

revived, Robert Baron, Professor of Divinity in the Marischal College of Aberdeen, was elected his successor in the see of Orkney, to which he would unquestionably have been an ornament, as may appear from the excellence of his character and writings, had he not been compelled, by the turbulence of the times, to flee from the country. He died at Berwick before consecration.

We are not informed in what manner, or by whom, the clerical office was held, or the parochial duties were performed, during the interval of Presbytery that succeeded.

Those at the helm of affairs being then busied in planting the churches in the central and more populous parts of the kingdom neglected, perhaps, to extend their views for some time to this remote sequestered province; and in that case the inferior orders of the clergy would probably continue to discharge the duties of their office, encouraged and maintained by the people.

The rents of the bishopric were granted by Parliament to the city of Edinburgh; and by the provost and magistrates farmed to two gentlemen in Orkney, Mr James Baikie of Tankerness, and Mr George Buchanan of Sound, who, either jointly or separately, held them to the time of the Restoration.\*

King Charles the First, in the midst of his troubles, granted these islands, with the whole jurisdictions and royalties that belonged to them, to William Earl of Morton, under the name or in the form of a mortgage, redeemable by the Crown, on payment of thirty thousand pounds sterling [1643].† This nobleman, soon after he had obtained the grant, retired hither; and, while disorders invaded the heart of the kingdom, he spent the remainder of his days in silence and security.

His family suffered a sad reverse of fortune under the usurpation of Cromwell. He stripped them of these possessions, on account of their attachment to the royal cause; and built a temporary fort, still known by the name of the Mount, in which he placed a garrison, to overawe and plunder, as well as protect the islands. During the power of Cromwell, his soldiers were guilty of several irregularities and oppressions; but they also were of considerable advantage to the islands. They introduced

\* Discharges *penes* Sir J. Stewart.

† *Great Seal Register.*

a superior mode of cultivating the ground, and the planting of cabbages, which were before that time in a great measure unknown. They also taught the inhabitants the use of marl as a manure, the improvement of the country houses, and the art of making locks and keys to secure them.

During the time of the Commonwealth, the people in general discovered no affection for the new principles, but seem to have been attached to the line of their ancient sovereigns ; since the Marquis of Montrose, that great champion of royalty, had no sooner landed on these shores, than he easily persuaded many of them to join his standard, and march to the south, whence scarcely any of them ever returned.

As soon as the Restoration took place, an Earl of Morton of the same family resumed the possession of the earldom, of which his ancestors had been so unjustly despoiled, and was in due time reinstated in all its privileges. Apprehensive, however, that these islands might devolve on the Crown by the general act of revocation, he exerted all his interest to obtain a new grant ; and was so fortunate as to succeed in procuring one in the form of a mortgage ; not in his own name indeed, as his affairs were in disorder, but in the name of the Lord Viscount Grandison in trust, on purpose to support the Morton family. But both this and the former grant were contested [1662] by his majesty's advocate ; and, in an action brought at his instance, were, in the legal style, *reduced*, or declared null and void, by a decree of the Supreme Court, on grounds foreign to our purpose to mention ; when the islands were once more, by act of parliament, annexed to the Crown [1669], and, at the same time, erected into a stewartry.\*

From this time, for the space of more than thirty years, they were under the management of administration, and were granted on lease to farmers, generally for a term of five years.

Among these, as might be supposed, there were men of very different characters ; and this circumstance would certainly influence the condition of the people ; who, in the different classes of which they were composed, seem, for the most part, still to have suffered thralldom, and improvements of every kind

\* Act 13. Parl. 2. Ch. II.