

III.

NOTICE OF A PRESENTATION BY GEORGE III. TO THE CHURCH AND
PARISH OF KIRKPATRICK-DURHAM. BY REV. W. A. STARK,
F.S.A. Scot.

Through the courtesy of Mr Ferguson of Kilquhanity, the Document of Presentation issued by the Crown in 1774, George III. being king, to Mr David Lamont, is now exhibited. In virtue of this presentation Mr Lamont was nominated to the Presbytery for ordination to the parish of Kirkpatrick-Durham. So far as I know, very few of these interesting documents are now in existence. They would be lodged by the presentees with the clerks of the respective Presbyteries, and in most cases would doubtless be destroyed sooner or later, after they had served their purpose. How this one came to be mixed up with the papers belonging to the old house of Kilquhanity in the parish of Kirkpatrick-Durham I have not been able to ascertain.

A few words may be permitted me regarding the patronage of this Stewartry parish. The earliest known form of the name of the parish, as well as an old tradition in the district, indicate (not obscurely) that the foundation of the church was due to a proprietor of lands in the parish whose name was Dorant or Durant. The earliest form of the parish name known to me is Kirkpatrick-Dorand in 1273, while in 1305, *tempore* Edward I., it was known as Kirkpatrick-Durant and Kirkpatrick-Duraunt. Of itself this would suggest that the founder of the church was some one belonging to the family of Durant or Duraunt. Several persons belonging to that family are mentioned in old charters, and were connected with this district. The indication thus given is confirmed by the tradition mentioned by Symson about 1684. Symson was minister of Kirkinner, and author of a *Description of Galloway*. He says that "the lands in this parish belonging to M'Naight of Kilquonadie pertained of old to the name of Durham." Gradually in the process of the years between 1300 and 1600 Durant seems to have

changed to Durham. As to the patronage of the church, then, it would first of all belong to the founder, whoever he was, called Durant. Having built and endowed the church, he would have the right, with consent of the bishop, to nominate the incumbent. But when Devorgille, at the beginning of the 13th century, founded the Abbey of Sweetheart, this church of Kirkpatrick-Durham was one of those gifted by her to the Abbey. Therefore from the beginning of the 13th century onwards to the Reformation—*i.e.* for about 350 years—the right of presentation belonged to the Abbot of Sweetheart or New Abbey. At 1560 it passed from the Abbey to the King. At the Reformation, the right of patronage in “common” churches, *i.e.* where it had been vested in a corporate body, such as the Abbot and Chapter, was, on the extinction of those orders, acquired by the Crown. Accordingly from 1560 onwards, for more than three hundred years, the presentation to this church and parish was issued by the Crown. Except for the intervals 1649 to 1661 and 1690 to 1711 (when the right of presentation by a patron ceased, and either the people or the heritors and elders nominated), the Crown exercised the *jus presentandi* from 1560 to 1874, when by Act of Parliament patronage and what it implied were finally abolished. The Document of Presentation, which in parts is much faded, reads as follows :—

George the Third, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, to all and sundry whom these presents do or may concern, greeting. Whereas we, taking into our royal consideration that the Church and Parish of Kirkpatrick-Durham in the Presbytery of Dumfries and County of Galloway is now vacant and in our gift by the death of the Reverend Mr. M'Morine late minister there, and being informed that the Reverend Mr. David Lamont, Preacher of the Gospel, is a person duly qualified to supply the vacancy. Therefore witt ye us to have nominated presented and appointed, likeas we by these presents nominate, present and appoint the said Mr. David Lamont to be minister of the said Church and Parish of Kirkpatrick-Durham during all the days of his lifetime, giving granting and disposing to him during the time aforesaid the constant local and modified stipend, together with the manse glebe and all profits and emoluments whatever belonging to the said church and parish, and that for the crops and year of God one thousand seven hundred and seventy four, and yearly in all times coming during his life and service of the cure of the said

Church and Parish, requiring hereby the Presbytery of Dumfries, within the bounds whereof the said Church and Parish lie, to admit and receive him the said Mr. David Lamont to the said Church and Parish in such manner as is directed by law. Given at our Court of St James's and under our privy seal of Scotland at Edinburgh the thirty-first day of January one thousand seven hundred and seventy four, in the fourteenth year of our reign.

Per signaturam manu S.D.N. Regis
supra scripti manue unius
Dominum Baronum.

David Lamont, whose name is mentioned in this letter of presentation, and who was duly ordained and inducted by the Presbytery of Dumfries in 1774, was descended from a Mr Allan Lamont, who was first minister of Scoonie in Fifeshire after the Reformation, and who died in 1630, aged 80. Six years after David Lamont's ordination to Kirkpatrick-Durham he received the degree of D.D. from the University of Edinburgh. Five years later he was appointed Chaplain to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV. He became a man of considerable influence in the district, was able to acquire several estates in his own and a neighbouring parish, was a Justice of the Peace, and exercised not a little authority both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. He was greatly respected as a parish minister, and his opinion in church matters was allowed considerable weight. So much was this the case that he was chosen as Moderator of the General Assembly in the year that George IV. visited Scotland. Early in that year, viz. the year 1822, George IV. announced his intention to visit his northern dominions. His purpose to do so was known before the meeting of the Assembly in May. It was also understood, as a matter of course, that the Moderator would represent the General Assembly and the Church of Scotland on this important occasion. Accordingly the question became one of some consequence, who was to be nominated for the Moderatorship. Much interest was taken in the election throughout the country, and when the Assembly met it was found that two names were to be proposed. One was that of Dr David Lamont, who was proposed by Dr Mearns, the retiring Moderator. The other was Dr George Cook, minister of Laurencekirk, and well known as a historian of the Church. The latter was proposed

by Sir Henry Moncrieff. Dr Lamont, however, was carried by a large majority—216 voting for Dr Lamont, and 84 for Dr Cook.

The arrival of George IV. did not take place till the month of August. His visit caused much excitement in Edinburgh, as there had been no royal visit to the capital of Scotland for a long time before. "Preparations were made on a most extensive scale. The royal palace was overhauled from basement to roof. New streets were made. Triumphal arches were erected. Crowds of people flocked into the city. Lodgings of any kind were only secured at high prices. Windows from which to view the proceedings were engaged at extravagant rates." The king was received with great ceremony, and the city authorities did everything in their power to demonstrate their loyalty. On Sunday 25th August his Majesty attended service in St Giles Cathedral. The service was conducted by Dr Lamont, who seems to have been an eloquent man, as well as shrewd and sensible. Two years afterwards the Sovereign showed his appreciation and favour by appointing him one of the Chaplains in Ordinary for Scotland. Dr Lamont died suddenly in his own house of Durhamhill in the early part of 1837 in the 84th year of his age and the 63rd year of his ministry.