Miss Hall of Ruffside, the proprietor; as were also the pulpit and reading desk from the centre of the south side, the two small chancel arches being utilized in their place; the square pews were worked up into open benches, and the chancel furnished with benches for the choir. A new font was substituted for the ancient one, of Early English date, which was much damaged; the ancient stone altar slab, found in the pavement at the east end, six feet three inches in length, three feet in width, eight inches in thickness, and perfect, was mounted on dressed stones found about the church; and an Early English grave-cover of a priest, with incised cross and chalice, lying in the chancel, one of the rectors doubtless, was inserted in the wall of the porch, with part of another found among the rubbish on the north side. The grave of Mr. Hunter, rector from 1735 to 1743, under a black marble slab now lying in the chancel, was found to have been disturbed, probably in the former restoration; and the whole

chancel was found full of human bones. Mr. Hunter deserves to be gratefully remembered in connexion with Edmundbyers; for during his short incumbency he did much for the living. I have no doubt that it was he who gave this silver communion cup¹³ to the church, as shewn by the date of the hallmark; and he greatly improved the rectory house. The houses attached to the livings in the district were only very humble affairs; thatched cottages, little better than the dwellings of the cottagers around; an example of which, now a cowbyre, still exists at Muggleswick. Such was the rectory at Edmundbyers, to which Mr. Hunter added the present main building, which bears the date of 1738. The thatched cottage still remained until removed by my predecessor, Mr. Forster. The house was in a very dilapidated state, when it came into my hands, and received very extensive re-construction. It is now in very good repair; and the church, if not all that I could wish it, is at least in sound state and decent condition for the celebration of the Divine Mysteries and other services. In the churchyard, besides the gravestone of Mr. Christopher Smith, rector from 1684 to 1735, there lies the grave-cover of Mrs. Ann Baxter, a member of the family of Ord of West Ruffside, who died in 1744, and left a sum of money, of which the interest was, on the anniversary of her burial, to be divided amongst a certain number of poor persons. This money, as in many other similar cases, has disappeared, having, probably, been placed in the hands of some apparently responsible person, who, honestly or dishonestly, has failed to fulfil his trust. I can find out nothing of it. In other grave-stones there is nothing remarkable, except the great age to which had attained many whose names are recorded; a consequence, probably, of the healthfulness of the district, which, in a great degree remains as the hands of the Creator left it, unaltered by the hand of man, and uncontaminated by the smoke which shrouds the greater part of the county of Durham.

A few notes may be added as to the more modern history of the parish. Its elevation above sea level, from 600 to 1,600 feet, in great measure precludes the cultivation of wheat; to which conduces also the nature of the soil, mostly reclaimed moorland; barley and oats especially are grown, but the area of their cultivation is

¹³ See *Proceedings*, iv. 276.

diminishing year by year, the greater part of the land being laid down to grass, pasture and meadow. This results in a lowering of the population, which has for many years been gradually diminishing; the lessened demand for agricultural labourers and the gradual failure of the lead-mining industry driving all the young men to the great centres of industry, where they settle and seldom return. The population of the parish, which by the census of 1851 was 485, appeared in that of 1891 as only 252: of whom 121 were males, and 131 females; the number of houses in the parish was seventy-one, of which forty-one contained less than five rooms. In the immediate neighbourhood of the village, a considerable portion of what is now moor and covered with heather, has at one time grown corn, and is laid in rig and furrow. This, according to tradition, may be referred to the time of the great war with France, at the beginning of the 19th century, when the high price of corn made it profitable to plough out the moorland and grow oats on the fresh soil; the fall of the price of corn on the conclusion of peace, and also the exhaustion of the soil, making it unprofitable to continue the culture. Within the memory of a few people yet living, oxen were used in ploughing, shod with what were called 'cleets,' a small shoe for each division of the hoof. The flail is still used in the village, though rarely, being almost ousted by the threshing machine; the scythe is now little used for mowing grass, being almost superseded by the mowing machine, which is also used for mowing corn, the sickle having now disappeared; As a consequence, we have not now the yearly visits of the Irish labourers in the corn fields. Peats are now never used for fuel, though many parts of the moor are covered with what are called 'peat-pots,' where they were at one time extensively dug; coal being now preferred, though a more expensive fuel. Cheese-making was once, not very long since, an industry at Edmundbyers; cheese-presses and heavy stones belonging to them, are still to be seen in the village. Up to nearly the time when I came, the boundaries of the parish used to be yearly traversed by the churchwardens and overseers; a custom dropped on the rearrangement of the boundaries by the Ordnance surveyors, when a considerable part of the parish was cut off and added to Muggleswick. I endeavoured to get the parishioners to move to have this rescinded, but they declined to take

any action ; and as a consequence a large amount of rates, paid by the Consett Water Company and the lessee of the shooting rights, has been lost. The shooting, which was at one time little regarded, is now a valuable source of income to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, with whom are now lodged all the rights of the dean and chapter of Durham, with the exception of the patronage of their livings. This was not affected by the division of the diocese ; and their patronage of livings in Northumberland also still remains in the hands of the dean and chapter of Durham. Edmundbyers moor is now a fine tract of shooting, and with the cultivated land in it and in the adjoining parishes of Muggleswick and Hunstanworth, affords to the sportsman grouse, black game, partridges, pheasants, woodcock, snipe, wild duck, hares, and rabbits, whilst the river Derwent and tributary streams, now uncontaminated by the poisonous leadwashings, contain trout and grayling, the latter lately introduced. The moors are famous for the purity of their water, and at present furnish the main supply for the Consett waterworks. The road to Stanhope, 7 miles of desolate moorland, crossing the watershed at a height of 1,600 feet above the sea, is still bordered by guide-posts, placed at intervals, the 'dols' of former times, intended to mark the road during snow-storms, with three huts on the side of the road, for shelter to travellers or shepherds overtaken and unable to proceed : but for which, deaths by exposure would be more frequent than they are. Two or three of such occur every winter on these fells ; and a reminiscence of an occurrence of the kind is found in the 'Dead Friar's Curruck,' a stone which lies near the road from Stanhope to Blanchland crossing the head of the valley, a very exposed and desolate spot ; and which in all probability marks the place where one of the community of Blanchland abbey had met his death by being caught in a snow storm in that very elevated and exposed region. In the valley about a mile above the village may be seen the ruins of an abandoned lead-smelting mill, which was established by the Blackett family in the reign of Charles II., and which for a long time did much work, until superseded by others in more accessible situations. The lead industry has now altogether died out, principally owing to the great fall in the price of lead ore. The last experiment was made, some years ago, in the 'Burnhope' mine, a short distance up the valley, which promised

well and yielded many tons of lead ore from a north and south vein, but which eventually failed, from the vein dispersing and becoming 'blind.' This trial revealed an extraordinary state of things below the surface, in the shape of a mighty stream, which had, in some long past geological era, run down the valley and left a deposit of fine clay, 60 feet in depth ; the quality of which is such that only deficiency in means of transit prevents it from being removed and made available for the manufacture of fine moulded bricks, terra cotta coloured when burnt. The same drawback prevents the development of an industry in building-stone of the finest quality from one of the strata of the millstone grit, of which a quarry has been worked a little to the north of the village, supplying stone of uniform and admirable colour for several important houses in the neighbourhood, and for the entire fabric of the church of St. Ignatius at Sunderland. In addition to its colour and quality, this stone possesses the valuable property of being soft and easy to cut when newly quarried, and hardening afterwards when becoming dry. From a bed overlying the stratum of this quarry, but on the opposite side of the valley, are obtained the grey slates with which the church and many of the houses in the parish are roofed ; these were formerly hung on the timbers with sheep-shank bones, which possessed the advantage of never pining and decaying, and could not drop out ; to all which defects the wooden pegs used in later years were liable. The grey slates are now never used in the modern dwellings, principally on account of their requiring heavier roof timbers than the thin Welsh slates ; which, however, are much more liable to be blown off in the heavy winds which sometimes prevail here. Thatched roofs are never now used ; and in cases of repairs required it is with the greatest difficulty that a thatcher can be found. A thin seam of impure coal has been, not long ago, worked near the head of the valley, not of quality to be used for household purposes, but with just sufficient burning power to make into lime the 'fell top' limestone, which forms the bed of the burn close by, and which it overlies. In some parts of the district, and indeed in the parish, a very low class coal has been at one time worked, a little better than that which I have just described. It used to be mixed up with clay and made into balls, which, when dried, placed in the

grates, and ignited (a difficult matter) threw out a strong heat and remained long alight. These were also used for heaping, when red-hot, on the top of the old-fashioned ovens, like broad, deep, flat sauce-pans with lids; which are still in use in some of the dales of Cleveland. The Ruffside property, in the township of that name on the north-side of the parish, has been greatly improved of late years, by planting extensive belts of larch trees on the moor, not only affording shelter to the tracts enclosed, which are now good pasture and meadow land, but also bringing in a handsome return from the timber itself. The dean and chapter of Durham at one time had entertained the idea of pursuing this plan with their Edmundbyers moor, and had made the beginning of an enclosing plantation; but this was soon dropped and the plan never carried out, a circumstance much to be regretted. Many fine oak trees have been found buried in the mosses, showing the capabilities of the soil; and some parts of the moor have been covered with extensive tracts of birchwood; of which in some parts the stumps still remain above the surface of the moor. In the village still remains (but soon, I expect, to be removed) an example of what are known as 'pele houses,' a survival of the arrangement adopted in the pele towers, where the lowest floor was independent of that above; the upper storey being reached by an outside stair. Superstition still survives and comes to light in unexpected quarters: it is not many years since that, with one of the principal men of the place, the illness of a horse and the belief that it was bewitched, gave occasion to send for a well-known witch doctor; when the regular course of incantation was gone through, the heart of the black cock stuck with pins and roasted, and all the rest. A cottager who was present and took part told me that he certainly saw a black figure, which he considered to be that of the 'evil one,' pass the window. The horse began to get better, but as the farmer tried to evade the payment of his full fee to the witch man, it fell back and the whole process had to be repeated. Charms are still used for many complaints; and certain persons are undisguisedly marked as able to use them. This tendency of the district seems to have been pretty well known; for, shortly after I was presented to the living, the late archdeacon Thorp asked me if I had ever yet found any witches at work. He was very fond of this little church, and frequently, on passing through on visits to his son,

who was then vicar of Blanchland, called to see how the restoration was going on. He sent, at his own expense, the chapter clerk of the works, Mr. Henry, to view the church and advise as to the work; he gave the masonry of the east window; recommended me to take off the plaster from the whole church; and suggested the replacing of the ancient altar-slab. 'It appears to me,' he said, 'from the number of altar slabs still remaining, many of them unmutilated, that the English people, and especially those of the north, did not cordially accept, nor readily act upon, the decree for the degradation and mutilation of their altars. Their obedience to the injunction ordering their removal satisfied itself with removal only, and lowering to the level of the pavement, without proceeding further to destruction.' I think that the wise archdeacon was right; so it was at Edmundbyers, and the sacred table with its five crosses was saved. It was so at Ebchester, and many another I have seen. I can remember the high altar slab of Hexham abbey, a splendid stone, nine feet long with five cross crosslets, lying in front of the then communion table, up to the time of the 'restoration' (or spoliation) of the Abbey in 1860; when tombs were rifled, venerable monuments thrust into corners, and the Lady chapel at the east end swept away. At that time the sacred slab was doubtless broken up.¹⁴

Pleased as the archdeacon was with the church then, he would have been much more so now; for it would have been a delight to him to see the church of God made, if not 'glorious,' at least decent, orderly, and reverent in fabric and furnishings. A vestry, not common in ancient churches of small size, has been built on the north side of the chancel; an organ has been added; and all the windows have been filled with stained glass. The east window contains a picture of the Resurrection; whilst the three nave windows are filled with glass representing the angelic guardianship of the Christian, in infancy, during life, and at death. All are by Baguley of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Around the church much has been done of late years in the way of improvement. Instead of only the large plane and ash trees round

¹⁴ I know a church in York, Holy Trinity in Goodramgate, a tiny Early English church with a perfect gem of an east window, the finest glass in York (and that is much to say, where stained windows are so plentiful and beautiful), which contains three, the high altar slab and those of two chantries. Howden church, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, also has preserved three, in the Saltmarsh chantry chapel, the high altar slab and those of two chantries.

the churchyard, plantations have been made and have sprung up, affording not only beauty and shade, but also a very much required shelter from the frequent violent winds. It might have been supposed that the high elevation would be accompanied by a very low winter temperature; but it is not so. True, that in hot summer weather there is always a coolness, tempering the heat; but the winter's cold is neither so great nor so destructive to evergreens and other shrubs as in places at a lower level. Judging from the published returns, the temperature is not so low in winter at Edmundbyers as at Hexham, Riding Mill, or other places in the valley of the Tyne. This is caused, doubtless, by the dryness of the soil. Were it not for the difficulty of access, Edmundbyers would be admirably suited for a sanatorium or a convalescent home. Even when covered deep with snow, the moors look beautiful; and the climate is very fine. Altogether, though much separated from the world, Edmundbyers has much to recommend it; with an ancient history, an interesting church, a fine bracing climate, an uncontaminated atmosphere, and a beautiful landscape, though lowly, it is not to be despised by lovers of the 'North Countrie.'

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Edmundbyers thus appears in the 'old taxation' of one mark in forty: '10 marcae Ecclesia de Edmundbirs, iiis. iiid.'—*Reg. Pal. Dun.* iii. 89.

The communion plate is described in the *Proceedings* (iii. 276) of the society. On 18 Aug. 6 Ed. VI., Edmundbyers had 'one chalice, weying vi. unces, iii. quarters, two bells in the stepell:—*Ecol. Proc. Bp. Barnes*, lv. Now there is only one modern bell, without inscription, in the turret.

For the people infected with the plague and pestilence, generally known as 'the Great Plague,' there was collected in Aug. 1665, in Edmundbyers and Muggleswick, the sum of 1s. 6d.—*Bp. Cosin's Corr.* (Surt. Soc. Publ.) 325; and on the fast day, Oct. 10, 1666, collected at Edmundbyers for the sufferers in the Great Fire of London, 3s. 8d.—*Ibid.* 331.